

# PERCEPTION

A Quarterly Magazine for Young People



“To every thing there is a season”  
(Ecclesiastes 3. 1).

SPRING 2019

IN THIS ISSUE	Page
Editorial. . . . .	1
William Smith (Conclusion) – His last days and death. .	5
Extract from <i>The Pilgrim's Progress</i> by John Bunyan . .	12
A Young Lion . . . . .	18
Christian Duties – An acrostic . . . . .	19
Fossils . . . . .	20
The World by Bishop J. C. Ryle . . . . .	21
The Sucking Pig by Father Charles Chiniquy . . . . .	25
Good Influence of an Older Sister . . . . .	29
Gaelic . . . . .	30
Bertha Mortlock of Coventry. . . . .	32
A Few Current Matters . . . . .	34
Questions and Answers 3 – Organ Donation . . . . .	35

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## EDITORIAL

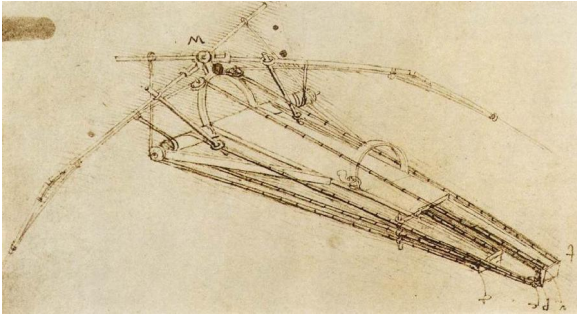
*“See, saith he, that thou make all things according to the pattern shewed to thee in the mount” (Heb. 8. 5).*

I wonder if any of you have had a similar experience to this: once, I had to cut six pieces of wood the identical length. The first one was measured and carefully marked with a pencil. For the second piece the tape measure was dispensed with and a pencil mark made using the first piece as a guide. When it was time to cut the third piece the piece that had just been cut was used as a guide. This continued until all six pieces had been cut. It was quite a shock to find that the last piece was very different to the first piece.

Of course, the reason for this was because I had used *my* work as a guide, rather than going back to the original measurement on the plan. This is just a faint illustration of God’s words to Moses that he was to make all things “according to the pattern shewed to thee in the mount.”

Although your editor enjoys making things (when he has some spare time), he would be the first to confess that he is certainly not a craftsman! Frequently things do not quite fit together as they should. Today, not many girls make their own clothes, unlike possibly their mothers, and almost certainly their grandmothers. Those who do, if making a dress, use a pattern. The exact shape of every piece of material is printed out on paper which is then pinned to the piece of material and cut exactly to shape. There is no danger then of mistakes being made.

Man has long realised he needs a plan. The great Leonardo da Vinci (1452-1519) is widely considered one of the greatest painters of all time. Most people know his “Mona Lisa.” But he was more than just a great painter – he was also an inventor. Da Vinci sketched out his ideas, many of which have been preserved since his death. What detail he worked into his plans. He did not know at the time, but they were to be a pattern for many a future invention.

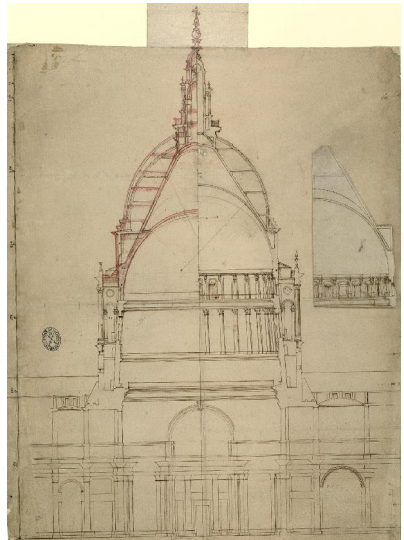


*Leonardo da Vinci's plan for a flying machine*

Another famous architect was Sir Christopher Wren. His masterpiece was the design of St. Paul's Cathedral, London, built between 1675 and 1710. How painstaking were his plans for each part of the building –

especially the dome. Sometimes his plans were modified as he went along, as everything had to be perfect.

But we leave these men, great though they were, as we turn to consider just a few of God's plans. First, let us think of Noah's ark. In Genesis chapter 6, God instructed Noah that the ark was to be made of gopher wood, most likely the cypress tree. What a wise choice! (The doors of St. Peter's, Rome, are made of Cypress wood and are over 1,000 years old – and still going strong!) The length of the ark was to be ten times the height and six times the width. No larger vessel was made until 1884 when the great engineer, Brunel, designed the ship "Great Britain", *which was built to exactly the same proportions.* How remarkable that man should conclude these proportions were the best that could be devised for the stability of the vessel!



*Wren's plan dome of St. Paul's*

In the later chapters of Exodus, Moses was called up into the mount, where God revealed to him in great detail how the tabernacle was to be made. It was to be the place where God dwelt with His people: "Let them make me a sanctuary; that I may dwell among them." The length and breadth were specified, and the materials to be used. Every detail of the wilderness tabernacle and its contents, including the ark of the covenant, the laver, every dish, every tool, every utensil - *everything* was to be made according to the pattern revealed to Moses.



Later on, Solomon's temple was built, perhaps the world's most splendid building ever. With a workforce of 70,000 labourers and 80,000 stonemasons nothing could be left to chance. What careful plans were needed!

Although we can understand that plans are needed for buildings, we may wonder whether God has a plan for our life. Well, we believe that God does have a plan for the life of every man, woman and child on this earth. But we need to be very careful how we speak of this – it is not something to be said lightly. For a believer, God's plan for his life is salvation from the wrath to come. For the unbeliever, God's plan for his life is eternal death. This is so solemn that we must never speak lightly, as some people do, of God's plan for our life.

Perhaps you have heard of the so-called "prosperity gospel" which has thousands of followers. These people say that God has a wonderful plan for their lives, often meaning that God will help them achieve their dreams. It is the belief that God grants health and wealth to those with the right kind of faith. It promises a solution to every problem and difficulty. If you only believe, all will be well. Many are turning to this false gospel. The reality is that for many of God's people, life has been the opposite. When I was a boy, Mr Jesse Tompkins was one of our regular supply ministers. (He finished his days in the Harpenden Bethesda Home.) One of his expressions that has remained with me is this: "You won't get to heaven on flowery beds of ease." Whilst we are surrounded with mercies, and we daily acknowledge it to be so, for the most part God's people find there are many trials, difficulties, sorrows, disappointments, and afflictions (sometimes severe). In some countries today, those who confess the name of Christ are severely oppressed, marginalised, and sometimes killed for their beliefs. If we think, for example, of the lives of godly Stephen and of the early apostles – many of them met a martyr's death.

The apostle Paul tells us that God's plan for the life of a believer is that He might become more like His Son: "For whom He did foreknow, He also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of His Son" (Rom. 8. 29). Conformed to the image of His Son? When we look within our hearts, many of us struggle with that. We have to say with Paul: "Not as though I had already attained, either were already perfect: *but I follow after.*" The believer is to take up his cross daily. No, a prosperity gospel is nothing but a cruel deceit.

One hymn sung much at Christmas (Once in royal David's city) has

the line: "For He is our childhood's pattern." There is a verse in Peter's first Epistle that has this same thought, that Christ is our pattern or example: "For even hereunto were ye called: because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that ye should follow His steps" (1 Peter 2. 21). My own Pastor, referring recently to this verse, asked a question: "Follow in His steps? (which is what people usually say). We can't do that - but we can follow His steps." How important that we notice every word that appears - and does not appear - in Scripture! It is easy to add extra words when we quote familiar texts.

There are two further verses that speak of Christ as our example: "Be ye followers of me, even as I also am of Christ" (1 Cor. 11. 1). "Be ye therefore followers of God, as dear children" (Eph. 5. 1).

One final thought. We know some of our readers are exercised about following the Lord in baptism, but have felt unable to go forward. May the Lord appear for them, that they might be enabled to follow the steps of their exalted Head, the Lord Jesus Christ.

"Soar we now where Christ has led,  
Following our exalted Head;  
Made like Him, like Him we rise;  
Ours the cross, the grave, the skies!"

Wishing all our readers the Lord's richest blessing.

The Editor.

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## THE RIGHT ANSWER

The superintendent, in addressing the Sunday School, asked the children a question: "If I were to ask you the way to the next town, you would, no doubt, be able tell me. But if I were to ask you the way to heaven, what answer would you give me?"

For a while there was no answer. Then a very little girl, standing up, gave the right answer: "Jesus Christ is the way."

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## WILLIAM SMITH (Conclusion)

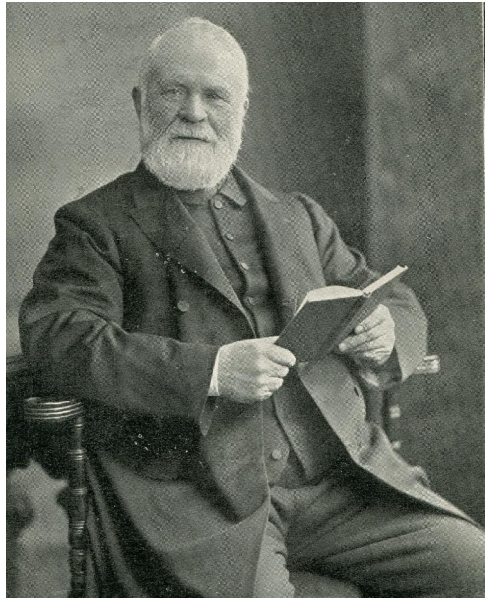
Having now come to the end of his own writings, which we have published in eleven instalments, we felt our readers would appreciate a few details of his last days, provided by his son.

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On the 5th of June, 1903, when my dear father came downstairs to breakfast, he appeared very strange in his manner, and was asked if he felt ill or giddy. He answered that he felt as if he had a cloth tied tightly round his head; and upon taking his seat at the table, when he should have asked a blessing upon the food, he commenced as if he thought he was writing a letter, or in the pulpit addressing his people at chapel. He said: "My dear friends, doubtless you will be surprised to hear what has befallen me. I shall soon be under the ground, and if I am not able to preach, I hope the Lord will soon take me to rest."

This was so very unusual and strange that my mother's servant - who was alone at the table with him, my mother having been ill for some time - ran out for a great friend, Mrs. Collins, who upon her arrival sent for other friends, also for the doctor.

He was got upstairs and put to bed, and when the doctor came he said he had received a slight stroke of paralysis. He soon after became unconscious to everything natural, in which state he remained, more or less, during the whole month he was laid aside, although at times, when spoken to by his dear wife and the different friends upon spiritual and soul matters, he was as sensible and clear in his mind as ever he was, and at times was able to answer quite distinctly. One friend in particular, Mr. Baty, quoted a part of a few portions of Scripture, which



he knew had been greatly blessed to his soul at different times, and he at once finished quoting the verse mentioned. At another time he told the same friend, who asked if he had any message to send to some mutual friends, to tell them: *"I am a poor sinner, but next door to heaven."*

Upon the last Sabbath of his life another friend asked him if he could send any message to his church and congregation. At first he said he did not know, but upon it being suggested that he could truly say that he had blessedly proved the faithfulness of his God in his own soul up to that moment, at once replied in quite a strong voice, "That I can; that I can." In fact, up to the last few days of his life he was quite alive to spiritual conversation, but appeared dead to everything else. We all feel it to have been a most merciful blessing that he did not appear to suffer any bodily pain during the whole time. He peacefully breathed his last on the morning of Saturday, July 4th, 1903, about 2 o'clock.

He was born at Stratford-on-Avon, November 22nd, 1827. He accepted the pastorate of Rehoboth chapel in the year 1876; thus being the pastor over the church for almost twenty-seven years; entering into everlasting rest in the 76th year of his age; leaving behind my dear afflicted mother and myself to feel the miss of a tender and loving husband and father. *E. SMITH.*

A dear friend says: "Once during our dear pastor's illness he asked his wife to sing to him one of the hymns they used to sing together; and upon her singing he tried to join her, especially the last verse:

"Rise, my soul, and stretch thy wings,  
Thy better portion trace:  
Rise from transitory things  
Towards Heaven, thy native place.  
Sun and moon and stars decay,  
Time shall soon this earth remove:  
Rise, my soul, and haste away  
To seats prepared above."

## THE FUNERAL SERVICE

His funeral was on Tuesday, July 7th, 1903. The following is a brief account of the day, by one of the friends:



This day the remains of our dear old friend, brother, and beloved pastor were laid in the grave.

Among the followers were Messrs. Hull, Ashdown, Newton, Botten, Dickens, and other ministers of the Gospel; together with about one hundred relations and friends from Croydon, Brighton, Hastings, and many other towns. Several letters were received from ministers and friends who were unable to attend, including Mr. Popham, of Brighton.

Upon reaching the cemetery, where between two hundred and three hundred were assembled, Mr. T. Hull, his oldest friend, conducted the funeral service, kindly assisted by Mr. Ashdown and Mr. Newton in the chapel. Proceeding to the grave Mr. Hull gave a most impressive address, which was listened to by the large assemblage with great attention and emotion; the solemn ceremony being concluded by a most feeling and affectionate prayer for the widow, the dear son and those belonging to him, for the deacons, the church, the congregation, and for all those who are now deprived of the services and prayers of one of the leading faithful ministers of the Gospel in this country.

The friends had been cordially invited to tea at Mr. Ralph's restaurant, which was presided over by our dear friend, Mr. Newton; a goodly number with several ministers also partaking of tea at Mrs. Smith's house.

Afterwards, all the friends adjourned to the chapel, which was crowded, and attentively listened to a very affectionate and touching discourse by Mr. Hull from these words: "A brother beloved." Mr. Newton gave out hymns 469, 477, and 1082, which were most applicable to the solemn occasion.

### **Address delivered by Mr. Ashdown at the Cemetery chapel**

My friends, our late dear friend Smith is taken home into his eternal rest from the evils to come. This is one of God's great mercies, to take home His people, our fellow-sinners, into that haven of rest when their work is done.

Our brother had finished his work and the ministry which God gave him, and has entered into rest, where he will remain until the resurrection; when this body we are about to commit to the grave will be raised up in that blessed resurrection of the just, with all the election of grace; and the immortal soul now in glory will be re-united to this same body; and all the saints who are on the earth at that period will be changed in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, and be gathered up

with all the election of grace from the four winds of the earth; and thus they will all be gathered home.

This, dear friends, is a blessed truth: God has had a people to honour Him in this world from the beginning, called by His grace and made one with Christ; and this is a solemn truth: all who are not saved in God's covenant love and grace must be lost! O, to be saved! What a mercy!

There was a time when God sent His Holy Spirit of life and love into the heart of our departed brother; and when that took place he was quickened together with Christ; and when grace had wrought and metened the soul for glory the Lord took him home.

This is one of the solemnities of Zion, when an immortal soul is gathered out of the church militant into the church triumphant. I have thought of this, that we cannot see the spirit, the soul of a man, but that is the man. The body is only the tabernacle, as our house we dwell in. Hence the Apostle says: "For we know that if our earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God, an house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens. For in this we groan, being burdened" (2 Cor. 5. 1, 2). Now our departed brother suffered under the holy law of God, with the terrors of it in his conscience, when he had fears of the wrath of God; and he found trouble and sorrow. In due time the Lord delivered him from that sorrow and trouble by His power; and gave him faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, and in His atoning blood and righteousness; which brought peace, and comfort, and satisfaction, and joy into his heart by believing. Therefore we do not mourn as those who have no hope.

What a mercy the Lord did not leave your late dear pastor to suffer long on a bed of affliction, but a gentle stroke of His hand made him helpless; and there he lay, not in sorrow and pain, but under the sweet visits of his God, and the comforts of the Holy Spirit, and he wished his dear wife to find the hymn which they used to sing of the Lord's mercies when they were young; when she found it he helped her to sing it: "Rise, my soul, and stretch thy wings."

You have lost a faithful and affectionate pastor, a godly minister of our Lord Jesus Christ; but what he was as a minister, he was by the grace of God. We shall hear his voice no more; the Lord has taken him home to the church triumphant above.

We commit the body, the mortal remains, to the grave. It is sown in weakness, it will be raised in power; it is sown in dishonour, it will be raised in glory, when the immortal soul will be re-united to the body,

and spend an endless eternity with God and all the elect, and with angels, and reign for ever and ever.

May the Lord support and bless the widow, son, and relatives, and you as a widowed church; may He be with you as a church, the deacons, and the congregation, and give you hearts to cleave to God, and the Divine truths which he preached. You will need each others' prayers in these things. May the Lord help you and bless you, and send you a minister and pastor. I hope it will be truly said, the Lord hath done all things well.

May He mercifully sanctify this stroke of His hand for the honour of His name, and for the mutual good of us concerned, for Christ's sake. Amen.

### **At the graveside**

Mr. Newton having engaged in prayer, the friends proceeded to the grave, when a few remarks were made by Mr. Hull at the graveside:

We often - some of us, at least - meet around the grave with different feelings. Some whose mortal remains we commit to the dust we can say but little about them, feeling that the Judge of all the earth will do right. Of others we are not without hope that they are included in the number who think upon the name of the Lord. But sometimes, as in the present case, we can confidently commit the mortal tabernacle to the grave as earth to earth, ashes to ashes, and dust to dust, in sure and certain hope of a joyful resurrection unto eternal life.

Having been in intimate fellowship with our friend Smith for nearly half a century, we are able to speak of him as a genuine Christian, and a faithful minister of the Gospel. We long walked in close spiritual fellowship, sharing in each others' joys and sorrows, adversities, tribulations, afflictions, and Divine mercies; "And death itself, that last of foes, Can't rend a union so Divine."

The church at "Rehoboth" has lost a faithful, loving, and devoted pastor in the death of our dear friend Smith. The dear widow has lost a loving and faithful husband, and the son has lost a loving, tender, and affectionate father; but the God of William Smith still lives, and ever will live, and He is the Caretaker of all them who trust in Him. May the church be kept in peace, and be favoured still to enjoy the blessing of the God of Jacob; and may the dear widow find in the Lord an ever-living Husband, and the dear son and his dear wife and children find in Him an everlasting and gracious Father; then it will be well with them.

To you who have sat under the ministry of our dear friend, I would ask, have you not often felt he was speaking to you the truth of God? But I would also ask, has it ever got into your hearts? If not, what good can it do to you? It is “with the heart man believeth,” and this is a new-given heart by God.

We may never all meet again upon earth, but we shall meet again at the trumpet’s call, when the rocks shall flee and the mountains fall. Then the last and eternal division will be made, the final sentence will be proclaimed from the lips of Him who is loved by His saints and despised by His enemies. That will be an awfully solemn day; may you anxiously think of it, and ask yourself the important question, “How stands the case, my soul, with thee?”

And now, as we leave the dear and redeemed remains of our beloved friend in the home appointed for all living, we bid adieu to him, saying:

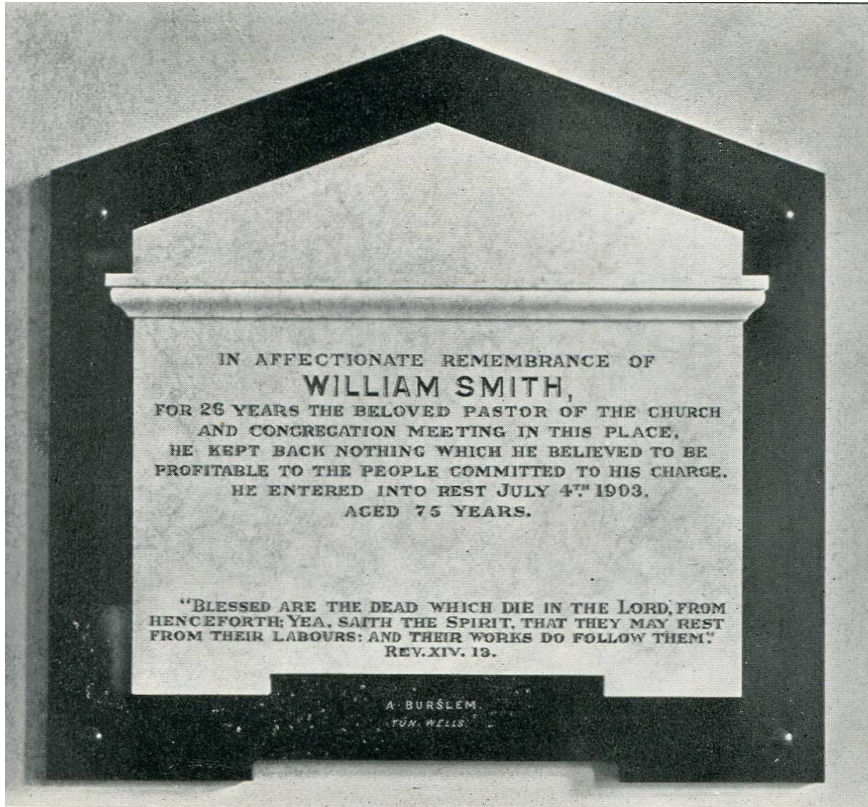
“Sleep on, dear friend, in bed of hallowed clay,  
There rest from sorrow, weariness and pain;  
Till Christ shall come on resurrection day,  
And bid thee rise with Him to live and reign  
And in His glorious likeness ever shine,  
As one redeemed with priceless blood Divine.”

After a short prayer and the benediction by Mr. Hull the sorrowful assembly dispersed.

### **Evening service**

On the evening of the funeral day Mr. Hull preached at Rehoboth Chapel, Tunbridge Wells. His text was “A brother beloved” from the epistle to Philemon, part of the 16th verse. During the sermon he said: “We walked in close fellowship for nearly fifty years. We were one in spirit, and there was such a spiritual affinity, which I feel I can say without doubt, death itself will never dissolve. I loved him as a child of God, and I loved him as a minister and servant of Christ. For some time previous to his being called to preach I had a firm persuasion that he would have to engage in that good work. I remember my friend Sinkinson saying to me, ‘Thomas, I believe Smith will have to preach.’ ‘Why,’ I said, ‘you are of the same mind as myself, I have been of that opinion for a long time.’ And how glad I was when the Lord opened his mouth, and gave the word an entrance into the hearts of His people.”





A few lines written by Mr. Smith some thirty years before he died:

And when the icy hand of death  
 Shall seize my frame and stop my breath,  
 May angels guard my soul away  
 To the bright realms of endless day.

Then shall I rest my weary soul  
 Long as eternal ages roll,  
 And sing before the sacred Three,  
 “Worthy the Lamb that died for me!”

THE END

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## **EXTRACT FROM THE PILGRIM'S PROGRESS**

by John Bunyan

Wherein is discovered the manner of his setting out, his Dangerous Journey, and Safe Arrival at the Desired Country, in the Similitude of a dream.

### **This world**

As I walked through the wilderness of this world, I lighted on a certain place where was a Den, and I laid me down in that place to sleep; and as I slept, I dreamed a dream. I dreamed, and behold I saw a man cloathed with rags, standing in a certain place, with his face from his own house, a book in his hand, and a great burden upon his back. I looked, and saw him open the book, and read therein; and as he read, he wept and trembled; and not being able longer to contain, he brake out with a lamentable cry, saying, What shall I do?

### **Distress of mind**

In this plight therefore he went home, and refrained himself as long as he could, that his wife and children should not perceive his distress, but he could not be silent long, because that his trouble increased: wherefore at length he brake his mind to his wife and children; and thus he began to talk to them: O my dear wife, said he, and you the children of my bowels, I your dear friend, am in myself undone by reason of a burden that lieth hard upon me; moreover, I am for certain informed that this our city will be burned with fire from Heaven; in which fearful overthrow, both myself, with thee my wife, and you my sweet babes, shall miserably come to ruin, except (the which yet I see not) some way of escape can be found, whereby we may be delivered.

At this his relations were sore amazed; not for that they believed that what he had said to them was true, but because they thought that some frenzy distemper had got into his head; therefore, it drawing towards night, and they hoping that sleep might settle his brains, with all haste they got him to bed: but the night was as troublesome to him as the day; wherefore, instead of sleeping, he spent it in sighs and tears. So, when the morning was come, they would know how he did; he told them, Worse and worse: he also set to talking to them again, but they began to be hardened: they also thought to drive away his distemper by harsh and surly carriages to him; sometimes they would deride,

sometimes they would chide, and sometimes they would quite neglect him: wherefore he began to retire himself to his chamber, to pray for and pity them, and also to condole his own misery; he would also walk solitarily in the fields, sometimes reading, and sometimes praying: and thus for some days he spent his time.

### **His book**

Now, I saw upon a time, when he was walking in the fields, that he was, as he was wont, reading in his book, and greatly distressed in his



mind; and as he read, he burst out, as he had done before, crying, What shall I do to be saved? I saw also that he looked this way and that way, as if he would run; yet he stood still, because, as I perceived, he could not tell which way to go. I looked then, and saw a man named Evangelist, coming to him, and asked, Wherefore dost thou cry?

He answered, Sir, I perceive by the book in my hand, that I am condemned to die, and after that to come to judgment, and I find that I am not willing to do the first, nor able to do the second.

*He was (as he was wont) reading in his book*

Then said Evangelist, Why not willing to die, since this life is attended with so many evils? The man answered, Because I fear that this burden that is upon my back will sink me lower than the grave, and I shall fall into Tophet. And, Sir, if I be not fit to go to prison, I am not fit to go to judgment, and from thence to execution; and the thoughts of these things make me cry.

Then said Evangelist, If this be thy condition, why standest thou still? He answered, Because I know not whither to go. Then he gave him a parchment-roll, and there was written within, Fly from the wrath to come.

The man therefore read it, and looking upon Evangelist very carefully, said, Whither must I fly? Then said Evangelist, pointing with his finger over a very wide field, Do you see yonder wicket-gate?



The man said, No. Then said the other, Do you see yonder shining light? He said, I think I do. Then said Evangelist, Keep that light in your eye, and go up directly thereto: so shalt thou see the gate; at which, when thou knockest, it shall be told thee what thou shalt do.

### **He flees**

So I saw in my dream that the man began to run. Now he had not run far from his own door, but his wife and children, perceiving it, began to cry after him to return; but the man put his fingers in his ears, and ran on, crying, Life! Life! Eternal life! So he looked not behind him, but fled towards the middle of the plain.

The neighbours also came out to see him run: and as he ran, some mocked, others threatened, and some cried after him to return; and

among those that did so, there were two that resolved to fetch him back by force. The name of the one was Obstinate, and the name of the other Pliable. Now by this time the man was got a good distance from them; but however they were resolved to pursue him, which they did, and in a little time they overtook him.

### **Christian talks with Obstinate and Pliable**

Then said the man, Neighbours, wherefore are you come? They said, To persuade you to go back with us. But he said, That can by no

*Do you see yonder shining light?*



means be; you dwell, said he, in the City of Destruction, the place also where I was born, I see it to be so; and dying there, sooner or later, you will sink lower than the grave, into a place that burns with fire and brimstone: be content, good neighbours, and go along with me.

OBSTINATE. What, said Obstinate, and leave our friends and our comforts behind us!

CHRISTIAN. Yes, said Christian, (for that was his name,) because that all which you shall forsake is not worthy to be compared with a little of that that I am seeking to enjoy; and if you will go along with me, and hold it, you shall fare as I myself; for there where I go, is enough and to spare: Come away, and prove my words.

OBSTINATE. What are the things you seek, since you leave all the world to find them?

CHRISTIAN. I seek an inheritance incorruptible, undefiled, and that fadeth not away, and it is laid up in Heaven, and safe there, to be bestowed at the time appointed, on them that diligently seek it. Read it so, if you will, in my book.

OBSTINATE. Tush, said Obstinate, away with your book; will you go back with us or no?

CHRISTIAN. No, not I, said Christian, because I have laid my hand to the plow.

OBSTINATE. Come then, neighbour Pliable, let us turn again, and go home without him; there is a company of these crazed-headed coxcombs, that, when they take a fancy by the end, are wiser in their own eyes than seven men that can render a reason.

PLIABLE. Then said Pliable, Don't revile; if what the good Christian says is true, the things he looks after are better than ours; my heart inclines to go with my neighbour.

OBSTINATE. What! more fools still? Be ruled by me, and go back; who knows whither such a brain-sick fellow will lead you? Go back, go back, and be wise.

CHRISTIAN. Come with me, neighbour Pliable; there are such things to be had which I spoke of, and many more glories besides. If you

believe not me, read here in this book; and for the truth of what is expressed therein, behold, all is confirmed by the blood of Him that made it.

PLIABLE. Well, neighbour Obstinate, I begin to come to a point; I intend to go along with this good man, and to cast in my lot with him: but, my good companion, do you know the way to this desired place?

CHRISTIAN. I am directed by a man, whose name is Evangelist, to speed me to a little gate that is before us, where we shall receive instructions about the way.

PLIABLE. Come then, good neighbour, let us be going. Then they went both together.

OBSTINATE. And I will go back to my place, said Obstinate; I will be no companion of such mis-led, fantastical fellows.

Now I saw in my dream, that when Obstinate was gone back, Christian and Pliable went talking over the plain; and thus they began their discourse.

CHRISTIAN. Come, neighbour Pliable, how do you do? I am glad you are persuaded to go along with me. Had even Obstinate himself but felt what I have felt of the powers and terrors of what is yet unseen, he would not thus lightly have given us the back.

PLIABLE. Come, neighbour Christian, since there are none but us two here, tell me now further what the things are, and how to be enjoyed, whither we are going?

CHRISTIAN. I can better conceive of them with my mind, than speak of them with my tongue: but yet, since you are desirous to know, I will read of them in my book.

PLIABLE. And do you think that the words of your book are certainly true?

CHRISTIAN. Yes, verily; for it was made by Him that cannot lye.

PLIABLE. Well said; what things are they?

CHRISTIAN. There is an endless kingdom to be inhabited, and life everlasting to be given us, that we may inhabit that kingdom for ever.

PLIABLE. Well said; and what else?

CHRISTIAN. There are crowns of glory to be given us, and garments that will make us shine like the sun in the firmament of heaven.

PLIABLE. This is excellent; and what else?

CHRISTIAN. There shall be no more crying, nor sorrow; for He that is owner of the place will wipe all tears from our eyes.

PLIABLE. And what company shall we have there?

CHRISTIAN. There we shall be with seraphims and cherubims, creatures that will dazzle your eyes to look on them: there also you shall meet with thousands and ten thousands that have gone before us to that place; none of them are hurtful, but loving and holy; every one walking in the sight of God, and standing in his presence with acceptance for ever. In a word, there we shall see the elders with their golden crowns, there we shall see the holy virgins with their golden harps, there we shall see men that by the world were cut in pieces, burnt in flames, eaten of beasts, drowned in the seas, for the love that they bare to the Lord of the place, all well, and clothed with immortality as with a garment.

PLIABLE. The hearing of this is enough to ravish one's heart; but are these things to be enjoyed? How shall we get to be sharers hereof?

CHRISTIAN. The Lord, the Governor of the country, hath recorded that in this book; the substance of which is, If we be truly willing to have it, he will bestow it upon us freely.

PLIABLE. Well, my good companion, glad am I to hear of these things; come on, let us mend our pace.

CHRISTIAN. I cannot go so fast as I would, by reason of this burden that is upon my back.

Now I saw in my dream, that just as they had ended this talk, they drew nigh to a very miry slough, that was in the midst of the plain; and they being heedless, did both fall suddenly into the bog. The name of the slough was Despond. Here, therefore, they wallowed for a time, being grievously bedaubed with dirt; and Christian, because of the burden that was on his back, began to sink in the mire.

PLIABLE. Then said Pliable, Ah, neighbour Christian, where are you now?

CHRISTIAN. Truly, said Christian, I do not know.

PLIABLE. At this Pliable began to be offended, and angrily said to his fellow, Is this the happiness you have told me all this while of? If we have such ill speed at our first setting out, what may we expect 'twixt this and our journey's end? May I get out again with my life, you shall possess the brave country alone for me. And with that he gave a desperate struggle or two, and got out of the mire on that side of the slough which was next to his own house: so away he went, and Christian saw him no more.

Wherefore Christian was left to tumble in the Slough of Despond alone: but still he endeavoured to struggle to that side of the slough that was further from his own house, and next to the Wicket-gate; the which he did, but could not get out because of the burden that was upon his back.

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## A YOUNG LION

This is a true story that has a lesson for us all.

While General Sydney Johnson resided on Oyster Creek, in Texas, he kept a tamed Mexican lion, of which he was very fond, and which followed him everywhere like a dog.

One day, while at dinner with General Lamar and the Rev. Mr. Fontaine, he was feeding him with pieces of meat, and happening to give a rare slice with blood dropping from it, the lion seized the hand that held it, crushing it, and growling fiercely, with angry eyes fixed on his master, General Johnson. Without a cry of pain or a single movement, he looked steadily at the lion, and said quietly several times, "Let go, Dan." But the animal only growled and lashed his tail, when, turning to a servant, the General told him to hand his pistol, which the frightened man did, and General Johnson, taking it in his left hand, blew out the lion's brains. But his hand was hopelessly maimed.

*Little lions are dangerous, and so are little sins.*

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## CHRISTIAN DUTIES

A reader has come across this anonymous acrostic with the title ‘Christian Duties.’ It would be an interesting exercise to find related Bible references for each line, and the Editor would be pleased to hear from anyone who is able to do so. Also, any suggestions for X, Y, Z?

*All Christians should be:*

Attentive on the means of grace

Bearing one another’s burdens

Courteous to all associates

Diligent in business

Exemplary in character

Faithful in friendships

Given to hospitality

Helpful like Phoebe

Industrious as the ant

Judicious in judgment

Kindly affectioned one to another

Liberal to the cause of Christ

Mindful of the needy

Neighbourly like the good Samaritan

Obliging at all times

Patient in tribulation

Quiet in anxiety

Ready to forgive

Sympathetic towards sufferers

Thoughtful of others

Unmoved by false doctrines

Virtuous in walk and conversation

Watchful on the walls of Zion



## FOSSILS

We are used to reading of fossils claimed to be fantastically old.

Two years ago, a team of Australian scientists found odd structures in Greenland that they said were partly leftovers from microbes that lived on an ancient seafloor. They were said to be 3.7 billion years old, and were billed as the oldest fossils on Earth. However, the journal *Nature*, has released research using NASA technology that concludes the structures found on the rocks were not fossils at all. The research was carried out by NASA astrobiologist Abigail Allwood. When she read about the research, she thought ‘there was something not quite right,’ so she went to Greenland to look for herself. She concluded that the find did not have the chemical signature of fossilized life.

Another recent find was the world’s oldest mushroom fossil claimed



*The fossilized mushroom*

to be 115 million years old. The mushroom was discovered in a limestone layer in northeast Brazil. Scientists claim that the ancient mushroom began its journey in becoming a fossil by falling in a river. It made its way into a salt lagoon, sank through the layers of salty water, and was covered in layers of fine sediment, in time becoming a fossil.

