Clifton News

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News



Young people at the Friday club and Bible time



Assembly lunch

News

Please continue to pray for the Sunday school whose numbers are down from the past year as some children have grown up and lost interest in spiritual things. However, good numbers still attend the club on Friday when after a time of games and tuck shop the gospel is preached to the teenagers.

A new item at Clifton Hall is a lunch on Sundays after the Breaking of Bread every two months which is a good time of fellowship and when new comers to the assembly can get to know everyone.

The assembly was also happy to receive into fellowship this month our sister Elaine Gordon who has been attending for a number of weeks. We welcome her in the name of the Lord Jesus.

Events

Sunday school outing

To Littlehampton 17th July

Meeting at the hall at 8:45 am & returning back approx 7 pm

Please pray for

Special Gospel Meetings

5th - 9th & 12th - 16th

September 2010

Conducted by Richard Catchpole & Nitish Patel

(using prophetic chart)

Meetings

The Week at Clifton

Lord's Day

Breaking of Bread

II a.m.

Sunday School

Gospel Meeting

6:30 p.m.

Tuesday

Bible Reading (First Tuesday of the month only)

Wednesday Seekers Club (Term time only for under IIs)

Thursday Prayer and Ministry

7:45 p.m.

Sunday Evening Gospel Meeting

7:30 p.m.

| July | | | |
|--------|----------------|------------------|--|
| 4 | Alf Taylor | (Family Service) | |
| П | Kevin Oh | | |
| 18 | Mark Beardall | | |
| 25 | Nitish Patel | | |
| | | | |
| August | | | |
| 1 | Local brother | | |
| 8 | Norman Gibbons | | |
| 15 | Local brother | | |
| 22 | Gareth Roderic | :k | |
| 29 | Local brother | | |
| | | | |

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Friday C3 Club (Term time only for 11+)

September

- 5 Gospel Campaign
- 12 Gospel Campaign
- 19 Archie Carew
- 26 John Aston

Tuesday Bible Reading

Studying the book of Proverbs

6th July Proverbs 16:8 onwards

3rd August No Bible reading

7th September No Bible reading - Gospel Campaign

Thursday Prayer & Ministry

July

- I Fred Epps
- 8 Fred Epps
- 15 Nitish Patel
- 22 Martin Baker
- 29 Richard Catchpole

August

- 5 Tony Sheldrake
- 12 Tony Sheldrake
- 19 Peter Hamm
- 26 Peter Hamm

September

- 2 Colin Roberts
- 9 Gospel Campaign
- 16 Gospel Campaign
- 23 Colin Roberts
- 30 Colin Roberts

Questions

Answered by Richard Catchpole

What did the Lord Jesus mean when He said 'from the days of John the Baptist until now the kingdom of heaven suffereth violence, and the violent take it by force' Matthew 11.12'? Who are the violent?

The verse quoted above comes within a section of the chapter which begins with the arrival of two of John's disciples sent by him to enquire of the Lord 'Art thou he that should come or do we look for another'? In view of the ministry that John had accomplished and all he had declared about the Lord Jesus the words of the disciples might initially surprise us. Though many would accuse John of displaying a lack of faith, we prefer to think this was not a question prompted by unbelief but rather by perplexity.

The phrase 'he that should come' has its basis in, and recalls the language of Messianic prophecies, cf. Ps.40.7 'Then said I Lo I come, in the volume of the book it is written of me. I delight to do thy will O my God'; Ps. I 18.26 'blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord'. John himself had spoken of 'he that cometh after me' adding 'Whose fan is in his hand and he will thoroughly purge his floor, and gather his wheat into the garner; but he will burn up the chaff with unquenchable fire', Matthew 3.11-12, Messiah executing judgment, sifting out the wicked from the righteous. But what was the situation with John now? He found himself imprisoned by Herod; because he has faithfully preached the truth, condemning Herod's brother, Phillip for contracting an incestuous marriage. While in prison he receives word of the works of the Lord, yet nothing is apparently being done to release him from prison. He is perplexed, the thrust of the question being 'Art thou he that should come or do we look for another of a different kind'. In His preaching none were bolder than John, but even for such a man like that there was a moment when prevailing circumstances in his life were perplexing to him. We have greater privileges than any John ever knew, but have you never been in circumstances that have left you wondering at the way the Lord is moving in regard to the circumstances and situations in your life?

