

# PERCEPTION

A Quarterly Magazine for Young People



“And thou shalt be like a watered garden, and  
like a spring of water, whose waters fail not”  
(Isaiah 58. 11).

**SPRING 2021**



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## EDITORIAL

It was graduation day. Invited guests were beginning to assemble for the occasion. Often held in a cathedral, but not this time. A huge gymnasium had been prepared instead, and the result was impressive. As visitors assembled, a splendid organ, hired in for the day, played quietly in the background. On arrival, each guest was given a book in which were written the names of every graduating student.

There were hundreds of names written in the book, and we were struck with the vast variety of names, many from overseas. Some were very short, some long. One very short name we remember was Pik Yip. Another student had five names, all of them long.

No-one whose name was *not* written in the book would receive a certificate.

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When we hear that a new baby has been born, there are usually two things people ask. First, how much did it weigh? Second, what is the baby's *name*?

If we think back to the time we started school, probably one of the first things we did was to learn to write our name. Today, very young children at nursery school quickly come home with their first efforts, sometimes writing over the top of what the teacher has written. To a child, it is an important milestone when they can write their name unaided.

In the Bible we read a great deal about people's names. Whole chapters in the Old Testament are long lists of names, sometimes covering entire families for hundreds of years. In the New Testament, the first chapter of Matthew contains a genealogy beginning with Abraham down to "Joseph the husband of Mary, of whom was born Jesus, who is called Christ." Similarly, the third chapter of Luke traces the ancestry of the Lord Jesus Christ right back to Adam.

The longest name in the Bible is Maher-shalal-hash-baz of whom we read in Isaiah chapter 8 – the hyphens are put in to help us read it (eighteen letters). The shortest name is better known – Og, King of

Bashan. He is mentioned twice in the Book of Psalms, once called a *mighty* king, then a *famous* king. We are even told how big his bed was, and that it was made of iron! The length of his name played no part in his fame.

Well, our names may be long or short, common or uncommon, but that is not very important. What we want to consider in this Editorial is a name which is much more important than ours, that is, God's name.

While Moses was tending His sheep in the desert, God spoke to him at the burning bush. He was to be sent to Pharaoh, to bring forth the children of Israel out of Egypt. Immediately Moses was full of fears and questionings. "They shall say to me, What is His name? What shall I say unto them?" God's reply was, "Thus shalt thou say unto the children of Israel, I AM hath sent me unto you."

What a name – I AM! It comes from the infinite verb *to be*, reflecting His nature as the self-existing God. What "holy ground" it was where God condescended to reveal His name to His servant Moses.

Some of you will ask, Is not God's name Jehovah? Yes, it is, but after the burning bush, God again spoke to Moses. He told him that, although He had formerly appeared to Abraham, He had not been known by His name Jehovah. "And I appeared unto Abraham, unto Isaac, and unto Jacob, by the name of God Almighty, but by my name JEHOVAH was I not known to them."

The name JEHOVAH appears only four times in the Authorised Version of the Bible, although there are three other cases where it is used in a compound name, e.g. "And Moses built an altar, and called the name of it Jehovah-nissi." To avoid the constant repetition of this most holy of names, the translators adopted LORD (all capital letters) in all but these four cases (over 6,000 times).

So holy was that sacred name to the Jews of old, that they would neither write it, nor would they speak it out loud. If they needed to write it they omitted the vowels, which is why we sometimes see the name written as YHWH. We find another name of God in Isaiah 57. 15 when the prophet refers to "the high and lofty One that inhabiteth eternity, whose name is HOLY."

As we think of just how holy the name of God is, we wish to pause at this point to consider today's almost universal usage of what has become an everyday phrase, "Oh my God." Not so long ago this phrase would have been regarded as a gross profanity. Today, it seems that some people can hardly open their mouths without using the phrase –



anything that surprises them, however banal, draws it forth. The expletive even has its own text messaging acronym: OMG. Surely, anyone with the fear of God in their hearts will recoil at this taking of “the name of the Lord thy God in vain.” This sin will not be unnoticed by God: “For the Lord will not hold him guiltless that taketh His name in vain” (Exodus 20. 7). Because of its very frequency we almost get inured to it.

There is a book that God has written – the Lamb’s book of life. In that book are the names of all His people, all those who will be found in heaven. No-one whose name is not written in this book will ever be found in heaven. If *your* name, if *my* name, is not written in the book, then we can never go to heaven. Just like the graduates, no certificate if their name was not in the book.

The apostle Paul knew there was a book of life: “... those women which laboured with me in the gospel, with Clement also, and with other my fellowlabourers, whose names are in the book of life” (Phil. 4. 3). John wrote very solemnly about it in Revelation: “And whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire” (Rev. 20. 15).

Many generations of children have sung the Sunday School hymn, number 240 in the YPH. It is worthy of careful reading:

If Jesus should come to our meeting today,  
To call out the Christians by name,  
O how we should listen to what He would say!  
How solemn the moments would seem!  
He’d know who they were, for He searches the heart;  
We could not the Saviour deceive;  
O who are the ones that He’d call out apart?  
And who are the ones He would leave?

May the words of Isaac Watts be our fervent prayer.

In Thy fair book of life and grace,  
O may I find my name  
Recorded in some humble place,  
Beneath my Lord the Lamb.

Wishing all our readers the Lord’s richest blessing.

The Editor

## THE CURRENT PANDEMIC

From an address given by Mr. G. D. Buss on 23rd October 2020

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### **The day prophesied**

The Lord Jesus Christ, speaking of the last times, clearly prophesied that there would be a day like this. If you turn to Matthew 24. 4-8, “And Jesus answered and said unto them, Take heed that no man deceive you. For many shall come in my name, saying, I am Christ; and shall deceive many. And ye shall hear of wars and rumours of wars: see that ye be not troubled: for all these things must come to pass, but the end is not yet. For nation shall rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom: and there shall be famines, and pestilences, and earthquakes, in divers places. All these are the beginning of sorrows.” And friends, this pestilence is the beginning of sorrows, there are more sorrows that are going to come upon the land and the nations in the latter days. In the book of the Revelation there is much that is very mysterious, and very wrong interpretations are made of it. But one thing not mysterious, is that in the days that precede our Lord’s return, there will be the very things our Lord has said, and pestilences are one of them. It is clearly prophesied by the Lord. It is a sign of the last times.

### **Permitted by God**

Now why does the Lord permit or even ordain such times as these? The first reason must be, it is the hand of divine judgment on the wickedness of nations. God is a very forbearing God. For example, we read concerning the Amorites in Abraham’s day, “for the iniquity of the Amorites was not yet full,” and centuries followed before God dealt with them when Israel invaded Canaan. But God is a forbearing God, and He was watching the Amorites and the time came when the Lord dealt with them. God is forbearing, He withholds the rod, He takes no pleasure in the death of the wicked, but *sooner or later* He will arise as a hand of divine judgment on the wickedness of nations. And I may say concerning our nation, what a wicked nation we have become, and we are part of it. There is no nation on earth really that has such reason to thank God for His intervention in our history. Time and time again the Lord has done great things for this nation, both in the last war and in the time of the Armada, and many other times. And yet now it is a shame if God’s name is mentioned. Anyone who begins to hint that these

things are God's chastening hand, are laughed down or shouted down. It is a very solemn day, from our royal house downward there is no acknowledgment that God's hand is in this. This makes you wonder how long it will last until, we trust, the hand of the Lord will be acknowledged. If only our nation would acknowledge it is God's hand there might be some hope that He would stay the plague.

### **A universal pandemic**

The second thing which struck me in meditation on this was, Noah's flood was universal. We know from the word of God it covered the whole earth, and so does this pandemic – it is a universal pandemic. And it makes me think of what our Lord Himself said in His ministry, that is, when the Lord comes, 'as in the days of Noah', and here was one thing that happened in the days of Noah, a universal flood, and here is a universal pandemic. Perhaps this is one of the clearest signs of the times that the Lord has given us at this time. I'm not a prophet in that sense, and there are those things which we feel will yet be performed on the face of the earth, in the conversion of Jews, before the world comes to an end, but on the other hand it would be a blind man not to acknowledge that many of the signs of the times are with us in our generation.

### **Divine chastisement**

But it is not only a hand of divine judgment on the wickedness of nations, but it is also a hand of divine chastisement on the Lord's people. Now you read in the book of Job 37 verse 13 these words: "He causeth it to come, whether for correction, or for His land, or for mercy." I'll read that again: "He (that is God) causeth it (these things) to come, whether for correction, or for His land, or for mercy." There we have three reasons why it may come: to correct that which is gone awry, or for His land (and particularly for His church), and oh! how wonderful it would be if it was for mercy – that it might bring a better day in the churches, a day of more prayer, more exercise, more nearness, more fruit, more ingathering of the people of God into His heavenly kingdom. It would be a wonderful mercy if that were so.

But it is a hand of divine chastisement. The very fact that in our worship at the moment we have been so restricted, we have to wear masks (and that is a trouble to many of the dear hearers and we feel for them, it is something which is so unusual), in many churches we cannot



sing as we would like to, and we have to keep a distance that we would rather not keep. All these things are oppressive to us, and they are affecting our worship. There is the hand of the Lord in this, it is reminding us that perhaps we took for granted the privileges we had of worship and the freedom we had to worship according to our conscience. The Lord has kindly put His hand on us to teach us to value these things. When we are restored, God willing, to the freedom that we are used to, may we highly value the Lord's house that we may have neglected, and the Lord's word that we may have neglected, and the throne of grace we may have neglected. Oh may we value these things much more, God willing, when the plague is lifted.

### **God in control**

Now my final thought is this: never forget that God is in complete control. Whatever may happen, however severe, however unexpected, God is in control. You read in Psalm 11 these words: "If the foundations be destroyed, what can the righteous do?" A good question! The foundations of our nation are being shaken at the moment in many many ways. Even the churches are being shaken by these things. "What can the righteous do?" The very next verse tells us: "The Lord is in His holy temple." In other words, the righteous should be looking up, to the unshakeable, unchangeable God that sits on that unshakeable, unchangeable throne. "The Lord God omnipotent reigneth." And even though these things try us, dear Job when the foundation of his whole life was shaken, family foundation, the foundation of his marriage was shaken at one time when his wife didn't understand, his friends forsook him; but he said, "Though He slay me, yet will I trust in Him." There was the mark of living faith under the divine chastisement of God.

### **The end known only to God**

Whatever God's will is in this pandemic, we know not how it will fall out. That is known only to the Lord. May we be among those God-fearing ones who humble themselves under God's mighty hand, acknowledge how just He is, and yet plead for mercy.

We began with those words of David, didn't we? "Let us fall now into the hand of the Lord; for His mercies are great: and let me not fall into the hand of man."

May God help us so to do, for His name's sake. Amen.



## **JOHN Warburton (Part 5)**

A few of the Lord's providential dealings

Born in 1776, convicted of his sin as a young man, delivered from a temptation to end his life by drowning, and Christ revealed to his soul under a sermon preached by William Roby at Cannon Street Chapel, Manchester. In a time of desperate need, with a creditor threatening to have his goods seized and sold the following Tuesday, an elderly deacon, to whom the Lord had given much of this world's goods, is able to relieve him by giving him the needed money, and a little beside. We continue with the life of the Lord's servant.

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I hastened home as quickly as possible, for I had left my wife very low, and I longed to tell her what great things the Lord had done for us, though, at that time, she knew Him not as her portion and her all. O the sweet journey I had home! The number of times I looked at the money, and blessed, and thanked, and adored, and extolled my covenant God, for all His wonderful goodness to one so vile and so unworthy of the least of all His mercies.

Upon reaching home, I told my wife of the goodness and lovingkindness of God in providing the whole of the money for my debt. I showed her the money, and, poor thing, she wept like a child upon seeing it. O what a heavenly night I had in viewing the everlasting love, mercy, grace and kindness of my God and Saviour. My soul could give Him all the glory. I needed no one to tell me it was my duty and privilege to "crown Him Lord of all."

### **The debt settled**

On the Monday morning I went to the man to whom I owed the money, and told him that I had come to discharge my debt; for the Lord had provided me with the money, and that I had more pleasure in paying than he had in receiving it. He took the money, and I came away. On the very Friday following, if I recollect aright, his wife was attacked with the fever and died in a few days, leaving him with a large family of young children; and, although at this time he was doing very well in business, yet in less than twelve months his goods were sold, his poor children taken to the workhouse, and he himself reduced to want bread.

**Darkness**

I went on for some time after this pretty comfortably, constantly hoping and praying that I might never distrust nor dishonour my God again. Indeed, I believed in my very soul that I never more could distrust that God who had appeared for me so often and so wonderfully. But I soon found that I had a sorer trial yet to pass through than any which I had had in my life. God was pleased to lay me up with a bodily affliction, so that for fourteen weeks I was ill of the dropsy, with no human hope of recovery, and nothing but the expectation of death!

The darkness of soul in which I passed about twelve or thirteen weeks tongue cannot describe. Day after day and night after night were spent in nothing but gloom, misery, and wretchedness. I began to fear that all my past experience was nothing but deception. Death was staring me in the face, eternity was opening upon me, and not one promise could I lay hold of as mine. When I cried, the heavens appeared as brass, and I verily believed that all the comforts and joys I had felt were no more than those of the stony-ground hearers. I verily believed that the devil himself had taken possession of my soul. I told all my friends that I was a deceived man, and had deceived them likewise, and that I was as sure to be damned as that I had been born.

**Deliverance**

I shall never forget the time of my deliverance. I was alone in the house, and being a little better in body, could just manage with the assistance of a stick to walk about, which I did, groaning and sighing. Bunyan's *Pilgrim's Progress* lay upon the table, and in opening it, I was led to cast my eyes upon the description of Christian's passing through the Valley of the Shadow of Death; with the awful scenes which he saw there, and the awful curses which were whispered in his ears, until he became so confused that he could not distinguish his own voice, but began to think that it was he himself who cursed the Lord. My soul began to melt, and hope to spring up that it was the very situation I was in. I saw that it was not I who was blaspheming God, but the devil who was tempting me to do so.

I then went down upon my knees and poured out my soul to the Lord, entreating that He would appear for my soul once more; and I felt a freedom of access to Him, and a going forth of soul that I had not enjoyed for fifteen weeks. The snare was broken and I escaped. O the transports of joy that I experienced! O the love that I felt to my God and



Saviour, who had conquered death and him who had the power of death, that is, the devil!

### **First thoughts of the ministry**

The next thing, I shall notice is my call to the ministry, which was a wonder to many in my own country, but most of all to myself.



*William Gadsby*

I believe that the first moving of God in my soul for the work of the ministry was when I was baptised by that dear man of God, William Gadsby, of Manchester. I had for several years been convinced of baptism, but had tried all in my power to satisfy my mind without attending to it; for I felt such a reluctance to leave the Independent church, the members of which had proved themselves such kind friends to me. I thought it would seem like base ingratitude to leave them after all their kindness; and as I did not, at that time, know any Baptist church with which to unite myself, I thought it my duty to abide where I was.

Some time after this, Mr. Gadsby came to Manchester to supply the Baptist chapel of which he is now the pastor, and I went to hear him. I think I shall never forget the first time I heard him. When I got into the chapel I thought to myself, What a poor, gloomy, miserable place this is! And as the people came in, I felt such a hatred rise up in my heart against them as I never felt against any people before. Nay, so much so, that I was just ready to take up my hat and walk out, when Mr. Gadsby got into the pulpit. I was struck with surprise to see so poor and mean-looking a fellow (as I thought him) attempt to preach. I despised him in my very soul, and thought he looked like an ignorant fool that had not commonsense.

He arose and gave out a hymn, but it was in so drawling a way that I verily believed he could not read. O how the devil rose up in my heart! I even wished that some one or other would raise a disturbance in the chapel, for I thought I could kick him out of it with all the pleasure in the world. My prejudice was so strong that, when he went to prayer, I do believe that I actually hated the sound of his voice. He appeared to me to stutter and stammer as though he could hardly get a word out of his mouth. My soul boiled with rage, and I called myself a thousand fools for coming to hear such a fool.

When he had finished his prayer, which was very short, I thought to myself, Poor creature! thou canst never preach, I'm sure; and I felt a secret pleasure in the hope that when he had read his text he would be obliged to tell the people that he could not preach. The words of his text were, "A good man out of the good treasure of the heart bringeth forth good things; and an evil man out of the evil treasure bringeth forth evil things;" and he was so long in reading them, that I dropped my head down and thought I would try to go to sleep. He then made a little pause, and I looked up to see what he was about, and he was looking all around the chapel, and rolling his eyes in such a way that I really thought him crazy.

The first words he spoke were, "Perhaps you will be ready to say that, according to our sentiments, we cannot find a good man upon earth. But by the help of God we will, or we will ransack the Bible from Genesis to Revelation." O how my prejudice was knocked down at a blow! My soul melted like wax before the sun, and I exclaimed, "God bless thee! The Lord help thee to find the good man!"

He first showed that by nature no man was good, and O the depths he entered into in showing man's lost and ruined condition! But when he came to describe the good man as he stood in Christ, and the good things which were then brought forth out of his heart, my soul was so overcome that I cried out in my feelings, "Whither thou goest, I will go; and where thou lodgest, I will lodge; thy people shall be my people, and thy God my God; where thou diest, I will die" (Ruth 1. 16-17).

My very soul was knit to him, as closely as Jonathan's to David, and my ears were nailed to the doorpost. I had never heard my ins and outs, my ups and downs, my days and nights, my sorrows and joys, so opened up before. Had he been in my very soul, he could not have opened it up more plainly. From that day I attended the Baptist Chapel, and O the heavenly times I had when Mr. Gadsby was supplying, for he was not at that time their settled pastor.

## **Baptism**

The next time, if I recollect right, that he came to supply I was baptised, being the only candidate. O the sight I had of the Lord Jesus Christ when I went down into the water. By precious faith I saw Him sunk in deep waters where there was no standing, and all the waves and billows of Divine wrath overwhelming Him for my poor soul. I can never describe the solemnity, humility, holy wonder, adoration, self-

abasement and godly contrition that I felt whilst I stood in the water.

Dear Mr. Gadsby, whilst standing in the water, before he baptised me, offered up a short petition to God; and before he concluded, placing his hand upon my shoulder, he begged the Lord to bless me, defend me, stand by me, uphold me, and protect me; and what was amazingly astonishing to me, he finished by begging God to raise me up as an instrument in His hands for His own glory, and the cause of truth. I believed and felt in my very soul, whilst in the water, that God heard and answered every word that flowed out of his mouth; and my soul was so swallowed up in glory, that for a time I did not know whether I was in the body or out of the body.

O the difficulty I had, when I came up out of the water, to refrain from telling the whole congregation what I had seen and felt of the preciousness of my dear Lord and Saviour. After this I was not like the same man. I had no rest nor peace but in reading, searching and praying over the Word of God at every opportunity which my employment would admit of, morning, noon and night. O what a spirit of prayer I felt that God would open my understanding to understand the Scriptures. I felt such wrestlings at times with God, that He would show me the meaning of His blessed Word, that both body and soul have been quite weak and feeble; and sometimes such light and life would shine and flow into my heart from a text of Scripture, that it set my very soul all on a flame of love to God and His people; and I have cried out, "O Lord, here I am; send me with a message of grace and peace to Thy dear children, who are kept in bondage under legal preachers." For at this time Mr. Gadsby was not settled at Manchester, though he was so a little while after.

### **Insufficiency to be a preacher**

But, alas! when I looked at my situation in providence, with hardly a shoe to my foot, with a large family of little children, over head and ears in debt, many times with not half a bellyful of victuals, without any human learning except just enough to read some parts of the Bible, and hardly able to write my own name properly. "Good Lord," cried I, "what can I be at? Surely I must be mad to think of preaching, such a fool as I." Then I determined to trouble my head no more about it, and did all I could to put it out of my thoughts. But it was just like trying to empty a spring, for it flowed into my mind as fast as ever I tried to put it out.



One day, when I was wrestling with the Lord to show me what it could all mean, and how it was I could not put it out of my heart, and telling Him how unfit I was for the office of minister, as being such an ignorant fool that I could not speak properly, those blessed words which God spake to Moses came with such power, that I was quite struck with amazement: “Who hath made man’s mouth? or who maketh the dumb, or deaf, or the seeing, or the blind? have not I, the Lord? Now, therefore, go, and I will be with thy mouth, and teach thee what thou shalt say” (Exod. 4. 11, 12). O how my soul was melted and crumbled down at His blessed feet; and like a poor simple child, I cried, “What! I, Lord? What! Wilt Thou open my mouth? What! Wilt Thou teach me what to say? Can it, Lord, be possible? Is it, dear Lord, from Thyself? Be not angry with Thy child, O Lord! It is such a solemn and great work to go and speak in Thy great Name. I am afraid, Lord, lest I should run before I am sent. Do not suffer me to be deceived or to deceive others. I am afraid it cannot be real. Is it really from Thee, Lord? Do tell me; do make it known to my soul.”

Whilst my poor soul was pleading with Him like a child, these precious words came with such power and sweetness, that brought me firmly to believe for a time that it was of God: “Fear thou not; for I am with thee: be not dismayed; for I am thy God: yea, I will strengthen thee; yea, I will help thee; yea, I will uphold thee with the right hand of My righteousness” (Isa. 41.10). O the blessed sweetness and Divine confidence which these words brought into my heart! Thy God to supply; thy God to teach. Nay, my very soul was satisfied that there was everything in my God which I could stand in need of, both for the ministry and for the family, for the body and for the soul, for time and for eternity.

Here I was wonderfully favoured for some time with sweet communion and fellowship with my God and Saviour. The Word of God was truly “a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path” (Ps. 119. 105). I was enabled to commit it into His blessed hands, for Him to work His own way, and if it were His good will and pleasure, that He would open the way in His own time. But if it were nothing but flesh and blood, pride and the devil, I prayed from my heart that He would overthrow and stop it. I felt so much the greatness and importance of the work, and the awfulness of running before I was sent, that it was my earnest cry, night and day, that I might not be deceived, or attempt it without His blessed approbation and smiles.

Then again, I was sorely harassed for fear it should be nothing but flesh and blood; for when I began to think what a poor ignorant, illiterate fool I was, how could I think of being the mouth of God? And what could I do in opening the Scriptures of truth to feed the children of God with wisdom and understanding, that had no understanding myself, but was a complete ignorant fool? Surely, thinks I, it must be a delusion of the devil, and I must be altogether deceived. This brought me down upon my knees to God again, and I could appeal to Him, who knew my very soul and before whom my heart was open and naked, and I could cry with unfeigned lips, "Search my heart, O Lord, and show me if I have any evil end in view." I begged from my very heart that if it were not of Him, He would deliver me from the thought of it, and pardon me for ever having thought about it.

### **Soul led out at the prayer meeting**

As I was going to the prayer meeting under these workings of mind, my soul was so led out to God that, if He had indeed chosen such a foolish thing, such a weak thing, such a base thing to preach the gospel, He would be with me that night in a peculiar way, and bless me with liberty in prayer, and such power attending it that the souls of the people might be blessed; and I told Him it should be a token whether it was of God or of myself. To my wonder and astonishment, my soul was so led out in prayer, and I had such a sight of the mercy, goodness, kindness and love of God, that I hardly knew how to conclude. Words flowed so freely, so sweetly, and so feelingly, that I was quite at home in the Lord.

After the meeting was over I stopped behind for some time, and my mouth was opened in conversation about the goodness, mercy and lovingkindness of my covenant God in delivering, helping, and upholding such a worthless wretch to the present moment. O what sweetness and liberty I felt in telling what God had done for my soul! One or two of the people were quite revived, and spoke of the goodness of God, who had been with us that evening. I went home full of joy, comfort and peace, believing that the Lord was with me, and had proved Himself to be my prayer-hearing and prayer-answering God.

### **Again tempted by the devil**

For several days I was very happy and comfortable in leaving all in His blessed hands. But after I had left off communing with my God I returned to my old place, and the devil began his old work. "How can you think of entering into the work of the ministry? Look at the

importance of the work; look at your ignorance; look at your poverty; look at your debts, which you have not a farthing to pay with; and you have hardly a rag to your back or a shoe to your foot, except what is given to you by someone or other.” O how my knees began to tremble, and my hair to move on my very head, and my blood to run cold, and I trembled from head to foot. Oh! cried I, in the greatest confusion and distress, what have I been doing? Am I wrong after all? O how did my soul beg of God that He would pardon me if I had attempted of my own accord to think about the ministry. Here I was for a long time. Sometimes a little hope would break into my heart to prop me up for a few moments, and then again I sank fathoms, and cried out, “Think about preaching! O that I could but get rid of the thought about it!”

But then again the Lord would send some precious part of His Word home to my soul with such power that I was willing to be anything or nothing that God might be glorified. Then I began to think it was my duty to tell some of the Lord’s people how I was exercised in my mind, and hear what they thought of it. Perhaps I should feel more satisfied after hearing their mind upon it. But this I never could do, for I believed in my soul, if it were of God He would impress it upon their minds as well as upon mine, and that they would ask me about it. O what a spirit of prayer I then felt, day after day, that God would make it known that it was from Him, by sending someone to ask me if I were not exercised about preaching; for I was sure that if God had designed me for the work, He would open the way without my opening it myself. Here I was kept for a long time, praying and watching the good hand of God.

But one Saturday morning, such a cloud of darkness overshadowed me – darkness that might be felt – every promise sealed up, no access to God, with nothing but wants in the family, and not one penny to supply them with, and the devil telling me what a fool I must be to think of preaching, and praying that God would send somebody to ask me to preach. O my very knees smote together, and how ashamed I was of my very prayers. Surely, thought I, it can be nothing but presumption! Had it been from God, He would have sent someone before now.

### **The question put to him**

Just in these workings of my mind, believing it could not be of God, one of the deacons of the church, whose name, if I recollect rightly, was Francis, called at our house, and wished me to walk out with him. When we got by ourselves, he said that he had a question to ask me, to which



he hoped I would give him a faithful answer. “Have you not, John,” said he, “had some exercises of mind about preaching?” I was so struck with astonishment at the question, that I was some time speechless. He soon saw how it was, and then told me that it had been impressed upon his mind and that of others, ever since I gave in my experience at the church meeting, that God had designed me for the work of the ministry, and that they had been watching the hand of God towards me ever since. “The more we make it a matter of prayer to God,” said he, “the more liberty and freedom we find, and we verily believe that He has designed you for the work of the ministry.” By little and little he drew it all out of me, and I told him all the workings of mind I had had from the time I was baptised. He told me that a few of the friends had agreed to have a private meeting at his house once a week, and that each, in his turn, should speak from a text of Scripture, as the Lord should enable him. He would take no denial, but I must promise that I would go in my turn. So I agreed to go, and the time fixed was, I think, that evening fortnight.

*TO BE CONTINUED*

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## UNUSUAL BIBLES (5)

In the *Adulterers' Bible*, which appeared in 1631, the word “not” in the seventh commandment was left out so that it read: “Thou shalt commit adultery.” Its London printers, Robert Barker and Martin Lucas, were stripped of their licence and fined £300 (£40,000 today) for the



oversight, although some think the omission was an act of sabotage. King Charles I was furious when he found out and ordered all the

Bibles to be withdrawn and burnt, but a few escaped. The mistake was not discovered for a whole year, by which time 1000 copies had come off the press. The Archbishop of Canterbury (George Abbot) commented wryly, “The composers are but boyes, and the correctors unlearned.” One of the nine copies known to have survived was sold by auction in 2018 by Sotheby’s for £41,100. A Sotheby’s spokesman said: “It remains a lesson for us all to proof-read everything we write.”

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## LAMBETH PALACE

A hammer-beam roof built of massive oak beams from “le West woode” near Harrow – but without a single nail being used in its construction! Is such a thing possible? Well, the Great Hall in Lambeth Palace, London has just such a roof.

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Lambeth Palace has been the home of the Archbishops of Canterbury for 800 years. What a splendid building it is with its Tudor brickwork wrought in the same wonderful pattern as Hampton Court.

The name Lambeth means “muddy landing place;” an appropriate name until the sluggish flow of the Thames was quickened by the building of the Embankment in the 1860s.

The oldest part of the building is the crypt, dating back to 1199. The proximity to the Thames caused some problems, and years of accumulated mud and silt were removed in 1905. The crypt is a perfect example of early Norman English architecture, with nothing changed.

The geographical situation of Lambeth became important during the 11th and 12th centuries. Starting in 1045, King Edward the Confessor



began to build a magnificent abbey on the north bank of the Thames: Westminster Abbey was consecrated on 28th December 1065, and Edward was buried inside its walls when he died a week later on 6th January 1066. King William II built a palace next to the abbey, and Westminster became the seat of government.

The Archbishop of Canterbury enjoyed great powers as a spiritual leader, and was one of the king's chief counsellors with an important place in court. Several Archbishops of Canterbury, including the martyred Thomas Becket, became Chancellor, holding a position approximating to our own Prime Minister. It was vital, therefore, that the Archbishop should have a house with easy access to the royal court at Westminster.



*The Lollards' Prison*

The grey stone, five-storey tower between the chapel and the river was built in the 15th century in the time of Archbishop Chichele, and is known as the Lollards' Tower. At the top of a long spiral staircase and behind two heavy iron-studded oak doors, is a small unlit cell in which the 'Lollards', (from the Dutch *lollaert* – mumblers), followers of John Wycliffe, were imprisoned. It is still possible to decipher the initials of some of the poor souls incarcerated here, carved into the ancient oak panels. The accounts record that 490 tons of ragstone, with lime, sand

and other materials, were brought by boat from Maidstone for the building. A survey carried out in 1647 has the entry: “At the Northend of the said Courte is a greate Bricke Buildinge with Windowes opening towards the Thames foure Storeys high covered with Lead Behind which Buildinge alonge by the West end of the Chappell is a paire of Staires Leadinge upp into chambers five Storeys high over which is the Lollards Tower all covered with lead.”



*Archbishop Thomas Cranmer  
by Gerlach Flicke, 1545*

In the year 1533 Cranmer, at the age of 44, was appointed Archbishop of Canterbury by King Henry VIII. After the King's divorce from Catherine of Aragon, Cranmer officiated at his marriage to Anne Boleyn. Anne was cruelly and falsely condemned to die for adultery, and on the day of her death Cranmer wept bitterly in the gardens of Lambeth Palace. Behind the chapel stands a red brick Tudor tower. One of its rooms is known as 'Cranmer's room' where, in 1549 and 1552, he produced two prayer books which together formed the basis of the later 1662 Book of Common Prayer with its beautiful wording. Even today this room is still very much the Archbishop's private sanctuary where he studies, writes and prays. The King died holding Cranmer's hand. How tragic that he was burnt at the stake at Oxford with six others on Wednesday, 21st March 1556.

In 1553 Queen (bloody) Mary came to the throne. Cardinal Reginald Pole, Mary's Roman Catholic Archbishop, as he left Italy, tucked a piece of a fig tree into his pocket. He gave it to a gardener at Lambeth Palace to plant against the west wall of the Great Hall. This magnificent plant continues to bear abundant fruit every autumn. How strange that Cardinal Pole died on the same day as Queen Mary, 17th November 1558!

The Great Hall dates back to the early 13th century and was often used for banquets and feasts. Here the Archbishop would receive and entertain important guests, including royalty. After the execution of King Charles I in 1649, Lambeth Palace was occupied by Oliver Cromwell's parliamentary soldiers. They badly damaged the palace



chapel, turning it into a dining room, and demolished the magnificent Great Hall, selling it off brick by brick. Sacrilegiously, the soldiers broke open the tomb of Archbishop Matthew Parker, and threw out his bones on to a dung heap in the stable yard. His remains were retrieved and buried under the floor in the chapel. The main doors of the chapel are marvellously preserved, and many of the original floor tiles remain. We were pleased to see an Authorised Version of the Bible on the lectern. Although not specially attracted to stained-glass windows, one window we found rather touching portrayed the thief on the cross with the words: *DOMINE MEMENTO MEI* (Lord, remember me).



*The Great Hall housing part of the Library*

In 1660, Archbishop William Juxon rebuilt the Great Hall in traditional style with its oak hammer-beam roof, only for it to be badly damaged by an air raid during the Second World War. Today the Great Hall houses one of the world's biggest collections of religious manuscripts, books and documents – second only to the Vatican library. The Lambeth Palace library became the country's first public library, opened in 1610. In 1698 Peter the Great of Russia came to visit it – he was astonished: he never thought there were so many books in the world. The library possesses a *Gutenberg Bible* printed in Germany in 1450 and illustrated in East Anglia. Another valuable book is a *History of the World*, published in 1492.



One day a month in the summer, Lambeth Palace is open to visitors (one year there were 85,000 visitors). There are thirty-nine portraits of previous archbishops, including one of Thomas Cranmer with a long grey beard, grown long in mourning for his King. Altogether there have been 106 Archbishops of Canterbury, beginning in the year 597 with Augustine, the Roman abbot who persuaded King Ethelbert to renounce his idolatry and become a Christian (at least nominally). The King and many of his subjects were baptised in the River Swale, a maritime branch of the river Medway in Kent. The King's wife Bertha was already a Christian.

Other well-known Archbishops are Thomas à Becket who was hacked to death in the Cathedral in the year 1170, Matthew Parker 1559 who was one of the primary authors of the Thirty-nine Articles of Faith of the Church of England (whose tomb was broken open – see above), and William Laud who was executed towards the end of the First English Civil War in 1645.



*Thomas à Becket*



*Matthew Parker*



*William Laud*

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In the above article we mentioned Cranmer's *Book of Common Prayer*. Phrases in everyday use which originated in this book include:

- till death us do part      all my worldly goods
  - land of the living      at death's door
  - the upper hand      fire and brimstone
  - peace in our time      to have and to hold
-

## **GOD'S WATCHFUL CARE**

Dr. Rupert Clarke was glad of a little break from the pressures of running the Overseas Missionary Fellowship hospital at Saiburi in south Thailand. The medical service in this rural area was warmly welcomed by the Thai officials, but the work was demanding. Adding to Dr. Clarke's burdens at this time was the recent news that two dear nurses – Minka (Dutch) and Margaret (Welsh) – had been abducted, and held captive in guerilla hide-outs deep in the jungle. In March 1975 news flashed round the world that two bodies had been found. They were the bodies of Minka and Margaret, both killed with a single shot to the back of the head when the ransom had not been paid.

So a little swim in the estuary of the River Saiburi was a welcome relief. It was free of the jellyfish which are hazards of sea bathing in those parts, and there were no sharks, either. But on this occasion Dr. Clarke misjudged the tide and the strength of the river current, and found himself swept out to sea for about half a mile. He started swimming steadily towards the shore, but realised that he was making practically no headway.

No-one on the shore would be on the lookout for him, he knew. He was a powerful and experienced swimmer, and there would be no reason for anyone to be concerned about him at this stage. And by the time his non-appearance had resulted in a search party launching out for him it would be dark. He dared not stop swimming, but the shore seemed as far away as ever, his heart was pumping, and he knew he could not hold on for much longer.

What he did not know was that a small Malay boy had been watching him from the shore, and saw when he was swept out to sea. The child ran and told his fisherman father, and so it came about that when Rupert was conscious of weakening he heard a shout, a fishing boat loomed into sight and sturdy out-stretched arms pulled him aboard.

Some would have termed it a 'lucky coincidence' that the child 'happened' to be watching, but Dr. Clarke himself did not see it in that way. 'Thanks be to God for causing the little boy to see me,' was the way he put it.

On such apparently coincidental 'happenings' hang the issues of life and death more often than most of us realise.

