

PERCEPTION

A Quarterly Magazine for Young People



“Thy name, O Lord, endureth for ever; and thy memorial, O Lord, throughout all generations.”
(Psalm 135. 13).

SPRING 2022

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Cover picture: The Monument to The Great Fire of London 1666

PERCEPTION

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SEVENTY YEARS ON THE THRONE

We pay tribute to our beloved Queen Elizabeth, who, on 6th February 1952, became Queen at the age of 25 on the early death of her father, King George VI. In her historic reign of 70 years, we praise her for her tireless service, her commitment, her integrity and loyalty to us as a nation and the Commonwealth.

The Queen is the only British monarch ever to have reached a Platinum Jubilee. She has reigned for fourteen years more than the entire life of her father, who died at the early age of 56. Queen Victoria reigned for almost 64 years, at the time the longest in British history. May the Lord grant His blessing upon her for the remainder of her days.

“Thy choicest gifts in store
On her be pleased to pour,
Long may she reign.
May she defend our laws,
And ever give us cause,
To sing with heart and voice,
God save the Queen.”



COURTESY OF ROYAL MAIL

Left: One of a series to mark the Platinum Jubilee.

Above: To mark the Coronation.

EDITORIAL

“God...hath determined the times before appointed, and the bounds of their habitation” (Acts 17. 26).

Many of our readers enjoy autobiographies – perhaps the lives of godly ministers from the past. Have you noticed how most autobiographies begin in exactly the same way? For the last two years in this magazine we have been serialising the life of John Warburton. His account begins in this way: “I was born at Stand, about five miles from Manchester, in October, 1776.” In this quarter’s *Perception* we begin the life of George Mockford. The first sentence reads: “I was brought forth into this world of sin and sorrow at a place called Southerham, in the parish of South Malling, Lewes, Sussex, on December 27th, 1826.” Two important things are here: *where* and *when* – Manchester 1776, Southerham 1826. The next sentence in an autobiography is usually about their parents. John Warburton says, “My parents being poor...” and George Mockford, “My parents were poor...”

This order of events is summed up exactly by John Ryland in his well known hymn (Gadsby’s no. 64): “Parents, native place, and time.” Is this important? Is it important to you that you were born in, say, Chippenham? Is it important to me, the Editor, that I was born in Letchworth Garden City, Hertfordshire? Yes, it is very important, because (to continue the hymn), “All appointed were by Him.” When and where we were born was *appointed* – it was not a case of it just happening to be. God knew from all eternity the moment when, and where, we should be brought into this world.

Every year in the United Kingdom over one million houses change hands, many by those who wish to change location. Behind every property transaction there was a series of decisions made by the purchaser as to where they wished to live. But we wonder how many have prayed about it!

Our birthplace is appointed by God, and it is equally appointed when and where we shall depart from this world. When visiting the various Bethesda Homes, many of the dear elderly residents would say, “I never thought I would end my days at Studley,” or “I never thought I would come to live at Harpenden” – but it had all been appointed by God. The time of our death is also appointed: “It is appointed unto men once to die.” We do not know that time, as this is known only to God.

In this Editorial, we want to think of the things that happen between these two events, the “time to be born” and the “time to die,” remembering that all is appointed. If we have been blessed with godly, gracious parents, that is a great mercy. John Warburton was able to say: “My dear mother was, I believe, a vessel prepared unto glory before the mountains were brought forth.” George Mockford on the other hand, said: “My parents were what is called church people, who did not like dissenters.” He tells us that his father could not see the good of boys “being religious.” So although it is a great blessing to have gracious parents, God has called many from worldly, godless homes, often just one of a family. Can we look back in our lives to an appointed time when we began to think about things which had never concerned us before? Perhaps it was the thought of eternity. Or perhaps it was a sense of the greatness of our sins before a holy, righteous God and the Judgment Day.

We have been reading recently of how God called Abraham out of his “native place” – Ur of the Chaldees – to go to a place that God would show him. How old Abraham was we do not know, but he departed from Ur with his wife Sarah, his father Terah, and his nephew Lot, and went as far as the city of Haran (the same name as Abraham’s brother), where they settled. Here the family increased, and by the time they left Abraham was 75 years old. When, in 1927, the famous archeologist Leonard Woolley excavated the site of Biblical Ur, he concluded that it was a city with a high standard of civilisation, the houses testifying to comfort, and even luxury. It was a big step for Abraham to leave his family home, but he had this promise, that God would show him where he was to go. The end of the journey was the land of Canaan, but it would be many years before he reached it. The hymn, based on Psalm 86, is a good prayer:

“Long as my life shall last,
Teach me Thy way;
Where’er my lot be cast,
Teach me Thy way.”

(This hymn, “Teach me Thy way, O Lord,” was written by Benjamin Ramsey, a music teacher at Bournemouth Grammar School.)

You may ask, Where is (or was) the city of Ur? It was in the area we call Mesopotamia, that is, the land between, and immediately surrounding, the two great rivers, the Euphrates and the Tigris, which

eventually join together and flow into the Persian Gulf, today's Iraq. Some scholars say that the city of Ur did not exist, but that Ur simply means 'land' – the land of the Chaldees. However, even today there is a city of the same name and we have no reason to doubt that it was indeed the name of Abraham's city. The fact that the Euphrates is mentioned in Genesis chapter two has led many to believe that the Garden of Eden was situated in this area.

If our lives are spared, there will be many different stages we pass through:

- Birth and babyhood
- School
- College or University
- Work
- Marriage (for some)
- Retirement
- Old age
- Death

At every stage of life, there will be decisions to be made, often difficult, and maybe with no clear leading. *Never take any step without prayer.* We do believe that, even though there may be no clear leading, if we have committed our way to the Lord, He will not suffer us to take a wrong step. It may be tried, it may not end as we had expected, but if it has been *His* way, it will have been for our good. When a Sunday School teacher (for over 20 years) I was often tried that my lessons were so frequently on the life of some Bible character. But it came to me like this, that the Word of God is largely God's dealings with men and women, and it is here that we find much instruction. David the Psalmist and King of the land, made many mistakes and fell into grievous sin when he had not sought the Lord. What warnings, what lessons, there are here! We cannot stress too much, do not decide what you will do, where you will go, or where you will settle, without much prayer.

Our lives are often compared to a journey. The journeys we take today by car may be short, or they may be longer. As we travel, there are many signs we must observe if we are to travel safely. They may warn us of cross roads ahead, there may be a low bridge, it may be a twisty road, there may be men at work. Or there may be a sign that is more pleasant, perhaps a lay-by ahead where we may stop and rest, or refreshments available. Before the days of satnav, if we came to

crossroads and we were not familiar with the way, we may have needed to consult our road map for guidance.

The word of God gives us much guidance for the journey of life. For younger people, especially as they leave home for university or work, there will be fresh temptations in their life. What if your friends ask you to go somewhere that you know is wrong? You do not wish to appear ‘holier than thou.’ Should you go just this once? The Bible is a clear guidebook for you: “My son, if sinners entice thee, consent thou not.” If you fear God, you must say NO.

As Moses led the children of Israel through the wilderness, he found many difficulties in the way. He had been brought up in the court of Pharaoh, and was not familiar with the wilderness. So he called for help. Moses’ brother-in-law, Hobab, was a man who lived in the wilderness. He was not an Israelite, not one of God’s chosen people, but was a Midianite familiar with the routes through the wilderness. He knew the way, and Moses needed his help. “We are journeying,” said Moses, “unto the place of which the Lord said, I will give it you.” But we need you, Hobab, to come with us, to guide us, to be to us “instead of eyes.” Young people, as you go on your journey through life, ask the Lord to guide you every step of the way – let Him be to you “instead of eyes.”

Did Hobab go with them? We are not told. At first he said he would *not* go, but maybe he changed his mind – the scriptures are silent on the outcome (see Numbers 10. 29-36). But God did not leave His people without guidance. He sent them a cloud to go before them, and when the cloud rested they stopped to camp in the wilderness of Paran. When the cloud moved again they “went out of the camp.” Indeed, God sometimes “moves in a mysterious way.”

We will close with one verse of a much-loved hymn concerning God’s leadings – another good prayer.

“Lead us, Heavenly Father, lead us,
O’er the world’s tempestuous sea;
Guard us, guide us, keep us, feed us,
For we have no help but Thee;
Yet possessing every blessing,
If our God our Father be.”

UNUSUAL BIBLES (9)

A Bible printed in Oxford, England in 1792 has been called the “**Denial Bible.**” The name “Philip” was printed in place of “Peter” as the disciple who denied Jesus in Luke 22:34.

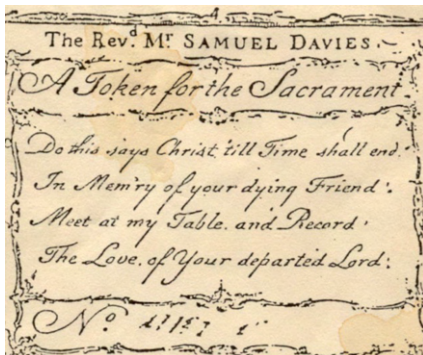
Three years later (1795) a new edition was published. Mark 7. 27 was printed as: “Let the children first be killed.” It should, of course, read, “Let the children first be filled.”

“LEAD US, HEAVENLY FATHER, LEAD US”

Having ended our Editorial with this hymn, it is interesting to note that this popular hymn was written by James Edmeston, who is reputed to have written over 2,000 hymns, many of a high standard. It was his habit to write a hymn every Sunday morning and then read it at family worship. Whether the tune Edmeston, number 640 in the CTB, was named after him we have been unable to establish. Do any of our readers know?

COMMUNION TOKENS

In the days when churches were larger than they are today, it was not uncommon for the participating church members to be given a token (usually numbered) to allow them to sit at the Lord’s table.



There were two Welsh ministers of the same name, Samuel Davies the first (1788-1854) who preached in Liverpool and Manchester, and Samuel Davies the second (1818-1891). We do not know to which minister the token pertains. The hymn is by Isaac Watts, no. 1121 in Gadsby’s HB (slightly different first line).

GEORGE MOCKFORD (Part 1)

"I will take you one of a city, and two of a family, and I will bring you to Zion" (Jer 3. 14).



Birth

I was brought forth into this world of sin and sorrow at a place called Southerham, in the parish of South Malling, Lewes, Sussex, on December 27th, 1826. My parents were poor, the occupation of my father being a shepherd. I was the eldest surviving member of a large family of twelve children, the first-born having died in infancy; and this being the case, I had, as soon as I was old enough, to be mother's help, to nurse the baby, clean the house, and do sewing like a girl, so that I was not only prevented from playing with other boys, but also from going to school.

Schooling

I did go for a short time to a dame's school, and thence for a little while to the British School at Lewes. My parents were what is called church people, who did not like dissenters; but they only went to church to have their children christened, or to attend a funeral. We were taught the church catechism on a Sunday afternoon, were also instructed to use the Lord's prayer, and for a time I was sent to the church Sunday-school. I was soon noticed as one paying



"My parents were what is called church people." St. Michaels Church, South Malling.



*"When I was ten years old I was taken entirely from school."
The Little Schoolhouse, Lewes*

great attention to my instructors, who, I remember, excited my wonder as to how they knew so much, and I had a great wish to be as wise as they: therefore I drank in very eagerly all they told me; and by their instruction the church and her ministers, ordinances, and ceremonies were soon looked upon by me as having something mysteriously angelic or heavenly about them; and being naturally very credulous, particularly of anything that had some mystery about it, I could easily be made to believe the statements of the mysterious, learned men, the clergy or church ministers.

Serious thoughts

I can remember, when quite young, having very serious thoughts about the great God that made the heavens and the earth, of the judgment day, and of hell. I remember what an effect some conversation between my father and mother had upon me when very young. I heard father tell mother that some person (mentioning the name) who lived in my mother's native place was dead, and that in his lifetime he had sold himself to the devil for so much money. On the bearers attempting to lift the coffin in which the body lay, they could not do so because of its great weight; this could not be accounted for until

they opened the coffin and found the body covered with brimstone, the smell of which was unbearable, and this they said was a proof that the devil was going to take him into hell for ever.

When about eight years of age I was employed, during the summer, to scare the birds from the corn etc., for which I had a shilling a week, seven days to the week; for though the master went to church, the rooks would go on stealing the corn if they could.

Health concerns

When I was ten years old I was taken entirely from school to help my father in the capacity of shepherd-boy, for which I had two shillings per week, which I thought was a great deal, though I never had the money, as, of course, my father took it.

I was always rather delicate in health, and had no stamina about me for outdoor exposure; the food for us young ones consisting of little else than potatoes with a little bacon fat on them. Having commenced my new occupation in the winter, I felt it much; my feet and hands became covered with chilblains, which soon broke out into open sores, yet for a time I had to work getting the turnips out of the ‘pie’, as we used to call this heap of turnips, covered over with straw and earth. I had some old leather gloves on, but the dry earth used to get into my gloves and fill my sores, and so bad did they become that the doctor was called in, who ordered me to be kept at home for a week at least, and gave directions to my mother how to treat my hands and feet.

I got better in a fortnight and went to work again, but caught a severe cold; indeed it must have been a bad attack of bronchitis, as I can remember how I had to labour for breath, and the wheezing noise in my chest could be heard all over the house.



“I was sent on frosty mornings to pull up the turnips in the field.”

For this again I had the doctor, but my father, who was naturally strong and healthy, had no sympathy with his white-faced son; he said I must be hardened to it, or I should never be any use; so one of the means employed was to send me on frosty mornings to pull up the turnips in the field, laying hold of their frosty tops without gloves on. But as my father was remonstrated with by some of the workmen on the farm about it, I did not

go many mornings. The great ambition of my father being to save money, his study was that his children's little strength and time should be all put to such an account as would be conducive to this end. This kind of treatment had no tendency to foster love to him; I began to have a great dread of him, and all I did for him was done under fear of the lash.

Thoughts of eternity

I remember about this time, a young gentleman from Lewes often walked in the evening to Southerham, and seeing me in the garden at work would talk to me and give me tracts that produced sometimes solemn thoughts about death and eternity, and finding I was willing to listen, his visits were more frequent than was agreeable to my father, who said he was most likely some one learning to be a parson, so he busied himself with talking to others; but as for boys who had their living to get, he could not see the good of their reading or being religious.

Steals his master's turnips

But as I grew older in years, so I did in sin. I was encouraged to keep rabbits, and any profit I made by them was to be used in buying my own clothes. My father would have been pleased for us to buy all our clothes, though he would not have encouraged me to do what I did to get profit, as I used to steal my master's turnips and hay to feed my rabbits. At first I was much scared in doing it, but soon grew bolder by seeing some of the workmen, who kept rabbits, do the same.

In a little while I could go into my master's garden and orchard, and fill my pockets with fruit; but I had at times such guilt on my conscience on account of it, that when I have been out on a dark night, I have felt as if Satan was upon me, and would surely carry me off. I vowed and promised to do so no more, but as soon as the light of day returned, and I got into the company of those who could curse and swear, and take the name of God in vain, my resolution melted away like ice before the fire, and I began to join with those who went to the ale-house, and hear them sing songs.

All I heard and saw there was quite congenial to my natural heart; I was delighted while in it, but O the guilt and fear I felt in walking home alone on a dark night after leaving my companions! I kept repeating part of the Lord's prayer or some such language to keep the

devil (as I thought) from grasping me; and on reaching my home, I have opened the door, and getting inside, have suddenly closed it to shut out the devil. There was no hatred to sin, no sorrow for it; but the dread of hell and punishment of my sin often made me cry out, "Do save me; do pardon me, and I will lead a new life." I do believe that persons from the effects of natural conviction may have great sorrow and long much for mercy, and yet there be nothing in it but the workings of nature.

Deliverance from dangers

I remember about this time being much alarmed. I attempted to take a jackdaw's nest that was built near the top of a high chalk pit; I tried to reach it from the top by lying down and reaching over, when a portion of the earth underneath me gave way, and but for the presence of mind I had to work myself gradually back by my feet, I must have been dashed in pieces.

At another time I was passing through a field in which was a vicious ox. I did not see him until I heard him close upon me. I cried out, "Lord, help me," and ran towards a fence which I just reached, and leaped over as the ox overtook me, but the fence being on a bank stopped him.



A vicious ox

I had also a second deliverance with respect to this same ox, when I was trying to detach him and another from a cart; the men would go in front of them to take the locker out that fastens the cart to the yoke, but as I was afraid to do this I went in between them and the neb of the cart, and they started with me in that position, the ox pressing his body tightly against mine. I was so jammed against the neb that I could scarcely breathe; but suddenly the wheel of the cart came in contact with a wall, which stopped the animals, and the pressure being removed, I dropped on the ground, and the master coming along at that instant pulled me out from under the feet of the oxen. It was, of course, thought that I must be fearfully crushed. I was taken indoors and restoratives given me; but wonder-of-wonders, no harm had come to me beyond the shock to the system.

How plainly we see the truth of the word of God, "Preserved in

Christ Jesus, and called;" and with the poet I can say:

"Preserved in Jesus when
My feet made haste to hell;
And there should I have gone,
But thou dost all things well;
Thy love was great, thy mercy free,
Which from the pit delivered me."

But at length the set time came,

"Not to propose, but call by grace,
To change the heart, renew the will,
And turn the feet to Zion's hill."

O how I love those words of the poet,

"There is a period known to God,
When all his sheep, redeemed by blood,
Shall leave the hateful ways of sin,
Turn to the fold, and enter in!"

Affected by a tract

When I was between sixteen and seventeen years of age, some unknown person came upon the Downs, and addressing me, said, "Well, my lad, do you like reading?" I replied, "Yes." "Then," said he, "I will leave this tract with you, and when I come again I shall know how you like it." I put it into my pocket, and thought, "I am not going to read that religious book; he might keep his book for aught I care", but then this thought came, "Well, you had better look at it, or you won't know what reply to give him when he comes again." So I took it from my pocket to look it over, but never did look it over in that sense, as all at once it looked straight into me. It was in this way. As I took the book from my pocket, these two scriptures met my eye, and went to my heart: "The soul that sinneth, it shall die." "He that offendeth in one point is guilty of all." I was struck as with a flash of lightning; the book dropped from my hand, and I fell to the earth.

How long I lay there, I cannot tell, but presently I began to crawl into a hedge nearby. I was afraid to look up, as I felt sure if I did, I

should see the eye of God upon me from above; and while lying in the hedge, I cried for the first time in my life, in the language of the publican, "God be merciful to me a sinner." O what a solemn sight I had of the majesty, holiness, and justice of God! and I proved His word to be as a sharp sword, piercing my heart. I felt there was no hiding myself from God. I wished that I could find some place to hide myself from the presence of my angry Judge.

How I got home that night I cannot tell, but such was the effect upon my body that I could scarcely walk. My parents were terrified at my appearance, and kept wanting to know the cause of my illness, but I could not tell them. Being able to eat but little, and sleep less, I soon became so ill that I was sent to a doctor, who examined me, and shook his head, but said, "I will try if I can do anything for you." Every one supposed that I was in a rapid consumption.

The church clergyman visited me, to whom I told my trouble; he laboured hard to comfort me, telling me God was very merciful, and only required us to do what we could, and he would do the rest. I puzzled him much because I was so anxious to know what my part was, and how much I was required to do. This he could not satisfy me about; but by reading the books he lent me, and attending to his instructions, I began to feel more quiet in my mind. As I was in real earnest to be right, I gave the greatest attention to my adviser, whom I held in much reverence. I felt sure all his instructions must be right, so I worked hard to do all he told me, and I soon could leave the rest, believing what he said, that God was a merciful God.



"The church clergyman visited me"

Thought well of – but all a delusion

I soon became quite religious, and was looked upon as such in the parish where I lived. I began to take tracts to people's houses, and visited the sick, exhorting them to turn to God, repent and believe, and they would soon be as safe as I was. My case excited much interest, as the clergyman set me up as a Christian young man. I was still very weak and feeble in body, and I could not get after the sheep, as I was not able to walk fast enough to keep pace with them as they passed from one part

of the Downs to the other.

I remember one of the workmen on the farm saying to me one day, “Do you know what the doctor thinks of your case?” I said, “No, what is it?” “Well,” he said, “your father and mother do not want you to know, but the doctor says you cannot live long.” “Oh,” said I, “I am quite ready to die; my peace is made with God.” It is true I felt as I said, so wrapped up was I in a false peace, and so incased in a false confidence; and had I then died, everyone would have said what a good end I had made. I knew not my need of Jesus Christ, nor had I any faith in him or desire after him; my ground of hope of going to heaven was the peace I felt – a peace that I had made with God, as I thought.

O what a delusion of the devil! But so he deceives thousands. Of such it is said that they “have no bands in their death; their strength is firm.” But my God had thoughts of peace towards me of a very different nature, blessed be his dear name.

Confirmed by the Bishop

The reader will observe that the sense of guilt that I had felt was on account of actual or outward sins; I knew nothing of heart sins. I was a hearty devotee of my (falsely so-called) spiritual adviser, and at his earnest desire I was confirmed by the bishop. Being honest as far as I knew, I wanted to attend to all things in a way that would not break my peace; but I felt adverse to confirmation, and told my instructor that I shrank from it. And when he asked the reason, I answered that I understood I was to relieve my sponsors of their obligation made at my baptism, and take it upon myself; but I would rather not take it upon myself, as I considered they had promised so much, and now if I failed, all the blame would rest upon me. His reply to this was, that as I had arrived at the age to which these vows extended, even if I were not confirmed, my sponsors would be free of responsibility, and it must rest with me.



Ashurst Gilbert, Bishop of Chichester at the time of his confirmation

So I was confirmed, and then, of course, I was entitled to attend the Lord's supper. This for some time I resisted, as that scripture so stood in my way, "He that eateth and drinketh unworthily, eateth and drinketh damnation to himself." This word "damnation" was very solemn to me, for I often feared I was not quite right; so the church minister and I had several talks on the subject, and I was told that it ought not to read damnation, but condemnation, the difference being explained in this way, that it simply meant that persons who lived in drunkenness, adultery, or open sin, in partaking of the Lord's supper did so unworthily, and thus their sinful acts condemned them. So I was persuaded to attend, and I remember it was a very solemn act in my estimation; but I was greatly put out by seeing some at the table who I knew frequented the public-house, were often intoxicated, and cursed and swore. However, by these means I was engrafted into the church, bound by her bands, and safely folded, and it was suggested to me that I was now safe, and safe I thought myself, not knowing that destruction was close at hand. "Thou turnest man to destruction; and sayest, Return, ye children of men."

Pride before a fall

I was filled with pride on account of what I had attained unto, and through the praise of others I was lifted up, and built my nest in the stars, but saith the Lord, "From thence will I bring thee down." I had built my house upon the sand, and when God put into practice His own word, "I will overturn, overturn, overturn," my house fell, and great was the fall of it.

I fell into open sin again, and I had made a vow unto God that if I did so any more, he might damn me. I would not ask forgiveness again; and now I felt as if God would take me at my word, and at once hurl me into hell for ever. His divine law that I thought to be unto life, I now found to be unto death; it required perfection in thought, word, and deed. The fountain of the deep was broken up within, I saw the thought of foolishness is sin, and I stood before God a condemned criminal, all hope of salvation being gone. I had besides such a discovery of the holy majesty of God in all his divine attributes – a God who could by no means clear the guilty – that I felt I was only allowed to live that I might prove a spectacle of His just judgments, by carrying – like Cain – the mark of His curse upon me. This produced hard thoughts of God for ever permitting our first parents to fall; and now His word, as I read it,

was like a candle searching into the inmost recesses of my heart.

Enmity to doctrine of predestination

I began to discover the doctrine of predestination and election as revealed in the scriptures, but O the enmity I felt against it, and against God on account of it! Where was the justice of God in it? I asked, as the doom of all was fixed, and that nothing man could do, would or could turn the mind of God. This was what I absolutely refused to believe. How hard I tried to make the word of God speak a different language! But the more I read it, the more I found the sovereignty of Jehovah set forth in its pages. The passage I particularly disliked was, “Jacob have I loved, and Esau have I hated;” so I tried to persuade myself that it was wrongly translated.

For months this deep distress continued, and my teacher the clergyman, and other church people who visited me, pointed out how wrongly I was acting in trying to look, as they said, into those secrets that belonged to God; I was putting a very wrong construction upon these doctrines. They tried hard to persuade me that Jesus Christ died for all mankind, quoting many passages to prove what they said, and I brought forward those parts of God’s word I had felt the power of in my heart, which were quite against the doctrine of universal redemption. Sometimes they pitied me, and sometimes spoke very harshly to me.

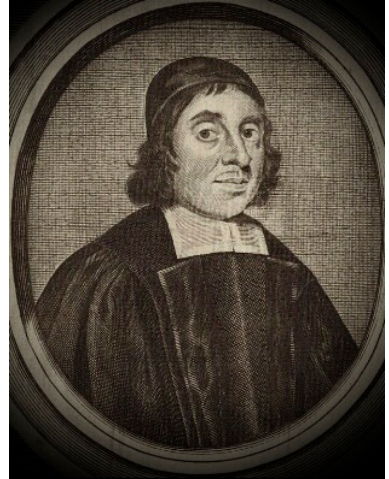
My parents were advised to take any books away that I might have, as they feared my mind was already greatly impaired by much reading. The weakness of my body increasing, I was taken from the sheep, and removed to the farmhouse to act as groom, and do anything the servants might require of me. This was supposed to be the only means of prolonging my life, as I should now be sheltered from the weather, and it was hoped that the good farmhouse ale, of which I was permitted to take as much as I liked, would strengthen me, and the company of the servants bring me out of my melancholy state. It did make a difference, for these servants were full of tricks and jokes, in which I was soon induced to join, and the trouble of soul began to be less. But not as before. It could not be stifled. And as to my not asking God for mercy, I could no more help doing that, than I could help breathing.

TO BE CONTINUED

THE DAY OF JUDGMENT

by Thomas Watson

Thomas Watson is thought to have been born in Yorkshire round about the year 1620. He is well known as a Puritan preacher, one of the English Protestants in the 16th and 17th centuries who sought to purify the Church of England of Roman Catholic practices. He studied at Emmanuel College, Cambridge, where he was noted as a diligent student. At the beginning of the Civil War, about the age of twenty-seven, he married his wife Abigail, who went on to have at least seven children in the next thirteen years, four of whom died young. He remained loyal to the Stuart monarchy and went to Cromwell to protest against the execution of King Charles I. This for a while led to his imprisonment. At the time of ‘the great ejection’ which followed the Act of Uniformity in 1662 he, with many other ministers, was dismissed from his pulpit at St. Stephen’s Church, Walbrook, London, a medieval church destroyed just four years later in the Great Fire of London in 1666. He had been Pastor for 16 years. He continued to preach in secret, especially amongst those affected by the Great Fire. He died suddenly at Barnston, Essex on 28 July 1686 while praying in his room. He was much loved, although it appears he must have been a very solemn preacher, as can be seen from the following extract.



Christ’s coming to judgment will be dreadful to the wicked. At the coming of the Judge, there will be a fire burning around Him. He “shall be revealed from heaven with His mighty angels, in flaming fire, taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ” (2 Thess. 1. 7 - 8).

When God gave His law upon the mount, “there were thunders and lightnings . . . and Mount Sinai was altogether on a smoke, because the LORD descended upon it in fire” (Ex. 19. 7 - 18). Augustine said, If God was so terrible at the giving of the law, O how terrible will He be when He comes to require His law.

The trial itself will be very great in size. Never before was the like seen. “For we must *all* appear before the judgment seat of Christ” – *all*. Kings and nobles, councils and armies, those who were above all trial here, have no charter of exemption granted them. They who refused to come to the *throne of grace* shall be forced to come to the *bar of justice*. And the dead, as well as the living, must make their appearance. “I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God” (Rev. 20. 12).

The trial consists in the opening of the books. “The judgment was set, and the books were opened” (Dan. 7. 10). There are two books that will be opened: first, the book of God’s omniscience [i.e. God’s knowledge of everything]. God not only observes, but registers, all our actions. “Thou numberest my steps,” said Job. The word “*to number*” signifies to put a thing into a book. It is as if Job had said, “Lord, Thou keepest Thy daybook and enterest down all my actions into the book.”

What shall be the consequences of the trial?

The separation: Christ will separate the godly and the wicked. “He shall separate them one from another, as a shepherd divideth his sheep from the goats” (Mat. 25. 32).

The sentence: The sentence pronounced upon the godly is, “Come ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world” (Mat. 25. 34). After the pronouncing of this blessed sentence, the godly will go from the bar and sit on the bench with Christ. “Do ye not know that the saints shall judge the world?” (1 Cor. 6. 2). Here below the world judges the saints, but there the saints shall judge the world. The sentence pronounced upon the wicked is, “Depart from me ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels” (Mat. 25. 41).

The carrying out of the sentence. “Bind the tares in bundles to burn them” (Mat. 13. 30). It is everlasting fire. No length of time can terminate it. A sea of tears cannot quench it. To avoid it will be impossible. But at the day of judgment, Christ will unload His people of all their sins. He, at that day, will present His church, “Not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing” (Eph. 5. 27).

I remember an aged friend saying the devil always takes learned and clever men for His servants; the Lord takes fools to be His. (*Elijah Coe.*)

GOD'S DELIVERING POWER

(Part Two)



*Rev. Archibald Glover, wife Flora, Hope and Hedley,
and Miss Caroline Gates in the year 1899*

In our Spring 2014 edition we included an extract from *A Thousand Miles of Miracle in China* by the Rev. Archibald E. Glover of the China Inland Mission. The book is a personal account of the author's deliverance with his wife and two small children, and a third missionary, Miss Gates, from the hands of the Imperial Boxers of Shan-Si at the height of the Boxer rebellion in China 1899-1901. The Imperial command was given: "Exterminate the Christian religion." All protection was withdrawn, and they were at the mercy of the merciless mob. The peace given in the face of certain death was remarkable.

The 2014 extract led up their condemnation to die – either to poison them with opium, behead them with the sword, to shoot them with a gun, or to attack them *en masse* outside in the street.

Kill the foreign devils

We had been seated in harrowing suspense for some little time, when a Boxer officer arrived on the scene – a young man of soldierly

bearing, with clearcut, handsome features, but an expression pitiless and cruel as the grave.

Relieving himself of his bag, he unsheathed his sword, and entered into conversation with those about him. His oft-repeated “Ai-ia!” as he looked across at us sounds still in my ears, and the look itself – even now my blood curdles as I recall it.

“What are you doing, letting these foreign devils sit here? Why don’t you kill them? Kill them outright – that’s our first business.”

Then stepping forward immediately in front of us, he closely scrutinized each one, asking us from what country we came, what it was that brought us to China, and what we now intended to do. Our answers provoked a sarcastic curl of the lip, as he sneered some contemptuous word, and turned for further conference with the rest. The result of which was that he sheathed his sword, shouldered his bag, and with the remark that he was on his way to the Boxer camp (7 miles off), but would shortly be back with his company to finish the work, hurried off.

Thus marvellously was another respite granted us, in the infinite mercy, of our God. True, it was only for a little while, but the officer’s unexpected withdrawal brought a faint, faint gleam of light into the prevailing darkness, and strengthened us to lean hard on Him with Whom all things are possible.

The sorrows of death

So we continued to sit on, while the crowd, which had swelled considerably by this time, continued to hem us in. They were now becoming bolder and more aggressive in their attitude. The wide ring was gradually narrowing towards us, until the foremost were but a few paces from us. We saw that they were evidently bent on taking matters into their own hands, without waiting for the arrival of the Boxers; and once more my beloved wife and I spoke words of farewell. I also gave her directions how to act, as well for little Hope as for herself, in the moment of attack, while I undertook to act for Hedley.

Meantime, Sheng-min’s care for us revived, and elbowing his way through the crowd he brought the dear children a small three-cornered cake each of rice and dates. Dear little souls! they were hungry enough, having fasted for twenty-six hours, and their eyes glistened at the sight of the tempting morsel. As they put it to their mouths, one who had made himself increasingly obnoxious snatched it from their hand and ate it before them.

By this act the barrier of restraint was broken down, and the one cowardly deed was quickly followed by another. The man standing immediately in front of my wife suddenly darted forward, and seizing her left hand attempted to tear the wedding ring from her finger. In a moment the hot blood shot to my temples, and as my beloved one looked at me appealingly and closed her hand to guard the sacred symbol, all the feeling of resentment natural to the flesh rose up in me with strong temptation to strike. But the power of God kept me, as He brought to remembrance the word, "Avenge not yourselves, but rather give place unto wrath. Recompense to no man evil for evil," and I just whispered, "Let it go, darling. Don't grieve over it. The Lord will give you much more than this." So, meekly opening her hand, she yielded up the treasure. What it cost her thus to part with it, and what it cost me to see her subjected to such insult, no words can express. But the memory of that gentle act of resignation is a more precious possession to me now than ever the lost ring could have been, for it was the substance of that of which the ring was but the shadow – the Christ-like expression of her true wifeness and womanhood.

A murderous onslaught

This overt act of violence was the signal for a general attack. With a wild shout of "Rob!" they rushed upon us. There was not a moment to think how one should act. We were each one seized and hurled out into the road, into the midst of the raging mass. I never thought it possible that any one of us could or would come out alive. For myself, I was torn away from wife and children, and knew nothing, saw nothing, heard nothing but the mad tumult of what I was convinced must be a murderous onslaught. By a painful process not far removed from lynching, my clothes were torn from me, and when I was left alone – alive, to my amazement – it was to find that, save for socks and cholera belt, I was naked.