The reply of the Lord is recorded in verses 4-6. We might think it to be a somewhat strange answer, but it was the testimony being given to Israel at that time, the works giving validity to His claims to be the Messiah, works that reflected Messianic prophecies, cf. Isa.29.18; 35.5-6. Although those are

prophecies, strictly speaking, regarding Millennial days they nevertheless indicate that when Messiah comes He will be concerned with and care for the afflictions of His people, something the Lord was doing even there and then. The concluding statement of verse 5 'the poor have the gospel preached to them' is a quotation from Isa. 61.1 another Messianic passage. The Lord concludes His answer by saying 'Blessed is he whosoever shall not be offended in me', verse 6, blessing for those not stumbled as to their faith in Christ, even though they might not understand what is taking place in their life.

With the departure of John's disciples the Lord addresses the multitudes, verse 7, and the one who in earlier days had borne witness to Christ has now witness borne to himself, the Lord taking care that His servant should not be discredited in the eyes of the multitude. Some of the people must have been amongst those that had gone out to John, Matthew 3.5-6; the Lord questions their reason for so doing, what did they go out see? He suggests three possibilities:-

- (a) 'A reed shaken with the wind' -A picture of a weak and uncertain man whose faith was blown about by every circumstance, something a superficial judgment might have concluded John was, when he sent disciples with his question.
- (b) 'A man clothed in soft raiment' John was not like that but was roughly clothed, living in the wilderness, his diet locusts and wild honey. It is in courts that you look for the grandeur of the world.
- (c) 'A prophet' They certainly went out to see that. In Luke 1.76 his father Zacharias said 'thou child shalt be called the prophet of the Highest', and the people knew he was a prophet, twice it is stated in Matthew that the people 'counted him as a prophet' 14.5; 21.26.

But then the Lord said 'more than a prophet', John had a peculiar place and honour that none of the prophets before him could claim, he was assigned to be the immediate forerunner of the Lord, the herald of the Messiah Himself. In verse 10 though a prophet he was himself the subject of O.T. prophecy the Lord quoting from Malachi 3.1, then in verse 11 the Lord adds 'Verily I say unto you, Among them that are born of women there hath not risen a greater than John the Baptist'. The Lord is speaking of John within the context and perspective of the kingdom of heaven and asserts that from the time of Christ all the way back to Adam, there has never been a person 'born of a women' greater than John. That greatness is related to the uniqueness of the ministry God had given to him as the forerunner of the Messiah. Some find a difficulty with these words counting Christ to be the greatest 'born of a woman', we might however observe that the language of Gal.4.4 is 'made of a woman' or literally 'became of a woman' it having in view His virgin birth, in which of course Joseph had no part. But while

John is spoken of as being the greatest among those born of a women, the Lord adds 'notwithstanding he that is least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he'. We should remember that John preached 'the kingdom of Heaven is at hand' it was near with the Lord Jesus being present on earth. The King however was rejected the manifestation of the kingdom on earth was thus deferred and when we come to Matthew 13.11, we have the kingdom in mystery, the present form of the kingdom in the period of the Lord's rejection. 'He that is least in the kingdom' is not a reference to Himself, He is the King, but involves a change of dispensation, in which the least inside the kingdom (i.e. the least believer) would have a position and privileges beyond anything that John enjoyed. A new order of things was commencing, in which the privileges that God's sovereign grace would confer would be so great, that the least in the dispensation about to open would be greater than the greatest in all the past dispensations. We have entered into that, sins forgiven with no need of further sacrifices; permanently indwelt by the Holy Spirit, every believer a holy priest,

Privileges common to all believer's today.

