

# PERCEPTION

A Quarterly Magazine for Young People



‘But as it is written, Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him.’  
(1 Corinthians 2.9)

SPRING 2023

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**Cover picture:** Visual Perception

# PERCEPTION

Volume 15    Spring 2023    Number 57

## EDITORIAL

In commencing the editorship of 'Perception', I thought of our former editor, Mr Trevor Scott, and the excellent job he was able to do with the Lord's help over the last 10 years. My thoughts also went to the beginning of this magazine and in particular the word 'perception' used as a title for the magazine by the first editor Mr John Broome. A number of questions came to mind, what does the word perception mean? Why call a magazine 'Perception'?

The following definitions were found, and they seem to answer both of these questions for us:

***Perception*** - Google

1. The ability to see, hear, or become aware of something through the senses.
2. The way in which something is regarded, understood, or interpreted.

***Perception*** – Collins Dictionary

1. Countable noun – Your perception of something is the way you think about it or the impression you have of it.
2. Uncountable noun – Someone who has perception realises or notices things that are not obvious.

We have these definitions of the word 'perception' which help me, as I commence the editorship, and I hope may help you, the readers, in your expectations for this publication. The magazine I hope will continue to be interesting, instructive, thought provoking and even challenging at times, without being controversial or confrontational. The most important thing for me as editor, is that the magazine will be to the honour and glory of God and used by the Lord for the encouragement and blessing of souls. I would encourage you to send me any articles you feel may be of benefit to readers and, where possible, I will try to include them.

Solomon wrote at the beginning of the book of Proverbs something of his desire for their use. In the first chapter we read the following:

*'To know wisdom and instruction; to perceive the words of understanding; To receive the instruction of wisdom, justice, and judgement, and equity; To give subtility to the simple, to the young man knowledge and discretion'* (Prov.1.2-4).

This desire of Solomon has, under the divine influence and power of God been known by many readers of the book of Proverbs and also the other pages of the Holy word of God. What is your perception of the word of God – the Holy Bible? I wonder if you, in reading the Bible, have perceived 'the words of understanding'? Using the words of one of the definitions quoted at the beginning of this article - What do you think of it? or What is your impression of it?

I remember at school being given some plasticine, rolling it flat and pressing a few different objects face down into it. These left an impression in the plasticine - they left a mark. One of the things we were being taught was the difference between various materials. The plasticine being soft received the imprint of the objects and there it remained until the plasticine was remoulded. The



table we were working on was different, it was not like the plasticine. The surface was hard, and no matter how we tried to push objects down onto it there was no impression made, no mark remained. You could say that it had not been impressed!

The Lord Jesus when here upon earth asked His disciples saying '...Whom say the people that I am?' (Luke 9.18) - to which various answers were given. Jesus then brought the question

nearer to them and asked '...But whom say ye that I am?...' (v20). What would your response be to such a question? One of the definitions of the word 'perception' was - 'the way in which something is regarded...'. Many who were alive at the time when the Lord Jesus was here on earth did not perceive who He really was. Some saw Him and heard of His wonderful miracles but they did not regard Him as worthy of praise and honour, but instead, they despised and rejected Him.

What Moses said to the children of Israel before they entered the promised land could have been spoken to many of those in the days of the Saviour's ministry:

*'And Moses called unto all Israel, and said unto them, Ye have seen all that the Lord did before your eyes in the land of Egypt unto Pharoah, and unto all his servants, and unto all his land; The great temptations which thine eyes have seen, the signs, and those great miracles: Yet the Lord hath not given you an heart to **perceive**, and eyes to see, and ears to hear, unto this day'* (Deut. 29.2-4).

Dear reader, '...What think ye of Christ?...' (Matt.22.42).

The springtime of year brings more hours of sunshine, warmer days and the signs of life in nature around us. Whereas in the autumn the leaves had fallen from the branches and the cold of winter seemed to have stopped any growth, in the spring we begin to see buds appearing, the shoots pushing up out of the ground, and blossom growing, showing us that all is not dead. How encouraging



these things are for us when we view them in relation to the promise made by Almighty God to Noah. On exiting the ark Noah took of every clean beast, and of every fowl, and offered burnt offerings unto God. Noah's sacrifice was accepted, we read '*And*

*the Lord smelled a sweet savour; and the Lord said in his heart, I will not again curse the ground any more for man's sake; for the imagination of man's heart is evil from his youth; neither will I again smite any more every thing living, as I have done. While the earth remaineth, seedtime and harvest, and cold and heat, and summer and winter, and day and night shall not cease'* (Gen. 8.21.22). This promise has been fulfilled each year, in the many years since it was given, and will continue 'while the earth remaineth'.

The first of our definitions of the word 'perception' was - 'The ability to see, hear, or become aware of something through the senses'. When God is pleased in mercy to regenerate a soul and to give the gift of living faith, and this faith is mixed with the senses, then that soul begins to learn of Him, perceive things and receive things which they hadn't done previously. Life springs up in the soul and like the springtime in nature the soul becomes active and flourishing in newness of life. I love reading the Song of Solomon, and find those words in the second chapter very precious:

*'My beloved spake, and said unto me, Rise up, my love, my fair one, and come away. For, lo, the winter is past, the rain is over and gone; The flowers appear on the earth; the time of the singing of birds is come, and the voice of the turtle is heard in our land; The fig tree putteth forth her green figs, and the vines with the tender grape give a good smell. Arise, my love, my fair one, and come away'* (Song of sol. 2.10-13).

This time of year is also the traditional time for lambing in our country, and the sight of the newly born lambs in the fields is a very lovely sight and one which reminds us of the joy of this



season. John the Baptist looked upon Jesus as He walked and exclaimed to two of his disciples '...Behold the Lamb of God!' (John 1.36). These two men heard those words of John the Baptist and followed Jesus. One of them was Andrew and it would seem the other was John, who omits to mention his name - the omission being consistent with his account of the gospel in which he never mentions his own name. John was eyewitness to many things in the public ministry of the Lord Jesus through to the sufferings, death, resurrection, and ascension of the Lord Jesus. Towards the close of his gospel John writes of the crucifixion of the Lord Jesus Christ, declaring his personal witness of those things in John 19.35. In The Revelation, also written by John, one of the things that stands out so clearly is the vision of Christ the Lamb of God. He writes 'And I beheld... a Lamb as it had been slain...' (Rev.5.6). May it please God to give us each a true perception of vital, saving truths and a knowledge of Jesus Christ as our Saviour.

With best wishes and Christian love,

*The Editor*

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## THE TEST

When you see a dog following two men, says Ralph Erskine, in one of his sermons, you know not to which of them he belongs while they walk together; but let them come to a parting road, and one go one way and the other another way, then you will know which is the dog's master. So, at times will you and the world go hand in hand. While a man may have the world and a religious profession too, we cannot tell which is the man's master, God, or the world; but stay till the man comes to a parting road: God calls him this way, and the world calls him that way. Well, if God be his master, he follows religion, and lets the world go; but if the world be his master, then he follows the world and the lust thereof, and lets God, and conscience, and religion go.

The Sower, March 1862

## WHO IS ON THE LORD'S SIDE?

### *Thoughts on Exodus ch32 v26*

A strange scene is before us, strange indeed to human reason. Moses is in the mount before God, receiving from Him two tables of stone with His holy law engraved upon them by His own hand. While God and His servant converse together, the people whom God had brought out of Egypt, through the Red Sea, miraculously fed – this people, with their high priest, were worshipping a god of their own making. Moses returns and is grieved at the sight and cries in the ears of all the people, 'Who is on the Lord's side? Let him come unto me.'

Could there be any on the Lord's side in such a multitude? Had not all worshipped the calf? No, there was a remnant even here, as there was also in the days of Elijah, who had not bowed the knee to Baal. In the worst of times, in the darkest corners of the earth, God has a remnant reserved unto Himself. In England during the darkest days of Popery, and now again when Romanism, Ritualism, and Rationalism (we may add here, Atheism, Islamism, and secularism, to name but a few! - Ed) threaten to carry all before them, God has still, and will have till time shall be no more, a remnant according to the election of grace. If then, there be such a people living and moving among us, a people '...saved by the Lord...' (Deut. 33.29), chosen in eternity, called in time, 'justified from all things...' (Acts. 13.39) and at last, glorified - I say, if there be such a people - surely it is worthwhile to inquire, what are the marks and signs by which they are to be known and distinguished from the rest of mankind? The Prophet Ezekiel saw one with a writer's inkhorn by his side, who was bidden to set a mark on the men that sighed and cried because of the abominations that were done in the land (Eze. 9. 1-4).

What evidence do we have that we are on the Lord's side? Have we been brought to look on Him whom we have pierced with



our sins, and mourned in bitterness because of Him? Have we sighed and cried for the abominations of our carnal nature?

Abraham was on the Lord's side; he obeyed when commanded to offer up Isaac (Gen. 22). So was Eli; he said, '...It is the Lord: let Him do what seemeth Him good' (1 Sam. 3.18). So was Job; he said, 'Naked came I out of my mother's womb, and naked shall I return thither: the Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away; blessed be the name of the Lord' (Job 1.21). Can we say the same, from our hearts, when the Lord's will concerning us crosses our will and upsets our plans?

How sometimes I have murmured and rebelled in my thoughts when things have run counter to my will and pleasure, but that murmuring and rebellion of mind brought me into darkness and doubt, and then I have felt at a distance from my best Friend. Is there a sincere desire within you to be able to say under all circumstances, '...not my will, but thine, be done' (Luke 22.2)? It is written, '...the Lord doth put a difference between the Egyptians and Israel' (Exod. 11.7), and He still puts a difference between His people and the world; but not as some think ... in head knowledge and clear views of truth merely, but -

A heart resigned, submissive, meek,  
The great Redeemer's throne;  
Where only Christ is heard to speak,  
Where Jesus reigns alone.

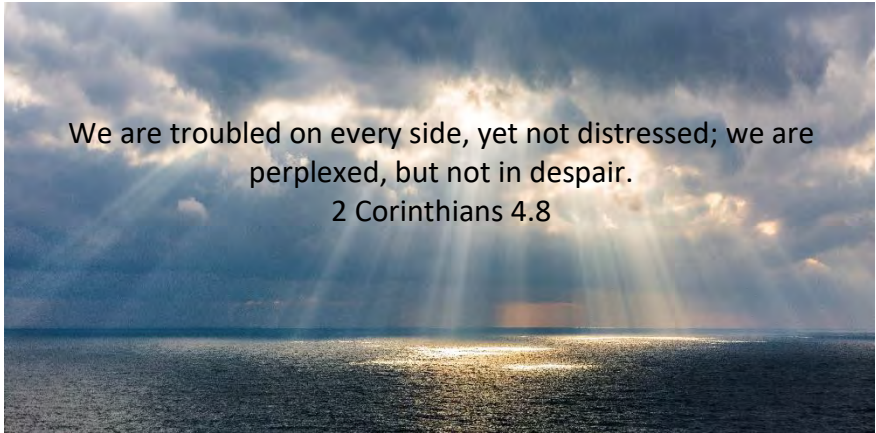
A humble, lowly, contrite heart,  
Believing, true, and clean;  
Which neither life nor death can part  
From Him that dwells within."

Gadsby's 1024

J. J.

An extract from a publication entitled 'Friendly Words'

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We are troubled on every side, yet not distressed; we are  
perplexed, but not in despair.  
2 Corinthians 4.8

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Circumstances sometimes overtake us in life which do not seem fair or logical. The apostle Paul had given everything for the sake of the gospel, but things got so bad at one stage that he despaired of life itself. These are times when we trust in the dark. Without faith it is impossible to please Him, and He will see that we will come out of the tunnel and into the light.

B Russell

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### **'Come Unto Me'**

'Come unto me.' How sweet that word  
To those that know Thee, gracious Lord!  
But how can such as I obey,  
Who know not Thee, or know the way?  
Weary am I of earth's vain show,  
And yet no load of guilt I know;  
But let not this, dear Lord, a barrier be;  
Reveal Thyself, and I myself shall see.

Author unknown

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## REFORMATION IS NOT REGENERATION

*Some details of my life by Tom Melling, Deacon at Providence Strict and Particular Baptist Chapel, Haydock.*



I was born 27<sup>th</sup> July 1912, one of ten children: eight girls and two boys. My brother William was dying, he was eleven years old, a deaf and dumb lad and a cripple from birth. All of us born in a little cottage which had been a 'Shippan' or cowshed, it had two rooms upstairs, originally one room that was made into two: the rent was 2s.6d. per week. There was much poverty in those days through unemployment, and low wages. Children who could, earned what they could working casually on the farms or wherever else to earn a little money. My poor mother worked hard on the farm, she also took in washing which she washed, ironed, and took back in a big basket - even then we were threatened with eviction. The police came to put my poor father in jail. Oh the times of poverty! We had no proper clothes in which to dress, only begged ones off the rag cart. My father had to follow my mother out at night to prevent her drowning herself. She nursed my poor brother until he was eleven when he died, and we never had a doctor; nothing but poverty, no social help. Having no proper bed clothes, we slept all together to keep warm. The 1914-1918 war raged in those years.

Well, my poor brother was laid in the grave 25<sup>th</sup> March 1918 for a very small fee, and my eldest sister found some domestic employment for a few shillings per week, and her keep. The shop keeper was good to us, letting us have food to be paid for when we could. I feel God constrained her to be so kind to us. The hearts of all men are under God's control, turning them whichever way He will. We never went to a Sunday school or church because we had no suitable clothes to wear on a Sunday, but the lads with whom I

played belonged to the Methodists; and the Rechabites\* had lantern lectures in the old chapel. The man who conducted them taught us a chorus:

'The Bible, yes, that's the book for me,  
I stand alone on the Word of God, the Bible.'

From that time, I got friendly with some of them and we went together to hear the lectures. I went on in poverty and sin, for the Sabbath days were desecrated with swearing... in this proving how much the seeds of evil grow as we get older in years – mighty seeds within us germinate, take root and bear fruit to damn our souls eternally. But oh, what a Saviour there is who came from heaven to suffer, bleed and save us!

There was no other good enough  
To pay the price for sin;  
He only could unlock the gate  
Of heaven and let us in.

Cecil Francis Alexander 1848

He only is the way, truth and the life of His people. We are all born in sin and shapen in iniquity.

The time came for me to leave school on 14<sup>th</sup> July 1926 (nearly 14 years old). I did some casual work following the threshing machine, gardening, anything to earn a little to help at home. I had been to several places seeking work, the collieries, the brickworks and then I tried Pilkingtons, and was about to be taken on when it seemed as though God shut the door. The man who interviewed me said to my father who was with me, "Do you work here?" When my father said, "No," he said, "I am sorry, I can't take you on" and that was where God closed the door. It was the custom in those days for Pilkingtons only to take on relatives.

\*Fervent followers of the God of Israel -best known for their total abstinence from alcohol. See Jeremiah ch35. Independent Order of Rechabites founded at Salford in 1835 – continue as The Rechabite Friendly Society.

'God moves in a mysterious way  
 His wonders to perform;  
 He plants His footsteps in the sea,  
 And rides upon the storm.'

Gadsby's Hymns 320

Well it seemed strange, but God is His own interpreter and He did make it plain. I believe and have proved that providence we sing of in one of our beautiful hymns - No. 61 in Gadsby's by Burnham. Oh, I do feel I can sing it with my heart, every word of it was my experience written. God uses His providential dealings to bring His purposes about and guide us in His purposes of mercy and salvation for us.

Still not having any employment, I sat one morning on a wall watching a neighbour cutting the hay, when who should come down the lane but the farmer's wife (a godly woman), driving the cows to pasture! She passed me and then on her way back asked me if I wanted some work. I quickly said "yes". "Well," she said, "go in the field where the potatoes are and weed the potatoes",



supposedly for only a few days. Those few days turned out to be sixty-four years; and wrapped up in hymn No.61 were those years of God's dealings with me in providence, grace and mercy. Here was the beginning of God's work of grace in me. I continued my Sabbath sport, card playing in the evenings, and all other worldly things: but there was a secret work going on within which I felt was

telling me it was wrong, and the two things worked together. The dear old godly farmer's wife used to say to me on a Monday morning: "What were you doing yesterday – Sunday?" Well, I was honest and said, "Doing the usual things," cricket, football or some other Sabbath desecrating thing. "Don't you know what Bunyan said about the Sabbath?":

‘A Sabbath well spent, brings a week of content  
And peace with the gains of the morrow.  
But a Sabbath profaned, whate'er may be gained,  
Is a certain forerunner of sorrow.’

I began to feel this desire in my heart to do as my employers did. Oh, how the Sabbath was well kept by them. When going in on the Saturday evening for supper, I had seen the dear godly old lady collecting all secular books, the magazines of a worldly type and the newspapers, putting them all away for the Sabbath. The first decent suit of clothes I got, I said to the other lads, "Instead of cricket Sunday, shall we go to church?" So, they agreed, and we went off to the Parish Church. I remember an old lady finding us the places in the book, encouraging us. During the following week I said to the lads, "Shall we go again?" but they declined. Well, I thought I must go, my employers will be pleased.

So, I continued going to the same church, an Evangelical, and got all so taken up with things. I dropped the swearing and, wanting to be a real Christian, I engaged in all the church activities and set about to turn people to Christ. Also, I began to kneel down and pray before getting in bed. Oh, the things I did which were admirable, honourable! I distributed tracts, prayed with the sick, even tried to speak at meetings. Well, the word of God says, 'Ye must be born again' (John 3.7) and we must. No salvation apart from it. Well on and on I went, truly believing the work which I was doing was the genuine work of God the Holy Spirit in my soul, when it was only of the flesh. It was all good, **but reformation is not regeneration**. If we are on the way to heaven, our feet and heart must be in the

straight and narrow way which leads to it, or else we are lost forever.

Being made to realise this I began to feel my righteousness was all my own, of the flesh and all my doings – good as they were. Now I was in trouble! I felt I was lost, my so-called righteousness as filthy rags. “What must I do to be saved?” was my cry. I could no longer do as I had been doing. I could no longer offer tracts asking people to accept Christ: that being only free-will and only of the flesh. ‘But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name: which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God’ (John 1.12,13).

Well, everything seemed to be wrong. I had to leave the Church and seek for the truth as set forth in Scripture. The Church of England being filled with error, my dear godly employer, who was also exercised at the time when I was under solemn conviction of sin, had to tell the vicar he could no longer teach the catechism to the Sunday School children. He was told to resign at once, which he did; this caused a real upset. Where God is at work the devil will be too, causing persecution, for the vicar preached at him from the pulpit. So we had to come out from among them and be separate. The next Sabbath afterwards, my employer said, “Let’s go and hear Mr Sylvester,” who had formerly been at Haydock St Helens: a good man, and my employer knew him. Mr Sylvester was a sound man in doctrine. So we went on our bicycles but got lost; a policeman finally directed us right, to St Silas, Toxteth, Liverpool. After the service the minister took us to his home and gave us a cup of tea: his wife playing the organ. “There are some good old Strict Baptist tunes,” he said.



Well, after telling him what had taken place, he was sympathetic. He said, "If you want to hear the truth, go to Shaw Street Strict Baptist's." He himself in his younger days when at college attended the Strict Baptist chapel at West Street, Croydon with his brother, but now went to the Church of England.

The following week, on the Sunday evening we went on our bicycles to Shaw Street Strict Baptist Chapel, Liverpool and saw the deacon after service, who introduced us to the Pastor, Mr Caton. He said how glad he was to meet us and said we would be very welcome any time but said that there was a place of truth at Haydock where the things we desired to hear were preached, the same as in this place. Well to them we went the next week (now sixty-four years ago), on the Sunday evening, it being a prayer meeting. I remember Mr Turton saying to the deacon, "Don't question them too much, perhaps they will take away some big grapes and pomegranates!" In our hearts we did and said, we are true men, and have not come to spy out the land.

I believe from that moment my ears were nailed to the door post, because God so wrought in my soul, brought me on the way, helped me, enabled me to continue, to persevere, and to follow Him in His Ordinances. But oh, at what a cost when the devil fought me as I sought to follow Him in the waters of baptism! I was accepted and all was arranged for the baptism, Mr Wolstenholme was to baptize me, but I asked the deacons to put it off because I felt I had deceived them. Oh, the anguish, darkness, fierce temptation to give up all and go back. So severe was the darkness and trial, I did neither eat nor sleep, and hardly could work. I remember being on my knees by the bed begging of God to help me, when my father came to bed, and said, "Aren't you in bed yet?" Well, I asked my godly employer Mr Hermon if he would go and ask the deacons to postpone the baptism, which he did, and they kindly consented. But now I got into greater darkness and trouble. 'Beloved, think it not strange' says the word, 'concerning the fiery trial which is to try you, as though some strange thing happened unto you' (1 Pet. 4.12).



Every man's work shall be tried, and a third part shall pass through the fire. In the midst of this trial, one day, going into the field to spread lime, God spoke these words, '...No man, having put his hand to the plough, and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God' (Luke 9.62), which were as an arrow shot into my heart. No wonder the word says it is quick and powerful, sharper than any two-edged sword. I fell down under that word, and went that night to tell the deacons, we sang the doxology together. So, I was baptised, March 1937.



'Many days have passed since then;  
 Many changes I have seen;  
 Yet have been upheld till now;  
 Who could hold me up but Thou?'

Gadsby's Hymns 376

Here I am, so unworthy and undeserving.

'Ah! But for free and sovereign grace,  
 I still had lived estranged from God,  
 Till Hell had proved the destined place  
 Of my deserved but dread abode.

But O, amazed, I see the Hand  
 That stopped me in my wild career;  
 A miracle of grace I stand;  
 The Lord has taught my heart to fear.

To fear His name, to trust His grace,  
 To learn His will be my employ;  
 Till I shall see Him face to face,  
 Himself my Heaven, Himself my joy.'

Gadsby's Hymns 200

I do hope it will be so. May the Lord forgive me in this testimony to His eternal praise from an unworthy sinner.

He died on 16<sup>th</sup> September 1998 aged 86 years, his funeral taken by Mr Norman Roe, Pastor at Ebenezer, Ossett. A small booklet was produced by Christian Bookshop, Ossett which contained much of this account and also the funeral address.

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## DON'T TELL ANYONE

Mr Hoby Childress spent most of his life living in Geraldine, Alabama, USA. His family described him as a humble, God-loving man who was known to bring apples, sweet potatoes, or okra to his neighbours as well as handwritten get well cards and letters. In his mind, since God was blessing him on his farm, it only made sense to help others in return.



It seems that Mr Childress was motivated and inspired by his faith in God and his own life experience. It had not always been smooth sailing for this warm and generous gentleman. In 1973 he suffered the loss of his own son and father in a tornado. His dear wife also suffered with multiple sclerosis, and at times they had struggled to pay for her medicine. She passed away in 1999. These things made an impression upon him.

Brooke Walker, the pharmacist in Geraldine, well remembers that day in 2012 when Mr Childress, a regular customer, asked her a question. She said that he pulled me to the side and said, "Do you ever have anybody that can't pay for their

medication?" and I said, "Well, yeah, unfortunately, that happens a good bit." Mr Childress then handed her a folded bill and said "Next time that happens, will you use this? Don't tell where it came from, and don't tell me who needed it, just say it's a blessing from the Lord." Ms Walker later called Mr Childress to tell him how much his generosity meant to the customer it had helped. He thanked her and she ended the call feeling blown away by his generosity, she thought it would be a one-off gift of kindness. But the next month he came in and did the same thing. "It continued every single month for almost 10 years", she said. "I never saw it lasting this long and he always said, Keep this between us."

After enduring illness for years Mr Childress became unable to leave his home, and one day he asked his daughter for a favour. He told her that he had been doing something for a while and he would like to continue doing it with her help. He said "I want you to take a \$100 bill up to the drugstore, at the first of the month, as long as I am alive." His daughter, Tania Nix, fulfilled his wish, the request not surprising her knowing his faith in God, and his deep care for community and country. Following the death of Hoby Childress on the 1st January 2023 the news of his altruism spread far and wide. Brooke Walker the pharmacist has received calls from across the US from people wanting to help keep the fund going. She said "His kindness motivated me to be more of a compassionate person. He was just a good old guy who wanted to bless his community, and he certainly did. He established a legacy of kindness."

*'But when thou doest thy alms, let not thy left hand know what thy right hand doeth: That thine alms may be in secret: and thy Father which seeth in secret himself shall reward thee openly.'* (Matt.6.3,4.)

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**GEORGE MOCKFORD (Part 5)**

*Continued from WINTER 2022, Page 7*

**A change of employment**

A godly man said to me, "The factory will never again be let as a soap factory. This is the Lord's way of bringing you out to give yourself to the work He has called you to do." I replied, "I feel sure that it will soon be let, and if I can agree with the parties, I shall stay." "Ah!" he said, "you never will." I could not believe him, but so it turned out, for it was never let again for a soap factory. The whole plant was sold, and the building converted into corn stores, so that I was now entirely thrown out of this calling.

I obtained a little employment, for a time, haymaking and harvesting, gardening, etc. When hop-picking time came, I went to Heathfield for a month's hop-picking and spoke to them some part of the time on the Sunday.

During the time I was hop-picking, a person broke into the house of the friends with whom I was staying and stole a watch and other things belonging to them, an overcoat, shoes, and other things belonging to me; my shoes, if I remember rightly, I had again, as they were found pledged at a pawn-shop in Tunbridge Wells. The thief was caught; I with my friend had to appear at court; and when I saw the person and noticed that he was a delicate-looking young man, how I wished I could speak to him, and tell him I forgave him. I wished that I had not to give evidence against the poor young man, he looked so sad. I dreaded the trial at the Quarter Sessions at Lewes, but there the poor young man pleaded guilty, so I had not a word to say. Some few of my friends made a subscription and collected £2 4s. 6d., so that my lost coat was replaced by a new one, as well as the other things stolen from me, and I had some money left.

**Moves from Lewes to Heathfield**

Seeing that every door was closed at Lewes for me to labour with my hands to obtain the bread that perisheth, and support my

family, it brought me into a great strait. I cried day and night unto the Lord to open a door for me, so that I might not be a burden to the dear people of God. I did so dread being a burden to them; and what made me fear it more was, the friends at Heathfield now giving me 10s. each time I supplied for them, and I did not see how they could continue this; indeed, I knew they could not, except the Lord provided.

After much exercise and prayer on both sides, the friends at Heathfield advised me to come among them to live. There was a cottage with a little land to let at a moderate rent, and they thought if I could keep a cow, and get what work I could, that we should be able to live. Ultimately I consented, and the friends sent a wagon from Heathfield, to take us there. So I, with my wife and family, left my native town, not knowing what bonds and afflictions awaited me. But I felt enabled to commit myself and family and way into the hands of my God, with an inward persuasion that I was taking a step agreeable to his mind and will; I felt the inward voice, "Go, and I will be with thee."

We safely arrived at Heathfield, and entered our new abode on the 9<sup>th</sup> day of October 1858. My dear wife had never been much away from her parents, had for a long time lived next door to her mother and father, and therefore greatly felt the parting. The house we left was much warmer, and more convenient than the one we were now in. We had only green wood to burn, (my wife had been used to coal,) and the place was filled with smoke every time we lit the fire.

### **Difficulties**

In addition to this, I had praised my Heathfield friends so much in her hearing. The day being Saturday when we unloaded our furniture, she had enough to do to get a little straight. She asked me what she was to carry to chapel for her dinner on Sunday, as it was too far to come home between the services. I told her they always found me a dinner, and for once I felt sure they would be glad to do the same for her, which might have been the case had I

explained the cause of the dinner not being brought by my wife. Well, at dinner time, my wife sat with me, and I handed her a part of mine, saying to the person who provided it, "I thought she could have part of mine to-day." "Oh," he replied, "I am not going to provide for so many," and appeared very unpleasant, so that it was but little either I or my wife could eat. All this put together made her very uncomfortable, and she said if these were my wonderful friends, I might have them, she would rather go back to Lewes to live. But she found that there were some who desired our welfare and sent us such things as we needed.

At that time persons were permitted to go into the park belonging to Sir C. W. Blunt and get up the roots of trees that had been thrown down. Some of these trees were very large, and there was a great deal of wood in the roots, so I went and dug some out, and got a friend to take them home for me; but, of course, they were (like me with my country life) green and required a great deal of other wood to make them burn.

I borrowed £20 at five per cent interest, and bought a cow, and some pigs to fatten, and worked when I could get it, gardening for the friends; and in the summer I helped a friend to cut his grass, and make hay of it, and get it up, and he helped me cut mine and get it up. I took a piece of peas to cut, but could earn but little at this; and when the time came, we all went hop-picking. This we did for over twenty years, with between two and three miles to walk morning and night with our little ones, and when we arrived home have been dreadfully tired. The children, having fallen asleep, generally had to be carried to bed without supper, and on account of the distance had to be roused up again early in the morning. Of course, the cow and pigs etc. must be looked after when we returned home at night, as well as before we left in the morning, and my wife did her washing, baking, etc. at night, so that she had but little rest.

Well, when the pigs were fattened, I sold them to a man, who promised to pay for them when he sold them but failed to do as he had promised. There was another man in partnership with

him; and after a time the Lord called one of them by grace, and though it was years after, he paid me all I would take. As my wife could not milk the cow when I was from home, I had to get someone to do it for me, which was not always convenient. This made it trying, as I had to return after speaking at places some miles from home, but we struggled on in this way for some time, much tried in providence, but with marked proof of the Lord's goodness in providing for us. In addition to this, I was favoured with evidences of the Lord's being with me in enabling me to declare his truth in simplicity and, I trust, godly sincerity, according as he had given me to taste, handle, and feel its power in my own soul, so that the little place we met to worship our God in was not large enough to accommodate us and hold all who wished to get in.