It was as well that my mind had other thoughts wherewith to occupy itself than



Hope and Hedley

with my own condition. Where were my loved ones? and where was Miss Gates? As I turned to look, the fighting crowd parted, and I caught sight of my precious wife standing alone, and anxiously looking for her little ones [Hedley and Hope]. She was flushed from the violence with which she had been handled; her gown was gone, and the “san-tsi” (or shirt) that was still left to her with her nether garments was torn. But she had sustained no serious injury, and was heroically calm. She greeted me with, “Oh, thank God you are alive!” – every other thought was for the moment swallowed up in that for both of us. “Have you seen the sweet lambs? Oh, where are they?”

It was a heartrending sight when, a moment or two later, we did see them. Not dead, thank God, nor, apparently, injured, but in uttermost terror and bewilderment wringing their baby hands and crying piteously for us, as they ran distractedly hither and thither among the hurrying mob. To recover them was the work of but a moment. Poor little darlings! their joy at seeing us seemed to eclipse all the terror, and very soon the tears were forgotten in the comfort of having their hand fast in ours again. Nothing had been left to them save their light gauze combinations and socks.



The food shop “where we were allowed a seat on a low plank beside the door”

And Miss Gates? She was lying in the roadway some thirty yards off, stripped of her gown, face downwards and quite motionless. We thought at first she was dead, but Sheng-min was with her, and as I went forward he raised her, and she opened her eyes. Presently, with his support, she was able to move, and together we all retraced our steps to the booth, where we were allowed a seat on a low plank beside the door of the food-shop behind.

The fellowship of His sufferings

I may here relate what actually occurred to my wife, Miss Gates, and the little ones, at the moment of attack, when we were torn one from another. It would seem that Miss Gates was dragged along for some distance, the violence with which her head struck the ground producing

unconsciousness. Hedley was roughly stripped at once, but little Hope, being a girl, was cruelly mauled as they tore at her clothing. She told me that “a man came towards her with a sword, and she prayed in her heart to God not to let him hurt her, and then he turned away from her.” As for my dear wife, she was knocked down at the first rush and dragged hither and thither, by head or feet, in the process of stripping.

It seemed now as if we had been brought to the lowest point of distress and humiliation – to a condition of things, in fact, in which it would be easy to choose death rather than life. I cannot utter the thoughts that overwhelmed my spirit as we sat there in our utter destitution. I can only say that the realization of all that our circumstances involved for the weak women and children under my care, together with the bitter shame of my condition, completely overcame me, and for the first and only time in all those sad weeks, I gave way to my grief. When my beloved wife saw the silent tears, she gently said, “Darling husband, why do you cry? Remember, this is the fellowship of Christ’s sufferings. He is counting us worthy to suffer shame for His Name.” Thus, through the tender ministry of her love, He poured His balm into my heart.

Some degree of pity at the sight of our misery seemed to have been excited in the heart of a few, and a bowl of “mi-t’ang” (thin millet gruel) was passed to us to drink. For this we heartily thanked God, praying that He would bless the giver, and taking it as a fresh token of His near presence and watchful care for us. Not long afterwards, a short coat of filthy rags, such as professional beggars wear – the like of which could only be seen in China – was handed me over the heads of the bystanders from within the food-shop behind, by one who was none other than the tramp, arrayed now in a garb of respectability which I recognized as none other than my own. So now our friend had realized his object: he had *my* garment, and I could have *his*. He and I had changed places. It would have required much grace, under ordinary circumstances, even to have handled such a disgusting thing; but as it was, I could only thank the grace of God which provided me a covering at all; and, bowing my acknowledgments to the man, I readily adopted it.

Yet a little later, one of my stolen shoes was returned, which proved of the greatest service to me afterwards; the dear children’s shoes also were recovered. But the kindness of God was crowned by the arrival of our boy, P’ao-ri, on the scene, with a pair of pants which had formed the major part of his own kit for the intended journey to Chau-kia-k’eo.

They were well patched, and came to about half way up my leg; but what of that? They met my sore need; and more than that, they were the embodiment of the love of Christ, offered me in His Name and for His sake; and as I thanked the dear lad in the Name of the Lord Jesus, I thought with joy of the King's recognition awaiting him: "I was naked, and ye clothed Me. Inasmuch as ye did it unto one of the least of these My brethren, ye did it unto Me. Come, ye blessed of My Father."

"Father, forgive them"

The day was wearing to late afternoon, and ere long we must expect the return of the Boxer officer with his braves. We had no reason to believe that the people were any the less disposed than heretofore to complete the programme they had set themselves, the first part of which they had already carried out. The stripping, doubtless, was but the prelude to the killing, as they had said. They still swarmed menacingly about us, giving us to believe that it was merely a question of time – a brief respite only, not a final reprieve. A clear indication of this seemed to be given when the shopkeeper at length came out, and once more ordered us off the premises.

There was nothing for it but to resume the old seat beneath the saplings. We knew that we were doomed – that, humanly speaking, all hope of escape was gone, and that any moment now the Boxers would be on the spot. Besides, to attempt to leave the place would only call forth suspicion and provoke the ever threatening attack. So we quietly sat down again on the slope, to be once more confronted by the instruments of death.

It was at this particular period that the climax of suspense was reached. For we could not but realize that, according to their declared intention, the next event was to be death. They had taken what they wanted: what else was there left to them to do but to kill us?

The inner experience of that hour was a singular one, in the way in which anxiety and rest existed side by side. How anxiously my eyes were for ever turning in the direction of the spot where the Boxer leader disappeared, expecting every moment the dread sight of his reappearance; and then how fearfully would my eyes wander back to the actual evidences of the destruction awaiting us! And yet, over against all the dread, how marvellously balanced was the deep peace of God!

As we sat, I need hardly say we prayed, not so much for ourselves as for our would-be murderers. It was no light compensation for the

bitterness of the cross that we should be given by His grace, in the fellowship of His sufferings, the fellowship also of His constraining love; and even the very prayer from His own Cross, "Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do." To find it possible to be possessed at such a time by the spirit of divine love and compassion instead of by the natural spirit of resentment and hate, was to us a tangible evidence of the truth of the Gospel we had preached.

Kept by an unseen power

How long we continued to sit there I could not say. The time seemed interminable. The sun was dropping to the west, and still the mob held back, and still the Boxers had not come. At length, to my amazement, one of the men (probably a "shae-sheo," or village elder) called to us: "What are you sitting there for? We don't want you here. Be off with you! Tseo pa!"

The cry, "Tseo, tseo!" was taken up, and I saw our God-given opportunity.

"We have no wish to stay here," I said. "If my respected elder brother will allow us to go quietly on our way, we will go at once."

We got up and moved off. Once more the crowd fell back before us, as if held by an unseen power, and not a hand was lifted to touch us as we passed on to the Kao-p'ing road.

We had not gone far, however, before they caught us up again, and made it pretty clear that they intended to dog our steps. Upon this, we again seated ourselves on a grassy sward by the roadside – to attempt to go on seemed idle; and once more we were surrounded. A supercilious young scholar, seeing us sitting thus as he drove by, dismounted in the hope of getting some sport out of us; and our answers to his questions upon our religion called out horrible execrations from the rest.

Up to the time of our being stripped of our clothing, my wife had been able to retain her tiny pocket edition of the Oxford Bible, which she carried within the inner fold of her gown. The one, of course, had disappeared with the other; and the loss of the precious little volume was to her, and to us all, irreparable – more keenly felt than any other. And now, as we sat, we caught sight of it in the hands of one of our captors, who was toying carelessly with it or showing the curiosity to the bystanders. Who should that one be but the tramp! My dear wife's joy at the sight of her lost treasure was very touching. It was, however, only to be an aggravation of the trial of its loss; for the man's hard heart was

proof against all her tearful entreaties, and the last we saw of it was its disappearance – most sad irony! – into my pocket. This may seem a trifling matter to record; but in reality it formed an integral part of the sufferings of that most suffering day, and as such I could not omit to notice it.

What do we want with your Je-su?

The incident of the scholar had the effect of breaking the people's reserve to us, and they showed greater readiness to talk to us than at any previous time. Though it followed the line marked out for them by their superior – that of rude, contemptuous questioning – yet it gave us an opportunity of preaching to them Jesus. The word was vehemently opposed by an old man, who had been very demonstrative when the scholar was talking with us, but whose rage now altogether broke bounds.

"Je-su, Je-su," he thundered; "what do we want with your Je-su? We mean to drive you foreign devils out of China, and Je-su too. Away with Him, and away with you! Tseo pa!"

It seemed now in very truth that the end could not be delayed. The crowd made a threatening move towards us, as they again took up the cry, "Tseo, tseo!" We answered as before, in polite, conciliatory tones, that we had no wish to trouble them with our presence, but that it was themselves who would not allow us to go. If they for their part would undertake not to follow us, but just leave us alone, we would go our way and trouble them no more.

Once again they fell back as we rose to go. A fear seemed to have fallen upon them that paralyzed their arm. They made no attempt to follow us; and when we looked behind at the bend of the road, the way was clear.

No hiding place

How to make the best use of our liberty, and of the time at our disposal, was the problem now. Was there any way open to us by which we could baffle pursuit?

Happily, the rising ground on either side hid us well from sight. Lifting the children in our arms, we left the road they had seen us take, and passing through a quarry made for the fields beyond. Here we were overtaken by a sharp shower of rain, and having no shelter at hand were soon wet to the skin. In this, however, we saw the hand of God working

for our good; for the friendly shower would both serve to deter the people, and also to convince them how false was the superstitious charge they had brought against us. On we pressed, seeking a temporary hiding place. But in vain. Nothing in the shape of cover could we see, look which way we would.

By the time the rain was over we had made some little distance, and my heart was beginning to take fresh courage when, as I turned to reconnoitre, I saw against the sky-line the figures of scouts on the look-out, and I knew that we had been sighted. We at once made for the lower ground, where we should be for awhile hidden from their view; and in doing so, we came upon a small hollow just off the beaten track, and sufficiently high up to elude the observation of passers-by. It was partially screened by shrubs, and large boulder stones were tumbled in it. Here was the very refuge we needed; and one by one – not without difficulty, owing to the treacherously balanced boulders – we stepped down into it. In another hour or so the sun would have set; and if only we could escape detection so long, we might then hope to get well away under cover of darkness. How anxiously we listened, as we crouched together, almost fearing lest the loud beat of the heart might betray us!

We had not been long seated when our ears caught the sound of voices and hurrying feet. They passed without seeing us, and we breathed again. A few minutes later, others were heard approaching; and they too passed ignorantly on. At last a couple of men happened to turn when they were all but past the spot, spied us huddling together, and stopped. The game was up. There was nothing for it but to put a good face on our discomfiture and descend to the roadway. The men then hastened on to report their discovery.

“I will not fail thee, nor forsake thee”

Worn out with all that we had already gone through that day, rain-bedraggled, and oh! so hungry, our plight seemed more hopeless than ever. It was just now, when in sore dejection, we were wandering on to we knew not what of fresh buffetings and cruelty, that the Lord gave us another token that He was with us and tenderly caring for us, according to the word that He kept in our hearts, “I will not fail thee, nor forsake thee.” Two men were seen coming over the field, and presently they called to us. Not knowing whether they were for or against us, Sheng-min answered the summons, and after a word with them bade us come. One of the two proved to be a gentleman from Lu-an city. With much

compassion in his look and voice, he said, “I am so sorry for you. I would assist you, but am helpless to do so. Certain death awaits you: you cannot escape it. There are people there and there” – (pointing warningly) – “waiting to kill you. I would urge you, however, under any circumstances, to avoid the village before you. And yet I know,” he added, “that you cannot go far without losing your lives. It is very, very hard for you.” And with that he handed me twenty-five cash, saying, “Take this: it is all I have on me.”

A little act of kindness

His companion then came forward, and without saying more than “K’o lien, k’o lien” – “I am so sorry for you” – thrust into my hand a tin of condensed milk which he had recovered from the plundered supply of our litters.

What these words and acts of mercy meant to us at that juncture I cannot express. We were much moved. Indeed, my dear wife, with her thoughts centred on the needs of her little ones, could not refrain from tears at the sight of the milk, and again and again we thanked our kind benefactors in the name of the Lord Jesus.

Following our friend’s warning, we turned our steps in another direction, towards the village of Uang-fang, where an evangelist of our church (Chin sien-seng) was living; his wife only, however, being at home at this time. Our hope was that, if only we could reach her house unobserved in the darkness, she might be able to hide us in the loft until the storm had blown over. Fond hope, that was neither realized nor realizable! And yet God allowed it, for the sustaining of our courage and the guiding of our steps in the prepared path.

Our change of direction was quickly noted, and a large body of men gave chase. We were now pressed hard, and the threatening attitude of the men kept us in constant expectation of attack. At length they made a rush for our boys. Sheng-min, a big, powerfully built fellow, defended himself; but the odds of thirty to one were too heavy, and he was borne to the ground. For several minutes the scene resembled a wild football scrimmage. Every now and again the poor lad became visible for a moment, struggling desperately; and my wife and Miss Gates covered their eyes as they cried out, “Oh, they are killing him, they are killing him!” Then he was wholly lost to sight, and



Sheng-min

we could but conclude that all was over with him. It was a time of awful suspense as we sat and waited for we hardly dared to think what; for surely our turn would quickly succeed.

Then the gang scattered, some running in various directions, others eagerly scouring the ground. Some half-dozen ran for poor P'ao-ri, who had escaped their hands when the first rush was made, and was now standing near us. As he offered no resistance, they contented themselves with searching him from head to foot, and after robbing him of what little silver and cash he had on him, they made off.

The interception of God

Meantime, to our unspeakable wonder and joy, Sheng-min reappeared, bearing the evident traces of his conflict, but still sound of limb, through the miraculous keeping of God. Unknown to us, both he and P'ao-ri had secreted a portion of our silver in various parts of their clothing before leaving the inn at Han-tien, and had jealously guarded it until now against our future need. The discovery that he had ingots on him was enough. They wanted nothing else, and were content to let him go when they were satisfied that his all was in their hands. In the fierce scuffle, some of the silver and much of the cash in his wallet had scattered on the ground, and it was owing to this that many were kept from the further pursuit, so intent were they on the search for what they could pick up.

The path we had taken brought us out upon an open space, where we were met by an expectant crowd, who at once pointed us in a particular direction. Here again we experienced a remarkable interposition of God. A woman of their number, touched at the sight of our pitiable condition, compassionated us so far as to lend the ladies a needle and thread to mend the rents in the garments left to them. Hearing the talk that was going on around her, to the effect that they intended to kill us near the village towards which they were pointing us, she set up the customary wail for the dead, whereby we divined their intent, and, with Sheng-min and P'ao-ri to lead us, followed another path of their choosing. We found, however, further crowds



P'ao-ri

awaiting us and coming to meet us all along the road. As they met us, they turned and went on with us. It was a steep incline all the way, and how wearily now we dragged along it!

The presence of our native servants was an untold comfort – God’s own gift to us for such a time. But He was pleased now to remove one of them. I saw P’ao-ri forging on ahead, and then, at a point where the road curved to the right, disappear in the crowd. I imagined that he had gone on to reconnoitre, and that he would reappear farther on. But we never saw him again. This was a sore trial at the time; but the Lord was our confidence, and we rested in the assurance that it was the ordering of His perfect wisdom.

The reason of P’ao-ri’s disappearance I learnt long afterwards. As the village of Uang-fang was our objective, he decided to go on before and prepare Mrs. Chin for a surprise. In this way there would be no disturbance created by our arrival, and no unfortunate waiting at her door. In fact, he received the coldest of receptions. In her terror at the threats held out by the Boxers to all who professed “the foreign religion,” she (poor soul!) had recanted, and was burning incense as he went in. Her fright at seeing him was such that she affected not to know who he was. As for any thought of receiving us, it was out of the question. Indeed, it was as much as her life was worth to have him even shadowing her doorway; and she entreated him to begone without delay. Baffled in his endeavour, P’ao-ri retraced his steps and sought for us high and low, but to no avail; until at last, utterly wearied out and unable to find any clue to our whereabouts, he gave up the search and returned sadly home.

TO BE CONTINUED

FURLONG

This English word came into being in the 1400's. The longest single furrow a horse could plough before resting became the length of a common field, a ‘furrow long’ or furlong (220 yards). A furlong is mentioned twice in the Bible, first in Luke 24.13: “And, behold, two of them went that same day to a village called Emmaus, which was from Jerusalem about threescore furlongs;” and then in John 6.19: “So when they had rowed about five and twenty or thirty furlongs, they see Jesus walking on the sea, and drawing nigh unto the ship.”

THE TRAGEDY OF *SS CITY OF BENARES*

During the year 2021, at least forty-four migrants died attempting to cross the channel from France. Three of them were children. All deaths at sea are tragic, but the deaths of children, who had no part in the decision to make the perilous crossing, are saddest of all.

This article is about a far greater tragedy that began at around



SS City of Benares

midnight Wednesday, 18 September 1940. Eighty-three children died when *SS City of Benares* was torpedoed by a German submarine, a U-48, of the Imperial German Navy. Only nineteen of the one hundred and two children aboard survived.

Colin, an 11-year-old pupil at a prep school in St. John's Wood, north London, had been signed up by his parents to join a trans-Atlantic evacuation scheme sanctioned by Prime Minister Winston Churchill. The scheme was organised by the Children's Overseas Reception Board which became known as CORB. The scheme received more than 200,000 applications from worried parents for just 20,000 places. As the bombs continued to fall, the successful children would have been evacuated to the safety of Canada.

The reason Colin went? Like many boys of the time, Colin had been circumcised. If the Germans invaded, he risked being mistakenly identified as a Jew. Aboard the vessel, Colin stood out because he was dressed in a bright red jacket. It was no ordinary jacket. His loving mother had sewn a life-jacket into the lining, which in turn had been lined with kapok for insulation. "Never take this off," she warned him.

Derek, aged nine, was also on board with his mother and two sisters – they were travelling as private passengers, not as part of the Government scheme. The ship had slowed down in the face of a violent

storm. But the storm did not keep Derek awake. Suddenly, there was a tremendous bang. At first it was thought that the ship had collided with another. But no, somewhere out there in the deep, a German U-boat had fired a torpedo directly into the ship, just below the children's sleeping quarters. Almost immediately the ship began to go down.

Dennis Haffner, an apprentice on board, has left us this account:

The night we were torpedoed, I was on the watch from eight until twelve with the Third Officer. It was dark, cloudy and very windy – probably about force eight – and rough; very rough.

During the watch we were struck by the torpedo in the port side of Number Four hold, above which was the accommodation where the children were berthed. Almost immediately she started to go down. The shout went out: "Clear the boats! Abandon ship!" The Engineers stopped her as soon as we were hit, and managed to get the emergency lighting going which made things easier. Fortunately, we were a light ship and she took a long time to go down – but it was not much time for the children to get themselves organised.

I went along to the verandah cafe at the after end of the promenade deck where the children had to assemble at their station, but I found that not many had turned up with their nurses and escorts. I went down below to try and find out what had happened to them and to gather them up. Their accommodation had been wrecked and many of them had been killed or maimed in the explosion. There was just a large hole where the deck had been, and jagged edges of metal all over the place. I could hear and see the water coming in as she settled by the stern, so I couldn't stay long. There was nothing I could do there anyway. I gathered up a few stragglers and took them up on deck to the boats. Being night-time, many of the children were clad in only their night-clothes.

I tried to get everybody cleared off to their boats – especially the children – and then I reported back to the bridge as I was expected to do. The Captain was there and I reported to him that the children, as far as I could see, were clear and the lifeboats were

away. He told me that I could go. "What about you?" I asked, to which he bravely replied, "I'll be all right"; but he went down with his ship.

There was no fire and she went down quietly with her bows up. The shaft tunnel must have been blown up, and she would then have flooded straight through to the engine room if the watertight door had been open or damaged. The Fourth Engineer would have been on watch, but only the Second and Seventh Engineers were saved.

I jumped over the side and swam away from the ship. I still had my greatcoat and bridge-gear on. I couldn't take off my life-jacket with all that on because I would have gone straight down, so I just kept on swimming.

I saw a lifeboat and made for it, but it had been turned upside-down. It must have capsized, for there were still some people clinging to it, clambering and kicking out in an attempt to climb onto its upturned hull. I didn't want to get mixed up with that since I didn't think there were going to be many survivors from it, so I swam away again. I don't think anybody was saved out of that boat.

I was at the end of my tether, a numbness coming over me, when I saw another lifeboat. Somebody's hands reached over the side and I grabbed them. I was hauled into the boat where I then lost consciousness. I came to in the bottom of the boat with somebody pouring brandy into me. Soon I was all right.

The lifeboat was absolutely full. In fact they weren't going to pick me up until they saw I was an officer of some sort and, as there was no officer on board already, they hauled me in. Otherwise it might well have been a different story.

Despite being the only officer, because I was only seventeen, I had but a meagre knowledge of lifeboats, but I did manage to get us all organised. We found the canvas boat-cover which fortunately had been left in the boat, and soon we had everybody covered – it was sleeting and snowing, and there was also spray coming over. It was dreadful weather: rough seas, force eight, the waves towering up and plummeting down – it was terrible. I had to sit in the freezing cold in my wet clothes.

We just sat and waited and waited. Eventually we spotted a ship on the horizon. It was a destroyer coming to rescue us. I thought it had missed our boat as it went round and round to other boats.

However, what had actually happened was that they had seen our boat was all right and had gone to pick up people on the rafts first. We were one of the last groups to be rescued.

On board the destroyer they looked after us very well. We were taken to the boiler room to take off our wet clothes and have them dried on the gratings. We were on board for three days while we headed for Gourock (a Scottish port). The day after our arrival, we went off to our respective homes and that was the end of the ordeal for us. David Critchely, the other cadet (with whom I'd been jointly responsible for getting the children to the boats), was in the last boat to be picked up after eight days at sea. Imagine sitting in a lifeboat for eight days in that rough weather. The Fourth Officer, who was in charge, was decorated with an MBE.

Later we had to attend an enquiry. The man in charge of it stated that everybody had done their job well. There was no question of any fault to be found in the crew for bad behaviour or not doing their job properly. Every member did their job to the best of their ability under the circumstances. It was the weather that caused the large numbers of casualties after the torpedoing.

One of Derek's sisters made it into a lifeboat; his other sister and their mother survived by clinging to a tiny raft in rough seas. "Some of the children were killed in the explosion," he recalled, "some were trapped in their cabins, and the rest died when the lifeboats were launched incorrectly and children were just tipped into the sea. All I can remember were the screams and cries for help. It was one of the worst disasters at sea concerning children, and it should always be remembered."

Colin was assigned to Lifeboat 2. He said, "Mr Raskai bravely helped me into it as it was crashing about against the ship. They didn't have anyone at the ends holding it steady." Once filled, the lifeboat was lowered into the raging sea. It stayed upright, but the big waves breaking over the bows quickly swamped it.

This left Colin sitting up to his chest in water – with only the lifeboat's buoyancy tanks preventing the boat from vanishing beneath the waves. "It was like sitting in a giant bathtub full of freezing water," he recalls.

Meanwhile, Lifeboat 5 was making an uneven descent from the vessel. With a sickening lurch, twelve passengers were thrown from the boat and lost in the darkness. Then the boat up-ended, tossing out the rest.

Among the children floundering in the waves were Bess Walder, 15, and Beth Cummings, 14, who managed to grab the up-turned keel and hung on. Others tried desperately to tread water before surrendering to the deep.

From the half-submerged Lifeboat 2, Colin watched as the *Benares* sank below the waves. "You could see people running around on the decks. Then up went the bows and down she went."

Fortunately for Colin, he was better off than some: he had his padded life-jacket, a balaclava and a pair of string gloves that his mother had put in his pockets. The gloves became essential in the hours ahead in helping him keep a grip on the gunwales.

Within half an hour, four of the crew members on his boat had slipped into unconsciousness and died. Abandoning his grip on the gunwales, Colin helped pull out the corpses and consign them to a watery grave. (Remember, Colin was only 11.)



Colin

His spirits lifted as he spotted a light – but it was only the conning tower of the U-boat, which had surfaced to check out the scene.

As the night progressed, body temperatures began to fall. Those who succumbed to sleep soon joined the growing numbers of the dead. Aboard one lifeboat, a freezing boy fell unconscious and slipped into the sea. He was saved by a fellow passenger, but died minutes later.

In another boat, a young mother had reached the limits of her endurance, but she never knew her babies were already dead, because she soon joined the growing list of victims.

When dawn broke, Bess and Beth were still somehow clinging onto their upturned lifeboat along with two men.

Afterwards, Colin said: "We were all becoming very sleepy, delirious. I could see people dying around me. I knew that if I fell asleep, I'd die. I thought, Wake up, Colin! You must stay awake!"

As it grew lighter, he could see corpses floating around each lifeboat. Of the 38 people in his boat, only 14 remained. Meanwhile, hail and rain continued to fall.

All morning, Colin continued to heave corpses away from his boat. As he worked, he knew that a single wave could sweep him away.

Later, as the light began to fade, even the strongest began to lose hope. In fact, *HMS Hurricane*, a Royal Navy destroyer, was already combing the area. The first lifeboat it found contained only the dead. On Lifeboat 10, just one child had survived and fourteen had died. On No. 11, two out of 11 children remained.

When Bess and Beth were rescued, their frozen fingers had to be prised off their capsized lifeboat. As *HMS Hurricane* approached Lifeboat 2, Colin and the remaining passengers started, somewhat bizarrely, to sing ‘Rule Britannia.’

After being pulled up by a rope to the *Hurricane*, Colin was still so cold he could feel nothing below the waist. He and the other children were watched over that night as they slept – but despite all efforts, three more died.

Most of the survivors were picked up the following afternoon by *HMS Hurricane*, which had steamed 300 miles in answer to the *City of Benares* Mayday call.

After this incident, no more children were sent overseas - the CORB evacuation plan was abandoned.

To this day, it is not known exactly who was at fault for the sinking of the *City of Benares*. German news agencies claimed that the German Navy was unaware of child evacuees on board and maintained that the vessel was an armed auxiliary cruiser, thus providing the justification for an attack under the terms of warfare. When the U-boat crew got back to their base in France and discovered that the *City of Benares* cargo had been children, it is reported they wept.

In contrast, blame was also placed on the Admiralty for ordering the convoy to pass through waters that it knew were populated by enemy submarines. In fact, the ship’s telegram operator was even made aware of such a presence – but the Admiralty failed to take action.

In September 1940 the German Navy published a statement in *The Times* newspaper. It read: “If the ship was really torpedoed with the loss

of children then the murderer's name is Churchill. Nothing is sacred to this monster. The world is beginning to recognise him more and more for what he is – a fiend in human form.”

Some families, such as the Grimmond family from Brixton, South London, faced an almost unimaginable loss: five of their children – Violet, Connie, Lennie, Eddie and Gussie – had all perished that night.



Some of the children on board SS City of Benares

One of the few things to survive was Colin's little scarlet life-jacket. Today, it sits in a glass case at the Imperial War Museum in London.

The *SS City of Benares* disaster is still one of the most studied tragedies of the Second World War.

As we read this sad account, with the lives lost of so many innocent children, the atheist asks his favourite question: “If God exists, and is supposed to be a God of love, and is all-powerful, how can He allow such tragedies to happen? Is He not supposed to love little children, but here He lets eighty-three children die in one night? Is that the act of a God of love?”

Atheists sometimes argue along these lines: “If God created all things, then He must be the author of the circumstances surrounding happenings that cause so much sorrow.” If we respond that God is not the author of evil things, they argue from Isaiah 45, verse 7: “I form the light, and create darkness: I make peace, **and create evil**: I the Lord do all these things.”

Young people will be faced with this line of argument from unbelievers, and it is often difficult to know how to answer them. Perhaps even those who would not normally dream of questioning God’s dealings, struggle at times with similar thoughts. Some have wrestled with the thought that God, at the time of Noah’s flood, destroyed *all* living things, including babies and little children, in fact, the whole of His creation apart from eight souls. God permitted the slaying by King Herod of “all the children that were in Bethlehem, and in all the coasts thereof, from two years old and under.” And then there is Psalm 137 verse 9: “Happy shall he be, that taketh and dasheth thy little ones against the stones.” Could anyone take a little child, even a child of your worst enemy, and dash that little one against the ground?

We limit ourselves to just a few general remarks.

- There was no suffering in the Garden of Eden. All suffering, all sorrow, is the result of the fall of man, when sin entered the world. “In sorrow shalt thou eat of it all the days of thy life” (Gen. 3. 17).
- Every time we see suffering, it is a reminder of sin, although not necessarily sin in the sufferer. In the time of the Lord Jesus, eighteen people were killed when the tower in Siloam fell down. The Lord Jesus taught that it was not because they were greater sinners than others. “Or those eighteen, upon whom the tower in Siloam fell, and slew them, think ye that they were sinners above all men that dwelt in Jerusalem? I tell you, Nay: but, except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish” (Luke 13. 4,5).
- What are these sorrows? We can only name a few. They include pain, illness, disease, disability, famine, hunger, poverty, abuse, broken relationships, betrayal, injuries, disappointments, heartache, crime – and ultimately, for everyone, death – every one of these sorrows is the result of sin entering the world.
- All sorrow must be viewed in the light of Gethsemane. “Was ever

sorrow like unto His sorrow?"

Are you broken? He was broken too.

Are you despised? He was "despised and rejected of men."

Is yours a life of sorrow? He was "a man of sorrows."

Have you griefs in your life? He was "acquainted with grief."

May our faith ever remain unshaken in Him who is

"Too wise to be mistaken, yea,
Too good to be unkind."

THE BURIAL PLACE OF MILES COVERDALE

We are indebted to Miles Coverdale for the first complete printed Bible in English, which he published in 1535. In one sense, Coverdale was not really a translator, but he worked from Tyndale's Bible, Luther's German Bible, Latin versions and other earlier translations, or, in his own words, from 'sondry interpreters and sondry translacions.' The result was a splendid, readable version of the Bible much of which has found its way into the Authorised Version we use today.



A stone's throw from The Monument to the Great Fire of London is the church of St. Magnus the Martyr. Having read in a guide book that Miles Coverdale had been re-buried in this church, we decided to pay a visit. On entering the church it seemed we had entered a Roman Catholic Church. However, on further enquiry we found that it is an Anglican Church, but the worship is in the Anglo-Catholic tradition. Behind the pulpit we found a large memorial tablet to Miles Coverdale.

Coverdale, born in Yorkshire in 1488, became an Augustinian monk living in the monastery at Cambridge at a time when Reformation teaching was affecting the University. In 1528 he openly declared against the mass, worship of images, and private confession. In his seventies, the Bishop of London was able to secure for "Old Miles" the

living of St Magnus the Martyr. After a few years he relinquished his position, refusing to wear the priestly robes. He continued to preach at Paul's Cross, London. At the age of 81 he preached for the last time at St. Magnus. It is recorded: "He was carried up into the pulpit where God did with His Spirit so strengthen him that he made his last and best and most godly sermon that ever he did in all his life."



St. Magnus the Martyr

He died on 19th February 1568, and was buried in the chancel of St. Bartholomew-by-the-Exchange near Threadneedle Street. When this church was demolished in 1840, his remains were removed on 4th October 1840 to St. Magnus church. Most people believe that is where he still lies, but this is not the case as all the chancel burials were removed to the Brookwood Cemetery near Woking in Surrey. We have found a record that says the remains from the Crypt were

removed in 1894. If Coverdale's remains were amongst them, he was at St. Magnus for only 54 years. The memorial in the church reads:

"To the memory of MILES COVERDALE who convinced that the pure Word of God ought to be the sole rule of our faith and guide of our practice laboured earnestly for its diffusion and with the view of affording the means of reading and hearing in their own tongue the wonderful works of God not only to his own countrymen but to the nations that sit in darkness and to every creature wheresoever the English language might be spoken he spent many years of his life in preparing a translation of the Scriptures. On the IV of October MDXXXV [1535] the first complete English printed version of THE BIBLE was published under his direction."

The memorial ends with a quotation from Isaiah 52 verse 7. This is Coverdale's translation of the verse:

"O how bewtiful are the fete of the Embassitoure, yt bringeth the message fro the mountayne, & proclameh peace: yt bringeth the good tydinges, & preacheth health, & saieth vnto Sion: Thy God is the kinge."

THE MONUMENT



In February, a group of our young people visited London. One of the highlights of the visit was the roof garden of the Fenchurch Building, the building which because of its shape we call the Walkie-Talkie. From the top is a wonderful view over the city, looking down on The Monument to the Great Fire of London 1666. It stands at the junction of Monument Street and Fish Street Hill in the City of London. Since the year 1176 the hill was the roadway that led down to Old London Bridge and the Billingsgate fish market, passing through a passageway under the tower of St. Magnus Church (called the ‘fishermen’s church’). The Monument was built between 1671 and 1677. It is 202 feet (61m) tall – the exact distance to the site in Pudding Lane where the

fire began in a baker’s shop. When it was built it was in an open area, but today is crowded in by tall office blocks and is difficult to see from any distance – and even more difficult to photograph. The devastating fire swept through London, destroying 13,200 houses, 87 parish churches, and badly damaging stone buildings such as The Royal Exchange, the Guildhall and St. Paul’s Cathedral. The fire began on Sunday, 2nd September 1666 and was finally extinguished on Wednesday, 5th September.

The word ‘monument’ is found only once in the Word of God. There were Jews in Isaiah’s time who, rather than seeking God in His appointed way, were said to “remain among the graves, and lodge in the monuments.” They would rather consult with the dead than with God! A similar word found many times in the Bible is a ‘pillar.’ When Jacob, on his journey to Bethlehem, lost his beloved wife Rachel in childbirth, “Jacob set a pillar upon her grave.” It was to be a lasting memorial to her, and the Bible says that it was there “unto this day.” The apostle Paul refers to “James, Cephas, and John, who seemed to be pillars.” And in Revelation 3. 12 we read: “Him that overcometh will I make a pillar in the temple of my God,” and God says He “will write upon him the name of my God.” What better desire can we have than that one day God will write His name upon us - to show that we are His to all eternity!