Now coming to verse 12 the Lord is still speaking in light of His own rejection from the days of John the Baptist until now the kingdom of heaven suffereth violence, and the violent take it by force'. In the parallel passage, Luke 16.16, it is evident that the Lord is speaking of those who 'press into the kingdom'. The verse in Matthew must be considered alongside the words of the Lord in 23.13 'But woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites, for ye shut up the kingdom of heaven against men; for ye neither go in yourselves, neither suffer ye them that are entering to go in', in that sense the kingdom of heaven suffered 'violence' from the days of John. The presentation of the Kingdom in the preaching of John in the past and the ministry of the Lord lesus was putting men to the test: the kingdom suffered violence on account of the attitude of the Nations religious leaders and would only be entered by those who had that energy of faith to overcome all obstacles and hindrances. That is the meaning behind 'the violent take it by force'. The word Greek word for 'violent' has the idea of 'strong' or 'forceful' and the word 'force' means to 'seize' or 'carry off by force'. A new thing was about to begin in which men, despite opposition and violence from without, would at all costs possess themselves of the blessings of the kingdom, overcoming every obstacle to doing so. Hence 'the violent' refers to believer's who despite opposition, by faith seize upon the kingdom and make it their own.

Bible Teaching

'There the Lord commanded the blessing' Psalm I 33.3

Divine blessing is something that every true company of believers surely longs to experience and see. It is something that can be withheld, as mentioned in Haggai 1.9-11, or commanded as in Psalm 133.3. The closing verse of the psalm regarding 'blessing' cannot of course be divorced from the opening statement regarding brethren 'dwelling together in unity'

THE EXCLAMATION

'How good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity.' In the book of Deuteronomy some 21 times reference is made to 'The place which the Lord thy God shall choose', nine of which are followed by the statement 'to put His name there', words that should convey to us the importance of that place to both the Lord and His people. One in which He would dwell in their midst and where they might gather before Him. We see a similar emphasis when we come to the New Testament and although the focus now is not on a physical centre. like the temple at Jerusalem, but a Person the Lord Jesus Christ, the centre of gathering is none the less as real despite that. In Matthew 18.20 the Lord said where two or three are gathered together_in my name, there am I in the midst of them'. In I Corinthians Paul likewise speaks of the gathering together of the saints, in chapters 11-14 some seven times, he uses the expression 'come together' in reference to the collective gathering of the saints at Corinth in assembly capacity. It is important to the Lord, but is it equally important to us? When the saints gather, are we present with them? Isn't it specifically noted of the early believers that 'they continued steadfastly in the apostle's doctrine, and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers?' Does it have the priority with us that it clearly ought to?

But in light of the teaching of Psalm 133 we might ask when we are gathered together, is there unity amongst us? We can surely catch in the psalm something of the delight and joy in David's heart, as he perhaps beheld the coming together of Israel to celebrate one of the annual feasts, coming together, united in desire and purpose. Think of what the psalmist is commending to us? He is speaking about 'brethren' conveying the idea of relationship, and suggesting because of that there surely ought to be unity among them.

If that was so for the people of Israel, it is equally true in regard to believers today, in Galatians 3.28 Paul says 'There is neither Jew no Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male no female: for ye are all one in Christ Jesus'. We know that in context Paul is speaking of our standing before God, and not of responsibilities or ministry in a local assembly, but the language conveys to us a mutual relationship, 'one in Christ Jesus', in the light of which there ought to be unity amongst us.

Again, he is speaking of brethren 'dwelling together'. Sometimes, in order that there might be peace between brethren it has been expedient for them to separate. It was so in Genesis 13.8 'And Abram said unto Lot, Let there be no strife I pray thee, between me and thee, and between my herdmen and thy herdmen, for we be brethren', and so they separated, but here brethren are dwelling together in unity. Not just together without any evidence of quarrelling or bickering, we can have that and still no unity. Again it is not brethren dwelling together in 'uniformity' we can have that in an assembly, but still no real unity. This is more, a company together, one in heart, mind and desire, a company in perfect accord.

The Psalm reminds us how attractive such unity is, 'How good and how pleasant it is'. The word for 'good' might convey how desirable it is, the word for 'pleasant' how agreeable it is.

Yet despite the relationship, and the delightful picture the psalmist paints, how often is that unity realised amongst us? If a stranger were to come to the assembly gatherings, and then watch and observe our life and general conduct, would he have grounds to speak of unity or would he have grounds for saying there are 'wars and fighting's among you', as in James 4.1, or 'Ye bite and devour one another', as in Galatians 5.15? Instead of unity would they discover, undercurrents, divisions?