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## OUR TIMES IN GOD'S HAND

I was saddened to read of a phrase our Prime Minister Boris Johnson has used in several of his recent Covid-19 briefings to the nation in the current pandemic, warning the British public of “losing loved ones before their time.”

It has made me consider, what does this phrase really mean, “... before their time.” This implies that frail, sinful man has a degree of control over the length of his life here on earth. It wrongly assumes that man ‘owns’ his time. How can this be? With all the advances of medical treatment, no man on earth can determine, or extend the length of any human life, however hard they try to prolong it. Man vainly assumes that they will live on this earth for a long time and naturally rises up in anger and resentment when their loved ones – to them unexpectedly – pass away perhaps at a younger age, or earlier than they would have thought possible, and often question, “Why?” But in Ecclesiastes 3. 2 we read, “There is a time to be born, and a time to die” – these two events, our birth and death, are God’s appointments which man cannot change.

“God never is before His time  
And never is behind” (T. T. Lynch, YPH Hymn 88).

“All my times are in thy hand,  
All events at thy command” (Gadsby’s 64).

... *not* in man’s hands.

May we pray that our Prime Minister and many others will have their eyes opened by the power of the Holy Spirit to see that God is in control of this Coronavirus pandemic and He has appointed every single death, at whatever age. “God is no respecter of persons” (Acts 10. 34).

“Days, months, and years must have an end;  
Eternity has none” (YPH Hymn 265).

As it is often quoted, “The old must die; the young may die,” and as the hymn says:

“And sometimes short’s the warning” (Gadsby’s 814).

A minister once said, “... and sometimes there is no warning!”

What a mercy if we are each prepared for that great day (see Gadsby’s Hymn 471).

*Contributed by one of our readers.*

## TRUSTING IN GOD'S MERCY

John James West

The Rev. J. J. West was a faithful clergyman of the Church of England, rector of the Church of St. Thomas The Martyr, Winchelsea, East Sussex in the 1800's. We remember as a teenager reading at the breakfast table one of his sermons in a *Zion's Witness* which had just arrived in the post. How struck we were that such a sermon could ever have been preached in a Parish Church! O that the Lord might again raise up such men who truly know and fear the Lord.



*The Church of St. Thomas The Martyr in 1860 (left) and today*

This is the first part of a sermon preached by him on a Tuesday evening, May 1st, 1860, at St. Barnabas Church, King's Square, London.

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Text: "*But I have trusted in Thy mercy; my heart shall rejoice in Thy salvation*" (Psalm 13. 5).

It is the thought of a brother rector of mine, a faithful servant of Christ, in my own diocese, that it is the privilege of the minister of the gospel to go and proclaim free grace salvation, without creature merits and works, to awakened prodigals. And I emphasize that word *awakened*, because, as Solomon says in Proverbs, "The hearing ear, and the seeing eye, the Lord hath made even both of them;" and while it is our office to "go and preach the gospel to every creature" – (mind, emphatically, "the gospel") – yet it is only awakened prodigals, those who have been quickened into life, who can receive the joyful sound.

David has the same thought in Psalm 89: "Blessed is the people that

know the joyful sound.” And depend upon it, my hearers, there must be a work begun, an opening of the ear and an anointing of the eye, before any man can understand the mysteries of the gospel of Christ crucified. Hence, in a pulpit in England’s church, in a church that maintains the doctrines of free grace, and is antagonistic to anything like the heresy of free will, I delight to proclaim the precious truths of a free salvation, “without money and without price,” by blood and love alone, to every poor, hungry, and thirsty soul, who cries and longs for mercy at the foot of a once dying, now risen, exalted, and enthroned Redeemer.

May the Lord Himself help me as I stand here before you, feeble in myself – but may it be mighty in Him – to preach, so that Satan may tremble, and sinners be awakened to know and to receive the truth. *Pray for me*, that it may be so.

I must read this Psalm, all of it; it is only six verses.

*(Reading of the Psalm.)*

Mark those words, “Lest mine enemy say, I have prevailed against him.” “Lest.” “Lest.” (Oh! listen Christian!) “Lest the enemy say, I have prevailed against him; and those that trouble me rejoice when I am moved.”

This is the same David who once said, “I shall one day perish by the hand of Saul.” But, my hearers, remember who has said: “They shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of My hand.” The enemy harasses the poor. The enemy delights to see a child of God in the dirt. This gives joy to the carnal worldling, and specially pleases the carnal professor. Now comes the text: “But I have trusted in Thy mercy; my heart shall rejoice in Thy salvation.”

It is sweet to contemplate this! Have you ever, in imagination, walked (as it were) between those two stones, Jehovah-jireh and Ebenezer? And when the heart has been sinking and failing to realise all that Jehovah-jireh means, then to take courage by the Ebenezers that are past:

“Each sweet Ebenezer I have in review,  
Confirms His good pleasure to help me quite through.”

John Newton knew that!

Now, first, “But I have trusted in Thy mercy.” Here is the experimental statement of David – of a sinner such as I am – and of one brought to a simple trust in God’s mercy. Here is all his hope! He was under the hidings of God’s face; he felt forgotten of the Lord; and so



forgotten that he asks (as in the first verse of the Psalm), “How long wilt Thou forget me, O Lord? for ever?” (can it be for ever?) “how long wilt Thou hide Thy face from me?” and in the other verses how keen are the exercises of his soul, till arriving at the climax in the text – “But I have trusted in Thy mercy.”

Now, people not taught of God call this Calvinism, and enthusiasm. But I know nothing of *Calvin*; I am a faithful, honest Church of England man; and I feel that I shall have with me, on my side, every faithful brother in the church, and every faithful brother out of the church, when I say that the standard that I set up as a test of orthodox discipleship is this, whether we have been brought to hope in the mercy of God, in and through Christ Jesus! That is all! To be raised to hope in Christ as our own Saviour! It matters not to me whether a man be a churchman or not – I would make you a churchman if I could in preference to being anything else! – but the test is this: IS CHRIST ALL? Has He “the pre-eminence?” I ask, has Christ “the pre-eminence” in you? Is He pre-eminent in all, in everything? He must be if you have been made to hope in His mercy, pity, and love. Surely in preaching this, I am not setting up a high standard. I ask the poor, trembling believer before me: do you feel, really feel your sin, brought down to nothingness under a sense of it, and melted in heart, because of God’s pardoning love to sinners in Christ Jesus?

I do not know whether he may be here tonight; but there is a man in London, called, so I understand, under my feeble instrumentality and ministry, to a knowledge of the truth, and who, after he was awakened, was taken into the union workhouse, and thrown into a ward with forty or fifty paupers; and at night, on his bed, under much exercise on account of his sins, and terrified at the thought that he must die, those words came to him with power, “The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom.”

Now, you who “belong to Christ,” and are one with Him in a union that is indissoluble, is it not a blessing to know that there “is forgiveness with God that He may be feared”? Mercy cried for, is a token that mercy shall be granted. Look at the poor publican! How different was the proud and boasting Pharisee! “The Pharisee stood and prayed thus with himself, God, I thank Thee, that I am not as other men are, extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even as this publican. I fast twice in the week, I give tithes of all that I possess. And the publican, standing afar off, would not lift so much as his eyes unto heaven, but smote upon

his breast, saying, God be merciful to me a sinner.” That is the gospel! You may talk of preachers, and the excitement of the day in which we live, of this great man and the other, but the test of Christianity, of true vital godliness, is mercy cried for, mercy sought.

“Mercy, good Lord, mercy I ask,  
This is the total sum;  
For mercy, Lord, is all my suit;  
Lord, let Thy mercy come.”

Does it not suit you poor ones? And also the hymn of Toplady’s:

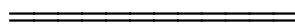
“Rock of ages, cleft for me;  
Let me hide myself in Thee.”

Well, now, whether we are ministers or whether we are hearers, how blessed it is to know, that when I leave this pulpit, and when you leave these pews, to know that we can, in our separate stations, and in our chambers, ask and cry for mercy under a feeling sense of personal iniquity and sin, and crying for deliverance from it, flee to Him as the refuge and shelter, in whom mercy only can be found. David knew that mercy could only be found in God alone! He knew this experimentally! And it is experience after all that tests the truth! Dry doctrines will not suffice alone! They would starve a living, hungry soul!

We must be sound in doctrine; we start from this point. The articles of my own Church make me sound in doctrine; but we are not to stop here. David cried for mercy. David was made to trust in mercy; and so must each one of God’s redeemed people. “But I have trusted in Thy mercy.”

Now, my hearers, I feel the difficulty, the great difficulty, which only faithful preachers can understand, of fully preaching out this great subject. It is impossible to do so! I am as a bottle having no vent! And mark my subject! David was in a trial; he felt forgotten of God; he asked, is it “for ever?” But yet do not suppose that David, for a moment, thought that God would finally forsake him. Oh, no! See this Psalm! There is no such thing as final falling away, nor will the child of God ever be finally forsaken of the Lord!

The Arminian heresy has no ground to stand on.



## DAVID STONELAKE

(1936 - 2020)

One of the deadliest weapons developed by the Germans was a flying missile, named by the people of Britain a 'Doodlebug.' The first of these flying bombs was dropped at Swanscombe in Kent on 13 June 1944 and the last one at Orpington in Kent on 27 March 1945. Of the 6,725 launched against Britain, more than two thousand hit London, causing over five thousand deaths.

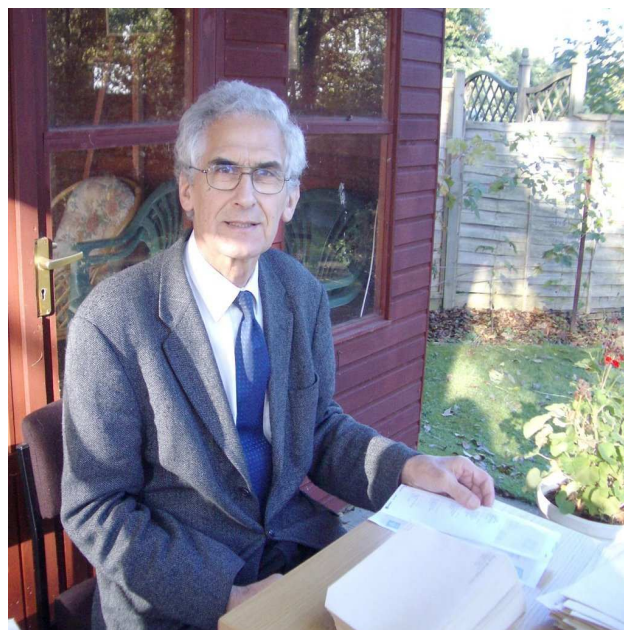
At the time of the second World War, David Stonelake was living in London with his family. In 1944, the family home was hit by a V1 Doodlebug. David's mother, father and grandmother were all killed, but David and his brother Douglas survived under the rubble for four days before being dug out. The trauma of this experience remained with David all his life.



*Ruins of the family home*

Stonelake. After National Service in the Royal Navy, David trained as a teacher. Most of his working life he was a maths teacher at Bourne Grammar School in Lincolnshire, a school which can be traced back to the year 1330 when a teacher was provided by the Lincoln Cathedral Chapter. On retirement at the age of 64, he settled in Luton, attending Bethel Chapel. During this period he was a great help every month in preparing the envelopes for sending out the *Gospel Standard* magazines.

On a personal note, there was a time when one of the Editor's



*Mailing the Gospel Standard*

grandchildren had some difficulty with her algebra homework, with a rather knotty equation to solve. Her grandad was not much help to her, but took the opportunity to approach Mr. Stonelake with the problem while he was dealing with the *Gospel Standards*. He proceeded to give an excellent (and lengthy) explanation of how to solve this particular kind of simultaneous equation. We decided he must have been a very good teacher!

David passed away in hospital on 24th November 2020 at the age of 84. His funeral service was conducted by Mr. B. A. Ramsbottom at Clifton Chapel, followed by burial in the Chapel graveyard.

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**Mr. B. A. Ramsbottom:**

For all of us, beloved friends, this is a sad occasion. David was well liked amongst us. He seemed to belong to us at Bethel. We do miss him.

David's life was a sad life. When he was a young boy, as most of you know, the house was hit by a bomb. His father, mother and grandmother, all perished in the air raid attack. David and his brother seemed to be lost in the debris for about four days. It was a traumatic experience for a young boy to wake up in hospital, to find that his mother, father and grandmother were all dead.

And really our friend David was scarred by this for the rest of his life, wasn't he? And he always had that conflict: if there be a God, why did He allow such a thing to happen?

After he left school he was called up into the Royal Navy. That's why *Eternal Father Strong to Save*, concerning the perils of the sea, has been chosen as our second hymn this morning. But as we think of that hymn on the Trinity, as we think of the voyage and the perils of the voyage, we remember that there is so much in God's Holy Word on the subject – the life of a believer is a heavenly voyage. But it all begins when he embarks.

Beloved friends, unless led by the Spirit, you and I never embark on that heavenly voyage, but must perish eternally. But if led by the Spirit of God, we leave this world's deceitful shore, leave it to return no more.

And then there's the voyage: we have an anchor, "which hope we have, as an anchor of the soul, both sure and steadfast and which entereth into that within the veil, whither the forerunner is for us entered, even Jesus."

If we have embarked on this voyage, we need to have a good anchor. And then, with Jesus, “through the trackless deep move on” (Gadsby’s Hymns 1102).

And so, He bringeth His beloved to their desired haven. And it will be a wonderful thing if at last you and I are safely brought through, safely landed. But don’t take it for granted. May we seek the witness of the Spirit that we are right.

After his Navy career, David for many years had quite a prestigious teaching appointment at Bourne Grammar School in Lincolnshire, where he seems to have been quite prosperous, and seems to have been very well liked. On his retirement he came to us at Bethel, about 18 years ago. But I’ve been reminded that for quite a few years, even before his retirement, he often used to drive down in difficult circumstances, enduring that long journey from Lincolnshire, to us.

Now, there was something which always held David at Bethel; under the ministry of the Word; the preaching of the everlasting gospel. With all his fears, his troubles, his anxieties, he could never leave. And his attendance was exemplary. At all the services, in the week also, the prayer meetings, and in his latter days, though it was very difficult, he was always there. There was something that drove him, there was something held him.

During the lockdown and since the virus, when he could no longer come out, he always wanted to listen to the services. When he was in hospital dying, he was only allowed one visitor – my son Tim visited him shortly before he died. He was very pleased to see him; he was glad to hear the Word read and to listen to the prayer.

Now, beloved friends, we’ll leave it there.

The great point I felt for many years, concerning any funeral service, is to speak to the living! So, may it be so. Sadly, only a small number can literally attend. But I speak also to those listening over the relay. We see a coffin in front of us. One day, you and I will be there. “*Think and tremble, Death is now upon the road*” (Gadsby’s Hymns 698). The vital thing is to be made ready – to be prepared! We are all sinners. Oh! what a weight in those four words we read: “By man came death.”

And, you and I, unfit to die, are by nature unready. Only the Lord can make us ready. And if there’s a word that stands out this morning it is this: “one thing is needful.” It is needful now, it is needful every



moment of our life.

“In death Thou wilt most needful be,  
When I yield up my soul to Thee!”

One thing is needful – Jesus engrave it on my heart. Jesus is the one thing needful. He lived a sacred life. He died a precious sin-atoning death. He opened the way of salvation; the way of forgiveness; the only way to Heaven. This is the one thing needful.

For there is an eternity before us and, beloved friends, on the great day each one of us will either be eternally saved or eternally lost!

“Then, O my God, prepare  
My soul for that great day;  
O wash me in Thy precious blood,  
And take my sins away.” (*Horatius Bonar*)

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## **AUDIO-VISUAL TECHNOLOGIES – A WARNING**

Dr. Matthew Hyde

About 100 years ago, a series of separate technological developments were brought together in the first television. It was a major milestone in the development of what we will call in this article “audio-visual” technologies, which allowed the storage and transmission of sound and moving image.

When I was a child most homes had a large box-like television in the corner of the lounge, and because we did not have a television we were treated with some derision by our school friends. Today, quite a number of homes do not have a physical television, as films, documentaries and live-TV have become available over the internet, viewable on mobile phones, tablets and computers anywhere in the world, on-demand. Films which were once the preserve of cinemas, are now purchased on DVDs and watched at home or downloaded from the internet. Technology has advanced, but I wonder whether our care and concern over the use of technology has kept pace?

In considering our use of these technologies I want to emphasise I do not write against the technology. Becoming anti-technology is not

a wise approach. God has given man ability to produce technology capable of much good. Visiting the eldest member of my congregation recently, she was able to tell me how her father (Mr. S. F. Paul, editor of the *Gospel Standard*), took her to see the first TV when it was on display at Selfridges in London. He said he wanted her to be aware of the new technology, because he felt it had great capacity for good use, but he also warned that in the wrong hands he feared it could wreak havoc. I believe Mr. Paul was a wise man for educating his children about technological advances and both their right and wrong use.

I also want to emphasise that there is undoubtedly a right use of the technology. A recent DVD sent into every school in the UK by Truth in Science concerning the LGBT agenda is undoubtedly good and a sensible way of disseminating an important message. The use of video clips to teach children at home during the pandemic or when routinely home-schooling could be considered another good use of the technology.

We are responsible for a right use of technology. But a right use is not just doing something because it is lawful, nor because it is pragmatic, but ensuring that our use of a thing is for the honour and glory of God and with our soul's interest carefully considered. As Paul said, "All things are lawful unto me, but all things are not expedient: all things are lawful for me, but I will not be brought under the power of any" (1 Corinthians 6. 12). I want to briefly consider here some considerations that we should remember when seeking a right use of audio visual technologies.

**Firstly**, the power of the technology. The eye is perhaps one of the weakest entrance points into our inner being. Bunyan depicts this in his account of the Eye Gate in his *Holy War*. The saying is, "seeing is believing." Listening to an audio book is far less impressive or memorable than watching a film adaptation of the book. The combining of eye and ear is what makes audio-visual technologies such a powerful tool in teaching. This should sound a note of caution. Great care is needed over what we watch because we are far more likely to be moved by it, or remember it, or be persuaded by it, than if we simply read or hear it. It is far easier to skip over the pages of a nature book which deal with evolution or the age of the earth, than it is to fast forward over the section in a film when it is accompanied by beautiful footage of nature which we are enjoying watching.

The power of the technology also makes it inherently addictive. Once we watch one DVD, see one clip on You-Tube, discover we can watch a documentary or film being discussed at work, without having to own a TV or go to the cinema, we become hooked.

**Secondly**, the content of the audio-visual technology. Sadly, most film makers have one aim – to sell their films. They are catering for the tastes of fallen people. By nature we are sinners and we love sin; we hate the truth and do not want the light because it reproves our evil deeds. Consequently, we must expect the vast majority of films to be aimed at these natural tastes. Sin is often the subject of films – be it adultery, murder, or encouraging us to covet a lifestyle which is not ours. I realise this can equally apply to books, magazines, etc. But it is the combination of the power of the technology and the depraved content which makes audio-visual technology more high-risk.

**Thirdly**, the atmosphere films create. (I use the word ‘films’ here because undoubtedly a good ‘documentary’ of nature can bring us rightly to marvel over the wonders of the God of creation, so the points made may not apply to all audio-visual technology.) When I was a boy I was always told we did not go to the cinema because of the worldly atmosphere. But what made that atmosphere? I do not think it was just the people you had to sit next to. It was perhaps primarily the thoughts and emotions stoked in the audience by the film watched. Taking that film into our home on a DVD or the internet does not separate us from the worldly atmosphere. Rather it brings and creates the worldly atmosphere in our homes and in our hearts.

**Fourthly**, by previous generations ‘acting’ itself was viewed as wrong. It was not just the film shown at the cinema that was wrong – but the content, the acting, was wrong. Why? Because acting is inherently an act of deception. You pretend to be something you are not. Perhaps religious films, where ungodly actors are called to act religious experience, prayer, worship – perhaps in portrayals of the life of Luther or Knox or similar – are actually the worst kind of films. How solemn to act the prayer brought forth in a child of God through the working of the Holy Spirit!

What is our concern? A few years ago an older friend, and a church member, who had just bought a DVD player, said to me that one person had called the DVD the “Strict Baptist television.” They said it in jest, but the words entered into my soul. I came to see all that my parents had jealously guarded us against, the television, the cinema, the theatre

and the “video machine” – I had allowed into my home and heart in the guise of a modern technology. Not only that, but the effects of these things in my soul brought me to see the reason they had so jealously guarded against them – they were in essence the spirit of the world. It is true what we read – “No man can serve two masters: for either he will hate the one, and love the other; or else he will hold to the one, and despise the other. Ye cannot serve God and mammon” (Matthew 6. 24). I had to prove that “Every kingdom divided against itself is brought to desolation; and a house divided against a house falleth” (Luke 11. 17).

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## ANGELS ENCAMPING ROUND ABOUT

Taikang in the central part of China was a town of dirt roads, alleys of thatched hovels, and open-fronted shops. But the town was on edge. A few months ago the Japanese invaders had retreated, but had now suddenly returned, and were patrolling the streets, striking fear into the residents. There was only one place of safety, the compound of the China Inland Mission. By now, the compound was filling up with frightened men, women and children, who came pouring in through the open gates to the security of the mission campus. At the crossroads about a couple of hundred yards away, the Japanese were jumping off their armoured cars, their rifles at the ready. Every now and then a shot was fired along the street, a spray of dust revealing where it had landed.

“Close the gates!” said someone urgently but the plucky gatekeeper was reluctant to do so. There were still people lurking in the doorways, then slithering along the walls to disappear into the open gates of the mission. If the gates were closed they would be left outside and defenceless. Yet if the gates were left open and Japanese soldiers came along the street, they might easily open fire if they saw a crowd of people congregated in the courtyard.

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For several days words from Psalm 34 had hovered round the mind of missionary Miss Phyllis Thompson. Why, she did not know, but she could not get away from them: “The angel of the Lord encampeth round about them that fear Him, and delivereth them.”

Later Miss Thompson told her story: “The thought occurred to me that if I stood in that opened gateway and the Japanese came, they would

see I was a Westerner from a neutral country and pass on. So I stood there. I must have stood there for several hours and, all the time, my mind was submerged by verses of Scripture about angels. I stood there that day without fear, except for one occasion when I stepped out into the road almost defiantly. The Japanese couldn't touch me! The sharp sound of a shot, and a puff of dust only a few feet from where I stood sent me promptly back to the shelter of the doorway, and I realised then that there is only a step between faith and presumption. I resumed my position inside the opened doorway, and did not move out again. Two little schoolboys, their faces white with fear, sidled silently past me. It did not matter who they were or in what condition they came. The door was there, and it was open. It is a day that I will always remember, although I did nothing beyond standing at the gate. Japanese soldiers went down other roads but they did not come down our road at all; and at evening time they retreated from the city to re-enter it peacefully the next day for permanent occupation. But the consciousness I had of the presence of angels was so extraordinarily real that although I heard nothing and saw nothing, I knew they were there."

But the angels had been seen, although it was three years before their presence was confirmed. By that time Miss Thompson was working in another part of the province. One day, with a friend Irene, they saw a family in the distance.

"We saw approaching us on a country road, a little family whom we immediately guessed from their appearance were 'flee-the-famine-people.' The man was pushing a laden wheelbarrow with a child on top and his wife was walking beside him carrying a basket. We naturally stopped to enquire where they came from. When they answered, 'Taikang' my interest was quickened. 'Taikang!' I exclaimed, 'I lived there once.' I saw that the woman's interest had quickened, too, and added, 'I was there when the Japanese attacked the city.'

"'You're teacher Dong!' she exclaimed. [Dong is a name given to teachers.] I nodded, and she continued, 'I heard about you.' Then she added words which confirmed what I had always been conscious of when I looked back to that day. The presence of angels. 'People said they saw Teacher Dong standing at the compound gate,' she said, then added solemnly, '*and two men with wings standing beside her.*'"

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## CHRISTMAS EVANS – The one-eyed preacher of Wales

The crossing to the Isle of Anglesey was by ferry – it would be thirty-five years before the first bridge across the dangerous Menai Strait was built. Christmas and wife Catherine left the Llyn Peninsula on horseback on Christmas Day, his birthday, in 1791 to cross over. “The way was long, the wind was cold,” he wrote. He was twenty-five. At seventeen, he had been unable to read or write. Now, for thirty-three years, he would serve the Island as Baptist minister at a salary of £17.

They made their way to the village of Llangefni, where the first



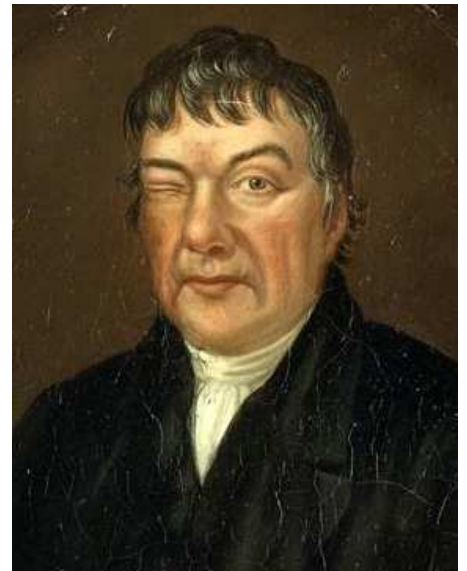
*Capel Cildwrn*

Baptist meeting place had been opened in 1750. A new chapel, named Capel Cildwrn, had been built in 1781 on the road leading out of the village towards Holyhead. Christmas and Catherine were to live in a little cottage built on the end of the chapel. The preacher was a tall man, just over six feet. The ceilings were low, and he could not stand upright. Why one eye? So angry were some of his former companions in sin

at his conversion, that six of them, one dark night, beat him with sticks so unmercifully that he lost one of his eyes.

Evans was considered to be one of the greatest preachers of Wales. We have room only to give a sample of his colloquial style from a sermon on “*Beginning at Jerusalem*”:

“At Jerusalem, Lord?” “Yes.” “Why, Lord, these are the men who crucified Thee; are we to preach to them?” “Yes, preach it to all.” “To the man who plaited the crown of thorns and placed it on Thy head?” “Yes, tell him from My degradation he may obtain a crown of glory.” “Suppose we meet the very man that nailed Thy hands and feet to the cross, the very man that pierced Thy side, that spat in Thy face?” “Preach the Gospel to them all; tell them all that I am the Saviour; that all are welcome to participate in the blessings of My salvation. I am the same Lord over all, rich unto all that call on Me.”



(We recommend *Christmas Evans* by B. A. Ramsbottom for further reading.)



## BIBLE WORDS (3) – “BETH”

**Beth** is the second letter of the Semitic writing system (see Psalm 119). It is a Hebrew word meaning ‘house.’ Semitic is a family of languages that includes Hebrew, Arabic, and Aramaic. Jesus and the disciples spoke Aramaic, but with a Galilean dialect distinguishable from that of Jerusalem. Peter was discerned to be a Galilaean. “Thy speech bewrayeth thee,” they said. Today Nazareth and Capernaum are still Aramaic speaking communities, with other speakers found in Iraq, Syria, Turkey, Iran, Armenia, Georgia, Azerbaijan and Russia – possibly up to one million speakers worldwide.

Twenty place names beginning with ‘Beth’ are mentioned in the Bible. We give below a list with one reference for each. The number of mentions is given in brackets, the most frequent being ‘Bethel’.

Bethabara (1)	House of the ford ( <i>literally</i> a place of crossing) (John 1. 28)
Bethany (11)	House of affliction (Luke 24. 50)
Beth-Aven (7)	House of vanity (Josh. 7. 2)
Beth-Birei (1)	House of my Creator (1 Chron. 4. 31)
Beth-Car (1)	House of the lamb (1 Sam. 7. 11)
Beth-Dagon (2)	House of the little fish (or Temple of Dagon) (Josh. 19. 27)
Beth-Diblathaim (1)	House of dried figs (Jer. 48. 22)
Bethel (60)	House of God (Gen. 28. 19)
Bethesda (1)	House of mercy (John 5. 2)
Beth-Ezel (1)	House of my neighbour ( <i>literally</i> adjoining house) (Micah 1. 11)
Beth-Gamul (1)	House of the camel (Jer. 48. 23)
Beth-Haccerem (2)	House of the vineyard (Neh. 3. 14)
Beth-Horon (13)	House of anger (Josh. 10. 10)
Bethlehem (51)	House of bread (Gen. 35. 19)

Beth-Peor (4)	House of an opening (Deut. 3. 29)
Bethphage (3)	House of early figs (Mat. 21. 1)
Bethsaida (7)	House of fish (Mat. 11. 21)
Beth-Shan (3)	House of ivory (1 Sam. 31.10)
Beth-Shemesh (19)	House of the sun (1 Sam. 6. 15)
Bethuel (10)	House of God (an alternative to Bethel. Usually a personal name but in 1 Chron. 4. 30 a place name.)

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## FROM THE MONASTERY TO THE MINISTRY

A Personal Testimony by a converted priest, Jose Borrás

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“Father, you must start a campaign against the Protestants. They are growing more and more,” said Sister Dolores, a nun in a cloister where I went on Sundays to say Mass and preach.



I was a young priest and teacher in a school in Spain when the nun asked me Sunday after Sunday to do something against the Protestants.

“They are deceiving the simple people, and with material gifts they are winning many good persons for their heretical group,” the nun said.

Willing to defend the Gospel of Christ, I decided to fight against the Protestants. The only thing I knew about them was that they were bad, and their doctrine was full of errors and heresies.

A few days later a pupil came to my class with a thick book in his hands. “Father,” he said to me, “This is a Protestant Bible. A woman gave it to my mother, but she is afraid of keeping it because she thinks it would be a sin to do so. Would you like to burn it?” “Oh, yes. I will destroy it,” was my answer.

After I had torn out some of the first pages I changed my mind, thinking that since I needed to preach against the Protestants and didn’t know their errors, I could read their Bible to find out their main heresies.

I read some portions of the New Testament and compared the text with my Catholic Bible. When I discovered that both Bibles were almost the same I became very confused wondering how in the world could there be such great differences between Catholics and Protestants since they both apparently had the same Bible. My conclusion was that the Protestants did not read their Bible, or if they did, surely they didn't practice its teachings.

Thinking that the best way of knowing who the Protestants were would be to observe their lives and customs, I went to visit a Protestant family. I told them that I was a teacher and would like to know their doctrine.

On speaking to them, I was astonished to find that they knew the Bible better than I. I was ashamed when I heard them speaking to me about Christ with a conviction that I, priest that I was, had never felt.

They explained to me some questions and invited me to speak to their Baptist pastor. I met him the next day, but my first words were: "Do not try to convince me, because you will waste your time. I believe that the Catholic Church is the only true one. I only would like to know why are you not a Catholic." He invited me to meet every week and to study the New Testament, discussing in a friendly way our different points of view. We did so.

The pastor answered all my questions with texts from the New Testament. My arguments were always the sayings of the Popes and the definitions of the Councils. Although I didn't accept his arguments externally, in my own mind I realized that the words of the Gospels had more value than the decisions of the Councils, and that what Peter and Paul said was of more authority than the teaching of the Popes.

As a result of our conversations I started reading the New Testament carefully in order to find some arguments against the Protestant doctrine. I wanted not only to show that the pastor was mistaken, but even to win him for the Catholic Church. But after each one of our interviews I came back to my school feeling that he had defeated me in argument.

For a long time I was very concerned, reading the New Testament and praying to God that He might increase my faith and dispel my doubts, so that I should not make a mistake. But the more I read and prayed, the more confused I became. Could it be possible that the Catholic Church should not be the Church of Christ? Could I be wrong in my faith? If so, what had I to do?

I heard that other priests and monks became Protestants by studying

the Bible. But I could not imagine myself doing the same. Be a Protestant! Be a heretic! Be an apostate of my faith? Never! What would my parents, my pupils, and my friends say? My eleven years of study would be declared invalid. What should I do for a living?

These thoughts disturbed me greatly. I preferred not to change my faith. I wished I had never spoken with that pastor. I tried to convince myself that he was mistaken.

I read the New Testament more and more seeking for an answer to confirm my position as a Catholic priest. As I read, I saw more clearly my wrong situation. But I was so afraid of leaving the Catholic Church that I decided to continue as a priest even though I might no longer believe in Catholic doctrine.

One Sunday, Sister Dolores talked to me: "Father, you didn't preach against the Protestants as you promised me to do. They continue growing every day and are winning many people for their church." "Sister," I said to her, "I have been studying the Protestant doctrine during all this time, but I have discovered that they are not as bad as we think. They base their doctrine on the Bible and we cannot preach against the Word of God." "You are quite mistaken, Father," answered the nun. "They are very bad. They are wolves in sheep's clothing. They are enemies of our country. They hate Mary. They are undermining our faith in the Pope. We must start a campaign against them."

I told her how some priests that wanted to preach against the Protestants had been converted and became Protestants when they studied their doctrine without prejudices and in the light of the scriptures. The nun interrupted me. "Don't tell me this, Father, they were not converted, but perverted. They went over to Protestantism either because they were demented, or because they wanted to get married." "You can study this doctrine without fear," she continued, "and I am sure you will never go to Protestantism, because you are not demented, neither would you sell Christ for a woman." "I am thinking the same, Sister," I replied, "I promise you to study this question seriously. If I come to the conviction that the Protestants are wrong, I will make a campaign against them. If I discover that they are right I shall become one of them." "Don't worry, Father," said the nun smiling, quite satisfied with my decision. "You will never be a Protestant."

I read my New Testament again and again, and I prayed to God with all my heart asking for wisdom and guidance in order to arrive at a clear

and right decision. I knew I never would be happy otherwise. Three months later I left the Catholic Church because I could not go on doing things and pretending to believe doctrines that deep in my heart I knew were wrong. I thought of all the possible difficulties, but I decided to follow Jesus Christ in spite of them.

The most important thing that could have happened to me, was when I had a personal encounter with Jesus Christ and came to know Him as my personal Saviour.

It is not enough to be a good Catholic; the important and necessary thing is to be born again in Christ. This has been my experience, when Christ entered into my heart. I experienced that He not only liberated me of my sins, but also of the heavy load I had to carry being in a Monastic order.

Thank God for the many that have sought and found that rest. The same God who transformed the life of Saul the persecutor on the way to Damascus, transformed the life of Father Borrás in the cell of a monastery. He is able to transform your life, wherever you are.

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## CURRENT MATTERS

### **Man-made objects outweigh all things living**

Man-made objects and structures now outweigh everything living on the Earth. Experts say that the year 2020 was the year that our buildings, roads, and machines surpassed the weight of all living creatures, trees and plants – about 1.1 trillion tons. Human beings make up 0.01 per cent of the total mass of living things.

### **Our Creating God**



God's amazing acts of creation never cease to interest us. The common house fly has been the subject of research by a university in Ohio, which reveals why the insect is so difficult to swat. The answer appears to be that they have been provided with a secondary set of wings known as *calypters* which allows them to take off in 0.007 seconds, five times faster than other flies.

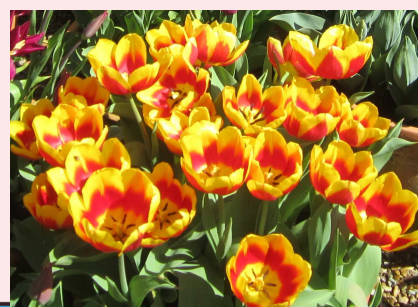
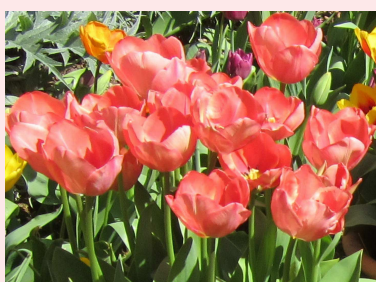
## SPRING COLOURS

Autumn colours are often spoken of, and of course they are truly spectacular. However, nature has provided us with wonderful spring colours, too, to lift our spirits after the long days of winter.