It has always been claimed that fossilization takes at least ten thousand years. Recently, though, a team of scientists has convincingly mimicked the process in less than 24 hours. Specimens such as lizard limbs and bird feathers were taken and packed into clay in the hope of simulating the natural fossilization process. Fossils form when organisms decay in sediment, and subsequent heat and pressure create

an impression of the dead creature in sedimentary rock. The specimens

were baked in a laboratory oven at over 200 degrees Centigrade and at a pressure of 3500 psi using a hydraulic press – a pressure 300 times higher than the atmospheric pressure at sea level. After 24 hours in the oven, the initial results were spectacular, and continued to be convincing even under the microscope.

This experiment has showed that it does not take millions of years to form fossils. In the presence of heat and pressure they can be formed in a short time. These conditions would have been present in the Noah flood when many of our fossils were formed, some of which have been found near the top of the mountains, thus confirming the scriptural text found in Gen. 7. 19-20: “And all the high hills, that were under the whole heaven, were covered; and the mountains were covered.”

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## THE WORLD

Bishop J. C. Ryle

*“Come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord”  
(2 Cor. 6. 17).*

The text which heads this page touches a subject of vast importance in religion. That subject is the great duty of separation from the world. This is the point which Paul had in view when he wrote to the Corinthians, “Come out – be separate.”



*Bishop J. C. Ryle*

The subject is one which demands the best attention of all who call themselves Christians. In every age of the Church separation from the world has always been one of the grand evidences of a work of grace in the heart. He that has been really born of the Spirit, and made a new creature in Christ Jesus, has always endeavoured to “come out from the world,” and live a separate life. They who have only had the name of Christian, without the reality, have always refused to “come out and be separate” from the world.

The subject perhaps was never more important than it is at the present day. There is a widely-spread desire

to make things pleasant in religion – to saw off the corners and edges of the cross, and to avoid, as far as possible, self-denial. On every side we hear professing Christians declaring loudly that we must not be “narrow and exclusive,” and that there is no harm in many things which the holiest saints of old thought bad for their souls. That we may go anywhere, and do anything, and spend our time in anything, and read anything, and keep any company, and plunge into anything, and all the while may be very good Christians – this, this is the maxim of thousands. In a day like this I think it good to raise a warning voice, and invite attention to the teaching of God’s Word. It is written in that Word, “Come out, and be separate.”

\* \* \* \*

And now, before I go a single step further, let me warn every reader of this paper that he will never understand this subject unless he first understands what a true Christian is. If you are one of those unhappy people who think everybody is a Christian who goes to a place of worship, no matter how he lives, or what he believes, I fear you will care little about separation from the world. What the Jews were among the nations under the Old Testament, this the true Christian is to be under the New. You will understand what I mean when I say that true Christians are to be a “peculiar people” under the Gospel, and that there must be a difference between believers and unbelievers.

First of all, let me show that the world is a source of great danger to the soul. By “the world,” be it remembered, I do not mean the material world on the face of which we are living and moving. He that pretends to say that anything which God has created in the heavens above, or the earth beneath, is in itself harmful to man’s soul, says something which is unreasonable and absurd. On the contrary, the sun, moon, and stars – the mountains, the valleys, and the plains – the seas, lakes, and rivers – the animal and vegetable creation – all are in themselves “very good” (Gen. 1. 31). All are full of lessons of God’s wisdom and power, and all proclaim daily, “The hand that made us is Divine.” The idea that “matter” is in itself sinful and corrupt is a foolish heresy.

When I speak of “the world” in this paper, I mean those people who think only, or chiefly, of this world’s things, and neglect the world to come – the people who are always thinking more of earth than of heaven, more of time than of eternity, more of the body than of the soul,

more of pleasing man than of pleasing God. It is of them and their ways, habits, customs, opinions, practices, tastes, aims, spirit, and tone, that I am speaking when I speak of “the world.” This is the world from which St. Paul tells us to “Come out and be separate.”

Now that “the world,” in this sense, is an enemy to the soul, the well-known Church Catechism teaches us at its very beginning. It tells us that there are three things which a baptized Christian is bound to renounce and give up, and three enemies which he ought to fight with and resist. These three are the flesh, the devil, and “the world.” All three are terrible foes, and all three are to be overcome.

But, whatever men please to think about the Catechism, we shall do well to turn to the testimony of Holy Scripture. If the texts I am about to quote do not prove that the world is a source of danger to the soul, there is no meaning in words.

*(a) Let us hear what Paul says:*

“Be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind” (Rom. 12. 2).

“Christ gave Himself for us, that He might deliver us from this present evil world” (Gal. 1. 4).

“In time past ye walked according to the course of this world” (Eph.2.2).

“Demas hath forsaken me, having loved this present world” (2 Tim. 4. 10).

*(b) Let us hear what James says:*

“Know ye not that the friendship of the world is enmity with God? Whosoever therefore will be a friend of the world is the enemy of God” (James 4. 4).

*(c) Let us hear what John says:*

“Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him” (1 John 2. 15).

“Whatsoever is born of God overcometh the world” (1 John 5. 4).

“We know that we are of God and the whole world lieth in wickedness” (1 John 5. 19).

*(d) Let us hear, lastly, what the Lord Jesus Christ says:*

“The care of this world chokes the Word, and it becometh unfruitful” (Matt. 13. 22).

“Ye are of this world: I am not of this world.” (John 8. 23).

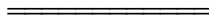
“I have chosen you out of the world, therefore the world hateth you.” (John 15. 19).

I make no comment on these texts. They speak for themselves. If any one can read them carefully, and fail to see that “the world” is an enemy to the Christian’s soul, and that there is an utter opposition between the friendship of the world and the friendship of Christ, he is past the reach of argument, and it is waste of time to reason with him.

I turn from Scripture to matters of fact and experience. I appeal to any old Christian who keeps his eyes open, and knows what is going on in the Churches. I ask him whether it be not true that nothing damages the cause of religion so much as “the world”? It is not open sin, or open unbelief, which robs Christ of His professing servants, so much as the love of the world, the fear of the world, the cares of the world, the business of the world, the money of the world, the pleasures of the world, and the desire to keep in with the world. This is the great rock on which thousands of young people are continually making shipwreck. They do not object to any article of the Christian faith. They do not deliberately choose evil, and openly rebel against God. They hope somehow to get to heaven at last; and they think it proper to have some religion. But they must have the world. And so after running well and bidding fair for heaven, while boys and girls, they turn aside when they become men and women, and go down the broad way which leads to destruction. They begin with Abraham and Moses, and end with Demas and Lot’s wife.

The last day alone will prove how many souls “the world” has slain. Hundreds will be found to have been trained in religious families, and to have known the Gospel from their very childhood, and yet missed heaven. They left the harbour of home with bright prospects, and launched forth on the ocean of life with a father’s blessing and a mother’s prayers, and then got out of the right course through the seductions of the world, and ended their voyage in shallows and in misery. It is a sorrowful story to tell; but, alas, it is only too common. I cannot wonder that Paul says, “Come out and be separate.”

TO BE CONTINUED





## THE SUCKING PIG

From *Fifty Years in the Church of Rome* by Father Chiniquy

Editor's note: The doctrine of Purgatory is a Roman Catholic belief that there is a place of suffering where the souls of those who die in a state



*Father Charles Chiniquy*  
1809-1899

of grace are made ready for heaven. According to a Catechism of the Catholic Church issued as long ago as year 1030 it is necessary for there to be a process of 'final purification' in order to 'achieve the holiness necessary to enter heaven.'

This seems to be directly contrary to many Scriptures. We believe that the only ground for entering heaven is the finished work of Christ. "So Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many" (Heb. 9. 28). This extract shows the fear and bondage into which the Roman Catholic church is brought by this belief. Charles Chiniquy was for twenty-five years a Priest in the Roman Catholic Church, a church from which he eventually withdrew completely. Before

he died at the age of 90 Father Chiniquy swore a declaration before a notary declaring: "I commit my soul into the hands of the Almighty God, my Creator, by the mediation of Jesus Christ alone, my Divine Redeemer, whose merits are infinite." He added: "I cannot return to the bondage of the Church of Rome."

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I had been invited to give a course of three sermons at Varennes in Canada. The second day, at tea time, after preaching and hearing confessions for the whole afternoon, I was coming from the church with the curate, when, half-way to the parsonage, we were met by a poor man, who looked more like one coming out of the grave than a living man. He was covered with rags, and his pale and trembling lips indicated that he was reduced to the last degree of human misery.

Taking off his hat, through respect for us, he said to the Rev.

Primeau, with a trembling voice: “ You know, Reverend Monsieur le Curé, that my poor wife died, and was buried ten days ago, but I was too poor to have a funeral service sung the day she was buried, and I fear she is in purgatory. Almost every night I see her, in my dreams, wrapped up in burning flames. She cries to me for help, and asks me to have a high mass sung for the rest of her soul. I come to ask you to be so kind as to sing that high mass for her.”

“Of course,” answered the curate, “your wife is in the flames of purgatory, and suffers there the most unspeakable tortures which can be relieved only by the offering of the holy sacrifice of mass. Give me five dollars and I will sing that mass to-morrow morning.”

“You know very well, Reverend Monsieur le Curé,” answered the poor man, in a most supplicating tone, “that my wife has been sick, as well as myself, a good part of the year. I am too poor to give you five dollars!”

“If you cannot pay, you cannot have any mass sung. You know it is the rule. It is not in my power to change it.”

These words were said by the curate with a high and unfeeling tone, which was in absolute contrast to the solemnity and distress of the poor sick man. They made a very painful impression upon me, for I felt for him. I knew the curate was well off, at the head of one of the richest parishes of Canada; that he had several thousand dollars in the bank. I hoped, at first, that he would kindly grant the petition presented to him, without speaking of the pay, but I was disappointed. My first thought, after hearing his harsh rebuke, was to put my hand in my pocket and take one of the several five-dollar gold pieces I had, and give it to the poor man, that he might be relieved from his terrible anxiety about his wife. It came also to my mind to say to him: “I will sing your high mass for nothing to-morrow.” But alas! I must confess, to my shame, I was too cowardly to do that noble deed.

When I was feeling ashamed of my own cowardice, and still more indignant against myself than against the curate, he said to the disconcerted man: “That woman is *your* wife, not *mine*. It is your business, and not mine, to see how to get her out of purgatory.”

Turning to me, he said in a most amicable way: “Please, sir, come to tea.” We had hardly started, when the poor man, raising his voice, said, in a most touching way: “I cannot leave my poor wife in the flames of purgatory; if you cannot sing a high mass, will you please say five low masses to rescue her soul from those burning flames?”

The priest turned towards him and said: "Yes, I can say five masses to take the soul of your wife out of purgatory, but give me five shillings; for you know the price of a low mass is one shilling."

The poor man answered: "I can no more give one shilling than I can give five. I have not a cent; and my three poor little children are as naked and starving as myself."

"Well! well!" answered the curate, "when I passed your house this morning, I saw two beautiful sucking pigs. Give me one of them, and I will say you five masses."

The poor man said: "These small pigs were given me by a charitable neighbour, that I might raise them to feed my poor children next winter. They will surely starve to death if I give my pigs away."

I could not listen any longer to that strange dialogue; every word of which fell upon my soul as a shower of burning coals. I was beside myself with shame and disgust.

A quarter-of-an-hour later, the curate knocked at my door and said: "Tea is ready; please come down. "I answered: "I am not well; I want some rest. Please excuse me if I do not take my tea to-night."

It would require a more eloquent pen than mine to give the correct history of that sleepless night. The hours were dark and long. "My God! my God!" I cried, a thousand times, "is it possible that, in my so dear Church of Rome, there can be such abominations as I have seen and heard to-day? Dear and adorable Saviour, if Thou wert still on earth, and should see the soul of a daughter of Israel fallen into a burning furnace, wouldst Thou ask a shilling to take it out? Wouldst Thou force the poor father, with his starving children, to give their last morsel of bread to persuade Thee to extinguish the burning flames? Is it possible that there is such a fiery prison for sinners after death, and that neither Thyself nor any of Thy apostles has said a word about it? Several of the Fathers consider purgatory as of Pagan origin. Augustine, the most learned and pious of the Holy Fathers, does not find purgatory in the Bible, and positively says that its existence is dubious."

Before saying my mass the next morning, I went to confess my criminal cowardice, and I repaired my cowardice by giving five dollars to that poor man.

I spent the morning in hearing confessions till ten o'clock, when I delivered a sermon on the malice of sin, proved by the sufferings of Christ on the cross. This address gave a happy diversion to my mind, and made me forget the sad story of the sucking-pig.

After the sermon, the curate took me by the hand to his dining-room, where he gave me, in spite of myself, the place of honour. He had the reputation of having one of the best cooks of Canada, in the widow of one of the governors of Nova Scotia, whom he had as housekeeper. The dishes before our eyes did not diminish this good reputation. The first dish was a sucking-pig, roasted with an art and perfection such as I had never seen; it looked like a piece of pure gold, and its smell would have brought water to the lips of the most penitent anchorite.

I had not tasted anything for the last twenty-four hours. I had preached two sermons, and spent six hours in hearing confessions. I felt hungry; and the sucking-pig was the most tempting thing to me. It was a real epicurean pleasure to look at it and smell its fragrance. Besides, that was a favourite dish with me. I cannot conceal that it was with real pleasure that I saw the curate, after sharpening his long glittering knife on the file, cutting a beautiful slice from the shoulders, and offering it to me. I was too hungry to be over-patient. My knife and fork had soon done their work. I was carrying to my mouth the tempting and succulent mouthful when, suddenly, the remembrance of the poor man's sucking-pig came to my mind. I laid the piece on my plate and with painful anxiety, looked at the curate and said: "Will you allow me to put you a question about this dish?"

"Oh, yes," he answered, "ask me not only one, but two questions, and I will be happy to answer you."

"Is this the sucking-pig of the poor man of yesterday?" I asked.

With a convulsive fit of laughter, he replied: "Yes; it is just that. If we cannot take away the soul of the poor woman out of the flames of purgatory, we will, at all events, eat a fine sucking-pig!"

The other thirteen priests filled the room with laughter, to show their appreciation of their host's wit. However, their laughter was not of long duration. With a feeling of shame and uncontrollable indignation, I pushed away my plate with such force, that it crossed the table and nearly fell on the floor; saying, with a sentiment of disgust which no pen can describe: "I would rather starve to death than eat of that execrable dish; I see in it the tears of the poor man; I see the blood of his starving children; it is the price of a soul. No! no, gentlemen; do not touch it. You know Mr. Curate, how 30,000 priests and monks were slaughtered in France in the bloody days of 1792. It was for such iniquities as this that God Almighty visited the Church of France. The same future awaits us here in Canada."

The poor curate, stunned by the solemnity of my words, as well as by the consciousness of his guilt, lisped some excuse. The sucking-pig remained untouched; and the rest of the dinner had more the appearance of a burial ceremony than of a convivial repast. By the mercy of God I had redeemed my cowardice of the day before.

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## GOOD INFLUENCE OF AN OLDER SISTER

From the autobiography of Cathie Macrae of Lochalsh

On the Sabbath days, especially in the summer-time, my sister Mary and I were both left as little housekeepers while the rest were in church. While the dinner was cooking she would find a few moments to read her Bible. On Sabbath afternoons, after we had had our dinner, she would take me with her to a quiet place - very often among the rocks at the seashore, and there we spent our time reading and singing psalms and hymns.



*Lochalsh with Eilean Donan Castle*

On one of those Sabbath afternoons I was so bored and tired of reading and singing that I very gladly welcomed a dark cloud appearing in the sky overhead. I made the excuse that it was going to rain and went off home expecting her to follow; but she didn't. I felt lost and uneasy without her, but was determined not to go back to where she was and to another spell of what was to me such tedious work. The rain did not come as I had expected and wished. In about the space of an hour she came home and told me she was reading a very interesting chapter and wanted so much to finish all her reading set out for that time, when

drops of rain began to drop on the Book. She said, “I went down on my knees and asked God to keep away the rain until I could finish my reading, and He did, for when I rose from my knees there were not even drops falling.” I listened intently to her, believing all she said, and believing God was quite able to do anything, and inwardly I felt very guilty for leaving her that Sabbath afternoon.

As she and other girls from the village and I were on our way home from school one evening, our conversation turned to what we would like to be when we grew up. One said she wanted to be a teacher, another a lady doctor, and so on, but Mary, my sister, quietly said, “I would like to be a missionary;” then quietly added, “but I expect I would need to have great talents given me from God for that.” She would be about 13 years then, and I can so well remember the exact spot where she uttered those words. It was coming up the crooked bend in the hill called the *Creagan Reamhar*. She was never involved in any fighting or quarrelling with the other girls on our way from school like the rest. If ever she heard any bad words among our company on our way to and from school, she would soon remonstrate with us, and I had come to fear her as much as my parents if I did wrong.

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## Gaelic

The ancient Celtic language of Gaelic dates back thousands of years and is still spoken in parts of Scotland today. St. Columba came to preach in the sixth century bringing with him his Irish Gaelic. Once used all round Scotland, it is now spoken mostly by communities in the Outer Hebrides with an estimated 60,000 speakers.

Gaelic suffered as a result of the 1707 Act of Union, which decreed English as the official language in Scotland. It also lost many speakers during the Highland Clearances which destroyed many communities in the 19th century. Despite this, the language has survived into the 21st century, and is currently enjoying an increase in speakers and learners. Edinburgh opened its first Gaelic primary school in 2013. For children living, for example, on the Isle of Skye, Gaelic is a compulsory subject. The Isle of Skye also boasts a Gaelic college where people come from all over the world to learn the language.

As well as the Gaelic translations of the Bible, various attempts were made to put the Bible into English as *spoken* by the Scottish

people. It is interesting to compare this extract from Mark chapter 6:

And he went round about the villages, teaching.

*He gaed round throu the smaa touns an clachans, teachin the fowk.*

And he called unto him the twelve, and began to send them forth by two and two: and gave them power over unclean spirits.

*An nou he caa'd the Twal til him and begoud tae send them out in twasomes, giein them pouer owre onclean spirits.*

And commanded them that they should take nothing for their journey, save a staff only;

*He baud them tak nocht for the road, but a rung onlie;*

No bread, no money in their purse;

*Nae breid, no a bodle i their girth-pouch;*

But be shod with sandals; and not put on two coats.

*They were tae traivel shoddit, but Ye maunna hae mair nor the ae sair.*

And he said unto them, In what place soever ye enter into an house, there abide till ye depart from that place.

*This, tae, he said tae them: Bide ye on i the first houss whaur ye finnd up-pittin till ye quat the pairt.*

And whosoever shall not receive you, nor hear you,

*Oniewey whaur they dinna walcome ye or winna hairken ye,*

When ye depart thence, shake off the dust under your feet for a testimony against them.

*Lae the place an shak the stour aff your feet at your waa-gaein for a warnishment tae them.*

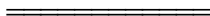
And they went out, and preached that men should repent.

*Sae they gaed their waas an preached aagate at men suid repent.*

And they cast out many devils, and anointed many that were sick, and healed them.

*An they cuist out monie ill spirits an anointit a hantle o sick fowk wi oil an cuired them.*

So now, to all our readers, *Oidhche mhath* (Goodnight - pronounced Oy-ke vah).



**BERTHA MORTLOCK OF COVENTRY**

*Written when she was 15 years of age*

The following is written by myself, an invalid, suffering from spinal disease, besides other numerous complications. I hope this will prove a blessing, if only to one poor body troubled about his or her never-dying soul.

This little work proceeds from the innermost depths of my heart, the outpouring of my soul. Some may think that it would be tedious and miserable for one so young as I to be laid aside heavily afflicted, but the Lord has, I trust, granted me patience, so that I find the days by no means dull. "As a father pitieth his children, so the Lord pitieth them that fear Him." May the blessing of the Almighty rest upon each one of us, comforting us in our distresses.

I will endeavour to write herein a few facts as to the state of my mind towards better things. The last few weeks especially I have felt greatly concerned about my soul. I can distinctly remember when about ten years of age lying awake during the night season, crying bitterly over my mountains of sins. I oftentimes took keen delight in attending Sunday School, drinking in eagerly the words that dropped from my beloved teacher's lips, and also the services held every Sabbath day at Rehoboth Strict Baptist Chapel, Coventry. Those early convictions would pass off, and I would practically forget all about it, but now I am laid aside by the Lord's afflicting hand, my sins are oftentimes staring me blank in the face. Oh, that the Lord would in His rich and infinite mercy shine into my hard, cold heart! I can say though at times I have been blessed with a little sweetness, and have felt such a love towards the precious Jesus, but I want and earnestly desire to feel it more and more. I am afraid my convictions are natural, not the working and quickening of the Holy Spirit in the heart. What a wretch I feel to be before a holy and righteous God, as low as the worms of the earth, vilest of the vilest sinners I feel to be.

Oh, Lord, I earnestly beseech of Thee to comfort and sustain me in this long affliction. Bless it more and more to my soul's good, and also to the loved ones surrounding me. The Lord knows what is best, and I desire to lie passive and unresisting in His gracious and unerring hands. May the Lord still further impart to me strength according to my day, as promised in His Word. May I feel more and more thankful for all the mercies that are daily showered upon unworthy me. Innumerable



blessings I have, although I am as helpless as a babe in being totally unable to get off my bed. A burdensome invalid I have lain for nearly sixteen months, yet I can say, with the Redeemer enabling me, "Sweet affliction." The Lord has sustained me through many severe trials of bodily pain; for instance, my entire body confined in a plaster-of-Paris case nigh upon ten months. Yet again, an operation for an internal malady, which I was compelled to undergo if my life was to be spared.

It is not always the healthy ones that are the happiest, for I have often felt, and still feel, happier in the true sense of the term than when I had health and strength and could walk about. "Hitherto hath the Lord helped us."

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A notice of her death appeared in the *Christian's Pathway* 1926:

BERTHA MORTLOCK, of Coventry, passed away March 17th, 1926, aged 28 years. She was a great sufferer from spinal disease, but the long affliction was truly sanctified. The funeral took place Saturday, March 20th, at Coventry Cemetery. A nice number of friends were present. Hymn 466 (Gadsby's) was sung in the chapel, and hymn 462 at the graveside. Mr. S. Adams officiated. We have the humble confidence that she has joined that glorious company. "These are they which came out of great tribulation, and have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb."

Further details were given the following month:

BERTHA MORTLOCK, whose death was announced in our April issue. The following, describing her last days, is from the pen of her father: **March 7th, 1926:** Myself and our dear one had a sweet time together in reading and prayer, and wept together for the goodness of the Lord. **March 8th:** A never-to-be-forgotten night with the dear sufferer, her Uncle James and wife and some other friends being present. I feel those who witnessed this will never forget it. It was marvellous in our eyes that one so weak should be enabled to give such a testimony with such force that only the dear Lord could give. Lifting up both hands, she said several times, "I am going home. All come and see me go home. Yes, I shall soon be landed." It is quite impossible for me to describe this. The nurse and doctor now gave her up, saying she could not live many hours, but she revived somewhat again for a day or two. She desired Mr. S. Adams, of Bedworth, to come and see her, having expressed a

wish that he should bury her. He read and prayed with her. We could hear her saying, "Living, or dying, we are the Lord's." She was very distressed at times, the enemy harassed her sorely, but the dear Lord sent relief. She would say, "So happy," "Wonderful," "Lovely," "Beautiful," several times saying to me: "Is this heaven, Father?" She repeated several times, "In My Father's house are many mansions."

**March 16th:** Became worse, but said many precious things. At 1.30 Wednesday early morning a change came. She became unconscious and lay thus for sixteen hours, and passed away about five o'clock on March 17th, to be for ever with the Lord, aged 28 years. We were enabled to say, "The Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away; blessed be the Name of the Lord." From her own pen, after being in great pain: "My times are in the unerring hands of Him Who never slumbers, Whose eye is never dim. I wish them there, and to lie quite passive too, trusting in Him to bear me in safety through." "I would see Jesus. Oh, grant I may see Him in heaven face to face, and through the ages of eternal day sing forth the wonders of Free Grace!"

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## A FEW CURRENT MATTERS

### **Church weddings on the decline**

The Church of England hosted 38,000 weddings last year, a fall from more than 50,000 in 2007. In the mid-1980's the number was 120,000. This means that a typical 'middle-sized' parish church now has only one wedding every year. This decline is in spite of a ban on the remarriage of divorced persons being lifted, something *Perception* believes to be directly contrary to Scripture. We are sad that the CofE fails to promote marriage as a lifelong commitment broken only by death.

### **Assisted suicide**

The Royal College of Physicians opposes doctors helping terminally ill patients to end their lives. However, the college plans to poll its members. Unless there is a 60 percent majority for or against assisted dying, it will adopt a neutral position. Most medical organisations oppose changing the law. In a letter to *The Times*, two dozen doctors wrote: "We are worried that this move represents a deliberate attempt by a minority to drop the college's opposition to assisted suicide." In 2014, 58 per cent of doctors said they opposed a change in the law.

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## QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS (3)

**Question 3:** “I am concerned about organ donation, as I understand the Government is considering an ‘opt-out’ system rather than the present ‘opt-in’ system. Is there any Scriptural guidance on this matter?”

**Answer:** We feel very inadequate to answer this difficult question that perplexes many who desire to live their lives in accordance with God’s word. There are no direct references to organ donation in the Bible, nor should we expect to find ‘proof texts’ from the Bible on this issue. Transplantation was not even a possibility at the time the gospels were written. However, there are numerous verses concerning our bodies, and we will look at some of these.

First, a few facts:

*What is organ donation?* Organ donation is giving a body organ to someone else who needs a transplant. This donation has the potential greatly to enhance or save the life of the person who receives the transplanted organ. The organ is normally given at the time of death of the donor, although some organs can be donated while the donor is still living.

*How long have there been transplants?* In 1954, a kidney was the first human organ to be transplanted successfully.

*What is an ‘opt-out’ system?* An ‘opt-out’ system means that everybody would be considered a potential organ donor unless they have added their details to the NHS Organ Donor Register to say that they do not wish to donate their organs. The Government has provisionally indicated that the system may be in place by April 2020. Since 2015 Wales has already had a ‘presumed consent’ scheme.

*Is there a minimum age for joining the register?* There is no minimum age. Parents and guardians can register their children, and children can register themselves. Children who are under 12 in Scotland and under 18 in the rest of the UK at the time of registration require a parent’s or guardian’s agreement for donation to take place.

*What can be donated?* Bone, cornea, heart, kidney, liver, lungs, pancreas, small bowel, and tissue are the most common.

*How many donations are there?*

- 6,035 people are waiting for a transplant in the UK
- 3,165 people received a transplant between April and December 2018
- 1,400 people every year donate their organs across the UK when they die.
- 1,000 people every year donate a kidney or part of their liver while they are alive.
- On average, three people in need of an organ transplant die every day because there are not enough organ donors.

*Can you give an example of a transplant?* Little Chloe (name changed), now two, became ill with a chest infection at 11 months old. It was later found that the main chamber of her heart was enlarged. It could not be repaired and she was reliant on a machine to pump blood round her body. A transplant was her only hope. Just before Chloe's second birthday there came a call to say there was a heart available. "We were ecstatic but terrified," said her mother. The nine-hour operation was a success and she is now a different, and very lively, child. As donors are anonymous, all the parents know is that the heart came from a two-year-old boy. "I'll always be so grateful to the family who made that decision to donate their own baby's heart so mine could live," said Chloe's mother.

We come now to the most important question of all: *What does the Bible say? What guidance can we find in the Word of God.* There are a number of verses which should be carefully (and prayerfully) considered when coming to an opinion. We have selected just a few.

First, a few scriptures brought forward by those in **favour** of organ donation.

**1 Cor. 15. 44:** "It is sown a natural body: it is raised a spiritual body."

When we die our bodies return to dust - "ashes to ashes" as we say. It therefore makes no difference what happens at the time of our death.

**2 Cor. 5. 1:** “For we know that if our earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God, an house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens.”

In eternity, we will have no need of our earthly bodies. Then, former things will have passed away, and all things will be made new.

**1 John 4. 11:** “Beloved, if God so loved us, we ought also to love one another.”

That love can be expressed in the decision to become an organ donor. The Lord Jesus Christ gave His body for the salvation of His people. “I am the good Shepherd: the good Shepherd giveth His life for the sheep.” We can give one of our organs when we no longer need it to help another.

Next, we will look at a few of the Scriptures brought forward by those who are **opposed** to organ donation.

**Job 19. 26:** “and though after my skin worms destroy this body, yet in my flesh shall I see God.”

My body, i.e. my flesh, is my personal body, in which one day I hope to see God. The body cannot be treated as just a biological entity, and to use its organs and tissues in another is morally unacceptable.

**Psalm 139. 14-16:** “I will praise thee; for I am fearfully and wonderfully made: marvellous are thy works; and that my soul knoweth right well. My substance was not hid from thee, when I was made in secret, and curiously wrought in the lowest parts of the earth. Thine eyes did see my substance, yet being unperfect; and in thy book all my members were written, which in continuance were fashioned, when as yet there was none of them.”

Opponents to organ donation take ‘my members’ to mean the various parts (or organs) of our bodies, which God “wonderfully made.” God has written these members in His book. God made these members especially for *me*. They are *mine*, and *mine* only. They were God’s gift to *me*, and I have no right to give them away.

**1 Cor. 6. 19:** “What? know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own?”

My body is a temple, which was given to me by God. It is not my own to do what I like with it.

**1 Thess. 5. 23:** “I pray God your whole spirit and soul and body be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.”

Paul’s prayer was that the spirit, soul and body might be preserved as one. This is a view expressed in the Heidelberg Confession: “That I, with a body and soul, both in life and death, am not my own, but belong unto my Saviour, Jesus Christ.”

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What ever view we take of organ donation, it is clear that our bodies, as God’s creation, are to be treated with reverence and respect as much at the time of death as in life. We think of how Joseph of Arimathea begged the body of Jesus, and he lovingly laid it in his own tomb. We think of how “devout men” carried Stephen to his burial (probably at great danger to themselves). We think of how Samson’s brethren came to find his mutilated body amongst the ruins of the house of Dagon at Gaza, “and took him, and brought him up, and buried him between Zorah and Eshtaol.”

We have been told that some people view organ donation as an extreme form of mutilating the human body. They say that to use the body simply as an object is to violate the dignity of the human person. In support of this view, they refer to 1 Cor. 6. 19, quoted above.

We agree that nothing that happens to our bodies, before or after death, can change our standing or our relationship with God: “For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord” (Rom. 8. 38-39). Some of God’s people have died at sea and their bodies devoured by predatory fish. Others have been eaten by cannibals. The martyrs were reduced to ashes. None of this affects the resurrection, when they will be raised in a new body: “It is sown a natural body; it is raised a spiritual body. There is a natural body, and there is a spiritual body” (1 Cor. 15. 44).

Sadly, some children do die and the decision to donate has provided some comfort to whole families, knowing their child went on to help others. Sometimes it is necessary to consider an organ’s size in the matching process; for example, small children are more likely to require heart and lungs from child donors.

A further consideration is how we would feel if one of our organs, or the organ of a loved one, was transferred to a criminal, or to activists

promoting ungodly relationships, or those living outrageous lifestyles contrary to Scripture. It has been said that by extending the years of an ungodly person it gives more time for that person to repent and come to a knowledge of the truth. We find it very difficult to accept that argument as God does not need borrowed time to call His own elect.

If we decide that we do not wish to donate an organ, we need to think carefully how we would react if the time ever came that we ourselves needed a transplant. On the basis that we do not wish to give, it would seem only right to refuse an organ if one was offered to us. Sometimes it is relatively easy to make a decision when we have not actually passed that way.

### **Conclusion:**

We have recently spoken to two gracious people who hold completely opposite views on this matter. The first strongly feels unable to allow an organ to be taken at death, whilst the other carries a donor card at all times.

The most common view today amongst the various Christian denominations appears to be that it is a matter for everyone's individual conscience to decide. If by that they mean that a person has a right to make decisions regarding his or her own body, then we have to say that is a worldly, secular view, that we must be wary of. It is like the pro-abortion viewpoint that a woman can do what she likes with her body – after all, it is *her* body (with no thought of the rights of the unborn child). But “Ye are not your own; ye are bought with a price.” We do *not* have the right to do whatever we wish with our bodies as they do not belong to us. What we do say is this: that if, after laying the matter prayerfully before the Lord and asking Him to direct our thoughts, we then feel a persuasion in our conscience that for us to donate an organ is the right decision for us, then there seems to be no Scriptural reason why an organ should not be donated. It is the presumption that *we* can decide that is so wrong. Only the Holy Spirit can enlighten us over the many difficult issues that have arisen in our days.

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### **FOOTNOTE:**

These are a few additional, rather random, thoughts on this subject.

We have concerns that man is made, not only in the image of God (Gen. 9. 6), but that God has created each of us as a unique human being. We understand that virtually every cell in our body has a DNA

coding that makes every organ unique to ourselves. One Canadian Christian doctor has said, “Every organ, even after a transplant, keeps its DNA blue-print that links it to the body it came from.” To some it may be an uncomfortable thought that your genes (a gene being a short section of DNA) are now in someone else.

Another concern is that although there appear to be adequate safeguards *at the moment* surrounding what is truly death, this may change. It seems that every piece of controversial legislation introduced, with promises of the most stringent safeguards, has over the years changed from a strong position to a weak position. This can be seen clearly in the position regarding abortion laws, Sunday trading laws, and divorce laws. When the law changed regarding the death penalty, the change was on the grounds that life imprisonment meant just that. Today, a few years are served, and the murderer is at large again. In our society today there is strong pressure to increase the number of organ donors, hence the proposed change in the law to an opt-out scheme. How long will it be before the definition of death is weakened?

Another concern is use of tissue or organs from aborted babies. The world calls it foetal cells and foetal tissue, but in truth it is dissecting apart what was a living, but yet unborn, baby.

At the moment it is not lawful to make a charge for donated organs. How long will this remain? Only recently it has been found that an international trafficker based in Nepal is selling kidneys to Britons in a package costing £30,000. The World Health Organisation estimates there are 10,000 black market organ operations a year worldwide. One poor Indian boy aged 16 sold his kidney for £200. He is now wheelchair bound and will be for life.

Most religious bodies appear not to have issued definitive statements on this issue, but leave it to the individual conscience. Jehovah’s Witnesses are often assumed to be opposed to organ donation because of their belief against blood transfusion. However, they are not opposed to organ donation provided that “all blood must be removed from the organs and tissues before being transplanted” (Office of Public Information for Jehovah’s Witnesses). Gypsies (Roma) tend to oppose organ transplantation as they believe the soul returns to the body after one year and so it must be kept in tact.

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## PLEIADES AND ORION

*“Canst thou bind the sweet influences of Pleiades, or loose the bands of Orion?” (Job 38. 31.)*

It is amazing that Job, that ancient writer, referred so long ago to two of the constellations we still speak of today.