THE ILLUSTRATIONS

Two are given, in order to demonstrate not simply how good and pleasant the unity of verse I is but also its implications.

The first looks back to the consecration of Aaron the priest, recorded in Exodus 29 and Leviticus 8. In the consecration of Aaron's sons the anointing oil was only *sprinkled* upon them, but in the consecration of Aaron himself it was *poured* upon His head and ran down to the very border and hem of his garments. Frequently in the Scriptures, oil is a figure of the Holy Spirit, and as we make an application, and think of the way that anointing all spread over the garments as a picture of

unity between brethren, isn't it in a way an illustration of the truth of I Corinthians 12.13 where Paul says 'by one spirit are we all baptised into one body.' In the chapter Paul is speaking of the local church at Corinth under the figure of a body, and he mentions the different members, from the head to the feet. He says in verse 27 'Now ye are body of Christ and members in particular', and Paul stresses in the chapter the unity of the body. Again there is the idea of dwelling together in unity when he says at verse 25 'the members should have the same care one for another, and whether one member suffer all the members suffer with it: or one member be honoured, all the members rejoice with it'. But what is the main point in the psalmist's illustration? The anointing oil ran down from the head of Aaron to the hem of his garments, the fragrance of the oil thus pervading his whole being. Isn't that how it will be in a local assembly where brethren are dwelling together in unity, subject to the leading of the Holy Spirit? The second illustration concerns the 'dew of Hermon ... descending upon the mountains of Zion.' Dew is likewise another familiar type in Scripture of the Holy Spirit. The main point of this second illustration is the fact that the 'dew' which came upon Mount Hermon in the north, likewise came upon the mountains of Zion in the south, bringing reviving and refreshment, that freshness profiting the whole land. As again we seek to make an application, would it recall, the words of I Corinthians 12.7 'the manifestation of the Spirit is given to every man to profit withal'. When brethren are dwelling to together unity, there will be room for the functioning of all the gifts and that to the profit of all?

THE AFFIRMATION

'There the Lord commanded the blessing, even life for evermore'. These closing words obviously indicate that blessing can be experienced, 'even life for evermore', life in all its fullness. This statement is even more striking when we notice that this is the first of only two mentions of 'eternal life' in the Old Testament, the other being in Daniel 12.2. The content of this psalm is well summarised in the words of Paul in 2 Corinthians 13.11 'Finally brethren, farewell. Be perfect, be of good comfort, be of one mind live in peace: and the God of love and peace shall be with you.'

For a realistic anticipation of blessing there must be a dwelling together in unity.

R.B. Catchpole

Good News

ONLY ONE MATCH - ONLY ONE OPPORTUNITY



Henry Drummond (1851-1897) told a story he heard while crossing the, Atlantic way back in the nineteenth century. He relates, "One night I and some of the passengers were talking to the captain, when he told us of an incident that had occurred to him in that neighbourhood some years previously. He was in command of a vessel, which had got thus far on her voyage, when the screw broke, and the engineer withdrew the shaft with the intention of repairing it; but the water rushed in through the hole, the bulkhead was not closed in time, and in a few minutes the ship began to sink. The boats were got out, the captain stepping into one laden to the gunwale. The night was dark, and the sea so rough that it seemed

impossible for the boat to stay afloat. After a while, they saw the lights of an approaching steamer; but how could they signal it?

They made search in the boat, and found a battered lantern with an inch or two of candle in it. Then they tried to find a match. Every man felt in his pockets, but in vain. Not a match was to be found. The captain bade them search again, and at last, out of some corner, one match was produced. The man who found it handed it to the mate; the mate passed it to another officer, and he gave it to the captain. The sailors clustered round him, holding out their jackets to keep off the wind, and they watched him with



anxiety. The captain said he had faced many a difficulty and danger, but had never felt such responsibility as at that moment when he had to strike the match, but he did it. The lantern was lighted, and when it was waved to and fro the ship saw the signal, altered its course, and picked them up."

