

# PERCEPTION

A Quarterly Magazine for Young People



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

**AUTUMN 2021**

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

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## EDITORIAL

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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## PRAYER

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

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

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## CLINGING TO CHRIST

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

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## JOHN WARBURTON (Part 7)

A few of the Lord's providential dealings

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




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### Darkness and confusion of mind

By and by I was invited to supply at a little chapel in Liverpool – in Matthew Street, if I recollect right. Upon one particular time when I was there, I was led out in a very sweet manner in meditation upon these words, “For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord” (Rom. 8. 38, 39). O, thinks I, what a time I shall have! I hope there will be the chapel full.

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

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

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

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

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

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

**Providential trials**

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

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

**Bodily needs supplied**

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

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

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

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

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

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

### **A pressing creditor**

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

### **Larger meeting place required**

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

*TO BE CONTINUED*

## SECOND BLUE PLAQUE FOR WILLIAM GADSBY

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



*With thanks to the  
Leicester Mercury*

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

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

## A YOUNG EARTH

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

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

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



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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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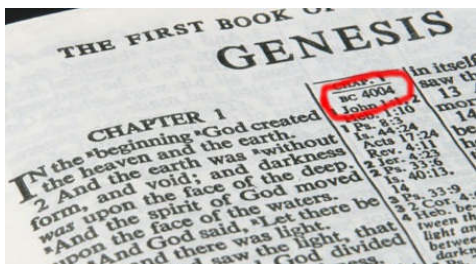
We do not need to be ashamed to hold *Young Earth* views. We firmly reject the affirmation in the Humanist Manifesto that the universe is ‘self existing and not created.’ Nor can we accept the views of those who regard God as the Creator but that He did so by using evolutionary processes. Those who hold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

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



*Bishop James Ussher*

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



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

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

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

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

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

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

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## UNUSUAL BIBLES (7)

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

## THE VENERATION OF RELICS

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



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

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



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

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

**WILLIAM DEVONSHIRE**

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

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



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

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**May 29th, 1858.**

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

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

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

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

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

### **May 30th.**

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

### **May 31st.**

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

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

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

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

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

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

### **June 1st.**

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

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

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

### **June 2nd.**

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

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

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

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

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

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

### **Evening**

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

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

### **June 3rd.**

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

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

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

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

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

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

### **June 4th.**

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

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

notice of what the teachers said.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

### **Late Afternoon.**

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

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

### **June 5th.**

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

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

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

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

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

### **Later.**

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

The following words were then read for a text:

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

I then said:

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

The following is the inscription on the gravestone:

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



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

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

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

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

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

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*Miss Annie Soper*

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

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

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

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

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

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

The workmen were paid on time.

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

From *Dawn Beyond the Andes*, by Phyllis Thompson

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## WILLIAM COLGATE



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

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

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

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

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

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

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

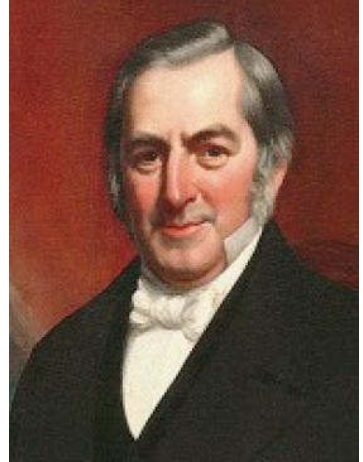
One day, a woman who had been the mistress of a well-known public figure became ashamed of the life she had been leading. She professed faith in Christ and left her old life behind. She applied to become a member of the church but there was reluctance on the part of some of the members to accept her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

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

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

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

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



*William Colgate*

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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## INVERNESS

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

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

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

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



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

## SAVED FROM THE PRAIRIE FIRE

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

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

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

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

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## CURRENT MATTERS

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

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

### **Schools’ daily act of worship**

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

### **Freedom of speech**

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

### **Abortions continue to rise**

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

## SEA OF GALILEE

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

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

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

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

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