What is meant by a constellation? From earliest times, observers have noticed certain recognizable patterns of stars, and they began to divide the sky into segments that fit together like a jigsaw. The people of ancient Greece had 48 named constellations. Many were named after mythical figures which they were supposed to represent. Today, astronomers recognize 88 constellations.



The Pleiades Cluster, popularly known as the seven sisters, is a beautiful group of stars, seven of which can be seen with the naked eye. A pair of binoculars will show dozens more. It is thought that in all there are over 300 stars in the group. A haze of dust surrounds them.

What did Job mean when he asked the question, “Canst thou bind the sweet influences of Pleiades?” The Institute for Creation Research makes the following comment:

The word translated “sweet influences” (Hebrew *maadannah*) is used only once in the Bible. Its basic meaning seems to be “cluster.” It is known now that the stars in the constellation Pleiades, anciently known as the “seven sisters” (although the telescope reveals many more stars in this group), are bound together gravitationally. The stars in the bright constellation Orion, on the other hand, are not so bound. Only God can either bind or release the stars, as He is the one who created them and placed them in the heavens.

**“The heavens declare the glory of God; and the firmament sheweth His handywork” (Psalm 19. 1).**

# PERCEPTION

A Quarterly Magazine for Young People



“Hast thou with Him spread out the sky, which is strong, and as a molten looking glass?”  
(Job 37.18).

**SUMMER 2019**

## IN THIS ISSUE

	Page
Editorial . . . . .	1
The Calling of Zacchaeus – <i>George Whitefield</i> . . . . .	5
Hyssop . . . . .	8
Matthew Henry – The Commentator . . . . .	9
Hold Him Fast . . . . .	13
The World: Part 2 – <i>Bishop J. C. Ryle</i> . . . . .	14
Answer For Me, My Lord . . . . .	17
Bruges and Its Martyrs . . . . .	18
Moving with the times . . . . .	22
Katherine Von Bora – Martin Luther’s wife . . . . .	23
The Evolutionist’s Calendar . . . . .	24
An Extended Sermon . . . . .	28
World War I – A few further thoughts . . . . .	29
The Honest Apprentice Boy . . . . .	30
The Single Life . . . . .	31
The Letter ‘J’ . . . . .	37
Christian Duties . . . . .	38
Tempted to go to the Dance . . . . .	38
A Few Current Matters . . . . .	39

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# PERCEPTION

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## EDITORIAL

To our dear young friends and all our readers.

What an amazing instrument is the Alpine Horn! It is amazing because of its very simplicity, carved from a piece of solid softwood three or four metres long, generally spruce but sometimes pine. We understand that an accomplished player can command a range of nearly three octaves, no mean feat considering this is an instrument without any valves. Everything is left to the player!



*Tourists at Kleine Scheidegg, Switzerland, attempting the Alpine Horn*

The Alpine Horn is, or was, an instrument of *calling*, used in the mountainous districts of Europe, particularly in Switzerland. By blowing the horn, the cowman was able to *call* the cows from the pasture to the alpine dairy when it was time for them to be milked. With a range of three to five miles, the herdsman high in the Alps could also *call* to his fellow herdsman down in the valley, or even communicate with his family.

In the book of Numbers we read that two silver trumpets were to be made, to call the people together. “Make thee two trumpets of silver; of

a whole piece shalt thou make them: that thou mayest use them for the *calling* of the assembly” (Num. 10. 2). The sound of the silver trumpets would be heard throughout the Israelite camp. In our own country, the original purpose of the church bells was to call the people to worship, and to announce the beginning of a service by the ringing of a single bell rather than a peal. In some areas, particularly in a village, it was also customary to toll the church bell to announce the death of a parishioner.

We want to think about some of the *callings* found in the Word of God. Sometimes we find it is God calling men, but other times it is men calling upon God.

First, we want to deal with the most important *calling* of all. We sometimes speak of someone being converted, but perhaps a more Scriptural expression, although found only once, is being *called by grace*. The account of Paul’s conversion on the road to Damascus was an amazing event, and the expression Paul used was that he had been called by grace: “But when it pleased God, who separated me from my mother’s womb, and called me by his grace . . .” (Gal. 1. 15).

Do you know anything of God’s calling? Have you heard His voice? “My sheep hear my voice.” If one might write something personal, there came a time in my life when I felt I *had* heard His voice. But was it really His voice? Was I mistaken? Like Gideon, I felt I wanted a sign. Those words had been the text at the morning service. My Pastor seldom took the same text twice, but I prayed that if it really was God’s voice, he would take it again in the evening. And to my amazement he did.

I have always liked the first two verses of Cecil Alexander’s hymn (we used to sing it at school to the tune *St. Andrew*), and especially applicable to our subject are the first two verses:

Jesus calls us; o’er the tumult  
Of our life’s wild, restless sea,  
Day by day His sweet voice soundeth,  
Saying, “Christian, follow Me.”

As of old Saint Andrew heard it  
By the Galilean lake,  
Turned from home and toil and kindred.  
Leaving all for His dear sake.

What did Jesus say when he called Andrew? “Follow Me.” When, Andrew? Later on? When you’ve finished mending your nets? When you’ve brought a good draught of fishes to land? No. Immediately. “And they straightway left their nets, and followed Him” (Mat. 4. 20). He left all “for His dear sake.”

But *how* do we hear His voice? Once God spoke to Elijah at a time when he was living in a cave at Mount Horeb. Leaving the cave, Elijah stood “upon the mount before the Lord.” We read that first there was a great and strong wind. This was followed by an earthquake. Then last of all there was a fire. But the Lord did not speak to Elijah through any of these things. That is not to say that God may never speak to us by awe-inspiring means, but in the case of Elijah He spoke to him by means of “a still small voice.” The Lord Jesus three times spoke to Simon Peter: “Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou me?” We imagine it was a very gentle, loving voice with which the Lord spoke. Later on, Jesus twice spoke the same words to Peter that He had said to Andrew: “Follow me” (John 21 verses 19 and 22).

What is it to follow the Lord? A man once came to Jesus and said, “I will follow Thee whithersoever Thou goest.” But he appeared to say this in his own strength – he had not counted the cost. “Foxes have holes,” said Jesus, “and the birds of the air have nests; but the Son of man hath not where to lay His head.” It will *not* be an easy pathway to follow the Lord Jesus. If there are any amongst our younger readers who have a desire to profess the Lord’s name, to walk in the way of His commandments in baptism, that would be a wonderful blessing, but it will be taking up the cross. Luke tells us of two others who said they would follow Him. But the first was not ready – he had a father at home – perhaps when he had died he would be willing to start. No, said Jesus, That will not do. I have a work for you. You are to go and preach the kingdom of God. The second man also said, I will follow Thee – but first of all let me go and say my goodbyes to those at home. You see, he was not willing to put God first. He was “looking back” towards his house (rather like Lot’s wife), and Jesus had to tell him that such were not fit for the kingdom of God. (This can be read in Luke chapter 9.)

If you have been favoured to hear His voice, Satan may tell you that you are deceived, or that it was just a coincidence. He may tell you it was just a temporary emotion and that it will not last. Remember how Satan desired to have Peter, but the Lord Jesus said him, “But I have prayed for thee.” Have you thought of that? Jesus *prayed* for him. And

we who are such sinners – how we hope He prays for *us*. Oh, what a great and merciful Saviour He is, One who knows all our infirmities, and can help us to stand when we are tempted.

If we have heard His voice calling us, then we are truly amongst the favoured few. Paul reminded the Corinthians very early in his Epistle “that not many wise men, not many mighty, not many noble are called.” There were amongst the Corinthians some that *thought* they were wise, some who (in their own eyes at least) *thought* they were mighty. They were contentious, putting their own points of view forward. There were different camps, some saying they followed Paul, some that they followed Apollos, and some that they followed Cephas. What did Jesus say? He said, Follow ME.

Although we have spoken of God calling men, we have just time to mention one case where men called on God, and that is the dear martyr Stephen of whom we read in Acts chapter 7. For professing the name of the Lord Jesus, the Just One, this faithful young man was cruelly stoned to death. How did he die? “And they stoned Stephen, calling upon God.” He died calling on his God. “Lord Jesus, receive my spirit” was his dying cry.

Finally, there is that wonderful word of nine letters: “whosoever.” The apostle Peter said it while preaching on the day of Pentecost: “And it shall come to pass, that *whosoever* shall call on the name of the Lord shall be saved.” The apostle Paul said it when writing to the Romans: “For *whosoever* shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved.” Speaking to someone of this only recently, they replied, “For many years I have called on the name the Lord to soften my heart, but He does not answer my prayers.” Well, if you do feel like that, *keep on calling*.

Does Satan tempt you to give up,  
And call no more on Jesus’ name?  
Cast not away your little hope;  
Come hither, and behold the Lamb.

He does hear, always, but for reasons known best to Himself, He sometimes waits to be gracious. Do not be discouraged, as many words of encouragement are found in God’s word. “He shall call upon Me, and I will answer him” (Psalm 91. 15).

Wishing all our readers the Lord’s richest blessing, with the desire that we may each be favoured to hear His voice.

The Editor



## THE CALLING OF ZACCHAEUS

George Whitefield

As our Editorial this quarter has been on the subject of calling, we have decided to include an extract from a sermon preached by George Whitefield in the 1700's. A brief account of this remarkable preacher was given in *Perception* Summer 2013. Many thousands attended his ministry. A copy of the article can gladly be sent if you would like one - just email the Editor.

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Well might the evangelist Luke usher in the conversion of Zacchaeus with the word *behold!* According to human judgment, how many insurmountable obstacles lay in the way of it!

Surely no one will say there was any fitness in Zacchaeus for salvation; for we are told that he was a publican, and therefore in all probability a notorious sinner. The publicans were gatherers of the Roman taxes; they were infamous for their abominable extortion; their very name therefore became so odious, that we find the Pharisees often reproached our Lord, as very wicked, because He was a friend unto and sat down to meat with them. Zacchaeus then, being a publican, was no doubt a sinner; and, being chief among the publicans, consequently was chief among sinners.

He was rich. One inspired apostle has told us, "that not many mighty, not many noble, are called." Another saith, "God has chosen the poor of this world, rich in faith." And Christ, the Maker and the Redeemer of the apostles, assures us, "that it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle, than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of God." Let not therefore the rich glory in the multitude of their riches.

But rich as he was, we are told that "he sought to see Jesus." And that was a wonder indeed! The common people heard our Lord gladly, and the poor received the gospel. The multitude, the very mob, the people that knew not the law, as the proud high priests called them, used to follow Him on foot into the country, and sometimes stayed with Him three days together to hear Him preach. But did the *rich* believe or attend on Him? No. Our Lord preached up the doctrine of the cross; He



preached too searching for them, and therefore they counted Him their enemy, persecuted and spoke all manner of evil against Him falsely.

Let not the ministers of Christ marvel, if they meet with the like treatment from the rich men of this wicked and adulterous generation. I should think it no scandal (supposing it true) to hear that none but the poor attended *my* ministry. Their souls are as precious as the souls of the greatest men. Were the rich in this world's goods to speak well of me, woe be unto me; I should think it a dreadful sign that I was only a wolf in sheep's clothing, that I spoke peace, peace, when there was no peace, and prophesied smoother things than the gospel would allow of.

But we must return to Zacchaeus. "He sought to see Jesus." That is good news. I heartily wish I could say, it was out of a good principle. But we are told that He came not to hear His doctrine, but to view His person, or to use the words of the evangelist, "to see who He was." The Lord's fame was now spread abroad through all Jerusalem, and all the country round about. Some said He was a good man; others, nay, but He deceiveth the people. And therefore curiosity drew out this rich publican Zacchaeus to see who this person was, of whom he had heard such various accounts.

But it seems he could not conveniently get a sight of Him for the multitudes, and because he was little of stature. Alas! how many are kept from seeing Christ by reason of the press. Finding he could not see Christ if he continued in the midst of the press, "he ran before the multitude, and climbed up into a sycamore tree, to see Him; for He was to pass that way."

There is no seeing Christ unless we run before the multitude, and are willing to be in the number of those despised few, who take the kingdom of God by violence. The broad way, in which so many go, can never be that straight and narrow way which leads to life. Considering the difficulty with which Zacchaeus must climb the sycamore tree, we may farther learn, that those who would see Christ, must undergo difficulties and hardships. Zacchaeus, without doubt, suffered contempt. Did not many laugh at him as he ran along, and in the language of Michal, Saul's daughter, cry out, "How glorious did the rich Zacchaeus look today, when, forgetting the greatness of his station, he ran before a pitiful, giddy mob, and climbed up a sycamore tree, to see an enthusiastic preacher!"

But Zacchaeus cares not for all that; his curiosity was strong. If he could but see who Jesus was, it did not matter what scoffers said of him.

And so it will be with all those who have a desire to see Jesus. They will go on from strength to strength, break through every difficulty lying in their way, and care not what men or devils say of them. May the Lord make us all thus minded, for His dear Son's sake!

At length, after taking much pains, and going (as we may well suppose) through much contempt, Zacchaeus has climbed the tree; and there he sits, as he thinks, hid in the leaves of it, and watching when he should see Jesus pass by; "for He was to pass by that way."

But sing, O heavens, and rejoice, O earth! Praise, magnify, and adore sovereign, electing, free, preventing love; Jesus the everlasting God, the Prince of peace, who saw Nathaniel under the fig-tree, now sees Zacchaeus in the sycamore tree, and *calls him*.

"And when Jesus came to the place, He looked up, and saw him, and said unto him, Zacchaeus, make haste and come down; for this day I must abide at thy house." Amazing love! It is worthy of our highest admiration. When Zacchaeus thought of no such thing, thought that Christ Jesus did not know him; behold, Christ does what we never hear He did before or after, I mean, invite Himself to the house of Zacchaeus, saying, "Zacchaeus, make haste and come down; for this day I must abide at thy house." Not *pray* let me abide, but I *must* abide this day at thy house. He also calls him by name, as though He was well acquainted with him: and indeed well He might; for his name was written in the book of life; he was one of those whom the Father had given Him from all eternity: therefore He must abide at his house that day. "For whom he did predestinate, them *he also called*."

With what different emotions of heart may we suppose Zacchaeus received this invitation? Think you not that he was surprised to hear Jesus Christ call him by name, and not only so, but invite Himself to his house? Surely, thinks Zacchaeus, I am dreaming: it cannot be; how should He know me? I never saw Him before; besides, I shall undergo much contempt, if I receive Him under my roof. Thus, I say, we may suppose Zacchaeus thought within himself. But what saith the scripture? "Thy people shall be willing in the day of Thy power." With this outward call, there went out a power from God, which sweetly overruled his natural will; and therefore "He made haste, and came down." He received Him joyfully, not only into his house, but also into his heart.

Thus it is, that the great God brings home His children. He calls them by name, by His word or providence: He speaks to them also by

His Spirit. Hereby their hearts are opened, and are made willing to receive the King of glory. For Zacchaeus' sake, let us not entirely condemn people that come unto the word, out of no better principle than curiosity. Who knows, but God may call them? It is good to be where the Lord is passing by. May all who are now present hear the voice of the Son of God speaking to their souls, and so hear that they may live!

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## HYSSOP

Hyssop is a plant that can be cultivated in gardens, but also grows wild.



The plant grows in bunches, with many stalks from a single root, to a height of two feet. We find in 1 Kings 4. 33 that Solomon spoke of it as a plant “that springeth out of the wall.”

Hyssop is of the mint family with a pleasant smell, but its taste is bitter and pungent. Its volatile oil possesses a camphor-like smell. It has been noted for centuries in herbal medicine, being used as an antiseptic, for sore throats, a cough reliever and expectorant, in the treatment of conjunctivitis, and as a natural remedy for insect bites – a truly versatile plant.

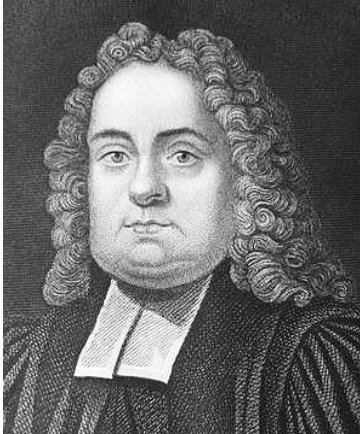
We find in Lev. 14. 6 that hyssop was to be used in the cleansing of lepers. At the Passover, a bunch of hyssop was used to sprinkle the blood of the sacrificial lamb on the doorposts of the houses. In that Psalm of repentance, David said, “Purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean” (Ps. 51. 7).

The most sacred connection with the plant must surely be when it was offered to the Lord Jesus as he hung on the cross at Calvary. The soldiers, we read, gave the Lord Jesus vinegar (a sour wine) mixed with gall, which is the juice of the hyssop plant. A reading of John 19. 29 may give the impression that a sponge was conveyed to the mouth of the Lord Jesus by lodging it on the hyssop plant itself. However, comparing the text with Matthew 27. 34 it seems that the juice of the plant was extracted and mixed with the vinegar. He received it and tasted it, but He would not drink it. He shortly bowed His head, and gave up the ghost. But only after His triumphant cry: “It is finished.”

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## MATTHEW HENRY – THE COMMENTATOR



I wonder how many of you have somewhere in your home a copy of Matthew Henry's *Commentary on the Holy Bible*. I inherited the commentary in six large and heavy volumes from my grandfather but sadly their condition was so bad that I had to dispose of them. (For a 21st birthday present I was given the commentary in one volume!)

Although there are many excellent commentaries on the Bible there has been no-one who could say so much in as few words as Matthew Henry. A few weeks ago I asked my Sunday School class whether in their English language classes at school they did exercises in *precis*. They assured me that they did not and, in fact, no-one in the class knew what I meant. When I was at school, *precis* was an important part of the English language syllabus. We were given a passage of several hundred words which we had to reduce to, say, eighty words. The art was to leave out all that was unimportant and to express the rest in as few words as possible. Had Matthew Henry been given such an exercise to do he would certainly have got top marks. (We get our word 'precise' from the old French word *précis*.)

### Birth

But who was this man Matthew Henry? Not far from Chester, just over the border into Wales lies the village of Iscoyd, in the county of Flintshire. It was here, in a typical Welsh farm house, that Matthew was born on 18 October 1662. At birth, he was so frail it was thought unlikely he would live. He was, therefore, baptised at one day old. As a boy he was physically weak, but mentally strong. It is said that at three years old he read aloud a chapter of the Bible.

His father, Philip Henry, was a well-known clergyman, and one who was ejected from his living on refusing to accept the conditions laid down in the Act of Uniformity. His mother was of an aristocratic family, and had a modest inheritance, which enabled her husband to pursue his ministry amongst the "dissenters."

**Education**

Matthew's tutor gave him his first love for Latin and the Classics, from which Matthew later frequently quoted in his Commentary.

In those days the universities of Oxford and Cambridge were becoming increasingly lax, and his father sent him to one of the new dissenting academies at Islington, at that time a small village just outside London. Here he remained for two years until the academy through persecution moved to Battersea. Henry decided to move back home.

Back at Iscoyd he was a great help to his father in his pastoral duties, but the village was remote, and his prospects seemed limited. Once more he wended his way to London, this time to study law at Gray's Inn. His remarkable memory and natural eloquence promised well for a distinguished career. Whilst there, in the providence of God, he came under the influence of two able ministers, Dr. Stillingfleet of St. Andrew's, Holborn, and Dr. Tillotson at St. Lawrence Jewry. He felt his future was not in law but in the ministry.

**Begins to preach**

Returning home, he began to preach as a candidate for the ministry. In Chester his ministry was greatly blessed, and the Presbyterian congregation asked him to become their pastor. After much prayer and self-examination he accepted the call, and was instrumental in founding the Presbyterian Chapel in Trinity Street. He preached on six days a week to various congregations within a thirty mile radius, but always contrived to be in his own pulpit at Chester on the Lord's day.

In public services he usually prayed for half-an-hour, and then preached for one hour. Psalms were sung from a selection he had made himself. On Saturday afternoons he held catechism classes for children.

He held the pastorate for 25 years, from 1687 to 1712. The time came, though, when he wrote: "Though the people at Chester are a most loving people, yet I have not been without my discouragements, and those such as have tempted me to think my work in this place has been in a great measure done: many that have been catechised with us, have left us, and very few have been added to us." (Sadly, not long after his death, the meeting house became a Unitarian chapel. Unitarians deny the Trinity.)

**Call to Hackney**

At this time he received what he described as an "urgent call" from the congregation worshipping at Mare Street, Hackney, a call he felt led to

accept. Now in his fiftieth year, he began his labours at Hackney on 18th May 1712. His congregation was not large, having only one hundred communicants.

On leaving his former flock, Mr. Henry promised to visit them once a year. In the summer of 1713 he fulfilled that promise, and again in May, 1714, he quitted Hackney for the same purpose. The two last Sabbaths of this visit he preached from: "There remaineth therefore a rest to the people of God." That rest was nearer than he knew.

### **Falls from his horse**

On Monday, June 21st, he set out on his return to London. He was engaged to preach at Nantwich on the way, some thirty miles from Chester. His horse threw him. A corpulent man, he fell heavily, but denied that he had sustained any injury. Accordingly, he preached as arranged at the Presbyterian Meeting House in Pepper Street, but everyone noticed that he was not so lively as usual. He preached only for a short time, and afterwards was very sleepy. He asked his friends to pray for him. It appears he was suffering from a stroke.

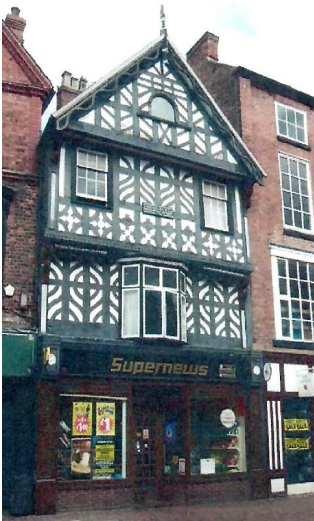
### **His death**

At eight o'clock on the following morning, 22nd June 1714, he died at 41 High Street, Nantwich in Queen's Aid House. The building dates from 1584 and still stands today, and was only recently on the market.

The following day, his eldest sister (Mrs. Savage) wrote in her journal:

*"Wednesday, June 23rd.* I went to the place to take leave of the dear earthen vessel, in which was lodged such a treasure, and shall always remember there was nothing of death to be seen in his face, but rather something of a smile. How is the gold become dim, and the fine gold changed! That head, that hand so fitted for service, now cold and moveless. Lord, what is man, the greatest, the best? When God bids Moses go up and die on Mount Nebo, it is observable he adds, 'As Aaron thy brother was gathered to his people.'

I have reason to think he loved me the best of all his sisters, and it is



*Matthew Henry died here*

with satisfaction I think of the love I had for him. I do not remember one angry or unkind word betwixt us.”

“*Friday, June 25th.* We gathered up the mantle of this dear Elijah, took the remains to Chester, and lodged them in the silent tomb, ‘the house appointed for all living.’ We laid him in Trinity Church, by his dear first wife, followed by a vast crowd desiring to pay their tribute to his blessed memory.”

### Family

His first wife, Katherine Hardware, died of smallpox, just as she gave birth to a child. They had been married only eighteen months. He married again (Mary), producing nine children, three of whom died in infancy. Both marriages were very happy. In his home Matthew conducted family prayer, expounding the Old Testament in the morning and the New Testament in the evening.



*Holy Trinity Church, Chester. Matthew Henry lies here in the nave with his first wife, Katherine. Now a redundant church, given over to secular use. A dance floor has been constructed over the original floor and it is no longer possible to see the gravestone, nor a brass wall plate now hidden behind panelling.*

### The Commentary

Matthew Henry began work on his Commentary in November, 1704. The first volume was published in 1708. Sadly, he died after reaching the end of the Acts. To complete the whole Bible, the work was finished by a panel of thirteen ministers.

Perhaps the best-known quotation from his Commentary is from the account of the creation of Eve in Genesis 2. 22: “The woman was made of a rib out of the side of Adam; not made out of his head to rule over him, nor out of

his feet to be trampled upon by him, but out of his side to be equal with him, under his arm to be protected, and near his heart to be beloved.”



One incident in his life is typical of the patience and thankfulness Matthew Henry displayed. Once, whilst travelling on his horse, he was robbed. Afterwards he wrote in his diary: “Let me be thankful, first, because I was never robbed before. Second, because although they took my purse, they did not take my life. Third, although they took all I possessed, it was not much. And fourth, because it was I who was robbed, not I who robbed.”



*Memorial to Matthew Henry on the Grosvenor Roundabout, Chester*

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## HOLD HIM FAST

Many years ago, a lady took shelter from the rain in the porch of Finnieston Church. Finnieston was then a village, but is now an area of Glasgow (Scotland) situated on the north bank of the River Clyde.

It was a Communion Sabbath, and Dr. Andrew Bonar was giving an address from Matthew 26. 48: “That same is He: *hold Him fast.*” The lady could not hear the address, but over and over again, as she stood in the porch, the words of the text came to her ear like a message from the Lord, “That same is He: *hold Him fast.*”

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## THE WORLD – Part 2

Bishop J. C. Ryle

*“Come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord”  
(2 Cor. 6. 17).*



*Bishop J. C. Ryle*

In the first part of his paper, Bishop Ryle showed from Scripture that the world is a source of great danger to our souls. In this second part of his paper, he shows us what separation from the world is *not*.

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Let me now try to show what does *not* constitute separation from the world.

The point is one which requires clearing up. There are many mistakes made about it. You will sometimes see sincere and well-meaning Christians doing things which God never intended them to do in the matter of separation from the world, and honestly believing that they are in the path of duty. Their mistakes often do great harm. They give occasion to the wicked to ridicule all religion, and supply them with an excuse for having none. They cause the way of truth to be evil spoken of, and add to the offence of the cross. I think it a plain duty to make a few remarks on the subject. We must never forget that it is possible to be very much in earnest, and to think we are “doing God service,” when in reality we are making some great mistake. There is such a thing as “zeal not according to knowledge” (Rom. 10. 2). There are few things about which it is so important to pray for a right judgment and sanctified common sense, as about separation from the world.

(a) When Paul said, “Come out and be separate,” he did not mean that Christians ought to give up all worldly callings, trades, professions, and business. He did not forbid men to be soldiers, sailors, lawyers, doctors, merchants, bankers, shop-keepers, or tradesmen. There is not a word in the New Testament to justify such a line of conduct. Cornelius the centurion, Luke the physician, Zenas the lawyer, are examples to the contrary. Idleness is in itself a sin. A lawful calling is a remedy against temptation. “If any man will not work, neither shall he eat” (2 Thess.

3. 10). To give up the business of life is lazy, cowardly conduct. The right plan is to carry our religion into our business, and not to give up business under the specious pretence that it interferes with our religion.

(b) When Paul said, “Come out and be separate,” he did not mean that Christians ought to decline all intercourse with unconverted people, and refuse to go into their society. There is no warrant for such conduct in the New Testament. Our Lord and His disciples did not refuse to go to a marriage feast, or to sit at meat at a Pharisee’s table. Such a course of life would cut us off from many opportunities of doing good. If we carry our Master with us wherever we go, who can tell but we may “save some,” and get no harm? (1 Cor. 9. 22.)

(c) When Paul says, “Come out and be separate,” he did not mean that Christians ought to take no interest in anything on earth except religion. To neglect science, art, literature, and politics – to read nothing which is not directly spiritual – to know nothing about what is going on among mankind, and never to look at a newspaper – to care nothing about the government of one’s country, and to be utterly indifferent as to the persons who guide its counsels and make its laws – all this may seem very right and proper in the eyes of some people. But I take leave to think that it is an idle, selfish neglect of duty. Paul knew the value of good government, as one of the main helps to our “living a quiet and peaceable life in godliness and honesty” (1 Tim. 2. 2). Christians who pride themselves on their ignorance of secular things are precisely the Christians who bring religion into contempt.

(d) When Paul said, “Come out and be separate,” he did not mean that Christians should be singular, eccentric, and peculiar in their dress, manners, demeanour, and voice. Anything which attracts notice in these matters is most objectionable, and ought to be carefully avoided. To wear clothes of such a colour, or made in such a fashion, that when you go into company every eye is fixed on you, and you are the object of general observation, is an enormous mistake. It gives occasion to the wicked to ridicule religion, and looks self-righteous and affected. There is not the slightest proof that our Lord and His apostles, and Priscilla, and Persis, and their companions, did not dress and behave just like others in their own ranks of life. On the other hand, one of the many charges our Lord brings against the Pharisees was that of “making broad their phylacteries, and enlarging the borders of their garments,”

so as to be “seen of men.” Those who try to show their unworldliness by wearing conspicuously ugly clothes, or by speaking in a whining, snuffling voice, or by affecting an unnatural slavishness, humility, and gravity of manner, miss their mark altogether, and only give occasion to the enemies of the Lord to blaspheme.

(e) When Paul said, “Come out and be separate,” he did not mean that Christians ought to retire from the company of mankind, and shut themselves up in solitude. It is one of the crying errors of the Church of Rome to suppose that eminent holiness is to be attained by such practices. It is the unhappy delusion of the whole army of monks, nuns, and hermits. Separation of this kind is not according to the mind of Christ. He says distinctly in His last prayer, “I pray not that Thou shouldest take them out of the world, but that Thou shouldest keep them from the evil.” There is not a word in the Acts or Epistles to recommend such a separation. True believers are always represented as mixing in the world, doing their duty in it, and glorifying God by patience, meekness, purity, and courage in their several positions, and not by cowardly desertion of them. Moreover, it is foolish to suppose that we can keep the world and the devil out of our hearts by going into holes and corners. True religion and unworldliness are best seen, not in timidly forsaking the post which God has allotted to us, but in manfully standing our ground, and showing the power of grace to overcome evil.

I commend these five points to the calm consideration of all who wish to understand the subject of separation from the world. About each and all of them far more might be said than I have space to say in this paper. About each and all of them I have seen so many mistakes made, and so much misery and unhappiness caused by those mistakes, that I want to put Christians on their guard. I want them not to take up positions hastily, in the zeal of their first love, which they will afterwards be obliged to give up.

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I leave this part of my subject with a piece of advice, which I offer especially to young Christians.

To quarrel with all our unconverted relatives, to “cut off” all our old friends, to withdraw entirely from mixed society, to live an exclusive life, to give up every act of courtesy and civility – all this may seem very right, and may satisfy our consciences and save us trouble. But if

we want to come out from the world, we must watch against a sour, morose, ungenial, gloomy, unpleasant, bearish demeanour, and never to forget that there is such a thing as “winning without the Word” (1 Peter 3. 1). Let us strive to show unconverted people that our principles, whatever may be thought of them, make us cheerful, amiable, good-tempered, unselfish, considerate for others, and ready to take an interest in everything that is innocent and of good report. In short, let there be no *needless* separation between us and the world. In many things we must be separate; but let us take care that it is separation of the right sort. Let us never give the world occasion to say that our separation is foolish, or senseless, ridiculous, unreasonable, uncharitable, or unscriptural.

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### “ANSWER FOR ME, MY LORD”

A favourite hymn of Samuel Dale who died aged 16.

Answer for me, my Lord;  
On Thee my cause I lay;  
I dare not stand and plead myself:  
Answer for me, I pray.

Without the spotless Lamb,  
Without the blood outpoured,  
There is no pardon for my soul;  
Answer for me, my Lord.

Answer for me till life  
Hath loosed her silver cord;  
And as I sink in death's embrace,  
Answer for me, my Lord.

No righteousness of mine  
A shelter can afford;  
But when I stand before the throne,  
Answer for me, my Lord.

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## BRUGES AND ITS MARTYRS

### Bruges - a mediaeval masterpiece

In the Middle Ages, Bruges was one of the richest cities in northern Europe. But it was bypassed by the industrial revolution. The result is a mediaeval masterpiece with cobbled streets, guild houses, palaces, stone bridges over hidden canals, and the most wonderful brick-built churches. With Eurostar, here is a city in northwest Belgium we can easily visit for a few days!



But is there some history connected with this city of which we should be aware? Did it feature in the Reformation? Were there Martyrs found here? Were there gatherings of the godly in times past?

### John Wycliffe and Bruges

Until recently we had absolutely no idea that John Wycliffe ever visited this city. However, reading d'Aubigne's *The Reformation in England* we found that he had been sent by the Government of his day to a conference in the city.



Nobody knows for sure when Wycliffe was born, although one possible date is 1329. He was a Yorkshireman, born near Richmond. When old enough, he arrived at Oxford as a student. Quickly he acquired a great reputation for learning.

But when he was 18 years of age, a

terrible plague appeared in England. So vicious was this plague, it is said to have carried off half the human race. The young Wycliffe saw this as a visitation from God. Alarmed at the thought of eternity, he passed days and nights in his cell groaning and sighing, and calling upon God.

### **England weary of the Pope's demands**

In the early 1300's, nearly two hundred years before the Reformation, England was weary of the burdens placed upon it by the Pope and the Roman Catholic church.

The Catholic friars, who were supposed to work for the good of society, pretended to be poor, and begged from high and low. But at the same time they lived in palaces, heaped up treasures, and dressed in expensive clothes. While they ate and drunk at their well-spread tables, they sent ignorant uneducated men in their place to preach fables and legends to the people.

The demands of Rome knew no bounds. Pope Urban V summoned the King of England (Edward III) to recognise him as sovereign of England, and to pay to him the annual sum of one thousand marks, perhaps £500,000 today.

This papal arrogance stirred England to its depths. Wycliffe, now in his prime, vigorously defended the rights of the English crown against this Romish aggression. He stirred up the zeal of several members of both Houses of Parliament. "Was the King of England to be a vassal of the Pope?" he asked.

### **Wycliffe sent to Bruges**

King Edward made Wycliffe one of his chaplains. It was resolved



*The conference took place here  
on the site of the City Hall*

by Parliament to hold a conference at Bruges to examine the whole matter of the Pope's claims. Wycliffe, who had been created Doctor of Divinity two years before, proceeded there with other commissioners, leaving London on 27 July 1374.

The exchequer granted him £60 for his expenses. On his return he was ordered to account

for his expenditure (rather like today). His sea passage cost £2. 2s. 3d. and he was allowed £1 per day for his expenses. The Crown calculated that he should return to the Exchequer £7 17s. 9d. It appears that Wycliffe did not pay the debt, until on 16 January 1382 a writ was served upon Wycliffe's bishop, John Buckingham of Lincoln. History does not record whether he paid up!

Wycliffe left the Commission with no doubt as to his views on the subsidy to the Pope. However, the result was a compromise - the Pope was still to receive 60,000 florins, not the full subsidy but a very substantial portion of it. The nation was not pleased, but it is to Wycliffe's credit that he was no party to such a disgraceful surrender to the papal claim. Wycliffe returned home from Bruges on 14 September 1374 to his rectory at Lutterworth.