If asked to describe the colours of spring, many of us would say ‘fresh.’ Who can fail to enjoy the pale green of deciduous trees just coming into leaf, the primroses of different hues, and the countless other plants that burst into life in March, April and May.

What would life without colour be like? Early computers had only monochrome monitors, but what a difference colour made! It was not until the mid 1980's that colour monitors became readily available at an affordable price. And how amazing it was to own a colour printer! It is thought that newborn babies see only black, white and gray as their capacity for sight is not fully developed at birth. As their colour vision begins to develop, babies will see red first, and then a full spectrum of colours by the time they reach five months of age.

It is sometimes asked how many colours the human eye can perceive. Strictly speaking, we can only see three colours: red, blue, and green. This is because we have three types of cones which ‘see’ these colours, but these three kinds of cones work together and allow us to see millions of colours, or, rather, shades. Many scientists estimate one million as a reasonable average, although often much higher figures are quoted, some experts claiming the human eye can differentiate approximately ten million different colours. Truly the eye is a marvellous act of creation. We remember reading of one evolutionist medical student who became an ardent creationist after studying the eye. She concluded that the evolution of this complex organ was impossible. We only wish we could remember her name.





# PERCEPTION

A Quarterly Magazine for Young People



“And David dwelt in the castle; therefore they called it the city of David” (1 Chron. 11. 7).

**SUMMER 2021**

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**Cover picture:** St. George’s Chapel, Windsor Castle, Berkshire

# PERCEPTION

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## EDITORIAL

It was with sadness we heard the news of the death on Friday, 9th April of His Royal Highness, The Prince Philip, Duke of Edinburgh. The whole nation felt deeply for our beloved Queen in her great loss after 73 years of marriage, making Prince Philip the longest-reigning consort in history.

On the occasion of their Golden Wedding, the Queen said of her husband: “He is someone who doesn’t take easily to compliments but he has, quite simply, been my strength and stay all these years, and I, and his whole family, and this and many other countries, owe him a debt greater than he would ever claim, or we shall ever know.”



It is a great favour if we have someone, whether a husband, a wife, or a friend, to whom we can look for help, support, and maybe comfort, when needed. For everyone, whether a believer or not, the provision of such a companion is a great blessing. For the Christian, whilst truly

thankful if they have an earthly friend to whom they can turn, they have another, higher, Helper. David was able to say, “The Lord is my rock, and my fortress, and my deliverer.” Another time he said, “He is my shield, my high tower, my refuge, my Saviour,” and in Psalm 62 “My defence.”

All of these words denote *strength*. Her Majesty the Queen used the phrase *strength and stay* relative to her husband. Although it is not exactly a Biblical phrase, it has found its way into English hymnology mainly through the translation by John Ellerton of the hymn composed in the 4th century by St. Ambrose, “O strength and stay, upholding all creation.” We find the tune of the same name composed for the hymn by J. B. Dykes, number 1007 in the Companion Tune Book.

Perhaps we could interject something here that often troubles the Lord’s people, especially, but not exclusively, those that are married. The marriage bond is a close, unique relationship. But sometimes there is a worry that we may be trusting too much, or leaning too much, on a husband, or a wife, or a parent, or a friend, even though it is felt that he or she has been God’s gift to us. If a married man, are you relying too much on your wives for help and advice? If a married woman, are you looking to your husbands more than looking to the Lord? David said, “He *only* is my rock.” If a difficult situation arises, a husband and wife may spend many hours discussing it, and hopefully will be of one mind. But we must take heed to the warning given by the prophet Micah: “Trust ye not in a friend, put ye not confidence in a guide: keep the doors of thy mouth from her that lieth in thy bosom.” Our loved ones may not always be right – it will be a mistake to put our confidence in the conclusions of *anyone*, however near and dear they may be to us. Especially we must be wary of relying on our own conclusions, for we are all fallen creatures, and very liable to make mistakes. Whilst it is right, and natural, to speak, discuss, and explore our concerns with those we love and trust, we must still go to the Lord and say, “Lord, do confirm this to me. Do show me what is right as I may have made a mistake.”

A rather homely thought comes to mind. A former generation was familiar with the use of a *prop*. Before the days of tumble driers washing was invariably dried out of doors, making use of a clothes prop to keep the line up as high as possible. In other words, it supported the weight of the wet washing. But these props were made of wood. After a few years of faithful service wet rot began to set in, until one day, the

prop failed. The wet washing would be found dragging on the ground! Eventually, all our earthly *props* will fail. John Berridge refers to this in his well-known hymn:

“Every prop will, first or last,  
Sink or fail, but Jesus Christ;  
On this sure foundation stone  
Let me build and rest alone.”

Recently, a thirteen year old girl named Scarlett became trapped while attempting to climb a rocky cliff-face. About one third of the way up her knee and a foot became tightly wedged between two rocks and she was completely unable to extricate herself. There she was, unable to move, forty feet from the ground, her life in great danger. Eventually she was spotted and the rescue service was called. But how could they reach her? It was decided the only way was to abseil down from the top of the cliff. The first task was to ensure that the rope was firmly anchored, no easy matter on an unstable cliff edge. However strong the rope may be, the rescue would end in failure if there was insufficient support. Thankfully, Scarlett was safely rescued and taken to hospital where she made a full recovery from her ordeal. The lesson here is that all our earthly schemes will fail unless anchored firmly in the Rock. We cannot depend on the rope, we cannot depend on our skill and strength – it is the *anchor* that must be sound. One of the Lord’s servants said only recently, “If you are looking to man, it will end in darkness.”

How will it be with us in the great day, that day when the Lord will come to judge the living and the dead? We are reminded of the words in Edward Mote’s hymn:

“When all around my soul gives way,  
He then is all my hope and stay.”

Everything in which we may have been trusting, apart from Christ, *will* give way in that day. We cannot dare to “trust the sweetest frame” then!

May God enable us each to lean wholly upon Him, that it may be well with us at the end, “Faultless to stand before the throne.”

Wishing you all the Lord’s richest blessing.  
The Editor.

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## THE APOCRYPHA

At the recent funeral service of Prince Philip, Duke of Edinburgh, the first lesson, read by the Dean of Windsor, was from the book of Ecclesiasticus. At least one commentator, and probably many other people too, confused it with Ecclesiastes, the book found in our own Bibles between Proverbs and The Song of Solomon. Ecclesiasticus is not a Biblical book at all but is found in what is known as the *Apocrypha*.

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When at school, the big event of our school year was the annual Founders' Day service. It was held in Hitchin Parish Church (St. Mary's) and was the only occasion the Boys' Grammar School and the Girls' Grammar School got together. We walked in file through the streets of Hitchin to reach the church, and people actually lined the streets to watch us! The service always began with the well-known "God Be In My Head," an ancient hymn first found in the *Sarum Primer*, a collection of prayers and hymns from Salisbury, put together during the 13th century. (*Sarum* is an abbreviation for the Latin word for Salisbury.) This collection of hymns was used throughout Britain until the Reformation. Our service closed with the hymn, "Let us now praise famous men" set to music by R. Vaughan Williams (he called his tune, "Famous Men"). I always imagined that what we were singing was from the Bible, although I had never actually come across it. It came as a surprise later to find that the hymn was based on words found in the Apocrypha, again from the Book of Ecclesiasticus.

So what exactly is the Apocrypha? The word comes from a Greek word meaning 'hidden' or 'secret.' It consists of fourteen books with the following titles:

I Esdras	The Song of the Three Holy Children
II Esdras	The Story of Susanna
Tobit	The Idol Bel and the Dragon
Judith	The Prayer of Manasseh
The Rest of Esther	1 Maccabees
The Wisdom of Solomon	2 Maccabees
Ecclesiasticus	
Baruch with the Epistle of Jeremiah	

If we were to open the Apocrypha at the beginning, we might think we were on familiar ground. The first chapter of I Esdras is concerning Josiah keeping the passover at Jerusalem, and is almost word for word the same as II Chronicles chapter 35. But soon, much new history is introduced, not found in the Holy Bible.

The books in this ancient collection are thought to have been written some time between 200BC and 400AD. The term apocryphal can be traced back to the 5th century. Jerome, who died in the year 420, translated the scriptures into Latin (which we call the *Vulgate*) but separated any books not found in the original Hebrew scriptures. It was not until Martin Luther published his complete German Bible in 1534 that the Apocrypha was included as a section between the Old and New Testaments, but he added a note explaining that they were not divinely inspired. For this reason, these are sometimes known as inter-testamental books. Luther had to grapple hard with this problem, as the Roman Catholic church used the Apocrypha to support the saying of the Mass, prayers for the dead, and almsgiving as a meritorious act.

The 1571 edition of the Thirty-nine Articles of the Church of England stated: “And other Books (as Jerome saith) the Church doth read for example of life and instruction of manners; but yet doth it not apply them to establish any doctrine.”

All King James Bibles published before 1666 included the Apocrypha, and it continued to be included in some editions until the year 1885.

The 1647 Westminster Confession of Faith stated: “The books commonly called the Apocrypha, not being of divine inspiration, are no part of the canon of the Scripture, and therefore are of no authority in the church of God, nor to be any otherwise approved, or made use of, than other human writings.”

So why were these books rejected as part of the sacred canon of Scripture?

- a) The Lord Jesus Christ never directly quoted anything from the apocryphal books, nor are quotes or paraphrases found anywhere in the New Testament. Nowhere do we read “as it is written” or “as saith the scripture.”
- b) Doctrines incompatible with other Scriptures are introduced. These include:
  - giving money to atone for sins. “Alms delivereth from death,

and suffereth not to come into darkness” (Tobit 4. 10).

- praying for the dead. “For if he were not expecting that they who had fallen would rise again, it were superfluous and idle to pray for the dead” (II Maccabees 12.43).
  - that an atonement for sin can be given after death. “Therefore, he made atonement for the dead, so that they might be delivered from their sin” (II Maccabees 12.45).
  - Praying to saints in heaven and asking them for prayer (numerous references).
- c) A lack of *unction* (an almost undefinable word) felt by the godly when reading these books.
- d) The praise of man rather than the praise of God. “Let us now praise famous men, and our fathers that begat us. Men renowned for their power. Leaders of the people by their counsels, and by their knowledge. Such as found out musical tunes, and recited verses in writing. All these were honoured in their generations, and were the glory of their times. Their name liveth for evermore.” (From Ecclesiasticus 45.)

Apart from the books found in the Apocrypha which we have listed, there are many other books which have never been considered inspired. You may have heard of the *Septuagint*, the ancient and best known Greek version of the Old Testament. This contained a number of books which are not found in the Hebrew Bible and are referred to as the *Anagignoskomena*, a very long word which means “things that are read.” Other writings are known as *Pseudepigrapha*, which are written in a Biblical style, and ascribed to an author who did not write them. Examples are:

Apocalypse of Abraham	Apocalypse of Moses
Letter of Aristeas	Martyrdom and Ascension of Isaiah
Joseph and Aseneth	Life of Adam and Eve
Lives of the Prophets	Ladder of Jacob
Jannes and Jambres	History of the Captivity in Babylon
History of the Rechabites	Eldad and Modad
History of Joseph the Carpenter	
Odes of Solomon	Prayer of Joseph
Prayer of Jacob	Vision of Ezra

**Question: How can we be sure that we have all of the Word of God in our Bibles? Might there be other inspired books that have been lost or not recognized?**

This is a question that troubles many young people. God has said that His word shall not return unto Him void. This being so, we do not believe God would or could have permitted His people to be deprived of that Word by some loss, mistake, or in any other way. Romans 3. 2 tells us that the “oracles of God” (His holy word) were committed unto the Jews, that is, for preservation, copying, and distribution. And what care they took in their work! As Dr. John Gill says, “They (the Jews) had the honour of being the keepers of these sacred books, these divine oracles, and of transmitting them to posterity, for the use of others.”

God has said: “Ye shall therefore keep **all** My statutes, and **all** My judgments, and do them.” Could God instruct His people in his manner unless **all** His will had been revealed? The apostle John wrote in Revelation 22 verses 18 and 19 that nothing is to be added to, and nothing is to be taken away from, the things which are written in this Book. We can rest assured that God has given to us in our Bibles everything needful for time and for eternity.

“O may these heavenly pages be  
My ever dear delight;  
And still new beauties may I see,  
And still increasing light.”

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## SORROW

I walked a mile with Pleasure;  
She chattered all the way,  
But left me none the wiser  
For all she had to say.

I walked a mile with Sorrow  
And ne'er a word said she;  
But oh, the things I learned from her  
When Sorrow walked with me.

*Robert Browning  
English Poet, 1812-1889*

## JOHN Warburton (Part 6)

A few of the Lord's providential dealings

Born in 1776, convicted of sin as a young man, delivered from a temptation to end his life by drowning, and Christ revealed to his soul under a sermon preached by William Roby at Cannon Street Chapel, Manchester. Baptised when 28 at Manchester by William Gadsby, Gadsby, while in the water, prayed that he might be raised up as an instrument in God's hand for the cause of truth. In spite of his felt-insufficiency for the ministry, he agrees to speak in a fortnight's time at a deacon's house. We continue with the life of the Lord's servant.

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### First time speaking in the Lord's name

After the fortnight expired, at the time appointed I went, begging of God that He would decide the matter. If He opened my mouth, and the people were satisfied, and encouraged me in the work, I should believe it was from Him; but if He shut my mouth, and the people were cool upon me, I should be satisfied to give it all up and leave it.

O the tremblings I had before I read the text! I felt as if it were impossible for me to speak. But after I had read the text, the fear of man was taken away and the Lord broke into my soul; my mouth was opened, and I did indeed feel it to be a time of refreshing from His presence to my own soul. Matter and words flowed so fast that I quite wondered to feel my soul so melted and so humbled before the Lord.

After it was over the people encouraged me very much, and would take no denial but that I must come again in a fortnight. O what a happy fortnight I had! I now believed that all was right and straight, and could not see it possible for the devil to harass me again about my call to the ministry, nor how I could doubt it any more, seeing that the Lord had answered my prayers in so many previous times of need, and had delivered me so blessedly, and so evidently by His own doing. O how my soul was swallowed up in the honour and glory of God! O what heavenly delight I had in searching the Word of God, and what sweet satisfaction and blessed confidence in seeing that it was of God, and that the Lord Himself had opened the way. My soul was as confident that the Lord would be with me as that I was born; and I longed for the fortnight to pass away, that I might go again and speak in the Name of



the Lord. It was my soul's request to spend and be spent in the cause of God and truth, for it was dearer to me than life itself.

### **Second visit**

When I went the second time the room was quite full, and the Lord was with me very sweetly and precious, and the people seemed all alive. As soon as I had finished my message, pride began to boil up in my heart: "They think you will be a very great preacher. See how the people are pleased, and how cheerfully they sing." And I thought so myself too. After concluding, I overheard some of the people whispering how well I had preached, and they had no doubt I should be a very great preacher; and one of them whispered to another that he was sure I should be a second Gadsby. O how sweet was this to my old man! How it gratified him to the very heart! Poor fool! I was carried away with pride to such a degree that I blush to write a thousandth part of it.

All the way home I was so carried away with my greatness and what I was likely to be, that at times I hardly knew whether I was upon my feet or my head. Sometimes I wondered in what place I should be settled. Surely, thought I, it must be in some great town or other; it will be in London. If I am to be SO great a man, and to have so great a work to do, it must be in London; for all the great, thought I, go there, and that, thinks I, will be my place in the end.

### **Carried away by pride**

I must add one thing more about this accursed pride, how far it carried a poor blind fool. I had thought to have kept it out of sight, for I do confess it is too base to name; but it must come out, base as it is.

Before I went again the third time, I actually went to Manchester to see Mr. Mouncey, the acting deacon, with a pretence to tell him that I could not come and preach any more, on purpose to draw it out of him whether he thought I was likely to be a great man. When I arrived at his warehouse, there was another deacon, a Mr. Holt, with him. They were both very glad to see me, and asked how I was getting on. I told them that I was come to inform them that I could not attempt to speak any more, for that I was such a blind fool that it would be madness in me to attempt it; and that I therefore hoped they would not expect me to come again. And I tried to put on as miserable a dejected countenance as I could while relating my lying cant, and tried with all my might to

squeeze out some tears.

The two deacons, believing I was an honest lad, and that the devil was tempting me to give up the work, encouraged me to go on, and spoke very freely how well they were satisfied, and how confident they were that God had a work for me to do, and there was no more fear of my going on than of Paul's going on; for they believed that Paul's God was my God, and that He would bring me through. O, thinks I, what! am I likely to be a second Paul, then? But I told them that I was certain they would never speak to me in that way if they knew my unfitness; and sure I am that, if they had known my abominable hypocrisy, they would have kicked me out of the warehouse, and served me right, too. But God knew how to manage me better than they. One of them said he did not wish to lift me up with pride, but to encourage me. He would say that he had no doubt God had a great work for me to do. O that word, "a great work to do!" I was blown up by it like a bladder. He said, further, that he durst not but insist on my coming at the time appointed. Many things more they said to me, which suited my old man very well.

### **Seeking a text**

So, having got such a bundle of food for the old wretch, off I went home and began to think what text I should preach from; for, thinks I, as they have such views of my becoming a great man, they will expect that I shall come with some grand mysterious text. I was safe enough, however, from meddling with any part of God's Word but what I had myself experienced. I tried with all my might to get into some dark text, but in vain. Well, then, thinks I, I will try an old text, one that my soul has been in hundreds of times. I am sure to get on with it, and shall have plenty to say. This was the text: "We must through much tribulation enter into the kingdom of God" (Acts 14. 22). O, thinks I, that is the text! O how pleased I was in thinking how I could divide it! Such wonderful light and such grand things were brought to my mind, day after day, that I was quite astonished. "O," thinks I, "whatever will they think when I come to preach of these things? They will be quite astonished." And, indeed, it proved so, for they were astonished, but not at my greatness, but at my littleness.

The time came and off I went, hoping there would be many people present. The most I could ask God for was that He would incline many to come and hear what I could do, and this but my third time of

preaching. When I got there I found the house quite full of people. I gave out a hymn with wonderful zeal and boldness, and then went to prayer, in which I had great liberty. O, thinks I, this will do! But when I had read my text, such darkness and confusion overwhelmed my soul that I could hardly read the words a second time. I trembled till my knees smote together.

### **Mouth stopped**

For about five or ten minutes I tried to say something, but what I said the Lord knows; I cannot tell a word of it. All my pride and presumption, my hypocrisy and lies, stared me in the face, and stopped my mouth completely. I was forced to confess before all the people that God had stopped my mouth and that I could not speak another word. I dropped on the seat, and verily thought that God would have struck me dead and sent me to hell, as I so richly deserved. There was a profound silence for some time. The people were all astonished, and wondered what it could all mean. Dear Mr. Mouncey, as soon as his feelings would suffer him to speak, said, "The Lord opens, and none can shut; He shuts, and none can open. I have often read it, but never have been an eye-witness of it in such a public manner until now." He begged of me to try again. "Perhaps," said he, "the Lord may open your mouth to speak, for it is all in His hands." But I assured him that I durst not attempt it, for the Lord had stopped my mouth, and I was determined never to try any more.

The dear man concluded with prayer, and I believe it was a time of prayer with him and the people; for I believe there was not a dry cheek in the place. But as for me, I was distracted nearly beyond my senses.

### **God is His own interpreter**

After he had concluded and dismissed the people, I got my hat, being determined to put an end to my existence that very night. I had something else to do now than to wonder where so great a man as I was to be settled. O the miserable journey I had home that night! What with the sight of my most abominable conduct in going to the deacon's house with such lies and devilish hypocrisy, and the dreadful accusations of the devil, I felt confident that I could be nothing but a hardened wretch, whom God had given up to a reprobate mind, and who would soon be proved to be a complete apostate. I was determined to go that very night and try to get on board a man-of-war, and leave wife and children and

all. Just before I got home I turned out of the road to go to Liverpool, wringing my hands, sobbing, crying and groaning, till my very soul was in an agony.

When I had gone on the Liverpool road about two stone throws these words sounded as loud as if someone had spoken them aloud behind the hedge:

“Blind unbelief is sure to err,  
And scan His work in vain ;  
God is His own interpreter,  
And He will make it plain.”

I stood astonished, and got over the hedge to see if any person was there. Finding no creature there, a hope sprang up. “Who can tell,” thought I, “but the Lord will make this plain?” So I concluded to turn back and go home. But before I reached it all my pride, hypocrisy, and lies came afresh to my mind, and such guilt and horror seized my poor soul, that how I staggered into the house I cannot tell. My poor wife, who had been waiting up for me till her patience was worn out, was quite in a rage with me for stopping so long, and asked me what I thought of myself. But this was a question I durst not answer. She asked me if I called that religion to leave a wife and family and come home at midnight. “And you pretend, too, to be a preacher!” said she. “What can you think of yourself? But you will bring me and the children to the workhouse.” For she could see nothing else but that we should all be starved to death, and her fear was that my end would be in a mad-house. I verily feared and believed that every word she spoke would come to pass. I was completely dumb, and could not answer a word. So she asked me if I had lost my tongue.

O the dreadful feelings that overwhelmed me, that I had brought nothing but misery upon my family; that I had distressed the church of God, by running before I was sent; that the uncircumcised would hear of it and say, “Ah! so would we have it!” O how the conduct of Uzzah, in putting forth his hands to support the ark of God, made me quake and tremble! “Surely,” cried I, “I am the man, and God will strike me dead for my presumption in attempting to speak in His Name.”

### **A room at Bury**

A few days after this some friends at Bury, in Lancashire, with

whom I had been in sweet union for a few years, agreed to take a room for prayer, and came to invite me to meet with them. I did so; and on the first Lord's day that we assembled together we carried on the meeting with singing and prayer. But on the second Lord's day they invited me to give them a few words of exhortation, and would take no denial, which I therefore did. But I got up with such fear and trembling lest the Lord should stop my mouth, that my knees were so weak that I thought I must have dropped down. The Lord, however, opened my mouth, and favoured me with liberty in speaking; and such life and sweetness flowed into my soul that I was astonished, and the few who were there expressed themselves to be refreshed.

If I remember rightly, we were about seven or eight in number, and all exclaimed that the Lord had done great things for us, whereof we were glad. Here my soul was kept for a time in real humility, meekness and quiet, as a child at His feet, begging of Him from my very heart that He would never more suffer the devil and my own evil nature to bloat me up with cursed pride, so as to attempt ever again to rob Him of His glory.

### **A fresh temptation**

But the devil started a fresh thing to my mind, which was a sore trial indeed, that I had never had a real evidence that I had the power of the Spirit upon me to anoint me to preach the Gospel. Here, then, I began to search, and to try to find if ever I had received any Scripture testimony that I had the Spirit; for I was confident that unless the Spirit had set me apart for the work it would all come to nothing, and that it would be proved after all that I had run before I was sent; and I knew that if that were the case all would end in the flesh. O how my poor soul went out to God in cries and tears! O, dear Spirit, art Thou with me? O Holy Comforter, hast Thou anointed me to preach the Gospel? Dear Interpreter, do show me!

Here I was for between three and four weeks, searching, groaning, crying and longing that God would satisfy me that He had set me apart for the ministry. The few persons to whom I had spoken in the room had all testified that God had sent me to the work; but that did not satisfy me. I wanted it from God's own mouth, and therefore my cry was unto Him; but there was no answer, neither night nor day, for several weeks. This brought me to fear that God had never sent me. I trembled lest I should run before I was sent; and the fear that God would stop my



mouth again made me to shake like a leaf. I told the few people again and again that I must give it up, for I was afraid that I had never been sent, and that the Lord would stop my mouth. But they insisted upon it that come I must, and declared that if I did not come I should be fighting against God.

This put me to a stand again, and what to do I could not tell. Sometimes I thought that the people's voice was perhaps the will of God, and that I ought to obey it. Then again I thought, "Poor dear things, they are quite deceived in me, for they do not know if I have the Spirit;" and I felt determined I would not go until I was satisfied I had the Spirit.

### **Ventures to speak once more**

When the Lord's day morning came, O what workings of mind I had! O the dreadful darkness that overwhelmed me that I could neither see nor feel that I was either called to the ministry or even to be a Christian. I began to fear whether the work of grace was really begun in my heart or not. O the confusion and misery I had from three o'clock in the morning until the time came for me to go. Such was my confusion, that I went out without my hat, and my wife came running after me and called out to know where I was going. I told her to Bury. "You had better," said she, "put on your hat." How far I should have gone without it I know not, for I was in such confusion that I feared my senses were going. No text; the Bible a sealed book; no answer to prayer; and the devil roaring, "Today you will be made manifest what you are, both to the people of God and to the world." And what added to my misery, he brought up all my former hypocritical ways and cursed pride, and told me that the time was now come when God would make me a spectacle to men and devils. "O," cried I, wringing my hands in the fields on my way, "would to God that I had never been born! O that I had never attempted to preach! What shall I do? Whither shall I go?"

Sometimes I stood still and thought of turning back. Then on again I went, begging and crying to the Lord that He would find me a text. But all was dark as darkness itself. "Then," cried I, "how is it possible that God has sent me, or will be with me, when He has entirely left me and forsaken me?" Then I stood still. "Surely," thinks I, "I must turn back, and determine to give it up; for if I go, and have nothing to say, the people will call me a thousand fools for coming without a message from God, and wonder that I should be guilty of such horrid

presumption.” So I turned back, wringing my hands, sobbing and crying, “O that I had never been born!”

I had not gone back more than three hundred yards, when this text met me like a sword, and sounded in my soul like a trumpet, “No man having put his hand to the plough and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God.” O it fetched me down to the earth, both body and soul, in a moment! “O Lord,” cried I, trembling, “O that it would please Thee to show me what I must do. Thou knowest that my heart’s desire is to do Thy will. Lord, what is it that Thou wouldst have me to do? O Lord, do show me; do lead me.” But nothing could I get but, “No man looking back is fit for the kingdom of God.” Then I felt a resignation to fall into the hands of God, and went forward.

### **His mouth opened**

When I arrived there, the time being up, I began the service, but had no text. And O what a trembling time I had in prayer! But near the close of it I felt a submission to fall into the hands of God; and whilst they were singing before the sermon, O how my very soul went out to God to find me a text and open my mouth, and then I should know of a truth that He had sent me, and believed if He would answer me, I should never doubt again.

Just before they concluded singing, these words came with such light, life, power and sweetness, as overpowered my soul with joy and comfort. I got up and read them as my text: “When the poor and needy seek water, and there is none, and their tongue faileth for thirst, I the Lord will hear them, I the God of Israel will not forsake them.” (Isa. 41. 17). The dear Lord opened my heart and my mouth too. I felt a springing up of matter in my heart, and my tongue unloosed to speak it with such sweetness and liberty, that I was quite astonished to feel it flow so freely into my soul and out of my mouth. The few souls who were there and who knew the truth, about nine or ten in number, sat under it with great delight, and its fruit was sweet to their taste. One old traveller, poor old John Crompton, had known the truth for about forty years, had come that morning about nine miles. Poor dear old soul! when I had concluded, he took hold of my hand, with the tears falling down his poor old cheeks, and his countenance shining with the holy anointing, and said, “May the Lord God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob bless thee! God has thrust thee out into His vineyard, and has sent thee to preach His everlasting gospel. Be strong in the Lord and in the power

of His might. Thou art young, and hast many fiery trials to pass through; but God has not sent thee a warfare at thine own charges. Fear not, for He will be with thee, and I am confident He will bring thee through them all.”

O what strength and encouragement did this communicate to my heart! My soul was wonderfully strengthened in the Lord my God, and I believed in my heart that He was with me. I went home at night much refreshed, and could praise and bless His dear Name for His mercy and goodness in going before me in the way.

### **The devil silenced**

But the next day in comes the devil again with his old plea – that I had not the Spirit. “And what,” says he, “is all the testimony of men if you have not the Spirit?” I began to feel a sinking of mind, and to fear that I should be deceived, and rest satisfied without having the Spirit.

Here my soul was kept wrestling for a day and a night. The second day I was so overcome with earnestness in prayer, that I was obliged to leave my work, and go into my bedroom, and take my Bible, and, kneeling down before my God, with it shut, wrestled with Him till body and soul were in an agony, that He would be pleased to grant that I might open the Bible, and that the first words I met with might decide the matter, whether or not. So at last I opened the Bible, and the first words I saw were, “If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children: how much more shall your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask Him” (Luke 11. 13).

O the power, the glory, the majesty, the sweetness and goodness of God the Holy Ghost that shined in me and overwhelmed me, was such that I can never find words to express; for it beggars all language to describe. I had just power to crawl on the bed, and there I lay for a time, and had neither power to move or speak. O how my poor soul was liberated! The old lying devil fled away, and left the dear Comforter and my soul together. What wonders I beheld in the glorious doctrine of the Holy Trinity, Father, Son and Holy Ghost, three distinct Persons in one God!

For a time things went on comfortably, and I fully believed that all was right and straight respecting my call to the ministry, and that the devil was so completely silenced that it was out of his power to bring anything more to upset me. But, alas! alas! this was not the case; for after I had had a few weeks’ rest he comes with a fresh thing, and tells

me that opening the Bible as I did, and fixing my eyes upon the first text was all chance work, and that I might as well have chanced to fix my eyes upon some other words as those; so that could be nothing to depend upon that it was from God. “For,” said he, “you never had a text that came with power to your mind, just suited to your case, that you had never read, heard, seen, or opened upon. Now, if God has indeed called you to the work, why did He not send some text into your soul that you never heard of, nor knew to be in the Bible? Surely the Lord is able to do so; and, if you were one that He has thrust out into His vineyard, you would have had it before now.”

Well, thinks I, perhaps it might have been chance, and I may have been deceived; it might have happened to another who had opened the Bible in the same way; surely the Lord is able to send me a text that I never saw or read in the Bible.

My soul had now a fresh errand to the Throne of grace, that God would send me a text with power, that I never knew was in the Bible. So on I went, crying from day to day, “Lord, make it manifest in my soul that Thou hast sent me to preach the gospel, by sending into my heart with power some precious text that I never knew was in the Bible, and then I shall be satisfied that Thou hast sent me, and art my God.” God, however, appeared to take no notice of me, and here I went on from day to day constantly crying for it, and God denying me it; till at last I began to fear that I must be deceived, and that God had never sent me to the work. Then all my old fears came upon me again, like an army, that I had run before I had been sent, and that God would make it manifest after all what I was.

### **“Ask, and it shall be given”**

One night, after the family had gone to bed, such a wrestling spirit of prayer came upon me, that I could not rest, and I told the Lord that I could neither go to bed nor hold my peace until He had satisfied me whether He had sent me to preach or not. Text upon text so flowed into my soul to encourage me to “ask, and it shall be given,” that I went down upon my knees, and there I had such a wrestling with cries and tears, that some of my clothes were quite wet with the tears that flowed from my poor eyes.

At last I looked up unto the Lord, just like a child, and said in the simplicity of my heart, “Lord, am I Thy child? Art Thou my Father? Wilt Thou not be angry with me for asking Thee to grant me my

petition? If it displease Thee, I will not ask it any more, for my will is Thy will. If it please Thy blessed Majesty to condescend to hearken to my poor petition, and to grant me my request, my petition and request is, that Thou wilt send me a precious text of Scripture, which I have never heard, nor read, nor know to be in the Bible, with such power and holy anointing into my poor cast-down soul, as to raise me up to the blessed confidence that Thou hast sent me to preach, and bring with it a blessed testimony that Thou art with me.”

### **Words never heard before**

While I was thus in simplicity opening my very heart and soul to the Lord, these words sounded both in my ears and in my heart, in such a manner as if the whole earth heard them as well as myself: “Arise and thresh, O daughter of Zion; for I will make thine horn iron, and thy hoofs brass; and thou shalt beat in pieces many people; and I will consecrate their gain unto the Lord, and their substance unto the Lord of the whole earth.” O, what I felt under it I can never describe! I was confident that the words were in the Bible, from the power I felt from them and the glory that followed them.

The words, I was confident, I had never heard or seen before, and every word came with such power as if it had been printed in my heart by the finger of God. At every opportunity I could get, I was searching the Scriptures to see if I could find out the words. At this time I had only a very small Concordance, so that I could not find them by it. At last I came to the prophecy of Micah, and was wonderfully delighted in reading the fourth chapter, till I came to the last words, and there I lighted upon the very words that had come to my mind, word for word.

I felt as if my soul would have split my body asunder with the feeling I had of love, praise, adoration and thanksgiving to the dear Name of my dear Lord. O how precious did the words sound again in my soul, “Arise and thresh, O daughter of Zion”! O the delight and joy I found for some time in the blessed word of the Lord! I felt confident that the Lord was with me, and that all was right; though at the same time I could not tell from day to day how we were to get through the difficulties we had to grapple with. But I was confident that the Lord would be with me, and bring me through to the honour of His Name.

*TO BE CONTINUED*

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## BLUE PLAQUE FOR WILLIAM GADSBY

William Gadsby's wedding took place at 8 o'clock in the morning at Hinckley in south-west Leicestershire. We wonder why so early. The date was 16th May 1796. William was 23 and his wife Elizabeth, a Hinckley girl, was 25. Here at Hinckley they set up their first home, and lived in the village for several years.

And now, 225 years later, his memory has been commemorated by the installation of a blue plaque at the site of his home.



Gadsby preached in what was known as ‘the old barn’ in Hinckley. And old it was! Gadsby said, “The thatch was off in so many places of the roof that we could see the sky through the numerous holes, so that when it rained, the people had to remove from one part to another.”



*Ebenezer Chapel, Hinckley*

Eventually, Ebenezer Chapel was built on what is now the site of B&Q. The *Leicester Journal* advertised: “The Particular Baptist Meeting House at Hinckley, Leicestershire, will be opened on Wednesday, June 1st, 1803. Worship to begin at Half past Ten o'clock.” The cost of the chapel was about £800. By the 1930's the chapel was used as a warehouse for a hosiery manufacturer, and was finally demolished in the 1980's.

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## UNUSUAL BIBLES (6)

Several editions of the Authorised Version printed in the 1600'S have contained relatively minor mistakes, but with disastrous results.

In 1631, Matthew 26. 36 ‘Judas’ was printed instead of ‘Jesus.’ It became known as the *Judas Bible*. One copy is held in St. Mary's Church, Totnes, Devon, where the misprint has been covered with a small slip of paper glued over the name of Judas.

In 1653, 1 Corinthians 6. 9 was printed: “Know ye not that the unrighteous shall inherit the kingdom of God?” It should, of course be “shall *not* inherit.”

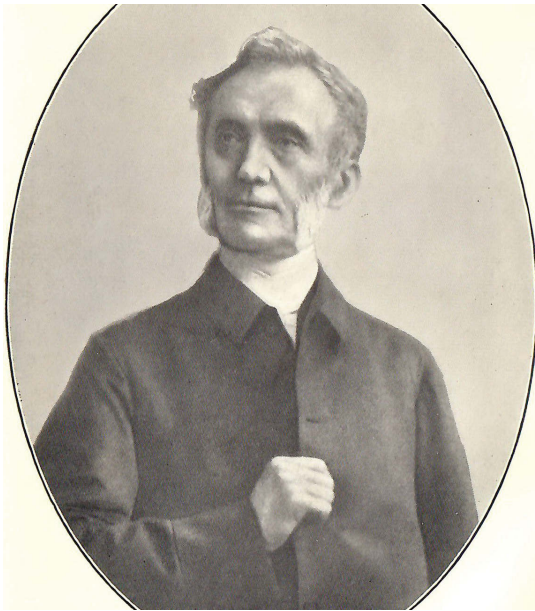
In 1682, Deuteronomy 24. 3 was printed: “And if the latter husband ate her” instead of “And if the latter husband hate her.” It became known as the *Cannibal's Bible*.