PERCEPTION

A Quarterly Magazine for Young People



“The grass withereth, the flower fadeth: but the word of our God shall stand for ever”
(Isaiah 40.8).

SUMMER 2022

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EDITORIAL

WATER – ONE OF LIFE’S NECESSITIES

“Jesus answered and said unto her, Whosoever drinketh of this water shall thirst again: But whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst; but the water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life.”

By now, for most of us last year’s summer holidays are just a distant memory. One thing we may remember about them is whether during our time away it was wet or dry. I expect for most people it was a mixture, but a lot depends on which part of the country we went to. Our own holiday was spent in the Lake District, and it rained every single day – although thankfully not all day and we did have some sunshine. We found that we were staying only eight miles from Seathwaite, said to be the wettest place in Britain, with 140 inches of rain each year! In spite of the rain, we did have a most enjoyable time in this lovely part of the country.

How dependent is mankind on water. Over recent years, in many parts of the country water has been scarce, with fears that supplies may be running out, leading to hosepipe bans and appeals to use water carefully. How easily we take for granted these vital necessities to life. Some time ago, when visiting Carlisle Castle, we were told to be sure to see the dungeons. One of the dungeon walls is known as the “licking stones” where, during the



The licking stones, Carlisle Castle

where, during the

Jacobite Rising of 1745, the poor parched prisoners, in order to stay alive, were forced to lick the stones where moisture collected.

Even more terrible was the Black Hole of Calcutta. The Black Hole was a dungeon in Fort William, Calcutta, measuring 4.3×5.4 metres (14×18 feet). In the year 1756, on a stifling June night, 146 British prisoners of war were imprisoned in conditions so cramped that many people died from thirst, suffocation and heat exhaustion. The next morning, when the room was opened at 6.00 a.m., only 23 of the prisoners remained alive. The dungeon was a strongly barred room with only two windows, and was intended for the confinement of no more than two or three men at a time. The prisoners were packed so tightly that the door was difficult to close. Many of the prisoners became delirious. “Water, water,” was their frantic cry. One of the guards, more compassionate than his fellows, brought some water, but in the tumult nearly all was spilled. Self-control was soon lost; those in remote parts of the room struggled to reach the window, and the weakest were trampled to death.

In God’s mercy, the needs of the drier parts of the country are often met by the abundant rainfall in the wetter parts. In the Lake District we noticed that the Thirlmere Reservoir supplies the city of Manchester with its water, which is transported 96 miles through an eight foot diameter pipe. I expect when our friends in Manchester turn on their taps they do not give much thought to the long distance the water has travelled!

I wonder how many of you have ever been thirsty – I mean really, really thirsty. When a boy, a friend and myself cycled to the Arlesey Pits in Bedfordshire. These pits were excavated in the mid 1800's when The Arlesey Brick Company began operations there in around 1858, producing the yellow bricks so familiar in those parts (like Clifton chapel) from resources quarried from the pits, which are now flooded. The story is that when the pumps were turned off the pit flooded so quickly that it was not possible to remove the equipment out of the pit in time. The jib of a crane can still be seen projecting from the water. The day we boys were there was hot and sunny, and, as the morning wore on, we became very thirsty. We were a long way from home, and our thirst became severe. We decided to clamber down the steep sides of the pit to reach water level to drink. The water was dreadful, and, in spite of our thirst, there was no way we could drink it!

Although all of us from time to time know what it is to thirst

naturally, do we know what it is to thirst after something very different to natural thirst. David the psalmist said, “My soul thirsteth for God, for the living God.” No doubt David had many possessions in this life, perhaps things he was pleased to possess, but his great desire was that a deeper, spiritual need might be met – he wanted to find a closeness to God. What a good thing it is to thirst after God.

When a young man working in Barclays Bank, I occasionally came into contact with some of its wealthy customers. One day, two directors of a local company came to see the bank manager before the bank’s normal opening hours, and it was my job to unlock the door for them, and show them to the manager’s office. It was well-known that these were some of the Bank’s richest customers. But as I looked at these men, my thoughts were these: “What if they have all this wealth but know nothing of God and eternity! What if they should gain the whole world, and lose their own souls!” And there was a desire, (a thirst) in my heart that I myself might possess something more than the things this world can offer.

Often these early desires, which are planted by the Holy Spirit, are brought about without any human instrumentality. Mr. A. B. Taylor, who became Pastor at Manchester after the death of William Gadsby, was in his young days fond of shooting. He loved to be out on the moors shooting grouse, or rabbits or anything else that offered him sport. His best companions were those who were fond of the gun like himself. But one day, after he had been out shooting pheasants, the words dropped into his heart: “What will ye do in the end thereof.” The next time he went to shoot, the day was spoilt by the same words that came to him through the day. He felt these words must be in the Bible, but he had no concordance at that time, and did not know where to find them.

There is much instruction in the account of the meeting of the Lord Jesus with the woman from Samaria as recorded in John chapter 4. It seems that there was a need for her frequently to visit the well to draw water, perhaps every day. Without water, of course, she could not live. But the Lord Jesus had something more to offer her than the water from the well, good and refreshing though it was. As we can see from the text quoted at the beginning of this Editorial, the water He could give her was water “springing up into eternal life.” In John Bunyan’s *Pilgrim’s Progress* Christian’s cry was after this very thing:

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

Does the thought of eternity and eternal life ever overwhelm you? It is our eternal state – for ever and ever. Can we be indifferent to it? We *will* be indifferent to it unless the blessed Holy Spirit puts that desire to be right into our hearts. Asaph, when writing Psalm 73, speaks of the foolish, that “there are no bands in their death.” What did he mean – no bands? Well, they have no thoughts of death and eternity, no terrors or fears as they “look the monster in the face” (Samuel Medley), no concerns as to where they will spend eternity. It has been said, “Men may die like lambs, and yet be found among the goats” – a very solemn consideration. Although Asaph admitted “his feet were well nigh slipped,” he had come to a better place by the end of the Psalm when he said, “It is good for me to draw near to God: I have put my trust in the Lord God.” In gospel days we may express it in a slightly different way:

“Nothing in my hand I bring,
Simply to Thy cross I cling.”

How much more the Scriptures have to say upon thirst, but we have space for only two more thoughts. The first is some good news: “As cold waters to a thirsty soul, so is good news from a far country.” What is that *good news*? It is that saying worthy of all acceptance: “Jesus Christ came into the world to save sinners.” Can there be any better news than that?

And then our second thought is on the dying Lord. As He hung upon the cross, we read that He said, “I thirst.” Though doubtless suffering greatly from thirst, He refused to make this known until He knew His work was finished: “After this, Jesus knowing that all things were now accomplished, that the scripture might be fulfilled, saith, I thirst.” Oh what grace and love to sinners in His dying minutes.

We said we had space only for two more thoughts, but find we just have space for a third, one more beautiful scripture: “They shall hunger no more, neither thirst any more; neither shall the sun light on them, nor any heat.” What a blessed truth for God’s dear people!

GEORGE MOCKFORD (Part 2)

Brought up in much poverty; confirmed in the Church of England by the Bishop of Chichester; discovers the doctrine of election and predestination and rises up against it – we continue the life of this man called by God to preach the gospel.

The Lamb's Book of Life

I did indeed feel in a strange state; there was inward enmity to God on the one hand, and a crying unto Him for mercy on the other, confessing the sin of my enmity, and hard thoughts of Him. Now I felt sure that Jesus Christ was the only channel through which mercy could flow to a poor sinner. I was led to see that He was set up from everlasting as the Saviour of the church; He was the God-man mediator between God and His elect people. O if my name had but been in His Book of Life! O if He had died for me, then I should have some ground of hope! O that I could persuade God to add my name, to take me in! But no; the election obtained it, and the rest (of whom I feared I was one) were blinded.

A dissenter

I had many talks with the clergyman upon different parts of scripture, and he would sometimes reprove me by saying I ought not to say this portion of the word of God meant so and so; he was my instructor, and I ought to know nothing but what he taught me. I remember on one occasion he said, "You talk like a dissenter." I told him I did not know what he meant. "What is a dissenter?" I enquired.

His answer was that dissenters were a people who broke away from the church as sheep sometimes did from the fold. I understood him to mean people who went to *chapel*, and those I hated, as I had always been taught to look upon them as canting hypocrites, and what he said made me feel more bitter against them. And yet, strange to say, there were two of them who walked past our house every Sunday on their way to Lewes, and they both spoke so kindly to me – one of them giving me a shilling on two or three occasions – and their manner seemed so different from that of the people who went to church, that I sometimes did wish I was like them. And when I have seen them pass, I have felt

at times such a love to them that I was quite vexed with myself for being so silly as to have any regard for such deluded people, as they were represented to be.

The work deepened

As time went on, God deepened His work in my heart, so that I was brought to see and feel that it was not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth, but of God that sheweth mercy; and what an increased fulness I saw in the word *mercy*! It was welcome news indeed unto me. Also the work of the blessed Spirit in the salvation of the church was more and more unfolded to me. I felt that all the actings of the new life in the heart of a poor sinner were the work of the Spirit alone, that all my professed prayers if not indited by the Spirit were only natural, and that faith, hope and love, repentance and obedience could not be spiritual unless they were the work of the blessed Spirit in the heart, and that this was in the new heart that God gives his people, which is a pure heart. This passage was sweetly applied: “A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you.” And this scripture stood forth: “That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit.”

Death of his mother

About this time my mother died of consumption; but before her death she manifested much concern about her soul. The church clergyman visited her, but her request was for me to read and talk to her, which I was enabled to do in the way God had taught me, and I have every reason to believe that the conversation was blessed to her, and that she died in the Lord.

So marked was this, that the clergyman said, “Mockford, I believe God intends you to fill some prominent place in the church; He has done such things for you as He does not do for young men in general.” And soon after this he spoke to my employer about it, also to his mother and others, and it was agreed amongst them to send me to Chichester Training School to prepare me for a missionary. This subject now occupied my mind much, as I had a secret desire that the Lord would pardon my sins, and make me a minister.

But the Lord frustrated their schemes and plans by laying me aside again by affliction, so that my life was despaired of. O what a blow it was to me, when I was told the thought of sending me to Chichester was given up, the clergyman saying it would only be a waste of money as I

should live but a short time!

Marriage

About this time I made the acquaintance of the person who became my wife; she attended the same church that I did, her father being the organist. My natural affections were ardently set upon her, though not a partaker of grace. Some of my friends remonstrated with me, but I argued that I believed she would be made a real Christian. O what a vain argument without a divine warrant! and how contrary to the revealed mind of God in His word. [Young people, there is a warning here! - Editor]

I soon left my situation, and went to live at Brighton, where I generally attended St. Peter's Church. The people with whom I lodged were dissenters, but not, I am persuaded, partakers of grace. They often jeered and sneered at my religion, though God knows I had but little of any value.

I soon got married without any legitimate prospect of obtaining a living; and as to my soul's concerns, they were very much in the background.

Starts a little business

I took to selling milk retail, buying it from an uncle who sold wholesale, and through this occupation I became acquainted with a Scotch lady, to whom I shall have occasion to refer hereafter.

This milk business did not bring us in a living, so I tried to get a little work to do as well. I worked a little for a plumber sometimes. I remember the before-mentioned lady asking if I knew any one who could clean the windows of the house in which she lived. I replied that I could, as I had done some for the man whom I have just mentioned. I accordingly went; but while cleaning the outside of a drawing-room window, I nearly fell, and in attempting to save myself, broke the window, which frightened me much. The lady was out. I measured correctly (as I thought) the size of a piece of glass required to mend it, and went to the man I had worked for, and told him my trouble. He cut me a piece of glass, and gave me some putty. I returned quickly to replace the pane I had broken, but to my consternation I found I had not measured correctly one way, so that the glass I had was almost one inch too narrow. I ran back to the man telling him of the dilemma I was in. He said, "I can cut you a piece more if you pay the extra price." I told

him I had not one halfpenny more than what I had paid him for the other; and he replied, "I shall not cut you another piece, but will give you a slip to put down beside the other, and that will do."

Well, I went back and put in the pane with the slip at the side, as he advised; but of course it did not look nice, and I feared the result when the lady returned, which she soon did, and at once called the servant to know how the window was broken. I was summoned into her presence to give an explanation, which I did honestly, at the same time pointing out to her that I would have put in a proper-sized pane most willingly, but as I had not the money, the man would not let me have it. She said, "I am of course sorry that the window is broken, but I will get a man to put a proper pane in, and I will pay you for the glass you have bought." Then she began to enquire after my welfare, asking if I had a wife, and I felt a freedom to tell her all. She wanted to see my wife, as she said she could find her something to do, which she did, and the Lord raised up in her a great friend to us, as will be hereafter seen.

Attends the Presbyterian Church

I obtained a situation at a brewery, and things went on better for a time; but I had not much felt concern about my soul. I attended for a time the Presbyterian Church at Brighton, and felt more satisfied with some of their forms than I did with the Church of England.

Most of the men at the brewery were openly profane characters, and I had much to endure from their taunts and jeers, though I said nothing to them with my tongue about religion, but I could not do as they did. My bodily strength being small, I do not think I was able at all times to do my master justice. But the foreman took a dislike to me, and got me discharged.

Now I was brought into great straits, having no means of obtaining the bread that perisheth, and things not being right between God and my soul. I cried unto Him, but felt He would not hear me on account of my marriage being contrary to my own convictions, and the word of God. O how true we shall prove that word to be, "If ye walk contrary unto me, then will I also walk contrary unto you!"

About this time the before-mentioned lady left Brighton, and sent for my wife, and gave her the coals she had left and the remaining food, which was indeed a Godsend to us. She also wished me to write and send my address if I left Brighton. But into such a state of distress, both with regard to my circumstances and my soul, did I now sink, that I was

sorely tempted to take my life. Every time I shaved I was continually tempted to use the razor on my throat; so that I dreaded shaving myself, or allowing any one else to do it for me.

Poverty

Having been very short of food for some time, and all one day without any, I went to a shop in the London Road, kept by a Mr. Trangman, where I dealt when I had money, and telling him I was out of work, asked him if he would let me have a loaf of bread and a quarter of a pound of butter. He replied, "No, not without the money."

Oh! this cut me to the quick on account of my wife. I did not mind so much about my own sufferings, but she had done nothing wrong; the wrong was on my side. She had had no food the day before, and had no prospect of any this day. I felt almost in despair; and without letting her know, I purposed going to Hove, to cast myself into the sea; and such was the state of my mind, that I walked through the streets without noticing any one until I was nearly at Hove, when I heard a voice behind me calling; but I did not look back for some time.

As the voice continued calling, I looked round at last, and saw a man hold up his hand, but thinking he did not mean me, I went on, but he called out again, so I turned back and walked up to him, saying, "Did you call me?" "Yes," he replied, "what a deal of calling you want." I said I did not think he was calling me. "Do you want work?" he enquired; and on my answering that I did: "I have," said he, "a garden I want dug and put in order." I gladly agreed to do it (he was butler to some lady), so he said, "Come into the house," bidding me follow him. I told him nothing of my hunger and want; but he said, "Before you go to the garden you must have some refreshment;" and set before me the remains of a leg of mutton, several pieces of bread, and a jug of beer. I was so overcome that I felt as if I could not begin to eat. I suppose he saw my embarrassment; for he said, "You can take it away if you like, as it is all yours." I thanked him, and said that as I must go home for my spade to dig with, I would take it with me. "Come in here to dinner," he said. My heart was full.

I hastened home to my wife to take the food to her, poor thing; as I knew she was suffering from hunger, I ate but little of it myself, as I had the promise of a dinner, so I hastened back, and worked until dinner time; then went to the house and sat down to some nice food with almost a broken heart under a felt sense of the goodness and mercy of God to

me. I did try to thank and praise Him for preserving me from self-destruction, and so strong was the persuasion that the Lord had thus mercifully interposed on my behalf, that it produced deep, godly contrition in my heart. O how I confessed my sins unto Him, and entreated him to pardon me! I felt enabled to commit my way unto Him, and trust my all in His blessed hands. The temptation to self-destruction was entirely gone, and I felt a persuasion that the Lord would provide: and so He did.

I finished the garden, and just then the lady before referred to sent for me to do some work for her; but the time came for her to return to London, and again she gave us all the food that was in the house with the coals and several other things. On bidding me goodbye, she said, "I should like to hear from you sometimes. Let me know if you remove from your present address."

Moves to Lewes

Soon after this I felt led to go back to Lewes to see if I could obtain anything to do; so I went and saw my old master; but he said just at present he did not think he could employ me. I asked him to lend me a horse and light cart to bring my goods and chattels from Brighton to Lewes; so my readers will be sure I had not great possessions if a light cart could carry them, and indeed I had not. He said, "Yes, you may have it;" so I returned to Brighton with the horse and cart to fetch my wife and goods, having hired one little room at Lewes to live in. Of course I did not get to Brighton very early in the day, but I must if possible return before night, as I had only borrowed the horse and cart for the day, and I had no money to pay for stabling for the night, only just enough to get the horse some food.

Before I got to Brighton it began to snow; but we filled the cart with our few things, and hoped to start, but we found the snow was so deep that it would be impossible to get to Lewes that night, so we were obliged to wait until the next day. Well, we left the things on the cart, and I went and found somewhere to put the horse up, and we sat in the house all night. It was not empty, as my wife's sister lived in the same house, so we had a fire. The next morning I went for my horse, and the man who had charge of it said there was two shillings and sixpence to pay. I told him one shilling was all I possessed, and that I had not intended staying the night; but the snow prevented my leaving. So he kindly let me have the horse, and I paid him the one shilling.

Then we took our departure for Lewes; but on the journey, my wife, who was riding, was taken ill. The cold, with an insufficient supply of food, had such an effect on her that I thought she would have died. I had nothing with me to give her to relieve her; so we hastened on, and before we got to Lewes she felt a little better. I did cry unto the Lord to spare her life.

We unloaded our few things in the room we had hired, and a woman living next door, as well as the people in the house from whom we rented the room, knowing my wife, and seeing how very unwell she looked, soon got her something to do her good, and I went to Southerham with the horse and cart. My old master wanted, of course, to know why I had kept the horse two days, so I told him the reason, and he said, "It is trying for you, and I am sure if the poor horse could speak, he would say it was trying indeed not to have more food than he had during his absence from home."

Rats make a good meal

But it was some time before I got work; so my wife went to her parents, and I to my father's for a while. My wife's parents were exceedingly kind people, and would have taken us both, but they were poor. My father did not manifest such a spirit, though I did what work for him I could. I used to make a pudding of ground oats and boil it with potatoes; and once I helped to clean out the barn, and caught a great number of rats, several of which I cooked and enjoyed.

During this time I was favoured with a spirit of prayer unto the Lord, and was kept from murmuring against Him, and still had the feeling that He would appear for me.

Works on the railway

I heard that more hands were wanted on the railway than being made between Lewes and Keymer; so another young man and I went to enquire, and found we could have night work – one party working by day and another by night. So we engaged to go by night, and worked one week, at the end of which time we went to what is called the payable for our money, and were told our gauger had it, and we must find him. This we could not do, though we tried, so we never got a penny. Then I said we would work no more by night; we must try to get on by day, which we did, getting beach sand from the sea-shore near Hastings, to finish the line. How often have I thought of it since when riding to

Hastings, sometimes with a broken heart under a feeling sense of the goodness of the Lord.

Sometimes I worked on one part of the line, and sometimes at another. I met with much opposition, as I could not join with the others in drinking etc. Though they knew me not, nor did I say anything about religion, they taunted me with being a Methodist; and one principal cause of this was, because I would not work on the Sunday as many did, receiving more money in consequence. My life with them became a burden. I cried unto the Lord in my trouble, and He delivered me out of my distresses by providing a situation for me at my old employment as a shepherd, my old master wishing me to take a flock belonging to a friend of his, for a time, which I did, and remained with him as long as he needed me.

He had two farms, but after a while he gave one up, so my services were no longer required. Then my old master sent me to another friend of his to help pick his hops, where I remained for a month, and slept in an ox-stall with many other hop-pickers. After I returned home I worked at digging up potatoes for my old master at one penny per bushel, my wife picking them up and measuring them. After this I worked in the marshes, cleaning out the ditches at one shilling per rood [a quarter of an acre] with another man, nearly all the winter.

Religious conversations

This man being a Roman Catholic by profession, we had many talks about religion. He told me of the many miracles he had known the priest to perform, and of his strong faith in the power invested by God and the holy Virgin in the priest, that their curse was God's curse, and their blessing, God's blessing.

His conversation was made profitable to me in this way: it was the means of leading me to search the word of God that I might be able to reply to him therefrom. I was also led to cry unto the Lord to keep me from being carried away by his errors, and that I might know the Holy Scriptures which were able – by the power of the Spirit of God – to make me wise unto salvation. In fact, through these conversations, my soul was first brought to feel its need of experiencing the power of the truth of God in my own heart. I could see so clearly by the conversation of this man that his faith was in the priest, not in the Lord Jesus Christ. O what a mercy not to be left to such devilish delusions, and lying dogmas!

I worked for my old master that winter and the next summer; both I and my wife went haymaking, and then harvesting. I still attended the parish church, and liked the clergyman very much. I believe he preached a great deal of truth, but he was not generally liked, as he was by far too truthful and honest; so he was dismissed and another chosen who was more agreeable to the majority of the congregation. But I could not get on with his preaching, and as I was in the Sunday School belonging to the church, I felt it the more difficult to separate from them. I had many talks with the clergyman, and the Lord so enabled me to answer his questions that he was confounded, and would exclaim, "You are right, Mockford, you are right."

Affliction and darkness

About this time the Lord laid me aside by afflicting my body again, and I was reduced to such an extreme state of weakness and prostration that my life was despaired of, both by myself and others; and worse still, I was brought almost to despair in my soul. I felt near death, without a grain of real religion. Night and day did I cry for mercy, for some token for good. Never had I found such language as this to fit me before: "O Lord, I am oppressed; undertake for me." "O save me for thy mercies' sake, O Lord." "O bring my soul out of trouble, that I may praise thy name." But not a ray of hope did I seem to have, as I felt so sure that though so much of the language of the dear saints of God in their trouble suited me, yet they had a ground to plead that I had not.

The clergyman called on me, and said, "Now is the time to prove if you have any real religion." "Oh!" I said, "I fear I have not." But as I began to recover a little strength of body, I wanted to get to the church, hoping the Lord would meet with me; but a voice seemed to speak to me, "Go and hear Mr. Vinall." "No," I replied, "I have heard such strange things of that man, I could not go to hear him." But still the voice said, "Go and hear Mr. Vinall;" and it was repeated many times as I lay on my bed. So I argued thus: the church is too far for me to walk to yet; I will go once, I shall feel a little stronger by another week. So to the surprise of my wife, I said on the Sunday morning, "I am going to chapel," and I went.

Goes to hear Mr. Vinall preach

Never shall I forget the feelings under which I entered the chapel, afraid some one that knew me would see me go in. I sat down on the

first seat I came to. Mr. Vinall was in the pulpit, as he was afflicted and was taken there before the service commenced. He was a very different man in appearance from what I had pictured him to be; so solemn and grave, I had never heard a man pray like him before; he took my heart with him in his prayer to God, and when he gave out his text, in what a solemn way he did it. I felt a peculiar awe come over my spirit as the words fell on my ear, "I will take you one of a city, and two of a family, and I will bring you to Zion."

I was astonished indeed to hear all about myself in a way I had never heard before. I felt it was really too bad to expose me so before all the people. I could not look up as I thought the people all knew whom he was pointing at. Who could have told him, and why did he not send to speak to me in private? I had a peculiar feeling of love and hatred working in my breast; I loved the dear man of God, and the truth he preached, yet it so exposed me, and the power of it was so great upon me that it produced a fierce opposition within to it, and I felt I will never come to hear you again; I will not be so exposed. Then such solemn questioning as this arose, "Is it not the truth?" "It is, it is," I replied, "I will go to hear again; I want to be right, I do, Lord, thou knowest."

Hears Mr. Vinall a second time

So on the following Lord's day I went again, and Mr. Vinall's text was, "And we know that the Son of God is come, and hath given us an understanding, that we may know Him that is true, and we are in Him that is true, even in His Son Jesus Christ. This is the true God, and eternal life. Little children, keep yourselves from idols. Amen." The dear man of God spoke of the knowledge God gave to His people by putting His fear in their hearts, and writing it upon their minds. Thus God's people were brought to know that Jesus Christ, His Son, was come, and this knowledge produced a longing desire to be assured that they were in Him that was true, and in the Lord's time they were brought to know that also.

O how he described my soul's exercises all through the first part of his discourse! But when he went on to speak of those who were brought to know that they were in Him, he went past me, and I cried within myself, "O thou man of God, I do want to follow thee." I felt such a reaching out after it, "O Lord, do bless me with that knowledge; do, I beseech thee." Such was the effect of the preaching of the gospel by this man of God that I was spoiled for attending the church. But as my

bodily strength was increasing, and I stood so connected with the church as a principal teacher in the Sunday School, I went there again for a time in the day with the Sunday scholars, and to chapel in the evening.

However, I could not mix it. I only got confusion in hearing in the church; so that I was led to cry earnestly unto the Lord in the matter, as I well knew what a fire of persecution I should have to face if I left the church. But my soul was more than my body, and the things of eternity more to me than the things of time. I so well remember standing in the middle of the road one Sunday morning and crying unto the Lord to direct my way, appealing to Him that He knew my heart's desire was to be made right, and to do right in His sight! *TO BE CONTINUED*

John Thorpe lived in the south Yorkshire town of Rotherham. This town was notable as one that resisted the ministry of George Whitefield and others when preaching the gospel in the neighbourhood. Many falsehoods were spread which greatly damaged the ministers' reputations, and it was not uncommon for their preaching to be mocked by those who had no fear of God before their eyes. But occasionally the grace of God was seen in these periods of revival. One day, Thorpe was drinking in a public house with three of his friends when a wager was laid amongst the godless company as to which of them could best mimic George Whitefield's preaching. The proposal was that each should, in turn, open the Bible, and hold forth from the first text that should present itself to their eyes. Thorpe, whose turn came last, leapt on to a table, crying, "I shall be better than you all!" Opening at random the Bible provided for the evening's blasphemous entertainment, through the providence of God his eyes fell on the text, "Except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish." No sooner had he uttered these words, a strange power fell upon him. The sacred truths that he had intended to ridicule astonishingly fell from his lips with seriousness and conviction. His companions were awed into silence and dispersed, leaving Thorpe alone with the Bible in his hand. From that time, John Thorpe became a changed man, and his connection with his former friends was entirely dissolved. Later he was appointed pastor of the first Congregational Church in the place where he had been so singularly converted. He frequently said, "If ever I preached by the help of the Spirit of God, it was that night. I seemed to feel my very hair stand on end."

Mr. Thorpe died on the 3rd November 1776 at the age of 46.

SAVED FROM SHIPWRECK

A group of missionaries were making the 160 mile journey from Antigua to the island of Dominica in the Caribbean Sea. The voyage was not a long one, and no particular dangers were anticipated. The year was 1806, and their purpose was to work amongst the poor West Indian slaves.

They embarked on a Saturday morning, and on the following day, the vessel sprang a leak. By then they had caught sight of Dominica, but they realised they were in great danger. Pumps and buckets were brought into use, everyone on board exerting themselves to the utmost to keep the vessel afloat. The rising water evidenced that the battle was being lost. Were they to perish in sight of land?

Suddenly, the leak seemed to stop. Those who were using all their energy to bale the water out of the vessel were surprised to see that gradually the volume of water became less, but how or by what means they could not see. The captain steered the vessel to the nearest land visible, which proved to be the coast of Dominica. With great joy and thankfulness they landed. On proceeding to overhaul the ship, they made the discovery that, under God's providence, a large piece of seaweed had been forced into the leak by the action of the waves.

What they did not know was that while they were incessantly engaged in baling water out of the ship, one of the missionaries, Mrs Johnston, was down in her cabin, earnestly praying for the intervention of Almighty God. What had happened was given in answer to fervent prayer. The God who created both sea and land ordered it that something as insignificant as a mass of seaweed should be the means of saving His servants' lives.

“My sheep hear My voice.” There were those unbelieving Jews who denied His wondrous claim that He was the Christ. *They* did not hear His voice. *They* did not receive anything. As the Lord deepens the work in your soul, you are not so much concerned about the name of the minister, and to go and hear this minister or that minister of Jesus Christ. Your concern is to hear the voice of the great Shepherd through the ministry. This is your exercise: “Lord, let me hear Thy precious voice.”

Mr. John Sperling Tyler, Pastor at the Dicker 1939–1989.

THE LIFTING OF THE CLOUD

How often in our lives we contemplate making some change – perhaps it is a change of where we live, or a move in our employment, or in your case something quite different. Whatever it is, we need to be sure it is the Lord’s will.

God’s people Israel were an unsettled race. They lived in tents, and were on a journey to the promised land. As they went they settled for a while in some commodious place – a place commodious enough for the tabernacle to be erected. But how long should they stay before moving on?

Mr. Jesse Delves dealt with this matter in a prayer meeting address in 1952, which we are pleased to print here. May it be helpful to anyone thinking of making changes in their life. He speaks of three things:

- Watchfulness.
- Preparedness.
- Willingness.



*Mr. Jesse Delves (right) with
Mr. John Green in 1972*

Reading: Numbers 9. 15 - 23.

The second part of this chapter has relation to the cloud resting upon the tabernacle and the cloud moving. Here, the commandment of the Lord was the one thing. “At the commandment of the Lord they rested in their tents, and at the commandment of the LORD they journeyed.”

When the cloud lifted they moved onward whatever the conditions were or however inconvenient it may have been. Whatever time of day, or even in the night season, when the cloud lifted from the tabernacle, *that* was the Lord’s commandment to them to journey onward.

Sometimes the cloud rested for a long time, but it is said here that “whether it were two days, or a month, or a year,” they were to be still

in that place until the Lord gave them direction. It brings before us just this: there was a need always for watchfulness. Their eye was to be upon the cloud. They were in the right place while the cloud rested, that was where the Lord intended them to be at that time; but they were to be continually on the watch because at any moment the cloud might lift as a signal that they were to go forward.

Not only does it show the need of watchfulness but it shows also the need of preparedness. You see a person might be watching and even then not be prepared to move forward. They were to be prepared, they were to be ready at any time the cloud lifted. They could truly say that they had no continuing city; they knew they would not remain very long in one place. They were to move forward continually until they came into the promised land which the Lord said He would give them.

It shows the need not only of watchfulness and preparedness, but it shows the need of willingness. They were to raise no objection when the time came; not one Israelite was to say, "I do not want to go, I do not want to move, I am content in this place." No, they were all to be willing to move onward when the cloud guided them but not without a moving of the cloud. May the Lord go before us, teaching by His Word even in these matters, and, where it may apply, give that spiritual watchfulness and preparedness and willingness to follow His leading.

BREAKING OF THE DROUGHT

The power of the Christians' God

Zambezia is the second most-populous province of Mozambique, on the southeast coast of Africa. In the 1960's the province had been suffering a prolonged period of severe drought, with no signs of abating.

The people there, pagans and Muslims alike, had been doing everything they could think of to induce the spirits to send rain. Animals had been sacrificed. Money, food, and garden produce had been ceremoniously cast into the lake time and time again, and still the heavens were as brass, the earth dry and cracked.

Eventually the chief called on *everyone* in his district to come together to worship the spirits and offer more sacrifices. It was to be a united gathering, from which no one was exempt.

But the Christians, few as they were in number, steadfastly refused to attend. They could not join in, they said, because they worshipped

the One True God, Jesus Christ. He had the power to send rain. They would pray to Him, but they would not sacrifice to the spirits.

The chief was very angry. There had been murmurings already about these people who were not adding their quota to the sacrifices thrown into the lake, and suggestions that this was why rain was withheld. So indignant was the chief at the Christians' outright refusal to obey him that he took a few of them and would not let them return home, virtually keeping them prisoners.

When the local Administrator, evidently a fair-minded man, heard about it, he called the chief to come and see him, and said: "Why not let these Christians get together and pray for rain, and see if there is anything in what they say about their God?" As the Administrator had the greater authority, the chief had to act on his suggestion. The Christians he was keeping prisoner were released, the remainder joined them, and they met together with as much solemnity as the pagans and Muslims who had gathered by the lake – but not to offer sacrifices to the spirits. They prayed very earnestly, loudly sometimes and with tears, for the matter was urgent. Not only had the need for rain become desperate, but their faith was being put to the test, their God, so to speak, was on trial.

They had never had anything like this happen before, but Jesus, their God, had all power and authority, and He must hear their prayer. So to Jesus they prayed: "Lord Jesus, send us rain!"

It was not long before the wind began to blow. Then little clouds were seen scudding across the clear blue sky. The clouds thickened and became darker, and people stood outside their huts, looking up and murmuring with awe that the Christians were praying to their God.

And the rain came pouring down.

It came down in sheets, bouncing off the dry ground, forming pools and rivulets that ran into every slight depression, whipping down branches from the trees and thatch from the roofs while the people, regardless of the damage done to their huts and their fences let the welcome rain beat on their bodies and shouted that it had come at last.

The God of the Christians had heard His people's prayer.

The Administrator was much affected. After that he gave permission for the Christians to hold services anywhere in the province.

It was not the only place in which the Administrator demonstrated a sense of justice which turned the tide in favour of the Christians. At

Alto Ligonha, another Zambezi Province, the chief had treated twelve of the Christians very badly, beating them up and forcing them to drink a highly potent local concoction.