### **A new chapel**

One day, when in Lewes, I met a gentleman who knew me. After shaking hands and asking after my health, he said, "I find the Lord blesses your testimony among the people at Heathfield; you must have a chapel built." I replied that I had not been among them very long, and most likely there would soon be plenty of room for those who came to hear. He replied, "I do not think so. I have land up near your present meeting-place, and I will give you a piece to build a chapel upon. Go home and talk it over with your friends and let me know the result."

I accordingly called the friends together to talk the matter over, and we came to the conclusion that we must accept the good man's offer with the hope that the thing was of the Lord. The church-members and others met in the field named by our friend, who had also said, "Take as much ground as you like," and we marked out a piece which we thought would be quite sufficient. This piece of land was conveyed from the said gentleman (Mr. Richard Barrett, of Lewes) into the hands of trustees for the express purpose of a chapel being erected upon it, which we at once set about. O the many sighs and cries unto the Lord that we might not be left to take a wrong step, and that if built, it might be for the Lord's own honour

and glory, and the good of those that were his! We began with great fear and trembling, as we were but a few feeble and much-despised folk.

The building was to be quite plain, 26 feet by 40 feet, with two small vestries, the cost of which, without the legal expenses, was about £360. It was opened for the service of God on the 28<sup>th</sup> day of July 1859, by Mr. John Warburton, of Southill, and Mr Tatham, of Eastbourne. The collections that day amounted to about £20, and we borrowed £100 on loan, to be paid back by instalments, and many promised to give one penny per week towards paying off expenses. I went about begging, so we got the debt considerably lowered. Our legal expenses came to over £20, which we felt was very heavy. I used to fear we should not be able to pay for it, and how many almost sleepless nights I had about it. I also feared that it would prove to be larger than we required. But Gideon's God was our God, and He made His word quick and powerful, so that there was crying from the sick and wounded among us, for mercy from the God of salvation to be manifested unto their poor souls. Some were healed by having God's word sent to them; while others, who had been brought to feel the galling yoke of bondage, were brought out into liberty.

### **A call to the Pastorate**

The church now gave me a call to become their pastor. I felt enabled to lay the solemn matter before the Lord, as I felt that it was a very different thing from being a supply. What should I do to speak continually to the same people! But I trust the Lord brought me to know and feel that I was quite dependent upon His divine teaching to preach one sermon to them, and that God who helped me at one time, could help me at all times; yea, and I felt He would.

I had for some years been persuaded that believers' baptism by immersion was the only scriptural mode of obeying a divine command and had begged of the Lord in His own time and place to enable me to follow Him. I was accordingly baptized in the new chapel on December 4<sup>th</sup>, 1859. I was favoured with the sweet



presence and powerful love of the Lord Jesus Christ shed abroad in my heart, so that I felt buried with my dear Lord, and raised again in Him, who I felt was my Resurrection and Life; my poor soul was ready to burst with holy joy and sacred peace.

When I returned into the vestry, the minister that baptized me said, "Well, how is it now?" "O bless the Lord," I replied, "I would willingly go down into the water again if the Lord required it." He said, "Well, I have not encouraged you." "No," I replied, "but I am sure it is a right step, and I have the answer of a good conscience." I afterwards accepted the church's call to become their pastor on condition that from henceforth it be a Strict Baptist Church, as before it was open communion. This was consented to, therefore from June 3<sup>rd</sup>, 1860, I became the pastor of the little church, consisting of eleven members and myself, and I trust that we entered into the covenant bond as a marriage bond of the Lord's own making. Yes, and I am persuaded it is as long as we both live, unless in the providence of God removed, for I can truly say I felt it was an unbreakable covenant. Some profess so clearly to see the hand of the Lord in bringing together the pastor and people, but in many cases it soon comes to an end, especially if a minister should have an offer of more salary: such can see their way clear if it is from where they are receiving £50 to £100 a year, but we don't often hear of their seeing the thing is of the Lord if the salary drops from £100 to £50.

### **A gallery and schoolroom built**

Well, soon after we built the chapel, it became evident that we must have more room, but this we feared very much to enter into, as we had still a debt; but it was at length decided to build a gallery, which was done in the year 1862, at a cost of £49 10s. We did not add this cost to the chapel debt, but the friends raised the money, and paid it the same year. At that time, I was often favoured with the spirit of prayer and the grace of supplication, as well as a watchful spirit; and, like Manoah and his wife, I have looked on with wonder and astonishment to see the Lord work so wondrously.

In order that the expenses might be kept down, I swept and cleaned the chapel, did the painting, etc. etc.; and this I did for some years. [The late Mr John Warburton put a stop to this by saying, "If you allow your minister to sweep the chapel, I won't come."]

In the year 1872 a new schoolroom, over the vestries, to seat about 100 children, was built at a cost of £135 18s. 2d. I again took my begging book, first asking the Lord to incline the hearts of the people to give, and it resulted in my obtaining £61 11s. 10d.; the remainder was in time all paid. Then in 1875 a new porch was built, at the entrance of the front door, at a cost of £20; and in the year 1881 the chapel was all new seated (as what we had before were only old seats which were given us), and the inside walls cemented, at a cost of £93 9s. 2d., and in a short time this was all paid off.

The dear old pilgrims who were advanced in years when I first came among them, were one after another taken home. I felt their loss very much, especially that of the senior deacon, William Errey. Not only was he a well-taught man of God but blessed also with an excellent spirit. Not a man to say much, but what he did say had remarkable weight and authority with it, being tempered with great tenderness and the fear of God, so his memory is blessed and dear unto me. In cases of trial, wherein he saw I was wrong in spirit or judgment, (and I was, and often am,) how affectionately and scripturally he would speak to me; really I felt my soul knit unto him as Jonathan's to David. The other deacon was such a very different spirited man, and caused me so much trouble and sorrow, that at last the church interfered, and he withdrew from membership with us, some years before the death of my friend William Errey.

### **A house built next to the chapel**

During the time I swept the chapel, one Saturday after doing my work, I went out into a field adjoining the chapel, and while there I had such a spirit of prayer and supplication poured out upon me, and such an impression to ask the Lord to give me a house to live in on that spot, that I felt a persuasion the Lord would grant my request, though I could see no way whereby it could be done. Well,

I could not get away from the feeling, but said nothing to any man; it was between the Lord and myself. Some months after this, one of the deacons said to me, "We as a church have been desirous of shewing our thankfulness to you for your endeavours to keep down the expenses, and to get the chapel out of debt, by doing something for you to be of permanent use. The conclusion we have come to is this: that if a piece of ground can be obtained near the chapel, where a house could be built, we will do what we can to raise some money towards the building of it." I then told him what I had felt respecting the matter, but he said that piece of land was not for sale. "Well," I replied, "if the thing is from the Lord, that is where the house will be." "Ah! well," he said, "this I must leave."

After a time I heard that the person who owned the land was going to build two cottages on it, so I asked a friend to enquire if it was true, and whether he would sell it. On my friend naming it to him, he said, "Yes, I do think of building, unless I could sell it; do you chapel people want it, as it joins yours?" My friend said, "I am not prepared to answer your question today, but will see you again," which he did. He told him he did want it for the minister to build upon, and what did he ask for it? He named the sum, and my friend said he was sure that price would not be given, as it was at that time for land here an exorbitant price, and far too much. "Ah! Well," said the man, "I don't care to sell, as I can build upon it myself;" so my friend was rather put out and thought he should not get it. But I felt it was the will of the Lord that I should have it, so I asked him to direct me what price to offer for it; and so I went with my friend the next time, and made the offer I felt the Lord had instructed me to make. He replied, "Indeed you are not going to get it for that sum." "Well," I said, "that is all I shall give; I will pay the conveyance." Again, he answered, "No." "Goodnight," we said, and left. But we had not gone far before he called us back, and said, "You shall have it at the price you offer." So, the bargain was struck.

The building of the house was soon begun. Some gave small sums of money, some gave bricks, others the carriage of materials, and others labour, so that I think on its being finished there was a

debt on it of about £150. I took up £100 at five per cent, and the other £50 was paid off, and only the £100 remained.

After the removal of dear Mr. Covell, of Croydon, unto the church triumphant, I was brought into an intimate connexion with the Misses Summers, who after a time visited my house, and during their stay with us, they asked my wife particulars about the house, and found that I had £100 mortgage on it. I remember on my return home from where I had been to speak, Miss Summers said, "We have found out all about the building of this house, and the debt you have on it." I replied, "This you would not have done had you not ploughed with my heifer." "Never mind," said they, "how we have found it out, we will pay the £100 off at once, and make it free to you." I was so overcome that I could not speak for some time. I thanked them as heartily as I could, and as soon as I was able, I went into my bedroom and there thanked and blessed my dear and gracious Lord for His great goodness unto me. I had at times been much weighed down respecting the £100. I could see no way of getting out of the trouble, as my family and expenses were continually increasing. O how sure I am that, 'When the Lord's people have need, His goodness will find out a way!'

And the Misses Summers were the instruments in the Lord's hand for my temporal good as long as they lived. 'They that observe these things, even they shall understand the lovingkindness of the Lord.'

### **Family afflictions**

It was not long after we went to live in our new house before fresh trouble came: the Lord saw fit to lay affliction upon my children, and one was taken away by the icy hand of death at the age of fourteen. O the sighs and cries of my soul, night and day, for the salvation of the lad's soul! I did not feel that I could talk to him about it, until one morning when he said, "Father, do you think that I shall get better?" I said, "What do you feel about it?" He replied, "I shall not get better." "No," I said, "I fear you won't." Then he said, "O father, do pray for me." I replied, "This I continually try to

do; I hope you pray for yourself.” He said, “I feel I don’t know how to pray.” The Lord had mercy on me, by giving me a sweet hope that He had mercy on him and took his spirit unto Himself; but this I did not get until after his body was buried. Before his departure, he asked for all his brothers and sisters to be called, spoke to each one separately, giving to each something belonging to himself, and bade them goodbye.

After this, we had the scarlet fever among the children, and all the members of the household were prohibited from going to chapel except myself. I caught it but had it only slightly; though for a time I was very low, both in body and mind. Indeed, I sank very low, and going down to Brighton for a change, I called on some dear friends, Mr. and Mrs. Combridge, and they asked me to stay with them. I did so, and their kindness was great to me, so that in a short time I felt better in body, and the dear Lord made that blessed promise good in my poor soul, ‘I will see you again, and your heart shall rejoice, and your joy no man taketh from you.’

It was brought about in the following way. As I sat in my friend’s room, feeling almost in despair, Mr. Combridge brought me the late Mr. James Wells’ book, called ‘Achor’s Gloomy Vale.’ I opened the book and began to read where I opened, and while reading the dear man’s bitter complaint, confession of sin, also of the Lord’s great goodness in bearing with his ill ways and crooked manners, and not cutting him off, my heart began to soften and melt, and I felt the goodness of God so flow into my poor soul, that it brought me to repentance and confession of my sins, and produced such brokenness of spirit, that I wept like a child; indeed, I was so overcome that I believe I felt like the Queen of Sheba, of whom it is said, ‘There was no more spirit left in her.’ I felt almost to swoon away with bliss. Mrs. Combridge coming into the room and seeing me in the state I was, exclaimed, “O Mr. Mockford, you are not so well!” I replied, “I am much better.” She said, “I will not disturb you,” and retired; but soon came back and said, “Do tell me about the change.” I answered, “I cannot; I will when I can.” I walked out by the sea with my heart overflowing with love unto my

blessed Lord Jesus Christ, for the great things He had done for me. The place was crowded with people (it being a gala day in Brighton), but it seemed as if I saw no one but Jesus only. I heard music passing; I felt in my heart, and said with my tongue,

“No music like Thy charming name,  
Nor half so sweet can be.”

Once or twice the cab-drivers called out, “Get out of the way, you fool; do you want to get run over?” I turned into a by-street, went back to my friends, and was enabled to relate a little of the goodness and mercy and lovingkindness of the Lord unto me, and we rejoiced together. I returned home like a giant refreshed with new wine, to relate to my dear people the great things the Lord had done for me. And O what a blessed heartfelt uniting we had! My trials much increased; I lived to prove that the word of God is true, ‘Folly is bound up in the heart of a child, but the rod of correction shall drive it far from him.’ The word being much blessed, my heart was lifted up and the Lord brought me down. This plunged me into trouble; I was also brought to see and feel the great goodness and mercy of my God in permitting trial as a preservative. O where might I not have stumbled and fell, but for trial?

There is much, however, I wish to pass over; the cruel spite of Satan through men has nearly crushed me into the grave, but, ‘Bless the Lord, O my soul,’ I proved him to be my Shield and Buckler, and my Strong Tower. By this teaching I was led in the ministry to draw the line more clearly between the flesh and the spirit, between life and death; and as my late dear friend Pert once said to me, “Your arms are too long; when they have done crying ‘Hosanna,’ they will say, ‘Crucify him,’ Then your arms will be shorter.” So I found it. I began to be called a man of a bad spirit, but doors were continually being opened for this bad-spirited man to preach, and I found more than ever that by the power of the Spirit the word spoken had a twofold effect; unto some it was ‘the savour of life unto life, to others the savour of death unto death.’ And as I was led to shew that all religious fruits that did not spring

from Jesus Christ, were not the fruits of the Spirit, therefore all sprang from the flesh. Some said I should by such preaching discourage the young in the ways of God, but I contended nothing would discourage them more than trying to build them up with untempered mortar. These young, real seekers dreaded being deceived – they prized faithful dealing. To be continued.

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## DYING TO SELF

When you are forgotten, neglected, or purposely ignored and you don't sting and hurt with the insult of the oversight, but your heart is happy, being counted worthy to suffer for Christ, that is dying to self.

When your good is spoken of as evil, your wishes crossed, your advice disregarded, your opinion ridiculed, and you refuse to let anger rise in your heart, or even defend yourself, but take it all in patient, loving silence, that is dying to self.

When you lovingly and patiently bear any disorder and irregularity, or any annoyance; when you stand face to face with waste, folly, extravagance, spiritual insensibility, and endure it as Jesus endured, that is dying to self.

When you are content with any food, any offering, any climate, any society, any clothing, and any interruption by the will of God, that is dying to self.

When you never care to refer to yourself in conversation, or to record your own good works or itch after praise; when you truly love to be an unknown and take the lowest place, that is dying to self.

When you can see your brother or sister prosper and have their needs met and can honestly rejoice with them in spirit and feel no envy, nor question God, while your own needs seem far greater and feel to be in desperate circumstance. That is dying to self.

## **Christian missionaries target the birthplace of Buddha in Nepal**

Converting people to another religion is illegal in Nepal, but missionaries are willing to risk prosecution to spread the Christian faith. The latest data from the national Christian community survey says there are now 7,758 churches in this still overwhelmingly Hindu country. Nepal is now a secular state. The 2015 constitution enshrines religious freedom, however, an anti-conversion law that came into force in 2018 means anyone convicted of encouraging someone to change their faith faces up to five years in jail.

The Christian community makes up less than 2% of Nepal's population. Hindus account for about 80% and Buddhists 9%, but census data reveals its growth. In 1951 there were no declared Christians in Nepal and just 458 in 1961. But by 2011, there were nearly 376,000 and the latest census estimates the community is now around 545,000.

The former deputy prime minister, Kamal Thapa complains "It's spreading like wildfire. The cultural identity is at stake. The fabric of the national unity is at stake." He speaks of the Korean missionary work as an "organised attack on the cultural identity of the country." He is quoted as saying, "Missionaries are working behind the scenes and exploiting the poor and ignorant people and encouraging them to convert to Christianity. This is not a case of religious freedom. This is a case of exploitation in the name of religion." He is lobbying for Nepal to return to being a Hindu state. He supported the introduction of the anti-conversion law and would like to see it being enforced.

It's only Christians who have been charged under the law, but, so far, no-one has been convicted. Cases have either been thrown out due to a lack of evidence or defendants have been acquitted on appeal. There are currently five active cases, according to the Nepal Christian Society.

Pastor Dilli Ram Paudel, who heads the Nepal Christian



Society was one of the first people to be questioned under the law. He was accused in April 2018 of bribing people to convert, something he strongly denies. Charges against him were also later dropped.



"We're accused of converting people, but that power is not in our hands," he says. "If it was, I could convert my mum. She is 92 - I can give her money, I can pray for her, but I can't convert her because conversion should come from Jesus."

He comes from a devout Hindu family and was ordained a Hindu priest like 21 generations before him. In his 20s he went to study in Korea and that's where he was introduced to Christianity. "I was alone and friendless," he recalls, "and then some people gave me a Korean bible in the Nepali language. Somehow, they found the Nepali language one. He read it in one night and found his Creator. "Does it seem funny and not believable? Well, that happened to me," he says with a smile. On his return he was ostracised by his family. "They said Christianity was a foreign religion, some people said that I was mad, and that I had lost my memory," he says.

It's taken time for him to be accepted back into his family and community. South Korean Pastor, Pang Chang says "The spread of the gospel can clash with existing religion and culture. This culture shock is unavoidable."

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### **Tomorrow's Cares**

One of the mysteries of life concerns the recognised difference between worldly men and the people of God. Although the former pitch their tent on the brink of destruction they are often, not only where eternal issues are concerned but also in relation to their life here, comparatively free from care. In relation to the unknown future within the circle of God's providence the righteous may, on the other hand, be full of anxious care.

This was the mystery which exercised the mind of Asaph when he envied some of 'the foolish' who seemed to live under the smile of a kindly providence. No cup of sorrow was in their hand. They were clad in the garments of pride. They prospered in the world. God seemed to leave them alone, while they dismissed Him from their thoughts as One Who was remote from, and irrelevant to, the kind of life they wished to live.

In one of His parables our Lord speaks of this type—so familiar in real life. This man had no care. The future of his own imagination was all fair and benign. Although death was already at his door he was thinking wistfully over his worldly success and of the many years of enjoyment which were yet to come. God addressed this man as 'a fool.' But only God did. In his own eyes and in the eyes of his fellow men he had attained to security and success. How often have we seen such! Bunyan's Atheist, with his back to God, laughed as he stumbled into perdition. To him there was no world worth seeking but the present. In fact, there was none other to seek.

Asaph solved this mystery of providence before God in

prayer. He relates the whole experience in Psalm seventy-three. He saw how deceptive mere appearances were. The carefree man of the world became suddenly shrouded in darkness, while the trembling saint guided and upheld by an omnipotent, if invisible, hand, he saw passing into the eternal serenities of God's presence.

But the theme of this chapter is not so much the bewilderment which the dispensations of God's providence may sometimes create in our mind; but rather the danger of anticipating our trials and of letting the cares of this life oppress us too heavily.

Our Lord exhorted His people to be careful for nothing, and not to endure beforehand the trials which have not yet arrived. *'Take therefore no thought for the morrow: for the morrow shall take thought for the things of itself. Sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof'* (Matt.6.34.).

These words do not mean that we are to exclude all necessary and reasonable preparation for the future from our thinking. The Christian is not a fatalist who, like others, folds his hands and does nothing. There is a legitimate care as there is a sinful anxiety. It is this anxious preoccupation with an unknown future against which our Lord warns us. For one thing tomorrow is veiled from our eyes. We know not what a day, or even an hour may bring forth. God alone knows the future in its entirety. How many tomorrows have we envisaged in the past? But few, if any of them, fitted into the pattern of our imagination. The bridges which we expected to cross long ago we have not yet reached! The insupportable trials, the overcoming temptations, the crushing burdens, which we so often feared have still to arrive. And arrive, as such, they never shall if our trust is in the Lord and His grace. To place tomorrow's cares on the top of today's is a burden too heavy for our mortal frame. Let us also remember that although the grace of God is always sufficient and ever available it is not given in advance. '...as thy days, so shall thy strength be' (Deut.33.25). Doctor Payson once said, "anticipated sorrows are harder to bear than real ones, because Christ does not support us under them." Whatever the future may bring, God will adapt His strength to every situation.

With the need—and only then—comes His grace. This promise is in the present tense. This grace was not given to Paul in the third heaven—a few hours before the trial came. It was given in answer to prayer when Satan had arrived at his door.

This promise of grace in all the crises of life should indeed, calm our spirits. A person I know went to bed one night full of anxiety. The tasks and expected trials of the coming days, along with his own sense of weakness, lay heavily on his spirit. Then, like the chime of a distant bell, these words of a Psalm became articulate within his soul:

“O, why art thou cast down, my soul,  
What should discourage thee?  
And why with vexing thoughts are thou  
Disquieted in me?

Still trust in God; for Him to praise  
Good cause I yet shall have;  
He of my countenance is the health,  
My God that doth me save.”

Then the dark forebodings in which he clothed the coming days took their departure.

One reason why we should leave tomorrow in God’s hand is that, long before He created us, He arranged the content of each day. Nothing, therefore, is haphazard or left to chance. All that happens within the sphere of His providence is as unchangeable as His love. Because, then, our times are in His hand—present and future—we should be content with whatever the present may bring or the future may disclose. ‘...be content with such things as ye have: for he hath said, I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee’ (Heb.13.5).

Once I thought that these words meant that we should rest content with the smallest tokens of His goodness and mercy towards us in this life. But the words have a fuller meaning. He commands us to be content with our cares and with all our burdens.

Why? Because '...he hath said, I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee' (Heb.13.5). This then, more than compensates for every trial. His own promised presence with us in the days to come is the guarantee that all shall be well. This should sweeten the unknown future and resign us to His will.

The spiritual peace and detachment which reign in our hearts when we acquiesce in the will of God is spoken of by David under a figure which is as tender as it is significant. 'Surely I have behaved and quieted myself, as a child that is weaned of his mother: my soul is even as a weaned child' (Psalm 131.2). The words mean, that, by a simple trust in God, he was now detached from all earthly care. He had committed his all to God, while he rested in His will. 'Rest in the Lord, and wait patiently for him: fret not thyself...' and '...fret not thyself in any wise to do evil' (Psalm 37.7,8).

Paul touches on this spirit of detachment and acquiescence in God's will even more impressively. In one place (Phil.4) he presents us, almost incidentally, with a list of his afflictions for Christ's sake. And he speaks of the deeper distresses which might emerge in the future; but with him all was well. '...I have learned in whatsoever state I am, therewith to be content' (Phil.3.11). The secret of his inner peace we find in his great affirmation, '...for I know whom I have believed, and am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him against that day' (2 Tim.1.12). All was in Christ's safe hand; nothing in his own. He was, therefore, weaned from the breast of care and worry, and from all preoccupation with the coming day.

There are those whose temperament or disposition stand as a barrier between them and this quiet confidence in God. An example of this we find in the home in Bethany where the Son of God was ever welcome. While Mary rested at the feet of her Saviour, her equally pious sister was distracted with domestic care. However legitimate her toil, and however worthy her motives, our Lord reminded her of the danger of letting the world and its cares deprive her of spiritual rest.

That our earthly cares may involve us in a very great danger

may be inferred from our Lord's words where He warns us with regard to His coming to judge the world. 'And take heed to yourselves, lest at any time your hearts be overcharged with surfeiting, and drunkenness, and the cares of this life, and so that day come upon you unawares. For as a snare shall it come on all them that dwell on the face of the whole earth' (Luke 21.34,35). Here 'the cares of this life' stand side by side with the grosser evils of surfeiting (over-indulgence) and drunkenness. It is also through the cares of this world and the deceitfulness of riches that the good seed of the kingdom withers and dies in many lives.

When the Lord asks us to cast all our care upon Him at the throne of grace, we are prohibited from classifying our cares into the smaller and the greater—those that we might be able to bear ourselves, and those under which the Lord only can help us. It was David who said, 'I have set the Lord always before me: because he is at my right hand, I shall not be moved' (Psalm 16.8). He never said, "This problem, this care, this trial is something which I can handle myself." No - with him God must always be at hand to help him every step of the way, '...without me ye can do nothing' (John 15.5). But 'I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me' (Phil. 4.13). If unto His faithful hands we in faith commit ourselves and all our concerns we make the discovery that God cares for us infinitely more than we care for ourselves. So great indeed, is His care of us that it is extended to 'the infinitesimals' (extremely small details) of our lives. 'But the very hairs of your head are all numbered' (Matt. 10.30). These words remind us of the minuteness of His providence, and that His love and care are extended to every part of our being and every detail of our life.

Our Lord has already given the greatest display of His love that we shall ever come to know. On the cross of Calvary He bore the burden of our sin and guilt. This burden He has put away as far as the east is distant from the west. He has cast our iniquities into the depths of the sea. They are remembered no more. Intimately linked with that burden was the burden of our griefs and sorrows. 'Surely he hath borne our griefs and carried our sorrows...' (Isa. 53.4).

Whatever burdens, therefore, are placed upon us for a moment here, they are, in the light of this great act of redemption and forgiveness, of little consequence. They are, in fact, like the touch of a feather compared to the burdens which lay on our soul in our state of condemnation, and which He, as our Substitute, bore on the tree.

Not only so, but all our “cares” are going to pass away like the blink of the eye. To use a simple illustration, let us for a moment stand before the mirror and blink our eyes. What happens? It is all over before it begins. The beginning and the end happen together. And all our sufferings here are, in their duration and measured by our eternal joy, a million times less than the blink of our eye! Is this not a sweet well of comfort to those whose souls are meantime discouraged because of the way? 'For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory' (2 Corinthians 4.17).

Let me say another thing. Our Lord not only carries our burdens but He carries ourselves as well. Many years ago, a gracious woman in the North of Scotland was on her death-bed. Her name was Marion MacLeod. The night before she died, and at her own request, a friend read out her favourite chapter. It was the sixty-third of Isaiah, where those often repeated and much loved words are to be found: verse nine - 'In all their affliction he was afflicted, and the angel of his presence saved them: in his love and in his pity he redeemed them; and he bare them, and carried them all the days of old.', verse fourteen - 'As a beast goeth down into the valley, the Spirit of the Lord caused him to rest; so didst thou lead thy people, to make thyself a glorious name.', and verse sixteen '...thou, O Lord, art our father, our redeemer; thy name is from everlasting.' Listening to these words, and with the light of heaven already in her eyes, the dying woman whispered, “I shall not get all that I desire of that chapter till I enter eternity. In love and in pity He redeemed them, and He bare them and carried them all the days of old.” What we feel about these words is that every syllable emerges, as it truly does, from a depth of compassion beyond all

knowledge.

The words also tell us of the eternal relationship in which He stands to all His people. 'Doubtless thou art our Father...' (Isa.63.16). It was He Who, by a new birth and a gracious act of adoption, made them His own sons and daughters. Therefore they come to Him with all their needs and cares. This is their unspeakable privilege.

'Such pity as a father hath,  
Unto his children dear,  
Like pity shows the Lord to such  
As worship Him in fear.'

Tomorrow, therefore, can bring us nothing but good, and fresh discoveries of His love and care. 'Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life: and I will dwell in the house of the Lord for ever' (Psalm 23.6).

Extract taken from – *In all their Affliction* by Murdoch Campbell

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A woman was once asked, "What do you 'gain' from praying to God regularly?" She replied "Usually I don't 'gain' anything, but rather I 'lose' certain things. And she quoted everything she lost praying to God regularly:

I lost my pride  
I lost my arrogance  
I lost my anger  
I lost stress  
I lost greed  
I lost the pleasure of lying  
I lost the love of sin  
I lost the impatience  
I lost despair and discouragement

Sometimes we pray, not to gain something, but to lose things that don't allow us to grow personally and spiritually. Prayer educates, strengthens, and heals....

Contributed



**Mr B A Ramsbottom**

The servant of the Lord, Mr B A Ramsbottom was taken home to glory on the 14<sup>th</sup> January 2023, aged 93 years. He had, with the Lord's help preached faithfully among the churches for nearly seventy years, and for fifty-five years of that ministry he held the office of Pastor at Bethel Chapel, Luton. He was editor of the Gospel Standard for forty-five years, and for almost 11 years was editor of the Friendly Companion as well as being the author of many books. Mr Ramsbottom was also blessed with a gift for writing books for children - the Miracles series still proving very popular today. As a loving husband, father, grandfather, great-grandfather and friend to many, he will be sorely missed. To many of us he was the instrument used by the Lord to bring the gospel of the grace of God to our souls, and to be a 'father' in the faith, '...whose faith follow...' (Heb.13.7).

*'For though ye have ten thousand instructors in Christ, yet have ye not many fathers...'* (1 Cor.4.15).

## **CURRENT MATTERS**

### **UK Government blocks Scottish Gender Bill**

In a major and unique intervention, the UK government has made an order under Section 35 of the Scotland Act 1998 to block the Gender Recognition Reform (Scotland) Bill. This is an unprecedented move, and one which has infuriated the first Minister of Scotland, Nicola Sturgeon. The Scottish parliament is expected to apply for judicial review, however, Lord Hope of Craighead, former deputy president of the final court of appeal, has cautioned against legal action, considering the Scottish government's chance of success to be 'very low'. The first Minister of Scotland, Nicola Sturgeon resigned on Wednesday 15<sup>th</sup> February 2023.