### The Bruges Martyrs

It is known that by 1534 there was an active and large congregation of Anabaptists in the city of Bruges. (Anabaptist means 'one who baptises again' or 're-baptises'. Anabaptists believe a person should be baptised only upon a personal confession of faith, and not as an infant.) A notorious hunter of heretics, one Brother Cornelis Adriaensz, speaks of no less than 700 Anabaptists living there.

A large number of martyrs came from this city. It is generally said



*The Bruges martyrs were imprisoned in a tower near this bridge*

there were 47, but we have found evidence of 13 others in addition, making a total of 60. Of the 60, two died in prison, three were buried alive, two were drowned, and 53 were burnt to death at the stake.

Eleven martyrs died together at the stake on 10 December 1561. The German hymnologist, Carl Wackernagel, says a hymn was specially written for

these eleven, beginning "*Genade ende vrede moet god vreezende zijn.*" ("Mercy and peace for them that fear the Lord." Thank you, Petra, for the translation of this very old Dutch.)

<b>DETAILS OF THE MARTYRS WHO DIED IN BRUGES</b>		
1538	7	
1552	1	Peter le Roux
1553	4	Cornelius Volcart, Hubert the Printer, and Philip Joyner, were burnt at the stake, and a woman (name unknown) was “buried with thorns under her.”
1558	7	Including a whole family – Jacob de Swarte (whose father Jan was a deacon from Lille,) his wife and four sons who died together at the stake on 15 August 1558. They were arrested at Lille.
1561	12	
1562	9	For details of these nine, see below.
1568	11	
1569	2	These were a preacher Jacob de Rore, and an elder Herman van Vlekwijk, who were burnt to death on 18 July 1569. An account of their examination by the above-mentioned Cornelis Adriaensz and some of their letters are in existence.
1570	5	
1573	2	These were Mattheus Kuese and Adriaen van der Zwalmé who died together on 7 August 1573.
<b>TOT</b>	<b>60</b>	

### **THE NINE MARTYRS WHO DIED IN 1562:**

#### **Martijntgen van Aelmeers**

In the year 1562, a young girl named Martijntgen was arrested at Honschote, in Flanders, because she had been baptised upon confession of her faith, and “ordered her walk and conversation according to the doctrine of the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ.” After great steadfastness she was sentenced to death, and burnt at Bruges.



### **Nikasen van Aelmeers**

The same year, Nikasen van Aelmeers, the brother of the above Martijntgen, was arrested for his faith at Bruges. He was severely tortured, but when nothing could draw him from his faith, he was condemned and burnt, as a true witness of our Lord Jesus Christ.

### **Seven arrested at Honschote in Flanders**

In the year 1562 Karel van den Velde of Ghent with Proentgen his wife, Franchoy de Swarte of Belle with Klaesken his wife, Jasper a shoemaker, Charlo de Wael who was just a lad, and Martijne Amare who was only a young girl, were arrested at Honschote in Flanders, for the truths they publicly confessed. All of them steadfastly adhered to the truth and the Word of God. The three men, the boy and the girl were burnt for their faith very soon after their arrest. The two wives, who were sisters, were a little later secretly drowned in a tub. One of the women, when she saw that they intended to put her to death *secretly*, said she would have preferred to die *publicly* to testify to the truths she held. But her sister said, "It is all the same, for God sees it; He will reward us, and avenge our wrongs."

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Hebrews 11. 35: "Others were tortured, not accepting deliverance; that they might obtain a better resurrection."

All of these noble and brave men, women and children passed through the conflict in the city of Bruges, enduring their torments with a strength and fortitude which could only have been given them from above.

Well might the Apostle say: "*Of whom the world was not worthy.*"

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## **MOVING WITH THE TIMES**

A deacon of a Particular Baptist chapel once said to their minister Elijah Coe: "We must go with the times." Mr. Coe replied: "Dead fish do go with the stream; it is the living ones that fight against it."

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## KATHERINE VON BORA – MARTIN LUTHER’S WIFE

As the funeral procession of Martin Luther drew near the gates of Wittenberg, the procession was joined by Katherine, his wife. The carriage in which she was seated, along with her daughter and a few ladies, followed immediately after the body. The lead coffin, covered with black velvet, was carried on a cart drawn by four horses, and taken into the Castle Church.

The history of Katherine usually ends at this point. But some have wondered what happened after her husband’s death in 1546.

### 1546 - 1552

In the year her husband died, war broke out in the area, and Katherine and the six children fled from Wittenberg to Magdeburg a few miles to the south west. Several protestant ministers were hanged and it was rumoured that the army wanted to dig up Luther’s grave.

By 1548 Katherine was back at Wittenberg, and her home, the Black Cloister, was renovated. Martin had advised her to move out of the old abbey after his death and sell it, but she refused. The plague (Black Death) then arrived in Wittenberg, and Katherine fled again, this time to Torgau on the banks of the River Elbe in northwestern Saxony. Close to the town, the horses drawing her wagon shied and she fell from the wagon into a ditch near the city gates. She never recovered from the fall and remained bed-ridden. Her daughter Margarethe nursed her.

In the late autumn of 1552 Katherine’s health got steadily worse, and she continued in and out of consciousness. On 20th December she died, aged 53. Katherine found her final resting place in the Torgau town church, St. Mary’s. It is indicative of the regard in which she was held that normally only members of the court were buried here.

In the whole time of her illness she comforted herself with the word

of God. “I will stick to Christ as burr to a cloth,” she said. Her ardent prayer was that the pure teaching which the Lord had given to the church through her husband might be handed down to posterity.

*Left: Aged 27. Right: Aged 47.*



## THE EVOLUTIONIST'S CALENDAR

<b>Number of years ago</b>	<b>Event</b>
12,000,000,000 (Twelve thousand million, today usually expressed as twelve billion)	Big bang gives rise to the universe. All the matter in the universe in one place. At time zero it explodes and begins to expand.
4,600,000,000	Condensation of gas and dust to form the sun and planets (including the earth)
3,500,000,000	Chemicals react together to form self-replicating organisms such as bacteria
2,500,000,000	Algae evolve
1,500,000,000	Cells with a nucleus enclosed in a membrane evolve
1,000,000,000	Evolution of simple invertebrates such as sponges
700,000,000	Evolution of complex invertebrates such as jellyfish
480,000,000	Fish evolve
360,000,000	Evolution of Amphibians (small animals with backbones requiring water or moisture) such as frogs, toads, salamanders and newts
260,000,000	Reptiles appear, such as crocodiles, snakes, lizards, turtles, and tortoises – all cold-blooded
200,000,000	Mammals appear
50,000,000	Monkeys evolve

25,000,000	Apes evolve
15,000,000	Ramapithecus appears, thought to be a possible human ancestor, more like an orangutan
4,000,000	Australopithecus appears, another extinct early human species
2,000,000	Habilines arrive, another early human-like species
1,500,000	<i>Homo erectus</i> people evolve from the habilines, intelligent, larger brains
150,000	Early <i>homo sapiens</i> evolve
40,000	<i>Homo sapiens sapiens</i> arrive – modern people (i.e. us)

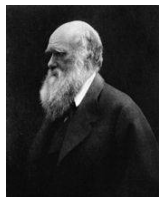
*What is evolution?* The theory that all life forms are descended from one or several common ancestors. All living things are related to each other through common ancestry.

*Evidence?* None.

*God's Word?* Irrelevant.

*Claimed evidence?* Mere conjecture. “Lacks the usual standards of rigour applied to physical sciences” (Dr. David Watts, Materials Scientist). “The theory that higher life forms all arose from a simple common source, contains too many serious scientific problems to be tenable” (Dr. Robert Beckett, Animal Geneticist).

*Fossils?* The fossil record does not support the idea of evolution of life. Evidence of continuous development is missing. No in-between kinds have been found. The transitional forms are missing – hence the term ‘missing links.’ “There is a distinct lack of fossilised transitional forms which should link reptiles, birds and mammals if evolution has occurred” (Professor David Gower, Biochemist).



*Charles Darwin?* Charles Darwin appeared on the £10 note between 2000 and 2018, described as a naturalist, geologist and biologist. Darwin in his 1859 book *On the Origin of Species* only popularized and modified ideas that had already been published over twenty years earlier by Edward Blyth and others.



*Edward Blyth?* Blyth was a creationist so his starting point was different to Darwin. He believed that God created original kinds, and that all modern species descended from those kinds. Blyth also believed that man was a separate creation from animals, very different to Darwin's view.

*Can a Christian believe that God, as a Creator, used evolution to carry out His creating work?* No. Nowhere does the Bible support the notion of molecules-to-man evolution.

*Could Genesis 1 be a simplified account of evolution?* No. The order of events in the Genesis account of creation is quite different, e.g. evolution says the sun came before plants, Genesis says plants came before the sun.

*Mutations?* By mutation is meant a permanent alteration in the DNA sequence that makes up a gene. The evolutionist says that man is the result of favourable changes in his genetic structure, acted upon by natural selection. It is true that mutations do produce physical changes in organisms, but most are harmful, if not lethal. "In man, mutations are rare events and almost always result in detrimental conditions with physical and mental handicap. Such changes are far from producing vigorous new characteristics which could assist a race of organisms to evolve. After many years of intense experimentation with the induction of thousands of mutations in various organisms, nothing has been observed which could account for the evolution of new species" (Prof. Norman Nevin, Professor of Medical Genetics).

*Vestigial organs evidence of evolution?* Some of the organs listed as vestigial and having no function at all include the pineal gland, the pituitary gland, the lachrymal glands (tear glands), wisdom teeth,

tonsils, body hair, and the appendix. We now know that all of these organs have an important part to play in the regulation and function of our bodies.

*Did Darwin truly believe in what he wrote?* Doubtful. When considering the complexity of the human eye, he said: “To suppose that the eye with all its inimitable contrivances for adjusting the focus to different distances, for admitting different amounts of light, and for the correction of spherical and chromatic aberration, could have been formed by natural selection, seems, I freely confess, absurd in the highest degree.”

*The ‘Big Bang’?* Some of you may know the formula  $\Delta U = Q + W$ . In a Creation and Evolution Lecture given by Mr. Frank Hayden (which he called *The Great Fraud*), he said this: “Consider the first Law of Thermodynamics: **Nothing can be created or destroyed. The sum total of energy in the universe is constant.** This means, therefore, God must have created matter. There is no other way it could have come into existence. The universe did not create itself and only something outside the universe and greater than the universe could have brought it into being – in fact, the God of the Bible.” Yes, energy can be transformed from one form to another, but can be neither created nor destroyed. Through countless experiments, scientists have discovered that the amount of energy at the beginning of any experiment is equal to the amount of energy at the end of the experiment.

*But don't some scientists suggest that the universe has a net energy of Zero?* Yes, they do. They say that the gravitational energy of the universe is a negative quantity, which may balance the rest of the energy in the universe, leaving a net balance of zero energy, and therefore the first law of thermodynamics does not apply. This is absolute speculation with no possible way of knowing whether or not it is true. It is a theory developed simply to fit the pre-conceived idea of a ‘Big Bang.’

## Conclusion

What ever theory people may or may not believe regarding origins, there MUST have been an initial act of creation. The idea of a ‘Big Bang’ that flung into space matter from some pre-existing primeval

atom has nothing to support it. There is no evidence that later life forms are descended from common ancestors, nor that humans evolved from animals. We firmly believe that man is a special creation of God. Spiritually, man is unique, as man alone is a worshipping being, with language that is radically different to all known forms of animal communication. Scientists are unable to propose a biological theory of language. There is no evidence from anatomy, biochemistry, embryology, or fossils, to support the idea of evolution.

Our belief is in a creating God “which made heaven, and earth, the sea, and all that therein is” (Psalm 146. 6).

“The Lord by wisdom hath founded the earth; by understanding hath He established the heavens” (Prov. 3. 19).

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## AN EXTENDED SERMON

On one occasion the Rev. Samuel Pearce (a well-known Baptist minister in Birmingham in the late 1700's) preached an excellent, well-arranged sermon. But after he appeared to have drawn to a close, he gave the impression of starting again; and what was added, though excellent, did not seem to belong to the subject of the sermon.

When it was over, one who had heard it said, “Mr. Pearce, will you allow me to ask a question? I much liked and admired your sermon; but did you make intentionally any alteration of, or addition to it, in the close? Because, valuable as it was, it did not seem to belong to the former part.”

After a pause, Mr Pearce said, “Well, if I must answer, the case was this: when I was uttering the last two or three sentences, I saw running up to the crowded place a poor man, wiping his face and head, and eager to hear. I thought this poor creature had come from a distance and it would be cruel to let him go away without hearing a word of the Saviour: and so my pride yielded to my pity; and I tried to be useful, by adding a few things, regardless of connection or order.”

It was said that Samuel Pearce was noted as a man of a most affectionate, kind and meek disposition. He died at the age of 33 years.

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## WORLD WAR I - A few further thoughts

Last year, much was written on the occasion of the 100 years since the end of the war. This article is a subject of which little is heard, that is, those servicemen who were executed for cowardice or desertion, many of them very young. We may ask, why did soldiers keep fighting at all? There was a sense of duty, patriotism, comradeship and hatred of the enemy. Refusal to fight risked punishment - including execution.

During the war, 306 men were executed by firing squad for cowardice or desertion, officially '*Fleeing in the face of the enemy.*' However, the horrors of trench warfare can be fully understood only by those who were engaged in it. At least one of those executed was only 16 years old. In those days the words "post-traumatic stress syndrome" meant nothing; the term "shell-shock" was used instead. The horrors of war were more than they could bear. Many of those executed did not appear to have a fair trial.

PROCEEDINGS OF COURTS MARTIAL SUBMITTED FOR THE INSPECTION  
OF THE ADJUTANT-GENERAL.

Case	Regiment	Offence	Sentence
<u>Roole</u>	11 <sup>th</sup> Bn, West York-Majesty's shire..	Deserting His Majesty's Service	To suffer death by being shot
	seen. 24/12		war office

Towards the end of the 1980's there was a growing call that these 306 men should be pardoned. This was resisted in some quarters, particularly by the Prime Minister, John Major. In 1993, he said in the House of Commons that pardoning the men would be an insult to those who died honourably on the battlefield. A few years later this was



overturned, and an Act of Parliament was passed pardoning the soldiers, although not overturning their convictions.



In 2001 a memorial was erected in parkland at the National Memorial Arboretum near Alrewas in Staffordshire, known as *The Shot at Dawn Memorial*. The memorial consists of a statue of a blindfolded young soldier tied to a stake modelled on the likeness of 17-year old Private Herbert Burden. Herbert was court martialled for desertion and sentenced to be shot at dawn after leaving his post to comfort a recently-bereaved friend stationed nearby, having seen many other friends killed at the Battle of Bellwarde Ridge.

Another young man executed was Private Thomas Highgate aged just 17. Thomas had been unable to bear the carnage of the Battle of Mons, and had fled and hidden in a barn. His offence, trial, sentencing and execution all took place on the same day - 8 September 1914 - just 35 days into the war.

Another was Private Bernard McGeehan. His cousin said, "Bernard suffered from the endless onslaught of the German shell-fire and merciless machine-gunning and he cracked. He couldn't cope. He was shell-shocked completely, shaking, bewildered and lost." He was arrested, court martialled and shot at dawn - for alleged desertion.

The statue stands with 306 wooden posts bearing the names of all the servicemen who were executed.

*We will remember them.*

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## THE HONEST APPRENTICE BOY

Adam Clarke had a good mother. The boy was apprenticed to a tailor. Sometimes, when a suit was made for a customer, the material was not quite long enough. The tailor showed Adam how to stretch the material to lengthen it. Although the customer would not know, this weakened the material. The influence of his mother remained with him. "Sir," said the boy respectfully, "I can't do that." The tailor was angry, and sent the boy home. His mother blessed God for giving her boy the resolution to stand to his principles.

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## THE SINGLE LIFE

This subject had been on the editor's mind for some time, but as it can be very difficult to write about something of which you have had no personal experience, nothing was done. However, unexpectedly one of our readers sent some extensive notes on the subject as she felt that some thoughts on this may be a help to some of the readers of *Perception* and this encouraged the editor to attempt to gather together some thoughts hoping it may be of the Lord, and we sincerely hope that this little article may indeed prove to be a help to someone.

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We are writing for those who would dearly love to find a suitable partner leading eventually to marriage. We also think of those who have lost a husband or a wife, perhaps at a relatively young age, who, in their loneliness, have a strong desire once more to be married and to have a companion for life. It can be a great trial and sorrow if they believe they may remain alone for the rest of their life.

There will doubtless be some single people who are happy and content in their state, and for these we do not wish to sow any seeds of discontent – that is not our purpose at all.

Many booklets are in circulation advocating the rightness of marriage. Most of them do not mention those people for whom this gift is withheld. We hope this article might redress the balance.

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### **Marriage – A creation ordinance**

We speak of marriage as a creation ordinance. God's first pronouncement that for a man to be alone was "not good" is found in Genesis chapter 2. (In this edition of *Perception* we have mentioned Matthew Henry's comment on the creation of Eve from a rib of Adam.)

When God's creating work was ended, we read that for Adam "there was not found an help meet for him" – 'meet' with the meaning of 'suitable.' Adam walked alone in the garden of Eden, and God said, "It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him an help meet for him" (Gen. 2. 18). William Tyndale translated the verse in this way: "I will make hym an helper to bear hym company." So Eve was created to meet Adam's need for companionship, and the two came

together in a lifelong relationship of marriage.

Women were created as ‘help-meets,’ as a wife, a mother and a keeper of the home. This is a role that you may be called to when you are young, but it may be after many years, or not at all. However it may be, the purposes of an all-wise God for us will be fulfilled.

Marriage is the way God has ordained that the human race might be populated. God created male and female that they might “be fruitful, and multiply” (Genesis 1. 28). Marriage was also ordained “to avoid fornication” (1. Cor. 7. 2).

### **Singleness – is God unkind?**

How should we view the fact that the provision of a wife or husband is not given to everyone? If God has withheld something from you which He Himself has said is good, it may be tempting to think that He is dealing unkindly with you. This is not the case. We do well to remember Samuel Medley’s words that He is “Too good to be unkind.” God is *never* unkind. We are not speaking of those who say they have no desire to be married, those who would rather be alone and free of all the responsibilities that marriage brings. We are, rather, speaking of those who wish to walk tenderly before God and seek His will in all things. A good (and appropriate) prayer is found in Hymn 123 in the Young People’s Hymnal:

Thy way, not mine, O Lord,  
However dark it be;  
Lead me by Thine own hand,  
Choose out the path for me.

Not mine, not mine the choice  
In things both great and small;  
Be Thou my Guide, my Strength,  
My Wisdom and my All.

### **Attraction towards a partner**

There comes a time in the life of young people when they begin to look around and take an interest in the opposite sex. This is only right and natural. Eventually, there may be an attraction towards a particular person. For the girls, this presents a difficulty. Traditionally, etiquette precludes the girl from taking the next step. Some boys who are of a shy or retiring disposition may find it difficult to take that next step towards getting to know the girl better. So just a word to the girls - do

try to make sure that you are friendly and approachable, as this makes things much easier for someone to get to know you better! Some boys have rightly been taught not to hurt a girl's feelings to the extent that they dare not ask a girl out. Also, they may fear rejection.

One young lady, many years ago now, was being courted by a young man, but she was very unsure. She liked him as a person, but prayed that she would have "feelings" towards him if it was right. She met up with him *seven* times before she really had feelings for him. So do not rush into anything if you are unsure but rather be cautious and prayerful. If you have been asked out by a young man and you do not have feelings for him, let him know kindly and give him dignity. Never go around telling other people as that can be hurtful and humiliating. Always remember that it can take a great deal of courage for a young man to make the first approach.

The Scriptures are very clear that a believer should not be married to an unbeliever. "Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers" (2 Cor 6. 14). There may be some of our readers who say, "I do not class myself amongst the believers," - they feel unable to "claim a portion so divine" - but nevertheless feel they want to do what is right in God's sight. One young girl started going out with a boy who, when he realised she was concerned about religion, said, "Oh, I believe in God." To some extent this quieted her concerns as to whether she was doing the right thing, and she thought she could persuade him to become a believer. Sadly, she soon found her mistake, and he had to be given up.

It is better to be single than to be unequally yoked.

### **God's appointment**

When speaking of single people we tend to think more particularly of women, but there are also single men who have been unable to find the right companion. It is a saying that marriages are made in heaven. Although this is often said flippantly by those with no religion at all, we believe it to be true. If God has appointed someone for you, in due time it will come to pass. Marriage is God's loving gift to humanity where the desire for companionship and intimacy is met. Single people may, therefore, struggle with loneliness and temptation. One single girl was recently heard to say: "I dread the future alone."

These things are certainly not exclusive to the unmarried, but they can be very much part of the condition of being single. If you are

longing for marriage, waiting can be very difficult, particularly if prayer does not seem to be answered and you are tempted to conclude that God has left you.

### **Is singleness second best?**

We must resist the implication that singleness is second best. The Bible says that marriage is good, but singleness has been “given” to some: “For I would that all men were even as I myself. But every man hath his proper gift of God, one after this manner, and another after that” (1 Cor. 7. 7).

The teaching of the apostle Paul is that being single is to be received with thankfulness if that is the “proper gift of God” for that person, since it opens opportunities that may be closed to married people. “He that is unmarried careth for the things that belong to the Lord, how he may please the Lord: but he that is married careth for the things that are of the world, how he may please his wife” (1 Cor. 7. 32).

There may be a pathway for a single person that they simply could not follow if they had the responsibilities of marriage, for example medical missionary work or something similar.

When Paul speaks of singleness as a gift, he is not speaking of any particular ability somebody may have to be contentedly single. Rather, it is recognising that the state of being single is a gift of God, just as marriage is God’s gift to those who receive it. It can require much submission to receive our situation in life, not just whether it is singleness or marriage, but our health, our wealth, our abilities, and other circumstances. “Godliness with contentment is great gain.”

When reading these passages of Scripture, we need to remember that Paul says he is writing for “the present distress.” This was a season of much persecution towards the church, and the cares and responsibilities of a family would be greater for those married than those unmarried.

Single or married, it is a gift. If it is God’s will for you to remain single, your life can be as meaningful as someone who is married.

### **Difficulties of being single**

It is natural to have a longing in your heart to love someone and to be loved. Consequently, there can be seasons of unfulfilled longing. There may be times when you are jealous of married couples. You may begin to think other people have something you do not.

Single people often say that they feel like spare parts in their

families, social groups, and places of worship. So much in our society is structured around couples. For a single person to walk into a room full of mostly couples can be extremely difficult. There are times when it feels awkward to be the only single person at the table or the gathering.

One of the greatest fears of young single people is the prospect of remaining single and alone. They wonder, is there someone out there for me? Will I ever find that special person I so crave for, a lifelong companion? Or will I be single for ever?

If you are married, do be sensitive towards single friends in your conversation and actions – be careful not to exclude them, even if unintentionally. Make them feel welcome and appreciated.

Also a word to those starting to “go out.” Do not drop your friends, as this can be very hurtful. Still keep in contact with them.

### **Unfulfilled longings**

There are very few examples in the Word of God of single men and women longing to be married. However, there are a considerable number of married women longing to receive the gift of children. Their unfulfilled longings have many similarities to those who long for a husband or wife. If you are waiting for an answer to prayer during your time of singleness, even though your case is not identical, it may be helpful to think of the way the Lord led them.

### **Abraham and Sarah**

At the great age of ninety-nine, God told Abraham that he would bless his wife, and that she would have a son by him. What was Abraham’s response? He laughed (as did his wife). “Shall Sarah, that is ninety years old, bear?” he said. What did the Lord say? “Is any thing too hard for the Lord?” The seemingly impossible did come to pass – but only at God’s appointed time.

### **Isaac and Rebekah**

For twenty years Isaac and Rebekah lived together with no birth of a child. What a trial this must have been, particularly for Isaac’s father Abraham, who knew that the promised seed (the Lord Jesus Christ) was to come through his son. Isaac was much concerned over his wife’s barrenness, and prayed for her. “And Isaac entreated the Lord for his wife.” He prayed for her, and God answered his prayer.

Rebekah was a praying woman, too. As she carried her twins, “she went to inquire of the Lord.” *She prayed.* “Wrestling prayer can

wonders do.” A Jewish writer expresses it thus: “She asked no advice, demanded no human aid; but in heartfelt prayer – for in prayer only could she so enquire – laid before Him her every emotion – and from Him implored a reply.”

### **Jacob and Rachel**

“And when Rachel saw that she bare Jacob no children, Rachel envied her sister; and said unto Jacob, Give me children, or else I die.” Rachel’s longing was so strong she felt she must die if her desires did not come to pass. The feelings of sorrow for a single person can be so strong, and we must recognise and be compassionate with regards to this. It is easy to dismiss others’ pain if you have never experienced their situation in life.

Jacob’s response was one of anger. “Am I in God’s stead, who hath withheld from thee the fruit of the womb?” he asked. We feel that Jacob could have answered his wife more kindly, although he rightly recognised that this barrenness was God’s appointment for his wife. God had ordained her pathway, hard though it was for her.

But what awful sin followed! Rachel gave to Jacob her maid in the hope that a child might result which she could call her ‘own.’ Jacob’s guilt was great: “And Jacob went in unto her.” But in spite of Jacob’s sin and Rachel’s sin, God did not forget Rachel. “And God remembered Rachel, and God hearkened to her, and opened her womb.” In God’s appointed time, Rachel’s unfulfilled longings were satisfied. Her son Joseph was born! “God hearkened to her” – He had heard her prayers.

### **Elkanah and Hannah**

Hannah longed for a child of her own. Her husband, Elkanah, had another wife named Peninnah who had both sons and daughters. Hannah was grieved beyond measure that God had not blessed her with children: “But the Lord had shut up her womb.” We read that Peninnah “provoked her sore, for to make her fret.” (How much this was like Rachel who envied her sister, Leah.) Even though she was blessed with a loving husband, she still wept, refused to eat. “Am not I better to thee than ten sons?” asked Elkanah. But no, her heart was grieved.

Those who are single can see their friends and family members finding love and fulfillment. They try to keep cheerful, but their hearts are breaking. Hannah went up to Shiloh with her husband in bitterness

of soul. “She prayed unto the Lord, and wept sore.” She said to Eli that she had “poured out my soul before the Lord.” Did the God of Israel grant her the petition she had asked of Him? Yes, He graciously did so. “And the Lord remembered her.” Later she was able to testify of God’s gracious gift of a son, when she took him up to the yearly sacrifice. “I am the woman,” she said to Eli, “that stood by thee here, praying unto the Lord.” And here is the child: “For this child I prayed; and the Lord hath given me my petition.”

### **A prayer-hearing God**

You who are praying for a husband or wife may be tempted to feel your prayers are falling on deaf ears, and that God is not answering your prayers. God does hear, always – but sometimes the answer may be no. God’s people of old were tempted to think that God was not hearing their prayers, but Isaiah the prophet was sent to them with these words: “Behold, the Lord’s hand is not shortened, that it cannot save; neither his ear heavy, that it cannot hear.”

You may be in a situation where there is no potential spouse in sight. There seems to be no possibility of it ever happening, and yet God is able to bring that person when it is His perfect timing. We knew a girl who longed for a partner, and she declared she knew every boy in the denomination – there was *no-one* for her. But eventually she *did* meet someone who she did not know, and now is very happily married.

God is a God “that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think” (Eph. 3. 20). Believing that, we can go on our way, eat, and, like Hannah, be “no more sad.”

(We recommend the booklet *Unanswered Prayer* by Mr. G. D. Buss, obtainable from Gospel Standard Publications, for further reading.)

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## **THE LETTER ‘J’**

The letter J was the last letter to be added to the alphabet. Although added in the 16th century, its use did not become common until the 17th century, so that early 17th century works such as the first edition of the King James Version of the Bible (1611) continued to print the name of Jesus with an I - Iesus. This same spelling is found in earlier English Bibles such as those of Wycliffe and Tyndale.

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## CHRISTIAN DUTIES

Following the acrostic in last quarter's *Perception* (page 19) we were delighted to hear from several readers in the USA, Carolyn and Carissa Ymker from South Dakota, and Jemima Fellows from Aiken, South Carolina. Carolyn wrote, "My sister and I spent a very enjoyable Sunday afternoon searching for the texts to prove these qualities." All had been able to find Bible references for each line, and also supplied suitable texts for the missing X, Y and Z. Jackelyn Krol from Rosedale, British Columbia, Canada also supplied suggestions for X, Y and Z.

Many thanks to all of you for your hard work. May the Lord bless the various texts to you each. "Search the Scriptures" (John 5. 39).

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## TEMPTED TO GO TO THE DANCE

From the autobiography of Cathie Macrae of Lochalsh

When I was about 15 years old I went to a wedding, and it was the first time I saw dancing. I could not dance and felt I was missing a lot of enjoyment and that I was odd and old-fashioned compared to other girls, and so I made up my mind I was not going to be old-fashioned and that I was going to learn dancing as soon as I could. This I did from the teaching of some of my friends, and from that time onwards my thoughts were bent on dancing and all the pleasures of the world.

At New Year time there was a dance held about eight or nine miles away from my home. A car was provided to take those from my part of the district to it. I had a frock and all the other necessities for such an occasion, except permission from my mother to go to it along with other two girls from our village. She firmly refused to let me go to it, and after the other girls had called in on their way for me and left, I sulked for the rest of the night and, in my mind, I thought my mother was the hardest and most narrow-minded mother in the world. Now, I think she wasn't half hard enough on me.

From now on the crave for dancing grew stronger and stronger and I gave my mother no peace until at last she said to me, "Well, lassie, your blood is on your own head, and it will never be against me that I haven't advised you, and done all in my power to keep you from the dance-hall." Those words "your blood is on your own head," seemed to echo in my ears from time to time and though I went to dances after

that I never seemed to get the same pleasure out of them, and the next day in my mind I'd say, "Well, I'm not going to another." However, when the next dance was to be held Satan would come to me and say, "Go to this one and then you can give them up," and, of course, poor frail, wisp that I was, would give in and go to the dance. I could enjoy myself all right while in the dance-hall, but the next day my conscience told me I was not to go to another. However, Satan came with his snare "Time enough" and I'd listen to him and yield to the temptation.

On one occasion while at a dance, the thought came to my mind, what would happen to me if I dropped dead on the dance-floor? Well, I knew where I would open my eyes, and the thought frightened me. Sad to say I went to a dance after that and shortly after I happened to read in a church magazine that John the Baptist's head was danced off. That made a deep impression on my mind and I got more and more convinced that dancing was not the right thing for me, and bit by bit I was losing my craving for it. Very often Satan used to tempt me very much to go to such-and-such a dance, and I would have a great battle to resist the temptation. But after the dance was over I always found that I was much happier than if I had gone to it.

During my late teens and early twenties life seemed to fly past and flow like a song. I seemed to get everything I wanted, but yet I could not say I was happy. There was an *aching void* the world could never fill, and I knew the world could not give me the happiness I wanted.

For our younger friends today, it may not be the temptation of the dance - but there are different temptations to worldliness and sin in each generation. Cathie Macrae found there was no happiness there on the dance floor. As the hymn says, "Happiness – only to be found in Thee."

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## A FEW CURRENT MATTERS

### **Evolution disproved once again**

A bone scientists thought had been lost to evolution has not been lost at all. Today it is found in at least two out of five people. The bone, known as the *fabella*, is placed inside the tendon behind the knee. It seems that the bone can relieve the pressure placed on our knees, and has reappeared as today we are better nourished and have become heavier. Clearly, God designed it that way. The accepted statement that the human skeleton has 206 bones will need to be revised to 207.

**End of the nuclear family**

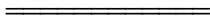
Sir James Munby, President of the Family Division of the High Court, has said: “Many Britons live in families more or less removed from what, until comparatively recently, would have been recognised as the typical nuclear family. People live together as couples, married or not, and with partners who may not always be of the other sex. Children live in households where their parents may be married or unmarried. They may be brought up by a single parent, by two parents or even by three parents. Their parents may or may not be their natural parents. Their siblings may be only half-siblings or step-siblings. Some children are brought up by two parents of the same sex.” Sir James added: “This is a reality which we should welcome and applaud.” *Perception* believes this is *not* something to welcome and applaud, but is a further move in these last days against what is clearly shown in God’s word to be the right way, that is, a husband and a wife, ruling their children well (1 Tim. 3.12). In another chapter the Apostle Paul desires that the younger women marry, bear children, and guide the home (1 Tim. 5.14).

**‘No-fault’ Divorce**

In early April the Government announced plans to introduce ‘no-fault’ divorce. No mention was made of the overwhelming opposition received in the consultation process. Under current rules, one spouse has to allege adultery or unreasonable behaviour by the other for divorce proceedings to start straight away. In future, they will only have to state that the marriage has broken down irretrievably. It will also stop one partner refusing a divorce if the other one wants one. Justice Secretary David Gauke said the changes would help to end the “blame game.” In the view of *Perception* this is a further serious erosion of the sanctity of marriage. It is part of a drive that wishes those simply living together to have the same status as married couples.

**Record number of Britons ‘not religious’**

A survey has revealed that the number of Britons who are ‘not religious’ has risen to 53 per cent. In 1983 it was 34 per cent.



## OUR BEAUTIFUL SKY

*“O ye hypocrites, ye can discern the face of the sky; but can ye not discern the signs of the times?” (Matthew 16. 3).*



Our front cover picture, and the picture above, shows nature's use of the colour blue to great advantage. What a delicate blue is the sky, and how deep a blue is the sea. Sky colour is a good indicator of future weather. In fine, settled weather the sunset is turned red by dust particles in the atmosphere. Since most of our rain comes from the west, the Sun clearly seen at sunset is a sign of good weather. By contrast, a red sky in the morning is due to the rising Sun shining on high cirrus ice clouds. This can indicate bad weather approaching from the west.

A thin layer of gases called the *atmosphere* is held around the earth by gravity. Most weather develops in the *troposphere*, the lowest level of the atmosphere where the air is in constant motion. Air circulates around the earth in bands or belts. Britain lies at the point where two of these belts meet – one bringing cold air from the North Pole and one warmer from the Azores – giving us very changeable weather. Around the coasts the sea warms and cools more slowly than the land. The contrasting temperatures between the sea and the land produce a daily pattern of land and sea breezes.

Job describes the sky as “a molten looking glass.” We may wonder exactly what he meant. One thing is sure, our beautiful sky reflects the glory of God. It was the very first thing God made: “In the beginning, God created the heaven and the earth” (Gen 1.1). When God saw everything He had made, including the sky, He declared “that it was very good.”

# PERCEPTION

A Quarterly Magazine for Young People



“For ye shall be as an oak whose leaf fadeth”  
(Isaiah 1.30).