Thankfully, this type of mistake is now very rare.

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## GEORGE MULLER (1805-1898)



*George Friedrich Muller, best remembered  
for the orphanage he established in Bristol,  
accomplished by prayer and faith alone*

### **Birth**

Muller was born on 27th September 1805 at Kroppenstaedt, Prussia (now Saxony-Anhalt, Germany), where his father was a tax official, the Collector of the Excise. His younger days were spent in much wickedness. His mother died when he was fourteen, and the night of her death he spent playing cards till two in the morning. At the age of sixteen he lived for weeks at a time in expensive hotels, disappearing when the time came to pay the bill. Eventually he was caught, arrested, and thrown into gaol, locked up with thieves and murderers. Here he remained for one year, until his father settled his hotel bills, paid for his maintenance in prison, and his fare home. In spite of this experience, he continued “a profligate and vicious life.”

### **“There is a period known to God”**

But in the providence of God, a remarkable change was at hand. Until this time he had had no Bible, nor had he read one for years. He

seldom went to church, and had never heard the Gospel preached, though from custom he took the Lord's Supper twice a year. But the appointed time had come when his eyes were to be opened.

One Sunday afternoon he took a walk with his friend Beta, who told him that he was now in the habit of going to a private religious meeting held weekly in the house of a Christian tradesman named Wagner. Beta told him that they read the Bible, sang, prayed, and read a printed sermon. "As soon as I heard this, it was as if I had found something which I had been seeking all my life long. I immediately wished to go with my friend, who at first was not willing to take me, for, knowing me as a gay young man, he thought I should not like this meeting."

However, it was arranged that they should go together, and the new-comer was welcomed in a way which Mr. Muller declared he would never forget. "Come as often as you please," said the kindly host, "house and heart are open to you." The few friends sat down and sang a hymn, and then one of their number, Keyser by name, fell on his knees and asked a blessing on the meeting. "This kneeling down," Muller observed later, "made a deep impression on me, for I had never before seen anyone on his knees." After the reading of another hymn, and prayer, the meeting terminated. Muller came away happy, "though," he said, "if I had been asked why I was happy, I could not have clearly explained it."

Mr. Muller's life is a long story. Eventually he settled in London, and then Bristol. It was while he was at Bristol the Lord put it into his heart to establish a orphanage in the city. This he accomplished by prayer and faith alone, never once actively seeking funds.

Here is his own record of his leadings regarding the orphanage.

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### **November 20th, 1835.**

Today I have had it very much impressed on my heart, no longer merely to *think* about the establishment of an orphan house, but actually to set about it, and I have been very much in prayer respecting it, in order to ascertain the Lord's mind.

### **November 23rd.**

Today I had ten pounds sent from Ireland, for our Institution. The Lord, in answer to prayer, has given me, in a few days, about fifty pounds. I had asked only for forty pounds. This has been a great

encouragement to me, and has still more stirred me up to think and pray about the establishment of an orphan house.

### **November 25th.**

I have been again much in prayer yesterday and today about the orphan house, and am more and more convinced that it is of God. May He in mercy guide me!

It may be well to enter somewhat minutely upon the reasons which led me to establish an orphan house. Through my pastoral labours, through my correspondence, and through brethren who visited Bristol, I had constantly cases brought before me, which proved that one of the especial things which the children of God needed in our day, was, *to have their faith strengthened*. I might visit a brother who worked fourteen or even sixteen hours a day at his trade, the necessary result of which was, that not only his body suffered, but his soul was lean, and he had no enjoyment in God. I might point out to him that he ought to work less, in order that his bodily health might not suffer, and that he might gather strength for his inner man, by reading the word of God, by meditation over it, and by prayer.

The reply, however, I generally found to be something like this: “But if I work less, I do not earn enough for the support of my family. Even now, whilst I work so much, I have scarcely enough.” There was no trust in God, no real belief in the truth of that word, “Seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness, and all these things shall be added unto you.” I might reply something like this: “My dear brother, it is not your work which supports your family, but the Lord; and He who has fed you and your family when you could not work at all, on account of illness, would surely provide for you and yours. Is it not the case that you begin the work of the day after having had only a few hurried moments for prayer. When you leave off your work in the evening, and mean then to read a little of the word of God, are you not too much worn out in body and mind to do so, and do you not often fall asleep whilst reading the Scriptures, or whilst on your knees in prayer?”

The brother would allow it was so; he would allow that my advice was good; but still I read in his countenance, “How should I get on, if I were to *carry out* your advice?” I longed, therefore, to have something to point the brother to, as a visible proof that our God and Father is the same faithful God that he ever was – as willing as ever to prove Himself the living God, in our day as formerly, to all who put their trust in Him.



Again, sometimes I found children of God tried in mind by the prospect of old age, when they might be unable to work any longer, and therefore were harassed by the fear of having to go into the poorhouse. If I pointed out to them how their heavenly Father has always helped those who put their trust in him, they might not *say* that times have changed; but yet it was evident enough that God was not looked upon by them as the *living* God. I longed to set something before the children of God whereby they might see that he does not forsake, even in our day, those who rely upon him.

Another class of persons were brethren in business, who suffered in their souls, and brought guilt on their consciences, by carrying on their business almost in the same way as unconverted persons do. The competition in trade, the bad times, the over-peopled country, were given as reasons why, if the business were carried on simply according to the word of God, it could not be expected to do well. Such a brother, perhaps, would express the wish that it might be different, but very rarely did I see *that there was a holy determination to trust in the living God, and to depend on him*. To this class, likewise, I desired to show by a visible proof that God is unchangeably the same.

Then there was another class of persons, individuals who were in professions in which they could not continue with a good conscience, or persons who were in an unscriptural position with reference to spiritual things; but both classes feared, on account of the consequences, to give up the profession in which they could not abide with God, or to leave their position, lest they should be thrown out of employment. My spirit longed to be instrumental in strengthening their faith, by giving them not only instances from the word of God of his willingness and ability to help all those who rely upon him, but *to show them by proofs* that he is the same in our day.

All these exercises of my soul, which resulted from the fact that so many believers with whom I became acquainted were harassed and distressed in mind, or brought guilt on their consciences on account of not trusting in the Lord, were used by God to awaken in my heart the desire of setting before the church at large, and before the world, a proof that he has not in the least changed; and this seemed to me best done by the establishing of an orphan house.

It needed to be something which could be seen, even by the natural eye. Now, if I, a poor man, simply by prayer and faith, obtained, *without asking any individual*, the means for establishing and carrying

on an orphan house, there would be something which, with the Lord's blessing, might be instrumental in strengthening the faith of the children of God, besides being a testimony to the consciences of the unconverted of the reality of the things of God.

This, then, was the primary reason for establishing the orphan house. I certainly did from my heart desire to be used by God to benefit the bodies of poor children, bereaved of both parents, and seek in other respects, with the help of God, to do them good for this life. I also particularly longed to be used by God in getting the dear orphans trained up in the fear of God; but still, the first and primary object of the work was, and still is, that God might be magnified by the fact that the orphans under my care are provided with all they need, only *by prayer and faith*, without any one being asked by me or my fellow-labourers, whereby it may be seen that God is faithful still, and hears prayer still.

#### **November 28th.**

I have been, every day this week, very much in prayer concerning the orphan house, chiefly entreating the Lord to take away every thought concerning it out of my mind if the matter be not of him; and have also repeatedly examined my heart concerning my motives in the matter. But I have been more and more confirmed that it is of God.

#### **December 2nd.**

I have again these last days prayed much about the orphan house, and have frequently examined my heart, that if it were at all my desire to establish it for the sake of gratifying myself I might find it out. To that end I have also conversed with brother Craik about it, that he might be instrumental in showing me any hidden corruption of my heart concerning the matter, or any other scriptural reason against my engaging in it. The only reason which ever made me at all doubt as to its being of God, is the multiplicity of engagements which I have already. But if the matter be of God, he will in due time send suitable individuals, so that comparatively little of my time will be taken up in this service.

Being encouraged by brother Craik, I have this day taken the first actual step in the matter, in having ordered bills to be printed announcing a public meeting on December 9th, at which I intend to lay before the brethren my thoughts concerning the orphan house, as a means of ascertaining more clearly the Lord's mind concerning the

matter.

**December 5th.**

This evening I was struck, in reading the Scriptures, with these words: "Open thy mouth wide, and I will fill it." I was led to apply this Scripture to the orphan house.

I asked the Lord for three things:

- 1 premises
- 2 one thousand pounds in money
- 3 suitable individuals to take care of the children.

**December 7th.**

Today I received the first shilling for the orphan house.

**December 9th.**

This afternoon the first piece of furniture was given – a large wardrobe. This afternoon and evening I was low in spirit as it regards the orphan house, but as soon as I began to speak at the meeting I received peculiar assistance from God. After the meeting, ten shillings was given to me. *There was purposely no collection*, nor did any one speak besides myself; for it was not in the least intended to work upon the feelings, for I sought to be quite sure concerning the mind of God. After the meeting, a sister offered herself for the work. I went home, happy in the Lord, and full of confidence that the matter will come to pass, though but ten shillings has been given.

**December 10th.**

I have sent to the press a statement, which contains the substance of what I said at the meeting last evening. I have received a letter, in which a brother and sister wrote thus: "We propose ourselves for the service of the intended orphan house, if you think us qualified for it; also to give up all the furniture, etc., which the Lord has given us, for its use; and to do this without receiving any salary whatever, believing that if it be the will of the Lord to employ us, he will supply all our need."

In the evening a brother brought, from several individuals, three dishes, twenty-eight plates, three basins, one jug, four mugs, three salt-stands, one grater, four knives, and five forks.

**December 12th.**

While I was praying this morning that the Lord would give us a

fresh token of his favour concerning the orphan house, a brother brought three dishes, twelve plates, one basin, and one blanket. After this had been given, I thanked God, and asked him to give even this day another encouragement. Shortly after, fifty pounds was given, and that by an individual from whom, for several reasons, I could not have expected this sum. Thus the hand of God appeared so much the more clearly. Even then I was led to pray that this day the Lord would give still more. In the evening, accordingly, there was sent, by a sister, twenty-nine yards of print. Also a sister offered herself for the work.

**December 13th.**

A brother was influenced this day to give four shillings per week, as long as the Lord gives the means: eight shillings was given by him as two weeks' subscription. Today a brother and sister offered themselves, with all their furniture, and all their provisions which they have in the house, if they can be usefully employed in the concerns of the orphan house.

**December 14th.**

Today a sister offered her services for the work. In the evening another sister offered herself for the institution.

**December 15th.**

A sister brought, from several friends, ten basins, eight mugs, one plate, five dessert spoons, six teaspoons, one skimmer, one toasting-fork, one flour-dredge, three knives and forks, one sheet, one pillow-case, one table-cloth; also one pound. In the afternoon were sent fifty-five yards of sheeting, and twelve yards of calico.

**December 16th.**

I took out of the box in my room one shilling.

**December 17th.**

I was rather cast down last evening and this morning about the matter; questioning whether I ought to be engaged in this way, and was led to ask the Lord to give me some further encouragement. Soon after were sent by a brother two pieces of print, the one seven and the other twenty-three and three fourths yards, six and three fourths yards of calico, four pieces of lining, about four yards altogether, a sheet, and a yard measure. This evening another brother brought a quantity of household articles, and told me that it had been put into the heart of an

individual to send tomorrow one hundred pounds.

**December 18th.**

This afternoon the same brother brought, from a sister, a counterpane, a flatiron-stand, eight cups and saucers, a sugar basin, a milk jug, a teacup, sixteen thimbles, five knives and forks, six dessert spoons, twelve teaspoons, four combs, and two little graters; from another friend a flatiron, and a cup and saucer. At the same time he brought the hundred pounds above referred to.

**December 20th.**

A sister gave five pounds.

**December 21st.**

A friend sent one pound, and a weekly subscription of four shillings.

**December 22nd.**

A sister gave me one pound, and a friend sent two shillings and sixpence.

**December 23rd.**

A brother gave, this evening, a piece of blind line and a dozen of blind tassels. About ten in the evening, a gentleman brought me from an individual, whose name he was not to mention, four pounds, of which I was allowed to take two pounds for the orphan house, and to give the other two pounds to poor believers.

**December 31st.**

This evening we had a special meeting for prayer and praise. There have been received into the church, during the past year, 59. There are men in communion with us, 95. I have received for my temporal wants, in freewill offerings and presents, £285 1s. 1¼d.

**April 21st 1836.**

This day was set apart for prayer and thanksgiving concerning the Orphan House, as it is now opened. In the morning, several brethren prayed, and brother Craik spoke on the last verses of Psalm 20. In the afternoon, I addressed our day and Sunday school children, the orphans, and other children present. In the evening we had another prayer meeting. There are now seventeen children in the Orphan House.

*TO BE CONTINUED*





*The Orphan House*



*A group of younger ones at tea*

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One old church member asked the Presbyterian kirk session to give her a new name as she had been such a great sinner while having her present one.

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## “THY SPEECH BEWRAYETH THEE” (MAT. 26.73)

These words were spoken to Peter as he sat in the house of Caiaphas the high priest with the servants “to see the end.” Peter’s denial of his Lord and Master is one of the saddest things we read in holy Scripture, when he swore, “I do not know the Man.” But those that stood by knew that Peter was a Galilean as his speech bewrayed him. This old English word - *bewray* - is very similar to our present word ‘betray’ in the sense of making something known. We can often tell which part of the country someone comes from by the way they speak, sometimes even pinpointing the very town where they were brought up. Living near Luton, my wife and I sometimes hear locals speaking in what we call “true Lutonian,” something spoken by the girls and women who worked in the hat factories that once dominated the town.

### Shibboleth

An interesting account is given in Judges chapter 12, when the men of Gilead fought with the men of Ephraim. If the Gileadites caught a man they would ask, “Art thou an Ephraimite?” If he said, “No,” he would be put to a simple test: “Say now Shibboleth.” But, however hard he tried, an Ephraimite could not get the *sh* right but said “Sibboleth.” The Bible says, “For he could not frame to pronounce it right.” You know how hard it is for non-English speaking people to say the word *the* correctly - they just cannot get their tongue in the right position on the back of the top teeth, so it comes out more as *te*.

### A mixed language

Nehemiah was greatly troubled in his day when he observed the children around him speaking a mixed language: “And their children spake half in the speech of Ashdod, and could not speak in the Jews’ language” (Nehemiah 13.24). The reason for this was that some of the Jewish boys had married wives from the heathen nations of Ashdod, Ammon and Moab. So angry was Nehemiah at this violation of God’s law that it seems he even smote some who had given their children to marry into these families, and said to them, “Ye shall not give your daughters unto their sons, nor take their daughters unto your sons.”

### Hardest words in the English language

The word ‘Worcestershire’ is the hardest in the English language for foreigners to pronounce, topping a list of top-ten words that non-English speakers find the most difficult. A survey asked people from

around the world to submit English words they struggled with the most. Most common are ‘squirrel’, ‘regularly’, ‘February’ and ‘phenomenon.’

### **The Parsley Massacre**

In more recent days, the border between Haiti and the Dominican Republic was once the scene of a mass slaughter, now almost forgotten. It became known as the Parsley Massacre. The reason for this was because the Dominican soldiers carried with them a piece of parsley and would ask people suspected of being Haitian to pronounce the Spanish word for it: ‘perejil.’ Those whose first language was Haitian found it difficult to say it correctly, which was something that could cost them their lives. Historians estimate that between 9,000 and 20,000 Haitians were killed on the orders of the Dominican dictator Rafael Trujillo. Their bodies were dumped in what is known as the Massacre River.

### **Speech - alway with grace**

How, then, is our own speech? In Colossians 4. 6 Paul says, “Let your speech be alway with grace.” What a searching word that is - *alway*. We may possibly speak graciously when talking to our minister, or some godly person in the church - but *alway*? How far short we feel to come.

We can very quickly form an impression of someone as soon as we hear them speak - and others can very quickly form an impression of us. When interviewing prospective candidates for employment, a skilled interviewer can, within five to ten seconds, know whether that person is going to be suitable. It is then hard to go through the whole interview process knowing full well that the job will not be theirs!

### **Peter, the Galilean**

We have already mentioned Peter, that he was a Galilean, and was therefore despised by the more learned people who lived in Jerusalem. They had very little opinion of those from the north! But what was the result when he and John spoke to the people? When they “perceived they were unlearned and ignorant men, they marvelled; and they took knowledge of them, that they had been with Jesus” Acts 4. 13. What a wonderful testimony this was: *they knew that they had been with Jesus*.

May God help us each in our daily conversation, to walk worthy of His great name. And may we not be *ashamed of Jesus* (that dear Friend), that He may not be ashamed of us.



## KING JESUS

Lady Pamela Mountbatten, lady-in-waiting to Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth, was once asked if she had ever said “No” to the Queen. “Never,” she replied. “If your sovereign asks you to do something, you do it.” *King Jesus* says, “If ye love Me, keep my commandments.” We may be obedient to our earthly monarch’s wishes, but are we obedient to the wishes of the heavenly King?

Old John Mpofu lived in a small thatched hut in the Ingwenya Mission, some twenty-five miles from Bulawayo. Often those passing by his hut heard him on his knees praying. In the absence of a minister Old John would sometimes take the services. His sermons were short but animated. Once he said, “Children of the Matabele, children of the Matabele, who ever heard of a king dying for his people? It is the people who die for their king, but *King Jesus* died for His people - a great and solemn thought which takes away my sleep when it comes to me in the night.”

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### “TAKE HEED HOW YE HEAR”

The apostle Paul once wrote, “How shall they hear without a preacher?” Sadly, for many churches and chapels, particularly larger buildings, it has been a case of, “How shall they hear the preacher?”

We were reading recently of Canon Carus, vicar of Romsey Abbey, who in 1854 had to resign because he found preaching in such a large building “*painfully tried his vocal powers.*” Eventually the Abbey purchased a disused sounding board from Winchester Cathedral which helped a little. However, it was not until 1971 that a sound system was put into the Abbey. The rather uncomplimentary Minutes of a Parochial council meeting recorded: “The size of the building necessitates using this modern contrivance, which means a few in the audience may hear the human voice, but the rest do hear but only a distorted voice coming out of tin spouts.” Tin spouts – what are they?

In a large building the main enemy is reflected sound, which means that you first hear the direct sound, followed by multiple echoes arriving at different times. This reduces the ability to understand what is being said. We are all familiar with railway station announcements, where the sound was very loud, but quite unintelligible, so it is important to distinguish between loudness and intelligibility.

Some mediaeval churches across Europe used large ‘pots’ built into the walls which absorb sounds of the pots resonant frequency. A fine example of this is seen in Lyddington church in Rutland where there are six pots built into the wall. The Greeks and Romans also used pots in their theatres, tuned to different frequencies by filling them with varying amounts of sand.



*Individual speakers, Denmark*

However good the amplification system, there will always be dead spots in the building where people are unable to hear as well as they would wish. This problem has been overcome in Ribe Cathedral in Denmark where an individual loudspeaker has been fixed to the pew in front for every member of the congregation. How we would love such a system!

In the year 1857, Mr. J. C. Philpott, editor of the *Gospel Standard*, was asked whether it was right for the deacons to prohibit the use of rubber gutta-percha tubes fixed to pulpits in public places of worship, thus depriving the deaf of hearing the gospel preached. His answer in the *Gospel Standard* was: “None but those who love the truth, but are afflicted with the infirmity of deafness, can tell the misery and wretchedness of being present with the family of God at public worship, and yet not able to hear a word of the prayer and sermon, or, at best, only just enough to tantalise them. None but these, therefore, can tell what a comfort, and we may add what a blessing, the gutta-percha’s hearing apparatus is to them. We ourselves know persons, who, before the invention of this apparatus, had not heard a gospel sermon for years; and they have invariably expressed their pleasure and gratitude at being once more restored by its means the privilege of a hearer. The objection mentioned by our correspondent, that it is unsightly, is not to be entertained for a single moment.”



*Gutta-Percha hearing tube*

What a privilege it is to be able to hear the gospel preached. The Lord Jesus said, “Take heed therefore how ye hear” (Luke 8.18). Notice that He did not say, “*what* ye hear” but “*how* ye hear.”

In the parable of the sower the Lord Jesus spoke of four classes of seed sown by the sower:



- 1 Some seeds fell by the way side
- 2 Some fell upon stony ground
- 3 Some fell among thorns
- 4 Some fell into good ground

Only the seed that fell into good ground brought forth fruit. The rest was eaten by birds, or was scorched by the sun, or was choked by thorns. The Lord Jesus, after delivering this parable to “great multitudes,” later explained it privately to his disciples, likening the seed to four classes of hearers. The way side seed was taken out of the hearer’s heart by “the wicked one,” the devil himself. The stony ground seed lasted only for a while, but when trials or persecution arose, it withered away. The seed that fell among thorns bore no fruit as it was choked by the cares and riches of this world. The seed sown on good ground was the only seed rightly received by the hearer.

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How we need to examine our own hearts! What effect does the preaching of the gospel have upon us? Is what we have heard snatched away as soon as we go out of the chapel doors? Or does it last a little longer until Monday morning, when once more we take up the cares of this life? Or does something remain within our hearts, and “bring forth fruit”? What kind of hearer are we?

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**THE SABBATH** – “All things another aspect wear” we sometimes sing. Describing the Sabbath, a Scottish writer said: “A hush was over the land, broken only by the sounds of psalm-singing, the bleating of sheep, the call of the gull, and the voice of the wind. Morning and evening, children and parents, ‘drest in best’, walked sedately to church.” In Britain today, how sad to see in our towns and cities the Sabbath now much like any other day.

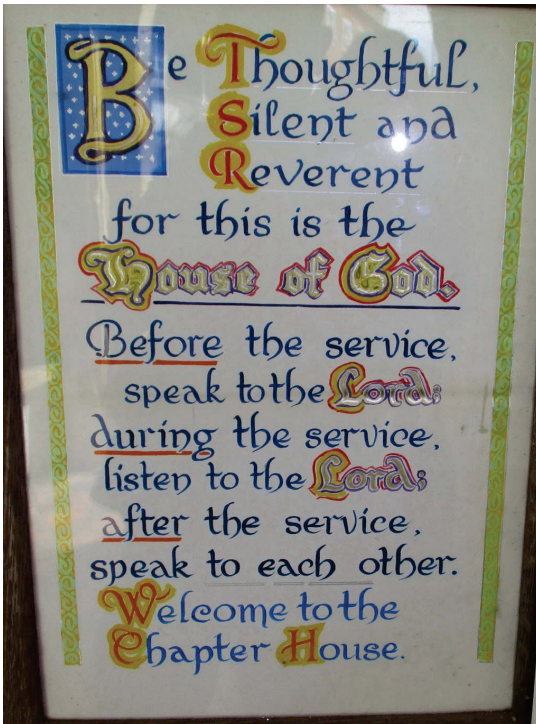
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**WHEN Donald MacDonald** came forward for the sacrament at Snizort on the Isle of Skye, the minister asked him if he had communicated before. “Yes,” he replied. “Where?” asked the minister. “At the cow’s stall,” he replied. He had a place there whither he resorted to pray.

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## REVERENCE IN THE HOUSE OF GOD



*Notice in the porch of St. Andrew's Church,  
Ampthill, Bedfordshire*

How do we go up to God's house? We trust that we have a desire to find a portion for our souls, but how easily we can forget that we are coming into the very presence of God. "Be our behaviour becoming the place," wrote Joseph Hart in one of his hymns. We once read of a man who said, "I love the quiet before service better than any sermon." Although we may not exactly agree with his sentiment, it is easy to see the point he was trying to make.

To come into God's presence is solemn. "God is greatly to be feared in the assembly of the saints" (Psalm 87.9). Jacob recognized this when he said, "How dreadful is this place! this is none other but the house of God." How

careful we should be in our behaviour as we enter God's house. It is said that in Scotland, in former days, the people were visibly moved, and even wept, as the Bible was carried into the church.

Recently, we heard of a Youth Celebration in a Baptist Church. Amongst those taking part were an Escapologist and illusionist, a Basketball juggler extraordinaire, a band called The Freaks, and others. It was billed that the event was to emphasise that life with Jesus is "Life 2 The Max." We hardly like to sully our pages with such awful things, but if our youth are trained up with such an approach to the things of God, where will it leave them. May it be a warning how far once 'respectable' churches can move in what they see as a way to get the people in. "Reaching young people for Jesus Christ, engaging them in effective Christian living," is how they described it. What an illusion!

## **FAMILY SADNESS**

Dr. Thomas Hunt and his wife Sarah, who lived in the city of Bath, were blessed with a family of five children. But what a sad life it was for them as not one of their children reached adulthood – something not uncommon at that time (the Georgian era).

This is what is recorded on the family memorial stone in St. Michael's Church, Bath:

THOMAS DIED SEPTEMBER 28TH, 1789, AGED 1 MONTH.

GEORGINA DIED JUNE 4TH, 1794, AGED 2 YEARS.

MARIA DIED NOVEMBER 3RD, 1796, AGED 3 YEARS.

MARY DIED OCTOBER 11TH, 1801, AGED 4 YEARS.

More is recorded of their youngest daughter, Sarah:

SHE REMEMBERED HER CREATOR IN THE DAYS OF HER YOUTH AND WAS FOUND IN FAITH AT THE COMING OF HER LORD. SHE DIED APRIL 20TH, 1819, AT THE AGE OF 17.

We can only hope this brought a crumb of comfort to the grieving parents. The mother was renowned in the city as “charitable to the poor and afflicted. Her whole character was adorned with the fruits of a pure and living faith. She departed this life, deeply lamented, on the eve of the Sabbath, December 10th, 1831 in her 71st year.”

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## **OUR TIME OF NEED**

As we begin finally to emerge from the lockdowns and restrictions imposed by the Covid pandemic, we feel it is a time for looking back and reflection on the Lord's judgments on the land. We must also record His great mercies in bringing us to the other side so far – mercies far exceeding what we as a nation deserve. We do not know how things

may develop, but the future we leave in His all-wise hands.

We are pleased to print an address given at Bethel Chapel, Luton by Mr. B. A. Ramsbottom on Thursday, 19th March 2020, which was the last service held before all places of worship were closed by order of the Government. The occasion reminded us of those farewell sermons preached by godly ministers at the time of the Great Ejection following the 1662 Act of Uniformity. It was a poignant moment when the last hymn was sung: “For a season called to part.” Many of us felt the solemnity as we gathered up our Bibles and hymnbooks to take home, knowing that we would not be seeing each other for a long time and fearful as to what was before us with the Covid pandemic. Little did we know that over 140,000 would die in this country alone. It would be seventeen weeks before the chapel re-opened.

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**Reading:** Psalm 50. 1-15

This is not a time for a lot of speaking; it is a time for prayer. And verse 1 says it all: “The mighty God, even the Lord, hath spoken.” Now that is just what is happening in the world at present and in our country. Verse 1 makes it clear that it is throughout the whole earth: “From the rising of the sun unto the going down thereof”; “the mighty God, even the Lord, hath spoken.”

He has spoken powerfully; He has spoken clearly in this epidemic that has spread abroad in the world. It is a mercy if we hear His voice. The multitude do not. This is the voice of God. His call to His people is that it is the Lord who is speaking. As we have it in the Book of the Exodus, the plagues upon the land of Egypt, they said, “This is the finger of God.” If it is a voice, then it is a call to pray, and a call to repent, and a call to heed our ways. “Be ye also ready: for in such an hour as ye think not the Son of man cometh.”

Verse 3 – surely this is a description of what the virus is like: “Our God shall come” – He has come – “and shall not keep silence” – He has not; He has spoken. “A fire shall devour before Him, and it shall be very tempestuous round about Him.” Now that is England at present: “A fire shall devour before Him, and it shall be very tempestuous round about Him.” It is a fire that we cannot put out.

And then verse 4 – surely this is a call to repentance. “He shall call to the heavens from above, and to the earth.” May we pray that the Lord will sanctify this occasion in the earth and amid our congregations.

Now some of you may know this, but the year 1940 when France

fell, and it was felt that the German army would invade us the next day, and people would be killed everywhere, there was that kind of feeling and concern that we have at present. Now there was a lady called Mrs. Grace Dockrill. She had left chapel. She married a man, and they had become exceedingly prosperous. When she heard the news that France had fallen, it was like a dagger in her heart. What if there was an invading army the next day and she should be killed, and where should she spend eternity? She realised that evening it was the prayer meeting at Bethel, so she came along to her aged mother's house. Her mother said, "Grace, you know I am always delighted to see you, but surely you should not come on prayer meeting night." She said, "Mother, I have come that I might go to the prayer meeting with you." You older ones remember Mrs. Dockrill. I do not think over the years we have ever had a more godly, gracious woman than she was. So the Lord sanctified that occasion. May He sanctify this.

And then verse 5. This is the point that we are concerned about: our personal safety. It is right to be concerned about it. Our friends, our families, our congregation, the Lord's little remnant in the earth – may this word be very blessedly fulfilled, and we find our hiding place here. This is the Lord almighty who speaks: "Gather My saints together unto Me." Where does He gather them? Beneath the shadow of His wings, to that hiding place in the cleft of the rock, to gather them with the hollow of His hand. "Gather My saints together unto Me; those that have made a covenant with Me by sacrifice" – those who have an interest in the Saviour's finished work, His sin-atonement death and resurrection.

And then verse 15 crowns it all for us here tonight. What should our posture be? What is the way we should go? What should we be doing? "Call upon Me" – this mighty God, even the Lord – "Call upon Me in the day of trouble." Well, it is a day of trouble. This is the Lord's loving command to His people. "Call upon Me in the day of trouble." And what a promise! May we be helped to plead it: "I will deliver thee, and thou shalt glorify Me."

I cannot help thinking all the time about Numbers 16, that terrible plague. There was that plague, and one after another there falling, but there was a high priest in Israel. His name was Aaron, and he ran and filled his censer with the burning coals from off the altar where the sacrifice had been offered, where the blood had been shed. "And he stood between the dead and the living; and the plague was stayed." It

could not go one inch further, one inch beyond that high priest.

That is my final thought this evening, that we have a great and glorious High Priest. O that He might stay the plague, and O that He may forbid it to come into our dwellings.

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## CURRENT MATTERS

### Unknown species

Previously unknown life-forms have been found living beneath an iceshelf in Antarctica at below-freezing temperatures. Researchers from the British Antarctic Survey found sponges and other unknown species attached to the rock on the sea floor. We are reminded of hymn 646: “Creatures of every sort and kind, Are all at Thy control.” Although men did not know they were there, they are all part of God’s creation.

### Marriage

In March 2021, the Vatican ruled that marriage can be only between one man and one woman. The Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, the body that sets down Roman Catholic teaching, affirms that sexual activity is only right within the confines of marriage. As expected, this statement was met with much opposition – even fury – but we are glad the Vatican has spoken out.

### Ancient Biblical text discovered

Fragments of Biblical text have been found in a cave near the Dead Sea known as the Cave of Horrors. It gets its name as 40 human skeletons



*Courtesy of Israel Antiquities Authority*

were found there, including the naturally mummified body of a child. The cave can be reached only by abseiling 290 feet down a sheer cliff, which has prevented looting. The fragments, thought to be nearly 2000 years old, contain text from Zechariah 8. 16-17 and Nahum 1. 5-6.

**Blackpool Council broke the law**

Blackpool Council breached equality and human rights law when it banned bus adverts for an event because the main speaker, Franklin Graham, opposes same-sex marriage. Her Honour Judge Claire Evans ruled it was wrong to characterise the belief in marriage as only between one man and one woman as “extremist.” The judge said that the council had shown “wholesale disregard for the right to freedom of expression.”

**‘Oddball’ Edwin**

Edwin Poots, who has taken over from Arlene Foster as leader of the Democratic Unionist Party (DUP) in Northern Ireland, is a creationist who believes in a ‘young Earth’ – his estimate is 6,000 years. The Giant’s Causeway, estimated by geologists to be 60million years old, is something he does not believe. Writing in a national newspaper, journalist Leo McKinstry said: “Poots is almost the stereotype of the Protestant bigot, fiercely opposed to gay equality and the scientific fact of evolution. He instead voices his bizarre beliefs in the crackpot dogma of creationism, which holds – in defiance of all evidence – that the earth is just 6,000 years old.” Once again, it seems you can believe anything you like, so long as it is not based on the Bible.

**Chinese Christians prosecuted for selling audio Bibles**

The last few years has seen an increased crackdown on Christian activity in China. Last month, five Christians in Shenzhen were prosecuted by the authorities for selling audio Bibles intended mainly for older people. The prosecution are recommending five years in prison for the owner of the business, and sentences of up to three years for the employees involved. In church raids – which are becoming increasingly common – Bibles are often confiscated. We understand that the Chinese government announced in 2019 that they will be producing an ‘official translation’ of the Bible. Any content deemed incompatible with socialist values will be changed.

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## OUR FINAL RESTING PLACE

It was William the Conqueror who chose the site for Windsor Castle, high above the River Thames and on the edge of an ancient hunting ground. He began building in 1070, and sixteen years later the Castle was complete. The walls of the Castle were originally timber, and it was not until the late 1100's that King Henry II began to replace them with stone.

St George's Chapel in the castle grounds was founded by King Edward III in 1348. Many kings and queens of England are buried in the Chapel, one of the most notable being King Henry VIII who died in 1547, where he lies in the Quire with his third wife, Jane Seymour. Strangely, in the same tomb lies King Charles I following his execution in 1649. King Henry had designs for a grand resting place in Westminster Abbey but it was never completed, and he remains at Windsor which was intended to be only a temporary resting place. The king had ordered that "a convenient altar be honourably prepared and apparelled with all manner of things requisite and necessary for daily masses there to be said perpetually while the world shall endure." The masses were never said, nor would they have benefitted his never-dying soul. The Royal Vault, where Prince Philip was buried in April, did not come into use until 1810. It contains twenty-six burials including four kings of England, and two stillborn babies.

We know that one day we, too, must have a final resting place. Many people as they grow older reserve for themselves a plot in the local cemetery, but there can never be certainty that that is where they will lie. Some have been buried at sea, whilst others, especially in a time of war, have no known resting place. We often think of Stephen who met a martyr's death: "And devout men carried Stephen to his burial, and made great lamentation over him." Jesus asked concerning Lazarus: "Where have ye laid him? They said unto Him, Lord, come and see."

Our final thought must be of that new tomb that once held the body of the Lord Jesus – but only for three days. THEN it was an empty tomb: "And they entered in, and found not the body of the Lord Jesus." What a wonderful explanation was given by the two men in shining garments: "He is not here, but is risen."

# PERCEPTION

A Quarterly Magazine for Young People



“And He sent away the multitude, and took ship, and came into the coasts of Magdala”  
(Matthew 15. 39).

**AUTUMN 2021**

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**Cover picture:** Sea of Galilee, approaching “the coasts of Magdala.”

# PERCEPTION

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## EDITORIAL

I wonder how many of you have ever been in complete darkness. Perhaps you have been in what you have regarded as a dark room, but, once your eyes have adjusted, you soon begin to see little chinks of light, however tightly the curtains may be drawn.