Now, what gave such value to that match? It was the only one! Your life is your only one in this world and after you leave this scene of time, your soul will be in eternity either in heaven or hell. Where you will spend eternity will depend solely on what you do with the Lord Jesus Christ.

He is the only Saviour of the world and the only One who having died for our sins on the cross, rose from the dead the third day a living Saviour. The only opportunity you have to be saved is now in this life not after death when there will be judgment for you (Hebrews 9:27). The Bible warns us, "How shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation." (Hebrews 2:3)

Your life is precious to God. He gave His Son out of great love to save you. Don't waste this opportunity to be saved. Call upon Him now to be your Lord and personal Saviour.

Church History

Harry Ironsíde By Mark Bearall

Harry Ironside was a tireless worker for Christ. His preaching engagements nearly always exceeded the days of the year. He was well known as the Pastor of Moody Memorial Church in Chicago. He was also a prolific author and many of his titles are still in print today.

Harry Ironside was born on the 14th October 1876 in Toronto, Canada. The doctor though that he was born dead and left him aside to take care of his mother. Forty minutes later a nurse detected a pulse in young Harry and he was given a hot bath, during which he gave out a hearty cry. The baby who was left aside as dead became a powerful preacher for our Lord Jesus Christ.



His father John Williams Ironside, a teller for the Merchant Bank of Toronto was well known as a street evangelist. His nickname was, "Eternity Man," because he asked nearly everyone he met the question, "Where will you spend eternity." John Ironside died of typhoid in 1878, three weeks after the birth of his second son John Williams Ironside Junior, so Harry's godly mother Sophia was left to bring up the children alone.

Harry was brought up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord. He started to memorise the Scriptures a the age of three. He was very zealous for the outward forms of religion. One day he heard that a man read the whole Bible in a year, so Harry thought that he would do the same. Sometimes he read the Bible through more than once in a year. By the time he was fourteen years old he had read the whole Bible fourteen times. Harry started a Sunday school when he wasn't even saved and he managed to gather 60 children to hear him preach. He was known as the boy preacher. He preached, taught Sunday school and gave out tracts but he didn't know the Lord Jesus personally.

Many preachers would visit his house and one in particular was Donald Munro. Every time he saw Harry he would ask him, "Are you born again yet lad?" Harry was very uncomfortable and would answer, "I give out tracts, memorise scripture and teach Sunday school." Munro would answer," O laddie, you may give out tracts and still spend all eternity in hell. Ye must be born again, Harry boy."

Harry began to indulge in worldly activities for about six months and one night in February 1890, when he was at a party some scripture came to mind. Proverbs 1:23-28. Ironside was cut to the heart. He left the party and ran home to seek the Lord. After some prayer and reading the Scriptures he came to the words," He that believeth on him is not condemned. The Lord blessed those words to his heart and he believed on the Lord Jesus Christ.

Harry attended a Salvation Army Open Air meeting the day after his conversion. He heard a few testimonies and then he asked the Salvation Army officer if he could give his testimony. The officer asked, "When were you saved?" "Last night", Harry replied. "Fire away then" said the officer. Harry read Isaiah 53:6 and gave his testimony. He was so long in giving his testimony that they were half an hour late for the meeting in the Hall.

Harry eventually became a Lieutenant in the Salvation Army. He distributed thousand of tracts and held many Gospel campaigns and was very busy for

the Lord. However, he struggled with the Salvation Army teaching on sanctification. He came to a point that he was in despair because he could not obtain entire sanctification or sinless perfection.

Harry spent some time in a Salvation Army rest home, where he studied the Bible on the subject and came to a different view on the subject. He was much helped by George Cutting's booklet, "Safety, Certainty and enjoyment."

Harry left the Salvation Army and began to meet with an assembly of believers in San Francisco. In 1896 he assisted Henry Varley in Gospel meeting in San Francisco. It was there that he met Helen Schofield, who was the pianist. They married in 1898. Harry was extremely busy preaching in various missions, Gospel Halls and independent churches.