When the Administrator heard about it he was extremely annoyed, and calling the chief to appear before him said: "God is a God of justice, and you will be punished." Then he handed a mug of the mixture to him and said, "Now you take this and drink it, and see how you like it!" So the chief had a taste of his own medicine, and the result was alarming. He came out with an itch all over his skin, especially on his legs, which became very inflamed and painful. They irritated him so much that he employed a boy to administer a primitive form of first aid – the boy had to scratch where the chief indicated he itched.

It was about three years before he was clear of the condition.

From Life Out Of Death in Mozambique by Phyllis Thompson

EARLY CONCERNS FOR ETERNITY

From the writings of Miss Eunice Croft
who died in the Harpenden Bethesda Home in 1998

I was born of godly parents and brought up in the truth. My parents were members at Ebenezer Chapel, Clapham, and they instructed me in the things of God. I can remember as a child being fretful at Sunday restrictions and thinking the services were boring, though, being musical, I always liked the hymns.

Death entered our lives and homes and visited our friends when I was of very tender years and this brought a concern with me to be prepared to die. My grandfather passed away when I was three years old; another of my parent's friends when I was five. My father brought me a child's Easter book about the resurrection of Christ and His second coming. I can remember praying to be spared to see the second coming because I did not want to die.

When I was six years old, my father was also taken to be with the Lord. This increased my concern to be prepared to die. It also brought great changes in our family and we were reduced to poverty. My mother bravely struggled to maintain a comfortable home, making comforts out of nothing so to speak. Many times our needs were supplied by a watchful providence, encouraging me to pray to the Lord in providential matters, and I often received what I believed to be the Lord's answers.

HYMN WRITTEN BY A HUSBAND FOR HIS WIFE'S 60th BIRTHDAY

Tune: Hampstead 340

- 1 As we reflect on birthdays past,
Thanks we return for mercies vast,
So we acknowledge in Thy fear,
Thy goodness through another year.
- 2 Our family's scattered far and wide,
We pray with each Thou may abide,
And that each one may come to know,
Thy saving grace while here below.
- 3 Dear M., the Lord has promised grace,
To those who gladly seek His face,
So fix your eyes on Him who died,
The Lord of love, the crucified.
- 4 So on to busy scenes we go,
Help us to keep Thy face in view;
As dangers may our paths surround,
We pray that each in Thee be found.

Bishop John Taylor Smith, Chaplain General to HM Forces in WW1 appears to have been a most gracious man. This is one little story from his biography.

While visiting in the parish when I was a curate at Norwood, a little boy came running up to me. I prayed, "Lord, guide me to bless this child." But God guided the child to bless me. Putting his arms round me he said, "I love you!" I said, "How do you know?" Then gripping me round the neck the little one said, "Because I want to get as near to you as I can." I had to ask myself whether I wanted to get as near to God as I could. I realised that if I loved Christ, I must get as near as possible to Him.

A CHILD'S DYING SONG

A little girl was severely scalded, and was carried to the accident ward of the hospital. Her sufferings were immense.

Night had come, and the patients and the nurses were for the most part asleep. Suddenly, from the child's bed came the sound of singing. These were the words:

“Jesus, the name to sinners dear,
The name to sinners given;
It scatters all my guilty fear,
And turns my hell to heaven.”

For a while there was silence, but before long the singing started once more:

“Happy, if with my latest breath
I may but gasp His name,
Preach Him to all, and cry in death,
Behold, behold, the Lamb!”

The nurse hastened to the bed of her little charge, but she was gone. Her spirit had already winged its way to glory – to join the multitude who have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb, and are therefore ever before the throne.

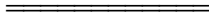
WHY ARE OUR CHAPELS CALLED “CAUSES”?

Some years ago we were speaking to the Baptist minister in Guernsey, Mr. Brehaut, whom some of our older readers may remember. In the course of conversation he asked this question: “Why are Strict Baptist chapels called *causes*?” It may be something that has puzzled you, and it is difficult to give a satisfactory answer.

The question must have been around for a long time, as Eli Page, Pastor from 1869–1895 of the Strict Baptist chapel at Mayfield, East Sussex, was asked this question by his family. One of the family

members (probably not his immediate family) left this account matter:

I had often wondered why the chapels in the villages around us were referred to as ‘causes’, and one day in conversation with Eli when he was using the term, I asked him about it. Eli explained that these congregations of Christian believers had come into existence because the mainstream churches had strayed from the teaching of the Bible. The eighteenth century evangelical awakening had resulted in a good number of new Christians hungry for the Word of God, and when their spiritual needs were not met by the clergy and traditional practises of the Anglican Churches, they formed their own gatherings for fellowship and spiritual food. They soon realised, however, that these new chapels had a greater reason for their existence than purely the needs of their congregations. Their main calling was to be lights in the spiritual darkness of the world around them in maintaining and proclaiming God’s truth in its pure biblical form. Of course we all fail in this, but at least that’s the grand objective. With this in mind, they began to refer to each other as ‘causes of truth’, or as time went by, simply ‘causes’.



ADONIRAM JUDSON’S FIRST BURMESE CONVERT

Adoniram Judson laboured as a pioneer missionary in Burma. Only after his arrival in Burma did he adopt Baptist principles, following which he was baptized by William Carey.

After some months of patient teaching, a young man applied to him for baptism, MOUNG NAU by name, as a believer in the Lord Jesus Christ. The prefix *MOUNG* signifies a young man. The Burmese use a number of titles to designate individuals, like ourselves. Thus, *MOUNG*, denotes a young man; *DO*, an old man; *MEE*, a girl; *MAH*, a young woman; *MAY*, an old woman.

MOUNG NAU was about thirty-five years of age, belonging to the middle ranks of life, and evidently much in earnest. It was after about two months of constant instruction, that MOUNG NAU requested baptism – a most thorough proof of his sincerity, when it is considered that he thereby exposed himself to the risk of execution, through forsaking the old religion of the country. No subject of the King who embraced a religion different from his own, would be exempt from punishment.

Moung Nau wrote a letter to Mr. Judson respecting his desire to be baptised. The letter evidences a straightforward simplicity in spite of its somewhat peculiar phraseology to English readers. This was his letter:

“I, Moung Nau, the constant recipient of your excellent favour, now approach your feet. Whereas my lords three [the three missionaries], have come to the country of Burma not for the purposes of trade, but to preach the religion of Jesus Christ, the Son of the eternal God, I, having heard and understood, am with a joyful mind filled with love. I believe that the Divine Son, Jesus Christ, suffered death in the place of men, to atone for their sins. Like a heavy-laden man, I feel my sins are very many. The punishment of my sins I deserve to suffer. Since it is so, do you, sirs, consider that I, taking refuge in the merits of the Lord Jesus Christ, and receiving baptism in order to become His disciple, shall dwell one with yourselves, a band of brothers, in the happiness of heaven, and therefore grant me the ordinance of baptism? It is through the grace of Jesus Christ that you, sirs, have come by ship from one country and continent to another, and that we have met together. I pray my lords three that a suitable day be appointed, and that I may receive the ordinance of baptism. Moreover, as it is only since I have met with you, sirs, that I have known about the eternal God, I venture to pray that you will still unfold to me the religion of God, that my old disposition may be destroyed, and my new disposition improved.”

Moung Nau was baptised on the 27th of June, 1819. It was the first profession of the Christian faith made by any of the subjects of the Burmese Empire, and it was an occasion of unutterable joy to the missionaries. The missionaries had long laboured in depression and gloom, while yet sowing precious seed in faith; now Moung Nau was the first sheaf of the harvest. Soon after this, two others were baptised, but at sunset, as they were timid believers, and did not desire to proclaim their faith to a numerous concourse of onlookers. After the ceremony, the converts and inquirers repaired to the Zayat (a kind of public shed for worshippers), and held prayer meetings of their own accord – to the missionaries a most encouraging sign.

ROSE ALLEN – THE 20-YEAR-OLD MARTYR

One of the ‘Colchester Martyrs’

Colchester – the oldest recorded town in Britain – was founded by the Romans in AD49. Before the Roman invasion Colchester was called Camulodunum.

The town boasts the best preserved sections of Roman wall anywhere, and the oldest surviving Roman gateway in Britain. The city walls are 2.5 metres (8 feet) thick, built of bricks and stone. Colchester Castle has the largest Norman keep ever built.

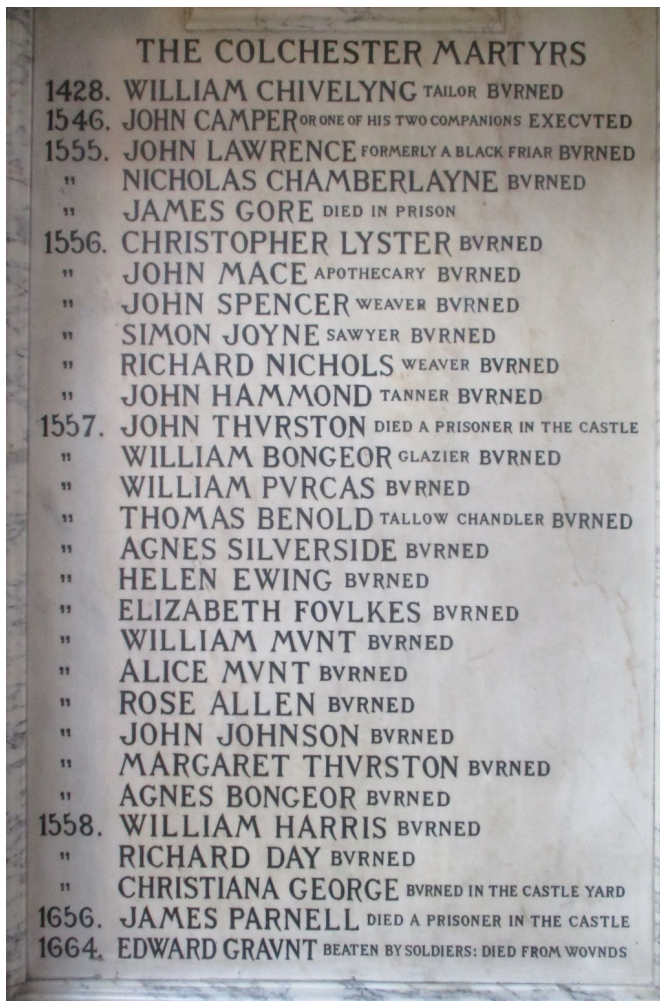


Section of Colchester Roman wall

In AD 60 Colchester was attacked by the Iceni tribe of Suffolk, led by Queen Boudica (or Boadicea as she is often called), who burnt the city to the ground. They were rebelling against their harsh treatment by the Romans. The town was easy to attack because it had no defences and only a small military presence. After the revolt, a defensive wall, which took fifteen years to build, was built round the reconstructed town. The wall contains the Balcerne Gate, a rare survival of a Roman gateway.

But the strength, influence and power of the Roman Empire began to fade. The Roman way of life came to an end, although their troubles were not over. First, waves of Saxons arrived from Germany, and then later the town was invaded by the Danes.

But of great interest to us is that Colchester has a long history of people prepared to die for their faith. They are remembered as the Colchester Martyrs. During the reign of Queen Mary, twenty-three people from Colchester were burnt at the stake for refusing to renounce their beliefs. These martyrs are commemorated in a plaque in the town hall, listing their names.



The subject of this article, Rose Allen, is listed under 1557. Above her name are those of her parents, William Munt (aged 61 years) and his wife Alice. All three were arrested for their Protestant beliefs, and, along with seven others, were burnt at the stake at Colchester on 2nd August 1557. The parents employed their daughter as their maid.

For non-attendance at the church, the local priest wrote to Bishop Bonner, the Bishop of London, and eventually a supplication seeking a warrant for their arrest was sent to Lord Darcy who forwarded it to Sir John Kyngstone, a priest and commissary. The supplication read:

Since your Lordship's departure, digression from good order has been made in the Parish of Much Bentley [now Great Bentley] by reason of three sedicious persons, William Munt and his wife, and Rose her daughter, who (as it doth appeare) were dismist and sent downe from the Byshop of London, and since their comming home, they haue not onely in their owne persons shewed manifest signes and tokens of disobedience, in not commyng to the Church, nor yet obseryng other good orders: but also most maliciously and seditiously haue seduced many from commyng to the Church, and from obeying all other good orders, mockyng also those that frequent the church, & callyng them church Owles, & blasphemously callyng the blessed Sacrament of the altar a blind God, with divers such like blasphemies.

In consideration wherof, may it please your honour (for the love of God, and for the tender zeale your good Lordship beareth to iustice, and common peace & quietnes of the Kyng and Queenes Maiesties loving subjectes) to award out your warrant for the sayd William Munt, his wife, and Rose her daughter, that they beyng attached and brought before your good Lordshyp, we trust the rest will feare to offend (theyr ryng leaders of sedition beyng apprehended) to the quietnes of other obedient subjectes.

Bishop Bonner was determined at all costs fully to restore the Catholic religion throughout the land. John Foxe, the martyrologist, summed him up in four lines:

“This cannibal in three years space
Three hundred martyrs slew,
They were his food, he so loved blood,
He sparèd none he knew.”

It was the seventh day of March, 1557. A loud knock on the door at two o'clock in the morning was not a welcome sound. Bravely, Rose

Allen answered the knock to find a number of men standing outside.

The leader of the men, named Edmund Tyrell, was accompanied by a bailiff called William Simuell, and two constables from Much Bentley, while other men surrounded the house. The men had come to charge this little family with heresy because they refused to attend the parish church. Queen Mary, the one we call “bloody Mary,” had come to the throne and was trying to bring England once more under the power of Roman Catholicism.

Rose and her family had no need of a priest, the confessional or penances, since their trust was in Jesus Christ, who had died for them and had forgiven them, and their delight was in reading His holy Word, the Bible. They had been brought to confess their sins and knew that God had pardoned them completely. They had stopped attending the parish church at Much Bentley and preferred to worship God quietly in their own home. But the local priest had reported them, and the Bishop of London had ordered their arrest.

Tyrell marched straight into the bedchamber where William and his wife lay, and commanded them to arise, as, said he, “Ye must accompany us to Colchester Castle.” Mother Munt, being very sick, desired that her daughter might first fetch her some water, and permission was granted. Rose took a stone pot in one hand, and a candle in the other, and went to draw water for her mother. As she came back again through the house, Tyrell met her. “You must,” he said, “give your parents good counsel, that they must be good Catholic people.”

“Sir,” said Rose, “they have a better instructor than me, for the Holy Ghost doth teach them, which I trust will not suffer them to err.”

“Why,” said Tyrell, “art thou still in that mind? It is time to look upon such heretics indeed.”

“With what you call heresy,” said Rose, “do I worship my Lord God, I tell you truly.”

“Then you will burn with the rest,” said Tyrell.

“If so,” said Rose, “for Christ’s sake – and I hope in His mercies – if He call me to it, He will enable me to bear it.”

Then turning to the men with him, Tyrell said, “This gossip will burn, do ye not think?” “Sir”, said one, “prove her, and we shall see.”

The wretched man immediately seized the young woman by the wrist, and held a lighted candle under her hand, burning a cross on the back, until the tendons and sinews cracked asunder and divided from the flesh.



The burning of Rose Allen's hand

The brave girl endured his monstrous cruelty unmoved. But Rose's strength served only to anger him. "Why, whore, wilt thou not cry?" he said. "I have no cause to cry," she replied; "I have only cause to rejoice, thank God. If you consider the matter well, you have more cause to weep than I. May the Lord put you right and

give you repentance, if that is His will." When he had ceased the torture, he thrust her from him, saying, "Ha, strong whore, thou shameless beast, thou beastly whore" and other suchlike vile words.

After this she took the drink to her mother, who lay on her bed. But very soon the three were told to make themselves ready. They were to be bundled into a cart and taken the seven miles to Colchester Castle, and there were locked in a cell. They were joined by another faithful brother named John Johnson, a labourer aged 34 years, having no wife alive, but three young children.



A prison cell in Colchester Castle

Another prisoner, a woman with a kindly heart, noticed poor Rose's hand and did what she could to attend to the wound. "Did it not hurt?" she asked. "It was painful at first," she replied, "and I felt like striking the man Tyrell with my stone pot, but I thank God He gave me patience and it seemed the pain grew less until I hardly felt it at all."

The trials of all three prisoners took place over a period of time. At his trial, William Munt said that the sacrament of the altar was an abominable idol, and if he should observe any part of their popish proceedings, he should displease God, and bring His curse upon him. He was examined on many things, but he stood to the truth, and in the end his sentence of condemnation was read to him. His wife Alice, being examined in the same way, said the same as her husband, and was also condemned to the same sentence.

Rose Allen, that brave girl, was examined concerning the confession, of going to church to hear Mass, and of the seven popish sacraments. She answered that they stank in the face of God, and that she durst not have to do with them for her life. Being asked what she had to say concerning the see of the Bishop of Rome (the Pope), she said, "As for his *see*, it is for Crows, Kites, Owles, and Ravens to swim in, but by the grace of God I will not swim in that sea as long as I live." They then read the sentence of condemnation against her, and sent her back to the prison with the rest, where she sang with great joy, to the wonder of many.

During that spring and most of the summer the little family from Great Bentley waited in Colchester Castle.

The 2nd of August 1557, was the day determined for the sentence to be carried out.

Other faithful men and women (three men and three women) who had been held in the Mote Hall prison were to be burnt in the morning, and were led out between six and seven o'clock in the morning to a plot of land just outside the city wall. One, whose name was Elizabeth Folkes tried to give a gift to her mother who had come to kiss her at the stake, but the cruel officers would not permit it. She then said. "Farewell world, farewell faith, farewell hope."

When all six were chained to their stakes, they clapped their hands for joy in the fire, that most of the standers by, which were estimated at thousands, wept aloud. Thus they yielded up their souls and bodies into the Lord's hand, for the testimony of His truth.

In the afternoon, William Munt, Alice Munt, Rose Allen and John Johnson, were led out of the castle into the castle yard. After they had

prayed, they were joyfully tied to the stakes, calling upon the name of God, and exhorting the people to flee from idolatry. Then they suffered their martyrdoms with such triumph and joy that the people marvelled.



Colchester Castle: "They were led out of the castle into the castle yard"

Thus ended the same day the life of these glorious ten souls, "Tortured, not accepting deliverance; that they might obtain a better resurrection" (Hebrews 11.35).

Rose was only twenty years old and just a humble cottage maid, but God filled her with courage and kept her faithful unto death.

Hector MacLean was once at a communion in Bracadale, and was staying in his nephew's house at Totarder, where some of the ministers were entertained. At dinner the ministers were conversing in English, a language which Mr. MacLean could not understand.

When dinner was over, they asked him to return thanks. He began: "O Lord, blessed be Thy name that *Thou* canst understand Gaelic."

It was Dr. MacCrie who said "that an ounce of Gaelic was better than a pound of English in feeding the souls of poor Highlanders."

PRAYER REQUESTS HEARD AND ANSWERED

The Vicar of St. Nathaniel's, Liverpool, Canon Hobson, was a man of prayer. With his some of his faithful members he met every Lord's Day morning to make their requests known unto God. Here is his account of prayer meetings held in 1894.

For the glory of God I record requests made to Him in our little prayer-meetings on Sunday mornings: they are but four requests out of many, but they are sufficient to show the faithfulness of our God.

That God would be pleased so to bless the annual appeal for the Ragged Schools that the needed £80 might be realized.

Answer: £82 15s.

That God might be graciously pleased to send us £40 to provide for the children, and specially for our poor widows at Christmas.

Answer: £67 7s.

That God might be pleased to supply again, for the waifs and strays of the parish, the weekly supper throughout the year, which we had been obliged to discontinue.

Answer: The good man who for eleven years had left off providing them, resumed the responsibility thereof, unasked!

That God would be pleased to supply the other weekly supper, for poor children, which had just been discontinued after twenty-five years.

Answer: A brother in the Lord, on hearing from me of this want, thanked God for providing him with such an opportunity for doing good. He continued to give for the poor little ones £30 a year for six years.

Praise the Lord!

Let those who choose to think so, say these are remarkable coincidences; we felt them to be direct answers to our prayers.

God says: "Open thy mouth wide, and I will fill it."

THE DEAD SEA SCROLLS

75 Years Since Their Historic Discovery

It was November 1946. Three teenage Bedouin cousins, Juma, Muhammad and Khali, were looking for a lost goat in the Judean Desert on the northwest shore of the Dead Sea in what is now known as the West Bank. Stumbling upon a cave, one threw a rock inside to frighten the goat if it were there. Hearing a sound of something shattering, they ventured inside. What they found was a collection of clay jars, seven of which turned out to hold some very ancient leather and papyrus scrolls. They took the scrolls to a dealer in Bethlehem who offered to buy them for 7 Jordanian pounds, worth about £250 today.



Entrance to one of the caves

American archaeologist John Trever examined the scrolls and identified them as ancient Biblical manuscripts. Between 1949 and 1956 ten more caves were found to contain additional scrolls. As recently as 2021 twenty additional fragments were found in Cave 8, known as the ‘Cave of Horrors’ as the remains of forty adults and children were found there.



Two of the scrolls as found

Who wrote the scrolls? It is thought that the scrolls were written between 150 B.C. and 70 A.D. Earlier theories concluded that they were

written by scribes, members of a mysterious community living in a desert complex known in Arabic as *Khirbet Qumran* (ruins of Qumran). Later scholars thought they had been written by professional scribes working in the temple at Jerusalem. According to this theory, the scrolls were transported to Qumran when Roman forces prepared to lay a siege around Jerusalem in the year 70. Today, many believe the copyists were a group known as the Essenes, who are described in detail by Jewish historian Josephus in his book *The History of the Jews*. This group agreed with the Pharisees in most points but took the practice of purity to the extreme – even to the point of abstaining from bodily functions on the Sabbath lest they defile this holy day. “They despise riches,” wrote Josephus, “and reject pleasures as an evil, but esteem continence, and the conquest over our passions, to be a virtue.”

What did the scrolls contain? Copies of all the books of the Old Testament were found with the one exception of the Book of Esther. The only complete book preserved among the manuscripts is Isaiah, dated to the first century B.C. This is amongst the earliest Old Testament manuscripts in existence. Along with biblical texts, the scrolls included the Community Rule containing the laws and regulations of the Jewish sect. The majority of the Dead Sea scrolls are in Hebrew, but others are in Aramaic, the language spoken by many Jews, including, most likely, the Lord Jesus. Several texts feature translations into Greek. Also found was a commentary on the book of Habakkuk. The best-preserved documents were those in Cave 1, including the Isaiah scroll. Cave 11 contained a very large scroll of the Psalms. In the same cave was a copy of Leviticus thought to date possibly to the 3rd century B.C. One other important scroll with 66 neatly-arranged columns gave details for the construction of an ideal temple at Jerusalem.



Part of the Isaiah scroll



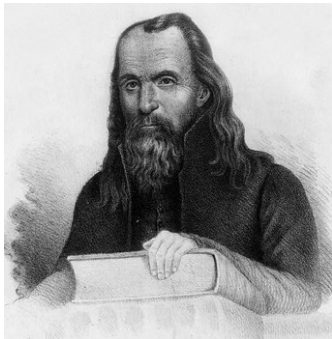
Another fragment

BIBLICAL TEXTS FOUND AT QUMRAN

THE TORAH (The Law)		THE NEVIIM (The Prophets)		THE KETUVI (The Writings)	
<i>Book</i>	<i>Scroll copies</i>	<i>Book</i>	<i>Scroll copies</i>	<i>Book</i>	<i>Scroll copies</i>
Genesis	20	Joshua	3	Psalms	34
Exodus	16	Judges	4	Proverbs	4
Leviticus	12	Samuel I & II	4	Job	4
Numbers	6	Kings I & II	3	Song of S	4
Deuteronomy	30	Isaiah	21	Ruth	4
		Jeremiah	6	Lamentations	4
		Ezekiel	6	Ecclesiastes	2
		Minor Prophets	8	Esther	0
				Daniel	8
				Ezra	1
				Nehemiah	1
				Chronicles I & II	1

The remarkable preservation of Scripture is a cause of much thankfulness. Many of the scrolls found at Qumran confirm the accuracy of the Scriptures we have among us today.

THE LAST TRUMPET



Lorenzo Dow

Lorenzo Dow (1777–1834) was the first Protestant preacher in what is now Alabama. This eccentric itinerant American evangelist is said to have preached to more people than any other preacher of his time.

One day, Lorenzo was preaching in the backwoods of America. His subject was the Lord's return and the day of judgment.

Before the great crowd assembled to hear him, he arranged for a man to hide with a trumpet in the tree under which he was to preach. At a certain point in the sermon the man was to blow a long, loud blast on the trumpet.

As he was speaking on the solemnity and suddenness of the Lord's return, he exclaimed that it will not be long before the trumpet of the Lord shall sound. As he spoke these words, the blast of the trumpet was suddenly heard!

What scenes of consternation followed! Some were fleeing, some weeping, some screaming, some lying prostrate on the ground.

Lorenzo Dow attempted to quieten his congregation. Calling to his unseen helper to come down from the tree, he explained what had happened. "But," he said, "if the sound of a trumpet, blown by a man hidden in a tree, causes such terror, *what will the coming of the Lord be?*"

THE TENDER BLADE AND AN EARLY HARVEST

An account of the illness and death of Mary Banfield of Hove, written by her parents.

In the hope that the following little account may be an encouragement to praying parents, we have endeavoured to gather together these cherished memories of our dear child's last days upon earth, which were brought to a close on 28th July 1943, aged 13 years.

Though not robust, and perhaps of a rather more serious turn of mind than the average child, Mary was of an active disposition and always liked a good game. Until her last and fatal illness we had no very clear indication that she was the subject of serious thoughts about her soul. When quite a child she would sometimes speak as if she had thoughts of eternal things, but we did not attribute much to this at the time, realising that it might be only the childish lisplings of her natural mind. In looking back, however, we wonder whether the Lord, knowing that her time here was short, had begun early to cause her mind to think on heavenly things.

At one time, shortly after the lamented death of her grandfather, Mr. Joseph Banfield, in 1932, (who had acceptably served the church at Galeed Chapel, Brighton, as Deacon for twenty years,) Mary went to stay with her Grannie, being then only three years of age. While she was there, her Auntie, wishing to please her, played the well-known hymn: "Holy, holy, holy! Lord God Almighty." Little Mary looked up and said, "That is what Grandpa is singing in heaven."

On another occasion, when her Mother was speaking of Grandfather, and mourning over the loss, Mary came up to her and said, "Oh, Mother, my Grandpa is in heaven, and I shall be there soon." Also, at one Christmas time, one of her Aunties took her to see 'Father Christmas' in one of the Brighton stores, and when they reached the shop, and her Auntie tried to prevail on her to go in, Mary said: "Oh Auntie, I would rather go and see Jesus than 'Father Christmas'."

There is reason to believe that, at sometime between the ages of eight and ten years, something occurred which made a lasting impression upon her, and which in her last illness she endeavoured to make known to her Mother. Finding the effort too great in her extreme weakness, she was obliged to desist. She seems also to have had a narrow escape from being run over, but details of this are incomplete for the same reason.

On the last Lord's day that she attended Chapel, it was noticed how attentive she was to the preaching as Mr. Frank Gosden was speaking, and how once she looked up into her Mother's face with such a look of real concern upon her countenance. How little did we think that this was to be her last attendance at Galeed. The afternoon of that day was spent, as was her wont, in writing a Scriptural essay, and it is remarkable that on this occasion the subject she chose was *The River Jordan*, and that the completion of her work also brought her to the last page of her writing book, used for this purpose for many weeks past.

That same afternoon she first complained of feeling unwell, but nothing serious was suspected until the Tuesday following, when it became evident that she was really ill. The dear child seems from the first to have had apprehensions of approaching death, and several times asked: "Do you think I am going to die?" Our own fears were also enhanced by the serious view taken by the Doctor of the case, which he pronounced to be blood poisoning. Everything that was possible was done for the dear child, and many were the prayers and heartfelt cries which were made to God on her behalf.

The first thing she said after taking to her bed was: "There are six in this house, Mother." But her Mother said: "There's Daddy, and Mother, and you Mary, and Marcus and John." Yet she still declared that there were six in the house, and we could only think of Nebuchadnezzar, when he said: "Did we not cast three men bound into the midst of the fire? Lo, I see four men loose, walking in the midst of the fire . . . and the form of the fourth is like the Son of God."

On the Monday the words came to her Mother, "A child shall die an hundred years old," which raised fears as to whether Mary was to be taken, and whether she was prepared to die; and as she was wondering about this, it came again: "A hundred years, a child shall die."

On the Tuesday her Mother was kneeling at her pillow, when she put her arms round her Mother's neck and kissed her, and said: "Oh Mother, this has all come for a purpose." On the Friday she became very much worse, and seemed much distressed in her mind about a matter relative

to her school life. She said to her Mother: "I have been such a naughty girl; will you forgive me?" On her Mother saying that she had nothing for which to forgive her, she said: "Oh, it is not that really, but will God forgive me? I am such a sinner!" Her Mother said: "What a mercy it is to know and feel that you are a sinner, Mary. There is a Friend for little children." Then she replied: "Yes, Mother; and I have been trying to pray to Him. Do you pray for me, Mother?" Her Mother said: "Yes, darling; I wrestle for you, and so does Daddy, and many others."

Her Father then coming in at that moment, she turned to him and said: "Oh Daddy, I am such a sinner!" He replied, "Well, Mary, 'Jesus Christ the same yesterday'" when she broke in, saying, "'And today' Daddy."

After kneeling down by her bedside and trying to plead on her behalf, she seemed to become less distressed. We noticed from this time how tender she became, and so patient in her sufferings, which were increasingly severe; hardly ever did she complain.

The following day Mr. Foster was expected to come to Brighton to preach on the Lord's day, and Mary, evidently remembering this, asked if he had arrived, expressing a desire to see him. But as the Doctor would not allow any visitors to see her, it was considered imprudent to go against this advice. Mr. Foster had taken a kindly interest in Mary on his annual visits to Brighton, and it was remarkable that her last illness occurred on one of these; so that, although not permitted to see her, he was able to visit the house of mourning daily while in the town.

Mary gradually became more and more delirious, until quite unconscious of her surroundings, in which state she continued for nearly a whole week. She then appeared to take a turn for the better, and our hopes of her recovery were somewhat raised.

On the Lord's day, a fortnight from the onset of her illness, she began, though with some difficulty, to speak. It was now that she tried to tell of something that had occurred to her in earlier years, but the effort proving too great, her Mother said to her: "You will have to tell Mother all about yourself when you are a little stronger, Mary, and then perhaps Mother can tell you all about herself." This seemed to quieten her mind a little, and she nodded her head approvingly.

She now showed great tenderness of spirit, and requested us to kneel down and ask God to grant her some much-needed sleep, which was mercifully given at that time. On waking up she asked us to kneel down again and thank Him for sending that beautiful sleep. Again, when

suffering pain, she asked that we might pray that she should be able to bear it. She seemed distressed at times, evidently troubled at the thought of death; but we noticed how attentive she became when the Scriptures were read, and when we attempted to pray with her. Great was the weight upon our spirits, and while we felt that we had a good hope that a work of grace was commenced in her soul, we wanted to see yet more.

One day she asked her Mother to sing to her, and her Mother sang two little verses which she remembered from her own schooldays:

“Loving Shepherd of Thy sheep,
Keep Thy lambs, in safety keep;
Nothing can Thy power withstand,
None can pluck them from Thy hand.

Mary nodded her head and smiled, as if this expressed what she wanted. She became very restless as the day passed on, so that it was distressing to behold, and she began again to show signs of delirium. Her Father saying to her, “Jesus is near you, Mary,” she said, “Jesus, Jesus, Jesus, be near to me, so near me,” very feelingly.

The Doctor now advised, as a last resort, that she should be taken to St. Mary’s Hospital, Paddington. Nothing else could possibly be done for her except special treatment, only to be given at three hospitals in the kingdom, and this the nearest. This seemed a heavy blow, but we felt it right to give consent. In the light of subsequent events, we cannot but feel this step was ordered of the Lord.

We followed our dear child to London, hardly expecting to see her again alive. We were, however, mercifully permitted to be with her when she breathed her last, which was at 2.30 a.m. the following morning. She was taken out of this world of sin and sorrow, and we are fully persuaded is now realising the bliss of that “holy, happy place, Where sin no more defiles.” (Gadsby’s Hymns 850.)

Feeling sad in our heavy affliction, we returned home. On re-entering the sick room, now so sadly vacant, and looking into her Bible, we discovered a paper tightly folded together, upon which the following portion of Scripture was written in Mary’s own handwriting: “And their sins and iniquities will I remember no more.” It seemed as though the Lord, in His compassion, had led us straight to that spot, that we should have this consolation regarding our dear departed one; and also that the dear child anticipated our thoughts regarding her eternal state and was enabled to leave these words for our comfort, and for the praise of that

great God whom she was taught to know by His quickening Spirit.

Afterwards it was noticed that the words, “For I have not found thy works perfect before God,” in Rev. 3.2 were underlined in her Bible, as if they had had a special significance to her; and truly they are words most expressive of the condition of her mind during the illness, as she evidently realised her sinfulness before God and her need of Divine forgiveness.

CURRENT MATTERS

Churches continue to close

During the last decade (from 2010 to 2019) a further 423 churches belonging to the Church of England were closed. The Dean of Southwark Cathedral said the huge number of closures was ‘shocking’. The number of churches left is just over 15,000.

Woke absurdity

Apple’s latest update for its iPhone contained a pregnant man “emoji.” As Colin Hart, Chairman of Coalition for Marriage, commented, “Somebody should tell Apple that men can’t have babies.”

World’s oldest person dies

The oldest person in the world died on 19th April 2022 at the age of 119. Kane Tanaka was born in Japan on 2nd January 1903 in Japan – the same year the Wright brothers flew for the first time. She kept her mind active by solving maths problems! As dear old Mr. Jesse Tomkins used to say:

“The young *may* die; the old *must* die.”