Many people have probably never been in complete darkness. Only once in my life (as far as I can remember) have I been in that condition. This was some years ago when, with some of my family, we descended deep into a slate cavern on a guided tour. After relating to us some interesting history of the slate mine our guide said, “I am now going to turn off the lights and probably for the first time in your life you will be in absolute darkness.” He then duly operated the switch, and the lights went out. The guide was right. No chinks of light penetrated the darkness of the cavern, and even though you might hold your hand up to your eyes, you could see absolutely nothing. Some of the group admitted they were afraid. We once read a touching story of one of the godly martyrs imprisoned in a dungeon deep below the ground. He pathetically begged of the warden that he might have a candle to be with him in his loneliness.

Is there such a thing as ‘absolute darkness’? At school, in physics we learned that there is a temperature of absolute zero below which it is impossible to go: minus 273 degrees Celcius, which is equal to 0 degrees Kelvin. (Some authorities state that nothing in the universe has ever reached absolute zero.) But is there such a thing as ‘absolute darkness’? The short answer is ‘probably not.’ The great mathematician Einstein held that the basic element of light is a photon. As photons are found everywhere there can be no state of absolute darkness. Well, *Perception* is not a scientific magazine so please forgive us if we have got it wrong.

One thing we can be sure of is that at the moment of the creation of the world there was absolute darkness. “And the earth was without form, and void; and darkness was upon the face of the deep” (Genesis 1.2). But by the end of the first day God had said, “Let there be light: and

there was light.” Those who wish to discredit the word of God ask how there could have been light on the *first* day when the “lights in the firmament,” including the sun, were not made until the *fourth* day. However, they fail to notice that the sun was created to rule over the day, and to divide the light, which existed already, from the darkness. Yes, the sun was one of the “two great lights,” but it was not the light itself.

Almost the last plague God sent upon the land of Egypt was a plague of darkness. It is described in Exodus chapter 10 as a “darkness which may be felt.” For three days none of the Egyptians could see anyone else in their household. The remarkable thing is that the children of Israel “had light in their dwellings,” something truly miraculous that no power of man could ever had brought about.

Sadly, Israel began gradually to turn away from the Lord God – that great and merciful God who had done so much for them. This led to a darkness amongst the people, which the prophet Isaiah referred to: “For, behold, the darkness shall cover the earth, and gross darkness the people.” Turning away from God always leads to darkness. If we follow our own desires, our own inclinations, and leave God out of our thoughts, it will bring darkness upon our souls. Yet Isaiah was able to give hope: “But the Lord shall arise upon thee, and His glory shall be seen upon thee.” Here was gross darkness covering the people – but the Lord shall arise. The people had lost their way – but the Lord shall arise. Their minds were blinded by the God of this world – but the Lord shall arise. “And His glory shall be seen upon thee.” This was the same glory that the shepherds saw: “And the glory of the Lord shone round about them.”

The apostle John tells us that Jesus Christ, the incarnate Word, was the true light: “The true Light, which lighteth every man that cometh into the world” (John 1. 9). There can be no light without Christ. What is the meaning of incarnate? It is God, embodied in human form, a real Man, who came to be the light of the world. Charles Wesley refers to it in hymn 1057 where he addresses Christ as “the Light:”

“Light of those whose dreary dwelling  
Borders on the shades of death,  
Come, and, Thy bright beams revealing,  
Dissipate the clouds beneath.”

Why does Wesley wish the Light to appear? His desire is that it might:

“Give the knowledge of salvation,  
Give the pardon of our sins.”

There is another darkness we must speak of. When the dear Lord Jesus was crucified, as he hung upon the cross, there was darkness over the land: “And it was about the sixth hour, and there was a darkness over all the earth until the ninth hour” (Luke 23. 44). Notice that it was over *all* the earth. It was as though the sun hid its glory for shame at what was done upon the earth to the blessed Son of God.

“Well might the sun in darkness hide,  
And shut his glories in,  
When God, the mighty Maker, died  
For man, the creature’s sin.”

None of us will ever be able fully to understand the darkness that the Lord Jesus experienced when He cried, “My God, my God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?”

“But none of the ransomed ever knew  
How deep were the waters crossed,  
Nor how dark was the night that the Lord passed through,  
Ere He found His sheep that was lost.”

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Perhaps some of our readers feel a darkness upon their spirit. Whether young or old, are you longing for Christ to appear through the darkness? The apostle John was an ageing man when he wrote the Book of the Revelation. God had shown him many wonderful things, and had instructed him to write down all that he had seen: “What thou seest, write in a book.” This he had faithfully done. Was he now satisfied? Could he just leave it there? No. He was still one of those “longing souls.” What were his last words? “Even so, come, Lord Jesus.” It was as though he said, “Thou hast testified to me many blessed things – things I must now transmit to the world through this Holy Book. But even so, Lord Jesus, come to me, I still need Thee though I have been



shown all these wonderful things. I am still a poor seeking soul, longing for Thy appearing.”

Is that your prayer – is it my prayer? “Even so, come, Lord Jesus.” The hymnwriter calls Him the “Joy of every longing heart.” May we prove it to be so.

Wishing you all the Lord’s richest blessing.  
The Editor.

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## PRAYER

Dr. Stanley Browne, a leading specialist in the treatment of leprosy, once said he would like to pass on four principles he had learned in the school of prayer:

- The first: until you’ve prayed, there’s nothing to do; after you’ve prayed, there’s everything to do.
- The second: pray as if everything depended on prayer; then work as if everything depended on work.
- The third: don’t pray for something unless you are willing to obey God if He tells you how to act in answer to your prayers.
- The fourth: when we pray, ‘coincidences’ happen; when we cease praying, they stop happening.

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## CLINGING TO CHRIST

**Old Isaiah Nyati**, a member of the church at Gwisani, Rhodesia (now Zimbabwe) said that he wished to die clinging to Christ. The Lord honoured his wish in that he *did* die clinging to Christ.

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## JOHN WARBURTON (Part 7)

A few of the Lord's providential dealings

Born in 1776, convicted of sin as a young man, delivered from a temptation to end his life by drowning, and Christ revealed to his soul under a sermon preached by William Roby at Cannon Street Chapel, Manchester. Baptised when 28 at Manchester by William Gadsby. While in the water, Gadsby prayed that he might be raised up as an instrument in God's hand for the cause of truth. After beginning to speak in the Lord's name, he was lifted up with pride with the thought that he would be a *great* preacher, but the Lord showed him that his sufficiency must in Him. We continue with the life of this servant of the Lord.




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### Darkness and confusion of mind

By and by I was invited to supply at a little chapel in Liverpool – in Matthew Street, if I recollect right. Upon one particular time when I was there, I was led out in a very sweet manner in meditation upon these words, “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). O, thinks I, what a time I shall have! I hope there will be the chapel full.

But when the time came, and I read my text, I was so shut up, and such darkness and confusion overwhelmed me, that I could not tell what to do. All the sweet things that had so pleased me were fled away. I had hard stammering to keep on speaking that God had always loved His own, and that neither sin nor the devil could ever separate them from His love. I kept repeating it for about twenty-five minutes, and then gave it up all at once, and said, “The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ be with you all. Amen.”

As soon as ever I could get down out of the pulpit I took my hat, and through the chapel I went as hard as ever I was able, and was determined to take the first coach in the morning and go home, for I

verily believed that if ever I were to show my face again there the people would cry open shame upon me. As soon as I got out of the chapel I went with all the haste I could to my lodging, afraid to look at anybody, or that anybody should look at me; calling myself a thousand fools for ever coming to the place, and wishing that I had never opened my mouth, for I thought it was now plain and evident that the Lord had left me. Thus I went on, out of one street into another; but I observed that a woman kept close after me for some time, which I could not make out. I tried to evade her, but could not.

At last she stepped up to me and said, “Pray, sir, are not you the minister that has been preaching in Matthew Street Chapel tonight?” I verily thought the woman had followed me when she spoke of my preaching, to reprove me for my presumption in attempting to preach. I told her, but so crossly that I could hardly bear myself, that I was the man who had been in the pulpit, and attempted it, but that there had been no preaching. On this the poor woman fell into a flood of tears, and hoped that I would pardon her for taking the liberty to speak to me, for she was not worthy; but she could not help following me to tell me that she had reason to bless God that she had been there, for it had been preaching to her, and such preaching, too, as she had never heard before.

At this my soul was melted within me, and I asked her what it was she had heard that was so sweet to her. She spoke with such sweetness, humility and confidence, that she had received the pardon of all her sins. “For,” continued she, “I have been for months nearly in black despair, and was going this very night to the water to drown myself, being determined to try the worst of it, for I believed, I could never be in a worse hell. As I was going by the chapel they were singing, and it struck my mind to turn in. When the service was concluded I thought it would be dark, and then I could go to the water unperceived. So I went in, and, blessed be the Lord, the text and all that you said came into my heart, and God told me He had loved me with an everlasting love, and that my sins, though many, were all forgiven; and many more precious things which quite overcame me with wonder and adoration to the God of all my mercies.”

My heart was too full to talk much with the poor woman, for I felt my very soul so melted down at the dear feet of a precious Jesus for giving testimony to the word of His grace through such a worthless pipe, that I was not for going home now, but was willing to be anything or nothing that God might be glorified.

**Providential trials**

I shall now proceed to relate a few providential trials and deliverances which have happened to me since I was called to the work of the ministry, which have driven me to such despair at times that I have said, “My soul chooseth strangling and death rather than life.”

Bury was the first place where I began to preach in the regular way; and, after a few months, the people increased, if I recollect rightly, to about thirty. We then agreed to take a larger room in a street called, I think, King Street. There we met for some time, still continuing to increase a little. And then they engaged to give me four shillings per week for twelve months. We had at that time six children under twelve years of age, and being nothing but a weaver, I was sometimes driven into such straits and trials that I verily believed my end would be the poor-house; indeed, I could not see how it could be possible for us to escape it.

**Bodily needs supplied**

One morning, I well recollect, I had been up very early, trying to get my work finished as soon as I could, for there was not one morsel of food until I had carried it home. Between eleven and twelve o'clock I had to send a girl to fetch me some yarn from the master's to finish with. My wife, having a child at the breast, burst out into tears, and said, “O dear, I am so faint and weak that I cannot live, for if you cannot get the piece in before dinner, it will be nearly night before we can have anything.” I tried to cheer her up all that I could, and told her we could not tell but that the Lord might send us a good dinner by some means or other; but she said she knew there would be no such thing. The girl comes by and by with the yarn to finish my work, and brings a bag in her hand, saying, “I found this bag in the middle of the road; I thought it belonged to a man who was driving a cart, and I called out to him, and told him that he had lost a bag; but he said he had not. I said it was not mine, for I had found it in the road; and I would have given it him, but he said I must take it home, for he would not have it.” So I opened the bag, and the first thing I brought out was a large piece of bread and of meat, next a large piece of cheese, and a very good pudding. O how I stood wondering and adoring, blessing and praising the kind hand of my covenant God for supplying my needs in such a way! O how sweet were those words, “The cattle upon a thousand hills are Mine; the earth is Mine; and all the gold and silver are Mine.”

**Monetary gifts – and cakes for the children**

A little time after this I was invited to preach one Lord's day at a little place in Cheshire, of which I forget the name, but which was about twelve or thirteen miles from home. I left home on the Saturday in a most miserable state of mind, for not one penny of money or one six-pennyworth of provisions did I leave in the house. There was nothing but gloominess, poverty and darkness, both within and without. My wife declared that she believed I should go on preaching until they were all starved to death. But go I must; and off I set with an aching heart indeed; and a most trying, miserable journey I had, for the devil set on me hard without mercy, and brought before me all my debts and miseries, and the impossibility of my ever being able to get through them with honesty. And such unbelief and darkness, confusion and misery, laid fast hold of me, and such weakness of body for want of something to eat, that I feared I should never reach the end of my journey. But the dear Lord broke into my soul with such sweetness, that I could have died for Him. He assured me that He would be with me, and would surely go before me. "Fear not," said He, "for I am with thee; be not dismayed, for I am thy God." O this was enough I for I knew that it would be all right if He were with me.

I arrived safe at my journey's end, and a sweet night I had upon my bed in wondering, praising and blessing my God for His lovingkindness in bringing me, a poor worm, thus far. I could indeed say from my heart feelingly, "Having therefore obtained help of God, I continue unto this day." I awoke in the morning (being Lord's day) in a very sweet frame, and at the time went to the place of meeting, which was a house that a few people met in for public worship. There were but few there, and a very poor people in general, but the Lord was there with His blessing. A comfortable day it was, and I do think the best wine was saved to the last, for the poor souls seemed to be all alive, and having so freely received of spiritual things, they thought it a light thing to communicate carnal things. Some gave me sixpence, some a shilling, some one thing and some another, until I was quite astonished.

In the morning (Monday) a young woman at the house where I slept, gave me half-a-guinea, and said that she had made up her mind to do so, and that I must have it. And I was to call at two or three places on my way home, and there the poor things had collected their shillings and sixpences together, and a handkerchief full of cakes to carry home to the children. I declared that I would go home, for I had robbed them

enough. When I got on my way, I stopped to count up the money which the Lord had provided, and, as nearly as I can recollect, I had thirty-four shillings in all, and a bundle of cakes. So on I went home full of joy, thanksgiving and praise to the God of all my supplies, who had given such testimony to the word Of His grace, and had so wonderfully supplied my wants and necessities for the body.

### **A pressing creditor**

But I soon found again that the day of adversity was set over against the day of prosperity, and that there is sure to be night after the day, for I soon had fresh exercises. One Saturday I was all confusion, for I could not get a text, and I had to supply on the Lord's day for Mr. Gadsby. O, thinks I, what shall I do, and where can I go? And such abominations were working in my heart all day that I began to fear whether I was a partaker of grace or not. To finish up my misery, late on Saturday night I received a note from a man to whom I had owed for some time two pounds ten shillings, that if I did not come and pay it on the Monday following, he would not wait any longer, and that it would be in vain for me to come and beg for any longer time.

O how my poor soul and body shook and trembled! Now, thinks I, God is bringing me to a complete end; now will the mouths of the uncircumcised be opened. How these words came into my soul like a thunderbolt, "The thing that I greatly feared is come upon me." O what a tremendous night I had to pass through, sometimes almost in despair. But before morning the Lord gave me a hope that He would appear, and how sweet were these words: "Call upon Me in the day of trouble; I will deliver thee, and thou shalt glorify Me" (Ps. 1. 15).

Indeed, I had nowhere else to look but unto Him who had the hearts of all in His hands. I left home on the Lord's day morning for Manchester, which was about five miles; and I believe if ever I did pray in all my life, I prayed those five miles that God would appear for me that day, both as a God of providence and of grace. When I began to preach the two pounds ten shillings were all taken away, and I do believe that the Lord was with me. But when I had done preaching the devil came again with all his accusations that I should bring a reproach upon the cause of God. He reminded me what I had to pay tomorrow, and that I had nothing towards it. I could not answer him a word, but shook like a leaf, and wished I had never come. O how I sighed and groaned in my very soul!



As I was going out of the chapel, an old lady put out her hand to shake hands and left half-a-guinea in my hand. O what a surprise was this to me! O, thinks I, who can tell but God may put it into the hearts of whom He will to give me the rest. O how my poor soul poured itself out to Him that He would go before me and provide what He knew I was in need of, that I might have another testimony that He was with me, that He was my God, and that I, a poor worm, was His servant. I had such an opening up to Him, and such a prevailing with Him in prayer, that I believed He heard and would answer my cry. The time arrived for me to preach in the afternoon, and I felt it good to speak of what I had handled and felt of the good Word of life. But when I had done, my old fears came again, How could the two pounds ten shillings be made up? Into the vestry I went trembling, and found the old lady who had given me the half-guinea in the morning. She shook hands with me and said, "Sir, when I got home my heart smote me, as David's heart smote him." At this I trembled greatly. Surely, thinks I, she is come for the half-guinea back again. What shall I do? But instead of this the old lady said, "My heart smote me because I did not give you more; but now I have brought my pocket-book with me, and I will give you two pounds more." At which I burst out into a flood of tears, for I could not help it.

At this the poor old lady was much surprised, and asked me what was the matter. I told her that I had a note sent me on Saturday night from a person to whom I owed two pounds ten shillings, and if I did not come and pay him on Monday, he would put me to trouble. "And now, to see that the Lord has put it into your heart to give me the money and sixpence over, it breaks my soul in love to God as the giver, and to you as the instrument." At this the old lady burst into tears too, and we both wept together for joy. "O," said she, "it is better to give than to receive." But I could not think it was, for I was so full of the goodness, mercy, kindness, faithfulness and glory of God to such a poor worthless worm, that I was quite full and abounded.

I think I shall never forget the poor old lady's feelings when she emptied all her money out of her pocket-book (which appeared to be about ten or twelve pound notes) upon the table, and with such earnestness, and tears running down her cheeks declared, "It is all yours; you shall have it all." "O no," cried I, "God forbid that I should do this thing. He has put it into your heart to give me the debt, and sixpence over, and I dare not take one penny more, and will not. It is not mine. What God moved you to give me is mine, but the rest is yours." She

blessed me and I blessed her, so that there was nothing but blessing between us. The friends gave me a pound for supplying on the Lord's day, so that I went home with money to pay my debt and money for my family to live upon. O the goodness and mercy of a covenant God in delivering His poor, tried children in such times of great distress, when there is no human eye to pity nor arm to help.

### **A crust of bread made a blessing**

I went on pretty comfortably for a few weeks, enjoying the presence of God; and all is well when this is the case. It was a rare thing indeed for me to be out of temporal difficulties, having a large family, and being nothing but a poor weaver, and getting but four shillings per week for my regular preaching at Bury.

One evening I had been out preaching about seven miles from home, and when I was returning, it being late before I reached home, O what a keen feeling of hunger came upon me before I got there. And what was my greatest distress, I knew there was nothing to eat when I got home. O the dreadful feelings and hard thoughts which rose up in my mind against God, I dare neither speak nor write them. O the dreadful rebellion I felt against His dealing so hardly with me, that when I was hungry I could not have even bread and water! "Ah," cried the old adversary, "where are the fine promises now that you have so often boasted of?"

It was rather late in the evening when I reached home, for my wife and children were all in bed and fast asleep, for which I was thankful. I found my poor body very weak, and I took the candle and went to search if I could find an old crust of bread. After some little searching I found an old crust which had been laid aside a long time, until it was quite hard and not fit for food. I then got a cup of water, and if ever my soul went out to God in prayer it was then, that He would bless it to the satisfying of my hungry appetite. And how sweet it came into my mind that Jesus turned water into wine at the marriage feast. And I believed in my heart that He was the same yesterday, today, and for ever. I looked up to Him just like a child, and begged of Him that He would bless this morsel of bread and water, that I might prove that He was the Lord my God. O how precious were those words to my soul, "Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God."

I took the dry crust, but it was so softened and enriched with the

love and mercy of God that the manna never tasted more sweet to the Israelites than the old crust did to my taste. I blessed and thanked God, and took the water, and it was richer to my taste than the richest wine I have ever drunk since. I never felt my body more refreshed, nor my appetite more satisfied.

### **Larger meeting place required**

As we had been increasing in the second room that we met in at Bury, we were encouraged after a time to take a third room, still larger, if I remember rightly, in a place called Butcher Lane. Here we for a time increased still more. But a few of the church found much fault with me for leaving them so often on a Lord's day; and one of the deacons told me that I had never been anything but a burden to them, and that he wondered how I could have a good conscience in taking four shillings a week from such a few poor people. O how this cut up my poor soul! for at the same time I was over head and ears in debt, and sometimes when I left home I had not half enough for breakfast from week to week. When unbelief and carnal reason were uppermost I was almost at my wits' end to know what to do. I felt this a hard blow from a deacon, who professed by his office to be my right-hand man.

The blow was so heavy that I could not stand it, and I told him that, as that was the case, I would not be a burden to them any longer. We had several meetings, but we could not be reconciled. So I gave it up, and the place was kept on for some time with supplies, but was soon given up.

I believe that I shall ever remember with a grateful heart dear Mr. Gadsby, and the dear church of which I composed an unworthy part, for their unbounded kindness towards me whenever they knew that I was set fast and could not move on. Their language was, with a smile, "John has got fast again: come, we must give him another lift." And cheerfully they communicated again and again. I never found them slack or tired; but have wondered at them hundreds of times how it was they were not tired of such a troublesome being as I was to them for years. They did indeed act like brethren in my distresses.

### **Preaches at a fresh chapel**

About this time I was invited to go and preach at Pool Moor, in Yorkshire, [We think this is probably Pole Moor - Ed.] and I believe the Lord went with me, and blessed the word to many of them. My very soul fell in love with the people and the chapel, though it stood almost in the

midst of a large common. Indeed, I was so taken up with the people and the place that I thought I must die if the Lord would not grant me the situation. I thought that it was just the very spot that God had designed for me, and believed it was the case, because my heart was so knit to it.

At that time the people were without a pastor, and many of them were very fond of me. “O,” said I, “it will come to pass in the Lord’s own time;” for I was sure that there was nothing impossible with Him, seeing that He had so many times answered my prayers, and had never failed me in all my straits, but had ever been my prayer-hearing and prayer-answering God. So I set to work with all my might to pray for the place. For, thinks I, the Lord says, “Whatsoever ye shall ask in My Name it shall be given.” I could bring in plenty of Scriptures if I could but persuade the Lord to perform it in the way that I wanted. And I thought there was no other way but to keep on crying for it night and day; for, thinks I, “The kingdom of heaven suffereth violence, and the violent take it by force.” I went several times to supply at this chapel, and every time I went I was more and more in love with the situation. O, thinks I, it is just the very spot for my large family. So again I cried and prayed from week to week; and, to my views at that time, I had such assurances from the Word of God and my own feelings, that I believed at times I was as sure to have it as that there was a God.

They had, if I recollect right, Mr. Webster, from Liverpool, to supply a few times, and most of the people were very much attached to him; and, as the time drew on, as I understood that the church intended to give him a call, and some of them expected that it would be done before I came again, they did not, therefore, expect that I should be needed any more after my next journey. But I did not feel much sunk down at this, for I thought that they did not know how many cries and tears I had put up to God.

The next Lord’s day for my supply was, I think, three weeks from this time, and some of the people hoped it would be my last. And, O, what a three weeks’ cry I had! It was almost night and day. I shall never forget, at times, when the Saturday came for me to go, what a journey I had of about twenty-two miles. I verily believed, according to my feelings, if it were settled for Mr. Webster to be their pastor that it would kill me.

I arrived in the evening at the house of one of the members, about a mile short of my lodging, and as soon as I got in, I said, “Well, by this time, I suppose you are settled with a minister, so that I shall not need

to toil over any more.” “Why,” answers the man, “it was settled for Mr. Webster to come; some of us indeed did not wish it, but numbers overpowered us, and we must submit.” O, I thought I must have dropped down in the house! I got my hat, and told the man that I must go. He tried hard to keep me in the house to sit and talk with him; but O no! for if I had not gone out I must have roared out in the house.

So out I went, and got into a little valley between two hills, where I believed no soul could hear me, and there I roared out like a raging bear bereaved of her whelps: nay, I had hard work to keep from tearing the very hair from my head. I roared and wept while I had power to weep. Then the devil set on with all his hellish spleen, and worked up such infidelity in my heart that I never can express a thousandth part of it. “Now,” says he, “what do you think of the Bible? Do you think it is true? Have you not prayed for this place hundreds of times, and have not floods of tears flowed from your eyes for it? And does not this Bible say, He that soweth in tears shall reap in joy? But you have sowed in tears and reap in sorrow. And does not the Bible tell you that whatsoever you asked it should be given you? But you have asked, and you believed that you should have the place, and have been denied. There is no God, and the Bible is nothing but priestcraft, and all your preaching and religion is nothing but an empty farce.”

I roared out again, “O that I could but die! O that I could but sink out of existence!” And such hatred and such awful blasphemies rose up in my heart against God that I felt that, if it were possible, I could have pulled Him from His throne and stamped Him under my feet. O how I struggled till the sweat ran down my wretched face to keep my mouth from uttering what boiled up in my heart!

At last I got to my lodging, but could not sit down, for I was in such a state that I could hardly speak, and my face was foul with weeping. I desired the mistress to give me a candle, and said I would go to bed, for I was very bad. She tried to persuade me all she could that I would let her make something for me that would do me good, but I told her that I wanted nothing but rest; so I took the candle and into my bedroom I went. And the tossings to and fro! sometimes in bed and sometimes walking the room till about four or five o’clock in the morning, till I verily thought that my natural senses were going, and felt quite confident that a mad-house would be my place. But as to pray, to hope, or ever think it possible for me to preach again, I could as soon blot out the sun with my hand as do any of them.

But I shall never forget the sound of those words that dropped like rain, and did indeed distil like the dew: “What I do thou knowest not now; but thou shalt know hereafter” (John 13. 7). O the softness these words produced in my heart in a moment, and I cried out, “It is the voice of my Beloved.” I went down on my knees, and felt just like a child. “Lord,” I said, how is it, and why is it, that my prayers are not answered? O, dear Lord, do show me, Thy poor, ignorant, sinful and helpless child: do, my dear Jesus, show me.”

And O with what light, life, and power did He speak these words into my heart that settled the thing in a moment, and showed me the why and the how: “Ye ask, and receive not, because ye ask amiss, that ye may consume it upon your lusts ” (James 4. 3). O how clearly did I see it was all my own fleshly planning and contriving, and that it was to gratify my own fleshly pleasure. O how sweetly could I give it all up into the hands of my covenant God! Never did I go and preach a sermon in my life with more peace and love than my last in Pool Moor Chapel. How I could pray that if it were the Lord’s will He would bless them in their choice of a minister.

*TO BE CONTINUED*

## SECOND BLUE PLAQUE FOR WILLIAM GADSBY

We reported in our last magazine that a blue plaque heritage sign had been erected at Hinckley to mark the spot of Gadsby’s first home.



*With thanks to the  
Leicester Mercury*

Another blue plaque has been erected to mark the spot of the old chapel in the High Street at Desford where Gadsby preached, often in turns with Hinckley. The chapel was built in 1800 at a cost of just over £114. All that remains is the graveyard which has been planted out by volunteers,

and is now a sitting out place for people to enjoy. A wildflower patch has been sown which looks beautiful in the summer season.



## A YOUNG EARTH

In the last *Perception* we referred to Mr. Edwin Poots, the new leader (since resigned) of the DUP, Northern Ireland, who was ridiculed and described as a bigot simply for believing in creation, and in particular for his views on a ‘young earth.’

Scientists – somewhat glibly – tell us of the millions of years it has taken for geological and geographical changes to happen on the earth. However, there is evidence that it does not necessarily take long for very significant changes to come about.

In the year 1287, a terrible storm hit the southern coast of England which changed the landscape for ever. Whole areas of the coastline were redrawn with a large part of the land becoming a sea-less swamp. Much of this area now falls within the High Weald area of outstanding natural beauty in West Kent and East Sussex. We understand that the whole area is sinking at a rate of one foot every one hundred years. If this is so, in 500 years’ time some towns in the area, e.g. Tenterden, will again be on the coastline! At the time Bodiam Castle was built in the 1300's it was possible for boats to sail all the way to and from the sea – in fact, the castle was built to defend against an invasion by the French in the Hundred Years War which began in 1337. The castle today could have no meaningful defensive role.



Coming to more recent times, we were amazed to find changes that had occurred just in our own lifetime. When a boy, our annual family holiday was to Jaywick Sands, near Clacton in Essex. (Jaywick was recently voted the worst place in England – but we thought it was wonderful!) We had a bungalow right on the promenade with a few steps down to the beach. At high tide the beach was covered and we were sometimes impatient for the tide to retreat so that we could play on the sand. Visiting again a year or so ago, we could hardly believe how things had changed. The area of sea and beach in front of the bungalow was now grass, and the sea had literally disappeared. It was hardly recognisable. I had a flashback to my sister standing on a breakwater with a fishing rod. There was now no breakwater, no sea – and certainly

no fish. If this change could happen so quickly, what might happen in just a few centuries?

The Biblical site of the Dead Sea (or salt sea as it is called in the Bible) is receding at an alarming rate. In 1930 the sea had a surface area of over 400 square miles, but its surface area today is only 230 square miles. The sea is the lowest point on the planet, and its level is dropping more than a metre a year. The shoreline has been devastated by the appearance of sinkholes, and it is possible that one day the sea may disappear completely.

Volcanic activity can bring about far-reaching changes in a moment. The story of the most powerful volcanic eruption in recorded history is well known. On August 26th and 27th 1883, a small uninhabited volcanic island called Krakatoa suffered a series of explosions, throwing five cubic miles of rock fifty miles into the air. The explosions were heard 3,000 miles away. Fine dust from the explosion drifted around the earth, causing spectacular sunsets. Of the estimated 36,000 deaths resulting from the eruption, at least 31,000 were caused by the tsunamis created when much of the island fell into the water. The greatest of these waves measured 120 feet high, and washed over nearby islands, stripping away vegetation and carrying people out to sea. Another 4,500 people were scorched to death from the pyroclastic flows (fast-moving fluid bodies of molten gas, ash and rock) that rolled over the sea, stretching as far as forty miles. Little is left today of the island, but the changes did not take a long time to come about – it all happened in one twenty-four hour period. Earthquakes, landslides, volcanic eruptions, and tsunamis, can all bring cataclysmic changes in a few moments.

Erosion is another cause of change over a short period of time. We are all familiar with those pictures of houses teetering on the edge of a cliff, until the day comes when all below gives way and the house is left as a ruin. One resident from the Isle of Sheppey in Kent said the home he has lived in for fifteen years was once 25m from the edge of the cliff. The house is now 4.5m from the edge, and it is clear the resident will not be living there much longer.

Last year, the home of another family living in Eastchurch, Kent, fell down the cliff at about three o'clock in the morning, and they had to leave with just the clothes on their backs. The shell-shocked mother-of-five returned later to the place she used to call home, which had fallen 70 feet off the cliff. She was not insured because the home was deemed too close to the cliff face. The mother bought the

timber-framed two-bedroom property, complete with swimming pool, in August 2018, with the dream of raising her young family in a lovely home overlooking the sea. She says she has now ‘lost everything,’ adding, ‘We are just grateful that we all escaped without harm.’

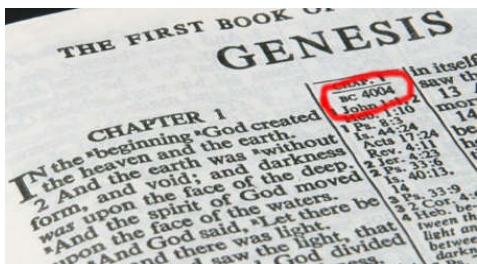
We do not need to be ashamed to hold *Young Earth* views. We firmly reject the affirmation in the Humanist Manifesto that the universe is ‘self existing and not created.’ Nor can we accept the views of those who regard God as the Creator but that He did so by using evolutionary processes. Those who hold such views are usually called ‘Theistic evolutionists’ – young people, don’t be one of those!

Many good men and scholars have attempted to put a date on the creation of the world. Most famous was Bishop Ussher who, in his 17th century work *Annales Veteris Testamenti* (Annals of the Old Testament) calculated that the earth was created in 4004 BC. For many years this date was printed over the top of Authorised Versions of the Bible, although not anymore. The Bishop refined his calculation stating that the act of creation took place at 6pm on October 23rd! This was remarkably close to the Venerable Bede’s estimate of 3952 BC and Sir Isaac Newton’s 4000 BC. One of



*Bishop James Ussher*

the youngest recorded dates of creation was calculated by a Jewish Rabbi named Yom-Tov Lipmann Heller who was born in 1579. Heller calculated that the creation of the world took place in 3616 BC. The 13th century Spanish king, Alfonso X, produced a date of 6984 BC. The Reformers, including John Calvin and Martin Luther, accepted a literal reading of the Bible as translated, believing in an ordinary twenty-four hour day, and maintained a



younger-Earth view. Even William Shakespeare, for what it is worth,

in his play *As You Like It*, has Rosalind saying: “The poor world is almost 6,000 years old.”

Some modern Young Earth creationists believe that there are significant gaps in the genealogies in chapters 5 and 11 of the Book of Genesis, but even so their estimates range between 11,000 and 20,000 BC. No-one will ever be able satisfactorily to calculate a reliable date. All we can say is that every one of these men was far removed from the millions of years talked of by modern-day evolutionists.

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A true belief in a creating God can only be held through faith. “Through faith we understand that the worlds were framed by the word of God, so that things which are seen were not made of things which do appear” (Heb. 11.3). May God grant us the courage in the face of a mocking, scornful world to state boldly that we believe the world, and everything in it, was made by God exactly as told to us in Genesis chapter 1.

David in Psalm 8 was overwhelmed with a sense of the *excellency* of God’s work - and he questions how so great a God, who with a word created the universe, can take notice of, and be mindful of, such insignificant creatures as man upon the earth. “When I consider Thy heavens, the work of Thy fingers, the moon and the stars, which Thou hast ordained; What is man, that Thou art mindful of him? and the son of man, that Thou visitest him?”

May David’s admiring spirit be our spirit. O that God in His mercy might be mindful even of us, though we are nothing. How great must our God be who brought into being a universe so immense that it defies our comprehension. “Yet one strange work exceeds them all!” says Joseph Hart. May we not be ignorant of that one *strange* work – that work in our souls, the work of redemption.

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## UNUSUAL BIBLES (7)

*The Goblin Bible.* We are all familiar with the goblins found in legend and children’s stories. It may come as a surprise that the first use of the word in English was found in Wycliffe’s Bible of 1384 where his translation of Psalm 91. 5 reads: “Thou schalt not drede of an arrow flynge in the dai, ne of a gobelyn goinge in derknessis.” The word is thought to come from the Latin *gobelinus*.

## THE VENERATION OF RELICS

John Calvin, that key figure in the Protestant Reformation, was very much against the use of relics in the church. In 1543 he published his *Treatise on Relics* in which he argued that the veneration of relics had become idolatry. He pointed out there was no mention of the keeping of the relics of Christ or anyone else in the earliest church writings.



One famous relic is the Crown of Thorns, saved by the Paris Fire Brigade during the disastrous Notre-Dame Cathedral fire of April 15, 2019. This relic can be seen only on the first Friday of every month, when it is brought out for a special veneration mass, as well as each Friday during Lent. From texts dating back to 530AD, it is claimed that the crown was on show in the Basilica of Mount Zion situated on a hill in Jerusalem just outside the walls of the Old City. It appears to be a twisted circlet of rushes.

Another famous relic is found in the church of Santa Maria Novella at Florence. It is part of the title placed by Pilate over the cross of Jesus, which caused such offence to the chief priests of the Jews. It is displayed in a small gold and silver case for all to view.



It is sad that such veneration is paid to material objects from the past. If what was on display was *truly* the crown of thorns, of course we would gaze at it with wonder and astonishment. But it is not the crown of thorns we must adore – it is the precious head it once covered that is so precious. It is not the title of the cross, or even the cross itself – it is that precious broken body that hung upon it that is worthy of our veneration. As John Bunyan sang:

Blest Cross! blest Sepulchre! blest rather be  
The Man that there was put to shame for me.