**AUTUMN 2019**

IN THIS ISSUE	Page
Editorial. . . . .	1
Mr. J. Lawrence of Blunsdon: Part 1 – <i>Autobiography</i> . .	4
Lifted Higher – Jane Baxter, Aged 13 Years . . . . .	13
Queen Victoria – 200th Anniversary of her birth. . . . .	14
The World: Part 3 – <i>Bishop J. C. Ryle</i> . . . . .	25
Thy Footstool . . . . .	31
Freewill Offerings . . . . .	31
Harpenden Bethesda Home 50th Anniversary . . . . .	32
“This is the way, walk ye in it.” – <i>Sermon preached by Mr. B. A. Ramsbottom at a baptising service</i> . . . . .	34
“Jesus Christ is the Way” – <i>A little Sunday School girl’s answer</i>	37
Social Media and Smart Phones: A Warning – <i>Review</i> . .	38
A Few Current Matters . . . . .	39

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**Cover picture:** Autumn colours, Lambeth Palace, official residence of the Archbishop of Canterbury, on the south bank of the River Thames, near Westminster, London.



# PERCEPTION

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## EDITORIAL

To our dear young friends and all our readers.

62,000 lightning strikes in one day! According to the Met Office that was the number of strikes in Britain on May 27th, detected by their system known as Lightning Arrival Time Difference Network. Worldwide, lightning flashes more than three million times a day – that is about 40 times a second. In May 2019 lightning struck the spire of the world’s tallest building – the 163 storey Burj Khalifa in Dubai. Up to a billion volts passed harmlessly to the ground through the structure’s specially designed lightning conductors.

Each year in Britain, approximately 30 people are hit by lightning! Most survive the encounter – but not always. Earlier this year a 55-year-old mother died instantly while walking on Na Gruagaichean, a mountain ridge near Fort William in the Highlands of Scotland when lightning struck.

Lightning is one of the most beautiful displays in nature. It is also one of the most awesome natural phenomena known to man. One scientist commented: “With bolt temperatures hotter than the surface of the sun, and shockwaves beaming out in all directions, lightning is a lesson in humility.”

It is common knowledge that lightning is generated in electrically-charged storm systems, but the method of cloud charging still remains a mystery. Lightning is usually associated with thunder clouds (cumulonimbus clouds). These are the clouds airline pilots try to avoid at all cost.

When there is a flash of lightning, most of us immediately start counting the seconds till it thunders. For every five seconds, the storm is one mile away. Divide the number of seconds you count by five to



*Lightning strikes the world’s tallest building*

find the number of miles distance.

Question – What is a safe distance to be from the storm? If you can hear thunder, you are close enough to be hit by lightning, and sheltering indoors or in an enclosed car is the safest place. Thunder can be heard up to 25 miles away, but lightning strikes can occur as far as 25 miles from thunderstorms – known as a “bolt from the blue.” All the energy of lightning travels along a path about as wide as a thumb!

The extreme heat generated by lightning can heat the air around it to temperatures five times hotter than the sun’s surface. This superheated air is about 20,000 degrees Celsius, and causes surrounding air to expand rapidly and vibrate, which creates the crashing thunder we hear a short time after seeing a lightning flash. Lightning’s extreme heat will vaporize the water inside a tree, creating steam that may blow the tree apart.

Amazingly a lightning strike usually lasts around 1 or 2 microseconds – a microsecond is equal to one millionth of a second. Each strike contains millions of volts of electricity. A large thunder storm is believed to contain enough energy to power the whole of the USA for 20 minutes.

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Although today we may understand (to a degree) these natural phenomena, they nevertheless belong to God. In the book of Job, Elihu tells us that “He directeth His lightning unto the ends of the earth.” Asaph tells us in Psalm 77 that “the voice of Thy thunder was in the heaven.” *His* lightning, and *His* thunder.

The awesomeness of lightning in the minds of the people can be found throughout the Word of God. When Israel camped in the wilderness before Mount Sinai, “there were thunders and lightnings.” The result was “that all the people that was in the camp trembled.” When John looked through the door into heaven, and was invited to “come up hither” he saw there a throne. Out of that throne “proceeded lightnings and thunderings” – and John tells us that there was “One” who sat upon that throne.

Perhaps the most striking reference to ‘lightning’ is found in the book of Daniel. Daniel, that man who was “greatly beloved,” was favoured to see in a vision that same “One” that John saw. Daniel tells us that His face was “as the appearance of lightning.” Even the men that were with him, who did not see the vision, “fled to hide themselves.”



No ordinary words could ever adequately describe this glorious Person, who was none other than the Son of God. Daniel's inspired choice of words was "as lightning."

Unsurprisingly, some have thought of thunder as God's voice. One little girl well remembers her mother telling her this and the effect it had on her, which remains even to today. The thought of thunder as God's voice seems entirely Scriptural, as Jeremiah in chapter 10 says: "When He uttereth His voice, He maketh lightnings with rain." Elihu said, "God thundereth marvellously with His voice." In a severe storm, is there *anyone* who does not have feelings of awe and wonder? One dear old lady in a Bethesda Home (who lived to be a hundred) was very frightened of thunder. We remember how the staff so lovingly sat with her and held her hand the whole of the time the storm lasted.

When the Lord Jesus returns to the Earth, we are told it will be "in such an hour as ye think not." When He does come, it will be as lightning: "For as the lightning cometh out of the east, and shineth even unto the west; so shall also the coming of the Son of man be."

The most important question for all of us is that asked by Malachi: "But who may abide the day of His coming? and who shall stand when He appeareth?" How shall *we* stand in that day? Shall we be found among the wicked who will call for the rocks to cover them to hide them from the face of the Lord? Or will we be among those who shall be caught up in the clouds, "to meet the Lord in the air." If so, we shall "ever be with the Lord."

A hymn written by James Montgomery (number 355 in the Young People's Hymnal) begins:

"For ever with the Lord!  
Amen, so let it be."

Here is the last verse – may we sing it as a prayer.

"So when my latest breath  
Shall rend the veil in twain,  
By death I shall escape from death  
And life eternal gain."



*James  
Montgomery  
1771-1854*

Wishing all our readers, younger and older, the Lord's richest blessing.  
The Editor.

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## **MR. J. LAWRENCE (Part 1)**

### **SOME OF THE LORD'S DEALINGS WITH MR. J. LAWRENCE OF BLUNSDON, WILTSHIRE, MINISTER OF THE GOSPEL.**

#### **Birth**

I was born at Highworth, Wiltshire of godly parents, in the year 1818. My dear mother died when I was about three years of age, and my father when I was about fifteen. I was thus left at a very early age to show what a slave I was to sin and Satan, running greedily into many of the most revolting sins; but at times I had many checks of conscience, which caused slavish fears.

#### **Begins a sinful life**

I then vowed that I would alter my course and live a better life, but, having no grace, I soon returned, “like a dog to his vomit, and the sow that was washed to her wallowing in the mire,” going still further into wickedness and becoming more daring in sin. My dear father was almost broken-hearted on my account, not knowing what to do with me. He tried in vain to keep me under restraint.

Being a tailor by trade, my father was much at home, and he would often make me sit by his side while he worked and read the Bible. On the Sabbath he would take me with him to the little Baptist meeting, which I hated, inventing all manner of lying excuses to stay away.

When very young I was almost deprived of the sight of one of my eyes. I was sent to Oxford Infirmary, but did not quite recover the effects, as it left me near-sighted. My father wished to teach me his trade, but my sight being so bad, it was considered unfit for me, neither did my mind favour it.

#### **Apprenticed to a baker**

After a while a way was opened for me to go to Swindon to learn the bread and biscuit trade. I believe that my father told the person of my propensity to evil, for he was a straightforward man; but the way was now open, and I was apprenticed to the trade.

Here I found many temptations to evil, and opportunities to indulge in it, for my master's was a very worldly family, and the business often called us to fairs, races, and places of that kind. This suited me, being a willing slave to sin, and it was not long before I became so captivated

with it as to be the ringleader of the most scandalous and vile depredations that were carried on in the neighbourhood. To my shame, I was the terror of all moral people. My Sabbaths were spent, as much as possible, in the alehouse; and when not there, I was strolling and sauntering about, spending my time in the company of the lowest drunkards in the place, though none were lower than myself.

### **Death of his father**

Some time after I left home my dear father was taken ill. He was deprived of all his faculties, but at his last hour was blessed with a clear passage over Jordan. He sang one of Mr. Gadsby's hymns, down to a certain point (as he before said he should), and then slept in Jesus.

### **Alone in London**

All parental restraint now being gone, I adopted another mode of vice by running away from my employer, and tramping about the country, begging my way along, and sleeping under hedges or in outhouses at night.

At length I reached London late at night. Here I was, nearly starved and almost naked, alone in that great city, without money or food, or any prospect of a night's lodgings. I reached Oxford Street just as the people were closing their shops, and asked alms. Some took no notice of me, others pitied and helped me a little, but soon I was arrested as a begging vagrant, and was taken the next day before the magistrates. Being very crafty, I so far deceived them, that instead of them sending me to prison, they allowed me money to take me back again.

When I got the money, I went to another part of London, where I met with some of the thieves and rogues who frequented the place, and with them I spent the money. While here a most daring robbery was planned by my companions in sin, and I was to be the one first to enter the premises. But the Lord's eye was over me, and his Divine providence interposed and stopped me. I often wonder at the Lord's goodness in snatching me from them, and I have never seen them since.

I had now to pass the nights at the different workhouses, sleeping in the casual wards. I sometimes, even now, shudder to think of the sin and wretchedness that I saw at some of these places.

### **Brighton**

I left London, and begged my way along, till, by degrees, I reached Brighton; I think it was fifty-one miles. When I arrived I was in an

abject state, being nearly naked and hungry; and there was not a creature in Brighton that knew me or that I knew. In this state I had cutting rebukes and alarms of conscience, and horrid temptations to destroy myself. One day, while at Brighton, I went to the sea-side, determined to throw myself in, and was just in the act, when, like a dart, these words came as though spoken to me: "What will become of your poor soul?"

I then drew back, and was now tried with another suggestion, which was this: to lie down till the waves should rise and wash over me; or allow myself to fall asleep, and so, perhaps, fall in. It would not then, I thought, be self-murder. But, as I have since seen, there was the same ever-watchful eye over me then that is over me now, which so troubled me as to cause me to leave the spot. I now started for my native place. After a wearisome journey I arrived there, went to Highworth Union, and was taken in and fed, and my sister told that I was there. She persuaded my late master to be reconciled. He took me in again, and for some time I went on a little better; but before long I fell back into my old ways again, and sometimes ran away; but as often as I came back I was forgiven.

On one of these occasions I was in Trowbridge, nearly starving, when I was tempted to go outside of the town, lay down in a lonely field and die. Still the eye of God was upon me, and so troubled me that I was obliged to return. Soon after this my master died. I was getting on in years, and being somewhat steadier before he died, he wished me to stay with his widow, and assist her in the business, which I did.

### **Marriage**

After a while I married a person who lived there as servant; and I bless the Lord for having sent her there for me, as I believe that "a good wife is from the Lord." In a little time after our marriage I proved as depraved as ever, giving my wife much trouble. I again ran away, leaving her and two children with very little food or money. I went to Weston-super-Mare, but was so miserable and wretched that I could not stay there. Every child I met reminded me of my own, and the remembrance cut me to the heart.

After much trouble and many privations owing to my bad conduct, I went, at length, to Ogbourne St. George (about three miles north of Marlborough, Wiltshire), to keep a turnpike-gate, for 3s. 6d. per week. I likewise obtained work in the village, but was still very unsteady, or we might have prospered, as my wife was an honest, hard-working

woman, though not at that time manifested as a vessel of mercy.

### **Conviction**

But I now come to the time when the Lord led me in a path that I knew not. About March, 1856, after some time of hard drinking, I was constrained to look into a Bible which my poor wife had provided for me, hoping that at some time it might be made a blessing to me. I had felt much remorse the night previous, owing to my conduct. On this occasion I opened the Bible at John 14, and read on to the end of chapter 17. I felt myself to be a vile sinner, and could get no rest.

I laid myself down on the bed. My wife was busy with the children's clothes. Whether I was in a dream or not I cannot say, but this I know, that I, with many others, appeared to be kneeling down in the wing of a chapel, and begging of the Lord for mercy, when I saw the dear Jesus come down into the chapel, and as I pleaded for mercy, my wife, hearing my prayer, ran into the room, and said, "Lawrence, what is the matter? Were you begging for mercy? I never heard you pray before!" And that was true, for neither she nor any other person ever had. I said, "Let us kneel down and pray." We both knelt down together for the first time, and I tried to pray for myself, for her, and for the dear children, and from that time I have ever prayed (little or much), and as long as I live I hope to feel the need of prayer.

After that night, for five long months, I was under the just and holy judgment of the righteous Lord. Although I could get nothing but condemnation from reading the Word, yet I could not give it up, trying to find comfort, but finding none. For many nights I have walked up and down the road crying for mercy, while others were in bed; yet I could not see how God could be just and save my soul according to His Word. O, what would I have given for one glimpse of hope? But the terrible holiness, majesty, and justice of God so opened up to me my sinfulness, vileness, and depravity, that my soul sank within me. My trouble had such an effect on my body that I was nearly unfit for business. But "there is a set time to favour Zion."

### **A set time**

I and my son were on a journey to Hinton, when a friend, whom I hope is born of God, said to me, "How ill you seem! you look as though you will not live long." I said, "My good woman, I shall die and go to hell; there is no mercy for me." (I had just been reading *James's*

*Anxious Inquirer* and that demanded so much from me, and kept me in such bondage, that I felt I would not read or try any more.) It seemed that I had got to this place: "If I must perish, I must perish. I can try no more." The woman said, "I have a book that has been useful to many of the Lord's family. Will you read it?" I said, "I am not one of the Lord's children, but I will read it."

On my way back, as my son drove, I read; and in reading a piece on the sinfulness of the human heart by D. Herbert, life, light, joy, and liberty shone into my soul. I felt that all condemnation was gone, my sins all washed away by the blood of the Lamb, and that I was clean in the sight of God the Father, through God the Son; and I said, "Dear Lord, look down upon Thy child." I told Him that if I had a thousand souls and bodies, they should all be His. I could scarcely keep in the cart, my heart was so broken down with love and my eyes streamed with tears. When we reached home I ran upstairs, and there I had such a time as is better felt than described.

### **Sweet communion – but pride intervenes**

After this, for nearly twelve months, I enjoyed much sweet communion with the Lord. If I awoke in the night, some sweet portion of Scripture or some blessed hymn came to my mind, which led me to the Lord. My love abounded, and my zeal was great. But I had a lesson to learn – a lesson that (little or much) I have been learning ever since – that "the heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked." The Lord suffered me to fall into a sore temptation, and that was *pride*. I began to think that because I lived so near to the Lord, I was much better than my neighbours. Then the Lord hid His precious face from me, and for a long time I was left to the assaults of the devil, who now turned my fierce accuser. My deceitful heart, unbelief, and the great adversary, made terrible work in my soul. All past experience was called in question, not as to whether I had really felt the things related, but whether they were of God; and it seemed like presumption to think of going to God in prayer, or to hope to have the same sweet drawings.

I was truly in a wretched condition, the hand of God seeming to go out against me in providence. Trade fell off; for, as I could not go to the church or any of the places where I once attended, many of the influential people turned their backs upon me, and, instead of helping me, used their influence against me. However, the clergyman, who I felt was a good man, and his daughter always stood by me, even when, for

the sake of Christ and conscience, I was obliged to leave the church. When in the midst of deep distress I believe the Lord stirred them up to administer to my necessities. I am persuaded that the dear clergyman is now in glory, and that his child is a vessel of mercy, but the preaching did not meet my case.

### **Hears the gospel preached**

About this time I was invited to a Strict Baptist place of worship at Ogbourne St. Andrew. There I heard the gospel preached by a Mr. Pocock, one whom I esteemed as a sent-servant of the Lord. His prayer was the whole language of my soul. This so rivetted me to the people that I never wished to leave them.

But now I had another great trial: I had agreed to have a child baptized (so called) at church, but my conscience told me that it would be wrong. What was to be done? If I did not carry it out I might offend my best earthly friends, as well as my wife; but by God's help I was enabled to stand firm. At the last hour I felt obliged to tell them that I could not come.

I continued to worship with the few friends at Ogbourne. They wished me to join them; and though I believed the ordinance of baptism to be right, having been exercised about it, yet I could not see my way sufficiently clear. But one day as I was walking with my basket upon my head, I was reading the third chapter of John, and when I came to the twenty-third verse, where "John was baptizing in Aenon near to Salim, because there was much water there;" I said, "Dear Lord, I will now be baptized in thy name." I had such a broken and contrite heart, which I knew was from the Lord. I felt small and self-abased in my own eyes, and could bless the Lord, who had done so much for me. Accordingly, with a few others who had also been exercised, I was baptized.

### **Providential trials**

In obeying the command I felt a little heaven below, but the trial of faith was to follow. Soon after I had these words:

"I will be with thee, thy troubles to bless,  
And sanctify to thee thy deepest distress."

Things in providence now began to look blacker. Trade was gone, and I was in debt, without any prospect of obtaining a livelihood in the future. The last provisions were gone. I had no money, and could not ask for credit. I left my cart and harness with my largest creditor,

instructing him to sell them in part payment of his claim. I live to prove that whatever a man may be before he is called by grace, upon his becoming manifestly a new creature in Christ Jesus he is honest in heart; and it will be a great grief to him if he cannot carry it out in practice in the sight of men, being often afraid lest he should give the world occasion to open the mouth of scorn, and grieve the family of God.

The last money and provision being almost gone, I said to my wife, "It is Board-day. I will go and see what they will do for us." My body was so weak that I was unfit for work. My wife, fearing we should have to go into the workhouse, cried bitterly, saying that she could never live if we were separated. Then my poor heart was broken down, but I was enabled to bring our case before the Lord.

While on my knees I felt impressed to take a certain course, which the Lord helped me to carry out, and so blessed the undertaking that I was able to pay my creditors to their satisfaction, leaving a few pounds over for our use. This was a great deliverance, but having a large family and a very small trade, our stock was often very low, though never since that time have we been quite so destitute.

### **The Lord appears for him**

One day in the harvest-time, as I was walking with my basket on my head, noticing the plentiful crops of wheat around, I thought, "How good the Lord is in thus providing for man and beast!" Then a fiery dart from the devil was shot into my heart: "What is that to thee? it is not thine!" But these words came sweetly into my soul: "Bread shall be given thee; thy water shall be sure." Love and joy flowed into my soul, and often since have I been led to plead that promise before him.

On one occasion we were in a great difficulty, our rent being nearly due, and ten shillings were required to make up the amount. I had been crying to the Lord about it, when, one morning, as my wife and I were walking across the Downs, on looking down there lay a half-sovereign. On another similar occasion, just as I had been pleading with the Lord for a sovereign, my wife picked up one in a wheel-rut.

When in the garden one day, I told the Lord that I would rather be the least help in his vineyard than sit on ten thousand earthly thrones, when these words came sweetly into my soul: "With long life will I satisfy thee, and show thee my salvation." Again my soul was broken down with love and wonder.

I had just before this paid away all my money excepting a few



half-pence; the bag of flour was nearly exhausted, and I had not wherewith to pay for a fresh supply; so I said, "But, dear Lord, how about the flour?" when, just at the time, one of my children ran out to me, saying, "Father, what shall the man do with the bag of flour?" I went in, and there was a man with a supply of flour. I gave him a small sum, and when he was gone, poured out my soul to Him who declares that we are of more value than many sparrows.

At another time of pressing need, after much prayer, I had a £2 cheque sent. On another occasion a friend lent me the amount required to make up my rent. I promised to pay it in a given time by instalments, but was quite unable to do so. About this time he lost one of his best horses, and another was taken ill; the doctor said it would die. But my friend took the case to the Lord, saying, "Dear Lord, if thou wilt restore my horse, I will give poor Lawrence the money he owes me." He rose from his knees fully persuaded that his prayer would be answered, which came to pass. When he told me of it, we rejoiced together.

How many times, in such like conspicuous ways, has the Lord appeared for us!

### **Death of his little boy**

Some time after the above exercises, the Lord was pleased to take to Himself one of the children, a boy of ten months old. And here we had a very sharp trial, in addition to the loss of the child.

We had arranged for the funeral to take place in the churchyard on a certain day, and that the service should be conducted outside the churchyard. But on the morning of the day fixed for the interment the clergyman came, and said that, as the child had not been baptised, he could not allow the grave to be made in the churchyard. He also added, "Now, Lawrence, you see what trouble you have brought upon yourselves by not having your child baptised!"

I said, "Sir, I perceive that you are in gross error; what you call baptism, I call sprinkling, and it does the child neither good nor harm. My Bible says, 'Believe and be baptised,' and my God has taught me that the path of obedience is the path owned and blessed by Him."

But my feelings are not easily expressed. Here was the corpse, and no place to bury it! The poor bereaved mother also was in great distress, and my soul was brought low.

I read a Psalm, knelt down, and was enabled to cast my burden upon the Lord. While thus engaged, I was impressed to go to Mr. Pope, of

Marlborough, and tell him my case. I went accordingly, and when I had made known to him my difficulty, and the impression while in prayer, he willingly undertook the case. The little body was conveyed there on our perambulator, a grave prepared, and the funeral took place at the same time at which it was arranged to take place (had it been allowed) at Ogbourne. Dear Mr. Pepler gave a very solemn address at the grave.

When all was over, I asked the sexton what I owed him. He said, "Mr. Pope has settled that." Then I said, "Bless Mr. Pope's God, and thank him." I have mentioned the names of my two dear friends, and hope they will forgive me, as I ever wish to esteem them highly, as also others whose names I have not mentioned; but my God will not forget them or their labour of love to me for His sake.

### **Exercises about the ministry**

I had been for some years exercised about the great and solemn work of the ministry. I deeply felt my unfitness and unworthiness, as well as a great unwillingness to go out, but yet, at times, the fire seemed to burn within me, and I was, as it were, speaking before a people, when it appeared to be from the Lord. Then again I sank down, and was ready to conclude that it must be the work of the flesh, and I would try to dismiss all thoughts of it. Still, I was obliged, from time to time, to beg of the Lord that if these exercises were not from Him, He would deliver me from them; but if they were, that He would, in spite of the devil, the flesh, and the world, open doors for me.

I believe that He sent me for a time as a 'Scripture Reader' and 'Sick Visitor', and I hope that my labours were not altogether in vain. But those with whom I was connected did not, I believe, approve of all my sentiments. I was a Strict Baptist in principle, as I am now, and ever hope to be, as I meet with no other people who carry out the precepts and doctrines of the New Testament as they do. These things I hope ever to maintain, although I know that it will bring down the slander of those who hate and oppose these things. That, however, I fear not. I must live and die for myself; and idle thoughts and opinions of others concerning me will make no difference to me.

I now gave up my post as Scripture Reader, the devil assailing me with the temptation that I should either be put to open shame or that I should come to poverty, so that my wife and family would be starved at home or else have to go into the workhouse.

I well remember one day being on a journey from Avebury to

Kennet, when I was so greatly distressed on account of those things, that it almost amounted to distraction, fearing that my past exercises concerning the ministry were not of God, the enemy taking advantage of my position in providence. My unbelieving heart also aided him, and truly it was a wretched time for my soul.

### **Confirmation concerning the ministry**

One day, suddenly these words were applied with power: “I will make thee an able minister of the New Covenant.” I had a large parcel under my arm, but was obliged to put it down, while I stood amazed at the condescension of the Lord in stooping so low as to pick up such an unworthy one. Such life, light, and liberty attended the words that my unbelief was put to the blush, the devil was compelled to flee, and my trouble was gone. I was now willing to spend and be spent for the good of the people of God, and to do anything if I could be of the least use in the Lord’s vineyard.

From that time doors have been opened in a remarkable way, and, notwithstanding my many fears and much opposition, both from within and without, my good and gracious Master has ever supplied me with suitable clothing in which to stand up before His dear people. I am still dependent upon Him for every needful blessing, and feel my need of His continual teaching, for none can teach like Him. O that I loved Him more, lived more to His honour and glory, and had more love for precious souls! O that I may never be left to dishonour His dear Name, but be kept faithful to the end!

*TO BE CONTINUED*

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## **LIFTED HIGHER**

Jane, aged 13, was dying. All her short life she had been an earnest attender at the Sunday School, and manifested a tender spirit towards the things of God. As her last moments drew near, she lifted her eyes towards the ceiling, and in a whisper she said to her parents, “Lift me higher.” Her parents raised her up with pillows, but she faintly said, “No, not that; but *there*,” earnestly looking upwards. A few moments later her happy soul flew heavenwards. On her gravestone are the words:

Jane Baxter  
Aged 13 years  
*Lifted higher*

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## QUEEN VICTORIA

“By me kings reign” (Proverbs 8. 15).

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The year 2019 has been a year of Anniversaries – amongst them 75 years since the D Day Landings, 150 years since the death of Mr. J. C. Philpot, and 50 years since man first set foot on the moon. However, in this quarter’s *Perception* we wish to submit a few thoughts on Queen Victoria and her times, as this year marks the 200th Anniversary of her birth.

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### Her birth

For most Londoners, it was an ordinary Monday morning. But at 4.15 a.m., just as the light on that May morning would shortly begin to reflect on the Round Pond, all was astir at Kensington Palace as a baby was born within her walls that one day would provide half the monarchs of Europe.

The baby was delivered under candle-light – a further sixty years would elapse before Thomas Edison invented his incandescent light bulb.

Two hundred years ago, on 24th May 1819, Alexandrina Victoria came into the world. The naming of the baby had not been easy – the final list of possible names was Alexandrina Georgiana Augusta Victoria. The Archbishop of Canterbury asked, “By what name does it please your Royal Highness to call this child?” There was a silence. “Shall she be called Georgiana?” asked the Archbishop. “On no account,” replied the Regent. At last, Alexandrina Victoria found acceptance – but she always preferred to be known by her second name.

Her father was Prince Edward, the Duke of Kent, the fourth son of King George III. But when the baby was barely eight months old, on 23rd January 1820, he died. It had been a bitter winter. After a walk on a very cold and wet day he caught a chill. Pleurisy set in. In accordance with the thinking of the times, he was bled – copiously – by his doctor. Several pints were taken, which doubtless weakened the already sick man.

Six days later, her grandfather, the King, died too.

## Childhood

The baby proved not to be an easy child. Her governess said, “I have never seen such a passionate, naughty child.” Her mother admitted that “a little storm” had been raised at both the times of dressing and washing.



A tutor was appointed for the growing child, the Rev. George Davys, later to become Bishop of Peterborough (and buried in the Cathedral). Contrary to her reputation within the palace, he described Victoria as a “sweet-tempered child.” He was a man of the mildest disposition. No doubt he was one to whom Victoria responded more favourably than to those responsible for her day-to-day care.

Victoria was raised under close supervision and in seclusion by her mother, Princess Victoria of Saxe-Coburg-Saalfeld. For the first three years of her life, Victoria heard only German spoken. At the age of three she began to learn English but she included German words and phrases in her English for the rest of life, and spoke with a slight German accent. Her mother never allowed the child to begin her breakfast until someone had first tasted the food. She had a morbid distrust of her husband’s brother Ernest, who, had it not been for Victoria, would have come next in line to the throne. Perhaps her fears were not unfounded – her father’s three elder brothers all died, and at the age of 18 Victoria inherited the throne. Two years before, she contracted typhoid whilst visiting Ramsgate, no doubt through poor sanitation, and was seriously ill for a while.

## Marriage

The young Queen Victoria married Prince Albert of Saxe-Coburg in 1840. The two were first introduced in 1836 when Victoria was the seventeen year-old heir to the throne. Her uncle, the aged (and grumpy) King William IV, disapproved of the tiny state of Saxe-Coburg as one fit to produce a consort for the future Queen. However, before they were to meet again, the King had passed away. When Victoria and Albert did meet again, it did not take long for the young Queen to fall in love. “Albert really is quite charming and so excessively handsome,”

she wrote after he visited in October 1839. Albert, too, said, “I was quite carried away with a genuine outburst of love and affection.” Albert was unable to tender a proposal of marriage – etiquette precluded *anyone* proposing to the monarch. So Victoria proposed to him instead, at the same time declaring that she was “quite unworthy of him.”



The marriage took place on 10th February 1840 at 1.00 pm at the Chapel Royal, St. James’s Palace, the first marriage of a reigning queen of England since Queen “Bloody” Mary I in 1554.

The day dawned wet and windy. She wrote a little note to be delivered to Albert, lodged somewhere in the palace. “I have rested very well, and feel very comfortable today. What weather! I believe, however, the rain will cease.”

The rain continued to fall as Victoria arrived in a procession of carriages from Buckingham Palace. She wore a white dress of heavy silk satin, trimmed with Honiton lace. Other carriages conveyed the twelve young bridesmaids.

Albert entered the chapel to the strains of Handel’s ‘See, the conquering hero comes,’ escorted by a squadron of Life Guards. He stood near the ‘altar’ clasping a Bible bound in green velvet dressed in his British field marshal’s uniform. He was followed by Victoria, the twelve young bridesmaids carrying her train. The service proceeded, the Queen giving her responses in a voice “full of softness and music.” She was given away by her uncle, the Duke of Sussex. The music was conducted by Sir George Smart, composer of the tune Wiltshire.

The wedding breakfast was held at Buckingham Palace. We are told that the wedding cake weighed 300 pounds. The newlyweds went off to Windsor Castle for a three-day honeymoon. “Dearest Albert came up and fetched me downstairs, when we took leave of Mamma and drove off at near 4; I and Albert alone.” The on-lookers were enthusiastic, but not impressed: “They went off in a very poor and shabby style,” wrote one. “They were in one of the old travelling coaches, the postillions in undressed liveries, and a small escort.”

Victoria described her wedding day as “the happiest day of my life!”

## Children

Her first baby was born about a year after the wedding. It was a girl, christened Victoria Adelaide Mary Louisa. The birth of a son, Edward (later King Edward VII), just under a year later brought great joy. A succession of children followed Edward: Alice, Alfred, Helena, Louise, Arthur, Leopold and the last, Beatrice, in 1857.

Leopold, as soon as he could walk, displayed the sure signs of haemophilia, the only one of the four boys to do so. The church blamed the fact that he was the first child to be delivered under the influence of chloroform – “a decoy of Satan,” said the clergy. Women were *meant* to suffer.



*Queen Victoria with her family*

Alice and Beatrice proved to be carriers of the haemophilia gene. But where did the gene come from? No earlier member of the royal family had suffered from the condition. Medically, the gene can only be inherited by a girl from her father. Was Queen Victoria the illegitimate

daughter of a haemophiliac man? We do not believe that. Was one of Victoria's parents the carrier of a random mutation? We shall never know. What we do know is that the two daughters of Victoria who were carriers passed the disease to the Spanish and Russian royal families.

How different the course of history might have been were it not for the haemophilia gene. For example, her granddaughter Alexandra, the last Tsarina of Russia, was a carrier and passed it to her only son. In an effort to hide the truth of his condition from the public, she became mentally unstable and reclusive, which played into the hands of the Communists.

### **Death of her husband**

The premature death of Albert from typhoid in 1861 at the age of 42



*Queen Victoria in mourning*

was a devastating blow to Victoria. It was many years before she could even begin to recover. All her life she mourned him, remaining in deep mourning, wearing the widow's clothes of black silk crepe. She continued to work hard and conscientiously as a Queen, but for many years her appearances in public were rare. In the early years of the marriage there had been considerable suspicion and resentment of Albert as a German. By the time of his death this had largely gone and he was held in esteem by the population, who also mourned his death and felt deeply for their Queen in her loss.

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### **An interesting story concerning Queen Victoria**

A story is related concerning an old lady who had been one of the Queen's servants, and was living on a pension in a cottage on the Osborne House estate on the Isle of Wight.

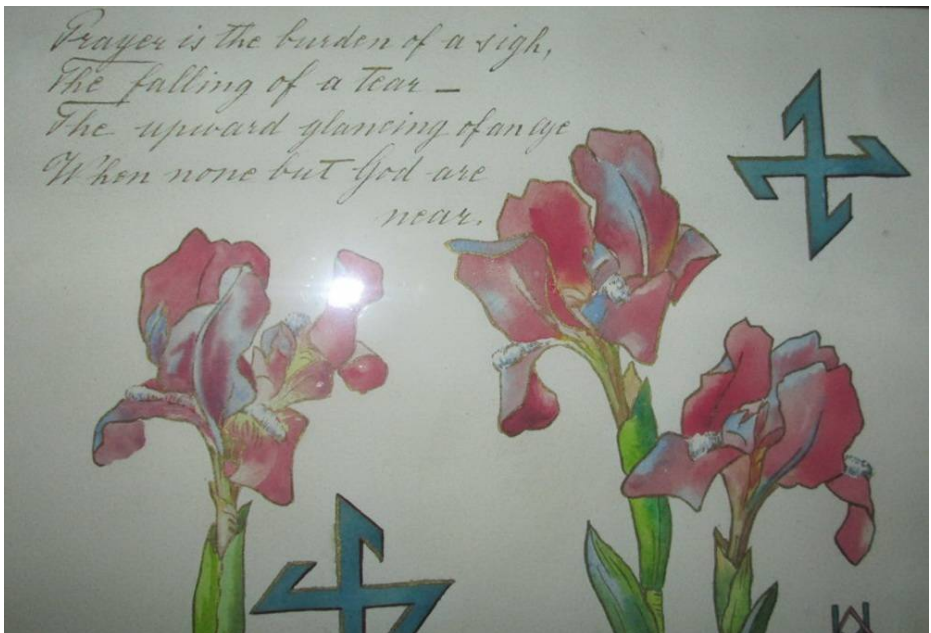
This old lady had a niece who ran a shop in Cowes. One early closing day, this niece went to her aunt's cottage to take afternoon tea. During the afternoon, Queen Victoria visited her pensioner, as occasionally she did. She remained for some time, knitting and chatting with the old lady, and also had tea with her and her niece.

After tea was finished, the Queen said, "Now I will read a few



verses from the fourteenth chapter of John,” which she did. Looking very kindly at the niece, she said, “I wonder whether you are a Christian, my dear?” “Oh, yes, your Majesty,” replied the young lady. “How do you know you are?” asked the Queen. “Because I have been christened and confirmed,” was the reply. The Queen made no reply, but quietly said, “Now we will have a few words of prayer, so you kneel down – we old ladies will bow our heads, as our rheumatism will not allow us to kneel.” The Queen then prayed and in her prayer she said, “Lord, open the eyes of this dear young girl and show her that without a change of heart, she never can become a true Christian; and show her that no outward observances can in any wise save her soul, and this I ask in the Name of the Lord Jesus Christ.”