### **Earthquake in Turkey and Syria**

At 01.18 GMT on Monday 6<sup>th</sup> February a 7.8 magnitude earthquake struck southern Turkey close to the border with Northern Syria. A second quake of 7.5 magnitude struck nine hours later. The death toll has risen above 41,000 and is still rising, the quake has left many survivors without homes, and sadly, very little temporary shelter is available. It is, however, encouraging to hear of the many accounts of aid and relief being sent from various parts of the world. We pray for those who are suffering due to the quake, and for the rescue and aid work.

### **England and Wales now minority Christian countries**

England and Wales are now minority Christian countries, according to the 2021 census. Leicester and Birmingham have become the first UK cities to have "minority majorities". The census reveals a 5.5 million drop in the number of Christians and a 44% rise in the number of people following Islam. It is the first time in a census of England and Wales that less than half of the population described themselves as "Christian". The census revealed 37.2% people - 22.2 million - declared they had "no religion", the second most common response after Christian.

# WHAT IS TRUTH?

In more recent years we have been able to back up oral evidence with that of photographic evidence. Using photographs as additional evidence has been of benefit to many. Following my apprenticeship as a carpenter and joiner I began working on a new build housing estate in north London. It was 'price work', so we were paid for the work we completed. With other trades working in the same areas, and everyone under pressure to complete their work it was, at times, very difficult.

One problem was proving that the work had been completed. Sometimes, a follow-on trade would remove things I had done rather than work around them, so, when I booked the work in and checked, it work was found to be incomplete and I was faced with doing it again or not be paid. The introduction of the camera to mobile phones was a great help, the date and time of the photographs proving very useful evidence in settling these claims. But can we still trust a photograph?



What do you think the photograph on the front cover shows? Is the apple eaten or not? The reflection in the mirror appears to show it has been eaten, but has it? This photograph on the back cover helps explain what has taken place. Comparing them, we see that there has been some editing.

Two photographs have been taken, one of an uneaten apple and one of an eaten apple. With some skillful editing of the images, the reflections in the mirror have then been swapped. Is a photograph still a reliable source of evidence? The advance in technology has provided us with some wonderful benefits, however, there are many things that are very concerning. The increase of AI technology and its unknown potential, the almost undetectable editing of photographs, and also the 'deepfake' videos being produced make us think - What is truth?

The Christian's comfort in this world of sin is the certain truth of God's word and the Gospel of Jesus Christ the Son of God.

# PERCEPTION

A Quarterly Magazine for Young People



‘Let every soul be subject unto the higher powers. For there is no power but of God: the powers that be are ordained of God.’  
(Romans 13.1)

SUMMER 2023

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**Cover picture:** St Edward's Crown

# PERCEPTION

Volume 15    Summer 2023    Number 58

## THE CORONATION OF HIS MAJESTY KING CHARLES III

On Saturday, 6th May 2023, the United Kingdom and Commonwealth marked the Coronation of our new King, Charles III. This followed the death last September of his mother, Queen Elizabeth II, who had reigned for 70 years since 1952. King Charles III was a small boy of just over three years when his mother became Queen, spending almost all of his life until now preparing for the day when he would be crowned. The service took place in Westminster Abbey, Charles III being the 40th monarch to hold the ceremony there since William the Conqueror on Christmas Day 1066.

Few of us can remember the late Queen's coronation in 1953. Whilst we live in a day where we are able to witness events via the



media, in the past monarchs relied on the coronation to assume the literal recognising by the people, with up to 8000 attending the ceremony of Elizabeth II. In 2023, the congregation was far smaller, as was the scale of the processions and celebrations. Despite this, the service lasted up to two hours and was witnessed by many.

The day proved to be wet, but this did not prevent huge crowds gathering in London to witness the pageantry which is such a hallmark of our country. The United Kingdom is the only nation still to enact the full public crowning and homage to a monarch. The King and Queen Consort returned to Buckingham Palace in the

Gold State Coach, used at every coronation since 1831 and built for George III in 1762. The new King and Queen Consort were preceded by over 6000 troops, including Armed Forces from across the Commonwealth and the British Overseas Territories, and all Services of the Armed Forces of the United Kingdom.



An event such as this combines the tradition of almost 1000 years with sacred symbolism, much of it rooted in scripture. Over the centuries, the Sovereign of the day has added to or amended the coronation rite, adapting to changing needs. However, the ceremony of 2023, which was witnessed by many millions across the world, was largely unaltered from that of Charles III's ancestors, with significant parts of it referencing the Protestant heritage established following the Glorious Revolution in 1688.

Within 30 years of the restoration of the last King Charles II in 1660 following the Civil War and Protectorate of Oliver Cromwell, England was once again on the verge of internal fighting, when, Prince William of Orange invaded England and the Catholic King James II fled to France. As a result, Parliament offered the Crown to his son-in-law William, who had married James' daughter Mary. Their joint reign, as William III and Mary II from 1689 to 1702, included the Act of Settlement in 1701, reinforcing the Bill of Rights passed in 1689 - legislation passed to ensure a Protestant succession to the English throne.

Upon Queen Anne's death in 1714, the Act ensured that Prince George of Hanover took the throne as George I. Prince George was a second cousin but, more significantly, he was the nearest Protestant in line despite over fifty Catholic claimants. He became the first English monarch of the new House of Hanover, through which Charles III can claim direct descent.

It was notable, early in the coronation service, that the new King was asked: *'Will you to the utmost of your power maintain the Laws of God and the true profession of the Gospel? Will you to the utmost of your power maintain in the United Kingdom the Protestant Reformed Religion established by law? Will you maintain and preserve inviolably the settlement of the Church of England, and the doctrine, worship, discipline, and government thereof, as by law established in England?'* This the King promised to do, as he had already done last September at the Accession Council.

Bible passages were read from Colossians and Luke's Gospel, the former reading taken by the Prime Minister, Rishi Sunak, a practising Hindu. His reading included the words *'...which hath made us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light: who hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated us into the kingdom of his dear Son: in whom we have redemption through his blood, even the forgiveness of sins'* (Colossians 1.12-14). May it be so for him and our new King.

The ceremony is a series of ancient rituals, having its roots in the ninth century, it being written down in the fourteenth century, in a book called the *Liber Regalis*, which is still kept in Westminster Abbey. The 2023 service was based on that same structure, set once again within the context of the communion service, which is the defining act of worship for the universal Christian Church. The service was led throughout by The Archbishop of Canterbury, Justin Welby, who also preached a short sermon. In this he prayed for the new King and Queen Consort, including these words *'With the anointing of the Holy Spirit, the King is given freely what no ruler can ever attain through will, or politics, or war, or tyranny: the Holy Spirit draws us to love in action. This is promised*



*by Jesus who put aside all privilege, because, as the first reading tells us, God will give all things for our sake, even His own life. His throne was a Cross. His crown was made of thorns.'*

The coronation service is divided into six parts. First, the **recognition**. The King turned to each of the four points of the compass and was recognised by all in the Abbey, and his peoples as their 'undoubted King'. A specially produced King James Bible was presented to the King, upon which he swore the oath mentioned above. Then, for the first time at a coronation, The King prayed publicly for grace to serve after the pattern of Christ.

After the sermon, the ancient hymn *Veni, Creator Spiritus* was sung by the choirs in languages from across the United Kingdom, calling on the Holy Spirit just before the most sacred part of the coronation rite—the **anointing** with holy oil. A specially woven screen shielded the King from view as he sat in the coronation Chair, over 700 years old, for this most solemn and



personal of moments, as the Abbey resounded to Handel's *Zadok the Priest*, a reference to the anointing of King Solomon.

The throne was placed on the Cosmati pavement, built on the orders of Henry III in 1268. The ancient mosaic floor symbolises the whole cosmos on the day of judgement, when Christ will judge all things in righteousness; the King of kings, on whom all monarchs are called to reflect, and to whom all must give an account. Once anointed, The King was dressed in priestly garments that symbolise both humility (the Colobium Sindonis) and splendour (the Supertunica, Stole, and Robe); reflecting the two natures of Christ 'Who... made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men: And being found

in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross' (Phil.2.6–8). The King symbolically represents humanity restored to its full dignity and glory in Christ, as '...a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation,...' (1 Pet.2. 9).

Various items of regalia were presented to The King in the **Investiture**, each a visible reminder of his great responsibility under God. There are Spurs and Armills, which would have been worn by a medieval knight, and a Sword which The King briefly wore and then offered in the service of God. After this came the symbols of secular and spiritual power: an Orb, representing the world under Christ; a Sceptre with Cross, representing earthly power, held in a gloved hand; and the Sceptre with Dove, representing spiritual authority exercised in mercy. A Ring was presented, symbolising the faithful 'marriage' of a Monarch to his peoples. Those presenting the regalia to The King reflected the diversity of the United Kingdom and its peoples, in striking contrast to Queen Elizabeth's ceremony seventy years ago.



The most important moment followed in the **Crowning**, when the Archbishop placed St Edward's Crown on The King's anointed head, all shouting 'God Save The King', after which a fanfare of trumpets sounded, the

Abbey bells rung, and gun salutes were fired across the nation.

The King then moved from the Coronation Chair to his throne in the centre of the Abbey and was encouraged by the Archbishop to 'Stand firm and hold fast', confident in God 'whose throne endures for ever.' Once **Enthroned**, The King received **Homage** (a promise of allegiance and faithfulness, recognising his spiritual and earthly authority), first from the Archbishop, then the

Prince of Wales, and finally the opportunity for the congregation and people elsewhere to participate in various ways. The Queen Consort was then anointed and crowned, also being presented with her own items of regalia.

Two hymns were sung, *Christ is made the sure foundation* (said to be the King's favourite hymn) and *Praise, my soul the King of heaven*. The rest of the service was taken up with the administration of the communion service to The King and Queen Consort, after which they walked through the Abbey as the national anthem was sung by all present, and no doubt by many others listening.

In 1547, Archbishop Cranmer preached at the coronation of Edward VI - the boy King often referred to as the English Josiah: '*The Almighty God of His mercy let the light of His countenance shine upon your majesty, grant you a prosperous and happy reign, defend you, and save you; and let your subjects say, Amen.*' Throughout the changing centuries, **the continuity and faithfulness to scripture of the coronation service is a reassuring element of our heritage.** It has been and still is an occasion for prayer. We pray for our King, and that our nation may yet be returned to be a God-fearing country where the Word of God is revered, read and treasured in every home.

Our new King and the Queen Consort come to the throne in their twilight years, and face the burdens of leadership at a time in life when many are laying down responsibilities. May the King be given grace and strength to fulfil his wish, expressed at the Accession Council after the death of his mother:

*'In carrying out the heavy task that has been laid upon me, and to which I now dedicate what remains to me of my life, I pray for the guidance and help of Almighty God.'*

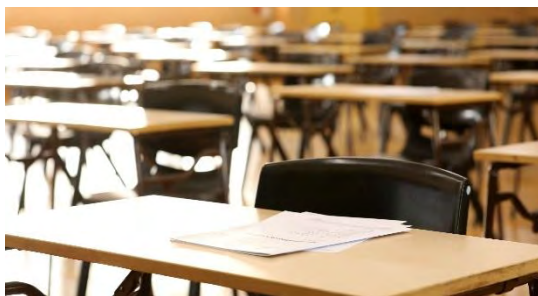
D Sayers

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## EDITORIAL

As I write this editorial my thoughts and prayers are for those children and young people who are taking exams at this time of year. For many, it is a time of stress and anxiety. The run up to the exam period can be stressful as pressure is put on by teachers and parents who try to encourage the children to revise for their exams. Then there is the actual examination time itself, which can also be very stressful.

Some people find the exam setting raises their anxiety levels, the strict examination conditions which are put in place to ensure no cheating during the

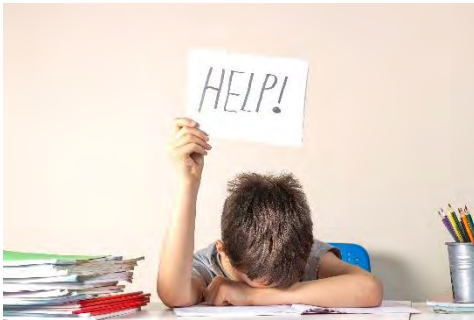


exam are unfamiliar and add to the seriousness of the occasion. There can also be an overwhelming sense that they are on their own. The rules requiring the tables to be spaced out, no talking, restrictions regarding items permitted during the exam etc. all heightening the sense of feeling isolated and on their own.

Preparation for exams is necessary. I wonder how many have sat in an exam and, having being presented with the question paper, then wished they had spent more time revising? There can be times – thankfully these are not very often – when questions appear in exams asking things which have not been taught in lessons and therefore not revised for. Should this happen, it can be a real hinderance to the person sitting the exam, especially so, if those questions appear in the early part of the paper. How it can unsettle and cause even more stress at an already stressful time!

There is, however, one thing which should not be overlooked in preparing for exams, one thing which can remove that feeling of being on one's own in these testing times, one thing that can remove stress and bring peace in the most stressful of

situations – and that is prayer! It may seem obvious to us, but if it is so obvious, why is it then, that we are not more often in prayer? Do we always prayerfully prepare for those things we know of beforehand? Or is our religion more one that could be described as a 'fire extinguisher' religion? That is, a religion that we only need and look for when in trouble? But the Lord is good and gracious, and in hearing the cries of those that are in need He leads them in a path of dependence and gives faith. We read in Psalm 107 'Then they cried unto the Lord in their trouble, and he delivered them out of their distresses' (v2). The Lord give you each cause to seek His help in prayer and in so doing, may He prove to you each that He is your Helper.



The Word of God frequently encourages, recommends and exhorts us to pray to God. We read '...I have laid **help** upon one that is mighty;...' (Psa.89.19). I hope this will prove a useful reminder for us each, that help can be found of

Almighty God in and through Jesus Christ in our times of need. One of the Secondary schools that our children attended had for their motto Psalm 121 during GCSE exam time. How precious it is to know that second verse of Psalm 121, I pray that you each will be taught it by the Lord – 'My **help** cometh from the Lord, which made heaven and earth.' During the exam you are not allowed to ask anyone for help to answer the questions, and no one is allowed to give you help answering the questions, but remember, you are allowed to pray! What a great blessing it is to be able to ask for the help of God, He who knows all things and is able to do all things. The Lord who waits to answer prayer is able to help in these times of need, no one can shut Him out of the exam hall, there is no rule to prevent you asking Him for help, even in the middle of an exam! May it not be said of any of us '...yet ye have not, because ye ask not' (Jam.4.2).

After the exams have been taken, there is the waiting for results day to come. This should also be a time for prayer. Don't think that because the exams are taken that is it - the stress of sitting exams will be over, but waiting for results can also be stressful. The waiting time can be a time of anxiety with thoughts of the next steps you desire to take, and maybe those desired steps depend on the grades you receive. Pray to the Lord for His help with any stress you feel. Pray that He will teach you to trust in Him and enable you to leave all your cares in His hands. Prayer has many precious benefits. One of these is the true benefit that comes in sharing our concerns, telling our concerns, our fears and worries to One who cares. The Apostle Peter writes 'Casting all your care upon him; for he careth for you' (1Pet.5.7). The Lord help you in your casting.

Then there is results day! What will it be? Will it be what you wanted and hoped for? Or will there be some disappointment? How do we respond to disappointments?

How hard it can be when we have some disappointments. It can seem in many ways even more difficult to understand when we feel to have prayed and then we have not received the answer we wanted. Questions arise



in our minds, why did I not get what I asked for? Why did I not do as well as others? Why did God not give me what I need to progress as I wanted?

A young person was surprised by the response of a fellow student when sharing something of her faith regarding praying at exam time. The response was "How amazing to have Someone to help you in the exam hall, what an advantage!" and then she went on to say, "and then when you get your results, to know that you

got what God would have you get, that must feel so much better when dealing with any disappointments." And so it is better, when we can see that our disappointments are also His appointments. There is a place of rest, may you be led to Him who gives this rest, who makes our disappointment bearable, and gives more grace. Pray the Lord will give you contentment with your results. 'And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose' (Rom.8.28).

I pray it will be a time of joy and rejoicing for each who take exams this year. A time when all that you hoped for, felt to need, and prayed for, is given unto you as the Lord sees fit.

How then to respond at a time like this? Well, again it probably seems obvious, we should be grateful, but I wonder how frequently we are not found giving the praise and thanksgiving to God as we should do. When we give thanks to



God it is pleasing to Him and it is a vital part of all true worship. The Apostle Paul writes 'Continue in prayer, and watch in the same with thanksgiving' (Col.4.2). May the Lord give us each a truly thankful heart. How thankful we should be when the Lord hears our prayers and in a day of trouble grants to us the help we need.

The Lord give you all that is needed and may He get all the honour and glory in answering those cries of '...Lord, help me' (Matt.15.25).

'What time I am afraid, I will trust in thee.' (Psa.56.3)

With best wishes and Christian love,

*The Editor*

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## Elizabeth Whiting

Of Maple Cottage, Linslade, Leighton Buzzard, who was called home on Sabbath evening, August 16th, 1896.

The following is only a brief account of the life and sudden death of Elizabeth Whiting, eldest daughter of William and Susanna Whiting, who was born on August 22nd, 1864. It may be interesting to know that from a child she was most gentle and kind in her manners, which greatly endeared her to all around. Her schooldays began when four years old, and continued until she was thirteen.

Being blessed with ability and a desire to learn, her parents had no trouble in sending her to school. She was much loved by her teachers; the last greatly desired that she might continue her studies, with a view of being a teacher herself. But her parents thought her strength was not equal to it. The education she acquired, however, was the means of her becoming a great help and blessing to her parents, as she for many years assisted her father in his business by doing most of his writing.

Before she was four years old her father took her most Sabbaths to Great Brickhill chapel, about two miles distant. When she was about six years old, her next sister was born, and between school hours she was her mother's little nursemaid, and eventually nursed all her seven sisters and brother, which was done, as far as health and



strength would admit, most willingly, for as she grew in years she became a great help to her mother. When she was thirteen years old, in the providence of God, her parents moved to a farm one mile



from Great Brickhill chapel, and seven years afterwards to Bletchley, four miles away. And again, in less than two years, they moved to Little Brickhill.

During this time she availed herself of every favourable opportunity of going to the services with her father or other members of the family, and would often say to her father (on their way home from the prayer meeting) how nicely the dear old men prayed. From a child, we believe, she was blessed with the tender fear of the Lord. She took great interest in the house of God and all the means of grace, and was very fond of reading good books, especially her Bible, hymnbooks, the 'Gleaner,' and the 'Sower', etc. She also committed much to memory, and at favourable opportunities would recite the same.

Having a desire to learn music, her parents encouraged it, and in course of time she was able to teach her sisters. She always chose sacred music for her own playing, and though she could play the 'Messiah' very nicely, she preferred the good old tunes, and would sing from memory many hymns in Gadsby's Selection. She was not only a constant attendant at the services, but also became a quick discerner between truth and error and was a real lover of a free-grace Gospel, and of those who preached the truth as it is in Jesus. She was taught by the blessed Spirit to renounce all creature merit and free-will. If she could speak to us, as we are writing this, we are sure she would say, "Give all the praise to my dear and blessed Saviour" and, like the Apostle, would exclaim, "By the grace of God I am what I am."

In 1886 and 1887, the Lord, in mercy, was pleased to deepen the impression of divine realities upon her soul, and more fully to convince her of her lost and ruined condition as a poor undone sinner in the sight of a holy God. In the early part of 1888 her father had some close conversation with her about her state, when she confessed that the Lord had indeed convinced her of her sins, and caused her to mourn over them; also that He had blessed her with a good hope in His mercy, by giving her to feel and believe that there was forgiveness for her in Christ Jesus, who bled and died to redeem

sinner. She was satisfied that there was salvation in no other, and that His salvation is sovereign and free to all His people. She began to express a desire to obey the Lord according to His own Word, and to join the church at Brickhill.

She came before the Church and gave an account of what she believed the Lord had done for her soul. The dear friends were quite satisfied, and received her with pleasure. She was baptized by her father, on June 3rd, 1888, and the Lord graciously enabled her to walk worthy of her high vocation, through the grace which is in Christ Jesus her Lord. She was certainly blessed with a very humble and meek spirit, and her Lord's prayer (John 17) was efficacious on her behalf, for she was mercifully kept from the evils of the world, so that she was not of the world and, because of this, even the world took knowledge of her that she had been with Jesus.

In the order of God's providence they moved, in March 1893, from Little Brickhill to Linslade, near to Leighton station, which is four miles from Great Brickhill chapel.

Notwithstanding the distance, she mostly managed to get there, and took pleasure in finding the hymns and texts for the dear old



friends. Her relatives can bear testimony to the great interest she took in family worship, she for some years reading the Holy Scriptures and Philpot's Portions.

It might be here stated that during the last year of her sojourn in this vale of tears, it was found necessary to provide a pony that was quiet, and a four-wheel chaise for the journey to chapel, owing to the occasional ill-health of herself and her mother. We little thought when we left home on Sabbath morning, August 16th, 1896, that her heavenly Father had determined that this was the set time for her last journey to the chapel. Jesus once said,

"What I do thou knowest not now; but thou shalt know hereafter" (John.13.7). He gives no account of His ways, and they are past finding out.

Here the dark veils of flesh and sense  
My captive soul surround ;  
Mysterious deeps of providence  
My wondering thoughts confound.

When I behold Thy awful hand  
My earthly hopes destroy,  
In deep astonishment I stand,  
And ask the reason why.

But God no reason gives: 'But he is in one mind, and who can turn him? and what his soul desireth, even that he doeth' (Job.23.13).

Dear Lizzie's last earthly Sabbath had now come. The pony and chaise being provided, as usual, she drove the little party to chapel in safety. The service commenced with hymn 481 (Gadsby's Selection), 'Descend from heaven, Immortal Dove,...' Great solemnity seemed to pervade the assembly. Her father's text was Psalm 135.4. After speaking of the Lord's choice of His people, he went on to say that all the Lord's people must be tried, and know something of Jacob's troubles in their measure, and must be refined and prepared for glory. It was a sweet and solemn time in speaking and in hearing. This was followed by the dear old friends' prayers at the afternoon prayer-meeting, when it was evident they were in the Spirit on the Lord's day, and found liberty and access at the throne of grace. We also found it good to be there, and our dear departed one especially so, for she wept with holy joy.

After service, she, with her sister Alice, took tea with one of the members who has been sorely afflicted for a great number of years - nearly nineteen of which she kept more or less to her bed. The two sisters sang hymn 780, 'All hail the power of Jesus' name...'

and then somewhat freely conversed about the Lord's special dealings with His people, which greatly cheered the dear afflicted one, whom Lizzie often visited on Lord's days. That Sabbath evening's service proved to be the last on earth for the dear one, who had led the singing there for about sixteen years.

Her father's text was, 'And this is the will of him that sent me, that every one which seeth the Son, and believeth on him, may have everlasting life: and I will raise him up at the last day' (John.6.40). It was a sweet and refreshing season to us, but we then little thought what was about to take place. The last hymn that dear Lizzie joined in singing, and sweetly too, was hymn 130, 'Christ is the Eternal Rock...'. And dark as the dispensation of God's providences may appear to human reason, her father, in closing the service, prayed for travelling mercies homeward.

The pony and chaise were soon ready, and dear Lizzie drove as usual. When Linslade was reached, all of us except Lizzie and her sister Daisy alighted to walk the nearest way home, leaving Lizzie and her youngest sister to take the pony home into



Leighton, as they had done previously in perfect safety, the distance being only about two hundred yards; and the report soon reached us that the pony started off, and ran most furiously the latter part of the way. It appears that Lizzie, who had quite lost all control over the pony, told her sister to jump out, which she did at once, and Lizzie immediately followed, falling on her back and head. She was at once picked up unconscious, and carried into a house close by. The doctor living near was in attendance at once; but in five minutes her spirit fled to be with Christ her Saviour.

So with her it was a Sabbath begun never to end. Daisy was

taken into the doctor's house, and in less than twenty minutes two gentlemen fetched her father, who went tremblingly to the sad scene. He first saw Daisy, who was unconscious, and now his anguish and sorrow began to increase as he was led to the other house, and found his much-loved and devoted Lizzie on the couch a lifeless corpse; he fell upon her dear face to kiss her, but in such distraction and deep anguish of soul as none but God and the loving and bereaved father could enter into. Soon after he and Daisy were conveyed home, when the deep waters of tribulation overflowed into the soul of the dear mother and two sisters and brother who were at home ; and when, a little later, dear Lizzie was brought pale in death, this happy home where, through grace, Jesus Christ was in some humble measure loved and worshipped, was a scene of tears and grief never to be forgotten while the sorrowing parents and family remain in this vale of tears. Truly—

God moves in a mysterious way,  
His wonders to perform.

463 Gadsby's



But what a solemn and mysterious ending of a very enjoyable Sabbath day, when the Lord sent His angels to fetch the redeemed spirit of His dear child to her heavenly home, and left the pleasant corpse for broken hearts to mourn over. Nevertheless, as the storm abated a little, we remembered that we had not to sorrow as others which have no hope, for our great loss was her eternal gain. Bless the Lord for His rich grace bestowed upon her in life, which united her in heart to His dear people. All that remained of her was tenderly laid in a coffin, and was conveyed to Great Brickhill chapel, on the 20<sup>th</sup> August, 1896, being followed by five carriages, full of mourners, and many friends joined them there for the funeral and committal.

We believe many felt the funeral and surrounding days to be a very solemn season. Oh, what a mercy to be able to sing -

Sweetly sleep, dear saint, in Jesus;  
 Thou with us shalt wake from death;  
 Hold he cannot, though he seize us,  
 We his power defy by faith.

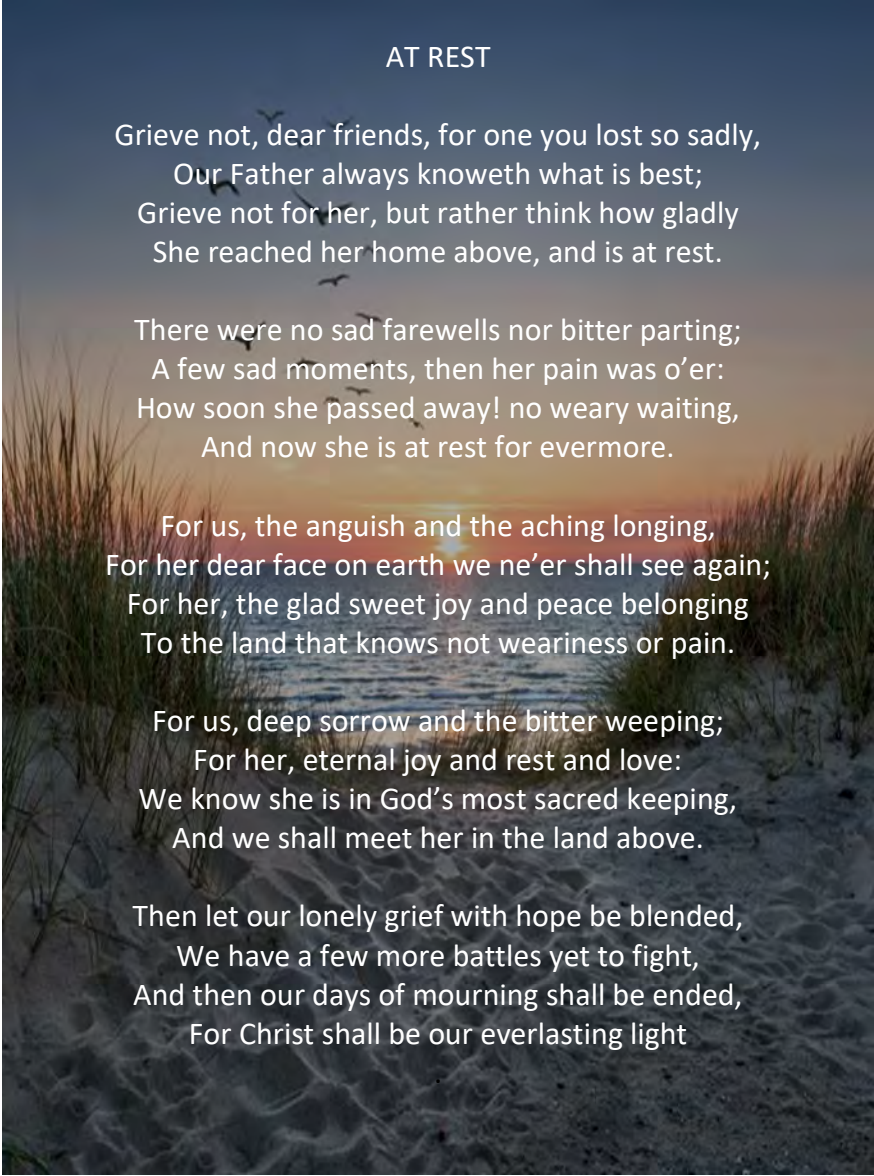
So shall we ever be with the Lord.

W. WHITING

The witness of the Lord's goodness and mercy to His people is a precious thing. To have the 'sting' removed from death by the pardon of sin by Jesus Christ is the greatest of all things. The sudden death of Elizabeth Whiting at a relatively young age, and the appointed time of her death – the journey home from Chapel on the Lord's day - is a solemn reminder to us each, that we do not know when that time will come for us. How will it be for you?

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## AT REST



Grieve not, dear friends, for one you lost so sadly,  
Our Father always knoweth what is best;  
Grieve not for her, but rather think how gladly  
She reached her home above, and is at rest.

There were no sad farewells nor bitter parting;  
A few sad moments, then her pain was o'er:  
How soon she passed away! no weary waiting,  
And now she is at rest for evermore.