Kane Takana



As a young lady

“THE FLOWER FADETH”

Four thousand – 4,000. That is the number of rose bushes to be found at RHS Wisley, the Surrey gardens of the Royal Horticultural Society. And what a splendid sight is their Bowes-Lyon Rose Garden in June when the roses are at their best.

As a visitor, on arrival we were handed a descriptive leaflet containing a map. The first words we read in the leaflet were: “Humans evolved alongside plants.” This introduction firmly places the Society as evolutionist in outlook – no recognition whatsoever of a creating God who gave mankind that beautiful kaleidoscope of colours for the enjoyment of His creatures, and for His own glory. Most scientists believe that rose thorns (strictly prickles) evolved to discourage hungry animals attracted by their colour and scent from eating them. Sadly for the evolutionists, their hypothesis falls apart when their fellow-evolutionists say that there is evidence that thorns evolved before the first plant-eating terrestrial animals did.

The photographs of the beautiful roses on the front cover were all taken on the same day. It was a splendid June day, and the rose garden was at its best. But if you were to visit four months later, what would you find. The rose bushes would still be there, and so may some of the remains of the roses, but how bedraggled, withered, and un-beautiful they would be. How expressive is Isaiah in the text on the front cover: “the flower fadeth.”

Several of our hymns remind us that the things of nature decay. Hymn 350 is one them:

This truth, like its Author, eternal shall stand,
Though all things in nature decay,
Upheld by Jehovah’s omnipotent hand,
The righteous shall hold on his way.

PERCEPTION

A Quarterly Magazine for Young People



“For the sun is no sooner risen with a burning heat, but it withereth the grass” (James 1. 11).

AUTUMN 2022

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Cover picture: Harpenden Common, Hertfordshire, in the drought

PERCEPTION

Volume 14

AUTUMN 2022

Number 55

HIS ROYAL HIGHNESS KING CHARLES III **Formerly Prince Charles Philip Arthur George**



*King Charles at the ancient ceremony
of the Accession*

Just as *Perception* was due to be sent to the printers, we unexpectedly lost our beloved Queen Elizabeth II on Thursday, 8th September at the age of 96. As a nation, we have suffered a great loss, a monarch who was loved and respected throughout the whole world. How thankful we are for the stability her reign brought to our country. The Accession Proclamation Council statement declared that Charles is King “by the grace of God.” In his address to the nation, the King said: “The role and the duties of monarchy also remain, as does the Sovereign’s particular relationship and responsibility towards the Church of England – the Church in which my own faith is so deeply rooted. As the Queen herself did with such unswerving devotion, I too now solemnly pledge myself, throughout the remaining time God grants me, to uphold the constitutional principles at the heart of our nation. Whatever may be left of my life, I pray for the guidance and help of Almighty God. ”

EDITORIAL

“He sendeth the springs into the valleys” Psalm 104.10.

Our cover picture is the Common in my home town of Harpenden in Hertfordshire, taken earlier this year on Tuesday, 9th August. This delightful open space is usually a greensward of which the town council can justly be proud. But at the time of the picture there was not one blade of grass to be seen!

Of course, we all know the reason why. The country had been through an unprecedented period of exceptionally hot, dry weather not seen for many years. Day after day of clear blue skies and burning sun wreaked havoc on our gardens.

But we do not need to fear – the grass roots are almost certainly alive. Of all plant families, grasses are by far the most resilient. After a good rain, grass which is dust dry will once more be transformed to a verdant green to be enjoyed by the locals.

Although not unknown in our country, wild-fires triggered by excessive heat and dryness have this year been much more frequent and severe, leading to a number of homes being completely destroyed. In spite of the best endeavours of our brave fire-fighters it has not been possible to save these properties – the fire has proved to be too strong for them.

Wildfires can indeed be a frightening experience. The story is told of a company of travellers journeying across one of the vast American prairies. After travelling for several hours, it was time for a break and a rest. The horses, unharnessed, were quietly grazing, while the company busied themselves in many different ways. All at once, the guide started to his feet, gazed earnestly over the prairie, and then, turning to the company, shouted, “The prairie is on fire! Harness the horses – quick, flee for your lives!”

Rapidly the order was carried out, and the heavy waggon tumbled and tossed across the uneven ground, the drivers urging their steaming horses to the utmost speed. Past them flew 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,

“Stop!” 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 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.

A valuable lesson can be learnt from this story. As sinners we are threatened with the punishment of sin, and the fiery condemnation of God’s holy law. Do you feel to need a place of refuge? The fires are pursuing you, and gaining fearfully on you. There is only one spot of safety, and that spot is Calvary. “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 the Saviour of sinners. We need not to fear if we are sheltered there; the fire will never touch that place again. If you are there, you are safe. As William Gadsby sings:

“Sheltered in his wounded side,
Now no ill can me betide.”

Another effect of the prolonged drought has been a severe shortage of water in some areas of the country. Obviously, in these circumstances we all have a duty to be as frugal as possible in our use of water. We heard of the owner of a campsite in Wales whose greatest fear was that, with several hundred people on site, they would run out of water. The campsite was on the end of the local water supply pipe, and if pressure dropped, no water would reach them. The thought kept her awake at night. She was encouraging the campers to wash their hair in the sea rather than use their precious stored water! How easily (like all our mercies) we take our water for granted.

But here and there we find sources of water that never fail. One such place is found at the springs just outside the village of Barton, or Barton-le-Clay as it is usually known. You need plenty of energy to walk up (and down!) the chalk hills of this part of the Chiltern Hills, now a nature reserve. It is easy to reach from the village, parking near the parish church. On the way you pass the house where Mr. Eben Clark lived for 41 years when Pastor of Hope Chapel, Barton (1937-1978).

The springs and chalk stream at the foot of the valley are most interesting. The water remains at a constant temperature throughout the year, and is deliciously cool to drink. Children can be seen cupping their hands to taste the water as it steadily leaves the hillside, and then enjoying a delightful paddle in the stream. (Beware - it is reported that there are high levels of Nitrates in the water from nearby farms.)



The spring at Barton-le-Clay

How anxious were the children of Israel to find these never-failing springs. After their disappointment at Marah, where they could not drink the bitter water, how their hearts must have rejoiced as they approached the twelve wells of water at Elim: “And they came to Elim, where were twelve wells of water, and threescore and ten palm trees: and they encamped there by the waters.” In spite of all their murmurings against Moses, God gave them a resting place.

How David desired to drink of the water from the well of

Bethlehem. “And David longed, and said, Oh that one would give me drink of the water of the well of Bethlehem, which is by the gate!” To David, there was no water to compare to it. Only that would truly satisfy his thirst.

This leads us to our final thought: the encounter of the Lord Jesus with the woman at the well. Her daily task was to come to the well to draw water for her needs. A tiring and perhaps tedious daily chore. To her astonishment, here was a Man who could offer her water so that she would never thirst again. Good though the water was from Jacob’s well at Samaria, it could only temporarily satisfy her needs. But she did not understand that the water the Lord Jesus could give her was “a well of water springing up into everlasting life.”

This is undoubtedly the same water spoken of by John in the last chapter of the Bible, Revelation 22. “And he shewed me a pure river of water of life, clear as crystal, proceeding out of the throne of God and of the Lamb.” The wonderful thing is that there is an invitation given to those who are truly thirsty: “Let him take the water of life freely.” It is with no money, no price. The price has been paid already.

None of life’s mercies, good though they may be, will ever truly satisfy our hearts. They are passing – transient we may say. When a boy, there was a popular little chorus which was quite widely sung. It seems to have virtually disappeared, and even an internet search could produce only one version where the words had been translated into the Tamil language. Simple though it is, it contains a precious truth. May we be favoured to know it for ourselves. These are the words:

“Jesus can satisfy the heart,
Gladness and peace He can impart;
Each passing day,
All through life’s way,
Jesus can satisfy the heart.”

LETTER TO A MUCH-LOVED HUSBAND

Mrs. Johnston, the wife of the Rev. George Johnston labouring amongst the poor West Indian slaves in Jamaica, was sinking fast. While her husband was away at the other end of the island engaged in his ministerial work, it soon became evident that the time of her departure was at hand. Friends sung and prayed with her, by turns; she often smiled while they were thus engaged, and by her looks manifested her

joyful composure. In this frame of mind she passed away. Her stricken husband, arriving home just in time for the burial, wrote afterwards:

“I received the information of her death with such feelings as I cannot describe, but I was, nevertheless, resigned to the will of God. Though I had reason to rejoice upon her account, because of the great advantage which she had gained by her release, yet tears of sorrow flowed from my eyes on account of the great loss which both I and the Church have sustained. My loss is beyond description. She was a true helpmeet to me both in soul and body.”

One touching circumstance remains to be noted. When, in the absence of her husband, Mrs. Johnston was attacked with malignant fever, and in prospect of her speedy removal from this world, she wrote him a letter, full of wise counsel, and touching words of cheer. This gracious letter was afterwards found in her desk. It must have been written at intervals; and it is perfectly astonishing how she could have accomplished such a task under the circumstances. This is the letter:

“My dearly beloved husband, If it should please Almighty God to call me home before your return, may He support and comfort you. Had I thousands of gold and silver, they should be yours, for you are more than worthy of them. But I have nothing to leave you except my love and my best wishes for your eternal welfare. With my whole heart I pray God to bless you in time and in eternity. I hear a voice within me saying, ‘Set thy house in order for thou shalt die and not live.’ And feeling by happy experience that Jesus is mine and I am His, I have commended my soul into His hands, and I know that He will keep it unto the day of His appearing. And under His care, I commit my body to the earth, in sure and certain hope of a glorious resurrection to eternal life through our Lord Jesus Christ. My spirit rejoices in the prospect of being eternally with my Heavenly Master, to be filled with His glory.

“Let my body be buried in a plain, simple manner. My motto is, ‘A sinner saved by grace – a brand plucked from the burning.’ Oh! my dear husband, take heed to the ministry committed to you by the Lord Jesus Christ: preach the glorious Gospel remembering Jesus has said, ‘Feed My sheep! Feed My

lambs!’ Be faithful to the important trust, not fearing the frowns of a wicked world. Despise its smiles, constantly make it your study to please God, and keep a conscience void of offence before God and man. Let your eye be fixed on God’s glory and the good of souls; and let your own soul be your particular care. Then you will know how to preach and how to live so that at last, when your Lord comes to reckon with His servants, you may be found one of those who having received five talents, have gained other five. Then you will be sure of a blessed reward. Oh! that I could say ‘Follow me as I have followed Christ.’ I cannot, but I *can* say what is better – follow Christ Himself: He is the perfect pattern of His Church and of His ministers. If you follow Him, you shall never miss your way. I know He hath loved me: and He now, upon the margin of eternity, gives me the witness of it in my heart, and enables me to shout ‘Victory’ over death and the grave.”

Mrs. Johnston passed away to her eternal rest on the 10th of August, 1811. Her path was rough and thorny in the extreme, but her reward was bright and glorious. Her memory was very fragrant to those fellow-labourers whom she left behind to work on in the midst of a poor and oppressed people.

UNUSUAL BIBLES (10)

The first edition of the Authorised Version of the Bible (the King James Bible) published in 1611 contained what was thought to be an error in Ruth 3.15. The last clause of the verse read, “and he went into the city.” The second edition issued two years later corrected this to, “and she went into the city,” as it remains in our Bibles today. The first edition became known as the “Great HE version,” and the second edition as the “Great SHE version.” Although we call it an error, it still causes confusion even today, as Daniel Bomberg’s edition of the Hebrew Bible, an edition frequently consulted for the Authorized Version, actually reads “and he went to the city.” Many scholars maintain that the word is masculine, and is to be understood of Boaz. The Targum (a Jewish Aramaic translation of books of the Hebrew Bible) expresses it plainly: “Boaz went into the city.”

- 1 **'Tis a point I long to know,**
(Oft it causes anxious thought),
Do I love the Lord, or no?
Am I his, or am I not?
- 2 If I love, why am I thus?
Why this dull and lifeless frame?
Hardly, sure, can they be worse
Who have never heard his name.
- 3 Could my heart so hard remain,
Prayer a task and burden prove,
Every trifle give me pain,
If I knew a Saviour's love?
- 4 When I turn my eyes within,
All is dark, and vain, and wild;
Filled with unbelief and sin,
Can I deem myself a child?
- 5 If I pray, or hear, or read,
Sin is mixed with all I do;
You that love the Lord indeed,
Tell me, is it thus with you?
- 6 Yet I mourn my stubborn will
Find my sin a grief and thrall;
Should I grieve for what I feel,
If I did not love at all?
- 7 Could I joy his saints to meet,
Choose the ways I once abhorred,
Find at times the promise sweet,
If I did not love the Lord?
- 8 Lord, decide the doubtful case;
Thou who art thy people's Sun,
Shine upon thy work of grace,
If it be indeed begun.
- 9 Let me love thee more and more,
If I love at all, I pray;
If I have not loved before,
Help me to begin today.

John Newton

What is this point you long to know?
Methinks I hear you say, "Tis this":
I want to know I'm born of God,
An heir of everlasting bliss.

Is this the point you long to know?
The point is settled in my view –
For if you want to love your God
It proves He first has loved you.

I want to know Christ died for me,
I want to know the seal within;
I want to know Christ's precious blood
Was shed to wash away my sin.

I want to know more love to Christ,
I want more liberty in prayer;
But when I look within my heart,
It almost drives me to despair.

I want a mind more firmly fixed
On Christ, my everlasting Head;
I want to know more love to God,
I want to feel less love to sin.

I want to live above the world,
And count it all but trash and toys;
I want more tokens of God's grace,
Some foretaste of eternal joys.

Is this the point you long to know?
The dead can neither feel nor see;
It is the slave that's bound in chains,
That knows the worth of liberty.

So where a want like this is found,
I think I may be bold to say –
That God has fixed within thy heart,
What hell can never take away.

I want - I know not what I want -
I want that real and special good.
Yet all my wants are summed up here,
I want to love! I want my God!

Daniel Herbert

GEORGE MOCKFORD (Part 3)

Continued from SUMMER 2022 Page 5.

Leaves the Church of England

I felt such a strong love produced in my heart toward the saints of God that met at Providence Chapel, and to the truth preached there; and the words – with, I believe, the feeling also of Ruth – came into my mind, “This people shall be my people,” and O that their God may be my God! All desire to go to the church was taken away, nor did I think of the trouble I might bring upon myself in taking the step as I walked to the chapel in such sweet meditation, that when I found myself inside the building, I almost wondered how I got there, and I never returned to the church again.

I am persuaded that had not the Lord brought me out of the Church of England to which I was so closely wedded, I should not have come out; it cost me something to do so, but I was enabled to commit my way unto the Lord, to trust also in him; and I have indeed found it better to trust in the Lord than to put confidence in man, or in princes. They that trust in the Lord shall not want any good thing. I am a witness that He is that God, and that His words are true.

As I had expected, my leaving the church began to make a stir, and I was requested to meet the clergyman to give an account of my conduct. We had many talks, and the Lord so favoured me with words to speak to him that he was not able to gainsay what I brought forward, and on one occasion he said, “You are right, Mockford, you are right;” but so unwilling was he to yield the point, that he wrote me a long letter, and spoke to my old master about the matter, and other folks in the parish, so that I began to be talked about by nearly every one in it. And though this clergyman never persecuted me, nor that I know of, showed a bad spirit towards me, yet it was taken up by others, and their bitter spirit made apparent in different ways; one being, that when in the winter, a blanket, a little flannel, or coals were given to the poor in the parish, I was no longer a recipient, and when I was ill (as I often was) their opposition was shown also.

A dissenter

On one occasion an old retired clergyman called at my house, and asked my wife how I was (I was then upstairs in bed, so I heard all he said), and was told I was rather better. “Ah! he’s a dissenter,” he said, “and doesn’t want to see me.” “I do not think,” my wife replied, “that

he would mind seeing you.” “He’s a dissenter,” he repeated, and my wife said, “You had better go upstairs and see him yourself.”

So up he came with, “Well, how are you?” “Thank you,” I answered, “I am better.” “You are a dissenter,” said he. “That,” I replied, “is what you call me, but I do not call myself so, as I do not dissent from the Articles and Doctrines of the Reformation, but it is you clergymen who are dissenters from those Articles.” “I have been to college,” he answered, “and been trained on purpose to teach you, and you are taking the place of a teacher to me. You are an Antinomian.”

“I do not know, sir, what you mean,” I said. “Then from your own mouth I prove your ignorance,” he replied, and began to explain to me the meaning of the word Antinomian by giving its Greek origin. I told him I did not understand Greek or Hebrew, but should think it meant those who said, “Let us do evil that good may come.” “Ah!” he said, “you are an all-faith man.” “Sir,” I replied, “I am at times much tried to know if I have any of the right kind;” and he said, “Now which do you think the most important, faith or works?” “Well, sir,” I returned, “I find in my Bible that James said, “Faith without works is dead;” therefore one is as important as the other. But now, sir, to prove that I am not against the church, I will say that had I been able to get the food my soul requires in her; if you” – handing him one of Toplady’s books – “and the rest of the clergy preached like that man, I should not have left the church.” To that he made no reply, but said, “If you had stayed in the church, we would have taken care of you and your family; we had agreed that you should have the clerkship, but as it is, you have brought misery upon yourself and family by turning your back upon your friends;” and in a great rage he asked, “What may you take?” “The doctor orders anything that is nourishing,” I answered. “Well,” he said, “I am commanded to look after your body, your religion I hate, I will send you a bottle of wine;” and downstairs he stamped as though he would break every step, and I never saw him again as he was soon cut off by death.

Works at a soap factory

Now a little while before I quite left the church, I had obtained, by the kindness of the Lord, a situation at a soap factory. My old master said to me one day, “A hand is wanted for a fortnight at the factory. I have spoken to Mr. Evershed about you, so you are to go at once.” The work there was entirely new to me; but without seeing the master, I went

as I supposed for the two weeks. The master and I never had any agreement, but the two weeks passed, and nothing was said to me about leaving, so I continued going. I afterwards heard that if I had not suited, I should have been obliged to leave at the end of the fortnight. But the dear Lord instructed me, and much favoured me after I had finally left the church. I remember after being laid aside by affliction for about a month, I was favoured with much importunity with the Lord in prayer that He would seal my pardon to my heart, and give me a full assurance that I was His.

All things become new

Well, the first day I walked out of the house by the river-side, O the blessed peace I was favoured with! peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ. Everything in nature looked new; all spoke of the goodness and praise of God: the birds of the air, the water in the river, the grass on the hill-side. That scripture came into my mind, “If any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new.” I felt a new creature; I blessed and praised the God of my life, and called upon everything to help me to praise Him who had done such great things for my soul. I cannot in words describe the blessed state I was in; I felt all my sins were pardoned and cast into the sea.



Mr. Mockford as a young man

How long I stayed out I do not know, but when I returned home I took up the Bible, and read a little, and to my great joy it was also new. I kissed the book, and blessed the God of it. A measure of this happiness lasted several months, but not to the same extent; and sometimes I was tried because it was suggested to me, “How do you know that your sins are pardoned, as you did not see Jesus Christ, nor had you any scripture applied, neither did you find that your guilt was removed by the application of the blood of Jesus Christ?” This tried me, as my guilt was not removed suddenly, but by degrees. So I begged of the Lord to give me a word, if His dear will: and, bless His holy name, He granted me my request, and said, “I have

blotted out, as a thick cloud, thy transgressions, and, as a cloud, thy sins." O what joy and peace were again produced in my heart! All was well, and I felt sure it would be for ever well.

Concerns about the ministry

I had for a long time been much exercised about the ministry; sometimes feeling it was right, and then again fearing that I was altogether deceived about it. But now it was laid upon my mind with much weight, and I had liberty before God on the matter, with a deep feeling of love to the Lord's people, and a sincere desire to honour and glorify the Lord in whatever way he was pleased to use me. I said nothing, however, to my fellow-creatures on the subject, as I was so afraid of being left to follow man's advice, which, as I told the Lord, He knew I did not want to do, unless I was sure such advice was in accordance with His blessed mind and will. I therefore begged of Him that He would himself lay it upon the minds of His people if it were His will to send me unto them.

One Sunday afternoon, a few friends called upon me, and, as we were talking together, one said, "How I do love to walk behind the Lord's people, and hear them talk." I replied, "So do I." An elderly man said, "You do?" I answered, "Yes;" and began to think, I fear that he can see I am destitute of grace; so I again said, "I hope I do." "Well," returned the good man, "we believe that the Lord intends you should go before His people; in other words, we feel sure that the Lord is preparing you for the ministry." "Oh!" I said, "you don't know what you are talking about." I felt as if I should have dropped from my seat, with the little child I had on my knee. My friend saw my agitation, and said no more. But, like Mary, I pondered his words in my heart, for I knew what I had asked the Lord.

Trick played on an old man

When I was a shepherd-boy, I and another lad, on one occasion, played a trick on a poor old man. He was a flint-digger, and was in the habit of bringing a bottle of beer to the Downs, containing enough to last him the week. This bottle we got hold of, carried it to the top of the hill, and started it down the steep into the valley below, and, of course, when it reached the valley, it was dashed in pieces. This was done after the poor man had left work.

Well, after the Lord had called me by His grace, I heard that this was a godly man, and that he was ill. I did so want to see him to confess

my fault, and ask his forgiveness. Accordingly I went to the dear man's house, and found him ill in bed, in a most blessed place in his soul, calm in the enjoyment of solid peace, and only waiting to be called up higher. He had been told I was coming to see him; so as soon as I got there, he said, "Now, my lad, sit thee down in this chair," (pointing to one by his bedside), "and tell me what the Lord hath done for thy soul."

"But I have come to confess my sin against you," I said, "and ask your forgiveness." "Sin against me," he exclaimed, "what do you mean?" I then told him what the shepherd-boy and I did with his bottle. "Ah!" said he, "I thought it was you two young trimmers; but where is the other?" "Oh!" I cried, with tears flowing from my eyes, "he is transported beyond the sea."

"Ah!" said he, "one is taken, and the other left." I burst into a flood of tears at this, as I felt so broken down with the goodness of God to me. Why me, blessed God, why me, and leave the other to reap the just reward of his sin, of which I had been a large partaker? As soon as I had recovered some composure, the good old man said, "I most heartily forgive you, my dear friend. Now do tell me a little of the goodness of our covenant God to thee." So I told him a little, and we both wept together to His praise for the mercy we had found.

I spoke a few words in prayer at his request; "and now," he said, "you must come and see me as often as you can as long as I live." This I did, and before he died, he said, "I have one request to make, which is, that you will continue to visit my dame after my removal home." I readily promised, and went once a week to see her, and after a little time she asked one friend to come in the same evening, and then another until there were several. I used to read one of dear Mr. Philpot's sermons, and speak a few words in prayer.

Pressed to speak in the Lord's name

On one occasion, when I took my sermon out of my pocket to read as usual, one of the company took it up, to see, as I thought, by whom it was preached, but as it was not returned to me, I said, "With your permission I will read the sermon," when, to my utter surprise, the person said, "We are persuaded you have no right to read other people's sermons, as we believe the Lord hath anointed you to preach His truth. There is the Bible; tell us what the Lord hath done for your soul." I begged and entreated him not to press it, as they were quite mistaken about that matter. "Do give me the sermon to read," I cried. They did

so; but I cannot describe the confusion I was in, as I had denied that I was exercised about the ministry, not in word, but in spirit. I went home that night with a very guilty conscience, and I stayed away a fortnight this time, and it was a fortnight of trouble, as I had asked the Lord to lay it upon the minds of others, and then had denied it.

Oh! if the Lord would pardon my sin, and I should be asked again, I would not deny it. Well, when I went again, I carried a sermon as before, but as soon as I laid it on the table it was taken, and when I asked for it, the reply was, "We are more convinced than ever that the Lord has designed you for the ministry, and this time we will not allow you to read the sermon." My fortnight's trouble was before me, as well as my promise to the Lord; I therefore with fear and trembling took the Bible, and opened on Psalm 107, and read until I came to this verse, "They fell down, and there was none to help;" and I spoke on that verse for about half-an-hour, feelingly; and so in future I made a few remarks upon some portion of the word of God. But this was only privately. I was still much tried as to whether the Lord had called me to the work, for I felt that this gift to speak in private might have been given me, but that was no proof I was called to speak publicly.

Invited to preach at Newhaven

One day a friend who lived at Newhaven said to me, "I feel sure the Lord has anointed you to preach the gospel to the poor, and I give you an invitation to Newhaven to speak in my house." I replied, "No, I cannot come; you will find some day you are mistaken." But on the next Good Friday (so called) a friend from Brighton came to Lewes in the morning, and said, "We must go to Newhaven to-day, and either you or I must preach; it is so laid upon my mind." It had been much upon my mind also, as we did not work that day, I therefore answered, "Well, William, I feel we must go, as I have had the same strong impression;" so we went, and when we arrived at my friend's house, he was delighted, and said to me, "You will speak to us this evening." I replied, "I do not know; we are come to see what the will of the Lord is in the matter." "Oh!" he said, "I will go to Mr. Young's and some others, and we shall have a nice number of folks this evening."

We thought the service had better begin at half-past six, as we had to get back to Lewes that night; so my friend went out to invite the friends to come; but all had some excuse, and not one came, so of course we had no service. Now what could I say about a divine call to the

ministry? Now both Satan and my unbelief had plenty of scope to work, and my friend and I had almost a seven miles' silent walk, and yet a great deal of talk within. Indeed, I concluded this was a proof that I was not called to the work of the ministry.

Questioned on his exercises

Well, now I felt a secret relief that I would think no more about preaching; and months passed away, until one morning, when going home to my dinner, I met a minister I knew, but to whom I had never said a word about my exercise: he had a friend with him, whom I did not know. He came up to me, and putting his hand on my shoulder, said to his friend, "Don't you be surprised if you see this man in the box at Heathfield some day" (meaning the pulpit). I said to him, "What are you talking about?" "Good morning," said he to his friend, "I am going home with this man."

When alone, "Now," said he, "can you look me in the face and say that you are not exercised about the ministry?" "I cannot, but I feel that of late it has not been so much on my mind, so that I think it will never be." "Well," he replied, "whatever you may think about it, I am convinced that God intends it shall be; moreover, I feel it so laid upon my mind that you will hear from me soon respecting preaching to a few people next Good Friday."

He then left me, but his words did not leave me, "I am convinced that God intends it shall be." This brought on a deeper concern than ever about it, so that it was a day and night burden. I sighed and cried to the Lord in this my trouble, that he would not suffer me to run unsent by him.

Well, the Good Friday came and passed, and I heard nothing from this friend. At first I was much tried at not hearing, but afterwards felt a secret relief that it was not the Lord's mind to send me, and that he had shewn his servant that he was mistaken in the matter.

Invited to preach at Barcombe

Well, after I had got settled down under the feeling that I should not have to speak in public, one morning, when just sitting down to breakfast, the postman brought a letter which, upon my opening, I found contained an invitation to go next Lord's day to Barcombe, a village a few miles from Lewes, to speak to a few people there; wishing an answer by return, and it must not be nay. [This was Providence Chapel, Hamsey Road, Barcombe, founded in 1810 - Ed.]

This almost took the breath out of me, nor could I take my food; and as I was musing on it, a knock came at the door. On opening it, who should it be, but the afore-mentioned friend, who said, "Well, my boy, have you had a letter from Brighton this morning?" I replied, "Yes, and I believe it is through you." "Yes," he said, "it is, and what answer are you going to give?" I said, "I cannot go." "Well," he cried, "I have no time to stop parleying with you, as I have to catch a train; but mark you, if you refuse, you will bring yourself into such a state of bondage and distress as you have not had lately: I leave you to settle the matter with God." And so he left me.

O this settling the matter with God! Well, I do hope it *was* settled by God. The whole of the day God and my soul were together upon it, and I felt enabled to fall into His hands in this way: that I would write and tell the person who wrote, if health and strength permitted, I would venture to go; but at the same time told him I was not a preacher, and had never spoken in public, but was much tried upon the matter, and that I had been enabled to leave it all in the Lord's hands. If He had not sent me, I would not be able to speak; but if He had, that He would open my mouth and give me and the people to feel His witnessing the same.

After I had posted the letter, I fell into such distress about it, that I went to the post office and asked the postmaster, who was a friend of mine, if he would kindly open the box and give me a letter, with such an address upon it, as I did not want it to go now. I did not say anything to him of its purport. He replied, "My friend, I dare not, it being contrary to my instructions;" so it had to go, and O what a week of trial I had! Sometimes I felt would venture, and then again, I would not.

Ventures to speak in the Lord's name

Now I had not said a word to my wife about what was on my mind, nor this engagement; but on the Sunday morning I got up early, having had but little sleep all night. My wife enquired why I was getting up so early. "Oh! I am going a little way into the country." "What for?" she said. I tried to evade the question, and said I should be home again in the afternoon. So I set out, it being about four miles through the fields from where I lived.

I knew nothing of the place nor the people, excepting one man living there, a grocer, whom we supplied with soap. It being the first day of June, 1856, it was nice walking through the cornfields. On my journey I met a man I knew as a hearer of dear Mr. Vinall, of Lewes, on

his way there, and I was so afraid he would ask me what I was going that way for, that had it not been in a cornfield where we met, I should, when I saw him coming, have turned aside. However, I was very glad that he only said, “Good morning,” and went on.



*“I had not said a word to my wife”
Mrs. Ansile Mockford*

When I got into the village, I did not know where the chapel was, or if there were more than one in the place. As I was passing through the village, I met the afore-mentioned grocer, who called out, “Where are you travelling to this way?” “Well,” I said, “I scarcely know.” “Not know! that’s strange; I suppose you are an Englishman.” “Yes,” said I; but I did so want to get away from him, as I knew nothing of his profession. I suspected he was a churchman, but I ventured to say this to him: “Have you any chapels in this place?” “Yes,” he replied, “there is one,” pointing to it. “What time does the service begin?” I enquired. “About half-past ten” was his cool reply, and I walked away, and hid myself among some trees, where I could see the chapel.

Soon I saw a woman come and unlock the door, and go away again. Now, I thought, is my time to slip in.

I did so, and into the pulpit I went, and sat there wrestling with God, that if he had sent me, he would be with me, and help me. Presently I heard footsteps coming into the chapel, and now it darted into my mind, You cannot run away, as you are in the pulpit, and the people are coming in. I hid myself as much as I could, and did not venture to look up until the clerk gave out the hymn, (if I mistake not, one of Hart’s), and as they were singing, I ventured to look up, and the first man I saw was the grocer before mentioned. Oh, I thought I must sink through the floor, but the Lord strengthened me, and after they had sung, I read and prayed, yes, and unto the Lord, with so much heart-feeling of nearness, and humble boldness, that I felt to be permitted to draw very near to

Him, and some words were on my mind to speak from, if the Lord would enable me.

When they had done singing, I told the people that I had been requested to come to speak to them in the name of the Lord, but I was not a preacher, and had never spoken in public; in fact, I told them I was there on a trial between God and myself respecting the matter. I then read Romans 1.16 as a text, and all fear of man was removed. I felt instead a sweet liberty, and opening of the words, concerning which I myself had proved the truth. If it might be called a sermon, it was an experimental one.

TO BE CONTINUED

THE VENERABLE BEDE

Those of you who like reading history may possibly have come across the name of *Bede*, or *The Venerable Bede* as he is often called.

But who was this man? And what do you know about him? Probably, like everyone else, not much at all. Virtually all we know is what he tells us about himself in the last chapter of his best-known book, *Ecclesiastical History of the English People*, plus a few things found in letters to and from various friends.

Although we call him Bede, he called himself Baeda. Surnames as we know them did not exist in England until the 11th Century.

First of all, let us try to place him in history. He was born in the year 673. That is 212 years after the death of St. Patrick, the apostle of Ireland; and about 70 years after the death of St. Augustine of Canterbury. It would be another 800 years before Martin Luther was born. Like Martin Luther, Bede was a monk after the Benedictine order.

He was probably born at Monkton, Durham, in present-day Tyne and Wear. At the age of seven he was sent to the monastery of St. Peter at Wearmouth to be educated by Abbot Benedict Biscop. Later he transferred to the sister monastery of St. Paul at Jarrow where his education continued under Abbot Ceolfrid. He was to spend his entire life in the monastery in learning, in teaching, in writing, and in observance of the daily services of the church. At the age of 18 he was appointed a deacon, and at the age of 29 a priest, both exceptionally young for these offices.

Some feel his entry into the monastery at the age of seven implies that by then he was an orphan. This is by no means certain, as it was not unusual for parents to dedicate their infant children to the religious life at an early age.

Bede was a prolific author, with at least forty books identified. Apart from his *Ecclesiastical History of the English People*, at the request of his friend Acca, Bishop of Hexham (in Northumberland), he wrote various commentaries on the Bible, as well as books on theology. His historical works are the key source for our understanding of early British history, and the arrival of Christianity in Britain. His *Ecclesiastical History* is the first work in which the AD system of dating was used. Later, King Alfred insisted that the work should be translated into the Anglo-Saxon tongue. Bede was undoubtedly the most learned man of his age, but makes it clear that all his studies were subordinate to Scripture. "Holy Scripture," he says, "is above all other books because it is divine, and leads to eternal life."

The brief biographical account of his life at the end of his *Ecclesiastical History* shows a simplicity of character. He calls himself a servant of Christ. He writes:

"I, Baeda, a servant of Christ, have, with the Lord's help, composed so far as I could gather it, either from ancient documents or from the traditions of the elders, or from my own knowledge. I was born in territory belonging to the monastery. I have spent my whole life within the monastery, devoting all my pains to the study of the Scriptures. Amid the observance of monastic discipline and the daily charge of singing in the Church, it has ever been my delight to learn or teach or write. From the time of my admission to the priesthood and my present fifty-ninth year, I have endeavoured for my own use and that of my brethren, to make brief notes upon the Holy Scripture."