He was often preaching five hundred times in a year. In fact in 1930 he preached 655 messages from the word of God. Ironside often wrote books and pamphlets on his travels. He produced expositions of many Old Testament books and most of the NewTestament as well as books on various subjects. One famous work is his, "History of the Brethren Movement." He did not use complex theological jargon but his writings were lively and easy to understand, full of illustrations and practical teaching. Ironside started as an evangelist but after sometime he felt the need to edify the saints and his preaching became more expository.

In 1912 Ironside started to run a book table at the Gospel Auditorium in Oakland California. He sold some of his own writings and some other authors, he specialised in Assembly Writers. This venture expanded and it became, "The Western Book and Tract Company. Ironside lectured for two months at Dallas Theological Seminary in 1924. He was offered a permanent position at Dallas but he refused it because he wanted to develop the book company.

Ironside agreed to become Pastor of the 4000 seat Moody Memorial Church in 1930. This was a difficult decision for him as he was against one man ministry. He agreed after appointing two assistants for the work. He

was the main preacher but they were equally important. He met with a number of believers of like mind in his study to remember the Lord in the breaking of bread every Lord's Day. Whenever, he was away preaching he would seek out an assembly of believers to take part in the Breaking of Bread. Ironside was at Moody Memorial Church for 18 years. Five people were saved on his first day as pastor. In the whole of the eighteen years there were only two Sundays without someone making a profession of salvation.

Ironside was well regarded by the fundamentalist of his day. He wrote many books on prophecy and he was nicknamed the, "Archbishop of Fundamentalism." He received an honorary Doctorate for Literature from Wheaton College and an honorary Doctorate of Divinity from Bob Jones University. He was not into titles but he accepted the Doctor of Divinity not wanting to offend his friend Bob Jones.

His wife Helen died in 1948 and he retired as minister of Moody Church. In 1949 he married Ann Hightower. She was a great helpmeet for him. He was not capable of looking after himself as his vison was deteriorating. Ironside went to New Zealand in 1950, where he wrote his last book, a commentary on Isaiah. By this time he was blind. A portion of scripture was read to him followed by Vine's commentary and then he would dictate remembering the verses exactly.

Harry suffered of a heart attack in January 1951. He thought it was just a bit of indigestion, so he continued his journey to the morning meeting and even took part, speaking on Psalm 118:19-29. One of the brethren begged him to see a doctor but he said, "No, I'm scheduled to speak this evening." Harry was taken to hospital at 5pm. He read seven chapters of the Bible in the hospital. Harry died on the 15th January 1951 and was buried at Purewa Cemetry New Zealand.

Be ye stedfast immovable always abounding in the work of the Lord.

Report of work amongst Hindus in Wembley

By Nitish & Ellen Patel

At present we are conducting another 6 week outreach at Wembley Gospel Hall which is surrounded by a predominantly Gujarati Indian population. Some 15,000 people shop on Ealing Road every week where the hall is situated and we are able to reach many with the gospel.

Over recent years, there has been an influx of thousands of Indian students who are very open to listen to the gospel compared to the wealthy Westernised local Indian population.

After years of sowing, the Lord saved a Hindu man last year named Kirit and then again earlier this year another Hindu man named Bhavesh was saved. Bhavesh is now baptised and in assembly fellowship. Kirit's wife and daughters have joined him from India and it was a great joy to see her coming to the meetings also. Please pray for the household to be saved.

Meetings are held on the weekends with the message translated into Hindi by brother Vijay Thomre and broadcast outside on loudspeakers (as far as we know the only assembly in the country where we can do this and get away with it!).

During the week there is a literature table kept outside the hall and a Bible class in Gujarati held where those interested can come to learn more about the Lord.

One student from India told us last week that he had heard of the name of Jesus but did not know anything about Him till that day. There are many like him and we cry unto the Lord for grace to reach them all with the wonderful words of life before they return to India.

Another Hindu lady wanted a place in Harrow where she could hear the Bible taught in her language. We met a man and his wife just come from Gujarat who told us he has been reading the Bible in India.

Every October there is a huge procession to celebrate the Hindu Diwali festival and some 20,000 people line Ealing Road to watch it giving us another opportunity for tracting. Do continue to pray for the great work the Lord is doing in Wembley.





Baptism of Bhavesh Jani at Wembley Gospel Hall (18 April 2010)