For us, the anguish and the aching longing,  
For her dear face on earth we ne'er shall see again;  
For her, the glad sweet joy and peace belonging  
To the land that knows not weariness or pain.

For us, deep sorrow and the bitter weeping;  
For her, eternal joy and rest and love:  
We know she is in God's most sacred keeping,  
And we shall meet her in the land above.

Then let our lonely grief with hope be blended,  
We have a few more battles yet to fight,  
And then our days of mourning shall be ended,  
For Christ shall be our everlasting light

Emily Mattock

A poem written in memoriam of Elizabeth Whiting on her sudden death.

## Fibonacci and the Golden Ratio

Have you ever heard of the Fibonacci sequence? Or the Golden Ratio? Or the Golden Spiral?

These mysterious numbers and shapes are all connected to each other. If you look closely, they can be found in the most unexpected of places, creating beautiful and pleasing patterns. Put simply, the Fibonacci sequence is a series of numbers which begins with 1 and 1. From there, you add the previous two numbers in the sequence together, to get the next number. This is a type of recursive sequence. So  $1 + 1 = 2$ ,  $1 + 2 = 3$ ,  $2 + 3 = 5$ , and so on.

This gives you a sequence that looks like 1,1, 2, 3, 5,8,13, 21, 34, 55 etc. But what makes this sequence so special and interesting?



Fibonacci numbers appear in the number of spirals of Romanesco Broccoli

### Mathematical sequence found in nature

For starters, Fibonacci numbers can be found in the natural world all around us. Most flowers, for example, will have a number of petals which correspond with the Fibonacci sequence. Irises have three petals whereas wild roses and buttercups have five petals. That is of course, until a petal falls off. No wonder four leaf clovers



are rarely seen!

If you cut into a piece of fruit, you're likely to find a Fibonacci number there as well, in how the sections of seeds are arranged. Bananas have three sections whilst apples have five.

The Fibonacci sequence even plays a role in the subtle spirals you can see in the seed head of a sunflower. This is because of something known as the Golden Ratio, the Golden Section or the Greek letter Phi. If you take a number in the sequence above 5,



and divided it by the previous number, you will get an answer very close to 1.618. The larger the numbers, the closer you get to 1.618. The Golden Ratio is an irrational number, and so cannot be written as a fraction. Again, this is a number that can be found in the natural world.

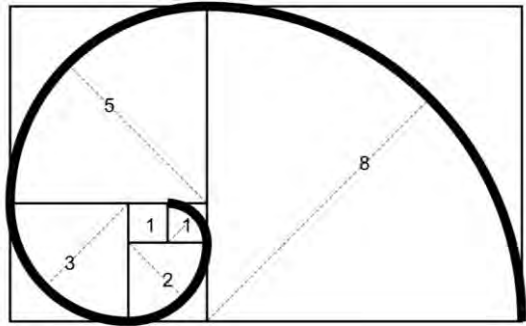
Take the sunflower. To be as efficient as possible, its seeds need to be closely packed together without overlapping. Now, if it simply grew seeds in a straight line in one direction, that would leave lots of empty space on the flower head. The best way of minimising wasted space is for the seeds to grow in spirals, with each seed growing at a slight angle away from the previous one.

If the degree of turn was a fraction, like  $1/4$ , that doesn't help matters much because after four turns the seed pattern would be right back at the start again. There would be four lines of seeds, but that's not much better than one when trying to cover a circular area. The perfect degree of turn needs to be an irrational number, which can't be easily approximated by a fraction, and the answer is the Golden Ratio.

## Transforming numbers into an eye-catching spiral

Another way of thinking about the Golden Ratio is as a spiral. This spiral gets wider by a factor of 1.618 every time it makes a quarter turn ( $90^\circ$ ).

Drawing a perfect Golden Spiral is pretty tricky to do by hand, but just like with the Golden Ratio, you can get a close approximation with the Fibonacci Spiral. This is created by drawing an arc through a series of squares which correspond to the Fibonacci numbers.



You might have seen these spirals being

superimposed over famous pieces of artwork, as experts try and explain why we find them so aesthetically pleasing. Often, the spiral draws in our eye so that the focus of the artwork is found in the centre of the spiral. Examples can be found in the works of Leonardo and Salvador Dali.

## Listening for the Fibonacci sequence in music

Fibonacci didn't actually discover the sequence himself. Born Leonardo Bonacci in 12th-Century Pisa, Italy, the mathematician travelled extensively around North Africa. There, he learnt how the Hindu-Arabic numerals of 0-9 could be used to complete calculations more easily than the Roman numerals still in use across much of Europe. Fibonacci explained his findings in a book called *Liber Abaci*, published in 1202, which had a section devoted to the intriguing sequence which would be named after him hundreds of years later.

Mozart made use of the Golden Ratio when writing a

number of his piano sonatas. A sonata can be divided into two separate sections, known as the exposition (where the theme is introduced) and the development and recapitulation (where the theme is developed and repeated). In Mozart's sonatas, the number of bars of music in the latter section divided by the former is approximately 1.618, the Golden Ratio.

Part of Learn and Revise

In creation we see the power, wisdom and glory of Almighty God in all His wonderful works. The use of numbers and sequence of numbers can be seen all around us if we look for them. Throughout the Bible a variety of numbers are mentioned and some are of great significance, for example the number seven. In the Autumn Perception we hope to include an article on the significance of the number eight in scripture.

Much can be gained from learning about numbers, One number though, has more importance than any other.

'For as by one man's disobedience **many** were made sinners, so by the obedience of one shall **many** be made righteous' (Rom.5.19).

To be taught that we personally are all in this number - one of the **many** made sinners is a vital lesson. What a great blessing to also be shown that we are numbered among the **many** made righteous by the Lord Jesus Christ. To be one of that number – that truly Golden number! May it be so.

'So teach us to number our days, that we may apply our hearts unto wisdom' (Psalm 90.12).

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God can pick sense out of a confused prayer. These desires cry louder in His ears than your sins. There is never a holy sigh, never a tear shed, which is lost.

God in Christ will cast a gracious eye upon that which is His own.

Richard Sibbes

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## Prepared of God

In 1517, Martin Luther was 33 years old when he nailed his 95 Theses to the Castle Church door, Wittenberg.

At that time –

John Knox was 4

John Calvin was 8

William Tyndale was 23

Martin Bucer was 26

Ulrich Zwingli was 33



God was preparing all these men to be Reformers.

Do not despise your youth.

D Bengel

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## The love of Christ

In the days of Whitfield, an American Indian was speaking of the love of Christ. Very disparagingly someone asked him, "What do you know of the love of Christ?"

The American Indian did not reply. Taking some burning coals (or pieces of wood) from a fire, he put them in a small circle on the floor. Then in the middle of the circle he put a worm.

As the fire crept nearer and nearer, the worm began to wriggle. Suddenly he snatched the worm from the fire and held it near his heart.

"That is what I know of the love of Christ." he said.

Little Stories by One who cares

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**CAN LOVE SAVE YOU?**

The photograph above, is of the rear face of a headstone at the grave of a 12-year-old girl. It is evident when standing at the grave that the girl was greatly loved by her parents and they have tried to show something of that love in this final tribute to her. To see this, and then stand and read the short statement on the back of the headstone is most profound and moving.

'If love could have saved you, you would have lived forever'

A parent's love cannot prevent death, no matter how much they love their child. This truth is acknowledged here in this statement. But it is the words 'you would have lived forever' that struck me most. Her soul, our souls do 'live forever'. How solemn and sad that the certainty of this little girl possessing a never dying soul seems to be unknown to the parents. A very solemn thing it is to know nothing of this vital truth.

Death brings 'time' to an end, and the soul in the body is

removed, but not annihilated. I wonder if we really understand this, and the implications of it? We all possess a soul, and that soul will exist or 'live' forever. The Lord God formed man from the dust of the ground and breathed life into him. We read in the word of God '...and man became a living soul' (Gen.2.7).

Our present state we call life, and this is where body and soul are first 'united'. Death will bring a 'dis-uniting' of body and soul, this state can be described as 'dis-unity' or separation. The body being 'mortal' returns in the passing of time to dust, the soul returns at death to God who gave it, to be sent to either heaven or hell until the second coming of the Lord Jesus Christ in all His glory. This period of 'dis-unity' is referred to as 'Hades' in the Greek or 'Sheol' in the Hebrew language. The Lord Jesus said to the dying thief '...Verily I say unto thee, To day shalt thou be with me in paradise' (Luke23.43). The body and soul of the Lord Jesus were 'dis-united' or separated at death, His body was laid in the tomb, His soul went to paradise. We can assume that the body of the thief was buried, and we know his soul went to paradise with His Saviour. The soul of the dying thief is still in paradise, the soul of the Lord Jesus Christ returned to His body on the third day – His resurrection day. This re-uniting of soul and body was permanent, and we read of His bodily ascension into heaven (Luke24.51). The resurrection brought Jesus Christ into a 're-united' state as the first-fruit of the harvest (1Cor.15.20). The second coming of the Lord Jesus, when 'time' shall be no more, will bring to pass the resurrection of all the dead and that state of 're-uniting' of souls and body, to a body that is raised incorruptible, that will exist forever. The dead in Christ shall rise first (1Thess.4.16).

David writing in prophecy of the Messiah says, 'For thou wilt not leave my soul in hell; ('sheol' – in a dis-united state) neither wilt thou suffer thine Holy One to see corruption', notice the capital letters in the Bible for 'Holy One' (Psa.16.10). Our body will decay and turn to dust unless we are alive at His second coming, and we all must be changed, from 'mortal' to 'immortal'. The soul, however, has an unbroken continuance. This brings us to consider that

tremendous word, 'Eternity'. I tremble to think of it and write of it.

Eternity is not time, nor can it be measured by time. If a clock could go on ticking for ever it would not measure eternity, it does not fully illustrate eternity. Time has a beginning, eternity does not, nor does eternity have an end. Eternity is not endless time, or an extension of time, it far exceeds all these descriptions that are commonly used. The words of Anne Steele seem very appropriate:

Eternity, tremendous sound!  
To guilty souls a dreadful wound;  
But O, if Christ and heaven be mine,  
How sweet the accents, how divine!

Gadsby's Hymns 1083

When time comes to an end for us, and we pass through death, what next for our souls? What does eternity hold for us? Time is precious, a temporary gift. Time has been given to us, may the Lord help us each to value it, use it wisely and not waste it, it won't last forever! During 'time' is where the mercy of God is to be sought, there is no 'time' after this – O remember this!

There is hope for sinners in these solemn matters of our souls and eternity. There is a love that saves a soul, that gives a soul eternal life.

*'For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life'* (John3.16).

It is the love of God in Christ Jesus that saves a soul from sin unto salvation. This love takes the sting out of death. This love makes death to be the passage that leads the soul to paradise.

Jesus said, 'Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends' (John.15.13). This Jesus Christ did on the cross at Calvary for His friends. That love saves - wonderful love!

Do you know something of this love, dear reader?

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**GEORGE MOCKFORD (Part 6 – Final)**

Continued from SPRING 2023 Page 29

With regard to the Lord's dealings with me in providence, we have been brought into great straits, and often knew not what to do. My being called to preach at West Street Chapel, Croydon, has (in the hands of the Lord) been a wonderful help to me; in fact it looks the only way by which I have been kept from getting greatly in debt, without any means of paying. As my family grew up, I found that increasing years brought increasing trials and heavier expenses that caused me sleepless nights, and at times much wrestling, with cries and tears, unto God on their behalf, as well as my own. I also had many blessed proofs of the lovingkindness of my covenant God and Father, in my own soul, as well as in providence, and found as the man of God, Hezekiah, did, that "by these things men live, and in all these things is the life of my spirit."

**Death of his wife**

In the year 1891 my dear wife was taken ill, and died in a few days, but the Lord favoured me with support by giving me to hope that He had taken her unto Himself. Under this keen trial I found great sympathy and kindness, both among my own dear people and many others; and dear Jesus drew me very near unto Himself, and favoured me to lean upon him as my Beloved, and thus brought me up out of the wilderness that I felt this death had brought me into. My dear people, with others, paid all the expenses of the funeral, etc - these were great mercies, but O the kisses of the mouth of my Beloved out-topped all, and it was indeed "better than wine!"

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Here Mr. Mockford's own writings end. After the death of his wife in 1891, he re-married in 1893. They were happily married until his death in 1899. Here are some extracts from the writings of his second wife, Mary:



The foregoing was written by my late beloved husband, to whom I was united in marriage on the 10th of February 1893, at Providence Chapel, West Street, Croydon, by Mr. Hemington, of Devizes.

I would just say I feel I had the Lord's direction to go forward. I had known and loved my late husband as a servant of God, and esteemed him as a friend, for more than ten years, and for nearly seven years, I trust, we were true helpmeets. He was a tender, loving husband, and in the things of God we saw eye to eye, and his ministry was blessed to my soul, if anything, more after our marriage than before. He was very delicate, often suffering from attacks of faintness, owing to valvular disease of the heart, and on that account, I generally went from home with him.

### **A dream**

Sometimes it seemed he must die, but God was good in sparing him to me so long, and I shall ever look back on the years we spent together as among the most happy of my whole life. He had a severe illness at the beginning of the year 1892, and he told me of a dream which he had during that time. He said, "I dreamed that a most august person took me by the hand and led me down a very long flight of steps. At the bottom was a door, and taking a key from his girdle, he said to me, 'This is the gate of death; shall I open it?' I replied, 'As thou wilt, Lord.' He turned and smiled upon me, and said, 'Not yet,' and led me up to the top again. I told those about me I should not die then but should get better." He spoke of this dream during his last illness, remarking, "I have had nothing of that kind now."

We had many trials in our short, married life, but were enabled to bear each other's burdens, and had many marked proofs of God's kind and gracious help under them, and my dear husband was often much favoured in his own soul.

**Severe illness**

In the early part of 1898, he had another severe illness, and had to give up several engagements, as well as being unable to preach to his own people. But although in addition to this affliction, he laboured under the pressure of a very heavy church trial, yet he was kept in a most peaceful frame of mind, the fear of death was removed, and he was willing to die or live, as God saw fit. On one occasion he told me that with the eye of his mind he saw death standing at the foot of the bed, and he said to him, "Yes, death, if my Master has bid thee strike, I am ready." When he told me this, I said, "I do envy you, for I fear death."

On the morning of his birthday this same year, December 27th, he had such a sweet visit from his best Friend, before he was up in the morning, that his soul was filled with holy joy and peace; he spoke of the first four verses of Psalm 103 as being the very language of his heart. When referring to this time, he would say, "Who crowneth thee with lovingkindness and tender mercies." Before another birthday came round, he was enjoying the full fruition.

From this time he never seemed quite so well – he failed more, got tired sooner, and had to give up first one thing, then another. His best place was the pulpit – he generally seemed better there and was very happy in his work. He often said he hoped when he could no longer preach, the Lord would take him home.

**Failing eyesight**

In the early part of 1899, his sight began to fail very much. He found it trying to read, especially in the pulpit, and at last had to get others to read for him. He saw an oculist when at Maidstone in June, who pronounced it to be cataract on both eyes, and said when he became quite blind it could be removed, but my dear husband did not think he should live to get blind, he so much dreaded an operation. He felt the great heat of the summer very much, and often said he thought he should soon go home. Each place he preached at he felt it would be the last time there. But I tried to

hope otherwise, as he still kept preaching, and was often greatly helped.

In July we went to Folkestone for a few days, and from there to Rainham, but he seemed no better for it. In the beginning of October we went to Rainham again, where he was engaged to preach at the Annual Thanksgiving. We heard Mr. Burgess in the morning and Mr. Prince in the afternoon, and each time my dear husband heard well; it was also a good day to me. Mr. Mockford's text in the evening was: "He that believeth on the Son of God hath the witness in himself." Before retiring to rest that night, Mrs. Stanley Wakeley said she had felt much helped that day and could not shut herself out. We both felt such a union of spirit with her; two of the three are now in heaven.

### **Continues with preaching engagements**

On the 15th of October, Mr. Mockford preached at Grove twice, and again on the following evening; on Tuesday at Wantage, Wednesday at Reading, and on Thursday at Oxford, and it was quite astonishing how he seemed helped, although so near the end of his course. We returned home on Friday, and on the following Sunday he spoke to his own dear people, and at Flimwell twice the next Tuesday, from the words, "The Lord turned and looked upon Peter." On the following day, Wednesday, October 25th, our own Thanksgiving Services were held, when many spoke as to the special time it was, and my dear husband also felt very comfortable; the text was Psalm 116. 12, 13. The following Sunday he spoke twice from Psalm 126. 6, it being a funeral sermon for one of the friends he had buried in the past week.

His last time of preaching at Heathfield was on Wednesday evening, November 1st, from Psalm 106. 44, 45. This was a good time to some there. After we got in from chapel, I said to him, "You felt helped, I am sure." He replied, "Yes, I liked being at chapel tonight." My own feelings were, O blessed "Nevertheless." He had dwelt so sweetly on that word; also on, "He remembered for them his covenant." I little thought then how soon we were to be parted.

Much more could be said of this last year, especially the last three or four months. On looking back and thinking it over, we can see how he was gradually sinking outwardly, but the inner man was renewed day by day, and his preaching was such that many wondered what was coming. And this verse was more or less up and down in my own mind,

Whate'er Thy sacred will ordains,  
O give me strength to bear;  
And let me know my Father reigns,  
And trust His tender care.

When I mentioned it to my dear husband, he said, "That looks like trouble for you."

### **His last illness**

I will now pass on to the last illness. He was taken first with a stroke on Friday, the 3rd of November, when his left arm suddenly dropped as he lifted it to fasten a door. This passed off in an hour or so, but later in the day returned, and again passed off. On the Saturday again his arm dropped in the same way several times; he also seemed very poorly, and hardly fit to take the journey to Croydon, where he was engaged to preach the next day. But he was unwilling to have the doctor sent for, as he knew he would not let him go from home; so as he seemed a little better and brighter, we left home at the appointed time, but he did not appear so well when we reached Croydon, he had had a bad night, and we thought he would not be able to preach. Yet still he did venture, and was greatly helped in speaking both times from John 17. 3, "And this is life eternal, that they might know Thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom Thou hast sent." He spoke in such an able manner both times, and his mind seemed so clear, that it shewed his weakness was not mental, but bodily; and many at Croydon can testify to the power that attended this, his last dying testimony in the pulpit. He also administered the ordinance, and it was a most

solemn day. He had again a trying night, and the next day Dr Philpot saw him, and advised his return home at once, saying it was a stroke of paralysis, and recommended us to send for our own medical man.

We returned from Croydon on Tuesday the 7th, a kind friend seeing us home; and as soon as he left us, my dear husband went to bed, which proved his deathbed; he never came down again or even had his clothes on. He was kept very quiet in his mind respecting the issue of his illness, and said, many times, he had no will in the matter, as to life or death. But from the first he seemed to feel it was for the end, and often spoke of the goodness of God to him all through his life; he said once, many years ago, he had this promise, "My God shall supply all your need." He said, "He has done it, how many mercies I have, and God is very gently taking down my tabernacle:" though he thought he should have more suffering yet. This was during the first week of his illness, when although he gradually got weaker, yet we had no extra help, and I was alone with him at night, and took all my meals in his room through the day. He said many things which I wish could have been put on paper; but as he required so much attention, this was not possible. He liked me to read a chapter and the daily portion each morning, and he would then speak in prayer, from which I gathered the state of his mind; and some of these times will never be forgotten, his heart seemed in heaven. He expressed a great wish one day to get up to the chapel once more, saying, "If I was up there, I could preach," and thought two of his sons could get him up there; I believe he felt he would like to speak to the people again. As he got worse, which he did each day, he suffered much from great restlessness, which was painful to witness, and his left arm was now quite helpless, indeed it extended all down the left side. The night of Wednesday the 15th was a most trying one to the dear sufferer, his restlessness of body was extreme, and, in addition, his soul conflict was very great; he said he dare not tell me what he was passing through, but in the morning said he had had a most fearful conflict with Satan, who had thrust sore at him that he might fall by his powerful temptations.

He spoke of it in this way: Satan seemed, like Apollyon, to straddle over the whole way, and said to him, "This is the valley of the shadow of death, and it is only a shadow to God's people, but to you it is a reality, and you shall not go through this valley alive. You have often told the people you were not afraid of death, but now you will be lost, so the best thing you can do is to take your own life and know the worst, it will only be a little beforehand." Then it was suggested, "Curse God, curse God" but the dear one was enabled to say to the enemy, "No! He has been a good God to me." Then these lines came with power and sweetness:

When through the deep waters I call thee to go,  
The rivers of woe shall not thee overflow.

He said he saw so much in the words, "I call thee to go," that it was God who led him through those "deep waters;" then these words followed:

And passing through a thousand woes,  
They get securely home.

This was indeed a sore trial of faith, but Satan did not get the victory. He spoke of this to some who came to see him, as he felt it might be an encouragement to any who might come into a like place. After this he never sank so low again, but for the most part enjoyed a settled peace within, though his bodily sufferings were great. He often spoke of that verse:

The spirits of the just,  
Confined in bodies, groan,  
Till death consigns the corpse to dust,  
And then the conflict's done.

On Thursday his eldest son arrived. He and his wife stayed with us to the end, and from this time it became quite apparent to

all that he would not get better. His children were all most kind and attentive, doing all in their power to help in every way. The Sunday previous to his death, he was very ill and could see but few of the friends but was very comfortable.

He said once, with much feeling:

His grace shall to the end,  
Stronger and brighter shine;  
Nor present things, nor things to come,  
Shall quench the spark divine.

He remarked, "It seems to be mostly hymns that come to me." He spoke of the hymn beginning, "Good hope, through grace, the saints possess" (242 Gadsby's Selection): it was read to him, and seemed so expressive, especially the last verse. This was a favourite hymn with the departed one.

It was said once to him, "It will be a solemn day at the chapel today." He replied, "It will be more solemn next Sunday." Another time he said, "The first Sunday after I am gone, the people must sing that hymn, or part of it, "'Tis with the righteous well." He also said on the morning of this day, "I thought I should die today. Why tarry the wheels of his chariot?"

Another time he remarked, "It will soon be said of me, 'He passed peacefully away.'" This, too, was the last morning that he could bear the reading, but he spoke most feelingly in prayer for a few minutes, his daughter-in-law and myself only being present. The next morning (Monday), when I was about to give him his breakfast, he held up his right hand for me to wait, and then with a look and manner I can never forget, prayed so fervently for me and himself, that I felt it was a most solemn moment with us two and God. A little later on, when alone with him, among other things, he said to me, "It is hard to part, but God, who gave us to each other,

has a right to separate, and I want to go home:

Weary of earth, myself, and sin,  
 Dear Jesus, set me free,  
 And to Thy glory take me in,  
 For there I long to be.

### **His last days**

About one o'clock he had another stroke, which affected his face and speech, and violent retching set in, which was most distressing to the dear sufferer, and to us to witness. After one severe attack, he turned his head, and said, "One stage nearer, Mary;" after another, "It is a monster," alluding to a hymn we had been speaking of, on death:

Who, except Jesus smiles within,  
 Can look the monster in the face?

The attacks of sickness continued all through the night, and it seemed the next morning impossible he could live long, but he rallied a little, and lingered on, but found dying to be hard work, although he had nothing to do but to die. He took only a little liquid from Monday to the end, and even this returned; but he was less restless, and very peaceful. He said once, "All is peace within, not a dog moves his tongue" and again, "Not one thing hath failed of all the Lord spake," etc. He was sensible to the last, but these two lines seem to express the conflict with the last enemy he had to meet:

Cease fond nature, cease thy strife,  
 And let me languish into life.

As his speech became more affected, it was with difficulty we could understand him ; but once we caught the words, "Whither the forerunner is for us entered;" and, "My God has been kind," or " is kind, to me;" also, "Wonderful, wonderful," he raised his right



hand and waved it; I cannot be quite sure, but believe that as fast as his breath kept coming, he said, "Crown him, crown him," several times over, and very soon breathed out his soul, at 9.15 on the morning of the 22nd of November, 1899, in the 73rd year of his age.

It is a great loss to us as a family. He was a kind and indulgent father. Seven of his family of twelve are still living, five sons and two daughters, all of whom were around his dying bed, as he had often expressed a wish it might be. His oft-repeated request, too, was granted, "that I might be spared to see him down to the river," and my loss is his eternal gain.

Mr. Newton and Mr. Smith, of Tunbridge Wells, conducted the funeral service on the 28th, a very large number of people being present. He was borne to the grave by six members of the church, and the rest of the members present followed after the family.

Subsequently a collection was made at the chapel to defray the expenses of the funeral. It is intended to place a tablet in the chapel to the memory of our late beloved Pastor.

Our loss as a church is very great.

'Truly God is good to Israel' (Psalm 73. 1).

'The memory of the just is blessed' (Proverbs 10. 7).

'And let thy widows trust in me' (Jeremiah 49. 11).

MARY MOCKFORD.

Ebenezer Cottage, Heathfield,

July 10, 1900.

---

In the years since the above account was written, a tablet was placed in Ebenezer Chapel, Heathfield, with the following inscription :—



The grave of Mr Mockford is to the left side of the main entrance of Ebenezer chapel, Heathfield



**COME UNTO ME**

Heavy laden sinners, hear!  
 Labouring souls, incline your ear -  
 Jesus calls you, far or near -  
 "Come unto me."

Is it care you need, and rest?  
 Want to learn which path is best?  
 Jesus calls you, as His guest -  
 "Come unto me."

Do you for a blessing yearn?  
 Would you from His teaching learn?  
 Jesus calls, with deep concern -  
 "Come unto me."

Do you worry in the night?  
 Are you wearied with the fight?  
 Jesus says His burden's light -  
 "Come unto me."

Have you other refuge tried?  
 Found no place in which to hide?  
 Jesus said, "In me abide" -  
 "Come unto me."

Is your soul by Satan bound?  
 Have you not redemption found?  
 Jesus calls - O welcome sound!  
 "Come unto me."

Jesus is the sinners' friend;  
 He will ever them defend;  
 All their ills and sorrows tend -  
 "Come unto me."

Jesus saves from death and hell;  
 Jesus every fear will quell;  
 Take you home with Him to dwell -  
 "Come unto me."

## Found - Medieval pendant with Hebrew words



The 10.3mm by 9.1 mm by 7.2mm (0.4in by 0.3in by 0.28in) pendant is inscribed around its edges with the letters AGLA.

A medieval gold and garnet pendant inscribed with a Hebrew phrase has been declared treasure. The jewel was discovered by a metal detectorist at Great Tey near Colchester, Essex, in August 2021.

The pendant is inscribed with an abbreviation of a Hebrew phrase meaning 'Thou art mighty forever O Lord'. County Finds Liaison Officer, Lori Rogerson, said its "noble" wearer was "invoking the protection of God in the most powerful language".

The late 12th or early 13th Century object is inscribed with the letters AGLA, which is an abbreviation of the phrase Atha Gebri Leilan Adonai. This inscription has been found on a range of medieval jewels, said Surrey liaison officer Simon Maslin in his report for the Essex coroner.

For medieval Christians, Hebrew was the language of the Almighty, being an ancient language originating from a place with a long tradition of religious practice. So the phrase was seen as important by invoking the protection of God in the most powerful language. Gemstones reminded the wearer of the Creator - God.

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## CURRENT MATTERS

### Lives saved by pro-life laws in the USA

Since the United States Supreme Court overturned *Roe v Wade* in June 2022 new data suggests that many lives have been saved. According to #WeCount, an estimated 32,260 fewer abortions took place in the six months following the judgement, which returned abortion law to state legislatures.

The Governor of North Dakota signed a Bill in April protecting unborn babies from six week's gestation – the point at which a heartbeat can be detected. This is the 13<sup>th</sup> state to introduce stringent safeguards protecting the unborn since the Supreme Court ruling.

The Lord give us each a burden of prayer for increased protection of the unborn in every nation. Also may He help us to pray that the by His grace the lives of many will change who currently have no thoughts of God, and grant that those laws be changed where they contradict the teaching of the Holy Bible.

### Civil war in Sudan

Sudan is on the brink of collapse as forces loyal to two rival generals are battling for control of the resource-rich North African nation. The ongoing conflict has left hundreds of people dead, thousands more wounded and hundreds of thousands displaced, according to figures from the United Nations.

With the war in Ukraine continuing with no sign of peace, and the unrest in other nations of the earth we have a solemn reminder of the fall of mankind in Adam, and the effects of sin. We pray that in all the sorrow and suffering the Lord will prove to be a refuge for many.

*'And a man shall be as an hiding place from the wind, and a covert from the tempest; as rivers of water in a dry place, as the shadow of a great rock in a weary land'* (Isa.32.2).

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## A Crown of Glory

These following words were spoken in the sermon by the Archbishop of Canterbury, Justin Welby, at the Coronation of King Charles III and were most striking – 'His throne was a cross. His crown was made of thorns.' This he said concerning the Lord Jesus Christ.

The front cover has a picture of the St Edward's crown which was placed on the anointed head of the King. The photograph below shows a crown made of thorns, in likeness to that of the crown of thorns the Lord Jesus Christ wore during the final hours of His suffering. What a contrast between these two crowns!

One of these crowns was placed with reverence and respect. The other was pressed down with cruelty and hatred.

One of these crowns was worn during a ceremony of celebration. The other worn at a time of suffering.



One of these crowns was worn by a King. The other was worn by The King of Kings.