The monastery offered exceptional facilities for study. Abbot Benedict Biscop had established a famous library with many books and documents from the continent. It seems that Bede had a considerable knowledge of Greek, and knew some Hebrew. His style is clear, simple and fluent.

As a historian, he took scrupulous care to investigate evidence, and to acknowledge the sources from which he draws, unusual in those days.

He concluded his great work with the following words: "And I pray Thee, loving Jesus, that as Thou hast graciously given me to drink in with delight the words of Thy knowledge, so Thou wouldst mercifully grant me to attain one day to Thee, the fountain of all wisdom and to appear for ever before Thy face."

Although his life was one of unremitting toil, he occasionally took a little holiday. "Having completed," he writes, "the third book of the Commentary on Samuel, I thought I would rest a while. In that way, after recovering my delight in study and writing, I proceeded to take in hand the fourth book."

His health began to deteriorate in the last year of his life. How much he was beloved by his friends can be seen from the account of his last sickness and death left to us by his friend and disciple Cuthbert.

I can with truth declare, that I never saw with my eyes or heard with my ears anyone return thanks so unceasingly to the living God. Wherefore I rejoice to relate in a few words after what manner he departed out of this world.

He was troubled with weakness and chiefly with difficulty in breathing, yet almost without pain, for about a fortnight before the day of our Lord's resurrection; and he afterwards passed his time, cheerful and rejoicing, giving thanks to Almighty God every day and night, nay every hour, till the day of Lord's ascension, that is, the twenty-sixth day of May, and daily gave lessons to us, his disciples. Whatsoever remained of the day he spent in singing psalms, as far as he was able. He also strove to pass all the night joyfully in prayer and thanksgiving to God, save only when a short sleep prevented it; and then he no sooner awoke than he straightway began again to repeat the well-known sacred songs, and ceased not to give thanks to God with uplifted hands. He repeated the words of the Apostle Paul, "It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God."

He also sung antiphons [short chants often taken from the Psalms] for our comfort. One of these was, "O King of glory, Lord of all power, leave us not comfortless, but send to us the

promise of the Father, even the Spirit of truth – Hallelujah.” And when he came to the words, “leave us not comfortless,” he burst into tears and wept much.

An hour after, he fell to repeating what he had begun. And this he did the whole day, and we, hearing it, mourned with him and wept. Now we read, now we lamented, nay, we wept even as we read. In such rapture we passed the Fifty Day’s feast of Pentecost till the aforesaid day; and he rejoiced greatly and gave God thanks, because he had been accounted worthy to suffer such weakness.

When the Tuesday before the Ascension of our Lord came, his breathing became more difficult, and his feet began slightly to swell; yet he continued all day to teach and dictate to his pupils with his usual cheerfulness saying, “Learn your best today; for I know not how long I may last, or how soon my Maker may call me away.” His pupils perceived that he saw his end approaching. He lay down to rest that night, but passed it without sleep, in prayer and thanksgiving.

When the morning dawned, that is, on the Wednesday, he called his young companions together and bade them lose no time in writing the rest of the task he had begun with them. So they continued employed till nine o’clock, when, as the office of the day required, they went in procession to the chapel. One, however remained with him; but fearing it might be too much for his weakness, he said, “There is still, my dear master, one chapter wanting to complete the translation; but I must not ask you to dictate any more.” “Nay,” said Bede, “it is easy to me. Take your pen and write; only lose no time.”

A little later he said, “It is now time,” he said, “that I should return to Him who created me. I have lived long, and my merciful Judge has well provided for me in the life I have led. I feel the hour of my freedom is at hand, and I desire to be released and to be with Christ.” Thus he passed the time in peace and holy joy till the evening.

Even on the day of his death, Bede was busy dictating his translation of the Gospel of John into the old English or Saxon language. His young scribe, a lad named Wilbert, who was writing it down, said, “There is still one sentence, dear master, which is not written down.”

Returning to Cuthbert's account:

"Write quickly, then," said Bede, and gave him the closing words. "It is now finished," said the youth, when he had set them down. "You say well," replied Bede, "it is finished! Support my head between thy hands, and let me, while I sit, still look towards the holy place in which I used to pray, that though I can no longer kneel, I can still call upon my heavenly Father." Shortly afterwards he sunk from his seat to the floor of his cell, and uttering his last hymn of praise, "Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Ghost," when he had named the name of the blessed Spirit, he breathed his last.



Bede dictating the Gospel of John to Wilbert

And thus Bede died there, in his cell, on the eve of Ascension Day, Wednesday, 25th May in the year 735 at the age of 62. The Venerable Bede's bones have been in Durham Cathedral since 1022. They were brought from Jarrow by a monk called Alfred who had them buried alongside his friend Cuthbert. In the 14th century they were moved into the Cathedral's Galilee Chapel.

LOUGHWOOD MEETING HOUSE

“In all places where I record my name I will come unto thee, and bless thee” (Exodus 20. 24).

This charming little meeting house, at Dalwood, near Axminster, Devon, was built in 1653. It is one of the oldest Baptist churches in England. How the early worshippers suffered! To be a Baptist was no easy matter – these were cruel days of persecution. Laws had been passed which bore particularly hard on the Baptists. Once, the worshippers arrived to find a soldier standing at the door with a drawn sword, with orders from the magistrate to thrust through the first person attempting to enter. A brave, God-fearing woman rushed past him “with a shriek,” while the soldier remained motionless. On another occasion a huntsman stood in the pulpit blowing his horn, with his hounds occupying the pews.

When built, the area was thickly wooded, in a hollow, and hidden



well out of sight. The 1657 church book records their timetable:

“Sunday meetings to be begun about seaven in the morninge. The tyme to be employed as followeth: in the tryall of gifts till 9 of the clocke. And that those two howers be improved by way of prayer. From 9 in the morninge till well towards 12 in publique exercise. From 1 till 3 of the clocke in publique exercise. That members spend 1 hower or 2 in communicatinge their experiences: inquiring after persons absent; trying the things heard and dutys neglected.”

The list of members at the beginning of the church book shows 105 members in good standing. Without doubt Huguenot refugees and their descendants played a considerable part in the history of Loughwood. They were given the nickname ‘French’ which was then adopted as a surname. This name is found frequently both in the burial ground and in the roll of deacons.

The earliest Pastor recorded of whom anything is known was George Allome, who, in 1669, was “chosen by lifting up of hands, and solemnly set apart with fasting and prayer.” James Pitt appears to have succeeded him, and was one who signed the Baptist Confession of Faith in London, 1689. The most famous was Isaac Hann, whose ministry commenced in 1747, and who died in 1778 aged 88. He was, we are told, a most devoted and eminent man, one whose praise was in all the churches.

Sadly, a malicious report was circulated that Mr. Hann had embezzled the sum of £90 “*which was given for ye support of ye ministry.*” The church launched an investigation, finding the report to be false, thus “*clearing our minister Isaac Hann from ye scandal of ye said report.*”

A wall tablet in his memory says:

*Ripen'd for Heav'n by Grace divine,
Like Autumn Fruit he fell;
Reader, think not to live so long,
But seek to live as well.*

Almost unique among Nonconformist churches, but not positively forbidden, during recent repairs the iron-studded oak coffin of Isaac

Hann was revealed in excellent condition beneath the floor. The coffin had to be moved, but was carefully re-interred in the same position.

One church member, named Catherine Stubbs, was sorely tempted by the devil. She overcame by the “blood of the Lamb,” causing the following verse to be written:

*Devil I tell thee without nubbs or jubbs,
Thou wert no match at all for Catherine Stubbs;
And if God give the grace to play the man,
Thou wilt come off as bad with Isaac Hann!*

These early Baptists at Loughwood were Particular Baptists – they believed in “particular redemption.” Disciplinary cases are recorded in the church book of some “*who meett with those persons which hold the doctrines of freewill, fallinge from grace and generall redemption.*” Five men were chosen to be elders “*by the voice and consent of us all,*” and five more as deacons.

A later Pastor was Richard Gill, who, in 1795, after a day set apart



for prayer and fasting, was unanimously called to the ministry. But the eighteenth century was drawing to its close, and a decline set in. The church book records: "*Alass we find much coldness as a Church in the things of God and true Relidgon and our Distresses are great.*"

The gallery appears to have been used by players of stringed instruments as music rests can still be seen, and in one place the book-rest is cut away to accommodate a bass viol.

The baptistry is situated beneath the floor in a central position below the pulpit. Three stone steps lead down to it and water was obtained from a nearby spring.

The property is now owned and managed by the National Trust. Admission is free, and is open every day. Services are held twice a year.

GENTLY LED

An account of the Lord's dealings with Florence Leeson, who departed this life, December 8th, 1883, at twelve years of age.

When Florence was nearly nine years of age, she had a time of illness which prostrated her very much. One Sunday night, her father enquired if she had ever asked the Lord about her illness. She replied that she believed the Lord had sent this illness to make her tell what distress she had been in about her soul, ever since the death of her sister Edith. Edith was a younger sister, and had been brought to a knowledge of the truth through the preaching of their dear pastor, Mr. Hazlerigg.

Florence said that after her sister's death she had felt that if she was to die she would be lost. Her elder sister said that Florence was frequently getting out of bed in the night to pray. Her childhood sins were laid on her conscience, and amongst others she felt she ought not to be cross when the boys (her brothers) teased her, and she prayed so against it; but could not get any rest or peace until the Sunday previous to the one mentioned above. On that Lord's Day, whilst Mr. Hazlerigg was preaching, she felt sure she was forgiven, and was so full of peace and happiness.

After this, she was very much blessed under a sermon preached from the text: "I love them that love Me; and those that seek Me early

shall find Me.” She felt that she had indeed sought and found Him, and that He did indeed love her.

Florence was very much blessed from the text: “My Beloved is mine, and I am His; He feedeth among the lilies.” For weeks this was a sweet morsel to her soul. She would very often exclaim, “My Beloved is mine, and I am His. I am sure I am one of His lilies, and shall be with Him in glory.” She seemed to hold constant intercourse with her Saviour.

She was at chapel a little later on, when Mr. Hazlerigg took for his text: “Take us the foxes, the little foxes, that spoil the vines” (Song 2. 14). The tears were running down her face during the sermon. When asked what had made her weep, she said, “When Mr. Hazlerigg spoke about little tempers, I felt it so.” Her mother said, “But, Florence, you are never cross.” She replied, “You heard what he said, – if we only felt angry without a cause, we were sinners in God’s sight, until we were washed in the precious blood of Jesus.”

Florence did not flinch from the word when it was of a specially searching nature. For instance, when Mr. Hazlerigg preached from the words, “Whose fan is in His hand” (Matt. 3. 12), though the word was very searching, she could bear it, and was only confirmed in the persuasion that she was amongst the wheat.

One Tuesday, later on, she was ill in bed. That night Mr. Hazlerigg spoke from the text: “Though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool.” When told the text, she said later that the words had never left her for three days and nights.

In the spring of 1883, she had another severe attack of illness. She said to her mother: “Don’t ask Jesus to make me better this time. I am so often poorly. Let the Lord do just as He likes with me, for I do love Him.”

A few days later, she said, “Mother, it is written, ‘If ye love Me, keep My commandments’; I do want to be baptized.” Her mother was astonished, and said, “My dear, you are too young. Wait till you are older.” She said, “Jesus loves the little children, and said, ‘Suffer them to come unto Me, and forbid them not, for of such is the kingdom of heaven.’”

Later on, Mr. Hazlerigg preached from the text: “Who passing through the valley of Baca make it a well.” Florence said she had been drinking deep at the well, when weary and full of pain, such draughts as

these: “My Beloved is mine” – “He knoweth them that are His” – “My grace is sufficient for thee.” “Mother,” she said, “I want His will to be done; but I do so want to see Him.”

Shortly afterwards another text was most blessedly applied to her heart. Mr. Hazlerigg preached from the text: “How shall I put thee among the children?” (Jer. 3. 19). She said she felt sure she was put amongst God’s children in heaven, and she should like to join them on earth. Florence mentioned her desire to be baptised to Mrs. Allen, a member at Zion Chapel, Leicester. On one occasion she said to Florence, “And do you like to hear of the good Shepherd?” “I do,” said Florence, “Jesus is the good Shepherd, and He is so kind to me.” She spoke to Mrs. Allen of one sermon in which Mr. Hazlerigg spoke of Christ’s sheep knowing His voice, and following Him; and said, “I do want to hear the good Shepherd calling me!”

Later Mrs. Allen called again, when Florence told her of a sermon preached by her Pastor from the text: “How shall I put thee among the children?” She said that she now believed that Jesus had died for her, and had put her amongst the children. She then said again, “I should so love to be baptized; but they say I am too young.” Mrs. Allen replied, “Oh no! Not too young for Jesus. But what makes you want to be baptized?” She said, “Because I should like to be amongst the children now. And when I was reading that word this morning, ‘They shall be Mine in that day when I make up My jewels,’ the Lord Jesus gave me faith to believe I am one of His jewels.” Mrs. Allen said, “The Lord will fulfil in you all the good pleasure of His holy will, and enable you to honour Him, I feel persuaded.”

A few days later, Mr. Hazlerigg called to see her. He said to her, “Do you think Jesus loves you?” Florence said, “Yes.” Mr. Hazlerigg said, “How do you know that He loves you?” She answered, “Because He died for me.” Mr. Hazlerigg, to test her, then said, “Oh yes; He died for you because you were such a good little girl.” Florence instantly replied, “Oh no! but because I am a sinner Jesus died for me.”

Some time after this, she came before the Church, and gave a sweet testimony. She was cordially received; and many were much affected with the simplicity and sweetness of what she said, and the Lord’s goodness to one so young.

Her mother asked the doctor if she could be baptized. “No,” he said, “it would be her death.” Florence did not see any cause to fear, and was baptized; and it was a time of great refreshing to the people.

Her health continued a little better for several weeks after her baptism, and her mother began to hope the dear Lord would restore her to the family. But it was not to be.

About a month afterwards, she was again worse. The doctor called. He said, "Florence, you are worse. Nothing seems to do you any good this time." She said to him, "God is all-sufficient, you know. He can make me strong and well if He likes." The doctor said, "Yes; I know He can give you a new heart in the body, the same as He has done spiritually. But He does not work miracles now." This was the doctor's opinion.

At a week-evening service, Mr. Hazlerigg spoke about answers to prayer. He said that sometimes we had answers at once, and sometimes we had to wait. When her mother got home, she told Florence what had been said. "Yes," she said, "I understand about that; for when I was to come before the Church, I was afraid my heart would be bad, and I should not be able to speak; and I kept praying to the Lord all the week, and the fear did not pass away till I entered the room. But when I was to be baptized, I was afraid I should cry out in the water; so I asked the Lord, and He took the fear away at once. I felt nothing but joy and peace all the time."

On the Sunday after the Luther Commemoration Sunday, her mother was speaking to her about the Lord's goodness, when she said, "I was wishing you would speak. I have something to tell you, and did not like to begin first. You were speaking about persecution; and you said, if it was necessary the Lord would give you strength to pass through the fire for His sake. I felt I dare not go through the fire for Him, and it has made me feel unhappy at times all the week. Last night, when I was in bed, thinking about it, these words were spoken inside me: 'I will not suffer you to be tempted more than you are able to bear.' I then felt such a sweet assurance that, if a time of trial came, I could go through the fire for Him."

A week later, when her mother went into her bedroom in the morning, she saw she had been agitated, but she looked happy. "What is it, Florence?" her mother asked. She replied, "I was in great pain in the night, and those words came into my mind: 'Is it nothing to thee?' I said, 'Is it nothing to Thee, Lord, to see me suffer so? for I do love Thee. Oh, help me!'" All at once I saw the Saviour on the cross in agony for my sins. Oh, mother, I did feel so sorry that I had thought my pain anything in comparison with what He bore for me."

She was always so very sweet, quiet, and gentle in her ways. During the last twelve months, her father had to carry her up to bed. As soon as his foot touched the first stair, she would kiss him, and say, "That's one"; and would kiss him every stair, counting them to the top. Sometimes she would say, jokingly, "Do you think I am heavier tonight, father?" "You are a lump of love," he would say; at which she would laugh.

On Sunday, 2nd December, she was very full of pain all day. After her mother put her to bed at night, she gave such a bright smile, and was asked, "Is your pain easier, Florence?" "No, mummy," she said; "but HE giveth more grace."

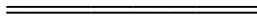
A day or two after this, Mrs. Deacon from the chapel called to see her. "You look very happy, Florence," was her first remark. Florence replied, "Yes; I am very happy." Mrs. Deacon said, "What makes you so happy?" Florence said, "A great many things; but what more particularly just now is the word, 'Come unto Me, all ye that are weary and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.' I have been weary now for nearly three years."

On Saturday, 8th December, she got up at ten o'clock in the morning. "Mummy," was her first word, "how anxious you look! You will make yourself ill; then what shall I do? Come and sit down. I have picked my verse for tomorrow. It is, 'Let your garments be always white.'"

On that 'tomorrow' she was before the throne (Rev. 7. 9).

Mrs. Allen called to see her about twelve o'clock. She was sitting in her chair, evidently very ill, but calm. Mrs. Allen said, "Is Jesus precious to you now?" She answered, "Yes," but was too ill to speak more. Her face lighted up with such a look of peace and love that Mrs. Allen never forgot.

At twenty past two her breathing became worse. She clasped her hands together, and called out, "Dear Lord Jesus, help me! Precious Jesus, give me peace!" and, putting one arm round her mother's neck, she then put her other hand in her father's, and at five minutes to three she was gone from them for ever, being only twelve years old.



BAPTISED IN A CROCODILE INFESTED RIVER

Mozambique is located on the southeast coast of Africa.

It was August 1968. Eventually Martinho Campos was urged to come and interview those who were ready to be baptised and take their stand as Christians. So he went, and when he had examined all the candidates he announced that twenty-six of them could be baptised, and that the ceremony would take place next day in the river.

Now there were known to be many crocodiles in that particular river. There had been a succession of casualties as women went down to the river to draw water and when they saw the sudden swirling of the water were not quick enough to run up the bank. The news got around that the preacher, Martinho Campos, would stand in the water and baptise twenty-six people, so crowds gathered on the banks to see what would happen.

The Christians knew the danger, and prayed earnestly for God's protection, standing as near the water themselves as they dared, singing lustily the hymns that had been chosen as one after another went down into the river to be baptised by Martinho in the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. He stood there calmly in the softly flowing waters until the last candidate had been plunged down and come up again dripping and brushing the water from his face as he waded back to the bank. Then Martinho himself waded back - and the waters started swirling. The crocodiles were coming back.

"Many were praying for me," he told Gordon and Katie, as he related the incident, and all that had happened during the years since they had left.

"God is good," he said, "and He hears our prayers." He continued telling of the various ways in which openings had been given to preach in many new places. As they listened they marvelled.

The next letter they wrote home to their supporters started with the words: "When the Lord turned again the captivity of Zion, we were like them that dream. Then was our mouth filled with laughter, and our tongue with singing. The Lord hath done great things for them. The Lord hath done great things for us; whereof we are glad" (Ps. 126. 1-3).

(From *Life Out Of Death in Mozambique* by Phyllis Thompson)

CONCERNS OVER FREEWILL

*From the writings of Miss Eunice Croft who died in
the Harpenden Bethesda Home in 1998.*

When about twelve years of age, I was sometimes allowed to go to the weeknight children's meeting at the local Church of England with our neighbour's children.

Some of these meetings were very good but the truth was at times mixed with freewill. I did not know the term at that time but I can remember being horrified at one meeting when an eminent speaker almost suggested it was in our power to choose whether we would go to heaven or hell and I was greatly distressed at what was said. Nevertheless, I knew nothing of the doctrine of particular redemption and when this was disclosed to me by a chapel friend a few years older than myself who was opposed to it, I was brought into great distress. I did not feel I could accept this doctrine and I began to listen to the sermons to see if I could get any light. I loved the Lord's people at Ebenezer, Clapham and I felt sure they were the people of God.

I did not think they would accept any doctrine which was not in the Scriptures but I could not seem to find this doctrine in the Scriptures. I searched in the dark for two years and when I was fourteen I went to stay with my relatives at Sale. There I got some light in the hymns which were sung and also through the conversation of a minister who was entertained at my aunt and uncle's house. The minister said he had been talking to a freewiller, who told a story of a king who erected a beautiful fountain in a garden. The water was most pure and refreshing and over the fountain the king put "FOR EVERYBODY" but, of all the crowds that passed by, only two or three stopped to taste those wonderful drops of water. The freewiller continued "That's like the gospel, isn't it?" "No," said our free grace minister (I pricked up my ears): "You will find nowhere in the Scriptures that the gospel is for everyone. You will read, "Ho everyone that thirsteth, come ye to the waters," and, "Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest."

The light began to dawn and my Bible became a new book. For two years after this until I was sixteen, I was gradually brought to understand the doctrine of election. After the teaching which I received at Sale I

read my Bible with new interest and prayed to the Holy Spirit to teach me the truth. Line upon line, and precept upon precept, it was brought to my mind as I studied the Word until there was only one point which was not cleared up regarding the doctrine of election.

When I was sixteen years of age, great changes came. Owing to our financial circumstances I was obliged to leave school although I had won a scholarship which would have given me a higher education. This was a great trial to me as I loved my studies and I was very rebellious at the Lord's dealings. I obtained a situation in London but I was not at all happy in it. Still, at times I was encouraged by a word of Scripture or a verse of a hymn as I went about my daily work. Later I felt it would be wiser to obtain more stable employment and enter the insurance industry, my first seven years being in the employment of the Prudential Insurance Company. I sought the Lord's guidance in my pathway and though often it was not of my choosing, I believe he directed my steps.

At the same time as I left school, changes also came at Ebenezer, Clapham and Mr. Jesse Delves came on three months' probation with a view to the pastorate. This did not please me very much as I did not at that time enjoy his preaching at all. However, during his three months, Mr. Delves preached one Sabbath from 1 Thessalonians. 1. 4 and took up the doctrine of election. Every point which I had questioned and been brought to understand was confirmed and Mr. Delves dealt with the last remaining point which troubled me and explained this so that I could see the justice of God. After this, I was more reconciled to the coming of Mr. Delves as Pastor and by the end of the three months, I discovered that there was food for my soul in his ministry more than in the other supplies, godly men though they were.

The next few years were times of spiritual feasts on the Lord's Days, while in the week my heart was up to the Lord to sustain His life in my soul as I daily had to be in contact with the world.

I was very fond of music and took my studies to a fairly high level but even this was as nothing after a spiritual feast such as we had on a Lord's Day. I can remember coming out of the Lord's house one evening and a young married friend said, "I thought about you last night because there was a wonderful Chopin recital on the wireless." Despite all my love of music, my soul revolted at the comparison with the truths of the everlasting Gospel. What do I care about that, thought I, in comparison to what I've had tonight!

And now I must come to a spot in my experience where I was

brought to worship at the cross of Christ and which I can never forget.

One Sabbath morning I was in a sad frame and far more concerned about my personal appearance than a blessing in my soul. Everything went wrong and I made myself and my mother late for the service. I was thoroughly miserable and felt to be a wretched sinner, not fit to be looked at or spoken to. We arrived at the service during the prayer and when the deacon rose to give out the second hymn, I discontentedly thought, "I wonder what hymn HE will give out." "Well," said my wicked heart, "it doesn't really matter what hymn he gives out for there isn't a single hymn in the book to suit a person like you today. No, not a single hymn in the book!" But there was one hymn in the book which touched the spot and this the deacon gave out: it was hymn 771, "To know my Jesus crucified, By far excels all things beside, All earthly good I count but loss, And triumph in my Saviour's cross." I felt as if the Lord turned and looked on me just as the Lord turned and looked upon Peter, and I wept bitterly, while all that hymn seemed for me. I sunk in self-abasement at the cross of Christ.

Verse 3 of the hymn was the commencement of a desire to follow the Lord in baptism and this exercise continued until, at length, in July 1938, I was constrained to ask Mr. Delves for an interview after hearing him preach from 2 Corinthians chapter 10, verses 4 and 5. In the evening sermon he urged the Christian soldier to put on his armour and go into the battle and later spoke of keeping the commandments in His ordinances. Hymn 270 was also sung.

I was helped in seeing our Pastor and the deacons but before the church meeting came, the Munich crisis came. I was tempted to believe that I had made a mistake and this had come to stop my baptism. The postponement of war at that time was to me an indication of the Lord's favour in my own case. I was helped at the church meeting and felt to have the Lord's blessing in my soul afterwards, so much so that I found it difficult to do my work the next day. I was baptised on November 2nd 1938 at the age of 20 and our Pastor's text was: "But I have a baptism to be baptized with; and how am I straitened until it be accomplished!" It was a deep and wonderful discourse on the sufferings of Christ. I felt it to be a very solemn time and when it was all over I felt a sweet feeling of the Lord's approbation in my soul.

JOAN WASTE

The Blind Martyr of Derby

In our last magazine, we gave an account of the martyrdom of a brave 20 year old girl, Rose Allen. This time, we have an account of Joan Waste, a poor, blind girl of 22 years of age.

Joan Waste was the daughter of William Waste, a barber, an honest but poor man. She was born in the year 1534, blind from birth, and lived with her father and mother. After their death she lived with Roger Waste, her twin brother. By the age of twelve she had learned to knit and to make ropes as her father was also a rope maker. In the time of King Edward VI (of blessed memory) she daily went to the church of St. Peter, Derby to hear the service read in the vulgar (common) tongue. In this way she became acquainted with Scriptural truths.



St. Peter's Church, Derby

Purchases a New Testament

At length she had saved sufficient money to purchase a New Testament, not the Latin version, but one in the English language. Although she was quite unlearned and, by reason of her blindness, unable to read, yet she had a great desire to hear the Scriptures read. Her memory was good and much of what she heard was deeply imprinted on her mind. She had access to a man named John Hurt, a prisoner in the common hall of Derby for debts. John Hurt was a sober, grave man of the age of seventy years, and being a prisoner mostly

unoccupied and without company, read to her daily some chapter of the New Testament.

At other times she would seek out John Pemerton, clerk of the parish church of All Saints, Derby, or some other person who could read. She would give a penny or two to such persons agreeing beforehand how many chapters of the New Testament they should read, or how often they would repeat one chapter, for the agreed price.

By this means she was able not only to recite many chapters of the New Testament, but also aptly to reprove, from Scripture, such sins and abuses as she saw around her.

Roman Catholicism restored

Not long after, following the death of King Edward, came the reintroduction of Roman Catholicism in the reign of his sister, Queen Mary (known as *bloody* Mary). Although many returned to the old superstitions, yet this poor blind woman continued constant and zealous in what she had learned. For this she was called before the bishop, and Doctor Draicot, the bishop's chancellor.

When questioned, Joan answered that she believed so much as the Holy Scriptures taught her, and according to what she had heard preached by many godly men, of whom some had suffered imprisonment, and some death. She desired them for God's sake not to trouble her, being a blind, poor, and unlearned woman, saying, that by God's assistance she was ready to yield up her life in that same faith.

She continued to be threatened by the bishop and Doctor Draicot with grievous imprisonments, torments, and death. The poor woman, becoming fearful and desiring to prolong her life, offered to the bishop that if he would, before that company, take it upon his conscience that the doctrines which he would have her to believe were true, and that he would at the dreadful day of judgment answer for her, she would then further answer them. The bishop said that he would answer for her at the dreadful day of judgment, but Doctor Draicot, hearing that, said, "My Lord, you know not what you do; you may in no case answer for an heretic."

The bishop and Draicot caused Joan Waste to be arrested in the town of Derby, accusing her of "the way which they call heresy" (Acts 24. 14). She was further examined, and asked if she would recant or not, and said she should answer for herself. The poor woman perceiving this, answered again that, as they refused to take on their conscience that

what they would have her believe was true, she would answer no further, but desired them to do their pleasure.

They therefore pronounced sentence against her, and delivered her to the bailiffs of Derby. After they had kept her about four or five weeks, they were required by the bishop to bring her to the parish church of All Saints, at a day appointed, where Doctor Draicot should preach a sermon.

Condemned for denying the ‘real presence’ in the mass

When the day and time came, Doctor Draicot came to the church, accompanied by several others. When all was ready, the poor blind servant of the living God was brought and set before the pulpit. The doctor having commenced his diatribe and speaking with great hostility against many things which he called heresies, declared to the people that the woman was condemned for denying the sacrament of the altar to be the very body and blood of Christ, really and substantially. He said that she was not only blind of her bodily eyes, but also blind in the eyes of her soul. As her body should be presently consumed with material fire, so her soul should be burned in hell with everlasting fire, as soon as it was separated from the body, and there remain, world without end. He ended his sermon by saying that it was not lawful for the people to pray for her. He then commanded the bailiffs to see her executed.

The sermon thus ended, the blessed servant of God was carried away from the church to a place called Windmill Pit, now situated in Lime Avenue, off the Burton Road, Derby by the Catholic Church. (A blue plaque commemorating the site was erected in 2017.)

Holding the hand of her brother, Roger, she prepared herself and desired the people to pray with her, and said such

prayers as she had learned and cried upon Christ to have mercy upon her as long as life lasted. Meanwhile, Doctor Draicot went to his inn, and there, after a meal, rested and slept during all the time of her execution, which took place on the 1st day of August 1556, at the age of 22 years.



Windmill Pit in 1875

“SHALL I TAKE YOUR PORTRAIT?”

In the days when cameras were unaffordable by the masses, it was not unusual for a photographer to take his camera round the streets or public buildings looking for business. In an old magazine called *The Juvenile Companion* we found the following article. Although somewhat archaic in its prose, (perhaps some may think childish,) it still has a lesson for us today.

“Shall I take your portrait, ma’am?” were the words of a comical little man, as he leaned his dirty face against that of a woman who lay in a state of intoxication upon a doorstep, with her back against the railings, through which he had bobbed his head. This sight, the saddest that can be imagined, filled my heart with sorrow. “Poor woman!” I mentally exclaimed, “I am sure that she would not like to have her portrait taken in this state; for what a feeling of shame would come over her, as she gazed on that sad, but truthful picture of her disgrace, as it hung day after day in its guilt frame. I am sure that she would not like to have her portrait taken.”

But, my dear young friends, is that poor woman alone? Are there not times when you would not like to have your portrait taken?

Look at Alfred! what a pretty portrait he would make, with his cherub face beaming with joy, and those golden ringlets thrown back so as to expose that thoughtful brow; but what a contrast an hour ago, when that pretty face was clouded with passion, when that chubby hand was raised to strike his sister, because she refused to play with him. Would Alfred like to have had his portrait taken then? Ah no. He hangs down his head; he pleads guilty.

And what a pretty portrait would Amy make, with her thoughtful blue eyes, her pretty, rosy, prattling lips, and face lit up with a smile. But yesterday those pretty eyes were flooded with tears, that beautiful smile, and those pretty dimples, had disappeared, and in their place, there was a gloomy, cross look, that had spread like a dark cloud over a summer’s sky, making everything look dreary, dark, and dismal, and all because she was forbidden to play because mamma’s head ached. I am sure she would not like to have had her portrait taken then, for she hangs down her head; she also pleads guilty.

How many of us would like a portrait taken of our hearts? Not

many, I am afraid; many of them would be anything but pretty; many would be sadly blurred and blotched.

If I were to ask if any of you have ever taken a portrait, I dare say you would all answer, "No." Yet you are continually doing so; there is not one of you who is not daily and hourly taking portraits; you are continually copying the thoughts, speech, and habits of all with whom you come in contact. Now if you had to choose a dress that was to last you all your life, how very careful you would be as regards the quality of the material, size, and shape. Habits are what we may call the clothing of the life; you are now choosing that clothing, and let me impress upon you the necessity of choosing well.

In America there is a creeper so powerful as to kill the finest trees, twining round the trunk with a tension so great as to impede the sap, until the mighty oak withers beneath its coils. So it is, my young friends, with evil habits; they at first may seem insignificant, and instead of cutting them off at the roots, they are allowed to grow, until the poor deluded victim finds himself writhing beneath their horrid embraces; at last, eating into his very soul, they impede his hopes, and destroy his happiness.

Many of my readers will have had their pictures taken at some time. They will have sat upon a chair, looking at the queer-looking box, and have then been shown their portrait, looking upon a piece of glass, which the photographer called a "negative." From this "negative" he takes as many as you require upon prepared Paper; these are pasted upon cards and then you have your Portrait.

But suppose the "negative" had not been a good one, that you had moved whilst it was being taken, and had, in consequence, spoiled the features, the consequence would be, that if he took a thousand, they would all be spoiled; it is impossible to make a good "portrait" from a bad negative.

So with habits; as I have said before, you are always copying them. Let it, therefore, be your aim to copy from good "negatives." If you know a good boy or girl, don't be afraid to copy them; for you have a good "negative." Those who are bad, avoid, because the "negative" will be bad.

There is One I desire you to copy from, above all others; it is a "clear negative;" there is not a spot nor a mark upon it; it has been pronounced by a very good Judge to be a "perfect negative," the best ever taken. This negative is without money and without price. It is the

Lord Jesus Christ.

One word in conclusion. Remember that you are not only copying others, but that others may be copying you! Determine, therefore, that they shall have a “good negative.”

CURRENT MATTERS

Just one in five couples have a religious wedding

The number of marriages between men and women in England and Wales fell from 426,000 in 1972 to 213,000 in 2019, a fall of 50 per cent. Fewer than one in five involved a religious ceremony (18.2 per cent). In 2019, Saturday was still the most popular day for weddings. Harry Benson, Director of Research of the charity Marriage Foundation, accuses the Government of failing to promote marriage as good for families. “Hostile policy-makers pretend marriage doesn’t matter,” he said. People are also delaying marriage till later. The average age at marriage in 2019 was 34.3 for men and 32.3 for women – a record high. In 1969 it was 23.7 and 21.8.