Later, when the niece related this story to a friend (who wrote it down), she remarked, “Well, I have often sung, ‘God save the Queen,’ but I never dreamt that I should hear the Queen pray for me.” It is to be hoped that the Queen’s prayer was heard and answered, for it seems that the niece was truly converted not long after. She died four days before her twenty-first birthday.



*This hung in Queen Victoria's bedroom at Osborne House, Isle of Wight. The last line should, of course, read "When none but God is near."*

### The secret of England's greatness

An anecdote relating to Queen Victoria is frequently told, although claimed by some to be unfounded. Whilst at Windsor Castle, the Queen received an ambassador from East Africa. When asked by the diplomatic delegation how Britain had become such an influence in the world, she handed to the ambassador a beautifully bound copy of the Bible, saying, "Tell the Prince that *this* is the secret of England's greatness." The story was popularised by Thomas Barker's famous painting of the scene in the Audience Chamber at Windsor Castle.



*Queen Victoria Receives The Delegation by Thomas Barker*

Whether or not this particular anecdote is true (and we lean towards accepting that it is), it is certain that the Queen on more than one occasion used the Bible in respect of foreign affairs. To the ruler of Abeokuta, the largest city and state capital of Ogun State in southwest Nigeria, the Queen sent copies of the Bible in English and Arabic "to show how much we value God's word."

### **Diamond Jubilee**

The summer of 1897 was Queen Victoria's Diamond Jubilee. Unlike the Golden Jubilee ten years before, this time no crowned heads were invited. The thought of crowding them into Buckingham Palace was more than the Queen could bear. On 22nd June 1897 the Queen processed in magnificence through the streets of London. The procession halted at the steps of St. Paul's Cathedral. But the now-infirm Queen refused to budge from her carriage! Perhaps it was the sight of all those steps. There was nothing for it but to hold the service out of doors. "An out of doors service before St. Paul's," exclaimed her cousin. "Has one ever heard of such a thing? After 60 years reign, to thank God in the street!"

### **Her declining years**

The Queen's health was deteriorating. The last few years of her life were particularly sad. Her son, Leopold, had died as a result of haemophilia as early as 1884 at the age of 30. Then the initial losses in the Boer War, which broke out in October 1899, filled her with anxiety. There were family deaths, too. Her grandson Alfred died in February 1899 at the age of 24 – it is generally accepted that he shot himself with a revolver. The following year, in 1900, her second son, Alfred, died of throat cancer at the age of 55. "My poor darling Alfie gone too," cried the Queen. "It is hard at eighty-one." Another grandson, Christian, died of enteric fever (probably typhoid). Then her daughter Vicky, widow of Kaiser Frederick of Germany, was suffering from advanced and incurable cancer that had spread to her spine, although the Queen did not know and thought it was lumbago. "We pray daily that she may suffer less," she wrote. On Christmas day, Jane, Lady Churchill, the queen's oldest and most trusted friend, was found dead in bed while staying with the queen at Osborne House.

In the middle of January 1901 it was clear that the Queen's end was near. After a series of strokes, her children were summoned to Osborne House on 18th January. At four o'clock on the afternoon of Tuesday, 22nd January, a bulletin was issued to say that "*The Queen is slowly sinking.*"

The Queen lay in her great white bed. Around her stood her children and grandchildren. In an effort to rouse the dying Queen, one by one they spoke their name and kissed her hand. There was no response. The Bishop of Winchester and the Rector of St Mildred's

Church chanted prayers and hymns. Her grandson, Kaiser Wilhelm of Germany, sat by her side and supported her for more than two hours.

Superintendent Fraser ordered the household police to surround Osborne House to prevent any news leaking out. All telephone and telegraph wires were to be suspended, and no servant or messenger was to leave the house.

A short while later, Superintendent Fraser walked down the long gravel drive to the entrance gate where a large crowd was waiting, and pinned a small notice onto the bulletin board.

*Osborne House, January 22, 6.45pm*

*Her Majesty the Queen breathed her last at 6.30pm,  
surrounded by her children and grand-children.*

“Oh, my beloved Mama! Is she *really* gone?” wrote her daughter. “It breaks my heart.”

The Queen’s death in 1901 ushered in not only a new century, but a darker, more uncertain age.

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## **The Victorian Age**

The Victorian age is measured by the life and reign of Queen Victoria. It was a period of unparalleled magnificence and colour in British history. Her reign provided a period of stability in the country.

It was the age of the Industrial Revolution and huge advances in science. It was also an age when Bishop J. C. Ryle could write (in 1877): “Most English people who have any respect for appearance go to some church or chapel on Sunday. To attend no place of worship in this country is the exception, not the rule.” Sadly, how very different to our day when the exact opposite is true.

What were the feelings of the godly of that time? How did those living view this period in the history of our nation? It appears that they felt that God had a special favour to our land, above all the other nations of the world. The Editor of the *Gospel Standard* magazine writing in 1893 evidently felt this to be the case:

“To what one nation under the whole heaven has God been so good, and shown himself so favourably disposed, as He has done to us? What one people in all the earth has such a history of providence and grace to read as we have? To whom has Almighty God discovered himself in so many thousand merciful forms as He has done to us? What wonderful testimony to the truth and power of His grace, sealed with the blood of His dear saints, has He given us to witness! And O with what splendour of grace has God distinguished this nation, and made it to stand out for all ages with an exceedingly gracious conspicuousness, as a standard-bearer for His great and glorious name! What witnesses to the nations of the earth has He made us of His truth, in that He has honoured us to print and publish His Word to an almost incredible extent! The blessed Book, the Bible, has been sent from our shores, in almost every language, to almost every clime beneath the skies. Upon whom has He spent so much grace, and put so much honour?”

In spite of this, the Editor spoke of the present time as “ripe and pregnant for evil, both in the nation and in the church.” Referring to attacks by leading statesmen on the country’s Protestantism, he wrote: “We know pretty well how much we are to expect from those in authority, and more particularly so when *from the very throne itself* and downwards, there is such an evident leaning towards the beast and the false prophet.” Reading the words we have put in italics did, we must confess, rather surprise us. All her life the Queen was a constant attender at Protestant worship, and she had a very notable respect for the Word of God. We are unaware of any leanings of the monarch towards Rome. The Queen strongly supported the Public Worship Regulation Act 1874, which removed Catholic rituals from the Anglican liturgy.

### **“Our Late Beloved Queen – A national blessing”**

Writing in the *Gospel Standard* March 1901 under the title Our Late Beloved Queen, the editor said:

“Since the last issue of the *Gospel Standard* we regret to say that all that was mortal of our late beloved Queen Victoria, who departed this life on January 22nd, 1901, has been removed from our midst. Great numbers of her loyal subjects, whose hearts were deeply affected by the great loss the nation, and, we may add, the whole civilised world, has sustained in the death of her

gracious Majesty, who had won the hearts and affections, not only of all her people throughout her dominions, over whom she had reigned for nearly 64 years, but she had also gained the esteem and the best wishes of nearly every nation upon the earth. This we gather from the numerous expressions of heartfelt sympathy and condolence that have reached the leaders of our beloved England from all parts of the world. We have been most agreeably surprised to see that special *mark* of personal respect shown to our late sovereign lady Queen Victoria. Such illustrious queens are not given to every nation in the world, nor does it fall to the lot of every reigning sovereign to sway the sceptre for such a long term of years, and over such an extensive empire; nor have we ever heard that any reigning monarch in the world's history stood higher in the esteem and affections of their people than did our Queen in the esteem and affections of her people. Therefore we must say that it is a kind Providence that has very mercifully smiled upon her, that has enlarged her coast and has given her this exalted position in the hearts of her people, and has made her famous in the eyes of the nations. As our beloved Queen, and the crowned head of our nation and empire, she sought the good of all her people and did all in her power to establish a lasting peace upon a firm basis in all her British and foreign possessions. This has gained for her the admiration and goodwill of all her people; and here it is that we see the Lord has made her unto us a great national blessing for which we have felt truly grateful."

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### **Her legacy**

Today, the reigning families of five of the monarchies of Europe are directly descended from Queen Victoria. Our own Queen Elizabeth II is Queen Victoria's great-great-granddaughter. The monarchies of Norway, Sweden, Denmark and Spain are also directly descended from Queen Victoria, and in the case of the Netherlands and Belgium, the relationship, though not direct, is close.

The Queen saw her grandchildren only rarely, and for them to be in her presence was awesome, but we are told she was exceptionally kind, sympathetic and understanding. One could always go to her in trouble.

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## THE WORLD – Part 3

Bishop J. C. Ryle

*“Come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord”  
(2 Cor. 6. 17).*



*Bishop J. C. Ryle*

In the first part of his paper, Bishop Ryle showed from Scripture that the world is a source of great danger to our souls. In the second part he showed us what separation from the world is *not* and in this third part what separation really is.

In the third place, I shall try to show *what true separation from the world really is.*

I take up this branch of my subject with a very deep sense of its difficulty. That there is a certain line of conduct which all true Christians ought to pursue with respect to “the world, and the things of the world,” is very evident. The texts already quoted make that plain. The key to the solution of that question lies in the word “separation.” But in what separation consists it is not easy to show. On some points it is not hard to lay down particular rules; on others it is impossible to do more than state general principles, and leave every one to apply them according to his position in life. This is what I shall now attempt to do.

(a) First and foremost, he that desires to “come out from the world, and be separate,” *must steadily and habitually refuse to be guided by the world’s standard of right and wrong.*

The rule of the bulk of mankind is to go with the stream, to do as others, to follow the fashion, to keep in with the common opinion, and to set your watch by the town-clock. The true Christian will never be content with such a rule as that. He will simply ask, What saith the Scripture? What is written in the Word of God? He will maintain firmly that nothing can be right which God says is wrong, and that the

customs and opinions of his neighbours can never make that to be a trifle which God calls serious, or that to be no sin which God calls sin. He will never think lightly of such sins as drinking, swearing, gambling, lying, cheating, swindling, or breach of the seventh commandment, because they are common, and many say, "Where is the harm?" That miserable argument, "Everybody thinks so, everybody says so, everybody does it, everybody will be there," goes for nothing with him. Is it condemned or approved by the Bible? That is his only question. If he stands alone in the parish, or town, or congregation, he will not go against the Bible. If he has to come out from the crowd, and take a position by himself, he will not flinch from it rather than disobey the Bible. This is genuine Scripture separation.

(b) He that desires to "come out from the world and be separate," *must be very careful how he spends his leisure time.*

This is a point which at first sight appears of little importance. But the longer I live, the more I am persuaded that it deserves most serious attention. Honourable occupation and lawful business are a great safeguard to the soul, and the time that is spent upon them is comparatively the time of our least danger. The devil finds it hard to get a hearing from a busy man. But when the day's work is over, and the time of leisure arrives, then comes the hour of temptation.

I do not hesitate to warn every man who wants to live a Christian life, to be very careful how he spends his evenings. Evening is the time when we are naturally disposed to unbend after the labours of the day; and evening is the time when the Christian is too often tempted to lay aside his armour, and consequently brings trouble on his soul. "Then cometh the devil," and with the devil the world. Evening is the time when the poor man is tempted to go to the public-house, and fall into sin. Evening is the time when the tradesman too often goes to the Inn parlour, and sits for hours hearing and seeing things which do him no good. Evening is the time which the higher classes choose for dancing, card playing, and the like; and consequently never get to bed till late at night. If we love our souls, and would not become worldly, let us mind how we spend our evenings. Tell me how a man spends his evenings, and I can generally tell what his character is.

The true Christian will do well to make it a settled rule never to *waste* his evenings. Whatever others may do, let him resolve always to make time for quiet, calm thought – for Bible-reading and prayer. The



rule will prove a hard one to keep. It may bring on him the charge of being unsocial and over strict. Let him not mind this. Anything of this kind is better than habitual late hours in company, hurried prayers, slovenly Bible reading, and a bad conscience. Even if he stands alone in his parish or town, let him not depart from his rule. He will find himself in a minority, and be thought a peculiar man. But this is genuine Scriptural separation.

(c) He that desires to “come out from the world and be separate,” *must steadily and habitually determine not to be swallowed up and absorbed in the business of the world.*

A true Christian will strive to do his duty in whatever station or position he finds himself, and to do it well. Whether statesman, or merchant, or banker, or lawyer, or doctor, or tradesman, or farmer, he will try to do his work so that no one can find occasion for fault in him. But he will not allow it to get between him and Christ. If he finds his business beginning to eat up his Sundays, his Bible-reading, his private prayer, and to bring clouds between him and heaven, he will say, “Stand back! There is a limit. Hitherto thou mayest go, but no further. I cannot sell my soul for place, fame, or gold.” Like Daniel, he will make time for his communion with God, whatever the cost may be. In all this he will find he stands almost alone. Many will laugh at him, and tell him they get on well enough without being so strict and particular. He will heed it not. He will resolutely hold the world at arm’s length, whatever present loss or sacrifice it may seem to entail. He will choose rather to be less rich and prosperous in this world. To stand alone in this way, to run counter to the ways of others, requires immense self denial. But this is genuine Scriptural separation.

(d) He that desires to “come out from the world and be separate” *must steadily abstain from all amusements and recreations which are inseparably connected with sin.*

This is a hard subject to handle, and I approach it with pain. But I do not think I should be faithful to Christ, and faithful to my office as a minister, if I did not speak very plainly about it, in considering such a matter as separation from the world.

Let me, then, say honestly, that I cannot understand how any one who makes any pretence to real vital religion can allow himself to attend races and theatres. Conscience, no doubt, is a strange thing, and every

man must judge for himself and use his liberty. One man sees no harm in things which another regards with abhorrence as evil. I can only give my own opinion for what it is worth, and entreat my readers to consider seriously what I say.

That to look at horses running at full speed is in itself perfectly harmless, no sensible man will pretend to deny. That many plays, such as Shakespeare's, are among the finest productions of the human intellect, is equally undeniable. But all this is beside the question. The question is whether horse-racing and theatres, as they are now conducted in England, are not inseparably bound up with things that are downright wicked. I assert without hesitation that they are so bound up. The breach of God's commandments so invariably accompanies the race and the play, that you cannot go to the amusement without helping sin.

I entreat all professing Christians to remember this, and to take heed what they do. I warn them plainly that they have no right to shut their eyes to facts which every intelligent person knows, for the mere pleasure of seeing a horse-race, or listening to good actors or actresses. I warn them that they must not talk of separation from the world, if they can lend their sanction to amusements which are invariably connected with gambling, betting, drunkenness, and fornication. These are the things "which God will judge." "The end of those things is death." (Heb. 13. 4; Rom. 6. 21.)

Hard words these, no doubt! But are they not true? It may seem to your relatives and friends very strait-laced, strict, and narrow, if you tell them you cannot go to the races or the theatre with them. But we must fall back on first principles. Is the world a danger to the soul, or is it not? Are we to come out from the world, or are we not? These are questions which can only be answered in one way.

If we love our souls we must have nothing to do with amusements which are bound up with sin. Nothing short of this can be called genuine scriptural separation from the world.

(e) He that desires to "come out from the world, and be separate," must be *moderate in the use of lawful and innocent recreations*.

No sensible Christian will ever think of condemning all recreations. In a world of wear and tear like we live in, occasional unbending and relaxation are good for all. Body and mind alike require seasons of lighter occupation, and opportunities of letting off high spirits, and especially when they are young. Exercise itself is a positive necessity

for the preservation of mental and bodily health. I see no harm in cricket, rowing, running, and other manly athletic recreations. I find no fault with those who play at chess and such-like games of skill. We are all fearfully and wonderfully made. No wonder the poet says:

“Strange that a harp of a thousand strings  
Should keep in tune so long!”

Anything which strengthens nerves, and brain, and digestion, and lungs, and muscles, and makes us more fit for Christ’s work, so long as it is not in itself sinful, is a blessing, and ought to be thankfully used. Anything which will occasionally divert our thoughts from their usual grinding channel, in a healthy manner, is a good and not an evil.

But it is the excess of these innocent things which a true Christian must watch against, if he wants to be separate from the world. He must not devote his whole heart, and soul, and mind, and strength, and time to them, as many do, if he wishes to serve Christ. There are hundreds of lawful things which are good in moderation, but bad when taken in excess: medicine can be healthful in small quantities, but downright poison when swallowed down in huge doses. In nothing is this so true as it is in the matter of recreations. The use of them is one thing, and the abuse of them is another. The Christian who uses them must know when to stop, and how to say “Hold: enough!” Do they interfere with his private religion? Do they take up too much of his thoughts and attention? Have they a secularizing effect on his soul? Have they a tendency to pull him down to earth? Then let him take care. All this will require courage, self-denial, and firmness. It is a line of conduct which will often bring on us the ridicule and contempt of those who know not what moderation is, and who spend their lives in making trifles serious things and serious things trifles. But if we mean to come out from the world we must not mind this. We must be “temperate” even in lawful things, whatever others may think of us. This is genuine Scriptural separation.

(f) Last, but not least, he that desires to “come out from the world and be separate” must be *careful how he conducts himself in friendships, intimacies, and close relationships with worldly people.*

We cannot help meeting many unconverted people as long as we live. We cannot avoid having dealings with them, and doing business with them, unless “we go out of the world” (1 Cor. 5. 10). To treat them

with the utmost courtesy, kindness, and charity, whenever we do meet them, is a positive duty. But acquaintance is one thing, and intimate friendship quite another. To seek their society without cause, to choose their company, to cultivate intimacy with them, is very dangerous to the soul. Human nature is so constituted that we cannot be much with other people without effect on our own character. The old proverb will never fail to prove true: "Tell me with whom a man chooses to live, and I will tell you what he is." The Scripture says expressly, "He that walketh with wise men shall be wise; but a companion of fools shall be destroyed" (Prov. 13. 20). If then a Christian, who desires to live consistently, chooses for his friends those who either do not care for their souls, or the Bible, or God, or Christ, or holiness, or regard them as of secondary importance, it seems to me impossible for him to prosper in his religion. If friends will not walk in the narrow way with us, we must not walk in the broad way to please them.

The principle here laid down ought to be carefully remembered by all unmarried Christians in the choice of a husband or wife. I fear it is too often entirely forgotten. Too many seem to think of everything except religion in choosing a partner for life, or to suppose that it will come somehow as a matter of course. Yet when a praying, Bible-reading, God-fearing, Christ-loving, Sabbath-keeping Christian marries a person who takes no interest whatever in serious religion, what can the result be but injury to the Christian, or immense unhappiness? Health is not infectious, but disease is. As a general rule, in such cases, the good go down to the level of the bad, and the bad do not come up to the level of the good. The subject is a delicate one, and I do not care to dwell upon it. But this I say confidently to every unmarried Christian man or woman – if you love your soul, if you do not want to fall away and backslide, if you do not want to destroy your own peace and comfort for life, resolve never to marry any person who is not a thorough Christian, whatever the resolution may cost you. You had better die than marry an unbeliever. Stand to this resolution, and let no one ever persuade you out of it.

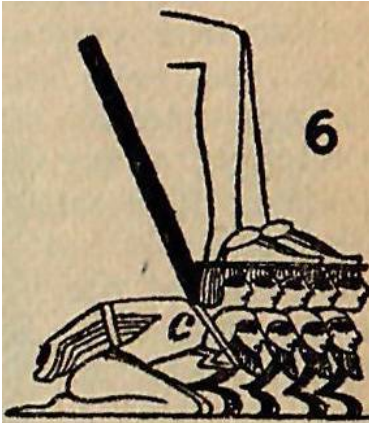
I offer these six general hints to all who wish to follow the apostle Paul's advice, and to come out from the world and be separate. In giving them, I lay no claim to infallibility; but I believe they deserve consideration and attention.

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## THY FOOTSTOOL

*“The LORD said to my Lord, Sit thou at My right hand, until I make Thine enemies Thy footstool” (Psalm 110. 1).*

We may wonder what this text means – enemies being made a footstool. Our picture shows the Egyptian Pharaoh, Amenhotep II, placing his feet upon his enemies. These vanquished persons, whose arms have been tied behind their backs, were now his footstool.



This practice is referred to in the book of Joshua. “And it came to pass, when they brought out those kings to Joshua, that Joshua called for all the men of Israel, and said unto the captains of the men of war which went with him, Come near, put your feet upon the necks of these kings. And they came near, and put their feet upon the necks of them” (Joshua 10. 24).

The “footstool” is mentioned as part of the throne of a king and symbolizes God’s throne. “Exalt ye the LORD our God, and worship at His footstool; for He is holy” (Psalm 99. 5).

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## FREEWILL OFFERINGS

Today we tend to speak of collections, perhaps monthly collections, or special collections. In the past it was much more common to speak of freewill offerings, which is very much a scriptural phrase, see, for example Ezra 8. 28: “The silver and the gold are a freewill offering unto the Lord God of your fathers.”



*Our picture shows a collecting box found in St. Mary’s Church, Stowe, Buckingham in the beautiful grounds of Stowe School. Parts of the church date back to 1270.*

## HARPENDEN BETHESDA HOME 50TH ANNIVERSARY

*(We thank one of our readers for this article)*

On a beautiful day, similar to 50 years ago, an important milestone was reached with the anniversary of the opening of the Harpenden Bethesda Home. Some of the people attending were working at the Home as teenagers and in their twenties when it opened so for them it held many, many memories.

We were so pleased that Mr. Ramsbottom was well enough to conduct the afternoon thanksgiving service which was held in the lounge with the overflow in the diningroom. It was also relayed into the large marquee which had been erected in the gardens. Mr. and Mrs. Ramsbottom were very much involved in helping set up the Home in the early days by serving on the first Home Committee.

About 170 visitors attended. The afternoon began with the service at 3.00pm. Mr. Ramsbottom preached from Hebrews 13. 8: "Jesus Christ the same yesterday, and to day, and for ever." During the course of his sermon he mentioned some of his memories of the early years. The singing was grand and many people said how much they had enjoyed the service.

Then there was an hour's mingling time while the tea was transported into the marquee by willing helpers. The children enjoyed ringing the gong for tea when everyone assembled themselves for the buffet tea. Some people sat in the marquee at tables, but the majority spread themselves in the garden and under the trees.







*Mrs. Pauline Watts, widow of past General Secretary, Mr John Watts*



A really happy atmosphere prevailed. The children enjoyed all the space in the gardens and ran round while the adults chatted. People who hadn't seen each other for years were glad to 'catch up'. Altogether it was a memorable day and one we shall always remember.



*Mr. B. A. Ramsbottom with Mr. A. W. Chapman*



*A young people's table*



*Some of the past and present staff*

**SERMON preached at Bethel Chapel, Luton  
by Mr. B. A. Ramsbottom at a baptising service  
on Lord's day morning, 30th September 2018**

**Text:** “*This is the way, walk ye in it*” (Isaiah 30. 21).

This is a short word, a well-known word, a beautiful word, and it was spoken by the Lord Himself. With the Lord's help this morning, I want to bring this word before you in three different ways.

“*This is the way, walk ye in it.*” First of all, *the way of salvation, the way to heaven.* We are favoured this morning to meet together for a baptismal service, and it is a beautiful ordinance, but it is not the way of salvation; it is not the way to heaven. There is only one way to heaven, and that is Christ. There are many ways to hell. O what a solemn word that was the Lord spoke on one occasion. He said, “There is a way which seemeth right unto a man, but the end thereof are the ways of death.” O the vital thing for you and me is to be found in the way that leads to heaven at last, and that way must be all of mercy; it must be all of grace. Our Lord Jesus said, “I am the Way, the Truth, and the Life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by Me.”

So I wonder how many of us are really concerned about our souls and our sins and our salvation. By nature we are not right; we have fallen short; we have sinned against a holy God. One day we must meet Him. We must meet Him as our righteous Judge, and that great question comes:

“Pause, my soul! and ask the question,  
Art thou ready to meet God?”

Now if we are walking in the way of sin, we are not ready to meet God, and if we are walking in the way of self-righteousness, trusting in ourselves, or anything we can do or have done, that will never do in the great day.

“*This is the way, walk ye in it.*” It is not just the way our Lord Jesus taught. It is not just the way that was His example. It is the way of His sacred death on the cross, where all the sins of all His people were laid on Him, and He suffered for them, and He bore them, and He shed His precious blood, and He for ever took them away. And so He opened



that new and living way, even into heaven itself, by His own death and by His own resurrection, and there is no other way.

If your religion and mine is right, we shall want to be walking in that way which leads to heaven. We want to walk in a way where there is forgiveness, where our sins can be cleansed, where they can be put away, where we can be accepted by a great and holy God. O the wonder of it, that the Lord Jesus has made that way, and He is that way, and unworthy, guilty sinners confessing their sin, forsaking their sin, pleading His mercy, looking to His precious blood, are welcome, thrice welcome, to walk in this way of salvation, this way which leads to heaven at last. O may many of you hear something of the authority of this word, especially those of you seeking the Lord's face, those who are really concerned about your souls and the reality of vital things.

"This is the way, walk ye in it." You might prove what we sometimes sing of a person so troubled – O how can I be found in the way? Now this is it:

"Till late I heard my Saviour say,  
'Come hither, soul, I am the Way.'"

That is it. "This is the way, walk ye in it." And what is the soul's response in the spirit of it? It is this:

"Lo! glad I come; and Thou, blest Lamb,  
O take me to Thee as I am;  
Nothing but sin I Thee can give;  
Nothing but love may I receive."

There is something that follows in that beautiful hymn. We believe Bethany through grace has experienced these things, all of God's mercy. But the language of that beautiful hymn:

"Then will I tell to sinners round,  
What a dear Saviour I have found."

There are many here this morning, and if I asked them, they could stand up and say, "Amen" to that; Yes, I have found Him to be a dear Saviour.

"This is the way, walk ye in it." So that is the first aspect of this truth. We want to set it on a solid foundation: grace from first to last, Christ from first to last, nothing in self, everything in the Saviour.

“This is the way, walk ye in it.” And then secondly, the way we seek to walk this morning: *the way of believer’s baptism*. Now let us be clear: believer’s baptism is not saving. The water of believer’s baptism does not wash away sin, but that does not mean that it is unimportant. Nothing is unimportant commanded by our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. “This is the way, walk ye in it” – not because it is a custom, but because it is the loving commandment of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. “If ye love Me, keep My commandments.” “This *is* the way,” the way of obedience, the way of following the Saviour, the way of honouring Him, the way of openly professing His name.

“This *is* the way, walk ye in it.” Our Lord Jesus Christ set a beautiful example. He was the Son of God. In Him there was no sin, no blemish, no taint of sin. But what did He say? “Thus it becometh us to fulfil all righteousness,” and He would be identified with His people, His unworthy people, and He would set a pattern for them, and He would lead the way. And so He came to Jordan, the River Jordan, to be baptized by John. You can remember, you can understand how John shrank from it. He said, “I have need to be baptized of Thee, and comest Thou to me?” “Suffer it to be so now.”

O the beauty I have seen by faith I could never tell you, as I have followed on the banks of Jordan and by faith seen John taking the sacred body of our Lord Jesus and immersing it, laying it beneath Jordan’s stream, down into the water and under the water and out of the water. And that ordinance of believer’s baptism was honoured by God. The Holy Ghost descended from heaven like a sacred dove, and the eternal Father spoke: “This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.” It is our privilege, our honour, to follow, to walk in obedience to Him. Sitting in the pulpit this morning – I do not want to use fanciful language, but there is a word which says that there is rejoicing in heaven over one sinner that repenteth – and I felt this morning, Father, Son and Holy Ghost, and the redeemed, there is rejoicing in heaven.

“This is the way, walk ye in it” – the way honoured by the Lord Jesus Himself and commanded by Him. And then we have the examples in the Acts of the Apostles, and that lovely account I read of the baptism of the Ethiopian eunuch. He was concerned about his soul. He had been all the way to Jerusalem and he was returning, and it seems he was disappointed. He had not got what he wanted. Many of you have

known that experience. You have gone to chapel, you have gone to a baptizing service, and you are going home and you are disappointed. Now the Lord knows how to deal with disappointed ones. He took Philip away from the thousands he was preaching to in Samaria, and He brought him down the desert way to Gaza, and there is a little oasis there. The Lord had provided it.

Before the baptism, there was something else. The eunuch in his bewilderment and his deep concern and his questions was reading Isaiah 53. “Of whom speaketh the prophet this? of himself, or of some other man?” What a word is this: “Then Philip opened his mouth, and began at the same scripture, and preached unto him Jesus.” And under the Holy Ghost’s influence, he preached Jesus right into that poor man’s heart. He was able to believe. He was able to rejoice in believing. But what a subject – the sin-atonement sufferings of the Lamb of God! “He was led as a sheep to the slaughter; and like a lamb dumb before his shearer, so opened He not His mouth” – the ground, the foundation of his belief.

And then the great question: “See, here is water; what doth hinder me to be baptized?” Often God’s people have many hindrances; I did. But the Lord knows how to remove them. “What doth hinder me?” “If thou believest with all thine heart, thou mayest.” Now that is the New Testament qualification. It is not just an empty, formal belief, not just believing that Jesus lived and died and rose again. It is that being brought to rest your whole hope for eternity upon Him, all the weight of your sin, your soul’s salvation, to believe with all your heart. And then we see them going down “*into the water*” together, “and he baptized him,” and then coming “*up out of the water*,” and Philip was taken away, and the eunuch “went on his way rejoicing.” He had found Jesus. He had found the glorious essence of this verse: “This is the way, walk ye in it.”

*TO BE CONTINUED*

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The superintendent once asked the Sunday school children: “If I were to ask you the way to the next town, you would, no doubt, be able tell me. But if I were to ask you the way to heaven, what answer would you give me?” For a while there was no answer. Then a very little girl gave the right answer: “Jesus Christ is the way.”

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## REVIEW

**Social Media and Smart Phones: A Warning.** A small booklet of this title has been sent to us. The authors explain: “We have written this pamphlet because of our increasing concern about the ensnaring effect of social media and the misuse of smart phones.” The booklet sets out the facts in a particularly clear manner. The warnings over the dangers of the misuse of smart phones should lead to much self-examination.

Although always taking a keen interest in technology, the editor, being of the older generation, readily admits to being not particularly ‘switched-on.’ However, no-one can fail to observe the vast amount of time some of the young people (and older people too) spend on their phones. We wonder, “What *are* they doing all this time?” Recently some young people showed us a few things concerning social media, and, frankly, we were absolutely amazed and shocked at what we saw. It was far more widespread than we had imagined. It seemed that virtually everyone we could think of was out there somewhere – on Facebook, Twitter, Instagram etc. with photos of even the most trivial events in their lives for all and sundry to share. We can understand how one of our ministers has described the scene as ‘The Devil’s Playground.’ A concerned mother recently commented, “It makes me think of the text, ‘Your life is hid with Christ in God.’ There are many lives today that are certainly not hid.”

The advent of smart phones has radically changed our society. Understandably, family members like to keep in touch using something like WhatsApp and this can be beneficial and helpful. But much of the rest can never be for our spiritual good, and we are left wondering “Where have we got to?” and “Where are we going?”

The booklet gives an informative overview of social media. Speaking of the key aspects, it says: “The first is the range of social media channels which people use. These include Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, Tumblr, Reddit, WhatsApp, hi5, About.me and Ning amongst many. Facebook, which was invented in 2004, has over 1.85 billion users of whom approximately 32 million are in the United Kingdom. On Twitter around 350,000 ‘tweets’ (short messages) are sent per minute which equates to around 200 billion per year. On Instagram 80 million photographs are shared each day.” There are many appropriate Scripture quotations, including: “Turn away mine eyes from beholding vanity; and quicken Thou me in Thy way” (Psalm 119. 37).

We commend this booklet, which can be obtained free of charge from the authors: Mr. & Mrs. D. M. Pickles, Willow Tree Cottage, Barrow Lane, Harwell, Oxon OX11 0EA.

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## A FEW CURRENT MATTERS

### **Pope alters wording in Lord's Prayer**

Pope Francis has approved a change to the wording of the Lord's Prayer. Instead of saying, "Lead us not into temptation", congregations will now say: "Do not let us fall into temptation." In 2017 the Pope said: "It is not a good translation because it speaks of a God who induces temptation." The Episcopal Conference of Italy approved the change in May 2019. We do not feel there is any necessity to tamper with the present rendering. As sinners, we know (and feel) how easily we can be led astray, and it is a petition that God might hold us up, and not allow us to run into sinful paths.

### **Loss of plant species**

Research by scientists from the Royal Botanic Gardens at Kew shows that at least two species of plant are lost for ever each year. It is thought that, over the past 250 years, 600 plant species have vanished. Many losses are the result of changes in land use. Plants provide both the oxygen we breathe, and the food we eat as told in Psalm 104.14: "He causeth the grass to grow for the cattle, and herb for the service of man: that he may bring forth food out of the earth."

### **Our country and the Lord's Day**

That our country has lost all sense of the sanctity of the Lord's Day was confirmed by a quick glance at one of the national newspapers on Monday, 15th July. The first three pages were devoted entirely to England's victory over New Zealand at Lord's cricket ground the previous day. (The match was watched by a crowd of 30,000 at Lord's and an estimated global television audience of one billion.) The next two pages of the paper were devoted to Sunday's men's single finals at Centre Court, Wimbledon, attended by the Duke and Duchess of Cambridge. Further on, another entire page was devoted to Prince Harry and Meghan's attendance at the star-studded premiere of Disney's *The*

*Lion King* at Leicester Square, London on Sunday evening, with a picture of them rubbing shoulders with some half-naked pop singer. What a sad indictment this is of our so-called protestant country, where our Queen is the ‘Supreme Governor of the Church of England’ – and just a handful of worshippers in most places.

### **Sparrows in decline**

The number of sparrows (to which the Lord Jesus so frequently referred) has more than halved since the 1970s. Researchers have found that three-quarters of those they studied were infected with a malaria parasite which makes the birds lethargic and unable to eat. The study was led by the Zoological Society of London. “Are not two sparrows sold for a farthing? and one of them shall not fall on the ground without your Father” (Matt. 10. 29).