One of these crowns is worn by many. The other crown is worn by One.

One of these crowns has a great monetary value that can be appreciated by all.

The other has no monetary value at all, but to some people it is priceless.

'But we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honour; that he by the grace of God should taste death for every man' (Heb.2.9).

# PERCEPTION

A Quarterly Magazine for Young People



If the clouds be full of rain, they empty themselves upon the earth: and if the tree fall toward the south, or toward the north, in the place where the tree falleth, there shall it be (Ecclesiastes 11.3).

AUTUMN 2023

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**Annual Subscription (2023):** includes postage and should be sent to:

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Email: [ddjchristian@btinternet.com](mailto:ddjchristian@btinternet.com)

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**Cover picture:** Leaning tree at Bradgate Park, Leicestershire



# PERCEPTION

Volume 15    Autumn 2023    Number 59

## EDITORIAL

The autumn time of year brings with it a time of remembrance. I hope it proves to be so for us each. It is important that we don't forget what has taken place in the past - history matters.

With busy lives and busy minds, we move so quickly from one thing to the next, the pace of life sweeping away opportunities for us to stop and reflect on what has taken place. The autumn follows the spring and summer in an almost seamless transition and sometimes we barely notice or regard the seasons as we pass through them. But God has given the various seasons to us and they each have a uniqueness and importance in the cycle of life.

Our American friends call the autumn season 'the fall'. To many this time of year is a favourite with the various colours of the changing leaves interspersed with the evergreens creating beautiful scenery.

The term 'the fall' comes from the change that is seen at this time of year as the leaves of the deciduous trees die and fall to the ground. This sign in nature serves as a reminder to us that



winter is soon to follow. Preparations for winter are vital for survival, not just for the natural world around us, but for mankind as well, especially so, in those parts of the world that have colder

and harsher climates. The harvest being gathered in stands as a reminder to us each of the faithfulness of God to His promise given to Noah on his exit from the ark. *'While the earth remaineth, seedtime and harvest, and cold and heat, and summer and winter, and day and night shall not cease'* (Gen.8.22). The Lord help us each to see these things, be thankful, and not overlook them!

Some of us are entering, or have already entered, what we might call the 'autumn' of our lives. Like the leaves in autumn, that begin to gradually change, so we notice a gradual change in our own bodies. Signs of ageing, a gradual decay and bringing down. Like the leaves on the tree we shall fall down one day, and there we shall lay, *'Then shall the dust return to the earth as it was: and the spirit shall return unto God who gave it'* (Eccl.12.7). This should come as no surprise - the Word of God tells us it will be so. Isaiah writes *'...and we all do fade as a leaf;...'* (Isa.64.6), and so we will, if our days are lengthened out to older age.

Dear young friends don't make the mistake, which so many make, in thinking that you have plenty of time. The Word of God gives clear instruction – *'Remember now thy Creator in the days of thy youth, while the evil days come not, nor the years draw nigh, when thou shalt say, I have no pleasure in them'* (Eccl.12.1).



We remember, in the United Kingdom at this time of year, the deliverance of our Protestant King James I and his Parliament from the plot to assassinate them by the Catholics, led by Guy Fawkes on 5<sup>th</sup> November 1605. Celebrating that the King had

survived, people lit bonfires around London; and months later, the 'Observance of 5<sup>th</sup> November Act' mandated an annual public day of thanksgiving for the plot's failure. Although this Act was repealed in 1859 we are thankful that the events of 1605 are still remembered in some way all these many years later. 'Guy Fawkes night' is still a popular event each year, and, if opportunity be given for our young readers to gather at bonfires, I pray it will be a time of remembrance and giving thanks to the Lord for all His goodness and mercy to



our nation in days past. We have often thought, "What would have come to pass if the plot of Guy Fawkes and his fellow conspirators had been successful?" The Lord mercifully intervened and prevented it, and our prayer is that Almighty God will still remember us in mercy, though we are a sinful nation that has departed from Him in many ways and deserve His wrath.

Another day of remembrance is also kept in November, and that is 11<sup>th</sup> November. This day, called 'Armistice Day', is known in the UK as Remembrance Day or as Poppy Day due to the tradition of wearing a remembrance poppy. This is a day which honours the members of the armed forces who died in the line of duty. The Commonwealth member states, since the end of the First World War, have observed this day of remembrance. The reason why it is held on the 11<sup>th</sup> November each year is because hostilities formally ended at 'the 11<sup>th</sup> hour of the 11<sup>th</sup> day of the 11<sup>th</sup> month' of 1918 according to the 'Armistice' signed that day. The war officially ended with the signing of the Treaty of Versailles on the 28<sup>th</sup> June 1919. In the USA, 'Armistice Day' is known as 'Veterans Day' since a name change in 1954 at the request of the major Veterans Associations. This is a federal holiday, honouring military veterans of the United

States Armed Forces who were discharged under conditions - other than dishonourable.



This was the scene at Tower of London in August 2014. A piece of art titled 'Blood Swept Lands and Seas of Red', which comprised 888,246 ceramic poppies - each poppy representing a member of the British WW1 military who lost their life in battle. A solemn loss to any nation and one of a number of events in history which we should not forget.

To 'remember' is mentioned often in the Bible. We can easily do the opposite of remember – which is to forget. What a mercy that God did not forget Noah! We read '*And God remembered Noah...*' (Gen.8.1), and God delivered Noah and all that were with him in the ark. When we see a rainbow in the sky or maybe a picture of one, we should remember it is God's token of the covenant made between Him and the earth. God gave it. It means something to Him - does it mean anything to you?

Satan tries to ruin everything God does, he tries to

overthrow God's purposes, but remember, Satan has failed. Satan failed in his attempt to separate Adam from God eternally, he failed in his attacks on the Lord Jesus Christ and he fails in his attempts to destroy the Church of God. Paul rightly states '*Who shall separate us from the love of Christ?...*' (Rom.8.35). Nothing can – remember this!

As you go forward through the autumn season and maybe you have begun new things, or maybe new things are before you, ever remember that there is One that is mighty – our Lord Jesus Christ. '*...I have laid help upon one that is mighty;...*' (Psa.89.19). We are to remember what the Lord has done for His people and not forget His merciful kindness. Moses reminded Joshua and the children of Israel of the Lord's dealings with them over the previous forty years, and then encouraged them to go forward into the promised land trusting in God. Moses warned them '*Beware that thou forget not the Lord thy God,...*' (Deut.8.11), especially when things are a little easier and going well, '*Then thine heart be lifted up, and thou forget the Lord thy God, which brought thee forth out of the land of Egypt, from the house of bondage*' (Deut.8.14). You may have had some measure of success in your life and have done well in your exams etc. Do not forget to thank the Lord for those answers to prayers, and the Lord help you and guide you in these providential things that they may be used to encourage you in seeking spiritual blessings for your souls.

*'Remember me, O Lord, with the favour that thou bearest unto thy people: O visit me with thy salvation'* (Psa.106.4).

With best wishes and Christian love,

*The Editor*

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## PERFECT PEACE

I don't look back; God knows the fruitless efforts,  
The wasted hours, the sinning, the regrets;  
I leave them all with Him who blots the record  
And mercifully forgives, and then forgets.

I don't look forward, God sees all the future,  
The road that, short or long, will lead me Home,  
And He will face with me its every trial,  
And bear for me the burdens that may come.

I don't look round me; then would fears assail me,  
So wild the tumult of earth's restless seas;  
So dark the world, so filled with woe and evil,  
So vain the hope of comfort or of ease.

I don't look in, for then am I most wretched;  
Myself hath nought on which to stay my trust.  
Nothing I see save failures and shortcomings,  
And weak endeavours crumbling into dust.

But I look up - into the face of Jesus,  
For there my heart can rest, my fears are stilled  
And there is joy, and love, and light for darkness,  
And peace, and every hope fulfilled.

## HOME? NOT YET!

It was late afternoon as the large ocean liner sailed into port at New York City with its host of passengers. Most of them were on deck and standing by the rail as preparations were being made to dock. Many were returning from business or pleasure trips abroad; others were arriving in the United States for the first time. Some had been away from home for many years, like the missionary and his wife, who had spent many years of their life in a remote region in far-away Africa. As they stood by the ship's rail and looked longingly at the shore of their beloved country, they wondered who would be there to meet them?

They had been away so long and now were beginning to feel their age. They had laboured and toiled where no eye beheld them but their God, whose they were and whom they served. It had not been easy; but not for one moment would they have been anywhere else, for it was where their Lord had sent them. But now, with their health broken and the years of toil showing in their faces, they were coming home.

They peered eagerly toward the docks and were now astounded to see literally thousands lined up there, waiting for the ship and crying, "Welcome Home!" They scarcely knew what to do, for the crowd seemed to be



pointing to where they were standing. "Mother," asked the old missionary, "do you suppose all those people knew we were coming home?" "I'm sure I don't know" was her reply.

The crowd continued to shout as the ship eased into its berth, and, amid the noise and the music of the band, they could now hear more clearly what they were saying. They were welcoming home a great game hunter from one of his hunting trips to Africa! Unbeknown to them he had been standing behind them in a group.

They looked at each other, and then started down the gangplank to the dock where the crowd was pushing and shoving to get a glimpse of the great game hunter...and there was no one to meet them!

Later, as they were riding along silently in a taxicab on their way to the hotel, Satan the accuser, whispered to the old missionary, "Aha, see how they greet the men of the world, and you - one of God's preachers, whose life has been given in preaching the Gospel in the steaming jungle, without a single soul to welcome you home!" This man of God admitted that in the loneliness of his heart there could have been room for hurt and Satan continued to taunt him as he sat quietly in his hotel room. 'No one to greet you. No one cares!' continued to ring in his ears.

Finally, he said wistfully to his wife, "Mother, after all these years, I thought there would be someone to greet us, someone to welcome us home." His wife replied sweetly. "Dear, I'm going out for a little while: why don't you talk to our Heavenly Father about it and see what He says."

Left alone in that lonely hotel room in that great city, the old missionary bowed his head and did just that. All the things the accuser had said, and implied, were poured out in childlike simplicity to his Father. Some while later his wife returned, and as she entered the room she noticed the serene expression on his face, and asked, "Dear, what did He say?" The old missionary replied, "He said, 'MY CHILD, YOU ARE NOT HOME YET!'"



*In the Summer edition of Perception, we included an article on 'Fibonacci and the Golden ratio' and in conclusion we noted the significance of numbers as mentioned in the Word of God. The following article relates to the number eight.*

## **NOAH THE EIGHTH**

In Peter's second epistle we read the intriguing words that God '...spared not the old world, but saved Noah the eighth person, a preacher of righteousness, bringing in the flood upon the world of the ungodly;' (2 Pet.2.5). The modern versions have conspired with one accord to paraphrase this verse rather than to translate it, and to treat the words 'Noah, the eighth person' as being an idiom with no literal significance. Thus, the Revised Version of 1885 tells us that God 'preserved Noah with seven others.' All the most widely used translations of the present day have followed suit - the English Standard Version, the New International Version, the Good News Translation, and the New Revised Standard Version.

Certainly, to speak of Noah and seven others is much more natural and understandable than to use such a quaint expression as 'Noah the eighth person.' However, it will not do. It is an interpretation and not a translation. It alters the text both by addition and by subtraction.

First, it adds by inserting a reference to 'seven others', but the wording in the Greek text has no reference to the number seven, and it speaks of no person but one, namely, Noah. Second, it subtracts by removing a specific description of Noah, however quaint – 'Noah the eighth person'. The New King James Version also fails in its stated intention "to preserve the work of precision which is the legacy of the 1611 translators." Its rendering is, 'Noah, one of eight people.' By comparison, the excellency of the Authorised Version is clear.

First, it follows a precise rule of formal rather than dynamic equivalence by translating as accurately as possible what is actually

there. It does not change the ordinal number "eighth" in the text to the cardinal number 'eight'. Second, it follows a principle of parsimony\*. Rather than requiring to show three words in italics for its insertions into the text, it shows but one, 'Noah the eighth *person*,' the minimum reasonable insertion to render fluent Greek into fluent English. Third, it does not force upon us an interpretation which excludes the possible significance of the literal text, 'Noah the eighth.'

The rendering 'with seven others' or 'one of eight' is based on the premise that the expression used in the original text is an idiom which is to be understood in this way. While it has been argued that Peter's usage reflects an underlying Hebrew usage of this kind, and a small number of idiomatic usages, mainly from classical Greek have been cited, it is nevertheless acknowledged that such a usage would be an exception to the norm. The word 'eighth' is not used in this way in any of its other appearances in the New Testament and, indeed, there is nowhere in the New Testament where an ordinal number is used idiomatically as a cardinal number. The precise literal translation provided in the Authorised Version allows us to ask, "Is there significance in Noah's being referred to as the eighth?" and it is this question which I explore further here.

The Greek rendering seems deliberate. It would have been easy and natural for it to have stated in an ordinary way in the Greek text that God saved Noah and seven others. Rather, it refers to Noah *ogdoön*, 'Noah, the eighth.' Rendered literally into English it comes across as a particular designation, like 'Louis Quinze' or 'George the Third.' Might it be that the blessing and mercy of God are extended to us in this faithful rendering in our English AV Bible?

In considering 'Noah the Eighth' there are meanings which we can readily dismiss. First, he is not the eighth representative of Adam. Enoch was 'the seventh from Adam' (Jude 14), and Noah is the tenth. There are also significant interpretative difficulties in seeking to join the phrase to the next phrase to make it read, 'Noah, the eighth preacher of righteousness.' This understanding of the meaning

\* Parsimony – from *parcere* 'be sparing' – no unnecessary words

has recently been argued for ably by Jensen in an attempt to overcome the acknowledged semantic and syntactical difficulties in replacing the literal ordinal term, 'Noah the eighth person' with the cardinal term 'Noah and seven others' or 'Noah, one of eight people.' He bases his argument on Genesis 4:26: 'And to Seth, to him also there was born a son; and he called his name Enos: then began men to call upon the name of the Lord.' He argues that the verb translated 'to call upon' could properly be translated as 'to proclaim', that Enos was therefore the first 'proclaimer' of the name of the LORD and that Noah, who was the eighth generation after Enos, was therefore the eighth 'proclaimer' or 'preacher' of righteousness.

This, however, involves some evident difficulties. First, since Seth lived for 807 years after the birth of Enos (Gen.5.8), there is no reason to suggest that the calling upon the name of the Lord did not begin with Seth himself rather than with his son. Second, we are told that men in general began to call on his name, rather than any one individual in particular. Third, we are not specifically told that Enos himself was a proclaimer of the Lord's name in any way that would merit him the title of the first 'preacher of righteousness.' Fourth, we are in any event unable to assume that the representatives of the other six generations between Enos and Noah were each of them inheritors of the title 'preacher of righteousness.'

Perhaps more importantly than all of these other difficulties, to construe Noah as the eighth preacher of righteousness takes from him this key distinction by which God has described him. In the midst of a godless generation, he stood alone: he was a preacher of righteousness - a role which he held uniquely for the entire 120 years in which God extended his mercy to the corrupt earth (Genesis 6:3). What other significance then might we attribute to the expression, 'Noah the eighth?'

When we ask questions regarding the symbolic and spiritual significance of numbers in Scripture there are two opposing errors

into which we can fall. The first is to treat the subject in such a mystical way that a number is never just a number. Thus, some have distorted texts to the point of fanciful speculation and private interpretation. The second is to speak as if number had no spiritual meaning at all, but served the purpose only of answering the factual question, 'How many?' The impropriety of the first error is plain. The unsustainability of the second may be easily demonstrated. If number were without spiritual significance, we would expect the numbers appearing in Scripture to follow a fairly similar distribution to their occurrence in general use. They do not.

It is hardly necessary to refer to the number seven, the number of perfection or completeness, or to the number twelve, the number associated with the Church and people of God, whose occurrence far exceeds anything that would occur if they had no



symbolic significance. For example, in the Book of Revelation, the number seven occurs fifty-four times - seven churches, seven Spirits, seven candlesticks, seven stars, seven angels, seven lamps, seven seals, seven horns, seven eyes, seven trumpets, seven thunders, seven crowns, seven plagues, seven golden vials, seven heads, seven mountains and seven kings. The number twelve and its multiples occurs thirty-two times. By contrast, the number eleven - a number which, as with the sad situation of 'the eleven' after the betrayal by Judas, always just falls short - does not appear at all, except once as an ordinal, 'the eleventh,' when each of the twelve foundations of the holy city is described.

Number is divine. It derives from God. It did not arise as a human development in the course of civilisation. There was number before there was man. How do we know that God rested on the seventh day? Because he had counted the first six, and five of these

were before there was a man upon the earth. Why are there seven days in a week? Or twelve months in a year? Or why do we count using a base of ten? It is because God ordained it.

The number eight is not without its spiritual significance, and it is proposed here that it provides a context for an exploration

of Noah the Eighth. Eight speaks to us of a new beginning. There were seven days of creation including the sabbath. With the eighth day we are back to a new beginning. So, every week God spares us, every Lord's Day when we gather to worship him, reminds us that God has given us eight as a new beginning. The eighth day on earth was the first day of the



new week, and thus it has continued from the beginning of the world till now. Our modern idioms stand against it. It was only within very modern times that the expression 'weekend' came into our vocabulary to signify the period from Friday night through Saturday and Sunday. When did that happen? When Sunday increasingly ceased to be the Lord's day and became man's day.

Here are three biblical 'eights' that speak to us of three glorious new beginnings.

The first speaks to us of cleansing from sin and God's full and free salvation. It is '...the law of the leper in the day of his cleansing:..' (Lev.14.2). Like us, he is totally dependent on God's mercy, for his 'hand is not able to get that which pertaineth to his cleansing' (verse 32). There are seven days and seven sprinklings to accomplish full and perfect salvation. Then comes the eighth day - and what a day! The sacrifice is made, and the final cry goes up, "Clean!"

The second speaks to us of the presence and glory of God. It is the seventh month, the Feast of Tabernacles. 'Seven days ye shall offer an offering made by fire unto the Lord: on the eighth day shall be an holy convocation unto you;...' (Lev.23.36). Then we come

to one Feast of Tabernacles when there was a holy convocation like no other. Solomon has completed the temple. The feast has been kept. The priests have '...come out of the holy place...' (2 Chron.5.11). Then comes the holy convocation. The singers have gathered '...having cymbals and psalteries and harps...' (verse 12), and with them one hundred and twenty trumpeters. Then as the sound of worship is lifted up, and as with one voice they praise the Lord, saying, '...For he is good; for his mercy endureth for ever:...' (verse 13) the glory falls. Such a new beginning was it, that '...the priests could not stand to minister by reason of the cloud: for the glory of the Lord had filled the house of God' (verse 14).

The third provides us with the answer to all of our doubts and fears. A man bows his head in hopelessness and despair. All he has lived for upon the earth has gone. His Lord has been crucified. The rejoicing of his companions is as an idle tale, and as a merry song to a heavy heart. '...We have seen the Lord...' No - not unless I see the nail prints; not unless I thrust my hand into his riven side, '...I will not believe' (John 20.25). 'And after eight days again his disciples were within, and Thomas with them:...' (v26). Then came Jesus to Thomas. '...Reach hither thy finger, and behold my hands; and reach hither thy hand, and thrust it into my side: and be not faithless, but believing' (v27). '...My Lord and my God' (v28) was the exclamation of Thomas. What a blessed new beginning on that eighth day! Do we have doubts, fears, uncertainties, afflictions? One stands with outstretched arms and says, 'Be not faithless but believing.'

Thus, we return to Noah the Eighth. Not only does Peter provide us quite specifically with these words, he also takes the trouble to specify the word 'eight' when he says '...the longsuffering of God waited in the days of Noah, while the ark was a preparing, wherein few, that is, eight souls were saved by water' (1 Peter 3:20). The story of the flood in the Old Testament does not actually specify the fact that it was eight, so Peter counts them one by one - Noah and his wife, Shem and his wife, Ham and his wife, Japheth, and his wife - and he tells us that the number was 'eight souls.' A 'few'

would have sufficed to convey the meaning, but he chooses to tell us the precise number. In telling us that eight souls were saved by water, Peter adds, 'The like figure whereunto even baptism doth also now save us...' (1 Peter 3:21) - not that it was the water of the flood itself that did the saving, any more than we are saved by the waters of baptism, for all water in itself does is to wash us, '...the putting away of the filth of the flesh'...' (verse 21). However, what baptism points to is that which saves, that which gives us a new beginning, Christ, the ark of our salvation.

So also was the sign of circumcision, again marked by the occurrence of 'eighth'. 'And in the eighth day the flesh of his foreskin shall be circumcised' (Leviticus 12:3) - pointing, not to any merit in the physical act, for '...neither is that circumcision, which is outward in the flesh' (Romans 2:28), but to a new heart: '...circumcision is that of the heart, in the spirit,...' (verse 29). Now, under the New Covenant, in Christ we are '...circumcised with the circumcision made without hands, in putting off the body of the sins of the flesh by the circumcision of Christ: Buried with him in baptism...' (Colossians 2:11, 12).

'Noah the Eighth'. If ever there was a testimony to the mercy of God, surely, we find it in these words. God did not need to let the world ever see the number eight again. God saw that '...the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually. And it repented the Lord that he had made man on the earth, and it grieved him at his heart' (Gen.6.5,6). Therefore, he uttered his decree: '...I will destroy man whom I have created from the face of the earth;...' (Gen.6.7). He could have shown judgement without mercy. 'But Noah found grace in the eyes of the Lord' (Gen.6.8).

Noah the Eighth would be God's new beginning on the earth. It was a merciful new beginning that would herald every new beginning to follow - the cleansing away of the leprosy of our sin, the presence and the glory of the Lord filling our souls, and the quelling of all our doubts and fears through the voice of the risen Christ.

Thus we gladly concur with the accuracy and precision of our faithful translation in the English Bible: God **'...saved Noah the eighth person, a preacher of righteousness...'** (2 Pet.2.5).

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## RUNNING A RACE

On Sunday June 1, 1997, the Canadian runner Donovan Bailey and the American runner Michael Johnson ran a 150-meter race. The race was supposed to decide which of the two could run the fastest.

The idea sprang from each runner's record time at the 1996 Olympic Games in Atlanta, Georgia. Bailey's time at the Games was 9.84 seconds in the 100 meters, and Johnson's time was 19.32 seconds in the 200 meters. Neither man had any admiration for the other. Bailey felt that he and his Canadian relay teammates had not been respected by American runners at the Olympics, and Johnson felt that Bailey had little respect for the Americans.

The race was won by Donovan Bailey. Johnson was unable to finish running because of a pulled muscle in one of his legs. Bailey crowed with conceit after he won and made some very unkind and shameful comments about his opponent. Johnson and Bailey had been verbal enemies for a long time. They seemed to delight in taking every opportunity to make miserable comments about one another, comments that were repeated in newspapers, comments that gave younger, would-be athletes a very poor idea of honest and fair sportsmanship.





Donovan Bailey earned \$1.5 million for 14.99 seconds of running. This works out to about \$100,000 per second.

The Olympic Games began in 176 B.C. in Olympia, Greece. They were held every four years but were disbanded by the Roman Emperor Theodosius (346-395) towards the end of his rule. Fifteen hundred years passed before they reappeared in Athens. The year was 1896. A Frenchman by the name of Pierre de Coubertin introduced the Games once more because he felt that competitions with principles of fairness and honesty were good. From then on, with the exception of the time period involving the two World Wars, the Olympics were once again held every four years. (An Olympiad is a period of four years.)

Not all the Games had competitors like Donovan Bailey and Michael Johnson. In 1924, Eric Liddell, a very gifted twenty-two-year-old runner from Scotland was scheduled to run the 100-meter race in the Olympics. He was an excellent 100-meter runner and had been chosen to take a place on the British team in Paris. When the timetable for Olympic events was posted and the athletes gathered around to read when they would be competing, everyone was amazed to hear Eric Liddell announce in a quiet voice that he

would not be running. The date on which he was posted to run was a Sunday - the Lord's Day.

There were not many people who understood why Eric would not run on Sunday. Most people ridiculed him. They insisted that Eric could dedicate the race to God that Sunday. They also said that he was letting Scotland down by not running and that he was a traitor to his country. Eric was hurt by the various unkind comments, but he did not waver in his conviction that God's command to honour the Sunday would be obeyed by himself and that he was right in refusing to run on the Lord's day.

Because he was part of their team, the British authorities requested that Eric run in the 200-meter and 400-meter races in the Olympics instead of in the 100-meter race. They did not expect him to do very well, let alone win. After all, he was a 100-meter runner and that was the race, they said, where he could have expected to win a gold medal. Against all expectations, Eric won a bronze medal in the 200-meter.

A few days later when the 400-meter day dawned, there was not much hope for a gold medal for the British team. Right from the start, however, from the very time when the pistol went off, Eric leapt into the lead. Breathlessly, people watched him run. No one expected him to keep up his incredible pace. A 100-meter runner would soon tire and be overtaken. But as the other athletes began to bridge the gap, Eric, against all expectations, picked up more speed, and kept it up, until he reached the tape a full five meters ahead of everyone else.

Eric Liddell set a new world record that day: the 400 meters in 47.6 seconds. Now everyone forgot all the bad things they had said about him;

Eric was now a hero. Eric himself was physically and emotionally



drained. He was happy that he had won the much-coveted gold medal for his country, but he was also deeply grateful to God for allowing him to win.

Prior to the race, Eric's trainer had given him a piece of paper, folded over so that he could not read it. Eric had thanked him for it and had not unfolded it until moments before beginning his run. In bold letters the trainer had written down, "In the old book it says, He that honours Me I will honour. Wishing you the best success always." The words had encouraged Eric at the onset of the race, and now that the race was over, Eric knew that God had indeed honoured his stand regarding Sunday running. The knowledge strengthened his faith.

Eric Liddell's goal had been to run, not for Olympic medals that would fade over time, but for '*...an incorruptible crown...*' (1Cor.9.25). His later life testified to that. Upon completing his studies, he entered the Chinese mission field, labouring there until 1945 when, at the end of the Second World War, he died in a Japanese prison camp.

Many men and women in the past have boasted about their accomplishments in sports, even as Donovan Bailey boasted that he was the fastest man on earth. What these people fail to realise is that the only race in which winning really counts is the one in which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will award the crown of righteousness to all those who have loved His appearing (2 Tim. 4.8).

*'Know ye not that they which run in a race run all, but one receiveth the prize? So run, that ye may obtain.*

*And every man that striveth for the mastery is temperate in all things. Now they do it to obtain a corruptible crown; but we an incorruptible.*

*I therefore so run,...'* (1 Cor.9.24-26)

Did you ever refuse to do something on Sunday for the same reason that Eric Liddell refused to run? What was it?

## WHO CAN FORGIVE SINS?

In R. Moffat Gautrey's book, entitled, *'The Glory of Going On'*, he gives this incident.

Not many months ago in an Oxfordshire village, an old saint lay dying. For over eighty years she had been on pilgrimage to Zion, until her face had grown bright with heaven's approaching glory. An Anglo-Catholic priest, under the misapprehension that none of his parishioners could find access to the City unless he unlocked the gate, called to visit her.

"Madam," he said, "I have come to grant you absolution."

And she, in her simplicity, not knowing what the word meant, inquired, "What is that?"

"I have come to forgive your sins," was the reply.

Gazing for a moment at the hand of the priest, she said: "Sir, you are an impostor."

"Impostor?", the scandalised cleric protested.

"Yes, sir, an impostor. The Man who forgives my sin has a nail print in His palm."

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When Sir James Simpson, the discoverer of chloroform, lay on his death-bed, he was asked:

"What do you consider your greatest discovery?"

His answer was:

"On December 25, 1861, I discovered that I was a sinner,  
and Jesus Christ was my Saviour."

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## CONVERSION

To be 'sound in doctrine' is important for all who profess the name of the Lord Jesus Christ. For many, however, this is not always the case and we find a sort of haziness exists in their minds. This may evidence itself in the expressions some use regarding the doctrines we hold. They may have a notion and can steer away from actual error, but lacking knowledge they cannot define and clearly express the full truth. The following is intended to touch upon two of these great doctrines of revealed and experimental religion. The hope is that it may be of some help to those who may not have the opportunity to ask someone, or maybe feel embarrassed to ask questions they feel they should already know.

Firstly, the word itself. What does the word '*conversion*' mean? A practical identity of meaning links our English word to the Hebrew and Greek terms which it translates. The word 'conversion' is derived from the Latin 'convertere', which means 'to turn around, transform'. The Hebrew term 'Shub' signifies 'to turn back; to return'. Two examples taken from a number found in the Old Testament Scripture are 'The law of the Lord is perfect, converting the soul...' (Psa.19.7), and '...turn thou me, and I shall be turned; for thou art the Lord my God' (Jer.31.18). The Greek word 'Epistrepho' means 'a turning towards', an example being '...lest at any time they should see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and should understand with their heart, and should be converted, and I should heal them' (Matt.13.15).

Both the Hebrew and Greek words from their simple meaning gather a number of applications which help to illustrate the central theme of conversion, the Hebrew word being used to express:

- A bringing back from captivity (Jer.32.44).
- A restoration of a withered hand (1 Kings 13.6).
- A rebuilding of ruined cities (Ezek.35.9).

The Greek word is used to express:

- A returning of the spirit (Luke 8.55).
- A revisiting after absence (Acts 15.36).