## WILLIAM DEVONSHIRE

Jesus Revealed to a Babe  
DIED AT CLIFTON, BEDFORDSHIRE  
AGED 11 YEARS, 7 MONTHS, AND 17 DAYS

*“Out of the mouth of babes and sucklings hast Thou ordained strength.”*



If you have ever been to Clifton Strict Baptist chapel (where the Gospel Standard Society annual meetings are held), on entering the chapel grounds, many of you will have noticed on the left hand side a square gravestone to the memory of William Devonshire, an eleven-year-old boy who passed away in the year 1858. This was during the pastorate of Mr. Septimus Sears, who preached the gospel at Clifton for 35 years. After William's death, Mr. Sears produced a booklet in his memory, from which these details are taken.

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### May 29th, 1858.

A little boy, named William Devonshire, sent to say he wanted to see me.

When I arrived, I found an emaciated little fellow, looking full of anxiety. I began to inquire about the nature of his disease, and soon discovered he was in the last stage of consumption.

While making these inquiries, his father said, “What he wants is for you to talk to him about his soul.”



Upon speaking to him, he said, “I am so frightened I shall go to the bad place; what shall I do? All I have done wrong so troubles me. I have prayed to God to save me, but I am so afraid.”

I asked him if I should pray to Jesus to save him. He said, “That is what I want.” I prayed, and felt my heart much drawn out on his behalf. I left him with my heart swelling with sympathy for the little sufferer. I discovered afterwards that his first conviction arose from his father quoting to him something I had said in the pulpit about the awful state of those who die in their sins. This made him cry, and resolve “not to be a bad boy again.”

### **May 30th.**

Called in the morning, and found he was asleep. I heard afterwards he cried, upon being told I had been, because his mother did not awake him.

### **May 31st.**

In the morning, found him extremely ill: he could but just whisper, and tell me how distressed he still was. I asked him how long he had been so unhappy. He said he had been “very unhappy for two or three weeks.” I said, “What made you become so distressed?” He answered, “When I found I kept getting worse and thought I should not live, this made me so frightened; I feel I am such a sinner.”

I tried to point out the way of salvation to him, telling him Jesus came into the world to save sinners – that He had suffered instead of all poor sinners who come to Him – that He had promised to cast out none who come to Him – that all are blessed who are brought to trust in Him – that nothing I could do, and nothing he could do, could save him. He appeared to drink in all I said with great eagerness. His mother told me, for two or three weeks he had been very unhappy about his soul; and because he could not kneel, he used sometimes, three or four times in the day, stand up and pray. Afraid he did not pray rightly, he would ask his mother to tell him something to say. When he became unable to stand, he said, “Mother, will it be alright to pray if I sit down?” He was told, God would hear him sitting as well as if he could kneel. Thus did the spirit of grace and supplication manifest itself in the dear child.

I went to see him again in the evening; and pitiable indeed it was to see the anguish of his soul: he did indeed feel himself a lost sinner. “O! dear; O! dear; what can I do? I am afraid I shall go to the wicked

place!” he exclaimed; “I try to beg all I can. I do not want to trust in my own goodness; I want to trust in Jesus: but, O! I can never go to heaven, if my sins are not forgiven.”

I tried to pray for him, and most touching it was to hear his feeble, yet earnest responses to the cries I put up for him. After I had prayed, he put his two poor skeleton-like hands together, and, with the most suppliant look, cried, “Lord! help me; Lord! save me; O Jesus that died for sinners, save me!” but this effort had completely exhausted him; his head fell back, and I thought his end was come. He revived again, and said, “O! I do want to know my sins are forgiven! How often can you come to me? I love you to come and talk to me about Jesus.”

After I had left him, his anguish was for some hours most heart-rending. To another friend he said, “Only to put your finger in the fire would be dreadful, but what must it be to be in the fire for ever: once in that fire, I shall never come out.” His mother said, she never heard him cry so in her life. He exclaimed, “O! that dreadful place, to be sinking, sinking, sinking for ever. O! what must I do.” Then, putting his little hands together, repeated his cries for mercy, with tears of deep sorrow and earnestness. Again he would cry, “What must I do, if God does not forgive my sins; I am afraid my prayers are not right; tell me what to say?”

### **June 1st.**

Found him lying greatly exhausted. He said, “My sins so trouble me; I want to see a way; I can see no way.” I stayed some time with him, and read to him from *Small Seeds*, the account of William Merton. I thought I perceived some dawn of hope in his mind, from the passages named to him: he seemed to feel some love to Jesus, and showed great love to me; and said, “O! how I love you to come to me;” and discovered such tender gratitude for any little kindness shewn him. He still seemed very earnest to know his sins were forgiven.

Went again in the evening. Found him remarkably revived. He talked in a sweet impressive voice for some time. He said, “I have been thinking of that poor little boy William. You see, Jesus saved him at last; and it has come into my mind, I must keep begging, and very likely Jesus will save me just at last. I must wait His time; I must not be covetous to go before His time.” Speaking to him of the promise, “Him that cometh unto me, I will in no wise cast out,” he said, with sweet simplicity of faith, “You know, Jesus could not tell a story.” And,

shaking his head, he said, “No! no! Jesus could not tell a story! I must wait upon Him; He has been good to me, very good. I would rather die than live; if I live to be ever so old, I must die; and if I live, I shall sin.” Upon being asked if what he was told about Jesus and what He had done made him love Jesus, he paused to think, and said, as if desiring to express the exact truth, “Yes, a little. O! was not He good, to die upon the Cross, that poor sinners might come to Him and be saved? I want poor children to come to Jesus and be saved; I do not want any of them to go to that dreadful place.”

### **June 2nd.**

Still very ill. He said, “It still keeps coming into my mind, I must keep waiting and hoping; His time is the best time.” All through the day, there was a sweet calm upon his countenance. Several of his sayings proved how sensible he was. He said, “I am a great sinner; a very great sinner. I know I cannot save myself. If Jesus does not forgive me through His death, I can never go to heaven. I must wait on Him.”

In the middle of the day I returned, and I quoted to him the following hymn:

Is there a little sinner here  
Who mourns because of sin;  
And sees with grief, and shame, and fear,  
How wicked he has been?

Is there a little aching heart,  
Which does its vileness feel,  
And groans beneath that deadly smart  
Which none but Christ can heal?

Is there a little soul that pants  
To taste redeeming grace,  
And longs to pour out all its wants  
Before the Saviour's face?

He said, “That is just like me: I must still wait and beg.”

### **Evening**

In the evening he was nearly past uttering a word. I asked him if he kept thinking of his soul, and was still hoping and waiting? “Yes,” he said, and nodded his assent. “Do you love Jesus?” I asked. “Yes,” he

said. "Do you want to get better?" He answered, "No."

### **June 3rd.**

This morning very ill; but still has a sweet hope. He said, "I love Jesus; none but Jesus could forgive my sins." He had said, "Mother, if I die, I am sure of going to heaven. I should like to have a gravestone: you can have a suitable verse put upon it."

A poor woman had said she should like to come and see him, but she had nothing to give him. He said, "Tell her I want no money; I want nothing in this world; heaven is all I want. I want Jesus to take me up to heaven." He continually showed great fear of saying more than what was true.

Upon these lines being read, he said they were just what he wanted:

Hear, gracious God! a sinner's cry,  
Who for Thy love doth pant;  
O! give me Christ, or else I die,  
For Christ is all I want.

When asked whether he still felt his sins a heavy load, he said, "No, not since I have hoped Jesus would answer my prayers, and save me."

I saw him again in the evening, and was struck to see what progress he made towards death. Deathly pale and exhausted he looked, but quite peaceful. I asked him if he still hoped. He said "Yes. If I should die to-night, we shall meet in heaven." I said, "Do you feel you love Jesus?" He said, "Yes," with great emphasis. I quoted, "I love them that love me." He seemed pleased, and said, "Jesus could not tell a wicked story. I must wait patiently, and hope He will come and save me."

### **June 4th.**

The dear child sent for me this morning, saying he could talk a little, and wanted to see me. When I reached his bedside, with a countenance shewing the most placid hope and entire patience, he was struggling to free his mouth from discharge from his lungs. I found upon speaking to him, that his hopes had brightened to little short of, if not quite, assurance. He had just been saying to his little brother that he was going to die; Jesus was going to take him to heaven, and he wished he might come too.

He told his little brother never to tell a lie, and never to play with boys that said bad words; always to go to the Sunday School, and take

notice of what the teachers said.

There was a sweet peace, and joy, and love in his manner, that cannot be conveyed on paper. I kneeled by him, and blessed a precious Christ on his behalf, with a sweet persuasion that he was a lamb gathered to the good Shepherd's arms. Upon leaving him, he threw both his arms round my neck, kissed me, and hung to me, saying, "I so love you to come. I think Jesus will soon take me up to heaven. Good bye."

My heart was full, I turned away, feeling that he was one that would shine as a gem in the diadem of Redeeming grace for ever. Soon after this, he said to his grandmother, "Grandmother, if you are a good woman, I shall meet you in heaven;" and asked her if she thought she should go to heaven. Upon her saying she did not know, he said, crying, "Do not fret for me, fret for yourself; do not pray for me, pray for yourself." When his grandmother was gone, he still showed much concern for her soul, and said, "Oh! my poor grandmother."

He said, "Do not ask God to make me better; I want to go to heaven. My mouth is very bad, but I can bear it."

### **One o'clock.**

Have just returned from another visit to the dying child. He is now evidently in the valley of the shadow of death; but fears no evil, for Jesus is with him. I sat by his bedside to hear his dying exhortation, delivered to me a word at a time, in a whisper, from lips the colour, and almost as thin as, parchment, with his temples covered with the cold sweat of death. I wish I could record every word, but will faithfully write all I can remember.

He said to me, "Jesus will soon come and take me up to heaven. I trust in Jesus. He cannot tell a lie. O no! It seems long, but I must wait His time with patience. Sweet the name of Jesus." Looking at me with the most tender affection, he said, "Do you love me?" I answered, while tears almost choked my utterance, "Yes, that I do." He said, "I love you and Mrs. Sears so much." I said, "You love all who love Jesus?" "Yes. When I am gone to heaven pray much to Jesus. We trust in Jesus, don't we? I tell my poor dear mother, if she has not got a halfpenny, or a bit of bread to eat, if she prays to God, and trusts in Him, He'll give her what she needs."

Later he said, "Mother, don't think about to-morrow, God will provide for you; if you have no money to pay people, pray to God – He will give it you. Pray to Jesus that you may go to heaven. I want my

poor brother to come to heaven. Go to Mr. Sear's chapel, and let my brother go to the Sunday School. They will tell him something good. I hope Jesus will soon come and take me to Himself."

Turning to me, he said, "Do come and see my poor mother, and pray for her, that she may come to Jesus." He then threw up his withered arms to embrace me. He held me, and kissed me for some time, saying, "O! you are precious; I love you so much; I love you to pray for me, and talk to me of Jesus." After this, he had a fit of coughing, and appeared nearly gone; but soon sank into a little doze, and I left him for a while.

After I had left him, he awoke, and bade all good bye, and told them they might leave the room, and he was going to Jesus. "Let me go," he said, "let me go," throwing out his little arms and saying, "Let Him have me; let Jesus have me; let Him have me."

### **Late Afternoon.**

Found him much the same. He was in a sleep when I went in. Upon awaking after some severe struggles through phlegm in his throat, he took a little drink, and then in a whisper he made an effort to speak and said, "Mother, don't keep me, let me go to heaven. Jesus, take me to heaven."

Then, looking at me he said, "Our blessed Jesus can't tell a lie, O! love Him, love Him, love Him all you can; He has forgiven me all my sins. O! if poor sinners knew what a precious Jesus He is, they would love Him and they would never forget Him. I trust in Him; I love Him; and I love all who love Jesus. Would Jesus like me to go to Him today, do you think? But I will wait His time. When He takes me to heaven, I shall love Him and praise, and He'll love me in heaven. The name of Jesus, – sweet – sweet!"

### **June 5th.**

I have just been again, and found the dear suffering child still alive; but felt he was too far gone for it to be well to attempt to talk with him. He knew me, and seemed pleased I was with him. I asked him if he was still hoping in Jesus. He answered with a sweet, peaceful look, "Yes."

I said, "I am praying to Jesus to take you." He smiled, and nodded his head. After some time, he said, faintly, "Jesus." I said, "Do you want to ask Jesus to take you?" He said "Yes."

An hour or two later, upon seeing me, he tried to speak. I said, "Do



you want to say you love Jesus?” He said, “Yes.” But this was all he had strength for.

A little before four o’clock a change took place in him. He was evidently going. His mother said, “You think you are going to heaven?” He replied, “I hope so, but I cannot talk, I am so hot.” (His mouth and throat were sadly feverish and parched). He sank back. A lovely brightness beamed in his eyes; and then, as if remembering what had been requested of him, if he felt happy, and felt he was going to heaven when he died, he would lift up his hand, – he raised his little hand, and then dropped it on his chest, and quietly breathed his ransomed soul into the hands of Jesus.

### **Later.**

I have just returned from looking at the beautiful clay, and when I consider what the Lord has done for him in the course of one week, I am constrained to say, “Bless the Lord, O my soul; and all that is within me, bless His holy name. Bless the Lord, O my soul; and forget not all His benefits.”

### **Tuesday, June 8th.**

At half-past six this evening I went to the cottage where the body of William lay, with four of the Sunday school teachers, who were to carry the ransomed remains of the dear child to Clifton Chapel.

Before the lid was put on the coffin, as we stood and gazed at the tenantless tabernacle, I remarked to his mother that one of his requests was that I should come and see you, and pray for you. I said, “Let us now fulfil his request.”

We kneeled about his coffin, and the bed where he breathed his last, and praised God for His mercy to the dear glorified child, and prayed that his fervent desires for the salvation of his friends might be granted. We soon formed a procession, and the child was carried to the Chapel. A goodly number of children and friends gathered together. The little coffin was placed in the Chapel; I ascended the pulpit, and announced the following hymn I had written for the occasion, which was sung to the tune ‘Mariners’:

Here before our face is lying  
Waiting for the quiet grave,  
One, though young, who felt in dying  
Jesus’ mighty power to save.

God's own promises he pleaded,  
On them hoped, and felt their power;  
Sought from Christ the peace he needed,  
Found it in the destined hour.

Now from every pain released,  
He with Christ in glory lives;  
Sighs and sorrows ever ceased,  
Songs of praise to grace he gives.

When we cross the bridgeless river,  
Let Thine arm conduct us o'er;  
As both grace and glory's Giver,  
We would praise Thee evermore.

The following words were then read for a text:

“And all Israel shall mourn for him, and bury him; for he only of Jeroboam shall come to the grave; because in him there is found some good thing toward the Lord God of Israel in the house of Jeroboam” (I Kings 14. 13).

In my discourse I observed that one thing in this text, through grace, applied to the dear child whose body was before us: *there was found some good thing in him toward the Lord God of Israel*. He implanted in this dear child a good understanding, which many of his sayings prove. The Lord implanted in him true repentance. He was made a mourner first under sin's burden. Sweet it was to see the smile of gladness that lighted up his suffering face when it was observed to him that he was now going to where there is no sorrow, no pain, and no sickness, and, above all, where there is no sin. He had a praying spirit given him. Several present had witnessed his fervent cries to God. He had precious faith given him, faith in the efficacy of Christ's death, which made him so fervently seek to be forgiven through what Jesus had done. “I trust in Jesus,” he said with his dying lips. “He has forgiven me all my sins.” And doubtless now his heart's desire is granted: “Heaven is all I want.”

The coffin was taken to the grave; and as it stood upon the bearers before being lowered, I addressed a few words to the children present. “My dear children,” said I, “there is a little boy lies in this coffin, a little older than some of you, but not nearly so old as many others. What if

it were you lying here, if you died without being born again, without a new heart to hate sin and love Jesus? Your souls would be where he was once so afraid he should be, sinking, sinking, sinking, for ever, in the bottomless pit of fire.

“He was a very little boy; but God loved him, and gave him His Holy Spirit to teach him. He was led to Jesus, and knew before he died he should go to heaven. And now, though his body is to be put down into the ground, his soul is up high above the skies. He has now a golden harp and a golden crown; and he is singing, among the dear people of God, sweet songs of praise to Jesus.

“At that day, when the trumpet sounds to call the people of God to heaven, he will rise up from this grave holy and happy, like Jesus, and love God for ever and ever. Short as was his time in this world, he had lived long enough to be saved by grace. O! that you may not die, if it is God’s will, until you know Jesus.”

Many little eyes filled with tears in listening to these remarks. The following hymn, written for the occasion, was read, and sung to the tune “Carmarthan New” [tune 116 in *The Union Tune Book*]:

Now to the silent tomb,  
In hope of endless day,  
We’ll let his body down,  
And fervently would pray:  
Lord! bless the children standing round,  
And fit them for the Trumpet’s sound.

The little coffin was then lowered. All seemed affected; and the hymn was continued:

His body here shall rest,  
Till that blest morning comes,  
When all the sleeping bless’d  
Shall leave their earthly tombs:  
O! how shall then his joys abound,  
To hear the welcome trumpet sound.

I then said:

A voice, a solemn voice, seems to sound from this tomb – the voice of him whose body is to moulder here – the echo of his death-bed sayings, in sorrow and in joy. And, O! may those sentences have a voice to my hearers, and reach their hearts by the mighty Spirit of God.

*‘O! to be in that dreadful place for ever.’* And there, sinners, if you die in your sins, you will be for ever.

*‘I can never go to heaven, if I am not forgiven through what Jesus has done.’* No, sinners! there is salvation in no other; the name of Jesus is the only name given under heaven, and amongst men, whereby we can be saved.

*‘O! if poor sinners knew what a precious Jesus He is, they would love Him, and never forget Him.’* This knowledge is a free gift from heaven. O that it may be yours!

After offering prayer, the numbers round looked by turns into the grave, while many a tear fell, and many showed their utterance was choked by emotion. O that some lasting, gracious effect might follow.

The following Lord’s day afternoon, a very crowded congregation assembled at the Chapel: very many were unable to get in. [The chapel seats 700.] I took for a text, 2 Kings 4. 22: “Is it well with the child? And she answered, It is well.”

In conclusion the following hymn, composed for the occasion, was given out, and the four verses were sung, of which this is the first:

’Tis well with the child we may cheerfully sing,  
He lived till he felt his sin’s load;  
His soul and his load at the Cross he could fling,  
When helped by the Spirit of God  
He cast away wholly his own fig-leaf vest,  
And looked to the Saviour, who smiled,  
And in His own garment the little one dressed;  
And thus it was well with the child.

At the close of the service, I mentioned the dear child’s request about a gravestone, and read an epitaph, which I proposed as suitable for an inscription, on a neat square monument, placed over his grave.

Some little children stood at the doors with plates, to receive donations for the gravestone. A liberal collection was made; and we trust this little monument in the front of Clifton Chapel may stand for many years to come, preaching the great truths of sin and salvation.

The following is the inscription on the gravestone:

THIS STONE WAS ERECTED BY  
 The Church and Congregation of this Chapel,  
 To mark the resting-place of the ransomed dust of  
 WILLIAM DEVONSHIRE,  
 who slept in Jesus, June 5th, 1858,  
 Aged 11 years, 7 months and 17 days;  
 Who, though young in years, was made  
 A MONUMENT OF RICH GRACE,  
 He was convinced of sin; stripped of his own righteousness: led  
 to the Lord Jesus; and died in peace, through faith in the Lamb of God.



Reader! You too must die  
 Have you been taught of God  
 To Jesus' cross to fly  
 And rest upon His blood?  
 Scorn not this question; pause, and think  
 You stand on vast forever's brink!

A world of woe or bliss;  
 The dreadful second death,  
 Or heaven's immortal peace,  
 Awaits your parting breath:  
 Are you in Christ? where do you stand?  
 Your dying day is just at hand!

**Dear Reader! how stand *you* for eternity?**

## **“BEFORE THEY CALL, I WILL ANSWER”**

### **God’s faithfulness in a time of need**

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*Miss Annie Soper*

Annie Soper was certain God had called her to serve Him in Peru in the 1920's. Health issues resulted in rejection by the mission boards. Instead, she bravely ventured alone to Lima and worked as a lone Protestant nurse in a Catholic hospital. She lovingly cared for her patients, by which she desired to show the love of Christ. For her testimony, Annie was shunned, resented, and eventually poisoned by someone on the hospital staff.

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The number of new believers in Moyobamba (a city in northern Peru, western South America) was increasing. The little mission room in which the meetings were held was too small to hold many more. A larger place must be procured, and a gift from friends at home about that time made the purchase of a house possible. It was quite a small house, but by knocking two or three rooms into one it was converted into a hall large enough to hold about 70 people. Soon the new hall, complete with forms, table, and three hanging lamps, was open for worship.

Great preparations had been made for the opening ceremony, and when the time came the hall was full. There was the usual hymn singing, Bible reading and prayer, followed by a sermon, the subject of which was, “The necessity of a personal knowledge of Christ.”

After the service, it suddenly dawned on the missionaries that they had left themselves with nothing to pay the workmen’s wages due in two days’ time. To be unable to pay the workmen would have been serious indeed, and they had no knowledge of where a sufficiently large sum could come from in so short a time. It was a night spent in earnest prayer, for rarely before had they been in such a predicament.

But it was one of those occasions when the Father’s foreknowledge and forethought were particularly evident. On Saturday morning the



postman came bringing them six letters. The first one they opened contained a cheque. So did the second. So did each of those six letters, some of which had been posted weeks before. “Before they call, I will answer,” the eternal Father had proclaimed.

The workmen were paid on time.

One of the missionaries said, “Words fail to tell the many blessings with which our life is filled, although, at the same time, there are many periods of darkness.”

From *Dawn Beyond the Andes*, by Phyllis Thompson

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## WILLIAM COLGATE



The name Colgate is today associated with one product sold all over the world - *toothpaste*.

William Colgate was born in Hollingbourne, Kent, England in 1783, moving to a farm near Shoreham when he was six years old. In 1798 he emigrated with his family to the USA.

William became interested in soap making and at the age of 19 he started his own business with his aunt's financial help. Initially the business was a failure, but he was encouraged by a friend to try again. One day, reading his Bible, he came across the passage in Genesis 28. 20-22: “And Jacob vowed a vow, saying, If God will be with me, and will keep me in this way that I go, and will give me bread to eat, and raiment to put on, So that I come again to my father's house in peace; then shall the Lord be my God: And this stone, which I have set for a pillar, shall be God's house: *and of all that Thou shalt give me I will surely give the tenth unto Thee.*”

This became William's prayer, and his desire was to honour God and give him first place in all his endeavours. He resolved that he would give one tenth of any money he made to God. After starting a new venture he gave God the tenth from the very first sale he made as he had covenanted. That was the beginning of a business enterprise, William Colgate and Company, whose products have conquered the world's market, branching out from soap to other products in a short time.

As God prospered him, he began to give more to God. From ten per cent, his giving gradually changed to twenty per cent, then thirty per

cent – the more he gave, the more he earned!

Eventually William was appointed a deacon at the Baptist church. William was a peacemaker, and had a remarkable gift for reconciling opposing factions, often bringing harmony where there was discord. His Pastor (the Rev. George Hatt), related that if anything occurred to disturb the harmony of the church, he would rise with a pleasant smile and say, “Brethren, let us remember we are in His presence who taught us to love one another.”

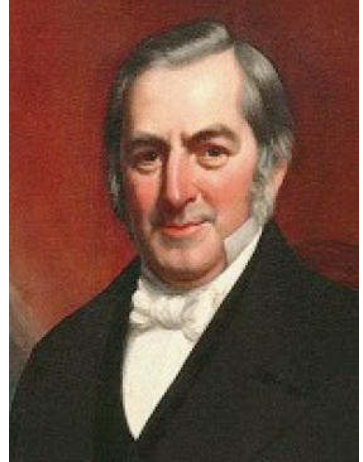
One day, a woman who had been the mistress of a well-known public figure became ashamed of the life she had been leading. She professed faith in Christ and left her old life behind. She applied to become a member of the church but there was reluctance on the part of some of the members to accept her without a period of probation. They wanted to be sure she really had changed. This caused a rift with those who felt she should be accepted unconditionally. It was decided to put the matter to a vote but before it went ahead, William put the doubters firmly in their place by saying: “I think, brethren, we have been a little careless, and hereafter perhaps it would be wise for us to be more specific in our prayers. We have been praying to God for the conversion of sinners. But we have not told Him what kind of sinners we desired to save. He has saved, as we hope, this sinful woman and we don’t know what to do – whether to receive her or not. Perhaps if we should had been a little more careful to tell the Lord just what kind of sinners to convert, we may not have to be troubled.”

His good humour won the day. His well-chosen words removed all opposition and the woman was unanimously received. She became one of the most dedicated and respected members of the church.

A visitor said of him: “My earliest recollection of Deacon Colgate is connected with the Baptist Tabernacle in Mulberry Street. I observed on entering that two men were acting as ushers. One was Deacon Colgate. I can never forget the warm, genial greeting received from him, nor probably would any stranger forget it. Dignity and kindness were so perfectly blended in the whole expression of the man, and the welcome was so thoroughly hearty that you were inevitably won and at once made at home.” William’s warmth also shone through in his lessons as a Bible class teacher. Years later many of his pupils recalled with affection how he put his points across with great clarity but it was the warm, relaxed manner in which he did so that made the deepest impression on them.

Throughout his life William's church commitments always took priority over his business activities. He would decline social and business invitations if they clashed with the prayer meeting or any other any meeting of the church.

By 1847 demand for Colgate soap was so high that a more effective means of production became a matter of urgency. A soap-making kettle with a 43,000-pound capacity was felt to be the answer. A kettle of this size was unheard of in the industry at that time and the very idea met with ridicule in many quarters. Nevertheless construction went ahead and when finished it was such a curiosity that crowds were drawn to Dutch Street to see 'Colgate's Folly', as it had become known. But the scoffers were proved wrong. In the course of the next two years the kettle proved such a success that it was *too small* to keep up with demand.



*William Colgate*

William Colgate died in New York City in 1857. An account of his death has come down to us:

He often said, "I am ready for God's will; I am ready and willing to die." To his daughter he said, "Do not mourn for me. Why should you? I shall be at rest. Think of it! an eternity with Christ!"

On the Sunday preceding his death, as the first beams of the morning were filtered through the blinds, lighting up the dying chamber, with pleasure he said, "Oh, heavenly light! the work of a pure Creator. Let in the light of heaven. Turn down the gas, the little work of man. Oh, blessed light! Oh, blessed Lord! Oh, blessed Sabbath morning! Oh, blessed Bible! Oh, blessed promises scattered through that Bible! Oh, blessed salvation as brought to us in that Bible!"

Wednesday evening, just before his death, he exclaimed, "Oh, I am so happy! I never felt so happy in my life. I love Jesus so. Oh yes; I have adored Him, but I never loved Him as I do now, with all my heart and soul, might, mind, and strength. Oh, do kneel down and offer thanks for this revelation!"

A few moments after his pastor left him, he opened his eyes for the last time and exclaimed, "My precious Jesus!" and lifting both hands

above his breast, he floated them up little by little, as if following an ascending angel, and then slowly dropped and folded them on his breast. Thus expired, on the 25th of March, 1857, at the age of seventy-four, this loving father, honest merchant, and faithful Christian.

His pastor preached the funeral sermon from the words found in the Acts 13. 36: "For David, after he had served his own generation by the will of God, fell on sleep, and was laid unto his fathers."

The large church could not hold the vast concourse of men and women of all creeds, citizens of all parties, the rich and the poor alike, who gathered on the occasion. Half the gallery was filled by his employees, who offered a tearful tribute to their friend and benefactor.

The remains of William Colgate were borne through the gateway to their last resting-place, followed only by his kindred, while the bell tolled out their deep sorrow.

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## **"I AM THE WAY, THE TRUTH, AND THE LIFE"**

Ann, eight years old, was playing hopscotch with a friend in a street in Glasgow.

She noticed two ladies coming along, and stood aside to let them pass; but they stopped, and one of them, looking at Ann, said, "Can you tell me the way to Hyndland Road?" "Yes, I can," Ann replied. "Just walk along to the corner, turn right and walk straight up. Hyndland Road is right at the top."

"Now, my dear," said the lady, "can you tell me the way to Heaven?" This question astonished Ann. She hung her head, blushed, and looked at her shoes. Yes, of course, she had heard about God, about Heaven. She had learned many psalms and Bible verses, but what should she say?

The lady patted Ann on the shoulder, smiled and said, "I thought every little girl in Bonny Scotland knew that. Have you never heard what Jesus said, 'I am the Way, the Truth, and the Life'?"

After the lady had gone, Ann said to her friend, "I knew that." But do you think she did? More importantly, do *you* know that? This beautiful verse can be found in John 14. 6. Ask God for Jesus' sake to teach you what it means: "I am the Way, the Truth, and the Life."

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## INVERNESS

Inverness - that ancient town on the River Ness. The Ness is one of the shortest rivers in Europe - just seven miles in length until it discharges into Loch Ness. ('Inver' means 'mouth of'.) Loch Ness holds more water than all the other lakes of England, Wales, and Scotland put together. It is 22 miles long, 1½ miles wide, and 889 feet deep. It is said that it could hold the entire population of the world three times over!

Located on Church Street is Dunbar's Hospital, built in 1668. It was named after Provost Alexander Dunbar who endowed it as a hospital for the poor under the supervision of the Old High Kirk. It is said to be built of stone from a fort in the city demolished by Oliver Cromwell.

The hospital has six high-level dormer windows. Above each window is an inscription from Psalm 34 (difficult to see):

- 1 This poor man cried
- 2 And the Lord heard him and saved him out of his tryel
- 3 A little that a righteous man hath is beter than
- 4 The richis of manye wikid men
- 5 Hie that giveth to the poor leneth to the
- 6 Lord and Hie vill paye them seven tymys mor.



The Old High Kirk stands on a small hill known as St. Michael's mount, overlooking the River Ness. As long ago as 1567, Mary Queen of Scots granted the church to the Burgh of Inverness for use as a Town Kirk for all its citizens. In the 7th century, an historian named Adomnan wrote a *Life of St. Columba*. He recorded that on this little hill Columba preached in the year 565, converting to Christianity the Pictish king, King Brude. (*Picts* means *The painted ones*, not because they painted their bodies, but rather they were heavily *tattooed*.)

## SAVED FROM THE PRAIRIE FIRE

A company of travellers was journeying across one of the vast American prairies. It was the time of rest, and the horses, unharnessed, were quietly grazing, while the company was employed in many different ways. One group was eagerly chatting by the side of a waggon, when all at once the guide started to his feet, gazed eagerly over the prairie, and then, turning to the company, shouted, “The prairie is on fire! Harness the horses – quick, for life!”

Rapidly the order was carried out, and the heavy waggons tumbled and tossed across the prairie, the drivers lashing their steaming horses to the utmost speed. Past them flew, with the swiftness of the wind, the wild animals of the wood. Still, despite every effort, the fire gained upon the travellers.

As they looked back in terror, they beheld the fierce flames licking up everything. Trees fell with a startling crash, and the air was fast becoming like the heat of a furnace. All at once, the guide cried out, “Halt!” and springing from his seat, he set fire to the grass in several places immediately in front of them. It quickly crackled and blazed, fanned by the breeze, and, spreading, left behind it a blackened but cleared patch. As soon as the part thus cleared looked large enough to receive the company, the guide shouted, “Stand where the fire has been!” Immediately the party obeyed. Scarcely had they, with their waggons and horses, reached the charred spot, than the prairie fire was upon them; but finding no grass to lay hold of, it parted, burned round them, and passed on, leaving them in safety.

Sinner, are you threatened with the punishment of sin, and the fiery condemnation of God’s holy law? Do you look about you for a hiding-place, and have you failed in your search? The fires are pursuing you, and gain fearfully on your pace, even while you flee with all your might. There is only one spot, sinner – I tell you truly, there is only one spot where safety is found. That spot is Calvary. Have you fled by faith to Christ crucified? Are you seeking God’s mercy? “Stand where the fire has been.” The fire of God’s wrath against the sin of His people burned once on Calvary, when it consumed their Surety. Fear not, therefore, if you are sheltered there. The fire will never touch that place again. If you are there, you are safe.

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## CURRENT MATTERS

### **Humans to live to 130?**

After tracking centenarians from the UK, Canada, Japan and the US, experts from the University of Washington have predicted the possibility of lifespans of 125 years, or even 130, by the end of the century. Enhanced nutrition, clean water and improvements in medicine has in their view increased the likelihood of people living well beyond 122, the current world record. It was God that fixed the lifespan of man as 120 years, reduced later to “threescore years and ten” – 70 years. We know that many people “by reason of strength,” and through the mercy of God, are granted a longer life. The Office of National Statistics states that life expectancy at birth in the UK in 2017 to 2019 was 79.4 years for males and 83.1 years for females. In the 1800's it was round about 40 years, rising by 1950 to 68 years. We can rest safely in the fact that “All my times shall ever be, Ordered by His wise decree” – we shall not die one second earlier or one second later than the life God has decreed.

### **Schools’ daily act of worship**

The Department for Education has reminded schools that the law requires all schools to have a daily act of collective worship. The majority of the acts of worship should be “of a broadly Christian character.” The Minister of State for Schools, Nick Gibb, has said that schools in breach of the requirement will be investigated. The requirement is found in the School Standards and Framework Act 1998.

### **Freedom of speech**

A historic bill introduced in Parliament in May will strengthen the legal duties on higher education providers in England to protect freedom of speech on campuses up and down the country, for students, academics and visiting speakers. The Higher Education (Freedom of Speech) Bill will bring in new measures that will require universities and colleges registered with the Office for Students to defend free speech and help stamp out unlawful ‘silencing’ (often called ‘no platformed’).

### **Abortions continue to rise**

The Office for National Statistics has reported that more than one in four pregnancies now end in abortion, 25.2 per cent in the year 2019. Abortion numbers have been rising steadily in the last ten years. “Thou shalt not kill” remains God’s commandment



## SEA OF GALILEE

Apart from the book of Revelation, the word ‘lake’ is found only in Luke’s gospel, where there is a reference to lake Gennesaret. Elsewhere in the Bible this lake is called the sea of Galilee e.g. “And Jesus, walking by the sea of Galilee, saw two brethren, Simon called Peter, and Andrew his brother.” Twice it is called the sea of Tiberias: “After these things Jesus went over the sea of Galilee, which is the sea of Tiberias.” This body of water is not a sea at all, although popularly called so. It is truly a lake, as it is not connected to the ocean.

One of our regular school hymns was Cecil Alexander’s “Jesus calls us! O’er the tumult.” (Mrs. Alexander also wrote “All things bright and beautiful” and “Once in royal David’s city”.) The second verse reads:

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

The story of the hymn is this. Mrs Alexander’s husband, William, became Archbishop of all Ireland. Impressed by his wife’s hymns he asked her to write a hymn for use at the the coming Lord’s day service based on the calling of Simon, Andrew, James and John (Matthew 4. 18-22).

“Leaving all.” This is easy to sing, but how difficult it is to leave all. Several men came to Jesus. The first, a scribe, said he would follow the Lord wherever He went; but Jesus reminded him that “the Son of Man hath not where to lay His head.” Another came and said, “Lord, I will follow thee; but let me first go bid them farewell, which are at home at my house.” There was a BUT in his life. Peter said he would follow the Lord, and in fact went so far as to say, “I will lay down my life for Thy sake.” But soon afterwards he swore that he did not know the Man. How much we need God to grant us grace to leave all, rise up, and follow Him.

# PERCEPTION

A Quarterly Magazine for Young People



“Benaiah the son of Jehoiada went down and slew  
a lion in a pit in a snowy day” (1 Chron. 11. 22).