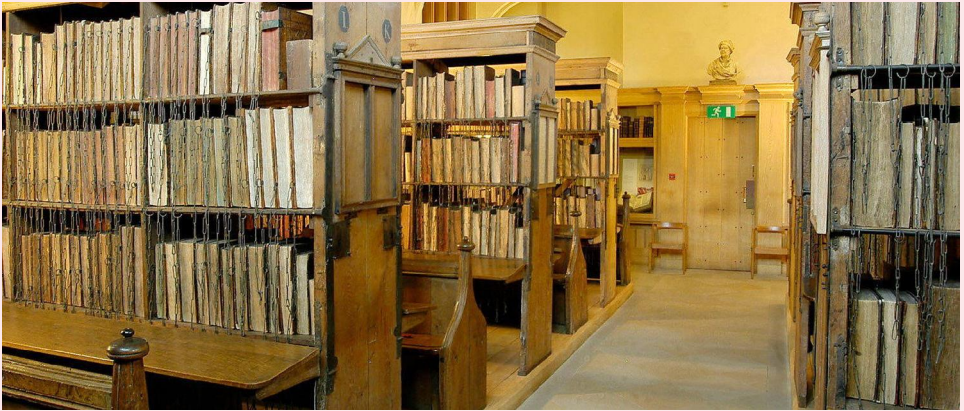
### **Prince William visits Israel**

Prince William undertook a four day trip to Israel at the end of June, visiting Jerusalem and the Occupied Palestinian Territories. He was welcomed by both the Israeli prime minister and the Palestinian president. The last day of his visit was to Jerusalem. Accompanied by Jewish rabbis, Prince William approached the Western Wall through a passage formed by police barricades that held back a crowd of onlookers. Wearing a skullcap he followed the Jewish tradition of placing a written prayer between the stones, and resting the palm of one hand against the wall. Whilst in the city he visited the tomb of his great-grandmother, Princess Alice, honoured by Israel for sheltering Jews in her palace in Nazi-occupied Greece during the Holocaust.

Jerusalem is a holy city to Christians, Muslims and Jews, and is the focus of continuing Middle East tensions. Although Israel claims the city as its capital, this is not recognised by the international community and almost all foreign embassies remain in Tel Aviv. The Palestinians consider East Jerusalem their territory, illegally occupied since the Six Day War in 1967.

President Trump’s decision to move the US embassy to Jerusalem, effectively recognising it as Israel’s capital, was welcomed by the Israeli government but provoked global hostility and inflamed Palestinian anger, triggering the clashes in which, it is claimed, 58 Palestinians died.

## THE CHAINED LIBRARY



The English word ‘library’ comes from the Latin for book – LIBER. During the later middle ages, when publicly accessible libraries came into being, books were often attached to their bookcase by a chain. The chains were sufficiently long to allow the books to be taken from their shelves and read, but not removed from the library itself. Only the librarian could remove the books from the chain using a key. The books were typically shelved with their front edge facing the reader, rather than their spines. This may seem like the wrong way, but it did allow the books to be lifted down and opened without needing to be turned around, thus avoiding tangling the chain. The largest chained library to survive with all its chains, rods and locks intact is at Hereford Cathedral, shown in the picture above. The oldest book in the library is the ‘Hereford Gospels’ written in Anglo-Saxon characters, dating to around the year 780. There is also a very rare Wycliffe Bible. (One copy was sold at auction on 5 December 2016 for 1,692,500 US dollars.) What a wonderful blessing good books have been to those who love the truth, although there is one Book above all.



“How many good books that demand our respect,  
Deserve to be well understood;  
But one Book there is we should never neglect,  
The Bible was written by God.”



# PERCEPTION

A Quarterly Magazine for Young People



“Hast thou entered into the treasures of the snow? or hast thou seen the treasures of the hail?” (Job 38. 22).

**WINTER 2019**



## IN THIS ISSUE

Page

Editorial . . . . .	1
“No Room” . . . . .	4
Mr. J. Lawrence of Blunsdon: Autobiography Part 2. . . . .	5
Beware . . . . .	13
Ageing . . . . .	14
“Life Is But A Weaving” . . . . .	17
The Name of Jesus heard for the first time . . . . .	17
Can Two Walk Together? – F. H. Wollaston. . . . .	18
Fencing the Table . . . . .	20
The Apple Tree – Andrew Rayner. . . . .	21
“This is the way, walk ye in it.” Part 2 – B. A. Ramsbottom . . . . .	23
Legions . . . . .	26
The Winchester Bible . . . . .	27
A Dying Testimony . . . . .	30
Judge Hale and the Duke . . . . .	31
CvIE National Conference 2019 . . . . .	33
A Family Motto . . . . .	35
Superstitions . . . . .	36
Bedford - The Home of John Bunyan . . . . .	39
A Few Current Matters . . . . .	40

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**Cover picture:** River Lea, Harpenden, Hertfordshire

# PERCEPTION

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## EDITORIAL

To our dear young friends and all our readers.

The Romans were a religious nation, with a multitude of gods – and goddesses. The twenty main gods were known as the *Di Selecti*, but there were many others.

One god was rather unusual. He had two faces, one looking forward, the other backward. His name was Janus, and he was the god who protected doors and gateways. He was also the god of beginnings and endings. January, the first month of the modern calendar year, was named after him. For the Romans, Janus's crucial role was to keep evil from crossing the threshold of the home. The first hour of every day belonged to Janus, as did the first day of every month, and the first month of every year. Without Janus's blessing, new undertakings were doomed to fail.

Although we will leave this god with the Romans, the principle of looking back and looking forward is good. It can be helpful to us. As we arrive at the end of another year it is right to look back. We are commanded to remember the way the Lord has led us: "And thou shalt remember all the way which the Lord thy God led thee" (Deut. 8. 2).

First, we look back on the Lord's mercies to us. Our lives have been spared, we have been protected from many dangers both seen and unseen, and all our needs have been supplied. As we look back, we will also remember with shame (or should remember) our sins, our failings, our backslidings, and our unthankfulness for those things we take for granted.

Perhaps some of you feel you do not have much to look back on, and that your life has been uneventful. For you, the words of the old hymn may be helpful:

"Count your blessings, name them one by one,  
And it will surprise you what the Lord has done."

Of course, there is a wrong kind of looking back. When Lot was instructed to flee from the city of Sodom, God specifically commanded

him, his wife and two daughters to “look not behind thee.” But his wife *did* look back. What was the result? “She became a pillar of salt.” It seems she hankered still for that wicked city where her home had been. She wanted one last look before it was destroyed for ever. The Lord Jesus referred to this solemn judgment in Luke 17. 32: “Remember Lot’s wife.”

Even if the Lord has touched our hearts, and has shown us a little of the vanity of everything below, it is still easy to find our hearts looking back to days and incidents in our lives when we were careless of the things of eternity. Perhaps then we thought we were having a good time. But sadly, our natural hearts can still hanker after those days, rather like Asaph who envied the foolish. “O,” he thought, “there are no bands in *their* death. They do not have concerns like me over where I shall spend eternity. *They* do not have the doubts and fears that I have. *They* are not troubled like me and they have everything their heart could wish for.” (Read Psalm 73 for Asaph’s honest account in full.) Yet in spite of all his envy of the wicked, Asaph could still say, “Whom have I in heaven but Thee? and there is none upon earth that I desire beside Thee.” What conflicts can be found in the heart of God’s people – it truly is “a company of two armies” (Song 6. 13).

Sometimes we may think this looking back is only nostalgia and quite harmless. But is it? How we need to be on our guard that we do not dwell on memories that might be evoked by, for example, hearing worldly music from the era in which we were brought up. It is a great danger to our souls. We knew an older church member, a godly man who seemed always to put the things of God first. However, we heard him confess that when younger he had a great love of football and was a frequent attender at football matches. When called by grace he had to leave all this behind, but how hard he found it, when out for a walk, to resist the temptation to go a slightly longer way round by the football ground. He knew he would be tempted to linger.

Cowper said:

“Dangers of every shape and name  
Attend the followers of the Lamb,  
Who leave the world’s deceitful shore,  
And leave it to return no more.”

That is a searching word – “to return no more.” May the Lord ever keep us from returning again to those things from which we hope He has

delivered us.

But what of looking forward? Life's journey is always uncertain, and the future is unknown. Perhaps we are fearful of new things in our life. Some of our readers have this term started at university, and others college courses, and others have entered into employment. Older people may have passed through difficult and trying circumstances. Isaiah's ministry frequently contained the Lord's gracious words – "Look unto ME." When we feel uncertain about the future, that is the safest path to follow, to look up towards God who alone knows the future. Ask Him to lead you and guide you, and to direct your feet when difficult decisions have to be made. The call to look unto Him contains a gracious promise: "Look unto me, and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth" (Isaiah 45. 22). His salvation extends to every nation, and his help can be sought in every situation, however difficult.

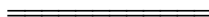
Then finally, there is one thing that is before us each, and that is ETERNITY. Is it a "tremendous sound" to you? Or is it *not* a concern to you? A new year marks a step further along the road towards eternity, and we are closer now than a year ago. The immensity of eternity sometimes overwhelms us. It has no end – what a thought! Our poor finite minds struggle to understand infinite things. It seems that John Newton had this thought in his hymn 'Amazing grace,' when looking forward with a sweet hope to his eternal home in heaven.

"When we've been there ten thousand years,  
Bright shining as the sun,  
We've no less days to sing God's praise  
Than when we first begun."

As 2019 draws to a close, may God Himself give us each an ever-growing concern that we might be right for eternity. None of us knows how soon that may be. Our final thought is expressed in verse 4 of John Kent's hymn (number 1093):

"The storm of death draws on apace,  
And who can say how nigh?"

Wishing all our readers the Lord's richest blessing in the coming year.  
The Editor.



## NO ROOM

No room for the Baby at Bethlehem's Inn,  
Only a cattle shed;  
No home on this earth for the dear Son of God,  
Nowhere to lay His head.  
Only a cross did they give to our Lord,  
Only a borrowed tomb.  
O cleanse me from sin, then Lord enter in:  
For Thee, in *my* heart, is there room?



*The Shepherds' Fields, Bethlehem, in winter*

“And there were in the same country shepherds abiding in the field, keeping watch over their flock by night. And, lo, the angel of the Lord came upon them, and the glory of the Lord shone round about them: and they were sore afraid” (Luke 2. 8 - 9).

Quite possibly these were the same fields where Ruth gleaned.

“And her hap was to light on a part of the field belonging unto Boaz.”

## **MR. J. LAWRENCE (Part 2)**

### **WE CONTINUE AN ACCOUNT OF SOME OF THE LORD'S DEALINGS WITH MR. J. LAWRENCE OF BLUNSDON, WILTSHIRE, MINISTER OF THE GOSPEL.**

Four years have passed away since I last attempted to commit to paper any of the dealings of the Lord with me in grace and providence. I have had many exercises about it since. I know that what I have written is the truth, yet I have had many fears lest I should not endure to the end. I humbly hope that I have been learning two very important lessons: my sinfulness and foolishness, and the Lord's goodness and wisdom towards me, a poor, vile, worthless worm.

But of late I have felt much condemned for neglecting to record His mercies. Being fearful about making another attempt, I was constrained to make it a special matter of prayer to the Lord. On one occasion, while asking His will respecting it, I besought Him to give me a token by causing me to open His Word at some portion suitable to my case. I opened upon Matthew 10, which was blessed to my soul. This gave me encouragement to go on, and I begged of the Holy Spirit to lead me back, and bring to my remembrance the past Ebenezers, that they might be raised in honour to the Three-One God, the great and mighty Jehovah. May He open up to my mind His gracious dealings with me. But oh, I tremble lest, after all, I should be left to dishonour His blessed Name! I feel a desire to be made useful to His dear afflicted family, and, above all, to honour His dear Name.

#### **Visit to Upavon**

At one time I had to go to Upavon to speak in the Lord's name. It was in the winter, and very cold. I had expected to meet a friend to help me on my way, but was disappointed, and not having the means to ride from Marlborough, I had to walk all the way (about fourteen miles). It grew dark before I arrived there, and as I was but poorly clad, I felt the cold, cutting winds very much. I became quite peevish and fretful, when these words came to me with power: "Foxes have holes, and the birds of the air have nests, but the Son of man hath not where to lay His head." O how ashamed I was of my murmuring spirit, and besought the Lord to forgive me. When I reached the house of dear Mr. Shaw, a good supper and a comfortable bed awaited me, and I cried, "Dear Lord, I am

satisfied!” for I saw how much better I was cared for than my Lord and Master. On the Lord’s day, after the evening service, a friend requested me to call on the morrow at the house of Mr. Walter, who gave me a good pair of thick black trousers and a waistcoat. “Ye are of more value than many sparrows.”

Another time, as I was going to the same place, my wife said to me, “How badly you need a hat, for yours is very shabby!” I replied, “The Lord will soon send me one, for I have been pleading with Him to clothe me in garments fit to go out in His Name.” On the Monday morning I was instructed to call at the shop of Mr. Hill, and obtain a ten shilling hat. “The very hairs of your head are all numbered.”

Another time, when I was very badly off for shirts, having to speak at Lea on the Sunday, a friend said to me on the following morning, “I hope I shall not offend you if I offer you a pair of new breeches and gaiters, and two new shirts.” O how my poor soul was broken down at the goodness of the Lord in thus again providing for me, “the chief of sinners, and less than the least of all saints.” When I got home and tried them on, I found them a good fit. “O that men would praise the Lord for his goodness, and for his wonderful works to the children of men!”

### **At Oxford**

One time I was speaking at Oxford. My shoes (the only pair I had) were very bad, when a friend very kindly gave me a good pair. The Lord knows what we need, and for years he has seen fit to clothe me; but with shame I confess how many times I have been filled with cursed unbelief. But, bless His dear Name, “If we believe not, He abideth faithful.”

### **Tokens for good**

I came home from Upavon one Monday morning in a very low state of mind. I could not see the blessing of the Lord attending my poor attempts to speak in His name, and I began to question whether after all it was His will for me to go out. I felt that unless I had another token of it from Him I could never again stand up in His name. I therefore begged of the Lord, that if He had indeed sent me out in His name, he would cause someone to pass in a conveyance and ask me to ride.

In a few minutes a man drove past, but when about twenty yards on, he stopped, and said, “Are you Mr. Lawrence?” Upon my answering “Yes,” he asked me to step in. He then said, “I once heard you preach

at Pewsey, and am thankful that I did. My name is Huntley, and I live at Sharcott Mill. Whenever you are in this neighbourhood, call at our house and take some refreshment; if I am not at home, my wife will make you welcome.” This appeared to me to be a token from the Lord, and my soul was melted again at His goodness in thus hearing and answering prayer.

Some time after this, being again at Upavon, I was walking on the same road. It was very hot, and I was so tired as to be often obliged to sit down. A man driving past stopped, and said, “Where are you going?” I told him, when he said, “You can ride with me; I work for Mr. Huntley, of Sharcott Mill.” After my making known to him who I was, he further said, “I have heard master and mistress speak of you. I am sure they would be very glad to see you.” I consented to go with him. We met Mr. Huntley in the yard, who kindly asked me in to take some refreshment, and his wife made me very welcome.

### **A providential need met**

Before leaving home, I had been asking the Lord to appear for me again in providence. I had a bill to meet on the following Tuesday, and I feared that I should give the enemy cause to rejoice, as I knew that I could not meet it unless the Lord supplied me from some unknown quarter. I did not say a word about it to my friends, although it was heavy on my mind, but I soon found that the Lord had been before me in this also.

When Mr. Huntley came in, he said, “After meeting you on the road some time ago, and asking you to call at my house, I put a sovereign in my pocket for you, and carried it about with me for some time, but as you did not call, and I had not seen you since, I began to question whether it was the Lord’s will for you to have it; but I now see that it is; so, although I have not got a sovereign, here are twenty shillings in silver.” Surely the gold and silver are the Lord’s, as well as the cattle upon a thousand hills.

### **No money for a train fare**

At one time I had to go to Goring Heath to try to speak, but had no money to pay the fare. As I could not walk there, I was compelled again to make my complaint known to Him who hears and answers prayer. On that same morning my wife found a two shilling piece and a half-crown, which was enough for me to start with. I told the friends



how I was supplied with means to come to them, and many tears were shed. "Whoso is wise, and will observe these things, even they shall understand the lovingkindness of the Lord."

I was one day reading that blessed book of dear Tiptaft's as I was walking along with my load of goods for sale, feeling much ashamed of my little self-denial compared with that much-favoured man of God. Before I left home that morning I had been making my requests known to Him who is the Keeper of Israel, who neither slumbers nor sleeps, as I was again desirous of meeting a bill, but had not the means.

As I was thus walking and reading, I met dear Mr. Shaw, who, after a few words, said, "How much money have you with you? Can you let me have five shillings?" I said "Yes," and gave it to him. He then told me how he had been exercised about me, feeling an impression that I was in want of money, but, as he had nothing less with him than a half-sovereign, he thought that was too much to give me, so he would take the five shillings and give me the half-sovereign. He put the amount into his purse, and began to fold it up, when suddenly he unfolded it, and taking out the five shillings, said, "You must have it all." I then told him how I had been pleading with the Lord that morning for the amount which he had given me, and we both wept together. "Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life, and I will dwell in the house of the Lord for ever."

### **A severe temptation**

One night when in bed, the baby being fretful, my wife ill, and myself far from well, I was trying to pacify the babe, when the enemy came to me with the temptation to destroy the child. This continued for about twenty minutes, and every moment I thought I should be overcome by it. I could not pray. But suddenly the blessed Spirit caused me to groan, being sorely burdened, and I cried for mercy and deliverance, when, blessed be His name, He set the poor captive at liberty.

At another time, when in a very weak state of body, I was left to much self-pity, and was sorely tempted to curse God. For a whole day and part of the next I was in this state, when, blessings crown His holy brow, He gave me these sweet words: "I will heal thy backslidings, receive thee graciously, and love thee freely."

### **His son injured**

When returning from Baydon on one occasion, my soul was very

much led out for the salvation of my family, when these words were sweet: "All thy children shall be taught of the Lord, and great shall be the peace of thy children."

The next day I received two letters stating that one of our sons had been thrown out of a car, and his head badly injured, and that we must come at once if we wished to see him alive. We both went, his mother crying, and saying that we should never see him alive. I too was much distressed, but the words just mentioned were a support to me. When we arrived, we found him alive, and he began slowly to recover. May he, with the others, be brought, in God's good time and way, to fear His name. On inquiry, I found that he was thrown out of the car just at the same time that the above words were so sweet to me.

### **Further needs supplied**

On one occasion I was much straitened for money to meet a creditor. I was engaged to supply at Swindon on the Lord's Day, and on the Friday evening before, Mr. Simpson was preaching there. I went to hear him, and was so blessed that I thought I should like to speak to him, but felt too unworthy. I thought, "How can I, such a poor, peevish worm speak here after such a man?" So I resolved not to go to the house where the supply ministers stayed, until Mr. Simpson was gone away, feeling afraid to meet him. But when I arrived at the house I found that he had been too late for the conveyance, and was obliged to return. I was then introduced to him, when, after a little conversation, he gave me a sovereign. I then told him how I had been exercised, and of the difficulty in which I was then placed, and we could clearly see that he had not been detained in vain, and that the Lord had a purpose in sending him back. "Bless the Lord, O my soul."

Being once more in similar difficulties, I desired the Lord to appear for me again. A dear friend (Mr. Moore) was so strongly impressed that I was in need of money that he was constrained to go out of his way in order to meet me. He gave me the amount I then stood in need of, and often afterwards proved a friend indeed to me.

### **Severe family trial**

One Lord's day in January, 1870, I spoke at Goring Heath. I think I never experienced such a blessed time in speaking to any people, and they testified to its being a special time, as the Lord brought home the word spoken with power to the souls of many. My soul was so full that I could not eat my dinner. The deacon said, "Your poor body needs

food.” I told him before leaving that I felt sure that I had some very heavy trial to pass through.

I was so much exercised about my family, that I was five hours in walking from Swindon. Upon my reaching home, the first words I heard were, “Oh! father, Amelia is dying!” I ran up stairs, and found her very ill indeed. She had been begging of the Lord to spare her till I got home. The Lord, however, graciously restored her again, but three others were taken ill of the same complaint, who, for six weeks, could not be left, night or day. Two boys, one eight years, the other fifteen years of age, died; the other two were restored.

This was a trial for faith indeed. Being very cold, sharp weather, my body weak, and having to labour during the day, with little or no rest at night, my soul began to sink within me. One day, while trying to sell a few things in order to supply the wants of those at home, and the enemy tempting me to fear that we should be starved, these words came to me with power and sweetness: “My God shall supply all your need.” This brought quietness and peace. I had not gone far before Mr. Bentley put two shillings into my hand; and when I reached Marlborough Mr. Stephens gave me half-a-crown. Some one had also left two shillings with Mrs. Pyle for me; so that I again proved that the Lord had gone before me. Having a scanty supply of bed clothing for such an extreme case, a friend sent a large quilt, which came as an answer to prayer. From that day, as long as the illness continued, the promise was fulfilled, both in providence and grace.

*Here Mr. Lawrence’s written account of his life ends. Mr. J. Painter, a friend, supplied the following details after his death.*

I have been acquainted with the late Mr. Lawrence for about eighteen years; but having no dates to which to refer, I am entirely dependent on memory. I think that it was about eighteen years ago that he left Ogbourne and came to live at Upper Stratton, near Swindon, when he became intimately associated with the nearby churches, but retained his membership at Ogbourne, ever feeling a great interest in that place. When I first knew him, as indeed all through his life, he was much tried in providence, and many and striking were the interpositions of God in his behalf.

On one occasion, when much tried, his wife said that she feared they should have to go to the workhouse. He became much distressed, and asked for the Bible. He opened on a portion which was much blessed

to him, and on kneeling down with his family in prayer, he had sweet access to a throne of grace. When he arose he told his wife he felt sure that deliverance was at hand. He then went for a walk to a neighbouring village, where he met with a friend who very cordially received him, and on his leaving gave him a cheese and a sovereign. Many such clear answers to prayer I have heard him relate, but not having particulars I must pass them by.

In a short time he removed to Swindon on account of his business (he was a sweet manufacturer) occupying the same house in which he had lived as an apprentice. While here, he once went with some friends to the Calne Anniversary services. After staying a day or two with a friend, he walked home through Hilmarton, a place where he occasionally supplied. He called to see an old afflicted friend, and entered into conversation with his friend's daughter respecting the ministers they had heard at Calne. She then related, with much feeling, a few occasions on which his ministry had been much blessed to her. This was a word in season to him, for he was much exercised and burdened in his mind, fearing that his ministry was quite useless, and he admired the sovereignty and condescension of the Lord in using him as an instrument.

Before he left, his friend gave him a suit of clothes, of which he stood in need. He used to walk a great many miles to the various places where he supplied, being too poor to ride. He would also walk many miles to hear, when he had the opportunity, as well as to the prayer meetings.

While still at Swindon his sight much failed, and he went into hospital in London for treatment; but though he seemed to benefit for a time, he never again recovered his sight clearly. In hospital following one of the operations, he quite lost the sight of his right eye. He often spoke of the goodness of God to him during this time, and of the kindness he met with while in London. While in hospital, confined to his bed, a portion of the ceiling above gave way, and a great quantity of debris fell around his bed, but did not injure him at all.

A railway company requiring the premises where he lived, he left Swindon, and went to live at Kingstown, near Stratton. It was while living there that his wife died. She had been a faithful help-meet to him through all his trials, working hard to bring up their large family. She was no talker, and having but little education, she always shrank from company. The cause of her death was a tumour in the breast, from

which she suffered much. Her dear husband was much tried in his mind as to how he should meet the expenses of her illness; but supplies came as soon as they were needed, sometimes from the most unlooked-for sources. She died March 17th, 1883, aged 62 years, leaving behind a satisfactory testimony of her interest in the Redeemer.

A heavy doctor's bill, the result of this long illness, was a great burden to him, and he oftentimes besought the Lord for help, dreading to bring any disgrace on the cause of God, which was a very tender point with him. A few friends, however, united together, and raised the sum required. This was a time of thanksgiving to our friend.

During the last few years, living at Blunsdon, he suffered much from exhaustion and weakness of the nerves. He was often very low in his mind, and much tempted to believe that he was altogether deceived.

On being asked to dictate a few more particulars of the Lord's dealings with him, he said he was afraid he should prove wrong in the end, and he must wait till he felt better in his mind. He said he felt sure that the things recorded by him were quite true, but he had been many times tempted to destroy the papers.

A friend visited him a few weeks before his death, and at his request read to him the 16th chapter of John. He seemed to receive great comfort from the words: "I will see you again." He would often speak with great confidence of the safety of God's dear people, but would add, "I am afraid the blessings laid up for them are not for such as I."

For some years he received a pension from the Gospel Standard Aid Society. This gladdened his heart many times, as he was very poor. On one occasion when I visited him, he said to me, "Friend, I think I am out of the secret altogether, and the money that I am receiving from the Society is for the Lord's poor ministers. I should like to be honest. Will you write to Mr. G. for me, and tell him that I *thought* I was right in taking the money, but as I am now out of the secret, they must not send me any more. I am so sorry that I have deceived them."

I asked him if he had knowingly deceived them, to which he replied, "No, I would not have deceived them for a thousand worlds." I said, "I don't think you have deceived them, for there is a God-fearing woman at Wallingford that tells me she was awakened under your ministry many years ago; and many of God's dear people have been blessed under your ministry;" to which he replied, "Bless the Lord, O my soul; I may be right after all."

Two days before his death I visited him again. The pain of body

must have been very great, as I could hear his groans long before I got to his house. I stood still for some time, and felt I could not go in to see him in such agony. However, I ventured to the door, and was told by his daughter that it was no use going up to see him, as he had not taken any notice or spoken to anyone since the day before. She ran upstairs, and said, "Father, would you like to see Mr. Painter?" To her astonishment, he replied, "Yes, tell him to come upstairs." As I spoke to him, his countenance brightened. I said, "Friend, where is your hope now?" He said, "In Jesus," and then repeated the verse:

"My hope is built on nothing less  
Than Jesus' blood and righteousness;  
I dare not trust the sweetest frame,  
But wholly lean on Jesus' name."

I said, "Then the truths you have loved and preached will do to die with after all." He said, "Yes."

I was in conversation with him for about half-an-hour. He seemed to be very much blessed in his soul, and as I was leaving him he said, "I shall soon be home. Give my love to all the dear people of God that inquire after me, and tell them that I shall die in peace."

He soon after became unconscious, and peacefully passed away from this world of sin and sorrow to be with his dear Lord for ever and for ever.

He died on June 26th, 1888, aged 70 years, and was buried by Mr. E. Chappell, in the Upper Stratton Cemetery, Swindon.

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## BEWARE

It was reported recently that a 19 year old student, 'enjoying' a night out with friends at a freshers' party, ended up in intensive care after her drink was spiked. She quickly fell unconscious, but thankfully was found by a friend who called 999. Drugs can take effect in 20 minutes. If she had not been found, it could have been fatal.

**BEWARE.** Never accept drinks from anyone unless you know and completely trust them. If you feel your drink has been spiked, always immediately seek medical assistance. Best of all, do not drink alcohol at all at these social events.

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## AGEING

“The moment when our lives begin,  
We all begin to die.”

What are we to make of this pronouncement in Isaac Watts’ hymn?

Perhaps you (like some people we have read of) consider this to be a very gloomy statement! Here is a new-born baby. His life stretches before him. He will one day (if spared) grow into a fine young man. He has many years of strength and vigour before him. Do we really want to be told this little one has begun already *to die*? Whatever was the hymnwriter thinking of?

Well, it is not whether it is gloomy – that does not matter at all. What really matters is whether it is *true*. So was Isaac Watts right, or was he wrong, when he penned these lines?

He was right, even though some authorities claim we begin to die at the age of 25, when our brain development peaks. In the time it takes you to read this sentence 50,000 cells in your body will die.

One certainty is that we can never reclaim time. We are all hastening towards eternity, and ageing is inevitable and unstoppable. Many have wished they could retain the vigour they knew when they were younger. Perhaps some of you remember Aled Jones, who, as a boy, had a most wonderful voice, and being a remarkably accomplished singer for such a young person, made quite a name for himself. (Most of the music he sung was of a religious nature.) When asked what was the most treasured item he had lost and wished he could have again, his answer was: “My boy soprano voice. I took it for granted.”

Noah’s grandfather, Methuselah, reached the remarkable age of 969 years (the greatest recorded age ever). But Genesis 5. 27 tells us: “and he died.” His appointed time had come, as it will for each of us.

Many see a vivid description of ageing in Ecclesiastes 12:

- the strong men shall bow themselves (weakness)
- the grinders cease because they are few (tooth decay)
- those that look out of the windows be darkened (failing eyesight)
- the sound of the grinding is low (deafness)
- the grasshopper shall be a burden (anxieties)
- desire shall fail (weariness)

And the reason for it all: “because man goeth to his long home.”

As an illustration, let us look at the ageing Sir Winston Churchill.



*Infant*



*Young boy*



*Older boy*



*A young man*



*An old man*



*"A very aged man"  
(2 Sam. 19.32)*



*Funeral procession*

CERTIFIED COPY of an ENTRY OF DEATH  
Pursuant to the Births and Deaths Register

Registration District KENSINGTON SOUTH in the RURAL DISTRICT of KENSINGTON

Death in the Sub-district of KENSINGTON SOUTH in the RURAL DISTRICT of KENSINGTON

No.	Name and where born	Name and residence	Sex	Age	Occupation	Cause of Death	Signature
10	Winston Leonard Churchill	Winston Leonard Churchill	Male	71 years	The Right Honourable Winston Churchill, M.P., M.C., C.B.	(a) Apoplexy (b) Embolism (c) Longstanding lung disease (d) Heart disease (e) Arteriosclerosis (f) Diabetes (g) Hypertension (h) Aneurysm (i) Cancer (j) Other	S. H. [Signature]

Register of Births and Deaths for the Sub-district of KENSINGTON SOUTH in the RURAL DISTRICT of KENSINGTON

*Certificate of Death*



This life of a famous man reminds us of the closing words of the last chapter in Genesis: “And he was put in a coffin in Egypt” – words which will be said of each of us one day. A solemn thought indeed.

The Word of God describes the fast passage of our lives with many striking phrases:

- a vapour
- a tale that is told
- a handbreadth (the width of four fingers)
- as nothing (that is, compared to eternity)
- swifter than a weaver’s shuttle



*A weaver, the shuttle below her arm*

shuttle at all, so quick was the worker’s action. (*See poem on next page.*)

This last phrase, found in Job 7. 6, is of particular significance. Job is one of the oldest books in the Bible, so we realise of how long the shuttle must have existed. Until the invention of ‘the flying shuttle’ (in 1733) the shuttle was thrown through the strands of raised wool by the human hand. It is said that this was so skilfully done that you could hardly see the

In view of the swift passage of our lives, how much we need to be ready for our end. Moses, in his song in Deuteronomy 32. 29 said: “O that they were wise, that they understood this, that they would consider their latter end.” May we be found amongst the wise.

“Pause, my soul! and ask the question,  
Art thou ready to meet God?”

**LIFE IS BUT A WEAVING**

(Sometimes known as *The Tapestry Poem*)

My life is but a weaving  
Between my God and me.  
I cannot choose the colours,  
He weaveth steadily.

Oft times He weaveth sorrow,  
And I in foolish pride  
Forget He sees the upper  
And I the underside.

Not till the loom is silent,  
And the shuttles cease to fly,  
Will God unroll the canvas  
And reveal the reason why.

The dark threads are as needful  
In the weaver's skillful hand,  
As the threads of gold and silver  
In the pattern He has planned.

He knows, He loves, He cares;  
Nothing this truth can dim.  
He gives the very best to those  
Who leave the choice to Him.

This poem is often attributed to Corrie ten Boom. It was, however, written by Grant Colfax Tullar who was born in Connecticut and worked in a woollen mill. (This has been confirmed by the Corrie ten Boom House Foundation.)

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**THE NAME OF JESUS HEARD FOR THE FIRST TIME**

I had two patients as early as 6.30 this morning and have done several operations since, preaching to quite a number, one poor woman especially, dying of consumption at the early age of twenty-four. I told her of the Land Beyond, and she went away with the name of Jesus on her lips, never heard before. (*Dr. G. Whitfield Guinness, Missionary, Kai-feng Hospital, Honan, China.*)

## CAN TWO WALK TOGETHER?

Part of a sermon preached in the Church of England at Deal, Kent, by the Rev. F. H. Wollaston, probably in the middle of the 1800's. How we would rejoice if we could find ministers in the Established Church today speaking as faithfully as he did.

Wollaston was a man of many interests. Once he prepared a paper for the Royal Society (the world's oldest independent scientific academy) on a device that measured heights based on the principle that the boiling point of water is regulated by air pressure. He himself made a model of this curious instrument, a kind of barometer.

The text on the occasion was Amos 3. 3: "Can two walk together, except they be agreed?" He took the text in rather an unusual way – are we agreed on Jesus' opinion of us, and our opinion of Him? If not, we cannot walk with Him.

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The Lord Jesus speaks expressly, and says, "I am not sent but to the lost sheep of the house of Israel." Then we are lost *sinners*, for He "came not to call the righteous, but sinners." This is Jesus' opinion of us, and are we agreed upon it with Him? If not, how can we walk together? O, if there be any among you who are not agreed to this view of your own state, I call upon you, to consider well, how is it that you are not agreed? Can Jesus be deceived, who knows all things? No, that is impossible. Can Jesus be deceiving you in that He thus calls you sinners? No, that is even blasphemy, "for He is not a man that He should lie; nor the son of man, that He should repent." "I am the truth," He says. For Jesus is the Word of God, and that Word is truth. But remember the fact laid before you in the text, you *cannot* walk with Him, except you be agreed first.

Now, in the next place, are you agreed when He says, "Israel is an empty vine"? Are you sure that He is altogether right in that, and that "in us (that is in our flesh) dwelleth no good thing"? Can you receive what He says, "Whosoever will come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow Me"? Are you agreed upon that also, that it is required altogether to deny self? Are you contented, and do you agree with Him, in considering yourself as nothing, and Him as All in All? If this be so, then you *are* agreed with Him. Few, very few, are

ready to say, “Not my will, but Thine be done.”

Is the quickening Spirit felt within you? Oh, if it be but ever so faint, yet do not be cast down. “He that hath begun a good work in you *will* perform it.” What a word of consolation is that: “*will* perform it”! And if He will, who can hinder the workings of Him who is almighty? No; poor foolish man may talk about freewill if he likes, but what can he do besides talk against the power of that almighty Jehovah, who “quickeneth whom He will”? Are we agreed with Christ our Saviour as to *His* view of our lost, ignorant and helpless state? If we are, then happy are we; but if not, we are not yet “walking with Him.”

But now let us consider shortly what *our* opinion is of Jesus, because if we agree not with that which is declared concerning Him, why, surely we must be in error, and not then walking with Him at all. We read in Isaiah 61. 1-3: “The Spirit of the Lord God is upon Me; because the Lord hath anointed Me to preach good tidings unto the meek; He hath sent Me to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to them that are bound.” This Scripture, we know, describes the Lord – you will find in the fourth chapter of Luke that He applies it to Himself. Then I ask, are you agreed in this view of Him? Do you know Him as the Christ, the Anointed of the Lord?