Secondly, *the nature*. Conversion is the outward evidence of God's work in the soul and may be defined as the action of men empowered by divine grace to 'turn' from sin towards God. By many it is spoken of as though it were identical with regeneration, but the two, as the above definition suggests, are quite separate and distinct. Regeneration may have taken place long before conversion is shown. It is here we differ from all Arminian teaching, for that asserts that the soul is only regenerated after conversion, whereas the contrary is the Scripture truth—regeneration always precedes real conversion and is the motive power of conversion.

The following distinctions may help to clear this point further.

- Regeneration is a power conferred; conversion is the exercise of that power.
- Regeneration is the motion of God in the creature; conversion is the motion of the creature to God.
- Regeneration is the principle to turn to God; conversion is the turning.
- Regeneration is the life; conversion its manifestation.

Conversion, therefore, is the human aspect, regeneration the Godward aspect of personal salvation.

Thirdly, *its forms*. While only one kind of conversion can spring out of regeneration, there are various kinds of conversion seen in people.

**Saving.** This is the only real conversion which, springing from regeneration, is a complete turning of the soul to God from the ways of sin.

**External.** This is simply a change of habit, an outward reformation of character in laying aside evil habits, but in which the soul remains the same without the slightest change. 'And it came to pass, when Ahab heard these words, that he rent his clothes, and put sackcloth upon his flesh, and fasted, and lay in sackcloth, and went softly' (1 Kings 21.27).

**Doctrinal.** This is a mere change of sentiments or opinions which may also be termed by some as conversion; as instanced in men deserting one religious creed for another.

**Restorative.** This is simply conversion in the sense of a child of God returning after temporary backsliding, as David in Psalm 51, and Peter in Luke 22 v32, where the Lord Jesus says, 'But I have prayed for thee, that thy faith fail not: and when thou art converted, strengthen thy brethren.'

Finally, its **Evidences.** True conversion is manifested in various ways:

- Ardent love to God (Psa.73.25).
- Delight in His people (John 13.35).
- Attendance on His ordinances (Psa.27.4).
- Confidence in His promises (Psa.9.10).
- Abhorrence of self (Job 13.5, 6).
- Renunciation of the world (Jam.4.4).
- Submission to God's authority and obedience to His word (Matt.7.20, 21).

## REGENERATION

Standing as the gateway to all true Christian life and experience, it is important for us to have a right conception of this great doctrine.

Firstly, *the word*. The Greek word 'Palingenesia', translated 'regeneration', is found only in two places in the Bible (Matt.19.28 & Tit.3.5). The literal signification of the word is 'an again birth'. Other expressions, however, are found which set forth the same truth. For instance, we have the terms, 'born again', as recorded by John, 'Jesus answered and said unto him, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God'. We read the same expression in Peter's first epistle 'Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever' (1 Pet.1.23). We also read the expression 'born of the Spirit' used by John (John 3.5,6, & 8) and 'born of God' in John's first epistle (ch3 v9, ch4 v7 and ch5 v1,4 & 18). There are other instances of these terms in other parts of the Holy Bible. In other literature the word 'Palingenesia' also appears. For example, by some of the Greek writers it is used to express the renewed state of the earth in spring, when all nature to visible sight

has been born again. Cicero, the Roman orator, and statesman, makes use of the word to express the new honour conferred upon him on his return from exile. So we have the word and the meaning of the translation of it.

Secondly, *the fact*. By many, regeneration is confused with conversion. Regeneration, though, is the bed-rock principle, if we may so speak, from which conversion takes its rise. In truth, regeneration is the imparting of a new principle of divine life absolutely separate and distinct from the natural life. So much is this the case, and so complete is the work, that it constitutes 'a new creature.' We read 'Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new' (2 Cor.5.17). It is not a simple restoration ... by which man returns to the state of innocence and righteousness before the Fall, but a new creation.

This emphatic nature of regeneration is expressly set forth in the New Testament. Paul repeatedly refers to 'the new man', while Peter, in close keeping with the word, declares that the Christian is begotten again (1 Pet.1.3), and '...given exceeding great and precious promises: that by these ye might be partakers of the divine nature,...' (2 Pet.1.4).

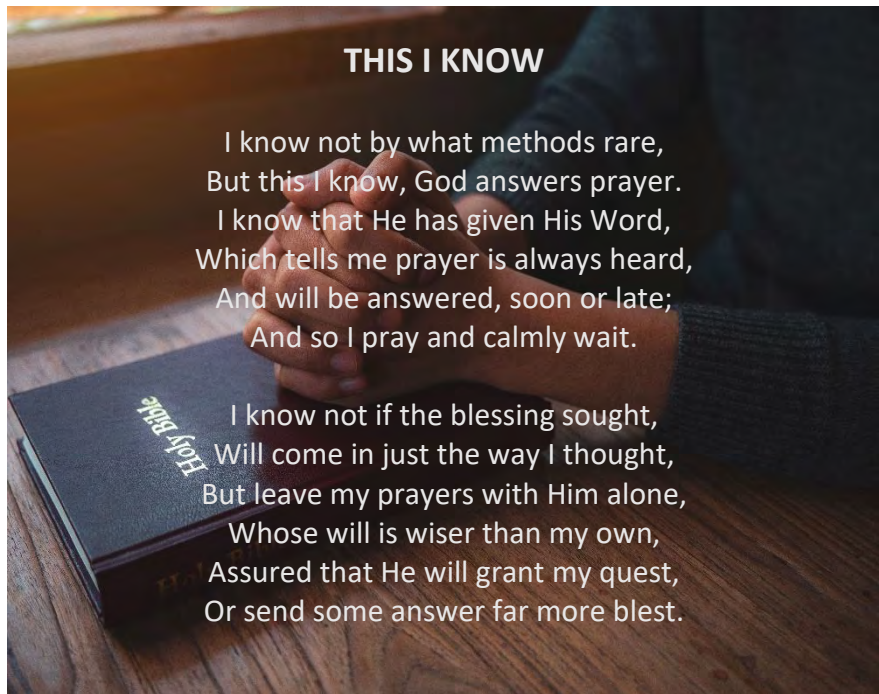
Thirdly, *the agent*. This is distinctly set forth to be the work of God. Often we read in Scripture of the work of God the Holy Spirit in regeneration. In the epistle to Titus, we read 'Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost' (Titus 3.5). The Word of God also sometimes ascribes it to God the Father. Peter in his epistle writes 'Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which according to his abundant mercy hath begotten us again unto a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead' (1 Pet.1.3). John writes of God the Son, saying 'If ye know that he is righteous, ye know that every one that doeth righteousness is born of him' (1 John 2.29).

The distinctions of Scripture cannot be ignored without confusion. Regeneration is entirely God's work. Conversion has a human aspect. Hence while man is exhorted to repent and be converted, he is never exhorted to be regenerated; and the exhortation to repent and be converted is only made, not as



implying man's natural ability in any way, but on the supposition that God's secret work of regeneration may have taken place. The position of the Gospel Standard churches is that we believe ministers of the Word must take the utmost care when preaching the fulness and freeness of the Gospel of the grace of God, being prayerfully concerned to encourage the coming, broken hearted sinner, and yet desiring not to give false comfort to those who do not truly mourn over their sin. Adapted from The Christian Pathway

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### One Thing Needful

When Sir Walter Raleigh had laid his head upon the block, he was asked by the executioner whether it lay right - to which Sir Walter replied, "It matters little, my friend, how the head lies, providing the heart be right".

Unknown Source

## NOT POINTLESS

It generally takes a number of years before a child determines what it is that he or she would like to be, whether an accountant, policeman, housewife, or farmer. But sometimes, a desire is put into a person's heart, a calling, that is manifest even as a young child.

In the 1840s a young Welsh boy became convinced that Jesus' words at the end of Matthew 28 were specifically directed at him. He studied diligently at school and went on to college. During the course of these study years, he was also given a sweetheart who shared his dreams of a mission field beyond Wales, beyond England. Financial support was garnered from the London Mission Society; prayers were offered; and China was the country to which the young man and his bride were being sent. The young man's name was Robert J. Thomas, and when he was ordained as pastor in a church in Hanover, Wales, it was the early summer of 1863.

Boarding a big ship, Mr. and Mrs. Thomas left their homeland in July of 1863. How they prayed together in their small cabin, thanking God for giving them opportunity to fulfil the Great Commission. How they praised His name for the comfort and support they had in one another because of common goals and understanding. They often stood at the rails of the ship's deck scanning the ocean for land, and when they first sighted Shanghai, they were very joyful that God had spared their lives from disease and drowning during the long and dangerous trip at sea.

Their joy was short-lived. Man plans but God decides. He always does. Shortly after landing, Robert's wife fell ill and died. He was now alone. He agonised over the question as to why his dear wife and help meet had died. Why had God brought her into China if only to take her so soon? Why had she been allowed to come so far? Why could he not have a partner in faith, one who would support him with love and compassion? In the end this sorrow,

despite unanswered questions, brought him closer to God. He earnestly began working by himself for the Lord in China.

In 1866, having evangelised a few months in neighbouring Korea, and having somehow mastered that language to some degree, Robert Thomas boarded an American ship, intending to travel further into Korea to spread the Gospel. The ship had been named the 'General Sherman' and took the route of the Taedong River. In some manner, perhaps because of its size, the General Sherman became grounded on a sandbar in the river. Seeing a big ship aground on their shore, Korean soldiers at that particular spot became afraid and suspicious. They were not used to foreigners, and they boarded the ship, heavily armed. The sun shone on the metal of their knives as they waved them about. They were unwilling to communicate and began killing both crew members and passengers at random.



The Taedong river, Pyongyang, North Korea

Robert Thomas realised that he would die also. He held out his Korean Bible to the soldiers, and his last two words were, "Jesus, Jesus." The Bible lay in a small pool of blood, and all the years of preparation in seminary and all the hours of prayer Robert Thomas had spent were apparently wasted. Three short years of mission work, and there was no clear harvest in sight.

But were those years really wasted? Was there truly no harvest?

In 1891 some people came across a small guest house along the banks of the Taedong River in the area where the General

Sherman had run aground. This house was unique in that it was wallpapered with paper of strange design - a design that had Korean characters/letters printed on it. The owner of the house explained that years ago he had torn the pages out of Robert Thomas's book and had pasted them onto the wall in order to preserve the writing. Many people came to stay in his guest house, and many people had read the walls, including himself. Thomas's life had not been in vain. God had used his death mightily.

Although there is much persecution of Christians in North Korea, the secret, or underground, church there was estimated to be at 60,000 people during the 1990s. The Word of God never returns to Him void. It accomplishes what He desires and achieves the purpose for which He sends it.

From 'The Great Escape' by C Farenhorst

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## **SHOULD HE HAVE TURNED BACK?**

In the year 1569 a faithful follower of Jesus Christ named Dirk Willems was arrested at Asperen in Holland. His faith was founded not upon the drifting sand of human commandments but upon the firm foundation stone, Jesus Christ.

Before his arrest, Dirk had been pursued by an Anabaptist-catcher who, trying to follow Dirk over an ice-covered lake, fell through the ice and was drowning. Dirk hearing his cries realised the man was in trouble, but now the question came - should he turn back and help?

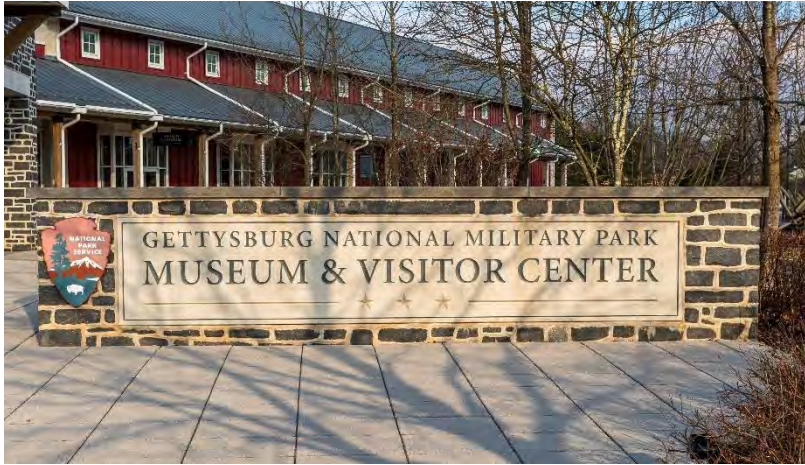
Dirk did return and helped the man out of the freezing lake. The Anabaptist-catcher wanted to let Dirk go but the Burgomaster sternly called him to consider his oath. Dirk was seized and after severe imprisonment and great trials was burnt at the stake.

Dirk Willems turned back that day and it cost him his life – what would we do if found in the same situation?

Anabaptists are persons rebaptized on profession of faith. This account taken from the Amish and Mennonite Cultural Centre in Shipshewana, Indiana, USA.

## CHARLIE COULSON THE DRUMMER BOY

by Dr M. L. Rossvally



Two or three times in my life God in His mercy touched my heart, and twice before my conversion when I was under deep conviction.

During the American war, I was surgeon in the United States Army, and after the battle of Gettysburg there were many hundreds of wounded soldiers in the hospital, twenty-eight of whom had been wounded so severely that they required my services at once; some whose legs had to be amputated, some their arms, and others both their arm and leg. One of the latter was a boy who had been but three months in the service and, being too young to be a soldier, had enlisted as a drummer. When my assistant surgeon and one of the stewards wished to administer chloroform previous to the amputation, he turned his head aside and positively refused to receive it. When the steward told him that it was the doctor's orders, he said, "Send the doctor to me."

When I came up to his bedside I said, "Young man why do you refuse chloroform? When I found you on the battlefield you were so far gone that I thought it hardly worthwhile to pick you up,

but when you opened those large blue eyes, I thought you had a mother somewhere who might at that moment be thinking of her boy. I did not want you to die on the field, so ordered you to be brought here, but you have now lost so much blood that you are too weak to endure an operation without chloroform, therefore you had better let me give you some."

He laid his hand on mine and looking me in the face said: "Doctor, one Sunday afternoon in the Sunday School, when I was nine-and-a-half years old I knew the Lord Jesus Christ as my Saviour. I learned to trust Him then, I have been trusting Him ever since, and I know I can trust Him now. He is my strength and my stay; He will support me while you amputate my arm and leg."

I then asked him if he would allow me to give him a little brandy. Again he looked me in the face saying, "Doctor, when I was about five years old my mother knelt by my side with her arms round my neck and said, 'Charlie, I am now praying to the Lord Jesus that you may never know the taste of strong drink. Your dear father died a drunkard, and went down to a drunkard's grave, and I asked God, if it was His will that you should grow up, that you should warn young men against the bitter cup.' I am now seventeen years old, but I have never tasted anything stronger than tea and coffee, and as I am, in all probability, about to go into the presence of my God, would you send me there smelling with brandy?"

The look that boy gave me I shall never forget. At that time I hated Jesus, but I respected that boy's loyalty to his Saviour and, when I saw how he loved and trusted Him to the last, there was something that touched my heart, and I did for that boy what I had never done for any other soldier - I asked him if he wished to see his chaplain. "Oh, yes, sir!" was the answer.

When Chaplain R... came, he at once knew the boy from having met him at the tent prayer meetings, and taking his hand, said, "Well, Charlie, I am sorry to see you in this sad condition."

"Oh, I am all right, sir," he answered. "The doctor offered me chloroform, but I declined it, then he wished to give me brandy,

which I also declined, and now if my Saviour calls me, I am ready, and can go to Him in my right mind.

"You may not die, Charlie," said the chaplain, "but if the Lord should call you away, is there anything I can do for you after you are gone?"

"Chaplain, please put your hand under my pillow and take my little Bible, in which you will find my mother's address. Please send it to her, and write a letter and tell her that since the day I left I have never let a day pass without reading a portion of God's Word, and daily praying that God would bless my dear mother - no matter whether I was on the march, on the battlefield, or in the hospital."

"Is there anything else that I can do for you, my lad?" said the chaplain.

"Yes, please write a letter to the superintendent of the Sands Street Sunday School, Brooklyn, N.Y., and tell him the kind words, many prayers, and good advice he gave me I have never forgotten; they have followed me through all the dangers of battle, and now in my dying hour I ask my Saviour to bless my dear old superintendent; that is all."

Turning towards me he said; "Now, doctor, I am ready, and I promise you that I will not even groan while you take off my arm and leg if you will not offer me chloroform." I promised, but I had not the courage to take the



knife in my hand to perform the operation without first going to the next room and taking a little stimulant to nerve myself to perform my duty. While cutting through the flesh Charlie Coulson never groaned, but when I took the saw to separate the bone the lad took the corner of his pillow in his mouth, and all that I could hear him

utter was, "O, Jesus, blessed Jesus, stand by me now!" He kept his promise and never groaned.

That night I could not sleep, for whichever way I turned I saw those soft blue eyes, and when I closed mine the words, "Blessed Jesus, stand by me now," kept ringing in my ears. Between twelve and one o'clock I left my bed and visited the hospital, a thing I had never done before unless specially called, but such was my desire to see that boy. Upon my arrival there I was informed by the night steward that sixteen of the hopeless cases had died and had been carried down to the dead-house.

"How is Charlie Coulson? Is he among the dead?" I asked. "No sir," answered the steward; "he is sleeping as sweetly as a babe."

When I came up to the bed where he lay, one of the nurses informed me that about nine o'clock two members of the Young Men's Christian Association came through the hospital to read and sing a hymn. They were accompanied by Chaplin R... who knelt by Charlie Coulson's bed and offered up a fervent and soul-stirring prayer, after which they sang, while still upon their knees, the sweetest of all hymns, "Jesus, lover of my soul," in which Charlie joined. I could not understand how that boy, who had undergone such excruciating pain, could sing.

Five days after I had amputated that dear boy's arm and leg he sent for me, and it was from him that I heard the first Gospel sermon. "Doctor," he said, "my time has come, I do not expect to see another sun rise, but thank God, I am ready to go, and before I die, I desire to thank you with all my heart for your kindness to me. Doctor, you are a Jew, you do not believe in Jesus; will you please stand here and see me die, trusting my Saviour to the last moment of my life?"

I tried to stay, but I could not, for I had not the courage to stand by and see a Christian boy die rejoicing in the love of that Jesus whom I had been taught to hate, so I hurriedly left the room. About twenty minutes later a steward who found me sitting in my



private office covering my face with my hands said, "Doctor, Charlie Coulson wishes to see you."

"I have just seen him," I answered, "and I cannot see him again."

"But, Doctor, he says he must see you once more before he dies." I made up my mind to see him, say an endearing word, and let him die, but I was determined that no word of his should influence me in the least so far as his Jesus was concerned. When I entered the hospital I saw he was sinking fast, so I sat down by his bed. Asking me to take his hand, he said, "Doctor, I love you because you are a Jew; the best Friend I have found in this world was a Jew."

I asked, "Who was that?"

He answered, "Jesus Christ, to whom I want to introduce you before I die, and will you promise me, doctor, that what I am about to say to you, you will never forget?"

I promised, and he said, "Five days ago, while you amputated my arm and leg, I prayed to the Lord Jesus Christ to save your soul."

These words went deep into my heart. I could not understand how, when I was causing him the most intense pain, he could forget all about himself, and think of nothing but his Saviour and my unconverted state. All I could say to him was, "Well, my dear boy, you will soon be all right." With these words I left him, and twelve minutes later he fell asleep, 'Safe in the arms of Jesus.'

Hundreds of soldiers died in my hospital during the war, but I only followed one to the grave, that one was Charlie Coulson, the drummer boy, and I rode three miles to see him buried. I had him dressed in a new uniform, and placed in an officer's coffin, with a new United States flag over it. That dear boy's dying words made a deep impression upon me. I was rich at that time, so far as money is concerned, but I would have given every penny I possessed if I could have felt towards Christ as Charlie did, but that feeling cannot be bought with money. For several months after Charlie Coulson's

death, I could not get rid of the words of that dear boy. They kept ringing in my ears, but being in the company of officers, I gradually forgot the sermon Charlie preached in his dying hour, but I never could forget his wonderful patience under acute suffering, and his simple trust in that Jesus whose Name to me at that time was a by-word and a reproach.

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## **THE BARBER OF NEW YORK**

by Dr M. L. Rossvally

For ten long years I fought against Christ with all the hatred of an orthodox Jew, until God in His mercy brought me in contact with a Christian barber, who proved himself a second instrument in my conversion from Jew to Christian.

At the close of the American war, I was detailed as inspecting surgeon and to take charge of the military hospital in Galveston, Texas. Returning one day from an inspecting tour, and on my way to Washington, I stopped to rest a few hours at New York. After dinner I stepped downstairs to the barber's shop (which is attached to every hotel of note in the United States). On entering the room, I was surprised to see hung round the room sixteen beautifully framed Scripture texts in different colours. Sitting down in one of the barber's chairs I saw directly opposite me, hanging up in a frame on the wall, this notice.

### **PLEASE DO NOT SWEAR IN THIS ROOM**

No sooner had the barber put the brush to my face than he began also to talk to me about Jesus. He spoke in such an attractive and loving manner that my prejudices were disarmed, and I listened with growing attention to what he said. All the time he was talking, 'Charlie Coulson, the drummer boy', came swelling up in my mind, although he had been dead ten years. I was so well pleased with

the words and deportment of the barber that no sooner had he done shaving me I told him next to cut my hair, although when I entered the room, I had no such thought or intention. All the while he was cutting my hair he kept steadily on preaching to me, and telling me that although not a Jew himself, he was at one time as far away from Christ as I was then.

I listened attentively, my interest increasing with every word he said, to such an extent that when he had finished cutting my hair I said, "Barber, you may now give me a shampoo;" in fact I allowed him to do all that one in his profession could do for a gentleman at one sitting. There is, however, an end to all things, and my time being short I prepared to leave. I paid my bill, thanked the barber for his remarks, and said, "I must catch the next train." He, however, was not yet satisfied. It was a bitter cold February day, and the ice on the ground made it somewhat dangerous to walk on the streets. It was only two minutes' walk to the station from the hotel, and the kind barber at once offered to walk to the station with me. I accepted his offer gladly, and no sooner had we reached the street than he put his arm in mine to keep me from falling. He said but little as we were walking along the street until we arrived at our destination, but when we got to the station he broke the silence by saying, "Stranger, perhaps you do not understand why I chose to talk to you upon a subject so dear to me. When you entered my shop, I saw by your face that you were a Jew."

He still continued to talk to me about his "dear Saviour," and said he felt it his duty, whenever he came in contact with a Jew, to try and introduce him to One whom he felt was his best Friend, both for this world and for the world to come. On looking a second time into his face, I saw tears trickling down his cheeks, and he was evidently under deep emotion. I could not understand how it was that this man, a total stranger to me, should take such a deep interest in my welfare, and also shed tears while talking to me.

I reached out my hand to bid him good-bye. He took it in both of his and gently pressed it, the tears still continuing to run down his face, and said, "Stranger, if it is any satisfaction for you to

know it, if you will give me your card or name, I promise you, on the honour of a Christian man, that during the next three months I will not retire to rest at night without making mention of you by name in my prayers. And now may my Saviour follow you, trouble you, and give you no rest until you find Him, what I have found Him to be, a precious Saviour, and the Messiah you are looking for."

I thanked him for his attention and consideration, and after handing him my card, said, I fear rather sneeringly, "There is not much danger of my ever becoming a Christian".

He then handed me his card, saying as he did so, "Will you please drop me a note or a letter if God should answer my prayers on your behalf?" I smiled incredulously, and said, "Certainly I will," never dreaming that within the next forty-eight hours God in His mercy would answer that barber's prayer. I shook his hand heartily and said "Good-bye;" but in spite of an outward appearance of unconcern, I felt he had made a deep impression on my mind, which indeed he had, as the sequel will show.

To be continued, GW, in the Winter Edition of Perception

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## HAVE WE ANY IDOLS?

How can you discern when a good desire might be turning into a sinful demand?

You can begin by prayerfully asking yourself 'X-ray' questions that reveal the true condition of your heart.

- What am I preoccupied with?
- What is the first thing on my mind in the morning and the last thing on my mind at night?
- How would I complete this statement:  
"If only \_\_\_\_\_, then I would be happy, fulfilled, and secure"?
- What do I want to preserve or avoid?
- Where do I put my trust?
- What do I fear?

- When a certain desire is not met, do I feel frustration, anxiety, resentment, bitterness, anger, or depression?
- Is there something I desire so much that I am willing to disappoint or hurt others in order to have it?

As you search your heart for idols, you will often encounter multiple layers of concealment, disguise, and justification.

One of the most subtle cloaking devices is to argue that we want only what God Himself commands. How we need to check our motives continually!

### **The Cure for an Idolatrous Heart**

An idol is any desire that has grown into a consuming demand that rules our heart; it is something we think we must have to be happy, fulfilled, or secure. To put it another way, it is something we love, fear, or trust.

Love, fear, trust – are these not words of worship! Jesus commands us to love God, fear God, and trust God and God alone (Matthew 22:37; Luke 12:4-5; John 14:1). Any time we long for something apart from God, fear something more than God, or trust in something other than God to make us happy, fulfilled, or secure, we are engaging in the worship of false gods. As a result, we deserve the judgement and wrath of the true God.

There is only one way out of this bondage and judgement. It is to look to God Himself, who is able and willing to deliver His people from their idols. 'I am the LORD thy God, which have brought thee out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage. Thou shalt have no other gods before me' (Exodus20:2-3). God has provided the cure for the sin of idolatry by sending His Son to endure the punishment because of the sin of His people.

Through Jesus Christ sinners are made righteous in God's sight and find freedom from sin and idolatry. "There is therefore, now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit' (Rom.8.1).

Adapted from RW360

## INFLUENCERS

For better and for worse, Joash was a man who was easily influenced.

After being made king of Judah at just 7 years old, Joash led his people to turn away from idol worship and to re-establish correct worship of the Lord. Much can be attributed to the good influence of a priest named Jehoiada. Indeed, King Joash '...did that which was right in the sight of the Lord all the days of Jehoiada the priest' (2 Chron.24.2).

Sadly, this good influence didn't last. After Jehoiada passed away, princes of Judah came and encouraged Joash to restore idol worship. Joash listened to his new influencers and led Judah to serve groves and idols (2 Chron.24.17-18).

When I read the story of Joash, I think about the children and young people and the range of people seeking to influence this next generation. In addition to parents, friends and teachers, there's a whole world of strangers seeking to influence people from afar. Children, as well as adults, are regularly exposed to advertising, the internet, TV, movies, video games, social media and more that seek to influence them. It's estimated that the average person sees thousands of advertisements each day. Combine that with regular amounts of mass media consumption and social media interaction, and it becomes clear that we all are inundated with potential influencers.

There are those who call themselves 'Influencers' and are making a lot of money promoting various brands or products. They build what might be called 'careers' from this form of advertising. Envy is the moving force behind the success of this form of



advertising, and when sin is the force behind something, then negative and destructive is the influence of it. Sin was the force that moved the princes of Judah, and negative and destructive was their influence on Joash.

So, what can we do to avoid the fate of Joash?

John writes 'Little children, keep yourselves from idols' (1John.5.21). This is the answer from the Word of God. It is best for us to put away any unnecessary distractions, to only take into our possession the necessary forms of technology, and to understand the potential waste of time they can be. Time is a precious gift, we can waste it but we cannot stop it, and when it is gone it is gone for ever. We each need the help of Almighty God to turn off or get rid of those things that are a waste of time!



We each have an influence on those around us. Parents are watched by their children and are influencing them, friends are influencing friends, the world around us is influencing us, and we could go on!

The princes of Judah had a bad influence on Joash and he turned to the ways of sin. May God give us each His Spirit to influence us for good!

Psychologists generally define forgiveness as a conscious, deliberate decision to release feelings of resentment or vengeance toward a person or group who has harmed you, regardless of whether they actually deserve your forgiveness. Forgiveness, they say, does not mean forgetting and it certainly does not mean condoning or excusing offenses.

However, the LORD has said '...for I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more' (Jer.31.34). What a mercy!

## CURRENT MATTERS

### Churches and Bibles burnt in Pakistan

Thousands of Muslims in Pakistan have set fire to churches and vandalised homes belonging to Christians over claims that two men had desecrated the Quran, police say. The attacks took place in Jaranwala in the province of eastern Punjab.

Police said at least four churches had been set on fire, while residents said up to a dozen buildings connected to churches had been damaged.

Yassir Bhatti, a 31-year-old Christian, was one of those to flee their homes. "They broke the windows, doors and took out fridges, sofas, chairs and other household items to pile them up in front of the Church to be burnt," he told the AFP news agency.

"They also burnt and desecrated Bibles, they were ruthless."

Videos uploaded to social media show protesters destroying Christian buildings while police appear to watch on. The mob was mostly made up of people from an Islamist political party called Tehreek-e-Labbaik Pakistan (TLP).

The Lord give us each a spirit of prayer for those who are being persecuted for their Christian faith.

### La Santa Biblia

This August saw the launch of the much anticipated Spanish translation of the Holy Bible by the Trinitarian Bible Society. The work of translation has taken the team almost 15 years to complete and is the most accurate translation following on from the Reina-Valera version of 1909. The original Hebrew and Greek has been used to meticulously compare every word to ensure this is an accurate and faithful translation. The official launch event was held in Columbia, South America, and we pray the Lord will own and bless His word among the Spanish speaking populations in Latin America and Europe.



## Leaning

If the tree pictured on the front cover is not cut down but is left to fall, then it seems obvious in which direction it will fall – the way it is leaning. This we know through the laws of physics.