**WINTER 2021**

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**Cover picture:** Snow, Dome of the Rock, Temple Mount, Jerusalem

# PERCEPTION

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## EDITORIAL

“I am the first, and I am the last; and beside me there is no God.”

“I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the ending, saith the Lord.”

These two texts, the first written by Isaiah, the second by the Apostle John, speak of the eternity of the Lord Jesus Christ.

In contrast to eternity, our lives are but a fleeting appearance on this earth. There is “a time to be born, and a time to die.” We come and we go – and are soon forgotten.

The doctrine that Christ has existed from all eternity, not just from the time He was born to the virgin Mary, is a vital one. Controversy over His eternal Godhead once split the churches down the middle, but the doctrine was ably defended by J. C. Philpot in the *Gospel Standard* magazine. Hebrews chapter 7, although difficult to understand, presents this doctrine to us in an unusual way. Here the priesthood of Jesus Christ is compared to the priesthood of Melchisedec (see Genesis 14. 18-20). Christ is said to be a high priest *for ever* after the order of Melchisedec. The point is that Melchisedec was a dying man, and one day his priesthood would come to an end. But by way of contrast, this Man, the Lord Jesus Christ, “continueth ever” (verse 24). The Bible clearly tells us that “God was manifest in the flesh” (1 Timothy 3.16).

We wish to give a strong word of warning here, particularly to any of our younger readers who may be tempted to use a more modern version of the Bible than our much loved KJV. In the text we have quoted above from the first Epistle of Timothy, the word ‘God’ is omitted from many modern-day versions of the Bible. The New International Version reads: “He appeared in a body,” whilst the Good News Bible says “He appeared in human form” – neither version bearing testimony to the Godhead of Christ. Be very wary of these modern versions which in many other cases downgrade the truth that Christ was God. Do not use the NIV – it is unreliable. No English Bible published after the New King James Version has the word ‘God.’ One

further example is in the Contemporary English Version which reads: “Christ came as a human.” We are reminded of the truth of Christ’s eternal Godhead at this time of year as we sing about it (we hope not unthinkingly) in some of the well-known Christmas hymns, such as *Hark! The herald-angels sing* and *O come, all ye faithful* (e.g. referring to Christ as ‘God of God’, and ‘Very God, Begotten, not created’).

The words *first* and *last*, *beginning* and *ending* are found in several places in God’s Word. As we approach the end of another year, our thoughts are very much on beginnings and endings. We look back to the beginning of the year that is now almost past. If we are in a right spirit, there are two things we need to acknowledge: first, our many sins, failings and backslidings; second, the abundance of the Lord’s mercies.

Thankfulness for God’s mercies, even in small things, is something we often lack. For some of our readers, the past year may have been a difficult one, or a sad year. It may be that the year began well, but the end has been difficult. For others, the past year may have had periods of great happiness – perhaps a marriage, or a baby born into the family, successes at exam time, or new friendships. Whatever it may be, have we remembered to return thanks for all these favours and mercies? “Be ye thankful,” says the word of God. It is good if we have the spirit of the Psalmist who said, “I will bless the Lord at *all* times.” How hard it is to be thankful when things have not gone well.

You may have come across the story of the poor African, a story well worth keeping in mind, particularly when things do not go how we would have wished. The story is this: whatever happened in the poor man’s life he would say, “Praise de Lord.” One day he was given a good piece of beef. He wrapped it carefully in an old newspaper to take back home. On his way he stopped to tie his shoelace, setting the parcel of beef on the ground. A dog saw an opportunity, seized the beef and ran off. The poor man said once more, “Praise de Lord.” A bystander said, “How can you praise the Lord for losing your beefsteak?” “Oh no, Sir,” said the man, “I do not praise de Lord for losing the beefsteak. I praise de Lord that I still have a good appetite.” We may smile at this simple story, but what a lot there is in it. Anne Steele’s prayer is good:

“Give me a calm, a thankful heart,  
From every murmur free.”

Another story that comes to mind is concerning a man in mid-life. He was walking through a busy shopping centre whilst suffering from

a most painful back after lifting something too heavy for him. He felt decidedly weary and not altogether free from rebellion. Suddenly, he noticed a wheelchair coming towards him carrying a man who had lost both his legs. He thought, "What have I to complain about with just a painful back, when that poor man has no legs and will never walk again." Here was matter indeed to "Praise the Lord!"

Matthew Henry, the great Bible commentator, was another man who showed an excellent spirit of thankfulness. Once, while on a coach journey, the coach was waylaid by robbers, and his purse was stolen. What was his reaction? It was one of thankfulness. "First," he said, "I am thankful that it was I who was robbed and not I who was the robber. Second, I thank God that although they took my money, they did not take my life. Third, I am thankful that although they took my money, they did not take *all* my money."

Another text connected with beginnings and endings is found in Matthew chapter 20: "The last shall be first, and the first last."

When I was at junior school, a period of play preceded the time for 'school dinners.' At the end of playtime, we children had to queue up in the playground before proceeding to the dining room. It was discovered that, in order to be first in the dining room, some of the children (particularly the girls), had taken to queuing up far too early so that they had no opportunity to 'let off steam' and run around and play games. The headmaster did not like this at all – and being a resourceful man, he had a solution. When the queue had finally formed, he would say in a loud voice, "Everyone turn round." So the whole queue reversed, following which the headmaster (a sidesman at Ashwell Parish Church) would unfailingly quote Matthew 20. 16: "So the last shall be first, and the first last."

But what was the meaning of the Lord Jesus when he uttered these words, first to his disciples (see Matthew 19. 30), and then again perhaps more publicly, at the end of the parable of the vineyard and the labourers (see Matthew 20. 16)? I expect many interpretations have been put forward, but one thing we have noticed over the years is that many who once seemed promising in the things of God, in later years prove a disappointment. Others, perhaps to our great surprise, are the ones whom the Lord uses. This reminds me of a story often told concerning two boys at our own chapel at Bethel, Luton. In the early 1900s, a boy named Frank Bennett began to attend the Sunday School at Bethel. Until that time, he had attended another Sunday School at the church

where his family attended. It was a high church, and Frank was not happy there. A friend asked him, “Why don’t you come to our Sunday School?” He began to attend, and was much touched by the kindness of his teacher, whose name was Miss Geary. Eventually, Frank attended all the services, and was much blessed – he was baptized in 1905, though much persecuted at home. Sad to say, the boy who invited him drifted away from chapel and Sunday School altogether. Here was a case of the first last, and the last first.

Now is the time we look forward to the beginning of a new year. How will it end? We are making our plans and already penciling in our diaries dates of important events. But have we remembered to say (or at least think), “If the Lord will.” We know not what a day may bring forth, and in all probability some of those dates will be crossed out before the year ends. Perhaps there will be another lockdown. As we begin a new year, there can be no certainty of what will happen. Wisely, the future is hidden to us, and is known only to God.

When we look back at the January editorials of monthly magazines, how often we find words such as: “The year 1897 has now passed into eternity and will never be recalled.” It is, of course, true. The English proverb, written by Geoffrey Chaucer, the greatest of our medieval poets, expresses it well: “Time and tide wait for no man.” (Chaucer died in the year 1400 and is buried in Westminster Abbey.)

All of us had a year which was our first, but for some of our readers next year may be their last year. As we sing in Sunday School:

“See, another year is gone;  
Quickly have the seasons passed;  
This we enter now upon  
Will to many prove their last.”

This is a solemn thought, not just for those who are older, but for younger ones too. Are you, am I, concerned about eternity? I am sure there are many things that *do* concern us all at the moment – the uncertainties (many brought about by Covid), the unrest, the lack of honesty and morals displayed by our elected leaders, and many other things. But again I say, are we concerned about eternity? The concerns of this life are as nothing compared to eternity. What if we should gain the whole world and lose our own soul? The Lord Jesus said, “Or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?”

The ways in which the Lord may bring a person into soul concern



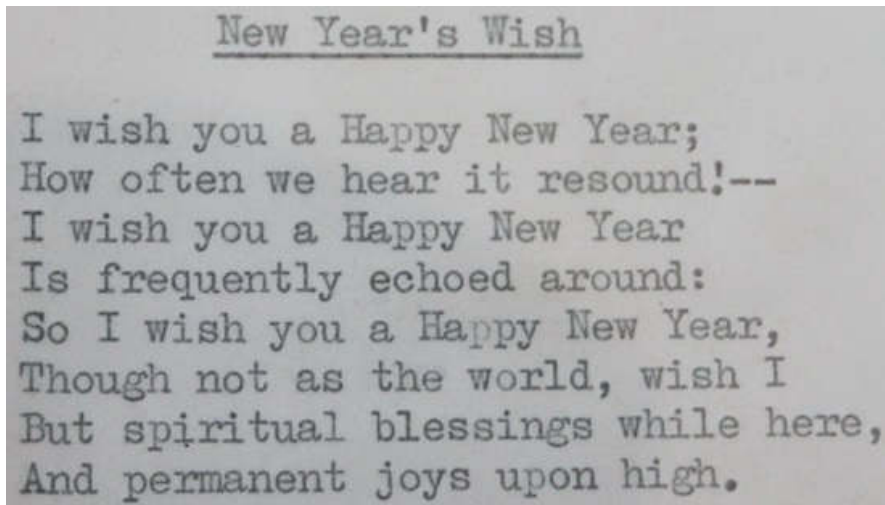
are many. We have heard of more than one young person who has stood by an open grave at a funeral, and the thought has come: "What if that was me? Where would I be? How do I stand for eternity?" One young man in relating his call by grace said: "I remember stepping into the road to cross the road, did not see a car coming; suddenly a loud screech and the car was right next to me, and I thought, if the driver had not seen me, where would I have been?" Others may be affected by the death of someone they love. One young lady said: "It was not until my Grandma passed away that I saw eternity. When we visited her, she seemed ready and prepared, and I thought, when I was in her position, would I be ready, because eternity seemed a tremendous sound?"

Our prayer for the coming year is that the Lord's work may go on amongst the churches. For many, may it be the Lord's appointed time.

"The appointed time rolls on apace,  
Not to propose but call by grace;  
To change the heart, renew the will,  
And turn the feet to Zion's hill."

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

The Editor



*On a Christmas card sent by Queen Victoria. The card is on display at Dunrobin Castle, Northern Highlands, Scotland.*

## THEY THAT WERE READY

As the end of the year begins to draw near, how much time we spend preparing for the season when we all get together with our families! But here Mr. Timothy Kingham speaks to us of a much more important preparation – to be ready for eternity.

This is part of a sermon preached by Mr. Kingham at Bethel Chapel, Luton on Lord's day morning, 29th August 2021.

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**Text: "They that were ready" (Matt. 25.10).**

Now then, let us get straight to the point. "They that were ready." Are *you* ready? Am *I* ready? Either we are ready or we are not. Here we have the ten virgins – five of them wise, five of them foolish. Five of them were ready, five of them were not. Five of them were saved, five of them were not. Five of them were sheep, five of them were goats. And so how is it with each of us this morning? Are *we* ready?

We have read so many solemn things in this chapter. Has it had any effect on us? By nature these warnings mean nothing to us. By nature we are not ready. Not only are we not ready by nature, but we have no desire to be ready. But has there come a change in your life and mine? Is there a difference to what there once was? Do you have a hope, perhaps a little hope, perhaps a feeble hope, that you are among those of whom it can be said, "They were ready." If this was the last Lord's day you and I were to spend on earth, what would be said of you when you were gone? Would it be said, "They were ready"? How solemn if it should not be so. I thought of it on Thursday, we had that word in Daniel where we read, "The God in whose hand thy breath is ... hast thou not glorified." Our every breath we take is in God's hand and there will come that time when we will breathe our last. And when that time comes, will it be said of us, "They were ready"?

How vital it is for us to be prepared. What a confirmation it was to me when we had that hymn just now, "Prepare me, gracious God." That is the only way in which we will be ready, if we are prepared. We cannot make ourselves ready, we cannot make ourselves right. It is the Lord's work. And so very distinctly we have those before us: those who

were ready, and those who were not. The sheep and the goats.

These words were spoken by the Lord Jesus to His disciples on the mount of Olives, and they came and asked Him after He had spoken about the destruction of the temple: “When shall these things be? and what shall be the sign of thy coming, and of the end of the world?” And the Lord Jesus, in chapter 24 tells them a few signs of what shall come in the last times. We have to think of that reproof that the Lord Jesus gave to His disciples, that they could discern the signs of the weather but they could not discern the signs of the times. He was telling them they needed to be ready, whatever times they lived in, whether it was the last times, the day of judgment, or whether it was not. There is a vital need to be made ready, so this morning I want just to speak from this word in two ways.

Firstly, what are we to be ready for? What do we need to be prepared for? How vital that need is for us to be prepared.

Then secondly, the blessing of those who are made ready.

What do we need to be ready for? Well, in a word, it is *eternity*. Is eternity a tremendous sound to you and I? It may be that some, or all, of us will come to our end before the Lord comes the second time. It may be that the Lord will come the second time whilst each of us are still living here below. So we need to be ready.

I want to speak particularly of three things concerning the Lord’s coming again. I hope you children will listen and understand concerning the second coming of the Lord Jesus.

Firstly, it is *certain*. It is certain that day will come.

Secondly, it will be *unexpected*. It will come suddenly. So in many places we are told He will come as a thief in the night.

Thirdly, we are told it will be *final*. There will be that final separation between the righteous and the wicked, the saved and the lost. There will be no second chances, no purgatory or anything like that. As the tree falls, so shall it lie.

So we need to be made ready for that day. Just as we read, it is appointed, the day of our death: “It is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment.” So there is that day of judgment, that is

appointed. Paul in Acts 17, speaking on Mars' hill, said, "He hath appointed a day, in the which He will judge the world in righteousness by that Man whom He hath ordained" – the Man the Lord Jesus Christ Himself. So we have the certainty. We must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ. There will be no escaping, there will be no putting it off. So here in this parable of the ten virgins the Lord Jesus was continuing what was spoken before, the solemnity of the last times, the coming of the Son of Man. So we have it sure and certain, the time appointed when the Lord will come.

And then we have this second point, that the coming of the Lord will come suddenly, and we have it described not just as a thief in the night, but as a snare for the fowler. If that animal had seen the trap, they would have avoided it, but it came suddenly upon them. So it is as a thief in the night. Peter said, "But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night; in the which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up." How solemnly this day will come. Will you and I be ready when it does come? Well, of course, the vital point is for each of us to be prepared for eternity.

We each in our lives have things that we get ready for. And lots of things, even today, you have had to get ready for, but what a difference it would make if we knew *that* time was to come today. What a difference it would make today if we knew we were to breathe our last. It is right that we should prepare our lives, we should try to order our lives – we are not to live disordered lives at all – but what comes first in all our preparations? In the days of Noah, it was the eating, the drinking, the marrying and giving in marriage. Nothing wrong with any of that in and of itself. "And knew not until the flood came, and took them all away; so shall also the coming of the Son of man be."

And now, what is it in your life you are preparing for? Perhaps, particularly you children, you younger ones, it is the time you are preparing for a new year at school, a new year in your education. You are preparing for a new situation, preparing for university or work. Many things you are doing to try and get ready. Nothing wrong with any of that in itself, but what about eternity? Amos said, "Prepare to meet thy God." Well, what preparations are being made for that? You know it will come suddenly. "But know this, that if the goodman of the

house had known in what watch the thief would come, he would have watched, and would not have suffered his house to be broken up. Therefore be ye also ready: for in such an hour as ye think not the Son of man cometh.”

As I read these chapters a few weeks ago, there were three or four phrases of four words that seemed to stand out. One of these we read in chapter 24: “he would have watched.” If he had known what time the thief would come “he would have watched.” But the point is this, he *didn’t* watch and it was too late. When we come to our end – we want to speak carefully – will it be said of us, “they were ready,” or will it be said of us, “if he had known he would have watched”? That won’t do us any good. We need to be kept from false hopes. We need to be kept from merely good intentions.

I came across an illustration given by a minister many years ago. He said it is as though there were many people in a boat at sea and came into a storm, and they were facing certain death. The boat was being broken up and there were some of them had their life jacket and some who did not, and those who did not, they were being so confident, so sure, yet when this certain death faced them, one said, “It will be all right, I am a good swimmer. I can swim, I can save myself.” How need we to be kept from a religion like that, in what you and I can do. There are others who perhaps had a life jacket, but it was a counterfeit one, it didn’t work properly, it didn’t support them, it was a false hope. Beware of building on false hopes. It looked like they had a life jacket but they did not; it was a vain hope trusting on a sandy foundation. How we need to be kept from that, trusting in our own works, trusting in a outward form of religion, trusting in coming to chapel every week, trusting in all sorts of things that come short of the Lord Jesus. There were others who said I haven’t got a life jacket, but I will hold on to someone else who has. That didn’t do them any good either. Just as the illustration is, we can’t get to heaven on another man’s religion, we cannot be given the grace of others. So that is just a faint picture that we need to be kept from these false hopes.

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As we come to a close we think of the apostle Paul. Not all the Lord’s people have such a striking experience as he had on the Damascus road, but Paul had been brought to see his need, he had been

brought to be prepared for eternity. He says in 2 Timothy 4, “I am now ready to be offered, and the time of my departure is at hand.” And so when that word is spoken, “Behold, the bridegroom cometh,” will we be able to say like Paul, “I am now ready to be offered, and the time of my departure is at hand”? Earlier he said he had a desire to depart. Why was there that desire to depart? It was to be with Christ, which is far better. “I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith: Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day: and not to me only, but unto all them also that love His appearing.”

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## OLIVE OIL

Olive oil was used in the services of the Sanctuary:

**First**, as oil for the light in the Holy Place of the tabernacle. “And thou shalt command the children of Israel, that they bring thee pure oil olive beaten for the light, to cause the lamp to burn always.”

**Second**, as oil for the burnt sacrifices and meat offerings. “And with the one lamb a tenth deal of flour mingled with the fourth part of an hin of beaten oil.”

The oil used for the lamps is described as “pure oil olive beaten.” This oil was extracted from olives specially selected for their excellent quality, by crushing them into a pulpy substance in a stone mortar and then hanging the pulp in baskets so that the oil was strained through. The oil which drips from the basket is now quite clear and free of particles of pulp or pips and is what is referred to as “pure beaten oil.” It is colourless and burns without giving off smoke.

If now the process is continued by placing some weight on the pulp in the basket, in the form of stones or a wooden block, further oil is obtained of a slightly inferior, but still very good quality, “the beaten oil,” used for the meat offering.

In order to extract oil for everyday use, the pulp was compressed still further, and in this process the pips were crushed as well. Oil obtained in this way was far less pure, containing as it did particles of fruit and pips.

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## JOHN WARBURTON (Part 8)

A few of the Lord's providential dealings

Born in 1776, convicted of sin as a young man, delivered from a temptation to end his life by drowning, and Christ revealed to his soul under a sermon preached by William Roby at Cannon Street Chapel, Manchester. Baptised when 28 at Manchester by William Gadsby. While in the water, Gadsby prayed that he might be raised up as an instrument in God's hand for the cause of truth. After beginning to speak in the Lord's name, he was lifted up with pride with the thought that he would be a *great* preacher, but the Lord showed him that his sufficiency must in Him. He sets his heart on settling at Pool Moor Chapel, Yorkshire, but another minister is invited as Pastor. We continue with the life of this servant of the Lord.

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### Preaches in a room at Rochdale

About this time I was invited to go and preach to a few people that had been separated from Mr. Littlewood's church at Rochdale for going to hear Mr. Gadsby, who then came once a month to preach at Rochdale on a week evening. They had taken a room to meet in, and after a few times I engaged to go regularly every Lord's day, for which, if I remember aright, they engaged to give me six shillings a time.

I had nine miles to go, and I think I went regularly for about twelve months, when, as the place was increased, they gave me a call, which I accepted. This was either in the year 1809 or 1810. And here I met with many comforts and many sorrows, and some downright real friends, as well as some downright real enemies, the latter of whom appeared when I first went amongst them as though they would have pulled out their eyes and given them to me; but I found in the end their language was, "Crucify him! crucify him!" Truly it is "through much tribulation that we must enter into the kingdom of heaven."

O the miserable journeys I had sometimes for about two years from the place where I then lived to Rochdale. I have many times left home with neither money nor provisions in the house, over head and ears in debt, full of carnal reason and unbelief, and not able to see how ever I could escape bringing a reproach upon the cause of God and truth. O how my poor soul has roared out like a bear, and mourned sore like a



dove, when I have been passing through the lonely fields on my way on a Saturday night or sometimes on a Lord's day morning, many times without a text, all my debts staring me in the face, no appearance of getting through a single week, and all our clothes nearly worn out. O the many times I have roared out in the fields, "What a fool I must be to go on attempting to preach when everything is so completely against me!" How many times did I tell the people that I must give it all up, for I was confident I should never be able to get through with honour to the cause of God and truth. But they only laughed at me, and told me that if I knew nothing of these trials I should not do for them, and they were at a point that I was in the best school God could put me in for the pulpit. How often my soul exclaimed, "Miserable comforters are ye all" (Job 16. 2).

### **Rent day**

One time we were completely set fast to make up the rent. We had somehow or other got it up except one guinea, and that we could not get from any source we could tell of. But a thought struck my mind that I would try the next Lord's day to borrow it from one of my friends at Rochdale, who I expected would lend it me, as the following Monday was the day to pay my rent.

O the journey I had to Rochdale praying to God that He would open the way. I told Him that I had nowhere else to go but unto Him, who had ever been my present help in all times of trouble. "O do, dear Lord, open the heart of someone to lend it me, and I will bless Thee as long as I live." I felt sweet access to Him, and readily believed that He heard my prayers, and that I should bring the money home. But how my poor soul was disappointed! For after I had done preaching on the Lord's day, I mentioned the affair to one who, I thought, could do it, but he had it not at that time in his power. O how I sank down in my feelings, and set off home miserable enough, and verily believed it was now all over, and in such darkness and unbelief and carnal reasoning, until I was almost distracted.

But when I came to a village called Heywood, through which I had to pass on my way home, it just struck my mind that I had to call to leave a message from Mr. Gadsby to an old lady who lived there, that he was coming over on such an evening. I rapped at the door, and told the servant my message, and the old lady being in the parlour heard me, and insisted that I should come in and have some refreshment. I wished

to be excused, as I had a long way to go home and it was getting late. Besides, I was so miserable that I thought ladies would be no company for me. But she would have no denial, and said I must come in. So in I went and sat down. And how it was I cannot tell, but so it was, that the moment I sat down I forgot my rent and all my misery, as if it had taken wings and flown away; and there being a young lady there who was keeping her company, I began to talk of the things of God with such freedom that I was astonished at my feelings.

The young lady burst into tears, and said, “These are the very things I have been exercised with in my mind. Are these the feelings of Christians?” At which my very soul was melted down in a moment, and my mouth was so opened that I began to speak of the way in which the Lord had led me, with such sweetness and pleasure, that I quite forgot my rent and every other calamity with it, and, to my feelings, could have sat all night. But I found by the clock that it was time for me to be going, for I had about seven miles to go, in a dark night and by a miserable road. The old lady desired me to spend a few minutes in prayer, and truly I felt it a time of prayer, and of praise too, in thanking God for the interview we had had together, so that I did not know how to conclude.

When I arose from my knees, and was taking leave of them, the old lady left a guinea in my hand, at which I burst aloud into a flood of tears in the room, and could not help it. They were both alarmed, and asked me what was the matter. As soon as ever my feelings would suffer me to speak, I told them that tomorrow was my rent day, and that I was a guinea short of making up my rent, and had tried all I could to get it, but could not; and to see the goodness and tender mercy of my covenant God in putting it into your heart to give it! O how the poor old lady wept for joy along with me, in seeing the goodness of God. I left them with ten thousand blessings from my heart, and on my road home I went with transports of joy, viewing the matchless wonders of my covenant God. O how my soul could sing with sweet melody in my heart:

“Ye fearful saints, fresh courage take;  
The clouds ye so much dread  
Are big with mercy, and shall break  
In blessings on your head.”

### **A chapel built a Rochdale**

Some little time after this we began to build a new chapel at

Rochdale, where I then laboured, and had done so for some time; and the Lord having blessed my labours, we were crowded in the room in which we then met. It was truly wonderful and amazing to see how the Lord opened a way for us, for we were a very poor people. But O how many times did we prove that portion of God's Word, "The cattle upon a thousand hills are Mine, and all the gold and silver is Mine." For He opened the hearts of the people far and near, to communicate towards the raising up of Hope Chapel, which we called it, for we said it was begun in hope, carried on in hope, and a hope, too, which will never make ashamed. Through many toils and difficulties, at length we got the chapel up, but with a considerable debt upon it, which was very heavy on our shoulders.

After preaching some time in the chapel, the friends wished me to come with my family to Rochdale; but I was stuck so fast with many little debts that I could not tell how I could possibly remove from the place I was in. It appeared to me to be utterly impossible; but I found, again, that what was impossible with me, was possible with God. And, blessed be His dear Name, He again made it manifest that He was able to deliver me. But, is anything too hard for the Lord?

### **Moves with family to Rochdale**

So off we went with six children, we having seven in all, but the eldest did not then live at home. We arrived safe at Rochdale, with my heart full of the blessing of the Lord. And O what a sweet time I had in my new habitation, in raising up an altar to the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, who had fed me all my life long. His boundless goodness, both in providence and grace, so shined into my poor soul, that it was truly delightful and pleasant to see His goodness pass before me in the way.

Ever since the Lord had opened my poor mouth in His dear Name, there was one request I had made, that He would open a place for me where I might have my family with me on the Lord's day. Truly I had many sweet promises that this would be the case in His own time and way; but little did I think God would favour me with a habitation adjoining the chapel. But so it was! And I verily believe, on the Lord's day when my wife and children entered the chapel, I should have fainted away in the pulpit had not the dear Lord supported me.

For several weeks I went on very comfortably, and was favoured very much with the sweet presence of the Lord in giving me a sight of

the way He had led me, and I could say from my heart, “He hath done all things well” (Mark 7. 37).

But I soon found plenty of work for prayer, faith and patience. My salary was now twenty-five shillings (£1.25) per week. I had six children at home, and my wife was again in the family way, and provisions being dear, I soon got up to the neck in trouble. For the first thing we had to do as soon as we got into the town was to go on credit at the shop for everything we needed. When my wife drew near the time of her delivery, I began to fear how it would be possible to get her the comforts she required at the time of her confinement. I soon found that I had to plunge out of one trouble into another, that is, borrow from one to pay another, so that I soon found I could not tell how to move on. When my wife was taken in labour there was but little in the house, and I was obliged of necessity to go to Manchester and leave her very poorly.

O what a miserable journey I had to Manchester! All the former mercies of God were lost to my sight, and now the devil told me that it would be a thousand times worse in Rochdale than at the other place, which I had wanted so often to leave. “For here,” said he, “the whole town is all upon the watch, hoping that something or other will come to stop the mouth of such a presumptuous Antinomian, and now,” says he, “the time is come. Your wife will die; God will stop your mouth; and you and your children must go to the poor-house after all.”

### **“The angel of the Lord did wondrously”**

When I had concluded my business in Manchester, I met a friend just as I was going off home, who asked me how we all were, and how my wife was, and how we were getting along. I told him how things were, and said that I was afraid that the Lord, after all the mercies He had favoured me with, had left me. After a little conversation, he told me that the Lord had not left me, nor ever would leave me; and when we parted he gave me what was needful for our present wants, and off I came home. How powerfully and sweetly did those words come into my soul: “And the angel of the Lord did wondrously, and Manoah and his wife looked on.” It was a looking on indeed. I verily believed it was all well with my wife, and that the child was a boy, so I cried out in the way as I went, “His name is Manoah!” What a very different journey had I home! All the way to Manchester the devil roared, but all the way back the Lord smiled.

When I arrived at home all was well; my dear wife was safely put to bed, and the child was a boy. How sweetly did I take the dear child up in my arms, and bless it in the Name of the Lord, and said, “His name is Manoah, and may the angel of the Lord do wondrously for him, and his poor soul look on,” which God grant in His own time.

### **Behind at the shop**

But it has ever been my lot to have changes, ins and outs, ups and downs. For after a while we got behind at the shop where we dealt for provisions. We owed, if I recollect rightly, about seven pounds, and had but two in the house, which we were keeping towards paying the debt; but there was no appearance of getting the rest. But all the rest came in God’s own time and way, and it was truly wonderful and astonishing to my soul.

There was one of our deacons, my right-hand man, who professed such love when I first went into the town that apparently he would have plucked out his eyes and given them to me. After a little time, however, he began to manifest his hatred and enmity against me by trying all he could to harass, perplex and distress me. He goes to the person we traded with, and asked him if I owed him any money. The answer was that I did. So he told him with his soft tongue, that out of kindness he let him know that, if he did not get it soon, he never would have it at all. This put my creditor into great fear, so that he sent me a very soft note that he should be glad if I would settle the account, as he was driven for money. O how this made me shake from head to foot! “Now,” said the enemy, “what will you do? There is five pounds to make up before you can pay the seven. You have drawn over your quarter’s money, and you cannot look there. But if you do not pay it immediately, it will be over the whole town, and it will be a matter of joy to the uncircumcised and sorrow and grief to your friends.”

O how all this sank me down, for though the Lord had done so much for me, I found that I had no faith at my command to trust Him one moment. This was on Saturday; no text, and Lord’s day coming, and I could not get one to strike me all the day. Then I tried to strike one myself, and I struck out many, but they all slipped through my fingers, and off they flew. What a day and night did I pass through. But through the tender mercy of a covenant God I had a good day in the courts of our Lord. The dear Lord led me into the very things that some of His dear children were exercised with, and they went home at night

rejoicing in the Lord, and putting no confidence in the flesh. The dear Lord favoured me with a sweet calm, and I felt a hope springing up that He would provide.

### **Only two shillings**

Before we went to bed, my wife asked me how we were to get through the week. “I have only two shillings,” said she, “and we are to have no more at the shop till the old score is paid off, and the two pounds we must not touch; and you know there is but little in the house. How do you think we are to get through the week?” “Well,” said I, “come, never mind it tonight. I am tired; let us go to bed and see what tomorrow will bring forth.”

I had a very comfortable night’s rest, and, being tired, lay pretty long in the morning. Indeed, I was rather reluctant to go down, for fear of the subject of the two shillings coming up again. Whilst I was pondering about the two shillings, the postman came to the door with a letter, and called out, “One shilling and elevenpence, mistress.” “What,” cries out my wife, “what do you mean?” “One shilling and elevenpence, mistress.” I could not help laughing in my room to hear my wife and the postman. Well, thinks I, we don’t need much consultation about laying out the two shillings. We have now a whole penny left. Neither I nor my wife understood the one-and-elevenpence then.

When the postman had shut the door, she comes stamping up the stairs as if she would have stamped them down. Into the room she comes with the letter and the penny, and down she threw them both. “Now,” says she, “as you have such a stock of faith, you have a whole penny to go to market with,” and down she went, not in the best of tempers. I opened the letter, and there was a two pound note and a one pound note, making three pounds. I ran down stairs with astonishment, and showed my wife the three pounds. Poor thing! she was quite overcome with wonder, and she declared that she should never again be frightened at one-and-elevenpence, and hoped one-and-elevenpence would soon come again.

### **All debts paid**

Just as we were talking it over, my old friend, Thomas Nivin, a Scotchman, whom I had ever found a faithful friend from first to last, came in to know how we were. I showed him the letter and told him of our situation, and that I owed seven pounds at the shop, and that my

creditor had sent for the money, and that we had only two pounds towards it until this letter came, and now we have five pounds. The old man rejoiced, and said that he was glad in his heart to see the lovingkindness of a covenant God in such a wonderful and unexpected way. The dear old man said, "I have two pounds laid up at home that I have no present use for." So off he went and brought the two pounds.

My old dame dressed herself up in her best gown, and off she goes with the seven pounds and discharges the debt with honour. Now, thinks I, I will go alone into the chapel, and there will I extol the mercy of my wonder-working God, who has wrought this wonderful deliverance for me, one so unworthy. But I am ashamed to write or speak what came into my mind as soon as ever I entered into the chapel. Instead of blessing and praising God for His wonderful deliverance, it darted into my mind that whoever sent it might have sent a five pound note instead of three, and then I should have had two pounds for other things, which would just have come in well. O how I hated myself for these thoughts, and how did my soul struggle, cry and pray to tread these cursed feelings under my feet. I walked to and fro, begging and crying for a thankful heart; but could no more thank God feelingly for the deliverance than I could make a world. And I began to find my heart as hard as the nether millstone, so that I found that thankfulness was a gift that cometh down from above. And I am confident that thankfulness is as much the gift of God as ever deliverance is.

### **More trials at Rochdale**

Soon after this I had trouble upon trouble at Rochdale, and began to see that I never could stay there long; and I was firmly persuaded that God never intended it, for every way kept closing up, till at last my old friend, the Scotchman, said he could not promise to communicate so much to the cause, and, indeed, I wondered he did what he had done for years. Then the deacons told me that it was plain the Lord meant me for some other place, and, if Providence opened a way, they considered I should do right in embracing it.

O how my soul did sink down within me. I had eight children; I was over head and ears in debt, and nothing but clouds and darkness within and without.

### **Letters from Maidstone and Trowbridge**

A few days after this I received a letter from Maidstone, in Kent,



saying that if I was at liberty, they wished me to come for four or six weeks upon trial. I looked upon this as a wonderful opening in providence, and sent them a letter, fixing the time at which I hoped to be there. I think it was the day after I had sent off my answer that I received another letter, from a few people who met in a room at Trowbridge, in Wiltshire, inviting me for a month upon trial, if I was at liberty. O how I wondered to know what all this could mean. I sent them an answer, saying that I would comply with their request as soon as I had fulfilled my engagement at Maidstone.

At the time appointed I went to Maidstone, and stayed as long as I had agreed to do. The people gave me a call to be their pastor, and everything was as pleasant to flesh and blood as I could desire; and fully was I determined to accept the call, only I must go to Trowbridge to fulfil my engagement there. But I was as confident in my own mind that I should come and settle at Maidstone as I was in existence; so to Trowbridge I came to spend my month. The room was crowded with people, and God blessed the word abundantly. But I felt determined I would go to Maidstone. The people at Trowbridge gave me a call, and, my time being nearly out, it was necessary to give them an answer. O the begging and crying I had that God would give me a command to go to Maidstone! for to pray to stay at Trowbridge I could not; for I could see nothing but difficulties, trials and miseries at Trowbridge; for I plainly saw the toils of a new chapel, and these I dreaded, as knowing what sorrows and miseries Hope Chapel had caused me. O what a night I had the night before I was to settle the business whether I was to go to Maidstone or stop at Trowbridge. I wrestled and prayed, and cried to God until about three in the morning, to let me go to Maidstone; and O how I sunk down when He spoke these words into my heart: "Abide in this city, for I have much people here." "O," cried I, "do, Lord, let me go to Maidstone; do, Lord. Do not be offended with my poor petition; do let me go to Maidstone." But the text sounded again and again, "Abide in this city, for I have much people here." But still I wanted Him to let me go to Maidstone. At last the dear Lord settled the matter at once by speaking these words to my soul: "If his children forsake My law and walk not in My judgments; if they break My statutes and keep not My commandments; then will I visit their transgressions with a rod, and their iniquity with stripes;" and I could see it as speaking all this to my soul: You may go to Maidstone; but here is the rod, and you shall have nothing else if you go. I fell down and cried out, "Not my will, but

Thine be done.” “But,” cried I, “How can I get on here? how can I live here, when I come with ten in family and my wife in the family way? How can I possibly live here and the people a poor people?” O how God condescended to settle the matter in my soul. “The cattle upon a thousand hills are Mine.” “The earth is Mine, and all the gold and silver is Mine.” “Thy bread shall be given thee, and thy waters shall be sure.” “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.” I cried out, “It’s enough, it’s enough: Amen to it.”