Then again, do you know Him as “preaching good tidings”? Or does a gospel of free grace sound hateful in your ears? And does the electing love of God sound harsh? O, look well to it whether you are agreed on this point also. “Search the Scriptures; for,” as our Lord says, “in them ye think ye have eternal life; and they are they which testify of Me.” But, as you search, remember there are those who do *not* see with their eyes, nor understand with their hearts. O, may the Spirit open your eyes, and give you understanding hearts, that you see. You will agree then with those words of Isaiah, where He is proclaimed as being “sent to bind up the broken-hearted.” Here, dear friends, is the healing through the blood of Jesus shown in all its excellence. A heart that was once hardened in sin, but since broken by the hammer of the Lord, and made whole again in the anointed Saviour’s blood. Are you agreed to that? Have you felt its power and experienced its healing powers? The Lord is proclaimed as being “sent to bind up the broken-hearted,” and how *can* you walk with Him, except you are agreed that He has done it?

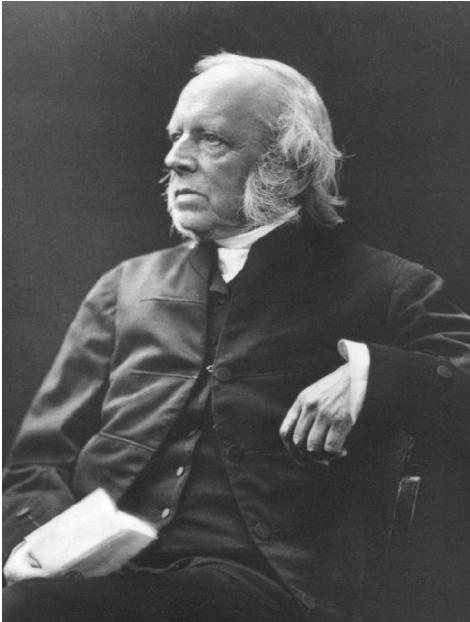
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## FENCING THE TABLE

Perhaps you have come across this phrase from time to time, particularly if reading about Scotland, and wondered what it meant.

An explanation is found in the life of Dr. Andrew Bonar, who was minister of Finnieston Free Church, Glasgow, from 1856 till his death in 1892, in a biography written by his daughter, Marjory Bonar.

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*Dr. Andrew Bonar*

At Finnieston, Dr. Andrew Bonar always retained the old-fashioned form of the communion service: first, the action sermon, then the ‘Fencing of the Table’, next the serving of the three Tables, followed by the closing address.

The first part of the address was specially for the children, who always gathered in the front seats of the gallery, and were quiet and interested spectators while the bread and wine were handed to the communicants.

Sometimes the thoughts of the older ones were directed to a communion time of long ago on the heathery moors, under the open sky, with its message to

young and old. The fragrance of these services and the words then spoken, still lingered in the hearts of many of God’s children.

“At the Table,” Dr. Bonar would say, “remember Christ and forget yourself. Jesus is walking today among the seven golden candlesticks, and He will stop here, at our Communion Table, to see if any of you want anything from Him.”

‘Fencing of the Table’ Dr. Bonar explained as declaring by whose authority the Table was spread. The word is used in old Scotch law.

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## THE APPLE TREE

From *The Crowded Chapel* series by Andrew Rayner

### The first apple

A well-aged apple tree stood in the Chapel House garden. Many of the branches and twigs had a knurled appearance and were covered in lichen, yet it faithfully produced a crop of tasty apples every year. It had been planted by the original pastor who had long ago founded the chapel. One of his congregation had kindly given him a sapling for the newly-formed garden. He had carefully planted it, watered it and watched over it for the whole time he lived in the house. After a few years it had produced its first apple. With joy, the pastor had carefully picked it, sliced it and shared it with his family.

Over the subsequent years, the house had been occupied by a series of deacons and pastors which served the chapel. Some were gardeners, others paid little attention to the garden and still less to the apple tree. Pruning was lacking and the tree grew and grew until it reached to tall heights and spread to a generous girth, reaching from one side of the garden to the other and beyond.

### The tree starved

In recent times, a new pastor occupied the house. He was most concerned about the condition of the tree. A prolific variety of ivy had taken hold of it and was strangulating it. Over a few decades, it had grown up the trunk with large boughs spreading to every branch of the tree. The stems were as thick as a strong man's arm; the apple tree had become so entangled with the ivy that the two had almost become one. The ivy starved the tree of light and air. Looking up from below, all appeared superficially well to the untrained eye. The tree had thick lush green leaves; however, closer examination revealed that they were not its own. As for fruit, the apple harvest was greatly reduced and the ivy produced nothing but dust which fell on anyone who disturbed it.

One Autumn, the pastor and his children set out to attack the intruding ivy. They cut through the main branches and pulled away many of the stems and boughs. They carefully cut out sections of the main ivy trunks at low level to starve the upper sections. They found it impossible to remove completely because many of the stems, so closely intertwined with the tree, posed a risk of damage to the tree bark. After a day's hard work, the pile for the bonfire had never been higher.

The pastor was delighted to see the tree once more returned to a

healthier state. He could not refrain from drawing spiritual lessons from what he had seen to use in his sermons. The ivy on the tree, like sin in a person's soul, grows all over it, strangling it and taking its life. What if no one had taken a saw to the ivy to prevent it from strangling the suffering tree? It was vital to get what was deadly away from it! Likewise if a sinner is to keep their sin, they will die in it. Praise God that Jesus has nailed to His cross the sins of whoever believes on Him. He has destroyed them, just as the ivy was to burn on the bonfire.

Another lesson: fresh sin weakens a believer's soul, it reduces the light and the water it needs, it stunts the growth and it reduces the fruit. After it has been cut away, it soon grows back and clings tight again if permitted. Constant watching, guarding, prayer and repentance are necessary. Praise God that He has power to keep as well as to save.

### **An abundance of fruit**

When Spring came, there appeared a most plenteous and beautiful display of blossom, white with pale pink flecks. The light and air had made the difference. As Summer came, it was clear that an abundant crop of apples would follow, the most abundant for many years. As Autumn approached, the apples swelled to great proportions. Truly the



harvest was going to be great. One morning, the pastor looked out of his window. What an unexpected sight he saw: his beautiful apple tree lay in a large tangled pile on the ground. The branches had split away from the trunk in all directions. Hundreds of ripe apples lay on the ground and on the fallen branches. The night had been totally still. Why had it fallen? The pastor could only conclude that it was the weight of the fruit; if a bag

of twenty large apples is heavy then the weight of many bagfuls on the extended branches must have been vast. This word came to him:

*"And he (Jesus) said, So is the kingdom of God, as if a man should cast seed into the ground; and should sleep, and rise night and day, and the seed should spring and grow up, he knoweth not how. For the earth bringeth forth fruit of herself; first the blade, then the ear, after that the full corn in the ear. But when the fruit is brought forth, immediately he putteth in the sickle, because the harvest is come"* (Mark 4. 26 - 29).

**SERMON preached at Bethel Chapel, Luton  
by Mr. B. A. Ramsbottom at a baptising service  
on Lord's day morning, 30th September 2018  
(Second part: Continued from Autumn 2019, page 34)**

**Text:** *"This is the way, walk ye in it" (Isaiah 30. 21).*

Now you might say, If there is no salvation in this ordinance, why did the Lord command it? Why do we keep it? What does it mean? Well, this open baptistery represents the grave of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. "Come, see the place where the Lord lay."

"View the rite with understanding;  
Jesus' grave before you lies;  
Be interred at His commanding;  
After His example rise."

So as we go down into the water and up out of the water, it is a representation of the death and burial and glorious resurrection of the Son of God. What is our profession? What is Bethany's profession? What is the profession of all those who follow in this way? It is this: that my only hope rests upon what the Lord Jesus did when He died and when He was buried and when He rose again.

But there is a second thing, and that is, in submitting to this sacred ordinance, a desire to be buried with Christ, to die with Him, to die to sin, to die to the world, to die to any hope of salvation in ourselves, and then to rise again and seek to walk in newness of life. So it is a beautiful ordinance and it is an ordinance for sinners, sinners saved by grace.

Now the third aspect of this word I want to bring before you this morning, "This is the way, walk ye in it" – believer's baptism is not the end. In many ways it is the beginning. It is the beginning of a profession of the Lord's name. It is the beginning of a new life that has to be lived. There is a pilgrimage that has to be walked out. There is a fight that has to be fought with sin, Satan and the world. There is a heavenly race that has to be run. Sometimes the Word of God compares the Christian life to a spiritual voyage. In one sense, this morning is like setting sail, but then there is the voyage in front. We read about those occasions – the launching of a new ship – and there are crowds of people there and all kinds of celebrations as the ship is launched, and



then all the people watch it, and gradually the ship disappears from sight, and then there is the ocean. We sing,

“And with Jesus  
And with Jesus  
Through the trackless deep move on.”

And that is the secret. It is a trackless deep, but, “And with Jesus.”

So this way to be walked out in an open profession is *a way of complete dependence on the Lord Jesus*. I remember the day I was baptized, and before going down into the pool, dear Mr. F. L. Rowell of Rochdale gave me this word: “As ye have therefore received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk ye in Him.” He spoke of it like this. He said, “Can you remember how you first received Christ? It was in complete dependence on Him. ‘So walk ye in Him.’ You remember how you first received Christ. He was everything, and you were nothing. ‘So walk ye in Him.’ You remember how you first received Christ. O the love! ‘So walk ye in Him.’”

“This is the way, walk ye in it.” It is a way that has to be walked out. Now you know, Bethany, it will not always be easy. There will be difficulties that come. The very context here speaks of that: but even though the Lord gives “the bread of adversity, and the water of affliction,” yet still, “This is the way, walk ye in it.” Yet it also implies this. There will be times as you journey on when you will come to a standstill. You just will not know what to do and where to turn. Then it is to look up. “And thine ears shall hear a word behind thee, saying, This is the way, walk ye in it.” As we feel our weakness, the Lord is with us. He has said, “I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee.” As we have so many needs, the word stands, “My God shall supply all your need according to His riches in glory by Christ Jesus.” When we feel weak and unable to go on, it is, “Fear thou not; for I am with thee: be not dismayed; for I am thy God: I will strengthen thee; yea, I will help thee; yea, I will uphold thee with the right hand of My righteousness.”

“This is the way, walk ye in it.” But then the Lord charges us that we should “walk worthy of the vocation wherewith we are called.” Now we can never *be* worthy – to the end we shall be unworthy – but we are

called to *walk* worthy. “Let your conversation” – your behaviour – “be as it becometh the gospel of Christ” – no contradiction between the glorious gospel we believe and the way we behave.

“This is the way, walk ye in it.” Of course, in walking out our open profession, in love and mercy the Lord has appointed a second ordinance, the ordinance of the Lord’s supper. Now this morning it is a once-and-for-all profession of the Lord’s name. Month by month at the Lord’s table we again and again profess,

“I have no hope but in Thy blood;  
Remember me, O Lord, for good.”

And so month by month in an open profession at the Lord’s table we remember the Lord – the broken bread, the poured-out cup – again, nothing saving in it, but beautiful emblems of the Saviour’s suffering and death and shedding of His precious blood upon the cross, our only hope. I hope you will prove it at times a sanctifying ordinance. We do not want to come away from the Lord’s supper and then mingle with the world. It is a sanctifying ordinance. And then at times you will prove it a strengthening ordinance. O the strength that the Lord can give!

But never forget as you journey on, as we come to the Lord’s table, it is to remind us it is an ordinance for sinners. “God commendeth His love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.” I am sure many of you remember the little story. It was at one of the wonderful communion services in the Highlands of Scotland, and there was a most godly woman, and she felt so unworthy. When the cup came to her, she passed it by without partaking. A godly minister sitting at the table – I believe it was the famous Dr. “Rabbi” Duncan – saw what had happened, and when the cup was returned, he went to her personally and put it in her hands and said, “Drink, woman. It was shed for sinners.” That is our hope at the Lord’s table, and that is our hope this morning, and that is our hope for the great day.

“None but Jesus!  
From His blood our hopes arise.”

But really, coming to a conclusion, two words, two vital words, two

words spoken by our Lord Jesus Himself: “Follow Me.” And the emphasis there: *Me*. On each of those three things I have tried to bring before you this morning: the way of salvation, the way to heaven – “Follow Me”; this morning in this sacred ordinance – “Follow Me”; and then walking it out – “Follow Me.” May it be, “These are they which follow the Lamb whithersoever He goeth,” and follow Him at last into heaven.

And so, Bethany,

“Soar we now where Christ has led,  
Following our exalted Head;  
Made like Him, like Him we rise;  
Ours the cross, the grave, the skies!”

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### **Address at the pool**

My dear Bethany, seeking a word from the Lord to give you, this has laid on my spirit: “Kept by the power of God.” We need the Lord Jesus to save us; we need the Lord Jesus to keep us. We are weak and helpless, but the point here is, the power of God, that same power that created the world, that same power that raised the Lord Jesus from the dead, now that is the power to keep you. They say this word really means *surrounded by a garrison of strong soldiers*. Well, the garrison is the power of God. “The Lord is thy Keeper.” What a word that is: He “is able to keep you from falling, and to present you faultless before the presence of His glory with exceeding joy.”

So the Lord bless you, Bethany. “Kept by the power of God.”

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## **LEGIONS**

“Thinkest thou that I cannot now pray to my Father, and he shall presently give me more than twelve legions of angels?” (Matthew 26. 53).

What was a legion? A Roman soldier was called a legionary. A full strength legion consisted of 5,200 soldiers. Every soldier in a legion was a Roman citizen, and as professional soldiers they were well paid. A legionary was not allowed to marry as his whole life was to be dedicated to the legion.

## THE WINCHESTER BIBLE

During the 12th century several magnificent large Bibles were produced in England. The largest and finest of these is the Winchester Bible.

The text is in the Latin of St. Jerome. It was handwritten by a single scribe on 234 sheets of calf-skin parchment, each measuring 23 by 15<sup>3</sup>/<sub>4</sub> inches (583 x 396 mm). These sheets were folded down the centre, making 936 pages in all. This kind of parchment was expensive – so to save space, the writer often shortened words, and each new book of the Bible starts on the same page as the last.



*Page of the Winchester Bible*

You can still see the corrections made by a second monk in the margins. Each page was ruled in advance, to ensure the layout remained the same.

Artists richly illuminated its capital letters. Their glowing colours are as intense today as 800 years ago.

Until recently it was possible to see only one of the four volumes in a temporary exhibition case in the Cathedral. When visiting in 2017, the Bible was open at the book of the Lamentations. The curator (said to be an expert!) did not know that Lamentations was written by Jeremiah, nor had she heard of the phrase ‘the weeping prophet.’

Now, since May 2019, all four volumes of the Winchester Bible are on display on the ground floor of a spectacular new exhibition centre, which houses the Cathedral’s greatest treasures.

The whole Bible was originally bound in two volumes. As they were too heavy to carry around, it was eventually re-bound into four volumes, with oak boards and leather backs.

Over the years, the manuscript has suffered at the hands of thieves and collectors. Some nine illuminated initials and at least one full-page illustration have been removed entirely.

A remarkable survival, it was commissioned in the year 1160, probably by Henry of Blois, a grandson of William the Conqueror and Bishop of Winchester for over forty years.

The Bible was produced in the great priory linked to the Cathedral, where sacred texts were copied out for use in daily worship.

Interestingly, comments, or little summaries, are added here and there, known as “a gloss.” For example, at the beginning of the Song of Solomon is a gloss: “The voice of the Church desiring the coming of Christ.” This is remarkably similar to the summary heading in our own TBS Bibles: “The church’s love to Christ.”



*Lamentations chapter 5*



*An initial letter illustrating the sacrifice of Isaac*

## A few notes on St. Jerome

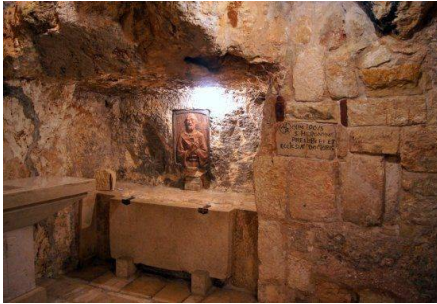
St. Jerome was born round about 342 AD in a town known as Stridon, thought to have been in Slovenia.

The young Jerome learned Latin, Greek and Hebrew from a famous Roman grammarian named Donatus. Little else is known about his childhood except that his parents were well-to-do, and Christians. By his own admission he was an immoral young man. When he was about 24, a change seems to have come over him, and he sought baptism, which was carried out by no less than the Pope himself (Pope Liberius).

A little later he came into contact with a monk, Rufinus, who was renowned for his translation of Greek works into Latin. Jerome himself was developing his skills as a translator, and spent much time translating the inscriptions he found on the tombs in the Roman catacombs.

Eventually (year 386), Jerome decided to settle first in Jerusalem,

then in Bethlehem. Here he wrote extensively defending the virginity of the virgin Mary, which some were beginning to question. However, the greatest achievement of his life was the translation he completed here in Bethlehem of the entire Bible into Latin from Hebrew, Greek and Old Latin manuscripts.



*Jerome's Cave*

From a cave beneath the Church of the Nativity in Bethlehem came the most enduring version of the Bible ever translated. In this underground room – no doubt pleasantly cool in summer – Jerome spent over 30 years completing his translation of the Scriptures, which became known as the Latin Vulgate version. The name “Vulgate” comes from the Latin *versio vulgata*, meaning “the version commonly used.” It comes

from the root word *vulgus*, meaning “the common people.” The Roman Catholic Church affirmed the Vulgate as its official Bible at the Council of Trent (1545–1563), and it remained the authoritative version for the Roman Catholic church until the 20th century.

Jerome died on 30th September in the year 420 at the age of about 78. He was traditionally regarded as the most learned of the Latin Fathers.

### **A few notes on Winchester Cathedral**

The building of the present Cathedral began in the year 1079. It is the longest medieval Cathedral in Europe.

In the early 1900's huge cracks started to appear in the building's massive walls, some wide enough for owls to nest in. The cracking was so severe that it was feared the Cathedral might completely collapse.

Winchester lies in a valley of the River Itchen, and the Cathedral sits on peaty soil with a high underlying water table. You can still see a distinct leaning in some of the walls.

An architect named Thomas Jackson was brought in to advise. His solution was to attempt the underpinning of the affected walls with new concrete foundations. These would need to reach four metres (13 feet) below the water table to be effective.

Early efforts to underpin its waterlogged foundations failed. As fast as the workmen dug, water flooded into their trenches. Even a steam

pump couldn't hold it back long enough.

Eventually, William Walker, an experienced deep-sea diver working at Portsmouth dockyard, was called in. For six years, six hours a day, Walker worked under water below the Cathedral at depths up to 6 metres (20 ft). He worked in total darkness, using his bare hands to feel his way through the cloudy, muddy water, filling bags of concrete to place under the subsiding walls.

In the end he and his helpers had placed an estimated 25,000 bags of concrete, 115,000 concrete blocks, and 900,000 bricks.

A special service of thanksgiving was held on St. Swithin's Day 1912, after which William Walker was presented to King George V and Queen Mary.

Sadly, he died aged just 49, during the great Spanish flu epidemic of 1918.

### **A few notes on St. Swithin**

Swithin was Bishop of Winchester, when it was the capital of England. His remains were buried in the old Saxon church built in 648, and moved into the new Cathedral when built by the Normans in 1079. In 1538 Saint Swithin's shrine was destroyed by King Henry VIII's men, and his bones lost for ever. A tiny doorway can be seen in the Cathedral today. This was an entrance to a tunnel that led underneath Saint Swithin's shrine. Pilgrims crawled into the tunnel to get as close as possible to his bones. We all know the British weather-lore proverb, which says that if it rains on St. Swithin's day (15th July) it will rain for 40 days!

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## **A DYING TESTIMONY**

A touching story is told concerning the singing of part of that well-known hymn by Cowper, "There is a fountain filled with blood."

A young man, suffering from cancer, was about to undergo an operation in one of the large hospitals in Scotland. When the surgeon had made a careful examination, he felt that the only hope of saving the life of his patient was the removal of his tongue.

The young man was already in the operating room when the surgeon, in a tender and sympathetic way, explained to the sufferer that, even though the operation should be successful, he would never again

be able to speak, and was asked whether there was anything he wished to say before the operation commenced.

For a moment a shadow crossed the brow of the young man at the thought that he would never again be able to testify in song or word for the Master whom he loved. But soon the shadow passed and a smile lighted up his face. He sat up, lifted up his voice, and sang the hymn "There is a fountain filled with blood."

Before the third verse was reached, not an eye of those who stood around the bed was dry. How he sang, for his heart was in the song. Then came the last verse:

"But when this lisping, stammering tongue  
Lies silent in the grave,  
Then, in a nobler, sweeter song,  
I'll sing Thy power to save."

The anaesthetic was administered, the operation performed, but alas! the patient never regained consciousness. Thus his last song on earth was to be his first in heaven.

May the possession of that hope which this young man possessed be ours also.

*From "Youth's Living Ideals, USA."*

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## JUDGE HALE AND THE DUKE

Sir Matthew Hale was born on 1st November 1609 in Alderley, Gloucestershire, and died in the same place on Christmas Day, 1676. He was one of the greatest scholars on English Common Law, and held office under Oliver Cromwell during England's Civil War.

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Sir Matthew was well known for his fairness and impartiality in his administration of justice. He would never receive any private information or recommendations from even the greatest persons in any matter in which justice was concerned.



One day, a duke, a member of the House of Lords, and one of the leading peers of England, went to his chambers. The duke was about to be sued in law for some supposed crime. He told Sir Matthew that he was come to acquaint him with the case, that he might the better understand it when it should be heard in court.



*Sir Matthew Hale*

Immediately, Sir Matthew interrupted him, and said he was not acting fairly in coming to his chambers about this matter. He insisted that he never received any information about cases except in open court where both parties were to be heard alike. He refused to allow him to continue.

The duke went away in a rage, and complained of his treatment to the king (King Charles II) as a rudeness that was not to be endured. But his majesty the king told him to be content. "I verily believe," said the king, "that he would have treated me no better if I had gone to solicit him in any of my own causes." How admirable was Sir Matthew's firm stand to uphold impartiality.

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The word of God tells us much of the impartiality of God's judgment. "Then Peter opened his mouth, and said, Of a truth I perceive that God is no respecter of persons."

In the Book of the Revelation, we read concerning the great day, when the secrets of all hearts shall be revealed: "And they were judged every man according to their works."

Speaking of our works, one final Scripture comes to mind: "So then every one of us shall give account of himself to God" (Romans 14. 12). Many years ago at school, four of us boys had got into some misdemeanour and were called up to see the headmaster. One by one we each gave *an* account of what happened. Sadly, our accounts did not agree one with the other. It was *an* account. The Scripture does not use the word *an*. "To give account." It will be exactly as it is.

"Think and tremble,  
Death is now upon the road."

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## CViE NATIONAL CONFERENCE 2019

THE FOLLOWING REPORT HAS BEEN RECEIVED.

Over the last two or three years Mental Health has become a high profile issue right across society, but perhaps particularly with young people. They are under unrelenting pressure to conform and to be 'liked', driven by the all-pervasive presence of technology and social media. The absence of moral absolutes and the prominence of the LGBT+ agenda means that young minds are inevitably confused. All this leads to an erosion of their sense of worth, purpose and direction, too often with tragic consequences. Recent coverage of teen suicides and the high rate of self-harm amongst teenage girls bears testament to this, with teens today reported as being more anxious than ever before. This was the background to the recent Christian Values in Education National Conference – *Mind Matters* held near Luton on Saturday, 28th September.



Around 300 people young and old gathered for the event at which the key-note speakers were Professor Alan Thomas (Consultant Psychiatrist) and Nick Pollard (Family Mental Wealth). A variety of talks and activities were provided for the various age groups throughout the day, whilst an extensive range of resources were available from CViE, Christian Bookshop Ossett, Gospel Standard Trust Publications, Lovewise, Valley School and Truth in Science.

In the main hall, the day began with an informative panel session looking at various education options from those who had made different choices for their own children's education – these included state schooling, home schooling and Christian schooling.



*A few of the speakers*

For teenagers, the morning session focussed on Stewardship. The group was encouraged to think about the different resources (time, money, energy etc) God has given to them and how they use these rightly. The 5-8 year olds had an activity looking at *God's Wonderful Creation*, whilst Lovewise ran a session

for 9-12 year olds on *God's Purpose for Marriage and the Family*.

After lunch, in the main hall, Professor Thomas gave an informative talk on *Mental Health: A Christian Perspective*. In this, he gave an overview of the topic with a Biblical basis, defined mental illness and then provided some valuable pointers for how those with mental health issues can be supported within the church setting.

Nick Pollard closed the day with a lively but moving talk *Mental Health: A Parent's Journey*, speaking personally about his own experiences as his daughter battled a near fatal eating disorder. It was encouraging to hear how their Christian faith had helped the whole family during a very difficult time.

Afternoon sessions for the children and teens were *Watch What You Say* (5-8s), *Using Our Time Wisely* (9-12s) and *Relationship and the Bible* (teens). An outdoor activity was also organised to help children to let off steam before the journey home!

The annual National Conference has become a major focus of the CViE's activities. Once again this year it was a great encouragement to meet for good teaching on challenging topics, and for fellowship with like-minded Christians facing the same issues in a difficult world. A record attendance this year means that a bigger venue will be needed for future events! We are thankful to the Lord for enabling us to hold the conference and for help given to all those leading the various sessions.

A date for the diary: the National Conference 2020 will be held on **Saturday, 26th September 2020** – details will be announced over the next few months and you can keep up-to-date at [www.cvie.org.uk](http://www.cvie.org.uk). The website also provides information about the charity's other activities as it seeks to counter unbiblical ideas, and to equip Christian parents, grandparents, teachers, children and young people to face the challenges they encounter in the world of education.

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## A FAMILY MOTTO

Scotney Castle in Kent, the home of the Hussey family, was originally a medieval castle surrounded by a moat. A new house was built in 1837, and the whole estate is now owned by the National Trust.



The family motto engraved in Latin above the main entrance is *VIX EA NOSTRA VOCO*, translated: 'We scarcely call these things our own.'

What a lesson here. How good it would be if we always remembered that all our possessions are not our own, but are lent to us by a kind and gracious God. "We brought nothing into this world, and it is certain we shall carry nothing out."

## SUPERSTITIONS

### Paul at Athens

The Apostle Paul spent several weeks staying in the city of Athens. While waiting for Silas and Timotheus to join him, he did what most people would have done - he went round to view the sights of the city.

The people in Athens, Paul found to be very religious, but as he looked round he saw many things he knew were not right.

He found, for example, that instead of worshipping the one true God, the people of Athens worshipped many gods. In various parts of the city they had built altars for these gods, inscribing underneath the name of the god for whom the altar had been built.

There was, however, one altar that particularly took Paul's attention. On it was an inscription as usual, but the words written on it we find in Acts 17. 23: TO THE UNKNOWN GOD. The people had built an altar to a god they did not know, a god whose name they did not even know. Paul felt he had to speak to the people about it. So we read he stood in the middle of a place called Mars' hill, where the people frequently gathered (and still do today).

"Ye men of Athens," he said, "I perceive that in all things ye are too superstitious."

### What is it to be superstitious?

What did Paul mean when he said that the people were "too superstitious"? To be superstitious is to believe things which have no foundation in reality, usually silly things that cannot possibly be true. In our own country, there are many people who are superstitious about various things.

Sometimes it is things they will *not* do, and sometimes things they *will* do. If a ladder is propped against a wall, people will not walk under it because it will bring them bad luck. Similarly, if a black cat walks in front of you, they think you will have a bad day. Others, when they are speaking of some future event will look round for a table and say, "Touch wood," as if that will ensure the event will happen.

Some house-builders have difficulty when selling an estate of houses, because people will not buy plot 13, or house number 13, as they believe this will be unlucky. Builders sometimes get over this by going straight from number 12 to number 14 and leaving out number 13 completely.

Superstition also explains why many high-rise buildings do not have a 13th floor, preferring to call it floor 12B or 14A. In a recent survey 13% of people indicated that staying on the 13th floor of a hotel would bother them and 9% said they would ask for a different room.

On top of this, some airlines such as Air France and Lufthansa, do not have a 13th row.

For some people, a Friday is likely to be an unlucky day, so they will not move house on a Friday, particularly Friday the 13th as that would be doubly unlucky. Many people have a dread of beginning any work on a Friday. We have heard of some people who will not sit down at a table if there is a party of thirteen.

I expect we have all heard people who are not particularly superstitious say “bless you” when someone sneezes. The reason is to prevent the devil from stealing their soul – as our ancestors thought possible during a sneeze.

### **Where did these superstitions come from?**

The reason why some of these foolish things are believed is somewhat obscure. Some say that a ladder against a wall forms a triangle, which to some religious people represents the Trinity. To walk under the ladder breaks the triangle, and thereby separates the Trinity. This, of course, is complete nonsense, if not blasphemous, but it is still believed, even today.

The number 13 is thought to be unlucky as at the time of the betrayal of the Lord Jesus by Judas Iscariot, thirteen sat at the table.

Regarding Friday as an unlucky day may be due to the fact that this was the day of crucifixion. An alternative explanation is that, in Britain, Friday was once known as Hangman’s Day because it was usually when people who had been condemned to death would be hanged.

### **Malta**

Some years when in Malta, we noticed most churches had two towers, and each of the towers had a clock. There is perhaps nothing unusual in a church having two clocks. However, the strange thing is that one clock was right, the other clock was wrong. At first we thought that one of the clocks was broken, but later we came across another church exactly the same – one clock right, the other wrong. Along another road we came to the cathedral and found the same situation there. If you look at the picture of Malta’s St. Paul’s Cathedral in



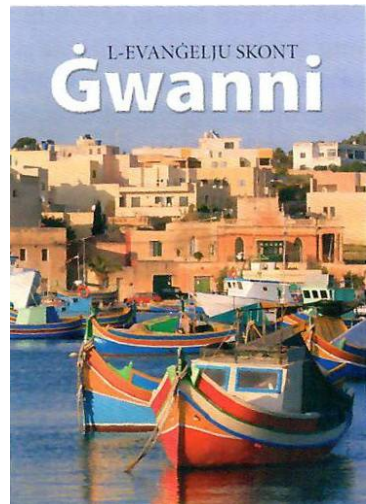


Mdina, you will see that the clock on the left says 7.15 and the clock on the right says 10.42, which was the correct time. Why was this? On making enquiries we were told that it was to confuse the devil, as he will not know what time the service begins, so will not be present at the service. They also believe the devil always leaves at midnight!

Well, we certainly do not want the devil to come to our services, but I am sure the devil is much too clever to be confused by a wrong clock. He certainly knows without a clock at all when the people are gathering together for worship. It would take

more than this Maltese superstition to keep him away! Just as an aside, work on building this beautiful cathedral began in 1697, and took five years to complete. The original church on this site was destroyed by an earthquake in 1693.

On a more encouraging note, we were pleased to hear at the AGM of the Trinitarian Bible Society that 100,000 copies of a revised Maltese Gospel according to John were ready for despatch to Malta – enough for one copy for every household on the island. The work of finalising the revised text of the whole Maltese New Testament is moving forward



*Maltese Gospel of John*

slowly. May it please God to use these Maltese gospels to bring true light to the inhabitants of the island.

### **The Bible warns against superstition**

Superstition generally means a belief in supernatural forces such as fate – the desire to influence unpredictable events. They are generally irrational and often defy scientific logic. Peter directs us to “a more sure word of prophecy” which is as “a light that shineth in a dark place.”

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## **BEDFORD – THE HOME OF JOHN BUNYAN**

Plans are afoot to make all the roads into Bedford show the message: ‘The Home of John Bunyan and The Pilgrim’s Progress.’ The project is being undertaken by the Bunyan Round Table. Elstow Parish Council has started the process with the first sign erected on Progress Way, Elstow.



The Pilgrim’s Progress for over 350 years was the best-selling book in the world, second only to the Bible. The Bunyan Round Table says: “The Pilgrim’s Progress contains a spiritual message that is as relevant today as when Bunyan wrote it.”



## A FEW CURRENT MATTERS

**Fewer women married.** The proportion of women who are married has fallen to below half for the first time. In 2018, in England and Wales 49.5 per cent of women were married. 10.5 per cent of adults live with a partner but have never married. 120,000 people are in a same-sex “marriage.”

**The Queen’s Speech, 2019.** The Queen’s speech, delivered in the House of Lords to the assembled House of Commons and House of Lords on Monday, 14th October, concluded with the words: *“I pray that the blessing of Almighty God might rest upon your counsels.”* Later the same day, the Prime Minister, Mr. Boris Johnson, was asked in the House of Commons: “Can the Prime Minister confirm that religious freedom will always be a key priority for this government?” Mr. Johnson replied, “I can certainly give my honourable friend that assurance and we will stand up for religious freedom in all our doings and in all our foreign policy.”

**Church of England attendance.** Figures just released show that a typical Anglican Sunday congregation numbered just 27 worshippers last year. 34,000 weddings were solemnised, down almost 30 per cent in five years.

**Nation’s favourite hymn.** Jerusalem (And Did Those Feet) has been named as Britain’s number one hymn. Amongst the top ten are How Great Thou Art; Abide With Me; Guide Me, O Thou Great Jehovah; and Amazing Grace. We are very sad that a whole generation of schoolchildren is growing up that does not know any of the traditional hymns at all.

**Suffering Christians.** The almost unbelievable sufferings of Christians, including children, continues unabated in some parts of the world. Eritrea is the second worst country in the world for persecution, after North Korea. An eight year old girl, Sophia, was arrested by police in the capital, Asmara, whilst attending a Saturday Bible Class. The whole class, some as young as five, many sobbing, were ordered into a truck and taken to a police station. There they were ordered to sit on the floor in a large hall. Some of the children began to sing a hymn which contains the lines: “Who can separate me from Jesus, Who showed me His love on the cross.” A police officer stormed into the room and began to kick and slap the children. They were then forced to sit in silence for hours. Eventually the police released those under 12, but the older children were detained. (*Information from Barnabas Fund.*)

## THE GREATNESS OF GOD

How many natural things show us the power and greatness of God. Some are said to be as ‘treasure’ and others are described as ‘precious.’

- the treasures of the snow
- the treasures of the hail,
- the wind out of His treasures
- precious fruits brought forth by the sun
- the precious things put forth by the moon
- precious things of the lasting hills
- the precious things of the earth

All these things caused the Psalmist to say: “For I know that the Lord is great” (Psalm 135. 5).

But there are other things that are also precious, some precious to God, and some precious to His people.

*Precious to God:*

- Precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of His saints.

*Precious to God’s people:*

- How precious also are Thy thoughts unto me, O God!
- I will make a Man more precious than fine gold.

*And the most precious thing of all:*

- the precious blood of Christ

Psalm 49 was written for the sons of Korah and sent to the chief Musician to be sung by the people. Verse 8 speaks of something else that is precious:

“For the redemption of their soul is precious, *and it ceaseth for ever.*”

What solemn words are these which we have put in italics. There is no second chance: “Where the tree falleth, there it shall be” (Ecclesiastes 11. 3).