For the time being the tree stands. Over the many years it has been growing the branches have adapted to the angle of the tree trunk by growing upwards and outwards. The roots also have secured the tree so that it has stood firm even though it leans at what seems a precarious angle.

The wise man writes – '...if the tree falleth toward the south, or toward the north, in the place where the tree falleth, there shall it be' (Eccl.11.3). Solomon mentions the tree falling in two directions, north or south. The tree falling one way or the other. The word of God speaks of two places after death, heaven and hell. Which will be our final destination?

Are we like the tree on the front cover – leaning a certain way?

Are we inclined in our thoughts and desires towards God or away from Him? Do we have affections toward God or are our affections on the things of the world, sinful things?

How we need the power of God to stop us in the ways of sin. To halt us in leaning constantly towards wickedness and recover us from the precarious state we are in by nature.

Only Almighty God can recover lost sinners and bring them from the ways of sin to the path of life.

*'Hold thou me up, and I shall be safe:...'* (Psa.119.117) was the prayer of the Psalmist, and a good prayer for us each.



# PERCEPTION

A Quarterly Magazine for Young People



For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life (John 3.16).

WINTER 2023

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**Annual Subscription (2024):** includes postage and should be sent to:

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**Cover picture:** Love-heart Hands

# PERCEPTION

Volume 15    Winter 2023    Number 60

## EDITORIAL

We think in particular at this time of year of the coming of the Saviour into the world. We would not limit our thoughts of the birth of the Lord Jesus to just a few weeks in December but, as we come to this season, we are encouraged that in such an increasingly sinful world there is still some remembrance of the Saviour's birth. This should make the heart of every Christian glad. Yes, sadly, there is much of the true meaning of Christmas lost in the commercialisation of it - but let that not deter us in our worship. The Shepherds having heard the good tidings of great joy said one to another '*...Let us now go even unto Bethlehem, and see this thing which is come to pass, which the Lord hath made known unto us*' (Luke 2.15). I pray the Lord will make known these things to each reader and put that resolve of the Shepherds in each heart.

That momentous night many years ago, when the Lord Jesus was born at Bethlehem, the multitude of the heavenly host joined the angel of the Lord in praising God for His glory, declaring peace and goodwill toward men (Luke 2.9-14). Upon hearing these good tidings there was an effect in the heart of those Shepherds, they were attracted and drawn by these things, their desire was to see for themselves, and that moved the Shepherds to leave their flocks and seek out the Saviour in Bethlehem that night. We read '*And they came with haste, and found Mary, and Joseph, and the babe lying in the manger*' (Luke 2.16). Peace, love and mercy occupied that manger in Bethlehem, the hope of lost sinners and the satisfaction of God lay in the manger in the Person of Jesus Christ. Have we been made to rejoice and praise God for the coming of the Saviour, the Friend

of sinners?

This time of year is often a busy time for people. Plans are made for family gatherings; presents are being brought and preparations made to celebrate Christmas. For some, however, it will not be busy. They have no family or maybe have lost loved ones and now look on empty chairs, space around the kitchen table, a quietness that can be particularly deafening at this time of year. The apostle Paul encourages the Philippians to be unselfish saying *'Look not every man on his own things, but every man also on the things of others'* (Phil.2.4), he then directs them to the perfect example and says, *'Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus:'* (Phil.2.5). Kindness, compassion and understanding are found without limit in the Lord Jesus Christ and are His to give, may it be given to us each.



In parts of north Europe and North America the closing and opening months of the year are wintertime. Friday 22nd December marks the Winter solstice across the northern hemisphere. This date is the 24-hour period with the fewest hours of daylight in the year, which is why it is known as the shortest day and longest night. At this time of year we have around eight hours of daylight. It might

be the shortest day, but it's a reason to be cheerful as the days get longer from here! The Winter solstice is the opposite of the Summer solstice - which has the most daylight and the longest day with the shortest night of the year. The Winter solstice happens when the North Pole is tilted furthest away from the sun as the Earth continues on its orbit - which is why it is winter in the Northern hemisphere at this time of the year. In the southern hemisphere it's exactly the opposite. The South Pole is pointing towards the Sun, making it summertime in Australia. As many of you will have breaks from study or work this Christmas time and maybe have opportunity to enjoy the winter weather, may you stop and consider the wisdom and power of Almighty God who created all things and ordered the seasons for us.

At the time of writing this editorial the end of another year approaches, eleven months of the twelve have come and gone. How many of us can join in with the sentiments of Mr Gadsby's hymn 699?

Another year of our short life is gone,  
And many are the wonders we have known;  
Our path's been strewn with blessings rich and rare,  
Proceeding from Thy special love and care.

In the natural order of things one year ends and another begins. We look back over the year that is past, we look forward and wonder what will happen in 2024. Some things that took place in 2023 were anticipated, thought about and prayed over before the year began and unfolded as envisaged. Other things, however, were not so and took us by surprise. Some events caused great sorrow and distress, others were times of great joy and rejoicing. But in all these things, not one of them was unknown, not thought of, or a surprise to Almighty God. This was true of 2023 and is so for 2024 and beyond.



The onset of a new year can cause varying emotions. Some look forward to the year as they have plans to get married or will become old enough to begin learning to drive, or maybe some will leave school, college or university.

It could be, however, a year for some that they fear and dread. Final exams, employment to look for and commence, or for some there are surgeries and treatments to be faced. David wrote in Psalm thirty one *'But I trusted in thee, O Lord: I said, Thou art my God'* (v14), he then says *'My times are in thy hand:...'* (v15). This truth, applied to us by the power of Holy Spirit will prove to be a sure support and comfort through the times of uncertainty and change which come with the passing of time.

In joys or sorrows, may we know that all are in His kind and gracious hands.

With best wishes and Christian love,

*The Editor*

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**NO ROOM**

There was no room for Jesus Christ,  
When as a babe He came,  
No room for Him within the inn,  
In little Bethlehem.

But in a stable there was found,  
A lowly manger bed,  
For there the Saviour of mankind  
Had room to lay His head.

And there was room upon the cross,  
For He who came from heaven,  
For there He shed His precious blood,  
So sin could be forgiven.

But do we give to Him the room,  
In things we do each day?  
A place for Jesus, Saviour, Friend,  
In things we think and say?

Does He have the rightful place,  
The honour that is due?  
Or does He find there is no room,  
And we ignore Him too?

Is there a place within the heart,  
A longing there to know  
The Christ of Christmas for ourselves,  
And know it to be so.



## **SPIRITUAL CONFLICT**

The experience of the godly John Bunyan (Author of The Pilgrims Progress) after years of service to God:

I find to this day seven abominations in my heart:

1. Inclinations to unbelief.
2. Suddenly to forget the love and mercy that Christ manifests.
3. A leaning to the works of the law.
4. Wanderings and coldness in prayer.
5. To forget to watch for that I pray for.
6. Apt to murmur because I have no more, and yet ready to abuse what I have.
7. I can do none of those things which God commands me, but my corruptions will thrust in themselves.

‘When I would do good, evil is present with me.’

These things I continually see and feel, and am afflicted and oppressed with; yet the Wisdom of God doth order them for my good, because:

1. They make me abhor myself.
2. They keep me from trusting my heart.
3. They convince me of the insufficiency of all inherent righteousness.
4. They show me the necessity of fleeing to Jesus Christ.
5. They press me to pray unto God.
6. They show me the need I have to watch and be sober.
7. And provoke me to look to God, through Christ, to help me, and carry me through this world."

From: ‘Grace Abounding to the Chief of Sinners’

## **CHARLIE COULSON THE DRUMMER BOY**

by Dr M. L. Rossvally

(Continued from 'The Barber of New York' in the Autumn Edition of Perception)

As is well known, the American railway carriage is longer than the ordinary British railway carriage. It has also only one compartment, which will seat from sixty to eighty persons. As the weather was bitterly cold, the passengers were not numerous in this train, the carriage I had entered not being more than half filled; and, without being conscious of the fact, in less than ten or fifteen minutes I had moved around the carriage and had occupied every empty seat in the compartment.

The passengers began to look upon me with suspicion as they saw me change my seat so frequently in so short a time without any apparent object. For my part I did not think at that time that the wrong was in my heart, although I could not account for my erratic movements. Finally, I went to an empty seat in the corner of the carriage, with the firm intention of going to sleep. The moment I closed my eyes, however, I felt myself between two fires. On the one side there was the Christian barber of New York, and on the other there was the drummer boy of Gettysburg, both talking to me about that Jesus whose very Name I hated. I felt it impossible either to go to sleep or to shake off the impression made upon my mind by those two faithful Christians - one of whom had bid me good-bye only an hour previously whilst the other had been dead nearly ten years - and so continued to be troubled and perplexed all the while I was in the train.

On my arrival at Washington, I purchased a morning newspaper, and one of the first things that caught my attention was the announcement of a Revival service in Dr. Rankin's church, the largest church in Washington. No sooner had I seen that announcement than an inner monitor seemed to say to me, "Go to that church." I had never been inside a Christian church during

divine service, and at any other time I should have scouted such a thought as from the devil. It was my father's intention when I was a boy that I should become a rabbi, and so I promised him that I would never enter a place where "Jesus, the Impostor," was worshipped as God, and that I would never attempt to read a book containing that Name, and I had faithfully kept my word up to that moment.

In connection with the Revival meetings just referred to, it was stated that there would be a united choir from the various churches in the city, who would sing at each of the services. Being a



passionate lover of music, this attracted my attention, and I made it my excuse for seeking to visit the church during the Revival service that night. When I entered the building, which was filled with worshippers, one of the ushers, attracted doubtless by my gold epaulettes (for I had not changed my uniform), led me up to a front seat, right in front of the preacher, an evangelist well known both in England and America. I was charmed with the beautiful singing, but the evangelist had not been speaking five minutes before I came to the conclusion that someone must have been informing him who I was, for I thought he pointed his finger at me. He kept watching me, and every now and then appeared to be shaking his fist at me. In spite of all this, however, I felt deeply interested in what he said. But this was not all, for still ringing in my ears were the words of the two former preachers—the Christian barber of New York and the drummer boy of Gettysburg - emphasising the utterances of the evangelist and, in my mind, I could plainly see those two dear friends also repeating their messages. Growing more and more interested in the words of the preacher, I felt tears trickling down

my face. This startled me, and I began to feel ashamed that I, an orthodox Jew, should be childish enough to shed tears in a Christian Church, the first I had ever shed in such a place.

I omitted to say that during the service, and whilst the preacher was watching me, the thought occurred to me that possibly he might be pointing his finger at some person behind me, and I turned round in my seat to discover who the individual was, when to my astonishment a congregation of more than 200 persons of all grades of society seemed to be looking at me. I at once came to the conclusion that I was the only Jew in the place, and heartily wished myself out of the building for I felt I had got into bad company. Being well known in Washington, both by Jew and Gentile, the thought flashed across my mind – “How will it read in a Washington paper that ‘Dr. Rossvally, a Jew, was present at the revival services, not five minutes walk from the synagogue he usually attends, and was seen to shed tears during the sermon?’” Not wishing to make myself conspicuous (for there were faces there I recognised), I made up my mind not to take out my handkerchief to wipe off the tears - they must dry up themselves; but, blessed be God, I could not keep them back, for they came flowing faster and faster.

After a while the preacher finished his address, and I was surprised to hear him announce an after-meeting and invite all who could do so to remain. I did not accept the invitation, being only too glad of the opportunity to leave the church. With that intention I got up from my seat, and had reached the door, when I felt that someone held me by the skirt of my coat. Turning round, I saw an elderly-looking lady, who proved to be Mrs. Young, of Washington, a well-known Christian.

Addressing me, she said: “Pardon me, stranger; I see you are an officer in the army. I have been watching you all this evening, and I beg of you not to leave this house, for I think you are under conviction of sin. I believe you came here to seek the Saviour, and you have not found Him yet. Do come back; I would like to talk to you, and, if you will permit me, I will pray for you.”

“Madam,” I answered, “I am a Jew.”

She replied: “I do not care if you are a Jew; Jesus Christ died for Jew as well as Gentile.”

The persuasive manner in which she said these words was not without its effect. I followed her back to the very spot whence I had just left so abruptly, and when we came up to the front she said: “If you will kneel I will pray for you.”

“Madam, that is something I have never done, and never will do,” for orthodox Jews never kneel in prayer except twice a year - on the feast of Trumpets and Day of Atonement, and then it is not kneeling as Christians do; it is a prostration on the ground.

Mrs. Young looked me calmly in the face and said: “Dear stranger, I have found such a dear, loving and forgiving Saviour in the Lord Jesus that I firmly believe in my heart He can convert a Jew standing on his feet, and I will go on my knees and pray for that.” She suited the action to the word, fell on her knees, and began to pray, talking to her Saviour in such a simple, childlike manner that completely unnerved me. I felt so ashamed of myself to see that dear old lady kneeling near me while I was standing - and praying so fervently on my behalf. My whole past life floated so vividly before my mind that I heartily wished the floor would open, and that I might sink out of sight. When she arose from her knees, she extended her hand, and with a motherly sympathy said: “Will you pray to Jesus before you sleep to-night?”

“Madam,” I replied, “I will pray to my God the God of Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, but not to Jesus.”

“Bless you!” she said, “your God of Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob is my Christ and your Messiah.”

“Goodnight, madam, and thank you for your kindness,” I said as I left the church.

On my way home, reflecting on my recent strange experiences, I began to reason with myself: “Why is it that these Christians take such interest in Jew and Gentile, perfect strangers to them? Is it possible that all these millions of men and women

who during the last 1800 years have lived and died trusting in Christ, are mistaken, and a little handful of Jews, scattered all over the world, are right? Why should that dying drummer boy think only of my unsaved soul? And why, also, should that Christian barber of New York manifest such a deep interest in me? Why should the preacher tonight single me out and point his finger at me, or that dear woman follow me to the door and hold me back? It must be all for the love they bear to their Jesus, whom I despise so much.” The more I thought of this the worse I felt. On the other hand, I argued: “Is it possible that my father and mother, who loved me so dearly, should teach me anything that is wrong? In my childhood they taught me to hate Jesus; that there was but one God and that He had no Son.” I now felt a desire springing up in my heart to become acquainted with that Jesus whom the Christians so much loved and worshipped. I started to walk faster, fully determined that if there was a reality in the religion of Jesus Christ, I would know something of it before I slept.

When I arrived at home, my wife (who was a very strict orthodox Jewess) thought I looked rather excited and asked where I had been. The truth I dare not tell her, and a falsehood I would not, and so I said, “Dear wife, please do not ask me any questions. I have some very important business to attend to. I wish to go to my private study, where I can be alone.”

I went at once to my study, locked the door and began to pray, standing with my face towards the east, as I always had done. The more I prayed the worse I felt. I could not account for the feeling that had come over me. I was in great perplexity as to the meaning of many prophecies in the Old Testament which deeply interested me. My prayer gave me no satisfaction, and then it occurred to me that if I should kneel, I might be deceived in thus bowing my knee to that Jesus whom I had been taught in childhood to believe to be an impostor.

Although the night was bitterly cold, and there was no fire in my study (it was not thought that I should use the room that night). My phylacteries were hanging in my study on the wall, and

I caught sight of them. Never since I was thirteen years of age had I missed a day in wearing them, except on Jewish Sabbaths and feasts. I loved them dearly. I took them in my hand, and while looking at them Genesis 49.10 came flashing across my mind: *'The sceptre shall not depart from Judah, nor a lawgiver from between his feet, until Shiloh come; and unto Him shall the gathering of the people be.'*

Two other passages also which I had often read and pondered over, presented themselves vividly to my mind, the first of these being from Micah 5.2: *'But thou, Bethlehem Ephratah, though thou be little among the thousands of Judah, yet out of thee shall He come forth unto me that is to be ruler in Israel; whose goings forth have been from of old, from everlasting.'*

The other passage is the well-known prediction in Isaiah 7.14: *'Therefore the Lord Himself shall give you a sign; Behold, a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel.'*

These three passages impressed themselves so forcibly on my mind that I cried out: "O Lord God of Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, Thou knowest I am sincere in this thing. If Jesus Christ is the Son of God reveal Him to me this night, and I will accept Him as my Messiah." No sooner had I said this than almost unconsciously I flung my phylacteries into a corner of the room, and in less time than I can tell it I was on my knees praying in the same corner, where my phylacteries were lying on the floor by my side. To throw the phylacteries on the floor as I had done was for a Jew an act of blasphemy. I was now on my knees praying for the first time in my



life, and my mind was much agitated and in doubt as to the wisdom of my proceedings.

My first prayer to Jesus I shall never forget. It was as follows: "O Lord Jesus Christ, if Thou art the Son of God; if Thou art the Saviour of the world; if Thou art the Jews' Messiah for whom we Jews are still looking; and if Thou canst convert sinners as Christians say, Thou canst convert me, for I am a sinner, and I will promise to serve Thee all the days of my life."

This prayer of mine, however, went no higher than my head. The reason was not far to seek. I had tried to make a bargain with Jesus, and if He would do what I asked of Him, I, on my part would do what I then promised Him. I remained on my knees for about half an hour, and whilst so engaged drops of sweat came running down my face. My head also felt hot, and I put it against the wall of my study to cool it. I was in agony, but I was not converted. I arose and paced to and fro in my room. Then the thought came to me that I had gone too far already, and I vowed I would never go on my knees again. I began to reason with myself, "Why should I go on my knees? Cannot the God of Abraham, whom I have loved, served, and worshipped all the days of my life, do for me what Christ is said to do for the Gentiles?" I looked at it of course from a Jewish standpoint and went on reasoning, "Why should I go to the Son? Is not the Father above the Son?"

The more I reasoned the worse I felt and became increasingly perplexed. In one corner of the room lay my phylacteries, which still possessed a magnetic influence over me. I instinctively turned towards them, and I involuntarily fell on my knees again, but could not utter any words. My heart ached, for I had a sincere desire to become acquainted with Christ, if He was the Messiah. I changed my posture time after time, alternately kneeling and then walking about the room from a quarter to ten until five minutes to two in the morning. At that time light began to dawn on my mind, and I began to feel and believe in my soul that Jesus Christ was really the true Messiah. No sooner had I realised this than, for the last time that night, I fell on my knees; but this



time my doubts were gone, and I began to praise God, for a joy and happiness had penetrated my soul such as I had never known before. I had found the true Shiloh, the Ruler of Israel, Immanuel - *'God with us'* - I had believed the report of Isaiah concerning the true Messiah - Jesus - who was *'...despised and rejected of men; a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief...'* (Isa.53.3), who was *'...wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon Him; and with His stripes we are healed'* (Isa.53.5). I had looked on Him whom they had pierced, and I knew that I was converted, and that God for Christ's sake had pardoned my sin. I now felt that neither circumcision availed anything, nor uncircumcision, but a new creature.

I arose from my knees and, in my newfound happiness, thought that my dear wife would at once share my joy when I told her of the great change which had come over me. With that thought uppermost in my mind, I rushed out of my study into the bedroom (for my wife had retired to rest, although the gas had not been turned off); I threw my arms around her neck, began to kiss her eagerly, saying: "Dear wife, I have found the Messiah." She looked annoyed, and, pushing me from her, coldly asked, "Found who?" "Jesus Christ, my Messiah and Saviour," was my ready reply. She spoke not another word, but in less than fifteen minutes was dressed and had left the house, although it was then two in the morning and bitterly cold and went across the street to the house of her parents, who lived immediately opposite. I did not follow her, but dropped on my knees, imploring my newly found Saviour that my wife might also have her eyes opened as I had, and afterwards went to sleep.

### **Bearing His reproach**

On the following morning my poor wife was told by her parents that if she ever called me husband again, she would be disinherited, excommunicated from the synagogue, and accursed. At the same time my two children were sent for by their grandparents and told that they must never call me father again;

that I, in worshipping Jesus, the “Impostor”, was fully as bad as He was.

Oh! the inveterate hatred of the human heart to the Gospel of God. Well might the converted Hebrew of the Hebrews who wrote the Epistle to the Romans declare ‘...*both Jews and Gentiles, that they are all under sin; As it is written, There is none righteous, no, not one*’ (Rom.3.9,10). ‘*For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God*’ (Rom.3.23).

Five days later after my conversion I received orders from the Surgeon-General at Washington to proceed west on Government business. I tried all the means in my power to communicate personally with my wife and to bid her goodbye, but she would neither see me nor write to me. She, however, sent me a message by a neighbour to the effect that so long as I called Jesus Christ my Saviour, I should not call her my wife, for she would not live with me. I did not expect to receive such a message from my wife, for I loved her and my children dearly, and it was with a sad heart therefore that I left home that morning to travel 1300 miles to my sphere of duty without being able to see either my wife or my children.

For fifty-four days my wife would not answer any of my letters, although I wrote her one daily, and with every letter sent I prayed that God would incline her heart to read at least one of them. I felt that if she would but read one of my letters (for Christ was preached and the joy I was experiencing in my soul was told in every one of them), she would reconsider what she had said and done before I left home. Never in my experience were Cowper’s lines more signally fulfilled:

God moves in a mysterious way  
His wonders to perform;  
He plants His footsteps in the sea,  
And rides upon the storm.

for it was through the disobedience of my daughter that my wife was converted. My daughter was the youngest of our children; she was generally considered her father's pet. After my conversion to Christ a sense of duty to her mother on the one hand and her love to her father on the other kept her mind in continual agitation.

On the fifty-third night she dreamt she saw her father die. A fear came over her, and she made up her mind that, come what may, she would not destroy the next letter in her father's handwriting. The following morning, she waited for the postman at the door. As he handed the letters to her she took her father's letter, quickly slipped it into her bosom, ran upstairs into her room, locked the door, and opened the letter. She began to read it, and then read it three times before she laid it down. That letter made her sad at heart to such an extent that when she went downstairs her mother saw she had been crying and asked her the cause of her grief.

"Mother, if I tell you, you will be offended: but if you promise me not to be grieved, I will tell you all about it."

"What is it, my child?" said her mother.

Taking out my letter from under her dress, she told her mother her dream of the previous night, and added, "I have opened papa's letter this morning, and now I cannot and will not believe what my grandpa or grandma or anybody else says about papa being a bad man, for a bad man could not write such a letter as this to his wife and children. I beg of you to read this, mother," she added, as she handed to her the letter.

My wife, took the letter, carried it into the next room, and locked it in her desk. That afternoon she locked herself in her room, and, opening the desk, took my letter and began to read it. The more she read the worse she felt. She afterwards told me she read it through five times before she finally laid it down. After the last reading of the letter my wife returned it to the desk and went back to the room she had just left. Her eyes were full of tears, and now it was my daughter's turn to ask, "Mother, why are you crying?"

“Child, my heart aches,” was the reply; “I wish to lie down in the lounge.” She did so. The servant made her a cup of tea, thinking that was all that was needed to take away the heartache of which she complained. There are many cases, doubtless, in which a cup of tea may possibly be a benefit, but it brought no relief to my poor wife.

After a while my wife’s mother came across the street to our house. Thinking my wife to be very ill she administered some simple house remedies, as mothers frequently do. This also failed to give any relief. At half-past seven in the evening my mother-in-law sent for Dr. D—. He came at once and prescribed for her, but his medicine likewise failed to remove the heart ache of which my wife complained. My mother-in-law stayed at our house that night attending to my wife until a quarter-past eleven o’clock. I heard my wife say afterwards that the desire of her heart was that her mother should leave the room, for she had fully made up her mind to go on her knees, as I had previously done, as soon as her mother had gone. No sooner, therefore, had she left our house than my wife locked the door and fell on her knees by the side of her bed, and in less than two minutes Christ the Great Physician met her, healed her, and delivered her.

Like her husband, the moment she was brought to an end of human effort, worldly wisdom and vain tradition, and surrendered herself, body, soul, and spirit, to God, she found the Holy Spirit able and willing to open her blind eyes, to turn her from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan to God as we read in Acts 26. 18. She was enabled to ‘...Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world’ (John 1.29), she could say with Philip of old, ‘...We have found Him, of Whom Moses in the law, and the prophets did write, Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph’ (John 1.45); and add with Nathaniel, ‘...Rabbi, thou art the Son of God; thou art the King of Israel’ (John 1.49).

On the following day I received a telegram worded as follows: “Dear Husband - come home at once. I thought you were in the wrong and I was in the right, but I have found that you were

in the right and I in the wrong. Your Christ is my Messiah, your Jesus my Saviour. Last night, at nineteen minutes past eleven, while on my knees for the first time in my life, the Lord Jesus saved my soul.”

After reading the telegram I felt for a moment as if I did not care one cent for the Government under which I served. I left my business unfinished, took the first express train, and started for Washington. My house at that time being well known there, especially among the Jews (for I had frequently sung in the synagogue), I did not wish to create a sensation, and so I telegraphed to my wife not to meet me at the station, for I would take a carriage on my arrival at Washington and drive quietly home. When I got to the front of my home, I saw my wife standing at the open door expecting me. Her face beamed with joy. She ran to meet me as I stepped out of the carriage and threw her arms round my neck and kissed me. Her father and mother were also standing at their open door across the street, and when they saw us in each other's arms they began to curse both me and my wife. Ten days after my wife had received the Lord Jesus Christ as her Saviour, my daughter was converted. She is now the wife of a Christian, and a worker in Christ's vineyard. My son (would to God I could say the same of him as of his sister!) was promised by his grandparents on his mother's side that if he would never again call me "father" or his mother, "mother", they would leave all their property to him, and thus far he has kept his promise.

### **Counting the cost**

I wrote to my mother, who resided in Germany, immediately after my conversion, recounting to her how I had found the true Messiah. I could not keep the good news from her, and in my heart thought she would believe me, the eldest of her fourteen children. Indeed, I may say that the first desire of my heart after my conversion was that all my friends, Jew as well as Gentile, should share with me in my new-found joy. I felt like the Psalmist when he wrote, *'Come and hear, all ye that fear God, and I will declare what*

*He hath done for my soul'* (Psa.66.16). This hope so far as my mother was concerned, was destined to be bitterly disappointed, for she wrote me but one letter (if a curse can be called a letter), prolonged silence at last awakening within me a suspicion that if she did write at all it would be to send me that curse which every Jew must expect from his nearest relations when he embraces Christianity. This suspicion was only too fully confirmed after a lapse of five months and a half, during which time I was in suspense, for previous to my conversion my mother had written to me once a month.

One morning when the postman brought me my letters, I saw amongst them one bearing the German postmark, and in the old, familiar handwriting of my dear mother. As soon as I saw it, I said to my wife, who was in the room: "It has come at last." Needless to say, I opened that letter first. There was no heading to it, no date, no "My dear Son," as all her former letters to me began, but it read as follows:

"MAX - You are no longer my son: we have buried you in effigy; we mourn you as one dead. And now may the God of Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob strike you blind, deaf, and dumb, and damn your soul for ever. You have left your father's religion and the synagogue for that Jesus 'the Impostor,' and now take your mother's curse. CLARA."

Although I had by this time fully counted what it would cost me in embracing the Gospel of Jesus Christ and knew what I had to expect from my relatives because I had turned my back on the synagogue, I confess I was hardly prepared for such a letter from my mother. My dear wife and I could now, however, be more fully sympathetic with each other in our new-found life; for, as stated before, her parents had already cursed her to her face for believing in Christ. It was not all sadness, however, for never before did the Psalmist's words seem so full of meaning and encouragement both to my wife and myself - '*When my father and mother forsake me, then the Lord will take me up*' (Psa.27.10).

Let not anyone think that it is an easy thing for a Jew to become a Christian. He must be prepared to forsake father, mother, and wife for the kingdom of God's sake, for the considerations which appeal alike to his affections and to his self-interests are brought to bear upon every Jew who is suspected of looking with favour towards Christianity. Yet such persecution only led me more and more to value the words of my newly found Master: *'...Verily I say unto you, That ye which have followed me, in the regeneration when the Son of Man shall sit in the throne of His glory, ye also shall sit upon twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel. And every one that hath forsaken houses, or brethren, or sisters, or father, or mother, or wife, or children, or lands, for my name's sake, shall receive an hundredfold, and shall inherit everlasting life'* (Matt.19.28,29).

Although she never wrote to me again, I was told the last word she uttered when life was ebbing away was my own name, "Max." And who can tell but in the last moments the sad memory of her curse and the soul-craving, unsatisfiable by Judaism, may have led her to find the God-provided Lamb in the true Messiah - JESUS (John 4.25,26; 6.37).

A year and nine months after her conversion my wife died. The desire of her heart previous to her death was to see her son, who resided about seven minutes' walk from our house. I sent again and again to him, begging of him to come and see his dying mother. One of the ministers of the city, along with his wife, personally saw my son, and tried to persuade him to grant his dying mother's request, but his only reply was, "Curse her, let her die, she is no mother of mine."

On Thursday morning (the day of her death) my wife asked me to send for as many members of the congregation where we worshipped as could come, to be with her in her dying hour. At half-past ten she asked Mrs. Ryle, the minister's wife, who was a very dear friend to her, to take her left hand, and let all the ladies in the room join hands with her. I stood at the other side of the bed and

took hold of the right hand, and the gentlemen joined hands with me, and at my wife's request, we formed a circle, about thirty-eight of us, and then we sang,

Jesus, Lover of my soul,  
 Let me to Thy bosom fly,  
 While the nearer waters roll,  
 While the tempest still is high.  
 Hide me, O my Saviour, hide,  
 Till the storm of life is past;  
 Safe into the haven guide;  
 O receive my soul at last!

very softly. As we began to sing,

Thou, O Christ, art all I want,  
 All in all in Thee I find;  
 Raise the fallen, cheer the faint,  
 Heal the sick, and lead the blind.  
 Just and holy is Thy Name;  
 I am all unrighteousness;  
 Vile and full of sin I am;  
 Thou art full of truth and grace;

Gadsby's 303

my wife in a feeble, though clear voice said: "Yes, it is all I want; it is all I have. Come, Lord Jesus, take me home," and she fell asleep.