Maidstone from that moment was as completely taken away from my mind, and the feeling of any desire to go there to settle, as if I had never heard of such a place.

And here I am at Trowbridge, a poor worm, and have proved the Word of the Lord to be truth nearly twenty-two years.

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NOTE: Having now inserted eight instalments of the life of Mr. Warburton, we intend now to leave the subject for a while, returning, if the Lord will, to it at a later date. There is still more to be told, particularly the building of Zion Chapel in 1816 to hold seven hundred people, the sad death of his youngest daughter Rhoda, and his triumphant death on Thursday, April 2nd, 1857. In his son’s words: At last he said, “Hal— , Hal—.” Then followed without a waver, “Hallelujah!” and he immediately breathed out his last at a quarter past seven p.m.

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## **SAFETY ONLY IN THE LORD**

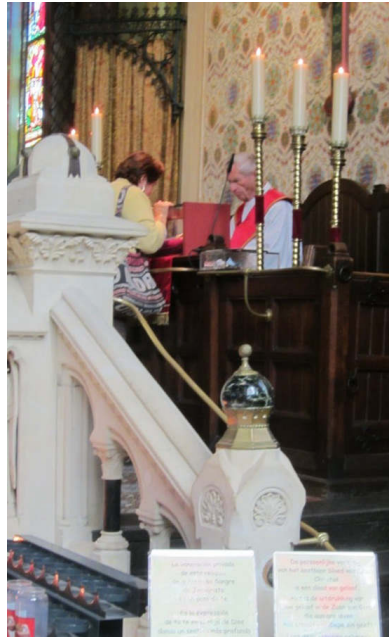
In Bible days, some thought their nation could be delivered by the strength of their horses. But the Psalmist tells us there was no safety there. “An horse is a vain thing for safety: neither shall he deliver any by his great strength.” No – that was not the right place for their trust. Wonderful though horses might be in the service of man, Solomon also realised that without the Lord’s blessing they alone could not deliver them. In the book of Proverbs, he wrote: “The horse is prepared for the day of battle: but safety is of the Lord.”

## VENERATION OF RELICS

In our last edition we mentioned two relics on display, one in Paris (the crown of thorns) and one in Florence (the title over the cross).

Another much venerated relic is found in The Basilica of the Holy Blood (Dutch: *Heilig-Bloedbasiliek*) in Bruges, Belgium. This truly ancient church (built in 1134) houses a relic of the blood of Christ allegedly collected by Joseph of Arimathea and brought from Jerusalem by Thierry of Alsace, Count of Flanders in the 1100's. The blood is displayed in a phial said to contain a cloth stained with the blood of Jesus Christ. Although the Bible never mentions Christ's blood being preserved, The Acts of Pilate – one of the apocryphal gospels – relates that Joseph of Arimathea preserved the blood after he had washed the dead body of Christ.

Pope Clement V issued a papal bull in 1310 granting indulgences to pilgrims who visited the chapel to view the relic. Modern examination has shown that the phial, made of rock crystal and dating back to the 11th century, was a Byzantine bottle made in the area of Constantinople. Its neck is wound with gold thread and its stopper is sealed with red wax. The phial is encased in a glass-fronted gold cylinder closed at each end by coronets decorated with angels. The date 'MCCCLXXXVIII die III maii' (May 3, 1388) is engraved on the frame.



*Viewing the relic*

We sometimes sing, “Needful is Thy most precious blood” (hymn 1105), and to the true believer, it most certainly is so.

“Dear dying Lamb! Thy precious blood  
 Shall never lose its power,  
 Till all the ransomed church of God  
 Be saved, to sin no more.”

## IMPORTANCE OF WEIGHTS AND MEASURES

### Laws of the Old Testament

We are all familiar with the “ten commandments,” but the Old Testament contains many other laws. To give just two examples: First, nothing was to be left in the way of the blind in case they should trip; second, the farmer was not to reap the *corners* of the fields as this was to be left for the poor. If we turn to Leviticus chapter 19 we find a quite a number of laws. What is striking that in verses 30-37 alone we read I AM THE LORD six times. They were not just men’s laws, but God’s.

### Weights and Measures

Verse 35 refers to weights and measures. In the UK today, so important is this subject that it has its own law: the *Weights and Measures Act 1985*. As you know, we lift something to find its weight, and measure something to find its length. It is, of course, very important to understand weights and measures. If we go to a swimming pool, we need to understand that the deep end is 3m deep, and the law says this must be clearly displayed in a public pool. The Weights and Measures inspectors are not concerned only with trade. In the past they dealt with sub-standard weighing machines in NHS hospitals!

In England six hundred years ago, there was a great variety of measures like a pound, a foot, a gallon and a barleycorn – and different trades had their own measurements. But in the 1400's it was decided this was not good enough. King Henry IV decided to measure his waist, and decreed this was to be called a ‘yard.’ As we all know there are three feet in a yard, 12 inches in a foot, and (perhaps not so well known) three barleycorns in an inch.

About 200 years later it was felt a new measurement, longer than a yard, was needed, and they decided to call it a ‘rod.’

This was determined by getting sixteen men to line up their left feet heel to toe – a very inexact method of proceeding. Our older readers may remember at school learning about chains, rods, poles and perches!



*King Henry IV*

Going back to Leviticus 19, in verse 36 the Lord emphasises that we are to have just balances (scales), just weights, and a just ephah (a measure of capacity). We once read a story about a pedlar who went around selling cloth. His measuring rod was also his walking stick. As time went on his stick wore down and got shorter, much to the advantage of the pedlar. One day, the pedlar heard a village preacher, whose name was Mr. Dawson. This was his text: “Weighed in the balances, and found wanting.” The pedlar was convicted of his sin, and broke his stick in pieces.

### **The kilo redefined**

For a long time scientists wanted to define the value of a kilogram by the laws of physics, rather than a physical weight. Other units had been successfully defined: for example, a metre is defined as “the length of the path travelled by light in a vacuum during a time interval of  $1/299,792,458$  of a second.” You cannot get anything more exact than that! In 2019, it was decided that the kilogram



*Pedlars measuring stick*

would no longer be measured against an actual weight. Since 1889, a kilogram had been defined by a single lump of platinum which was housed inside three glass jars at the headquarters of the International Bureau of Weights and Measures (BIPM) outside Paris. But the master copy, known as *Le Grand K*, had been picking up micro-particles of dust, and had been losing weight in cleaning.

Representatives of sixty nations agreed to redefine the kilogram based on the unchanging value of the Planck constant. This is named after a scientist named Max Planck who solved various problems to do with the amount of energy a proton carries. We are told it is an important quantity in quantum physics. So instead of checking the kilo against an actual weight, scientists can find an exact kilogram by measuring the amount of electricity needed to lift it, using a special set of scales known as a Kibble balance.

### **Weights and measures in the Bible**

The importance of exactness in our weights and measures is a principle emphasised in the Word of God. We have already referred to

Leviticus 19. 36 where we read: “Just balances, just weights, a just ephah, and a just hin, shall ye have: I am the Lord your God, which brought you out of the land of Egypt.” Later, in Proverbs 16.11, we read similar words: “A just weight and balance are the Lord’s: all the weights of the bag are His work.” The prophet Micah speaks of a “bag of deceitful weights,” and Amos complains of those who make “the ephah small, and the shekel great, falsifying the balances by deceit.”

### **The Shekel**

Although today we think of a shekel as the Israeli currency, the shekel is derived from a Hebrew word meaning to weigh. In Exodus 30.13 we read of “the shekel of the sanctuary.” Every man over the age of twenty was required to give a half-shekel offering to the Lord as “a ransom for his soul.” “The rich shall not give more, and the poor shall shall not give less than half a shekel” was the instruction given by the Lord to Moses. In Israel today a shekel is worth about 23p, and this 500 Shekel note would be worth £115.



### **“Weight of glory”**

There is another reference to ‘weight’ we would like to mention, and that is the “weight of glory.” This phrase appears only once in the Word of God. “For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory” (2 Cor. 4. 17). The trials and afflictions carried by Paul and his fellow-sufferers at Corinth, although heavy, were light compared to the far more exceeding “weight of glory.” Their trials here below would one day end. Then the exceeding weight of glory will be theirs for ever. Dr. Gill says: “It is the same glory Christ has entered into, and will give to His people.” What an unspeakable mercy it will be if one day that “weight of glory” is ours. As the old hymn says:

“Then the toils of the road will seem nothing,  
When I get to the end of the way.”



## SEPTEMBER - A MONTH OF ANNUAL MEETINGS

September 2021 was a time for the annual meetings of various societies in which we have an interest.

**The Gospel Standard Trust** held their 55th Annual General Meeting on Saturday, 11th September 2021, this year at Oakington Chapel in Cambridgeshire. After the business side of the meeting had been completed, a very interesting talk was given by Mr. Edmund Buss with the title “Spiritual Lessons from the Recent Restoration of Oakington Chapel.” The chapel was originally built in the year 1865, but the structure was found to be



*Original chapel*

suffering from severe wet rot and dry rot, and deterioration in other ways too. Virtually all the timber was removed and replaced, and a completely new floor laid. Mr Buss compared this work to the gracious work in a sinner’s heart, where a complete renewal is needed. The restored chapel is a splendid example of what can be done



*All the timber removed*



*The restored chapel*



to an old building. The layout has been completely changed and the pulpit is now at the opposite end to the original. Full width folding doors enable the schoolroom to be opened up when occasion requires, as it was at this AGM.

**The Trinitarian Bible Society's** 190th Annual General Meeting was held in the Metropolitan Tabernacle, London on Saturday, 18th September 2021. It was on 7 December 1831 (a Tuesday) that over two thousand people gathered at Exeter Hall, London for the inaugural meeting of a new Bible society. It was agreed that this society would be called the Trinitarian Bible Society. From that day, the objects of the Society remain unchanged:

*The object of this Society is to promote the glory of God and the salvation of men, by circulating, both at home and abroad, in dependence on the Divine blessing, the HOLY SCRIPTURES, which are given by inspiration of God, and are able to make men wise unto salvation, through faith which is in Christ Jesus.*

More would have been made of this 190th anniversary had it not been for the difficulties surrounding Covid. It is amazing to think that during 2020 the Society distributed 7.6 million Scriptures and Scripture items in 40 languages to 111 countries. The morning business meeting concluded with an interesting report from Pastor H. Emiru on his work on a New Testament and Psalms for use in Ethiopia. This is in the Amharic language, the official language of Ethiopia, a Semitic language spoken by about nine million people. In the afternoon a sermon was preached by the Rev. Dafydd Morris, a deputation speaker for the Society, from 1 John 1-3. The 111 countries to which Scriptures have been sent by the TBS are listed on page 37.

**Christian Values in Education** (CviE) held their 2021 National Conference on Saturday, 25th September 2021 at The King's Centre in Chessington, Surrey. This turned out be an outstandingly suitable venue, with plenty of room for everyone and excellent facilities. It was thought that around 250 people attended the event, and no doubt in normal times it would have been more. Professor Andy McIntosh spoke on the subject of environmentalism, and Mr. Matthew Seymour, a pastor and parent, spoke on "RSE: Taking a Stand", drawing on his experiences confronting the curriculum at his local primary school. Pictures of this event are on the next page.

CViE 2021 NATIONAL CONFERENCE



## UNUSUAL BIBLES (8)

The Authorised Version of the Bible was published in 1611. It did not take long for a mistake to be made, as an edition printed in 1612 became known as *The Printers' Bible*. Verse 161 of Psalm 119 read: "Printers have persecuted me without a cause." It should have been 'Princes.'

Another 17th-century English printer was fined £3,000 for substituting 'a' for 'no' in Psalm 14 so that it read: "The fool hath said in his heart, There is a God."

In 1716 a serious error occurred by simply reversing the letters in a two-letter word: John 8. 11 read: "Go, and sin on more." The correct reading was: "Go, and sin no more."

The following year, in 1717, an edition was printed by John Baskett. People referred to this Bible as a "Baskett-ful of errors" as there were so many printing mistakes. The page heading for Luke 20. 9 read, "The Parable of the Vinegar" instead of "The Parable of the Vineyard," hence its popular name of *The Vinegar Bible*. One of these Bibles is found in St. Andrew's Church, Farnham, Surrey, given to the church in 1739 by the speaker of the House of Commons.

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## PERSEVERANCE

Medical Missionary, Dr. Stanley Browne, was once journeying up the River Congo in the hospital motor-boat. Ahead of him, out of the blue, three storm centres suddenly converged. The wind reached hurricane force, the rain beat down in torrents, and all around the waves were black and angry. He knew they were in great danger, and asked the African boatman if they should stop till the storm abated.

Dr. Browne never forget his answer. His eyes looking straight ahead, his hands gripping the wheel, he said:

"To go back is impossible.  
To stand still is too dangerous.  
We *must* go forward."

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## “THY HEAVENS”

*“When I consider Thy heavens, the work of Thy fingers, the moon and the stars which Thou hast ordained; What is man that Thou art mindful of him?” (Psalm 8. 3.)*

Some years ago a calculation was made by a team led by astronomer Dr. Simon Driver of the Australian National University in Canberra. The team concluded that the universe contains about 70 sextillion - or 70 thousand million million million - observable stars, according to the most accurate estimate yet made of the number. This was a figure that far exceeded all previous estimates. 70,000,000,000,000,000,000,000 stars! (70 followed by 21 noughts!) This is greater than the estimated number of grains of sand on all the world’s beaches and deserts - in fact about 10 times more.

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Psalm 8 speaks of the greatness of God’s creating power. Verse 3 reminds us that it is “Thy heavens.” It is similar to Psalm 89 where in verse 11 we read: “The heavens are thine, the earth also is thine.” They were “founded” by God.

Today, it is not fashionable to believe in creation, but this is man’s blindness. There is lot of talk how we are going to save the planet, but our planet Earth, the sun, the moon and the stars all belong to God. He made them - they are the work of His finger.

When we look up at the sky on a starry night, it reminds us how great and glorious God is. Once, God told Abraham to look up, and to count the number of stars, if he was able - which, of course, he was *not*.

Going back to our figure of 70 sextillion stars, Dr. Driver himself said: “Even for a professional astronomer used to dealing in monster numbers, this is mind-boggling. This is not the total number of stars in the universe, but it’s the number within range of our telescopes. The real number could be much larger still - some people think it is infinite.”

Of course, the team did not physically count the stars, but using some of the world’s most powerful telescopes, they instead took a representative sample by counting all the galaxies in one small region of the universe. By measuring precisely how bright each galaxy was, they were able to estimate how many stars it contained and extrapolated this out to the whole universe visible through telescopes.

The Hubble Deep Field, a seemingly empty patch of the sky, turned out to be filled with distant galaxies (NASA). The vast majority of stars are too dim to see with the naked eye, which can pick out only around 5,000 stars from even the darkest places, and only 100 or so in the middle of a big city.

Another astronomer has calculated that our Milky Way galaxy contains about 300 billion stars, of which about 30 billion are like our Sun, and at least 1.5 billion theoretically have orbiting planets the size of Jupiter.

In 1999, observations by NASA astronomers, using the Hubble Space Telescope, suggested that there are 125 billion galaxies in the universe.



*Hubble Space Telescope*

One very beautiful day in June, two Jehovah's Witnesses called at my door (it was a Saturday morning). The conversation began by commenting on how lovely the blueness of the sky looked. They then asked me what I thought was going to happen to this beautiful world. I said, "One day, it will all be burned up."

"Oh no," they said, "You don't think that God would burn up His beautiful world, do you?"

I said, "It is not what I think that matters. It is what God's word tells us."

And indeed, Peter tells us (2 Peter 3. 7 and 10) that one day "the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up." The Jehovah's Witnesses did not know how to reply to this clear evidence from God's word.

Psalm 8 ends as it began - the excellency of God's name - and that His name is greater even than all His works.

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And one final thought this Christmas time: amongst those 70 sextillion stars, there was one special star created by God that went before the wise men "till it came and stood over where the young Child was" – it was ordained from all eternity that *this* star should lead directly to the Saviour.

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## THE GRACE OF GOD IN THE HEART

There was once a man who had got so far in his regular drinking that he was downing two pints (just over a litre) of brandy a day.

One day he went home and said to his wife, “My dear, come and sit by me.”

She sat there, looked at her husband, and then said, “If my husband did not drink, I would be the happiest woman in Canada.”

“What?” he said in surprise.

She repeated: “If my husband didn’t drink, I’d be the happiest woman in Canada.”

“Well, my dear,” he said, “I married you to make you happy, and I ought to make you happy. It is my duty to make you happy, and if *that* will make you happy, I will not drink another drop as long as I live.”

He was as good as his word. For eight years he kept it up without any belief in Christianity. He rejected the Bible and all its requirements.



*The drinking saloon*

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Many years later, one day, walking down the street with a friend, the man said, “Do you see that red-fronted building, that drinking saloon?”

“Yes,” said the friend.”

“Well,” he continued, “I have been afraid of that building many years. It is right on my way as I go to business, but I always went down another street to avoid going past it. I have done it again and again. But, since I got the grace of God in my heart, I go right by that saloon. And if I have the slightest desire to enter it I offer a prayer: ‘Lord, keep me for Christ’s sake,’ and I go by safe.”

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Ah! gentlemen, when a man abstains from drink in his own strength, he does it at a daily risk; but when Divine grace reigns in him, he is safe.

*From an 1878 magazine*

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## THE LIONS' MOUTHS SHUT

*"We ought to obey God rather than men" (Acts 5. 29).*



*Wong Ming-Dao*

Wong Ming-Dao was born in 1900 in Beijing (formerly Anglicised as Peking), the capital of the People's Republic of China, while it was under siege of the Boxers. At the beginning of August in 1939 (which was the third year of the Japanese occupation of North China) he returned to his home town after ministering in Hongkong. At this time in his life he was publishing a quarterly periodical known as the *Spiritual Food Quarterly*. This is his story.

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On arriving home, I was shown a document sent out by the Japanese Ministry of Information.

It was a directive requiring all newspapers and periodicals published in the city to insert, in their next issue, four slogans drawn up by the Japanese Army Bureau. Anyone daring to disobey this directive would be severely punished.

The brother who handed it to me voiced his opinion. Obviously, he said, we cannot publish slogans like this; but not to publish them is plainly dangerous. Who would dare to disregard a direction from the Japanese military? At the time I weakened. While I was determined not to compromise truth by publishing God-dishonouring slogans, I did not possess the courage to publish the *Spiritual Food Quarterly* in the usual way without including the slogans.

I discussed the matter with several believers and with one voice they recommended that we let the *Spiritual Food Quarterly* cease publication voluntarily. In this way we would avoid compromising truth and yet at the same time avoid incurring danger. In view of my having weakened I naturally welcomed advice like this and accordingly began my preparations to halt publication.

That year we had published a combined issue for Spring and Summer, but the Autumn issue had not yet been published. Subscriptions covered the whole year, so if publication ceased half-way through the year I would have to return subscriptions for the second half of the year. So I prepared to print and distribute an announcement



informing subscribers that we would either refund the half-year subscription or send books to that value. While I was making these preparations my heart was full of anguish, because up to that time the *Spiritual Food Quarterly* had been published for twelve and a half years. In fact I regarded this publication as my child. Every quarter I myself wrote the manuscript; I corrected it; and sometimes I even sent it out. Many readers had told me of help that they had received through reading this periodical. But publication was now to be halted. The child was dying an early death. My heart was filled with great sorrow.

On August 14th, in the evening, I was praying in my room when suddenly my heart was rebuked by the Holy Spirit. I asked myself some questions: “When you began publishing the *Spiritual Food Quarterly* did you not do so because you were unmistakably guided by God? And during the twelve and a half years of its publication is it not true that many have been helped by it? Who is it that today is causing you to stop publication? It is not that God is causing you to stop publication, but that you yourself are voluntarily ceasing publication because of an order issued by the Information Ministry of the Japanese Army. Is not this a case of fleeing as you approach the scene of battle? If we publish those slogans we shall be raising the white flag of surrender to Satan; but if we decide voluntarily to cease publication would it not be a far bigger surrender than publishing the slogans?”

I felt that, come what may, we cannot halt publication. We need not enquire as to hypothetical dangers in the future, we will go ahead and publish the periodical as usual but we will not insert the slogans.

After prayer I felt strengthened and prepared to act. I pondered the fact that to publish the magazine without the slogans would almost inevitably bring trouble, for at that time we were required to hand over several copies of every issue to government officials. If the Ministry of Information of the Japanese Army discovered this omission it was absolutely certain that they would be extremely angry, for in their eyes this would amount to disobeying their orders. The outlook was distinctly sombre. If they reacted leniently we would at least expect instructions to cease publication; but if they reacted harshly they would probably arrest me and charge me with various crimes. But I determined not to be swayed by these considerations and resolved to stand firm to see the matter through. They might compel us to cease publication but we would not cease publication voluntarily. Whatever dangers might arise and whatever we might be called upon to suffer I would not

abandon the task that God had committed to me.

I knew that God had chosen me to use me and that in the grave situation in which we were placed He relied on me to be loyal. As the saying is, ‘A soldier is trained for a thousand days; he is used only briefly.’ This was the time that God wanted to use me and on no account must I flee as we approached the battle.

The next day I discussed my decisions with several fellow-believers. No one was willing to utter an opinion. On the one hand they did not wish to hinder me, yet on the other hand they hesitated to express approval. Afterwards I shared my thinking with my wife. She asked me, “Are you prepared to be arrested, to be examined, and to be jailed by them? If you are not fully prepared for these things I fear that when the time comes you won’t be able to endure it. But if you are prepared for these things you may screw up your courage and go.”

I replied right away, “I am prepared.” She said, “Then you may go and act according to what God has shown you.” Thank God, this is just what I did. The *Spiritual Food Quarterly* was published as usual. Not one word did we publish of the slogans that the Japanese military had ordered us to insert in this issue. After publication we sent a copy for them to scrutinize as usual. What happened? They did not arrest me. They did not instruct me to cease publication. They did not even communicate with me.

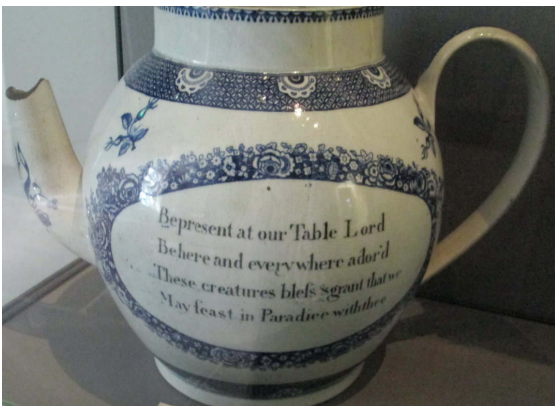
The Japanese Army occupied North China for eight years yet at no time was the *Spiritual Food Quarterly* adulterated (that is, with political matter). Like Daniel I can say, “My God hath sent His angel, and hath shut the lions’ mouths, that they have not hurt me.”

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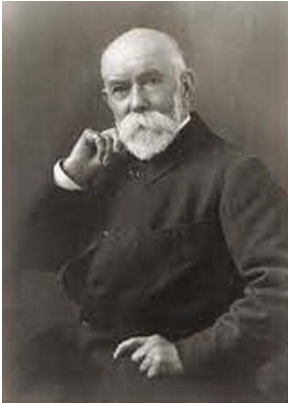
## WESLEY’S TEAPOT

Wesley wrote in his Journals that Josiah Wedgwood, the English potter, had given him a teapot. This teapot was called a ‘Gallon Teapot.’ However, it does not look as though it would hold a gallon! Interestingly, Wedgwood was the grandfather of the evolutionist, Charles Darwin.



## THOMAS BURBERRY

### Inventor of 'Gabardine'



*Thomas Burberry*

Burberry is a well known, world-wide clothing brand with its roots in Basingstoke. Born in Betchworth, Surrey in 1835, Thomas Burberry and his wife Elizabeth came to Basingstoke in 1856. At the age of 21 he set up his very own drapers shop on the Winchester Road. At that time, Basingstoke was just a small village with a population of 4,500 people.

What is not so well known is that Thomas Burberry was a Strict and Particular Baptist. It seems that in 1867 he was instrumental in building a Strict Baptist chapel at Basingstoke, which was formally opened in early February, 1868. The following report appeared in the *Reading Mercury*:

**OPENING A NEW CHAPEL.** On Sunday last, February 2nd, special services were held in connection with the opening of a new chapel, called Ebenezer Baptist Chapel, for that section known as Particular Baptists. The chapel consists of an entirely new building, of a very neat and plain appearance, and is situated in Church-street. A prayer-meeting was held at seven-o'clock in the morning, which was well attended, and at the fore-noon service, a sermon suitable to the occasion was preached by Mr F. Marshall of London, from 1. Chron. 29th chap, and part of the 20th verse. In the afternoon the members partook of the Lord's Supper, and in the evening Mr Marshall again conducted the service and preached the sermon. The chapel was filled on both occasions.

Thomas Burberry was one of the five named trustees on the Chapel's trust deed dated 31st December 1868. The chapel seated 120 worshippers, and was known as 'Ebenezer, Strict and Particular.' A census taken in 1882 recorded a congregation of 90 in the morning and 65 in the evening. There was a thriving Sunday School, with a New Year Treat (as it was called) which included an address, recitations and the distribution of buns, oranges and sweets. Additionally, the Young

People's Bible Class held an annual meeting of supporters.

In 1895 a difference of opinion emerged over whether the chapel should have an organ, some members feeling "that an instrument of music was neither necessary nor desirable in a place of worship." Eventually a consensus was reached, and an American reed organ was purchased. The first marriage was solemnized in 1900. The building continued as a place of worship until the 1930's when by an order of the Charity Commission the building was sold.

But what of his most notable achievement? It came about in this way. Burberry had noticed that shepherds' linen smocks repelled water, and it seemed as though the reason for this was that they had become impregnated with oils from handling sheep. As a large proportion of his customers were farmers, fisherman and hunters, Burberry saw a need for a material that was adequate for the English weather - weatherproof, breathable (insisted on by his Doctor), and tear-proof. After some experimentation, he achieved his aim and called the material Gabardine, which he patented in 1888. The word 'gaberdine' was first used by Shakespeare to describe the cloak worn by Shylock in *The Merchant of Venice*. Whether Burberry purposely altered the 'e' to an 'a', or whether it was a mistake, we shall never know.

The company was a huge success and soon had stores in London, Reading, Manchester, Liverpool and Winchester. There were even stores being opened overseas in Paris, New York and Buenos. In more recent times, the company retooled a trench coat factory to make non-surgical gowns and face masks for use in the Covid crisis, and donated substantial sums of money towards the search at Oxford University for a coronavirus vaccine.



As the material was known for its protective material qualities, Gabardine was used by many explorers, including Sir Ernest Shackleton on three of his Antarctic expeditions. However, it was not just explorers that wanted the material. In 1902 the British War Office wanted a new



Gabardine coat designed for its soldiers to help them with the weather conditions. The company gained approval at the highest level when no less than King Edward VII is recorded as saying: “Give me my Burberry.” The Editor’s school uniform list included a ‘Navy Gabardine Raincoat’ and it was standard school-wear in the 1950's and 60's. It is now a recognisable global brand known for its check pattern and beige trench coat.

But how many people know that it was invented by a Strict and Particular Baptist from a little town in Hampshire?

## COUNTRIES WHERE THE TBS DISTRIBUTE SCRIPTURES

1. Albania	29. Dominican Republic	57. Kenya	86. Rwanda
2. Algeria		58. Liberia	87. Sao Tome & Principe
3. Angola*	30. Ecuador	59. Lithuania	88. Scotland
4. Antigua & Barbuda	31. El Salvador	60. Madagascar	89. Serbia
5. Argentina	32. England	61. Malawi	90. Sierra Leone
6. Armenia	33. Eritrea	62. Malta	91. Singapore
7. Australia	34. Estonia	63. Martinique	92. Slovak Republic
8. Belgium	35. eSwatini	64. Mauritius	93. South Africa
9. Benin	36. Ethiopia	65. Mexico	94. South Korea
10. Bolivia	37. Finland	66. Moldova	95. Spain
11. Brazil	38. France	67. Mozambique	96. Sri Lanka
12. Bulgaria	39. Gambia	68. Myanmar	97. St Kitts & Nevis
13. Burkina Faso	40. Germany	69. Namibia	98. St Lucia
14. Burundi	41. Ghana	70. Nepal	99. Sweden
15. Cameroon	42. Greece	71. New Zealand	100. Switzerland
16. Canada	43. Guatemala	72. Niger	101. The Netherlands
17. Cape Verde Island	44. Guernsey	73. Nigeria	102. Togo
18. Chile	45. Honduras	74. North Macedonia	103. Trinidad & Tobago
19. China	46. Hong Kong	75. Northern Ireland	104. Uganda
20. Colombia	47. Hungary	76. Norway	105. Ukraine
21. Cook Islands	48. India	77. Pakistan	106. Uruguay
22. Costa Rica	49. Iran	78. Panama	107. USA
23. Cote D'Ivoire	50. Iraq	79. Paraguay	108. Venezuela
24. Croatia	51. Ireland	80. Peru	109. Wales
25. Cuba	52. Isle of Man	81. Philippines	110. Zambia
26. Cyprus	53. Italy	82. Poland	111. Zimbabwe
27. Czech Republic	54. Jamaica	83. Portugal	*Scriptures distributed via Christian logistics organisations in the UK.
28. Denmark	55. Japan	84. Romania	
	56. Jersey	85. Russia	

## JOHN BUNYAN APPOINTED TO THE PASTORATE



John Bunyan remained a prisoner in the Bedford County Gaol for twelve years from 1661 to 1672. In 1672 King Charles II issued a Declaration of Religious Indulgence. Bunyan was released from prison. He was immediately appointed pastor of the Independent Church in Bedford.

### EXTRACT FROM THE CHURCH MINUTE BOOK:

“At a full assembly of the Church at Bedford the 21st of the 10th moneth of 1672: –

After much seeking God by prayer, and sober conference formerly had, the congregation did at this meeting with joynt consent (signifyd by solemne lifting up of their hands) call forth and appoint our brother John Bunyan to the pastorall office or eldership. And he accepting thereof gave up himself to serve Christ and his church in that charge, and received of the elders the right hand of fellowship.”



*Old Bedford Gaol on the bridge*

The king’s Indulgence lasted only a year as he was forced to withdraw it the following year. In 1677 Bunyan was returned to prison. The law on which Bunyan was put in prison came into being in Queen Elizabeth’s reign. It was entitled, ***“An act for the punishment of persons obstinately refusing to come to church.”***

This monstrous act made law “that if any person above the age of 16, should refuse attending the reading of common prayer in some church, or should be present at any conventicle under the pretence of religion, he should be committed to prison without



bail; and in case he refused to sign the declaration of conformity within three months he should abjure the realm, and go into perpetual banishment; in failure of which he was to suffer death, without benefit of clergy.” Under this dreadful act, Bunyan was sentenced. Justice Keeling told him, “Hear your judgment; you must be had back again to prison, and there live for three months following; and, at three months end, if you do not submit to go to church to hear divine service, and leave your preaching, you must be banished the realm; and, if after such a day as shall be appointed due to be gone, you shall be found in this realm, or be found to come over again (without a special licence from the King), you must stretch by the neck for it, I tell you plainly.” “But,” said the fearless Bunyan, “I told him, as to this matter, I was at a point with him; for, if I were out of prison today, I would preach the gospel again tomorrow, by the help of God.”



*Bunyan's wife interceding for the release of her husband*

Three thousand people, it is said, would gather together in the borough of Southwark, before breakfast, to hear him preach, even at one day's notice. King Charles II once asked Dr. Owen, how he, who had so much learning, could hear a *tinker* preach. The doctor replied, “May it please your Majesty, had *I* the tinker's abilities for preaching, I would most gladly relinquish all my learning.”

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## A FEW CURRENT MATTERS

### **Total of over 100s rises**

The number of centenarians soared by nearly a fifth last year to 15,120. The huge leap was caused by a baby boom after the First World War. The oldest man in the UK at the moment is aged 109 years.

### **Virus deaths hit 5m**

In November the John Hopkins University reported that the number of deaths from Covid-19 around the world had reached five million. It makes Covid the third leading cause of death worldwide after heart disease and strokes.

### **Boys to wear a skirt**

Castleview Primary school in Edinburgh requested boys as young as three to go into school wearing skirts to ‘promote equality.’ Teachers wrote to parents: ‘We want our school to be inclusive and promote equality. We’re keen to spread the message that clothes don’t have gender and that we should all be free to express ourselves as we choose.’ The Word of God makes it clear that clothes *do* have a gender and that it is a sin to wear clothes that pertain to the opposite sex. “The woman shall not wear that which pertaineth unto a man, neither shall a man put on a woman’s garment: for all that do so are abomination unto the Lord thy God” (Deuteronomy 22. 5).

### **More state control of schools in India**

The Indian state of Gujarat has passed a law that the appointment of teachers and head teachers will now be undertaken by a Central Recruitment Committee rather than the schools themselves. It is feared that the law will be used against the appointment of Christian teachers in religious schools. Christian groups have launched a legal challenge.

### **“Did not know about Covid”**

The remote village of Mangual in Peru’s dense Amazon rainforest first learned of the global pandemic in October this year when health workers arrived by boat with vaccines. Through a translator, a community leader said, “We didn’t know about Covid-19. This is the first we hear of it.” The village is a three-day boat ride along rivers starting from the Amazonian city of Iquitos, itself unreachable by road. The villagers hunt and fish for food, and live in wooden stilt houses with no electricity. Connection with the outside world is minimal and the local language is unique.

## SNOW IN JERUSALEM

*Does it snow in Jerusalem?*

Yes, but rarely. Our cover picture shows the Dome of the Rock on the Temple Mount in the Old City of Jerusalem in February 2021 - its first snow for six years. Snow blanketed parts of Lebanon, Syria, Jordan and Israel which had not seen snow for many years.

*When was the last heavy snowfall?*

In January and February 1950, Jerusalem experienced the largest snowfall registered since the beginning of meteorological measurements in 1870.

*What are the usual winter temperatures in Jerusalem?*

This cover of Perception is being prepared on Monday, 29th November. Outside is a sprinkling of snow, and the temperature is -1 degrees. In Jerusalem it is 26 degrees, exceptionally hot for the time of year! The average daytime temperature ranges from 12 degrees in January to 29 degrees in July and August. Jerusalem is much cooler than many parts of Israel. We can understand how Peter sat and warmed himself by the fire: “And the servants and officers stood there, who had made a fire of coals; for it was cold: and they warmed themselves: and Peter stood with them, and warmed himself.”

Today, Israel has no coal of its own, but imports almost 10m tons a year from countries such as Russia. Maybe in Bible times there were small deposits here and there. The many Old Testament references to “burning coals of fire from off the altar” show that coal was readily available. We read also of that wicked officer of the king, Jehudi, who cut the Word of God “with the penknife, and cast it into the fire that was on the hearth, until all the roll was consumed in the fire that was on the hearth.” The account does not refer to coal, but “on the hearth” leads us to think that it was so.

Did you realise that the Lord Jesus Himself once made a coal fire on the shore of the Sea of Galilee? “As soon then as they were come to land, they saw a fire of coals there, and fish laid thereon” (John 21.9).