Five planets align

A rare spectacle occurred on June 3rd when Mercury, Venus, Mars, Jupiter and Saturn – in the order of distance from the sun – were aligned for the first time for a generation. These are the only planets visible to the naked eye. Watchers had less than half an hour to see the phenomenon, just before sunrise.

Shortest day ever on Earth

The Earth’s usual 24-hour spin speeded up on June 29th by 1.59 milliseconds. Since the 1970's the Earth’s rotation has been known to slow down, needing 27 leap seconds to keep our clocks accurate. But since 2020 that phenomenon has reversed. Humans cannot detect the change, but it can affect satellite and navigation systems.

Majority of babies now born out of wedlock

Of the 624,828 babies born in 2021 in England and Wales, 51.3 per cent were to unmarried mothers. Gavin Rice, policy director at the Centre for Social Justice, said, “Evidence shows children with married parents have better outcomes than those whose parents cohabit.”

THE GUTENBERG BIBLE

Johann Gutenberg's Bible is probably the most famous Bible in the world, and has been described as "a masterpiece and the most beautiful work of printing the world has ever known." It is the earliest full-scale work printed in Europe using moveable type.



Gutenberg's invention allowed the mass production of books for the first time and changed the world. Before Gutenberg, every book had to be copied by hand. Now it was possible to speed up the process without sacrificing quality. His invention did not make him rich, but it laid the foundation for the mass production of books, which subsequently meant

that books soon became cheaper, and available to a much broader spectrum of society. It took three printers three months to produce 300 copies. It would have taken three professional scribes all their lives to produce the same number of copies.

The Gutenberg Bible was printed in Mainz in 1455. Only forty-eight copies are known to have survived, of which twelve are printed on vellum and thirty-six on paper. Two of them are at the British Library, one printed on paper and one printed on vellum. Many copies, including the British Library's paper copy, married the new technology of printing with the old, and contain hand-painted decorations to imitate the appearance of an illuminated manuscript.

We thank God for the preservation of His Word over the ages.

PERCEPTION

A Quarterly Magazine for Young People



“And He brought him forth abroad, and said,
Look now toward heaven, and tell the stars, if
thou be able to number them” (Genesis 15. 5).

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PERCEPTION

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A FRIENDLY CHRISTMAS GREETING FROM SAMUEL MEDLEY

The present season prompts my mind to send
These, my kind wishes, to my Christian friend:
I wish you much increase of every grace;
I wish you strength to run your Christian race;

I wish you patience under every rod;
I wish you much sweet fellowship with God;
I wish you joy and comforts all divine;
I wish your evidences bright may shine;

I wish you very strong in precious faith;
I wish you well through life, and well in death;
I wish you well on the celestial shore;
And there, I wish you well for evermore.

Your sincere friend
SAMUEL MEDLEY

EDITORIAL

A special word to all our readers. It is with a measure of sadness I begin this Editorial, as it will be my last after a period of almost ten years. Fourteen years ago, Mr. John Broome became the first editor of a new magazine to be known as *Perception*. When he died early in 2013 I was asked initially to compile the remaining three issues for the year, but have in fact continued until now. It has been a labour of love to me, and a task I have enjoyed greatly, but I feel that the Lord has shown me that the time has now come to lay it down. I would like to thank all those who have contributed to the magazine in any way, my long-suffering proof reader Mrs. Miriam Pearce for her painstaking work, and especially to you my readers who have taken such an interest in the

publication. The Magazine Committee has invited Mr. Timothy Parish to become the next Editor and we wish him the Lord's help and blessing as he takes up this additional labour in the new year.

"Whoso is wise, and will observe these things, even they shall understand the lovingkindness of the Lord" (Psalm 107. 43).

Seeing. Observing.

What a difference between these two words. Every moment of our lives we are *seeing* all kinds of thing. Only rarely could we say we have been *observing*. Recently, parked near my house was a blue car. Every time I went out I saw it. If someone had asked about it I would have said, "Well, it's a blue car." If they had asked me anything more about it I couldn't really have told them. After several weeks, I thought that there must be something wrong; in fact, I thought it ought to be reported to the police. Before doing so, I went to have a better look. At this point, it would be true to say that I *observed* it. I wrote down the car number, the make, the model, and the fact that it had a flat rear nearside tyre. Strangely enough, before reporting it to the police, the owner turned up, changed the wheel, and took it away.

In the text at the top of this editorial, the psalmist (whose name we do not know) speaks of the wise observing *these things* – the wise in this case being "the redeemed of the Lord" (verse 2). What are *these things*? They are the dealings of God with His people. He gathers His people out of every land. He satisfies the longing soul. They cry unto Him in their trouble. He delivers them out of their distresses. He makes the storm a calm. He sets the poor on high. He brings them to their desired haven. These, the psalmist tells us, are things that enable us to "understand the lovingkindness of the Lord." Notice again, we are to *observe* these things.

We have been struck how Mary, the mother of Jesus, was an observer. When she heard the things that were said by the shepherds, we read that she "kept all these things, and pondered them in her heart." In the passage of Scripture which the church often calls The Magnificat (from "My soul doth magnify the Lord") she observed how the Lord had regarded her low estate, how He had done great things, the proud had been scattered, the mighty had been pulled down, and the hungry had been filled with good things. How God-honouring it is to truly observe His mercies – and His judgments.

One thing mankind has always observed is the heavens. The Royal Observatory, Greenwich is an observatory situated on a hill in Greenwich Park in south east London, overlooking the River Thames. Work on this fascinating building began on 10th August 1675, when the first Astronomer Royal, John Flamsteed, laid the foundation stone. (It is even recorded that this happened at 3.14pm!) The project was notable for the speed in which it happened, and for the small budget with which it was achieved. Flamsteed moved in less than a year later on 10th July 1676 with his two servants to begin his observations in earnest. A total of £520. 9s 10d. was spent on construction, with costs being kept down by using recycled materials!



Queen Elizabeth visits the Royal Observatory in 1960

It was Christopher Wren who first suggested using the ruined Greenwich Castle as the site for the new observatory. This location had the advantages of having solid foundations in place, as well as being located on high ground in a royal park. Wren also oversaw the design of the building, creating an octagon-shaped room to enable all-round views.

In the 1600s much work was done to help mariners at sea to determine their location. By 1700 skilled seamen could find their position north or south (latitude) by means of the work done in observing the positions of the heavenly bodies, but they still lacked accurate methods to calculate their east-west position, known as longitude. Then in 1707 four Royal Navy vessels struck the Giltstone Ledges Rocks off the Isles of Scilly with the loss of over 1,300 men including the Admiral of the Fleet. The nation was so shocked that in 1714 the government passed the Longitude Act, offering cash awards of up to £20,000 (£3m today) to anyone who could solve the problem. The development of reliable chronometers was a great step forward. Today, using satellite navigation, longitude can be measured instantly within one centimetre.

Although the observation of the stars and planets has been of great use to man, there is another aspect of the word, and that is, that others

observe *us*. First, God observes all that we do and think. “For there is not a word in my tongue, but, lo, O Lord, thou knowest it altogether” (Psalm 139.4). There is nothing we say, nothing we think, nothing we do, that is not known to God – He observes everything. But what of others observing us? People see us every day, not paying particular attention to us, but at other times they may be observing us closely. Just a very simple example: people had seen me coming in and going out of chapel many times. But there came an occasion when, for the first time I walked into chapel with my future wife. I felt as if every eye in the chapel was observing me!

There was once a young man who wanted to join the church, and although he gave an acceptable simple testimony, the deacons wished he had perhaps had a little more to tell them. And then one of them said, “But we have *observed* his walk.” This made all the difference – his quiet, humble walk, his consistent attendance at the house of God, and general behaviour. On another occasion, after a young lady had given her testimony, the minister said, “And she’s growing her hair.” Not a popular theme, but it had been *observed* that she wished to walk tenderly before the Lord!

When the Lord Jesus was here upon Earth, he was closely observed by his enemies. “And they send unto him certain of the Pharisees and of the Herodians, to catch Him in His words” (Mark 12.13). Of course, they did not succeed but rather “they marvelled” at His answers. Overawed at His wisdom we read, “And no man was able to answer Him a word, neither durst any man from that day forth ask Him any more questions.” But we may likewise be watched – observed – by our enemies. It is expressed strikingly by Hosea: “as a leopard by the way will I observe them.” We have all seen animals crouching down ready to spring at their prey, observing every movement; even our domestic cats will do that. And always remember, there is one great enemy who goes about seeking whom he may devour. How we need to be on the watch:

“Alas, what hourly dangers rise!
What snares beset my way!
To heaven O let me lift my eyes,
And hourly watch and pray.”

Wishing you all God’s blessing now and in the New Year.

Your sincere friend, The Editor.

“WHAT WAS IT, BLESSED GOD?”

Or “Why did He come?”

Verses written by Ann Taylor (later Mrs. Gilbert), the author of “Jesus, who lived above the sky.”

What was it, blessed God,
Lest Thee to give Thy Son,
To yield Thy well-beloved
For us by sin undone?
*'Twas love unbounded led Thee thus
To give Thy well-beloved for us.*

What led Thy Son, O God,
To leave Thy throne on high,
To shed His precious blood,
To suffer and to die?
*'Twas love, unbounded love to us,
Led Him to die and suffer thus.*

What moved Thee to impart
Thy Spirit from above,
Therewith to fill our heart
With heavenly peace and love?
*'Twas love, unbounded love to us,
Moved Thee to give Thy Spirit thus.*

THE THREE SIEVES

Betty ran in from school, and called out: “Oh, mother, what do you think of Freda Long? I have just heard that...” “Wait a minute, my dear,” said her mother. “Have you put what you have heard through the three sieves before you tell it to me?” “Sieves, mother! What do you mean?” “Well, the first sieve is called Truth. Is it true?” “Well, I don’t really know, but Mary Shaw said Shirley told her that Freda ...” “That is very roundabout. What about the second sieve - Kindness? Is it kind?” “Kind! No, I cannot say it is kind.” “Now the third sieve - Necessity. Will it go through that? Must you tell this tale?” “No, mother, I need not repeat it.” “Well then, my dear, if it is neither necessary nor kind, and perhaps not true, let the story die.”

EIN' FESTE BURG

“A mighty fortress is our God,
A bulwark never failing.”

In 1530 Johann Walther, the Elector of Saxony's Kapellmeister, presented to Martin Luther a set of five part-books, the *Geistliche Gesangk Buchleyn* (The Little Spiritual Song Book). It contained Luther's own composition, both words and tune, “Ein' feste Burg.” Only one of the part-books survives, and thankfully it is the Tenor part, which contains the melody. A copy of the page is given below.

Ein feste burg ist unser got, 1 er gute werke und was er
 Er helfe uns fern and alle not, 1 er uns got hat beschützt
 Und wenn die werlt viel trübsal hat, 1 und doch uns got verhoffung
 So forchten wir uns so sehr, 1 so sol uns got gelingen
 Der alt böse feind, mit reust er sich nicht, 1 er
 Der feucht böse feind, mit same er sich nicht, 1 er
 Und machst, 1 er geantwärtung ist, 1 auf er ist nicht
 Und doch nicht, 1 er macht er ist, 1 er macht er ist, 1 er

It has been said that if you wish to know what Strict Baptists believe then look at 2 Thess 2. 13-14.

GEORGE MOCKFORD (Part 4)

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Preaches at Barcombe, Sussex

I spoke at Barcombe both morning and afternoon from the same words. After the morning service, the grocer I mentioned stood at the bottom of the pulpit stairs, with tears in his eyes, and said, “O my friend, do forgive me for speaking to you as I did this morning. I had no idea that you had come here to preach, and now you must come home with me to take dinner, and never you come to Barcombe again without coming to my house;” and I found him the same friend ever after. At the close of the afternoon service, many friends came to shake hands, and said what a good day it had been to their souls, and that they were sure I should come again. Well, I feel I may truthfully say, that my four miles’ walk there was in prayer, and my four miles’ walk home was in praise. Now I could tell the Lord that I knew he had sent me, and that I was willing to go wherever he should open a door for me.

One thing I must mention. After the service, the friend who paid the ministers gave me four shillings. I said, “No, my friend, I have not come by rail, so you have not to pay me.” I really did not know that those who went out as supplies were paid anything beyond their expenses. “Yes,” he said, “it is yours; it is what we pay everyone.” So I took it; but though I was in debt at the time, I did not feel I could spend the money in helping me to get out of it: so I begged the Lord to direct me respecting the matter. Well, I had not an umbrella, so I bought one with the money for the Lord’s service, and that umbrella accompanied me many miles in the service of my God.

Invited to preach again

The following week I had another letter asking me to go again to the same place the next Lord’s day, as the word had been so blessed to the people. I replied, “Yes,” at once, saying I would go, God willing; and felt a longing for the time to come, to “tell to sinners round, What a dear Saviour I had found; And point to His redeeming blood, And say, Behold the way to God.”

I did not journey the four miles in prayer, as on the former occasion; I felt the Lord had called me to preach, and he would be with me. I read and spoke in prayer, in which I felt some sweet nearness to the Lord; and gave out these words as a text: “Go out into the highways and

hedges, and compel them to come in, that my house may be filled.” Well, I spoke for about fifteen or twenty minutes, and then I felt just as if a black sheet was let down between me and the subject; I stammered about for a short time, and sat down. The friends tried to encourage me, saying they were sure I was sent to preach.

Well, I tried in the afternoon, but felt so shut up and confused, that I told the friends I felt I had run unsent of God, and that I should never go into a pulpit again; and I felt I should not. “O Lord,” I cried, “do pardon me in this great sin in running unsent by thee,” for I did feel it was a great sin. I sank almost as low as when I feared that I had committed the unpardonable sin. Yes, and to this day I feel it to be a very solemn and weighty matter to stand up professedly as God’s mouth to deliver His message. How few that are called, and call themselves preachers, appear to know what the “burden of the word of the Lord ” is.

Thoughts on a call to the ministry

I feel persuaded that those whom the Lord sends into his vineyard to labour have a special and a distinct call to the work, and are expressly fitted and qualified for it, by the teaching of the Holy Ghost, in the school of affliction and temptation and trials, where they are brought to prove both God and His word to be true, so that they have a “Thus saith the Lord” to go with. They have tasted, handled, and felt the word of life, speak with authority, and not as the scribes.

O what a lack in the churches of looking for the divine anointing in the men who go out to preach! I feel this to be one of the principal causes of the deathly, barren, carnal state of the church in the present day. It is for the want of power attending the ministry; that power will attend in a greater or less degree the ministry of those whom God has taught, prepared, anointed, and endued with power from on high for that work.

The gift to speak in public alone will not really benefit the church of God, and yet how often we hear it said, “He has a gift for speaking,” or, “He speaks the truth.” Yes, thousands may do that, in whom you have no proof that God has anointed them for the work of the ministry. Many go forth into that work because, (as they say,) it is such an honour to be a minister. Then, again, many, I feel sure, take it upon them in order to get a living: “Put me into the priest’s office for a morsel of bread.” I know some in these parts, who, I feel sure, have gone forth

into the ministry with these motives in the background, and I say this without prejudice against them as good men. One good man with whom I was in communion *until* he became a preacher, will not even ride with me in a railway carriage, because I cannot encourage him in his false position, and recommend him to the churches.

Determines never to preach again

I came home from Barcombe that afternoon very sad indeed, begging the Lord to pardon me. On meeting with a dear friend the next day, he asked me how I got on on the past day. "Oh!" said I, "it is all over, I shall never attempt to preach again." He laughed, but I said, "Ah! it is not a laughing matter with me." He replied, "I am more than ever convinced that God has appointed you to preach the gospel, and I am sure you will go again, and that soon."

This I did not believe, but my thoughts and the Lord's were very different in the matter. He saw good to lay His servant aside by affliction, who was one of the supplies at Heathfield, the person before mentioned, and he wrote to me, saying that he had heard of my casting down, on account of being shut up at Barcombe, and that I had said I should not attempt to enter a pulpit again. But he entreated me, as a friend, to go to Heathfield for him, as there were a few of the Lord's poor there who would be without anyone to speak to them, and he said, "If you cannot speak to them, you can read and conduct the service that way." The result was that I consented to go.

I had fifteen miles to walk on the Sunday morning, and knew not the place, nor the people, except the one I saw with my friend from there, as I before named. On my way to the place these words came with power on my heart, "Stand still, and see the salvation of the Lord." They abode on my spirit with such weight, and the Lord the Spirit conversed with me upon them until I arrived at the place, so that I felt I must tell the people of the Lord's dealings with me in bringing me to prove the truth of them in my own soul. Afterwards I found that there was much more couched in the words for me to know and prove in connection with the ministry and Heathfield than I had then any idea of.

An aged man, a member of the little church, was labouring under a heavy trial. The Lord so blessed the word spoken to that dear man that he was completely delivered from the trial, though the circumstances of the trial still remained. And I afterwards heard that the Lord put His seal to the word spoken that day. The Lord removed to his eternal rest His

servant for whom I had supplied, with the result that the church requested me to supply the pulpit twice a month. This I did, riding up by the mail-cart on a Saturday night, and walking back to Lewes after the afternoon service. Sometimes a friend would take me part of the way.

But the more I went among the people, the more I felt that there were a few that feared the Lord. The good man who was the deacon, was a well-taught, staid, sober man, a man who said but little, but that little was at the right time, and in the right spirit; I soon found my very soul knit unto him.

Through my returning home on the Sunday evening, to be in my place of work on the Monday morning, I heard but little of what was going-on in the minds of the people, or the effect that my youthful testimony had among them; but each time I went I found there were more people. I found that some of them were hearers of Mr. Crouch, of Wadhurst; Mr. Russell, of Rotherfield; Mr. Cowper, of the Dicker; Mr. Pitcher, of Horsebridge; and Mr. Hallett, of Hadlow Down. When I heard of this, it made me tremble, and my knees often smote together as I entered the pulpit, but, through mercy, I was kept from saying much to man of my solemn exercises and heart-sinkings, but was enabled to cry unto my God for direction, and strength to follow it; and I will say of the Lord, that He was then, and still is, “my rock, and my fortress; in Him will I trust.” I trusted in Him, and was helped!

Trials in the workplace

But I must now return to relate a little more of the Lord’s wonderful works to me in providence. The staff of the soap factory soon conceived a great dislike to me. It began to shew itself in this way: the master was often out from home, and the men were in the habit of spending much of the time in his absence, in gambling and drinking beer; my place was on the ground-floor of the building, to prepare lees, and do the bidding of the foreman. “Well,” he said to me one day, “If master asks you what quantity of lees has gone upstairs, say, so many.” I replied, “That quantity has not gone up.” He tartly replied, “What has that to do with you? you do as I tell you.” I answered, “I shall not say any more has gone up than has done so.” At this they were much offended, and said they were sure that I was a canting Methodist, and began to make it as unpleasant as they possibly could, to get me to leave the situation of my own accord. But I was enabled to make my prayer unto my God, and set

a watch day by day.

Finding they could not succeed in getting me to leave of my own accord, they sought means to accuse me to my employer, for they were determined to get rid of me, and things went on in a very trying manner for some time, until one morning, on my being called upstairs by the foreman, he falsely accused me, and I not only denied it, but told him he might do what he wanted me to help him to do himself, and I went downstairs again. This was as he would have it, I had refused to obey him in that which was plainly my duty. He therefore left all the work in a stand-still state until the master came.

On seeing things as they were, he asked how it was; the foreman told him that I refused to help, and that I was useless, in fact he could not put up with me. I was, of course, called by my master into his office, and he began very sharply to speak to me. "How is it that you allow all my work to be on the stand-still like this?" Now, I had laid my case before the Lord, and asked him to judge between me and these men, and that he would enable me to reply properly. So I said, "Sir, I hope they have told you the truth about the matter; I own I refused to help take the pump out of the copper, but I was provoked to act as I did, by their conduct towards me." On my thus speaking, my master shut the office door, and said, "Now tell me the whole truth," which I unreservedly did, relating the whole affair. "Now," he said, "I have for some time past been sure that there was something wrong in this factory, but I could not tell in what way. Now you go out, and say nothing to others of what has passed between you and me, but as long as you prove faithful and look after my interests, I will stand by you."

Well, of course they all thought that I should be discharged on the Saturday night following, but on the Monday morning I again entered the factory, when the foreman said, "What do you do here this morning? Were you not discharged on Saturday night?" I replied that I had not heard anything about it. He said, "Then you shall hear about it; for if you do not go, I will." So when the master came down, he said to him, "How is it, sir, that Charles is not gone" (they called me Charles as the foreman's name was George)? "If he does not go, I will." The master very coolly observed, "Well, you can go as soon as you like." But before the end of the week, he said to the master, "I will alter my mind and stay." "No," said the master, "you will leave next Saturday night week." This was a blow; they could not make it out.

Before this man left, (who was the maker of the soap as well as the

foreman,) the master said to me, “Would you take his place?” I replied that I could not, as I knew not the art of soap-making. He answered, “If you are willing to take it, I will employ a traveller, and stay at home myself and teach you.” I thanked him, and told him I would do my best to learn, which I did sufficiently to be left alone in a good measure in a month, the master taking great pains to teach, and I was very willing to be taught. After this the clerk (who had been one with the foreman) left, and another was engaged for a time, who soon sickened, and died of consumption. After that I acted as clerk, and maker, and foreman, and I must say I very much liked my employer, and we got on well together.

It was about this time that the Lord called me to go with His message to the people, and it was not long before my master heard of it. As it required some one to attend to the weighting of mottled soap during its cooling, it was my duty to see to it, as I had the keys of the place, and was not supposed to give them to anyone else. He said to me, “I hear you go out to preach.” “Well,” I replied, “I do.” “But how do you manage when your services are required here on the Sunday?” I said, “I have instructed my wife how to adjust the weights, as I do not think it right to give the keys to any one else.” “O,” he said, “don’t get your wife to come; when it requires looking after, and you are going out, tell me, I will do it for you.” And this he did as long as I was with him.

A severe accident

One circumstance I must mention. My calls to go out to speak were for every Lord’s day somewhere, and I had an invitation to speak at Bodle Street, where I had a desire to go, having heard much of them through their pastor. In the week before I was to go there, I was doing something on a plank, over some portion of the hot soap, and the plank slipped and I fell in, standing upright in the hot liquid. I screamed, the master ran to my assistance, and got me out. Had the copper been full, this would have been sudden death, as it would have covered the whole body though standing upright; or had it been boiling hot, with only the quantity that was there (up to my waist), of course I must have died, as the caustic nature of the lees was such as to quickly eat through the skin into the flesh, so that my sufferings were great for a time. They stripped me in the factory, and in taking my stockings off, the skin of my legs came away with them.

They carried me home, and soon two doctors were attending me. This was not needed, but the first one sent for being from home, another

was brought; and when the first one came home, and was told he had been asked to attend a person who had fallen into the soap copper, he thought perhaps it was full, so came immediately. After a time the pain abated, and I fell into a sleep. But so low did I sink in my mind under this affliction, that I felt sure I should not get over it, and I neither felt ready nor willing to die; and I felt tried respecting my call to the ministry, as I argued if the engagement to go to Bodle Street was of the Lord, I should not be thus laid aside. A Christian friend, who often came to see me, said, "I am persuaded you will be raised up again, as when I was pleading for you this morning these words came with power:

"It is the Lord, whose matchless skill
Can from affliction raise,
Matter eternity to fill
With ever growing praise."

And further he said, "I am persuaded that the Lord will make you His witness to many people, and you will have to suffer many things for the truth's sake." The means used were blessed, and I was able in a fortnight to walk out on crutches, and soon was at the factory again. My master was very kind to me, and paid me all the time I was laid aside; and many of the friends who worshipped at Jireh Chapel, Lewes, were kind and sympathising, and sent me nourishment, and old linen to dress my wounds.

As soon as I could, I went to Heathfield again, and found more people, and the deacon paid me 6s. instead of 5s. I must remind my readers that the people were very poor, most of them labourers. After a time the friends at Heathfield wished me to come among them three times a month when I could, so at times I did. I often used to go also to Bodle Street, and to a little chapel near Willingdon, and to Horam, and other places.

I had been brought, I trust by the Lord Himself, to see that baptism by immersion was right, and that only believers in the Lord Jesus Christ were the right subjects for that ordinance. Although I had not been brought to that place in my experience, "See here is water, what doth hinder me to be baptized?" yet in my heart I was a Baptist.

Naming a baby

One Lord's day morning, the deacon said to me, "You will have a

child to name to-day.” I said, “You name children here?” He answered, “Yes.”

Well, I could not make out in my mind what this naming children was, or in what way it was done, as I had never seen anything of the kind, except sprinkling of children, and I felt sure that they did not use water in the naming, but I did not make my dear friend acquainted with my perplexity. So after the morning service (as my custom was) I retired to my vestry, which was a plantation of fir trees, and I told the Lord I knew not what to do, and entreated him to teach me, and enable me to do that which was right in his sight; and the Lord replied, “His name is John.” I at once felt I had the direction I needed. I returned to the place of worship, and after the sermon, they brought the child to me. I took it in my arms, and asked the name; they replied, “William.” I said, “This child’s name is William,” and then was led to pray earnestly for the child. After the service was over, an elderly man came to me and said, “I much like your way of naming children.” I replied, “I hope I had my instruction from the right quarter,” but did not say that I had never named one before. This practice I continue to this day, and feel the approbation of God in so doing.

Changes in the business

After a time a fresh trial came upon me. My master, having lost money in betting on horses at the races, suddenly left his home and went abroad; we had no thought of his being involved as he was. He came down to the factory as usual in the evening, looked into the copper, and said to me, “Are you going to do so and so?” I answered, “Yes,” and he left. The next morning I learnt that he had not been home all night; they enquired when I last saw him, and on going to the Railway Station they found he had gone overnight to London, from thence he had gone to Liverpool, and when they reached that place they found he had left for Australia. His wife hearing from him, afterwards went out to him. There was a sale at the factory of what belonged to my master, and the owners of the building wished me to stay, saying they should soon let it again. I consented, and did stay for some time.

TO BE CONTINUED

TEN GOOD WAYS

- 1 Listen without interrupting (Proverbs 18.13)
- 2 Speak without accusing (James 1.19)
- 3 Give without sparing (Proverbs 21.26)
- 4 Pray without ceasing (Colossians 1.9)
- 5 Answer without arguing (Proverbs 17.1)
- 6 Share without pretending (Ephesians 4.15)
- 7 Enjoy without complaint (Philippians 2.4)
- 8 Trust without wavering (1 Corinthians 13.7)
- 9 Forgive without punishing (Colossians 3.13)
- 10 Promise without forgetting (Proverbs 13.12)

UNUSUAL BIBLES (11)

An 1804 edition of the Bible substituted “lions” for “loins” in the verse “Thy son that shall come forth out of thy loins.”

In an 1805 edition of the Bible, a proof-reader’s response to the question of whether a comma should be deleted in Galatians 4. 29 was actually printed: “But as then he that was born after the flesh persecuted him that was born after the Spirit *to remain*, even so it is now.”

An 1806 Bible contained a misprint in Ezekiel 47:10 which read, “that fishes (instead of “fishers”) shall stand,” giving it the designation of the “Standing Fishes Bible.”

A MESSAGE FROM GRANDAD AND GRAN ON YOUR WEDDING DAY

Our dear Tim and Lizzy,

Firstly, we do hope that you are enjoying your special day and we are so disappointed that we are not able to share it with you. We have to remember that God is in control, indeed that

“All our times are in His hand,
All events at His command.”

You have seen the wonderful way in which God has brought you together, and now provided you with a home. We do trust that the Lord will be with you there and “That in all things He might have the pre-eminence” (Colossians 1.18).

Some dear friends of ours had a framed text in their home which said, “It was noised that He was in the house” (Mark 2.1). What a blessing, for whatever guests you may have in your home, may He always be the chief One.

Then there is the reading of God’s Word. The minister that married us fifty-nine years ago commended it to us, and told us that “Some sweetness would come that way,” and I think we can say that it has. We have tried to read the Old Testament in the morning and the New Testament in the evening. When the family were young we would read a verse each and this helped the children to follow the reading better.

One piece of advice, if there is a difference of opinion between you, don’t try to win your point, but discuss the matter quietly and try to see each others point of view. This will lead to a more peaceful outcome.

And don’t forget that the underlying reason for your being here today is that you love each other. It isn’t the boxes of chocolates and similar things that need to be bought to show it, but those special little touches – an offer to do the washing up, a cup of coffee when the other one is weary, perhaps an offer to cook a favourite meal; and never forget to tell each other “I love you.”

We do wish you both every happiness and God’s richest blessing on your marriage.

With our fond love.

Grandad and Gran

GOD ACKNOWLEDGED IN THE WORKING WORLD

The firm of Charnwood has been manufacturing woodburning stoves at their works on the Isle of Wight since 1972. The introduction to their brochure ends with these words:

In our 50 years we have learnt three things that are vital to us:

- Faith in God
- Make products we can believe in
- Value the people we work with, our customers and suppliers.

Take any one of those away and we wouldn't have made it.

How good it is to see God's help acknowledged in the business world. "The Lord thy God shall bless thee in all thy works, and in all that thou putteth thine hand unto" (Deut. 15.10).

BISHOP FERRAR OF ST. DAVIDS

St. Davids, in that remote part of Pembrokeshire in western Wales, is the smallest city in Britain. To the visitor, its magnificent Cathedral, located in a hollow to hide it from the marauding Vikings, comes as a breathtaking surprise. The Cathedral is reached by descending thirty-nine steps, said to be one step for each of the thirty-nine articles of the Church of England. Some years ago, the installation of a gate involved removing the top step, reducing the number of steps to thirty-eight. In order to bring it back to thirty-nine, an extra one was put in at the bottom. From a builder's point of view, no worse site could be found. There are underground springs, and the ground is sloping and unstable. The floor of the Cathedral slopes upwards several feet from back to front, and the internal supporting pillars lean well out of perpendicular.

As all the pillars lean the same amount, it almost looks as though it was designed that way. The wonderful ceiling is made of Irish oak – no spider will ever spin a web on Irish oak!



St. David himself was born just a short distance from the city centre, around the year 512 AD. The place of his birth is marked by the ruins of the ancient St. Non's chapel, named after his mother. However, this article is not about St. David, interesting though that would be. Rather, we were concerned to know whether there is any reformation history connected with St. David's and its Cathedral. There is. One of the bravest of the martyrs who suffered during the reign of Queen (bloody) Mary was a bishop of St. David's – Bishop Robert Ferrar. Little is made of him today, with no mention in the Cathedral itself, nor in any of the guide books we have seen.

In 1526, while Ferrar was at Cambridge, a number of students began to take an interest in the teachings of Martin Luther. Some of these students were later to become prominent as reformers and martyrs of the English church. These included Thomas Cranmer, Hugh Latimer,

Thomas Bilney and Robert Barnes. They were bold enough to preach the new doctrines publicly, but were accused of heresy and were officially silenced.

The reign of King Henry VIII was a time of much debate and argument over religion. At length, Parliament was asked to consider the following points:

- whether the bread and wine could be the true body of Christ without transubstantiation
- whether both bread and wine needed to be given to the laity
- whether vows of chastity needed to be observed as part of divine law
- whether priests should not marry
- whether private masses were required by divine law
- whether auricular confession (that is, verbal confession to a priest) was necessary as part of divine law

The result was an affirmation of the traditional Roman Catholic teachings, and the *Act of Six Articles* became law in June 1539. The penalties for non-conformance were draconian. Denial of transubstantiation was punished by burning without an opportunity to recant. Denial of any of the other articles was punished by hanging or life imprisonment. Married priests had until 12th July to put away their wives, which, most likely, was a concession granted to give Archbishop Cranmer time to move his wife and children outside of England.

Bishop Ferrar was a target for attack by those who sought to enforce the new law. He was summoned to appear before the Ecclesiastical Court on 10th September 1540. When he failed to appear he was excommunicated.

After the death of King Henry, godly King Edward VI came to the throne and the *Act of Six Articles* was repealed (in 1547). King Edward, ever favourable to the Reformation cause, appointed Ferrar as the Bishop of St. Davids on Sunday, 9th September 1548. Tragically, King Edward's reign was short. He died in 1553. The old laws were brought back, and religion was to be returned to the state it was in Henry's reign.

Bishop Ferrar had many enemies whose intent was to blemish his character, and utterly (as they thought and made their boast) to pull him down from his bishopric, and to bring him in a *præmunire*" (meaning an offense against the English Crown). Amongst his enemies were George

Constantine; David Walter, his servant; Thomas Young, chanter of the cathedral, who was afterward archbishop of York; Rowland Meyrike, doctor of law, who was afterward bishop of Bangor; Thomas Lee, brother-in-law to the said George Constantine; and Hugh Rawlins, priest. In the end, 127 witnesses were found who between them laid fifty-six “wrangling articles and informations against him.”

It took about three weeks to produce a written publication of the various allegations, and a further two weeks elapsed before Ferrar could get hold of a copy “because the book thereof is so huge and monstrous.” Not unreasonably, the bishop desired time, first, to inquire into the persons that had witnessed against him, and second, to examine the proof of what had been brought against him.

All this time Ferrar remained in London. On 10th February 1555 he finally appeared before the bishop of Winchester, the bishop of Durham, the bishop of Worcester who sat at the table, Master Rochester, Master Southwell, Master Bourne, and others standing at the table’s end. The Bishop of Winchester opened the hearing. John Foxe, the martyrologist, has recorded the conversation in this way:

Winchester: Now, sir, have you heard how the world goeth here?

Ferrar: If it please your Honour, I know not.

Winchester: What say you? Do you not know things abroad, notwithstanding you are a prisoner?