She who from infancy had been taught to hate the Name of Jesus had by grace learned to value that Name above every name as the One Who so recently had saved her precious soul, made and kept her happy during the last trying months, and in our presence had given her a triumphant exodus from this world of sin and sorrow into the everlasting habitations prepared for Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob and all the redeemed, whether Jew or Gentile.



My son would not come to the funeral, nor, so far as I have known, has he ever visited his mother's grave, neither has he called me "father", nor answered any letter of mine since my conversion, although I have three times crossed the Atlantic from America, to Germany, trying to see him and be reconciled, but have failed in every instance, for he would not see me. This, however, has only called forth more fervent prayer on his behalf, that he also may be emancipated from the thralldom of Jewish prejudice, and in Jesus *'Behold the Lamb of God Which taketh away the sin of the world'* (John 1.29).

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## **CHARLIE COULSON THE DRUMMER BOY**

**The sequel** by Dr M. L. Rossvally.

About eighteen months after my conversion, I attended a prayer meeting one evening in the city of Brooklyn. It was one of those meetings when Christians testify to the loving-kindness of their Saviour. After several of them had spoken, an elderly lady rose and said, "Dear friends, this may be the last time it is my privilege to testify for Christ. My family physician told me yesterday that my right lung is very nearly gone, and my left lung is very much affected, so at the best I have but a short time to be with you, but what is left of me belongs to Jesus. Oh! it is a great joy to know that I shall be with Jesus in heaven, where my boy is. My son was not only a soldier for his country, but a soldier for Christ. He was wounded at the battle of Gettysburg and fell into the hands of a Jewish doctor; who amputated his arm and leg, but he died five days after the operation. The chaplain of the regiment wrote me a letter and sent my boy's Bible. In that letter I was informed that my Charlie in his dying hour sent for that Jewish doctor and said to him, 'Doctor, before I die, I wish to tell you that five days ago, while you amputated my arm and leg, I prayed to the Lord Jesus Christ to save your soul.'

When I heard this lady's testimony I could sit still no longer. I left my seat, crossed the room, and taking her by the hand, said, "God bless you, my dear sister; your boy's prayer has been heard and answered. I am the Jewish doctor for whom your Charlie prayed, and his Saviour is now my Saviour." A heavenly fervour spread over the meeting at the affecting sight of Jew and Gentile being made *'one in Christ Jesus'*, and realised His wondrous power in enabling the dying drummer boy to manifest the Spirit of his Master in praying for the enemies of the Cross; in the wonderful answer to the dying lad's prayer and in the glorious prospect of the re-union of the great ransomed multitude which no man can number out of every kindred and tongue and people and nation.

The Doctor writing in July 1887 says:

A fourth visit to Germany in July 1887, has strengthened and confirmed my faith, for my son not only consented to see me, but he shed bitter tears on the remembrance of the past, and at once declared his determination to see his dear sister in America.

Writing in October, 1887, the doctor says:

It is with great joy and thankfulness of heart that I record the conversion of my dear son. I firmly believe that the dear Saviour had been troubling his heart for some time prior to our meeting in July 1887. For the first time in fourteen years he called me 'father'. He wept bitterly at our meeting, and it seemed his soul's desire was to see his sister again. My heart leaped with joy to hear this, for I knew with his sister (a devoted Christian in America) he would be in good hands.

After travelling with myself and some friends for several days in Germany (during which time he conversed freely with me about his mother, regretting that he had refused to see her before her death, and expressing a desire to see her in heaven), he left for America, where he met his sister on Monday afternoon, August 15th. That meeting can be better imagined than described, for they

had not met for nearly fourteen years. On the following Friday, my son begged his sister to accompany him to their mother's grave. My daughter wrote me that same night that her brother's heart nearly broke while standing at his mother's grave, and she concluded her letter: 'Dear father, I thank God my brother is under deep conviction of sin; he fully realises how he has neglected his duty in the past towards his father, mother, and sister. I am constantly praying for him, so is my husband, and many Christian friends here are praying for his conversion.'

On Friday, August 29th, he again visited his mother's grave (but this time alone), and while there God in His mercy, for Christ's sake, pardoned his sins and blessed his soul. He went home, told his sister the good news, and then wrote to me that same night. Unknown to her brother, my daughter also wrote to me, and both letters reached me by the same post, making that day to me indeed a day of good tidings, and granting me some recompense for the many years of sorrow I had endured, causing me to exclaim with our Psalmist: '*...weeping may endure for a night, but joy cometh in the morning*' (Psa.30.5).

And now, in conclusion, I pray that God may spare my life that I may be permitted to hear my only son preach the Gospel of that dear Saviour Whom he had so long rejected, but Who is now his all in all; for in his last letter he informs me that he is now being exercised for the work of the ministry.

A short time after his conversion, Dr. Rossvally resigned his commission in the United States Army and began preaching the Gospel among his Jewish brethren. He was bitterly opposed and persecuted, but went on, and had the joy of seeing many Jews and Jewesses brought to the Lord, to confess Him as their Redeemer and Saviour.

He made prolonged evangelistic tours in many parts of America, Canada, and Europe preaching the Word, and was the means used of God in leading many—both Jews and Gentiles—to Christ.

After a few years of such joyful service, followed by a period of great suffering, he passed away in October 1892 aged 64, to be 'with the Lord', whose Name he loved and whose Gospel he had proved to be the power of God in his salvation. He was buried at Lawnswood Cemetery in Leeds, England. His story of 'Charlie Coulson the Drummer Boy' has been widely circulated in many lands, and the testimony therein borne to the saving grace and power of God, has been a message of life and salvation to very many.

May it prove to be so to the reader, who, whatever his nation, religion, creed, or character, is a sinner before God, and needs a Saviour. There is one —only one— provided as such by God, and His Name is Jesus Christ.

*'For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son', that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life' (John 3.16).*



## JAMES THE THIRD

Dr Riley of Minneapolis tells the following story in an address he gave: An invalid mother who devotedly loved her boy called him to her bedside before she died saying, "I want you to be James the Third". Then she proceeded to explain what she meant and told him never to forget her last message to him. After his mother's death James III proceeded to College, and his name became a subject of curiosity to his fellow students. One asked if it had anything to do with English history while another suggested that it was probably due to the fact that he was the third child. To all these suggestions James gave a negative answer. "What then is the meaning?" they eagerly asked him and James told them the story of his mother's last message to him: "Christ first, my neighbour second, and myself third."

It was good advice from a dying mother and what a different world it would be if we always, according to Scripture rule, placed Christ first.

Gospel Gleanings for Young People

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## THE BLIND GIRL AND THE BIBLE

Dr Bell relates that a blind girl living in France had for many years perused an embossed Bible with her fingers, but becoming partially paralysed the sense of touch in her fingers was lost.

Her agony of mind at the deprivation was great, and in a moment of despair she took up her Bible, bent down, and kissed the open page by way, as she supposed, of a last farewell. In the act of doing so, to her great surprise and sudden joy, she felt the letters distinctly with her lips, and from that day the poor child has thus been reading the Book which is her greatest stay and comfort.

*'That which I see not teach thou me...'* (Job 34.32)

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## THE WORKING CHURCH

The concept of ‘the working church’ is one which you might have heard spoken about a great deal in Christian circles, especially in recent years. There have been many books and magazine articles, published both here in the UK and overseas, promoting the idea, and even a conference dedicated to persuading congregations to become ‘working churches’. Perhaps some readers may have family or friends that belong to chapels following the ‘working church’ methodology. In brief, advocates for the notion argue that every local, Bible-believing church ought to run as many forms of outreach as possible, whether that be Sunday schools, midweek clubs for children, bus routes to ferry people to services, door-knocking, evangelism targeting university students or something else entirely, and that every single member of the church, other than those laid aside with sickness or infirmity, should be involved in at least one of these ministries, if not more.

It is commonly asserted that if churches adopt this methodology, then in the normal course of events they will grow and flourish – people will be soundly converted, members will be added to the church, and a congregation’s witness in its neighbourhood will be greatly increased. Some go so far as to say that, unless these methods are adopted, a church is not being faithful to the pattern of Scripture. These are all surely very worthy desires, and things which every true Christian doubtless prays for regularly. But a good desire does not make all methods of achieving it good. Needless to say, as Reformed believers, we ought always to try to understand the trends and ideas that are current in church life. If an idea is good, that is to say, if it is in accordance with God’s Word, then we should do all that we can to promote and encourage it; likewise, if an idea is found to be unbiblical, unhelpful or worldly, then we ought to oppose it forcefully.

The Apostle John told the believers of his day to ‘...*believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God...*’ (1 John

4.1), and likewise, the Bereans of old were commended because *'...they received the word with all readiness of mind, and searched the scriptures daily, whether those things were so'* (Acts 17.11). Christians are not permitted to be neutral, but rather must weigh all ideas and methodologies in the light of the sacred Word, and have

nothing to do with those things that do not conform to its teaching. Thus, we have a duty to consider this concept of the 'working church', and to see whether it lines up with *'...what the Spirit*



*saieth unto the churches'* (Rev.3.6). This writer would humbly counsel, both from personal experience, having spent some years in a congregation which very much prides itself as a 'working church', and from a broad study of the Scriptures and church history, that, while the idea might seem very attractive, not all that glitters is gold. Indeed, if we weigh the whole system in the balance, I believe that it will be found wanting on five separate counts. Before we come to the five points let us lay the groundwork of what Christians have always believed about the local church.

This matter comes down very much to the fact that the church, divided into particular local congregations, was placed upon the earth for a very specific purpose: to worship God according to His rule and to glorify Him through the sanctified lives of His people. After this, it was to act as a fellowship and spiritual family for His people, wherein they could grow in grace and love for the brethren; only thereafter was it to preach the Gospel to the lost. That's not to say that this last department is unimportant. Not at all! Any true Christian evangelism fulfils the church's prime directive to glorify God and is one of His chosen instruments for saving His elect. Preaching of the Gospel ought obviously to be a big concern for any

faithful and Bible-believing church, and zeal for the salvation of God's elect is not optional, as any minister who has spent many a tear-stained hour in the prayer closet can tell you. But it is possible for a church to get its priorities confused, and to forget its first two imperatives in the name of upholding the third.

The **first**, and most important, grounds upon which we ought to question the 'working church' method are Scriptural. Simply put, the Gospels, the Acts of the Apostles and the Epistles of Paul, Peter, John, James and Jude - which are our sole authoritative guide to New Testament church order - make no mention whatsoever of churches in which all members were signed up to outreach ministries; no mention of Sunday schools, children's weeknight meetings, holiday clubs, camps for teenagers, and so on, or of the endless lists and rotas which necessarily attend all of these things. While this writer does not believe any of these things to be inherently unlawful, and holds that churches have discretion in whether or not to employ them, and indeed, while they can certainly be right and beneficial when used with discernment, we could not for a second believe that they are a key and crucial part of church practice, or else they'd surely be at least mentioned somewhere in the New Testament. There's simply no record of them in apostolic practice, and no mention of them in the early non-inspired Christian writings of the first and second centuries, like the Didache, Epistle of Clement or Letters of Ignatius. Rather, we read in Acts 2 v42 that in the earliest church of them all - in Jerusalem, *'...they continued steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers.'* These are the first priorities of the Biblical church; never do we read of each new believer being slotted into one ministry or other in the Apostles' time, nor does any part of the New Testament contain instructions for the setting up and maintaining of these kinds of operations. This alone ought to be sufficient reason for us to question the 'working church' method.



**Secondly**, a candid study of the Christian church's history will not find 'working churches' existing at any point before the nineteenth century. This isn't to say for a second that churches beforehand were indifferent to evangelism. Even before the Reformation, preachers of the truth would travel far and wide to share the Gospel. Call to mind the medieval Lollard movement, which sent its preachers tramping up and down throughout the country, even as far as the Scottish Lowlands, witnessing faithfully wherever they went, despite fierce and violent persecution. Indeed, what was the Reformation, if not a revival of the preaching of the true Gospel? Men such as Hugh Latimer, John Hooper, John Knox and George Wishart preached with tremendous God-given power, and the Lord was pleased in that time to convert great numbers: the same was true of the Puritans in the seventeenth century, and the preachers of the Evangelical Revival in the eighteenth. The Reformed laity of this land and further afield were always renowned for their personal witness, both by word and faithful example. But the idea of a local church basically being organised almost as a kind of insect hive in perpetual activity, with every member or regular attendee being assigned responsibility in this or that ministry, and everyone constantly pushed to do more, is a very late arrival on the historical scene. It basically grew up out of the nineteenth century revivals in the United States, where huge numbers of people made professions of faith, often in response to emotionally charged and even shallow preaching. As a result, churches became very much addicted to having big congregations, big Sunday schools and big temperance leagues (organisations in which members pledged to abstain from alcohol) and wanted a methodology to ensure that they stayed this way. While some of the people that pioneered and pushed this approach, like Dwight L. Moody, were Calvinistic (although not confessionally Reformed), most were Arminians, believing that humans have the ability to come to God of their own free will whenever they chose to. By the opening decades of the twentieth century, this kind of thing, whereby every church member was expected to be continually active in as many ministries as

possible, was a mainstay of the Arminian, dispensationalist Independent Fundamental Baptist movement. It's here that we find the origins of sending out buses to transport in large numbers of residents from poor neighbourhoods, of single churches competing to have the largest number of professing members, and the most children on the books of their Sunday school. Most of the major figures driving for this, men like J. Frank Norris or Jack Hyles, had very serious theological problems, and sadly sometimes personal lives tainted with scandal. Underpinning all of the 'working church' practice which these men pioneered is the belief that God does not have a predestined elect and a reprobate, and that salvation or damnation is the free and unimpeded choice of each individual. Thus, it was felt that the bigger and grander the evangelistic effort, the more people would be saved. Some of these men resorted even to shameful tactics to pack the largest number of people into their churches, laying on entertainments to draw crowds, and their poor church members were often worked to the nub with doorstepping, bus ministry and Sunday school teaching. If, by contrast, we follow the great doctrines of the Protestant Reformation, then we must believe that the number of the elect and of the reprobate are eternally fixed, and that God will use only His ordained means to save the former. Do we trust the Lord to save His people, or not?

A **third** objection must be made upon Sabbatarian grounds. To be brief, the Sabbath is, and always has been, a day of rest for God's people, a gracious gift by a wonderful God to the ones that He loves. While it has always

been recognised that believers may undertake works of necessity and mercy on the Lord's Day, and that it is certainly not unlawful to engage in evangelism on the Sabbath, it is nevertheless possible to



pervert the good purpose of the Day, and to turn it into a seventh day of labour. If a church is just a hub of frenetic activity on a Sunday, then the people often go home more exhausted, more physically and mentally drained than they were on Friday evening after finishing work! The day which ought to be one of the believer's sweetest blessings, in which he is fed spiritually and enjoys the fellowship of his brethren, is turned into another yoke for his neck. The knock-on effect of this is often powerful. The demands of constant involvement can wear away at a believer's family life and cause their relationships to suffer. The teaching of the Reformed faith has always been that a Christian man's first human responsibility is to his family, to lead his wife and children in the way of God, and to raise all dependants in His fear and admonition. The 'working church' is often, tragically, an obstacle to this - mother and father may well be excellent Sunday school teachers, or go on all the children's camps in the summer, while their own flesh and blood sons and daughters go uninstructed in doctrine, un-prayed with and untaught in *'the goodness and severity of God'*.

Our **fourth** area of consideration is the one in which this writer would confess the greatest degree of first-hand experience, and that is the fact that the 'working church' philosophy is often profoundly corrosive to sound and Biblical church order. The Bible tells us exactly how God wants His churches to be structured and run. Most readers will likely attend Particular Baptist Churches, and so it must be said that the absolute bedrock of Reformed Baptist church government is that of a church membership made up only of baptised believers. Reformed Baptist churches have historically been 'bottom up' structures, in which the membership directed by God has taken the lead in appointing elders and deacons and in which all major decisions are made by the church members. Responsibilities in the church, whether they be stewarding, any form of outreach or evangelism were only ever given to people who were baptised members of the church, in good standing. The 'working church' in its worst forms badly undermines these two key

principles. All of the extra bureaucracy needed to run a dozen different ministries invariably leads to a centralisation of power, in which elders come to act almost as an elected dictatorship, and end up functioning more like managers of a business than spiritual shepherds. It also begets a layer of middle management totally alien to the Scriptures. A 'working' church is usually weighed down with a swarm of 'Sunday School Department Leaders', 'Bus Captains', 'Children's Work Coordinators'. Where do we find any of these offices in the Bible? We simply have no scriptural authority to innovate in church order. And sadly, even earnest Christians all too often let this sort of manmade title go to their head - and can come to think more highly of themselves than they ought - and to enjoy ordering around the believers that have been placed under them.

Additionally, the manpower demands of running a 'working church' usually hollow out the principle of only giving responsibility to accountable church members. So many people are needed to move furniture, shepherd children, teach classes, knock doors, drum up interest in the neighbourhood for the Sunday school, etc that almost invariably jobs start to be given to people who are not members, just so that the work gets done. This might seem like a trivial matter, but it is not. A church member is accountable. They are subject to discipline if they do wrong or deviate into false doctrine. But no such sanction can be applied to people who are not part of the local church. If someone is truly a Christian, then they are commanded by their Lord to be baptised and join in lasting membership to a church; if they are not converted, or refuse to seek membership, then they have no Biblical authority to hold office. Often, however, this teaching of the Scriptures is disregarded in practice by 'working churches'. '*...My brethren, these things ought not so to be*' (Jam.3.10).

**Finally**, the 'working church' methodology is suspect because so often it replaces genuine conviction with mere conformity to a system, in the hope that it will cause the congregation to grow. Paul tells us in Romans that '*...whatsoever is*

*not of faith is sin'* (Rom.14.23).

The corollary of this is that anything that a believer does for the Lord must arise from the sincere persuasion that what they are doing is right and will bring glory to His name. If they intend to do something, even something which externally is very right



and good, for the wrong reasons, then it were better that they didn't do it at all. While doubtless a great many in 'working churches' truly believe in the method, and do all things as unto the Lord, it must be said that the system contains within it the potential, particularly in larger churches, for people to get involved, to teach Sunday school or knock doors, or whatever the ministry may be, simply because it is expected of them and because they are under pressure to be seen to be participating. The Lord wants His people to serve Him out of fervent love and gratitude, not merely to keep up appearances in front of others, or because they believe that in doing so, they have found a magic 'silver bullet' that will fill their churches with converts.

Lest we seem to close this article upon a note of negativity, let us recognise that the motives of those advocating for the 'working church' system are almost always good – they desire to see souls converted and disciples made. Which of us would not be delighted to see chapels full of sincere new believers, growing in grace? Indeed, one once said, quite rightly, that if we are not burdened for the salvation of others, we have scant grounds to consider our own profession credible. But we must acknowledge that one can be sincere and yet sincerely wrong. The 'working church' methodology simply does not measure up to the teaching of Scripture or stand the test of time in terms of church history. The problems which its implementation causes in a church are often

worse than those that it purports to solve. It is a manmade system, and like all things made by sinful men, it is flawed, and liable to cause lasting damage if brought into God's house. Let us rather stick to the plain and faithful doctrine of the Bible in this matter.

The Christians that this writer has come to respect the most have always lived by God's principle that *'them that honour Me I will honour'* (1 Sam. 2:30). If a church is faithful with a little, more will be given them, but if they bend the rules in the name of getting more people into the pews, then they are just stacking up wood, hay and stubble. The Lord help us to be unwavering, and *'Prove all things; hold fast that which is good'* (1 Thess. 5:21).

Contributed

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## THE HAPPY MAN

The happy man was born in the city of Regeneration in the parish of Repentance unto Life. He was educated at the school of Obedience. He has large estate in the county of Christian Contentment, and many times does jobs of self-denial, wears the garment of Humility, and has another suit to put on when he goes to Court, called the Robe of Christ's Righteousness. He often walks in the valley of Self-Abasement, and sometimes climbs the mountains of Heavenly mindedness. He breakfasts every morning on Spiritual Prayer and dines every evening on the same. He has meat to eat that the world knows not of, and his drink is the sincere milk of the Word of God. Thus happy he lives, and happy he dies. Happy is he who has Gospel Submission in his will, due order in his affections, sound peace in his conscience, real divinity in his breast; the Redeemer's yoke on his neck, a vain world under his feet, and a crown of glory over his head. Happy is the life of that man who believes firmly, prays fervently, walks patiently, works abundantly, lives holily, dies daily, watches his heart, guides his senses, redeems his time, loves Christ, and longs for glory. He is necessitated to take the world on his way to heaven, but he walks through it as fast as

he can, and all his business by the way is to make himself and others happy. Take him all in all, in two words, he is a Man and a Christian.

By the Rev. Lachlan MacKenzie, Lochcarron

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## The Christians of Manipur

The Indian state of Manipur has been in the news recently due to violence in the region. Most of the violence is between the Hindu Meitei people and the Christian hill tribes. Many churches have been destroyed, villages burnt down; some Christians have been killed and many more displaced. The Trinitarian Bible Society currently has nine projects in the tribal languages of these groups, but, in God's providence, so far the translators have been kept safe.



### Where is Manipur?

Manipur is a state in north-east India, bordered by Myanmar (Burma) on the east. It is largely isolated from the rest of India and has a population of around three million people. It is made up of two areas: the rugged hills where the Christian tribes live (who make up 41% of the population), and the flat plain area where the capital city Imphal is found, and the majority Hindu Meitei people live.

## **The arrival of Christianity in Manipur**

The hill tribes, who each speak their own tribal languages, were originally head-hunters and spirit worshippers. Christianity arrived in Manipur in the late nineteenth century. The early missionaries were Baptists, meaning that many Christians in Manipur today are still Baptists. The Rev. William Pettigrew arrived in Manipur in February 1894. Initially he worked in Imphal but when due to political tensions he was told to stop, he continued at his own risk amongst the hill tribes. He ended up in Ukhrul, a hill region in the north-east of Manipur where people were of the head-hunter Tangkhul Naga tribe. In 1901 twelve Tangkhul men were converted to Christianity, and the first Baptist church in Manipur was formed.

In 1908 a young Welsh slate miner called Watkin R. Roberts arrived in Aizawl (in the neighbouring Indian state of Mizoram) to help a missionary couple establish a medical clinic there. One day he received a gift of £5 from a lady in England, which he spent on printing copies of the Gospel according to John in the Lushai dialect. These Gospels made their way to the Hmar tribal chief of Senvon, a village in the south of Manipur. The chief wrote back saying ‘Sir, come yourself and tell us about this book and your God’. Watkin requested permission from the British government agent in the area but was denied as it was considered too dangerous: five foreigners had recently been assassinated and the Hmar were known head-hunters. However, Watkin decided to go anyway and visited in 1910 with two students.

During Watkin’s visit the chief of Senvon and four other Hmar men announced that they wanted to believe in Christ. Watkin returned to Aizawl and asked for volunteers among their native students to return as missionaries to the tribe. Three men volunteered to work among the people of southern Manipur. They entered prayerfully into Senvon on 7 May 1910: this day has been observed as ‘Missionary Day’ in Manipur since the 1920s.

Within two generations the entire Hmar tribe converted to Christianity, and many of the other hill tribes had also become Christian. By the 1950s there were thousands of converts in



Manipur.

### **Translating the Word of God for Manipur**

Today, nearly all these hill tribes are predominantly Christian, with a great desire to have a faithful translation of God's Word in their own tribal languages. As one pastor wrote, 'Preaching in the church becomes very inconvenient without a Holy Bible in our own language'.

The Thadou are the largest tribe and have worked with TBS for many years on a translation of the Bible, which was fully published in 2020. The revised Simte Bible was published in 2022, and it is hoped that the Zou Bible, Kom New Testament, and a revised Vaiphei Bible will be published shortly, God willing. Projects are also ongoing in Chothe, Gangte, Hmar, and Tedim Zomi. For the Chothe people, the TBS Bible is one of the first written publications ever in the language; currently there are just a few Christian booklets and hymns published in Chothe, so the translator is faced with a tremendous task.



### **Escalating violence**

In February 2023 thanksgiving services were held in Manipur for the Thadou and Simte Bibles, and there was no sign of violence then. However, the trigger was a court ruling in late April 2023 which for the first time gave the Hindu Meitei people protected tribal status, meaning that they could now purchase land and forest belonging to the hill tribes. They could also access education and government jobs reserved for the hill tribes, who traditionally have worse access to employment and economic opportunities, living in poorly developed areas. The court ruling meant that the hill tribes

lost their unique protection so they protested fearing their lands and forest would be swallowed up by the dominant community.

In early May the protests turned violent, aided and abetted by militant Hindu Meitei groups, and from that point on the suffering, bloodshed, and violence have continued with the Christians suffering greatly. Hundreds of churches have been burned down, many villages destroyed, and tens of thousands displaced from their homes. There appears to be no let-up in the conflict.

### **A desperate need for Bibles**

A few of the TBS translators left for neighbouring Indian states, but most either remained in Manipur or have now returned, all of them are continuing with their translation and revision work. The



need for Bibles is even greater now—many lost their Bibles and New Testaments when their homes and churches were burnt down. A Thadou translator wrote to us:

*We are praying without ceasing for God's intervention. Thousands of Thadou Kukis in Imphal and peripheries of the Manipur valley ran for their lives without having a chance to take their belongings and even their Bible as they were suddenly attacked and their houses burnt down.*

We pray that the Lord would preserve our translators and revisers, their families, and their churches, and that peace would be restored to this region.

By Natalie Hanks, Lead Editor TBS – London

## CURRENT MATTERS

### War In Israel

Thousands have lost their lives, and many thousands have been greatly affected by the war in Israel and Gaza. This war followed the brutal act of terrorism inflicted upon Israel by Hamas on the 7<sup>th</sup> October 2023. Hamas terrorists launched the unprecedented surprise attack on Israel from Gaza by air, sea and land killing more than one thousand two hundred Israelis and foreign nationals, mostly civilians, and taking approximately two hundred and forty hostages.

After forty-eight days of war a four-day truce began on Friday 24<sup>th</sup> November with small numbers of hostages taken by Hamas being released in exchange for Palestinian prisoners. At the time of writing a total fifty-eight hostages have been released. Forty hostages, all women and children were freed as part of a deal between Israel and Hamas, meanwhile seventeen Thai and one Filipino hostages were released in a separate deal between Hamas and the Egyptian government.

The loss of lives both in Israel and Gaza is immensely sad, and we pray that the temporary truce may develop into a permanent ceasefire. The effects of conflict upon homes and infrastructure are felt for decades, and the loss of loved ones has a life-long effect upon those that survive.

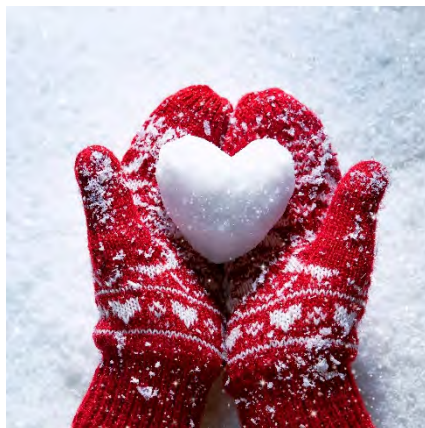
Israel for the most part is in the darkness of the Old Testament dispensation and the response to the Hamas attack has been very much in line with the Israel of old. How much prayer is needed for the Holy Spirit to be poured upon the House of Israel, to open the blind eyes and bring them see the Lord Jesus as the Christ, the Son of the living God, their Messiah.

*'Behold, your house is left unto desolate. For I say unto you, Ye shall not see me henceforth, till ye shall say, Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord'* (Matt.23.38,39).

## LOVE

Love is a precious gift from God. The fall into sin of Adam and Eve brought hatred into the world, and the effect of this was soon seen when Cain murdered Abel his brother, but still God did not take back His gift of love from mankind. What a mercy, despite all the sin, the love of God remained.

Love is the great theme of the Gospel. It is a display of love from beginning to end. Love is clearly seen in the birth of Jesus Christ at Bethlehem. The wonder of wonders that God would send His Son into this sinful world to save sinners is the substance of the well-known verse on our front cover. *'For God so loved the world...'* (John 3.16).



The disciple John had great love to the Saviour and this is seen when reading his gospel and the first epistle he wrote. John also knew that Jesus loved him, and five times in his gospel he refers to himself as the disciple *'...whom Jesus loved.'* John had a personal relationship with Jesus, he came to Him, confided in Him, listened and learned of Him, and followed Him. Do we?

The Lord Jesus tells us what is the greatest love. *'Greater love hath no man than this, that a man should lay down his life for his friends'* (John 15.13). Love lay in the manger at Bethlehem, Love went about doing good, and Love hung on the cross at Calvary.

Jesus asked Peter *'Lovest thou me?'* Can we say with Peter *'...Lord, thou knowest all things, thou knowest that I love thee...'* (John 21.27).

*'And we have known and believed the love that God hath to us. God is love; and he that dwelleth in love dwelleth in God, and God in him'* (1 John 4.16).