Ferrar: No, my Lord, I know not.

Winchester: Lo, what a froward fellow is this.

Ferrar: If it please your Lordship, how should I know any thing abroad, being a prisoner?

Winchester: Have you not heard of the coming in of the Lord Cardinal?

Ferrar: I know not my Lord Cardinal; but I heard that a cardinal was come in: but I did not believe it, and I believe it not yet.

Worcester: I pray your Lordship tell him yourself, that he may know what is done.

Winchester: The queen’s Majesty and the parliament have restored religion into the same state it was in at the beginning of the reign of King Henry the Eighth. You are in the queen’s debt; but her Majesty will be good unto you, if you will return to the catholic church,

Ferrar: In what state I am concerning my debts to the queen’s Majesty, in the court of exchequer, my Lord Treasurer knoweth: and the last time that I was before your Honour, and the first time also, I showed you that I had made an oath never to consent or agree, that the bishop of Rome

should have any power or jurisdiction within this realm: and further, I need not rehearse to your Lordship; you know it well enough.

Bourne: You were once abjured for heresy in Oxford.

Ferrar: That was I not.

Bourne: You were.

Ferrar: I was never; it is not true.

Bourne: You went from St. Davids to Scotland.

Ferrar: That I did not.

Bourne: You did.

Ferrar: That did I never; but I went from York into Scotland.

Bourne: Ah! so said I: you went with Barlow.

Ferrar: That is true; but never from St. Davids.

Bourne: You carried books out of Oxford, to the archbishop of York, Edward Lee.

Ferrar: That did I not.

Bourne: You did.

Ferrar: I did not; but I carried old books from St. Oswald's to the archbishop of York.

Bourne: You supplanted your master.

Ferrar: That did I never in my life.

Bourne: By my faith you did.

Ferrar: Forsooth I did not, never in my life; but did shield and save my master from danger; and that I obtained of King Henry the Eighth, for my true service, I thank God there-for.

Bourne: My Lordship, he hath an ill name in Wales as ever had any.

Ferrar: That is not so: whosoever saith so, they shall never be able to prove it.

Bourne: He hath deceived the queen in divers sums of money.

Ferrar: That is utterly untrue: I never deceived king or queen of one penny in my life; and you shall never be able to prove what you say.

Winchester: Thou art a false knave.

Then Ferrar stood up unbidden, (for all that while he kneeled,) and said, "No, my Lord, I am a true man; I thank God for it! I was born under King Henry the Seventh; I served King Henry the Eighth and King Edward the Sixth truly; and have served the queen's Majesty that now is, truly, with my poor heart and word: more I could not do; and I was never false, nor shall be, by the grace of God.



Bishop Ferrar

Winchester: How sayest thou; wilt thou be reformable?

Ferrar: My Lord, if it please your Honour, I have made an oath to God, and to King Henry the Eighth, and also to King Edward, and in that to the queen's Majesty, the which I can never break while I live, to die for it.

Durham: You had made another oath before.

Ferrar: No, my Lord; I never made another oath before.

Durham: You made a vow.

Ferrar: That did I not.

Winchester: You made a profession to live without a wife.

Ferrar: No, my Lord, if it please your Honour: that did I never. I made a profession to live chaste – not without a wife.

Worcester: You were sworn to him that was master of your house.

Ferrar: That was I never.

Winchester: Well, you are a froward knave: we will have no more to do with you, seeing that you will not come; we will be short with you, and that you shall know within this seven-night.

The Lord Chancellor then did ring a little bell, and Bishop Ferrar said, "I pray God save the king and queen's Majesties long to continue in honour to God's glory and their comforts, and the comfort of the whole realm; and I pray God save all your Honours;" and so departed.

After these examinations ended, Bishop Ferrar remained in prison uncondemned till the fourteenth day of February 1555; and then was sent down into Wales, there to receive sentence of condemnation.

On the last day of February another examination took place before Henry Morgan, the pretended bishop of St. Davids, and George Constantine, his registrar. The same articles were then put before him once more:

First: Being a priest, to renounce marriage.

Second: To grant the bodily presence of Christ in the sacrament, under the forms of bread and wine.

Third: That the mass is a propitiatory sacrifice for the living and the dead.

Fourth: That the church's general councils, lawfully congregated, never did, nor can err.

Fifth: That men are not justified before God by faith only: but that hope and charity are also necessarily required to justification.

Sixth: That the catholic church only hath authority to expound Scriptures.

Bishop Ferrar replied that he would answer when he saw a *lawful* commission and authority. Upon this, Morgan pronounced him as *contumax* (one defiant of the law). Bishop Ferrar gently asked for a copy of the articles and for time to examine them. His request was granted. He was to appear before them at the same place on Thursday the seventh of March, between one and two o'clock to answer precisely and fully.

On Thursday as appointed, Bishop Ferrar again appeared, when he produced in writing his answer to the articles that had been laid before him. Ferrar refused to subscribe to any of the articles, affirming that they were invented by man.

Henry Morgan then assigned the next Wednesday, in the forenoon, for Bishop Ferrar to appear to hear his final and definitive sentence.

On the appointed day, the bishop and true servant of God, Master Ferrar, appeared. Morgan asked whether he would renounce and recant his heresies, schisms, and errors (as he called them,) which hitherto he had maintained, and if he would subscribe to the catholic articles.

The godly Bishop Ferrar declared Morgan an incompetent judge, but Morgan, proceeding in his rage, pronounced the definitive sentence against him as a *heretic excommunicate*, to be given up forthwith to the secular power; namely, to the sheriff of the town of Caermarthen, Master Leyson.

Thus this godly bishop, being condemned and degraded, was committed to the secular power. Not long after was brought to the place of execution in the town of Caermarthen, where he, in the market place in the south side of the market-cross, the thirtieth day of March 1555 being the



Market Place, Caermarthen

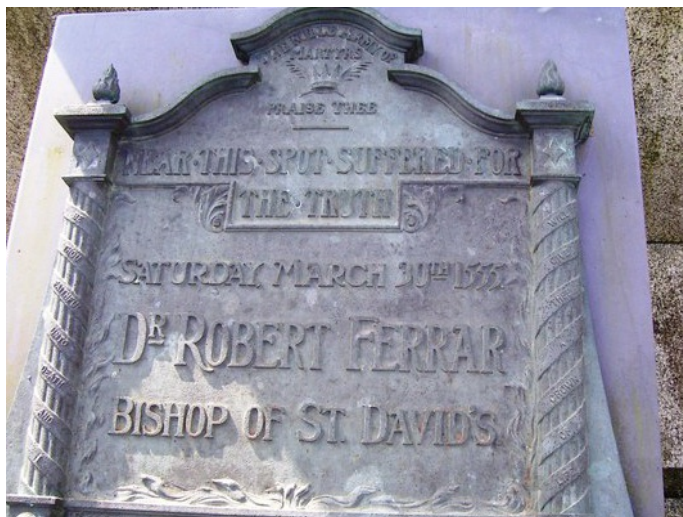
Saturday before Passion Sunday, most constantly sustained the torments and passion of the fire.

A little before his death, one named Richard Jones, a knight's son, came to him, lamenting the painfulness of the death he was to suffer. The bishop answered: "If you see me once to stir in the pains of my burning, then give no credit to my doctrine."

And as he had said, he stood so patiently that he never moved in the fire, and so he continued, till one Richard Gravell with a staff dashed

him upon the head, and so struck him down, his sufferings thus brought to an end.

Only three Marian martyrs are known from Wales, one of them being Bishop Ferrar. He died at the age of 46. He was originally from Halifax, in West Yorkshire.



Memorial plaque in Market Square, Caermarthen

A LITTLE GIRL'S PRAYER ANSWERED

Miss Eunice Risbridger

I had to write an essay at school, and the Headmistress was to take the lesson. I did not know what to do as I was not very good at essays and we were told we must do our very best for her. I lifted up my desk lid and tried to beg for help. A little girl who sat beside me asked me who I was talking to but I would not tell her.

What we had to write about I do not remember. But I had 9 out of 10 - the best mark I ever had!

FRIENDSHIPS – BE THOUGHTFUL

Contributed by a reader

Friendship is valuable

In Ecclesiastes chapter 4 we read:

Two are better than one; because they have a good reward for their labour. For if they fall, the one will lift up his fellow: but woe to him that is alone when he falleth; for he hath not another to help him up.

Friendship is a valuable thing.

What kind of a friend are you?

Are you really “there” for your friend when they need you? Or are you a “fair-weather friend,” off as soon as things get hard, or if someone more exciting comes along?

I’m sure many of our readers will have experienced the pain of realising they were used as a friend rather than it being a deep, meaningful, faithful friendship. They had been someone useful to hang around with, catch a lift with, or to sit with, so they were not on their own. Make sure YOU are NOT that kind of friend.

Let nothing be done through strife or vainglory; but in lowliness of mind let each esteem other better than themselves. Look not every man on his own things, but every man also on the things of others. Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus (Philippians 2. 3-5).

Be ready to listen to your friend, not just desire to be listened to! Be the friend that sends a text or phones *first*, not always wanting to be messaged. Be thoughtful.

A friend loveth at all times, and a brother is born for adversity.

Warnings on choosing friends

The book of proverbs has much wise teaching on taking care who we choose as friends. For example:

He that walketh with wise men shall be wise: but a companion of fools shall be destroyed.

He that covereth a transgression seeketh love; but he that repeateth a matter separateth very friends.

It can take a while to know who is trustworthy. The Bible refers to whisperers: *a whisperer separateth chief friends.*

Make no friendship with an angry man; and with a furious man thou shalt not go: Lest thou learn his ways, and get a snare to thy soul.

Some people always have to find the negative in everything, moaning or complaining. Not the greatest friendships come from this attitude.

Heaviness in the heart of man maketh it stoop: but a good word maketh it glad.

The friendship of the world is enmity with God. Does this mean we cannot be friends with non-Christians? Not necessarily, but it is about not embracing the values, attitudes and desires of the world. We all have school friends or colleagues who we are friends with but we must take care not to imbibe secular, atheistic or materialistic mindsets.

We should of course be friendly, courteous, helpful and kind to everyone, but the choice of friends is one to be thoughtful about.

Church and Family

We are Social Beings. God has set us in families. The first friendships we will make are usually within the family. Brothers, sisters, cousins, can be a great blessing but because we are fallen and broken people, families, and relationships within them, can be complicated, but we are made to be with others, not alone.

The Church is not a building, it is a group of people. God's DESIGN for His children is to support and encourage each other in the way. The Church should be friends, showing care and love towards one another.

In Malachi 3.16 we read:

Then they that feared the LORD spake often one to another: and the LORD hearkened, and heard it, and a book of remembrance was written before Him for them that feared the LORD, and that thought upon His name.

It is a sad thing where there is no real conversation among believers. The love of Christ transcends age and race and social standing. To attend a church service week after week and walk straight out of the doors to the car without enquiring after one another or talking about what you just heard, or sharing an answer to prayer, flies in the face of this verse. There will, of course, be times when you do need to be alone with the LORD, but regularly there should be love, friendship and communion among God's children. Be thoughtful TOWARDS those you worship with.

Boy/girl friendships

The matter of 'who should I marry?' could take a whole book to write. Suffice to say, there are certain relationships forbidden in the word of God – a close relative (brother, sister, uncle, aunt, niece, nephew), someone who is already married, and someone of the same sex. Believers are not to marry unbelievers.

So what is a believer? What does it mean to believe? It is where an individual has been brought to a realisation that there is no hope of being made right with God through anything good they try to do. They have come to trust in Jesus Christ alone, and what He did on the cross to pay the price of their sin. There is a fleeing to Christ, there is a sorrow over sin, there is an overwhelming love to the Lord Jesus. When they hear His name, it thrills their soul. Some believers have a full assurance, others it is a gentle hope and trust. Both are believers.

But before you start thinking, 'is this young man or lady a believer?', I lovingly urge you to consider, are you a believer?

If you are a baptised believer in church membership you need to think and pray very carefully over whether this young man will be a spiritual leader of the home should you marry. Or, will this young lady be a help in the way, will she teach your children in the ways of the Lord, can we pray together? Will we be pulling in the same direction? Do they love the Lord? Are they a believer? Guard your hearts until

you know these things.

Even if you are both believers there may be differences in views, for example, in how children should be brought up, which chapel to attend. All these things will need to be discussed. You may have completely different interests, and it may be that it simply is not a good match!

The question over ‘platonic friendships’ is a complex one. Some argue there is rarely any such thing! Not once you reach the age and maturity to consider marriage.

But what is the difference between friends and more-than-friends? There has to be that attraction. There are certain things that can make a difference. For example, a girl who is texting a lot of different boys will be thought of as one who is not sincere, and probably not really interested in one individual. Not caring for your appearance or personal hygiene can make the difference between being friends and being more than friends. Boys, be thoughtful about making a bit of an effort – freshen up (perhaps use some aftershave). Young ladies, be elegant, but not obsessively so, because beauty fades. Make an effort to smile and be friendly, try being the first to say “hello” rather than expecting them to always approach first, make them realise you find them interesting.

Often in an intense boy/girl friendship there is a secret attraction and pining to become more than friends, but the friendship has been so long-standing, and the feelings have been disguised for so long that there is a problem overcoming the barrier. It can be a great fear in the young man, that, should the answer be “no,” it will for ever change the good friendship and the dynamics within a friendship group, making things awkward.

Obviously, if you never ask, you’ll never know! Young men, honesty is the best policy. If you are really good friends and you have built up a level of respect and trust, a simple, “Have you ever considered us being more than friends?” may be all that’s needed. BUT prayerfully bring this matter to the Lord, ask Him to open the way for the conversation, if it is His will. Ask Him for the courage you may lack. Remember:

Whoso findeth a wife findeth a good thing, and obtaineth favour of the Lord (Proverbs 18. 22).

Young ladies, be thoughtful, if your answer is maybe “no”, or “not sure,” give the young man his dignity. Do not go around telling others.

I would also urge you to prayerfully consider your response. If you need time to pray over it, tell him. My grandmother met with my grandfather seven times before really knowing her feelings for him. So there is no need to rush, and certainly no need to “go public” before you are ready. I would urge you to give your parents the honour of discussing the matter with them also. They love you, and are the ones who care deeply about your future more than anyone else you know.

When you *begin* a relationship

Advice for those embarking on a relationship: think very carefully, and be very sensitive towards your single friends. They will feel they have “lost” you to some extent, and that can be painful and make them feel disposable (for example, if you cancel a pre-arranged visit or outing in order to be with your new boy/girlfriend). Of course, you will share the news with them – particularly close friends. Tell them yourself. Don’t plaster photos of you as “the couple” on social media and leave them to work it out! Don’t constantly talk about your relationship, or him/her, and where you’re going or what you’re doing. This can be hard when you’re in the first flush of love, so be thoughtful. Take an interest in your single friends life, ring them, meet up from time to time still, don’t drop them. And be careful with PDA (public displays of affection). No one minds you holding hands or popping an arm around the shoulders but just ... go easy.

Advice for those whose friend has started a relationship

There needs to be a level of acceptance and understanding that this may be their future spouse. They will need to spend a lot of time together, talking, and sharing and really getting to know each other to ascertain if they are suited for marriage. If you really care for your friend you will need to encourage this and not show resentment. This can be really hard as you feel usurped at times, and perhaps a little deserted. This can breed bitterness so bring this to the Lord – it can be a struggle that is real. It is the right and natural order of things, that this new girl/boy friend will become the most important person in their life. Try to get to know this new person in your friend’s life, and include them, rather than seeing them as separating your friendship.

Just to emphasize one more time: if the Lord has blessed you with a boy/girl friend always remember to look out for your single friends. Nothing can be more lonely than if you feel left behind by your friends.

Be thoughtful. Together you can be such a force for good, reaching out together, as ‘friends’ in the plural, to others.

Friendship groups

We all have different characters. Some prefer to have three or four very good friends; some prefer one best friend; and others love being part of a big group of friends. The point is to be friendly. In any of these types of friendships it can become exclusive or possessive. Always try to include those who are alone in a situation. Young people have shared of times where they’ve gone to a meeting or conference or gathering where they have felt very alone in a crowd, feeling that there’s a clique here and a clique there and no-one spoke to them. Look out for others. If the Lord has blessed you with friends, be a blessing to others – don’t allow your friendship group to be self-centred or exclusive. Be thoughtful.

Therefore all things whatsoever ye would that men should do to you: do ye even so to them (Matt 7. 12).

Group Holidays

I approach this topic with some caution. Be assured it is not intended to criticise or point fingers!

Group holidays can be a wonderful way of making new friends and spending precious time with other young Christians.

To lead or organise a group holiday is a big responsibility, as what happens on it will reflect on you personally, and the witness of the group, as a whole, is observed by the public and the property owners. They will likely be aware that you are a ‘church group’ so their expectations will be high.

A few things to be thoughtful about:

The Lord sees and hears it all, but also many photos will be taken and shared. Be thoughtful about what impression you are giving to those at home, young and old. You also represent your home church. Don’t let them down.

Recently an Elder from a church in Wales wrote an email to one of our deacons, telling him how they had enjoyed having the young people from some of our chapels for lunch and at their services. He said, “They were a credit to you,” and that was a great joy to that deacon to receive such an email. So be aware of your conduct when on a group holiday,

especially when visiting other places of worship.

Think carefully about modesty. Modesty of clothing. Don't wander around in inappropriately revealing clothes; cover up when you come out of the pool or sea. Think about modesty of behaviour. Don't flirt, don't speak foolishly. I'm sure we've all gone to bed and cringed over things we've said in the day. Ask the Lord to "Set a watch, O Lord, before my mouth; keep the door of my lips." It is so easy when you're having fun and enjoying yourself to get carried away and later regret it.

Think about noise levels: is it fair or appropriate on neighbours or others around you? Be respectful of property. Think carefully before you act.

Think carefully about sleeping arrangements, privacy and respect for the opposite sex. Have rules in place, even if you think everyone will know. It's important to be clear and communicate these expectations.

Will there be Bible reading each day? Who will take this? Are there Bible studies? Is the individual mature enough in the Christian pathway to take these? How do you keep discussions on track rather than it becoming a debate on issues? What will happen on the Lord's Day. Some may have different views on what is acceptable and what is not, and as the leader you may need to set this out in the very beginning. All these points need to be carefully considered.

Group holidays can be very positive experiences but there are temptations and situations you may find yourself in where your reputation can be damaged. So be thoughtful.

In the light of ETERNITY

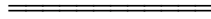
Who is the best friend, the very best friend you can ever have?

Talking to dear old lady in Bethesda, she shared with me how she had had a broken friendship in her younger years. She was heart-broken, "But," she said, "Jesus became my friend, my BEST friend." That has always stayed with me. It's all very well and nice having friends, or having boyfriends/girlfriends, but I earnestly yearn for you young people to, "Seek ye first the Kingdom of God." We need to think of all these things in the light of eternity. All the friends we may make will not last for ever. They may let you down, they are tainted by sin, jealousy, and possessiveness, but, "Greater love hath no man than this, that a Man lay down His life for his friends."

The well-known hymn is very true:

“What a Friend we have in Jesus,
 All our sins and griefs to bear!
 What a privilege to carry
 Everything to God in prayer!
 O what peace we often forfeit,
 O what needless pain we bear,
 All because we do not carry
 Everything to God in prayer!”

If only I could find the words to tell you what a faithful friend He has been to me through the ups and downs of my life.



“WHEN I SEE JESUS I SHALL KISS HIM”

Jane Elisabeth Page, aged 2 years 11 months

When only a boy, one of the ministers we had to preach was Mr. J. Tomkins. We remember how often he reminded us: “The young *may* die, the old *must* die. How true that is. But how wonderful for a little one to leave behind such a blessed testimony. This is an account of her short life by her Pastor, Mr. Tom Farley.



Jane Elisabeth Paige, aged 2 years and 11½ months, daughter of Mr. & Mrs. Paige, passed away on April 20th, 1962, after a short illness. Jane was the subject of much suffering. When only a few days old she had an infection in her hip, and had four operations and spent much of her time in plaster. But after much prayer and crying to God to appear, she was restored so that she could walk; for which her dear parents were truly grateful to the Lord. She was of a most sweet disposition and many loved her, and no doubt she was the subject of many of the Lord’s people’s prayers. During the week previous to being taken ill, she said to her mother: “When I see Jesus I shall kiss Him.” No one thought then that her end was so near, though some felt the Lord might take her while she was young. She was taken ill on the Monday morning in the early hours with haemorrhage, and was taken to hospital, where her dear parents watched over her until she passed away, we believe, to be with Jesus, which is far better. The loss to her dear ones is great, and we each tender our deep sympathy to those who loved her so much. How true it

is, “God moves in a mysterious way, His wonders to perform.” May the Lord make up the breach to our dear friends and enable them to say, “Thy will be done.”

PASTORAL PRINCIPLES

Wong Ming-Dao, Pastor, The Christians’ Tabernacle, Peking

We are very strict in receiving believers. Unless we are quite sure that a person has repented and believed in the Lord and is thereby saved we will on no account accept him for baptism. We do not enquire into knowledge of doctrine, but rather emphasize repentance, faith, and salvation. This experience must be evidenced by the change in their manner of life. In some cases it is soon clear that they have repented and believed, and they can be baptized without delay. In other cases it is more difficult to be sure. We then ask them to wait; it may be a year, or two years, or even three years, and only then can they be baptized.

In some cases they are asked to wait so long that they begin to complain and even grow angry. They cease to attend meetings. It is certainly well that such people have been delayed, for if they became church members it would not be for the good of the church. On the other hand some people when asked to wait will show no sign of complaint or anger; they remain humble and they diligently attend meetings. They acknowledge that God’s time has not yet come, and when they are baptized eventually, they are usually good church members.

During the past seventeen years not more than about 570 believers have been baptized here altogether. Yet many newly formed churches have had as many baptisms as this within the first two years. Sometimes we have had not more than one or two baptized at one time, sometimes up to ten or more, and on one occasion twenty. Originally we received people fairly easily, but in recent years I have learnt through bitter experience to be stricter.

MARTIN LUTHER'S BIBLE

This year marks the 500th Anniversary of the publication of the first part of Martin Luther's translation of the Bible into German. It was in September 1522 that the New Testament was published at Wittenberg, popularly known as the 'September Testament.'

Luther translated the New Testament from Greek into his native German in just eleven weeks during his stay at Wartburg Castle between 1521 and 1522.

It would take another twelve years to finish the translation of the Old Testament. The first complete edition of the German Bible was published in 1534. Someone once asked Luther how it was that he



Martin Luther



Philip Melancthon



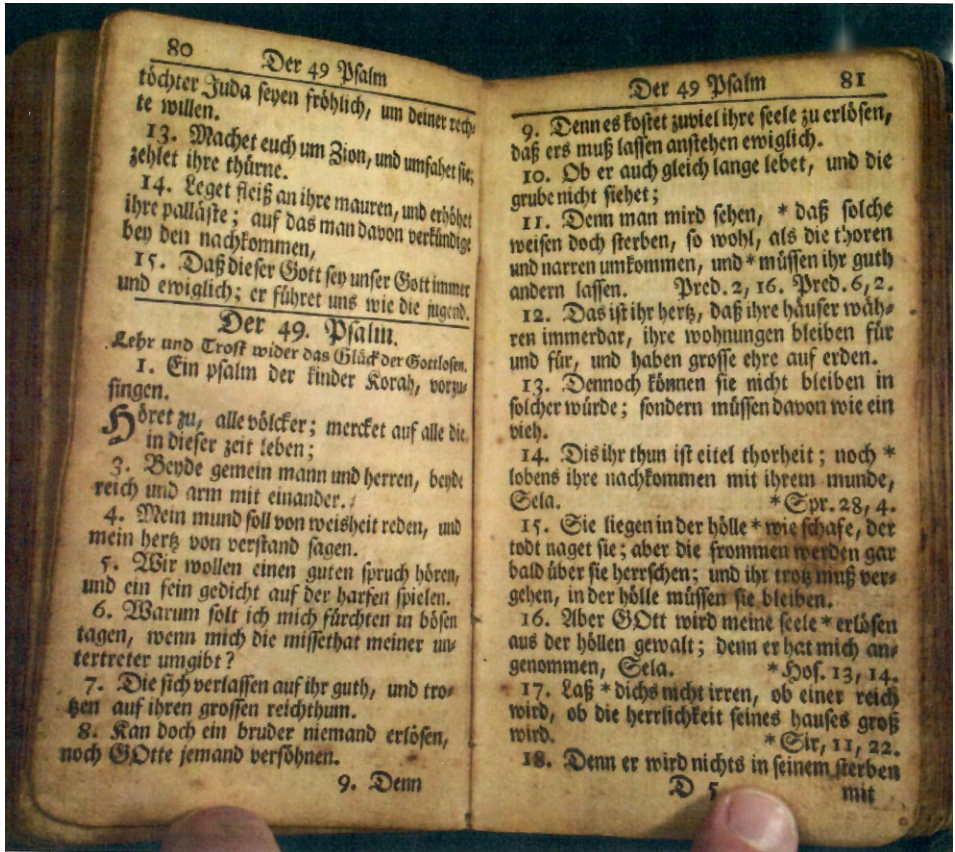
Justus Jonas

could complete so perfect a translation of the Bible amid so much other labour. He replied, "*Nulla dies sine versu*" - "not a day without a verse." In his work he was greatly assisted by Justus Jonas, and Philip Melancthon, who Luther always admitted had far greater linguistic skills than himself.

The hardest book was Job. Luther said, "In the book of Job we took so many pains, Master Philip Melancthon and I, that sometimes after four days we had scarcely dealt with three lines."

Those competent to judge declared the style "pure, clear, vigorous, and beautiful." Although Luther's translation of the Bible into German was not the first one to be published in Germany, it was by far the most influential one. Many of Luther's words and phrases entered the

language and are still very much in use in Germany today. He had not only captured the language of the ordinary people of his day, but he also influenced the future of the German language, much as the King James Bible in England fixed the standard of the language. By the time of Luther's death one million copies had been sold.



This Bible is open on Psalm 49. Notice that the title of the Psalm, "A Psalm for the sons of Korah" has been numbered as verse 1.

In the autumn of 1535, Luther promised his wife 50 gulden if she read through the entire Bible by Easter of 1536!

As a number of our readers have studied German, on the next page we give a comparison of Luther's translation of the first ten verses of Genesis chapter 1 set beside the Authorised Version. Even those who do not have a knowledge of German can see how similar it is to the AV.

<p>1 Am Anfang schuf Gott Himmel und Erde.</p> <p>2 Und die Erde war wüst und leer, und es war finster auf der Tiefe; und der Geist Gottes schwebte auf dem Wasser.</p> <p>3 Und Gott sprach: Es werde Licht! und es ward Licht.</p> <p>4 Und Gott sah, daß das Licht gut war. Da schied Gott das Licht von der Finsternis</p> <p>5 Und nannte das Licht Tag und die Finsternis Nacht. Da ward aus Abend und Morgen der erste Tag.</p> <p>6 Und Gott sprach: Es werde eine Feste zwischen den Wassern, und die sei ein Unterschied zwischen den Wassern.</p> <p>7 Da machte Gott die Feste und schied das Wasser unter der Feste von dem Wasser über der Feste. Und es geschah also.</p> <p>8 Und Gott nannte die Feste Himmel. Da ward aus Abend und Morgen der andere Tag.</p> <p>9 Und Gott sprach: Es sammle sich das Wasser unter dem Himmel an besondere Örter, daß man das Trockene sehe. Und es geschah also.</p> <p>10 Und Gott nannte das Trockene Erde, und die Sammlung der Wasser nannte er Meer. Und Gott sah, daß es gut war.</p>	<p>1 In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth.</p> <p>2 And the earth was without form, and void; and darkness was upon the face of the deep. And the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters.</p> <p>3 And God said, Let there be light: and there was light.</p> <p>4 And God saw the light, that it was good: and God divided the light from the darkness.</p> <p>5 And God called the light Day, and the darkness he called Night. And the evening and the morning were the first day.</p> <p>6 And God said, Let there be a firmament in the midst of the waters, and let it divide the waters from the waters.</p> <p>7 And God made the firmament, and divided the waters which were under the firmament from the waters which were above the firmament: and it was so.</p> <p>8 And God called the firmament Heaven. And the evening and the morning were the second day.</p> <p>9 And God said, Let the waters under the heaven be gathered together unto one place, and let the dry land appear: and it was so.</p> <p>10 And God called the dry land Earth; and the gathering together of the waters called he Seas: and God saw that it was good.</p>
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THE STARS

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

This Psalm speaks of the greatness of God's creating power. This verse in Psalm 8 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.

At this time of the year, we think of one special star: "We have seen His star in the east." HIS star!

It is not fashionable to believe in creation, but that is man's blindness. There is lot of talk today 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. Well, of course, he was *not* able.

Some years ago a calculation was made by a team led by astronomer Dr. Simon Driver of the Australian National University in Canberra. They 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 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 ten times more!

"Even for a professional astronomer used to dealing in monster numbers, this is mind-boggling," said Dr. Driver. "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, much larger still - some people think it is infinite."

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 closest to Earth. By measuring precisely how bright each galaxy was,

they were able to estimate how many stars it contained and then extrapolated this out to the whole region of the 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.

As far back as 1999, observations by NASA astronomers, using the Hubble Space Telescope, suggested that there are 125 billion galaxies in the universe.

But now we have an even more powerful telescope, the most powerful telescope ever. Sensational images of space have been revealed by the James Webb Space Telescope from its viewpoint one million miles above the earth. Launched on Christmas Day, 25 December 2021 at 12:20pm, it is the largest and most powerful telescope ever built. The image on the next page is the area of sky covered by a grain of sand held at arm's length, a tiny sliver of the vast universe. Scientists claim the light from these galaxies has taken more than 13 billion years to reach us. In spite of these claims, we continue to believe that God created all the heavenly bodies in a moment on the fourth day of creation. We cannot attempt to explain these "billions of years", but God possesses infinite knowledge, and our starting point must always be that God's Word is true. The amazing discoveries serve only to glorify Him more in accordance with Psalm 19.1: "The heavens declare the glory of God; and the firmament sheweth His handywork."

One very beautiful June day last year, two Jehovah 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."

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.” They did not know how to reply to this clear evidence from God’s word.



Distant space from the James Webb Space Telescope

Psalm 8 ends as it began - the excellency of God’s name - and that His Name is greater even than all His works.

CAEDMON’S SONG

It was Friday, 8th July 2022 – the last day of term for the girls at St. Hilda’s School, Harpenden. As usual, their annual service to mark the end of the school year was being held in the local Parish Church.

The third hymn was titled “*The Song of Caedmon.*” Caedmon, an illiterate cowherd, round about the year 650 wrote paraphrases, designed to be sung (a novel idea then), of many parts of Scripture in the old Anglo-Saxon English language. All his songs are lost apart from fragments of this one on the first chapter of Genesis. This is a simplified translation of part of his song, a summary of the creation story:

“He made the heavens, He made our sky,
The sun, the moon, the stars on high.
He formed our world; His mighty hand
Divided sea and land.”

The Order of Service sheet told us that Bede, the historian, said that Caedmon received his gift of poetry from God. Looking through, only a few words can be readily related to today's English.

heaven - *heafon*
 roof - *hrofe* (i.e the sky as a roof)
 the glorious Father - *Wuldorfaeder*
 now - *nu*
 holy - *halig*
 midst - *middangeard*
 earth - *eafter*

Bede's Ecclesiastical History of the English People, tells how Caedmon retired from company one night in shame because he could not comply with the demand made of each guest to sing. Then in a dream a stranger appeared commanding him to sing of "the beginning of things," and the herdsman found himself uttering "verses which he had never heard." Throughout the remainder of his life his more learned brethren expounded Scripture to him, and all that he heard he reproduced in poetry, some in his own Northumbrian dialect. All of his poetry was on sacred themes. This hymn on creation is found in seventeen manuscripts.

CURRENT MATTERS

20,000,000,000,000,000

The number of ants on Earth has been calculated as a mind-blowing twenty quadrillion – 20 followed by 15 zeros. This is two and half million for every human being. These humble creatures help plants and animals thrive by dispersing seeds and aerating soil. All are part of God's wonderful creation, called in the Bible "creeping things."

Bishop calls for gay marriages

The Bishop of Oxford, the Rt Rev Steven Croft, has said it was 'unjust' to refuse to marry same-sex couples. He wrote: "The present position on same-sex relationships no longer seems appropriate." The Holy Scriptures say (in four places): "For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother, and shall be joined unto his wife, and they two shall be one flesh." How a man, who professes to be a Christian minister, can fly directly in the face of such clear Scriptures is difficult to understand.

THE ROYAL OBSERVATORY

The red ball never fails to fascinate visitors. What is it for? Having an accurate time signal to set ‘home time’ before setting sail was vital to mariners so that they could plot their course from the Sun

and the stars. If you know the variation in local time between two places on earth you can work out the longitude between them. The five-hour time difference between Greenwich and New York represents about 75 degrees of longitude. The Royal Observatory set up a Time Ball in 1833 to give a visual time signal that could be seen from the river Thames. It still drops every day at 1.00pm.

The Sun and the stars were the earliest timekeepers and, from ancient times until quite recently, sundials were the most reliable clock. Until the 1950s, the most

accurate time measurements were still based on the movement of the stars and planets. Today, quartz crystal clocks have replaced pendulum clocks, and atomic clocks are even more accurate. These work by analysing the photons absorbed and emitted by caesium atoms. The scientists tell us that the next generation of atomic ion-trap clocks will be accurate to one second in billions of years.

Although time is important to us, the Book of the Revelation tells us that one day an angel, with one foot on the land and one foot in the sea, will declare that “there should be time no longer.” When that time will be we do not know, but how true it is that “Time, like an ever-rolling stream, bears all its sons away.” And that includes us!

