

Clifton News

No 254 - July - September 2011

Published since 1948



45 Whitehorse Lane, South Norwood, London SE25 6RD
www.cliftongospelhall.com



News

The Easter Holiday club was well attended and around 60 children came in total. There were well over 40 children coming the first couple of days but dropping off a little towards the end. Behaviour was good about 12 parents were present to hear the gospel on the prize giving night.

Last quarter, our Friday club numbers have increased beyond our expectation and there have been too many coming to fit comfortably in the hall, which is a good problem to have.

Sunday school was at the point of closure with hardly any children turning up but things have improved and now around 6-8 attend each week who are quite enthusiastic.

The hall has been repaired and renovated in time for the July 29th wedding of Alastair Rodger and Rebecca Catchpole.

Gospel Campaign 4 - 18 September 2011 (Lord willing)

Speaker: Jonathan Black
Monday - Saturday at 8 p.m.
Sundays at 6:30 p.m.

Jonathan has had a burden for the people of London and was recently commended to full time Christian work by his assembly in Ballymena, Northern Ireland. He will be shortly moving to London with his family to labour here. Do pray for them and this mission.

Meetings

The Week at Clifton

Lord's Day	
Breaking of Bread	11 a.m.
Sunday School	3 p.m.
Gospel Meeting	6:30 p.m.
Tuesday	
Bible Reading (First Tuesday of the month only)	8 p.m.
Wednesday Seekers Club (Term time only for under 10s)	6:30 p.m.
Thursday Prayer and Ministry	7:45 p.m.
Friday Club (Term time only for 10+)	7:30 p.m.

Sunday Evening Gospel Meeting

July

3	Graham Cole (Family service)
10	Mark Beardall
17	Norman Gibbons
24	Kevin Oh
31	Richard Catchpole

August

7	Nitish Patel (Family service)
14	Norman Gibbons
21	Mark Beardall
28	Nitish Patel

September

- 4 Jonathan Black (Gospel Campaign)
- 11 Jonathan Black (Gospel Campaign)
- 18 Jonathan Black (Gospel Campaign)
- 25 Phil Briercliff

Tuesday Bible Reading

Studying the book of Proverbs

- July 7 Proverbs 19b (Note this is on Thursday)
- August 2 Proverbs 20a
- September 6 No Bible reading (Gospel Campaign)

Thursday Prayer & Ministry

July

- Tuesday 5 Tom Ledger (Note the Bible Reading will be on Thursday)
- 14 Michael Surry
- 21 Michael Surry
- Tuesday 26 Timothy Millar – Note the change of day

August

- 4 Richard Catchpole
- 11 Ian Roberts
- 18 John Aston
- 25 Norman Gibbons

September

- 1 Norman Gibbons
- 8 Jonathan Black (Gospel Campaign)
- 15 Jonathan Black (Gospel Campaign)
- 22 Archie Carew
- 29 Archie Carew

Questions



Answered by Richard Catchpole

In Romans 6.23 the apostle Paul says 'The wages of sin is death' is this 'death' physical or spiritual or eternal?

We should perhaps first consider some of the different contexts in which the word 'death' is used in the Bible and which are especially relevant to the above question.

i) The first mention of the words 'die', 'dead' and 'death' all come in the book of Genesis, the first book of the Bible. The word 'die' comes first in chapter 2.17 in the warning God gave to the first man Adam not to eat 'of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil' adding 'for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die'. The first mention of the word 'dead' is found in chapter 20.3 when God warning Abimelech of the judgement that would overcome him if he pursued the course he had embarked upon said 'thou art but a dead man'. Then the first mention of the word 'death' comes in chapter 21.16 when Hagar said in respect of her son Ishmael 'Let me not see the death of the child'. While we shall return to the first of these references in a moment, it is sufficient to say at this point that all three verses refer to physical death.

ii) In the New Testament the word 'dead' is sometimes used with a different significance, in Ephesians 2.1 Paul writing of Gentile Christians and comparing what they had been before they trusted in Christ with what they were subsequent to believing, says 'And you hath He quickened (i.e. 'made alive') who were (i.e. before they trusted in Christ) dead in trespasses and sins'. Here the word 'dead' is directly traced to a spiritual condition, 'trespasses and sins', two words that give a summary of the conduct and so evil condition of

fallen mankind. 'Trespasses' involve overstepping a boundary, diverting from a right path, while 'sins' embrace coming short of a set standard. As 'transgressors' men are viewed as rebels against God: and as 'sinners', having failed in the sight of God. Such conduct is seen as an index to a spiritual condition namely that by nature men are void of any life towards, or any personal relationship with, God. The Lord Jesus taught that a relationship and fellowship with God and with His Son Jesus Christ, is an integral part of eternal life, John 17.3, but the Bible says that by nature man is 'alienated from the life of God', Ephesians 4.18, and 'dead in trespasses and sins' so the reference in Ephesians 2.1 relates to spiritual death, men void of any life toward God.

iii) In the last book of the Bible, Revelation 2.11; 20.6; 20.14 and 21.8, we read of the 'second death' the latter two verses linking this to 'the lake of fire' and the final destiny of the lost. John describes in Revelation 20 the final judgement, a great white throne, the dead small and great standing before God to be judged 'every man according to their works' and the awful doom of those whose names are not written in 'the book of life', eternal banishment to the lake of fire, vv. 11-15, such is the second death.

Now in considering what 'death' is in view in Romans 6.23 it is important to observe that Paul is speaking in the verse about 'sin' and not 'sins'. The plural word describes the deeds of men and is linked to the condition of spiritual death as seen in Ephesians 2.1 and are the works for which those who reject the gospel and are unrepentant will ultimately be judged as described in Revelation 20. The singular word 'sin' in Romans 6.23 is not a reference to the deeds of men but to the evil principle, or source of action, that was introduced into the world in consequence of Adam's disobedience in the garden of Eden, a principle active in all men on account of their connection with a fallen race. Then record of Adam's fall makes it evident that the 'wages of sin' is linked to physical death. God had warned Adam that to disobey His command and to eat of the forbidden fruit would result in his death, Genesis 2.17. Consequent

upon Adam's disobedience, the Lord passing sentence upon him said 'In the sweat of thy face thou shalt eat bread, till thou return unto the ground, for out of it wast thou taken; for dust thou art and unto dust thou shalt return', Genesis 3.19, language indicating that physical death was clearly in view. That sentence has passed upon all men on account of their descent from Adam, Romans 5.14, 17. Physical death is thus seen to be the stamp of God upon a fallen creation and every sign of its approach is a testimony to men that they are under sentence of judgement and if they are ever to be righteous before God, they stand in need of a Saviour. How thankful we should be that Romans 6.23 does not finish with 'the wages of sin' but with the 'gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord'. Is that life yours? The Bible says 'God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish but have everlasting life' John 3.16.

Bible Teaching on Fasting

*An examination of what the Holy
Scriptures teach*

by late Charles Wigg (Tasmania)



Fasting has been practised by men, both the people of God, and Pagans from ancient times. The Pagans did so to try to obtain favours from the deities whom they feared and served. This was especially in times of crisis and distress, or for auspicious occasions such as before marriage etc. It was the practice of Pagan sailors to fast especially in the autumn time, with the approach of winter, so that they might be kept from shipwreck in times of winter

storms. (See Acts 27:9 and 33). The fast referred to in verse 9, was the fast observed by the Jews before the great day of atonement, which took place late September, or early October. However as mentioned earlier, it was the custom for the pagan sailors to fast with the onset of winter, and in this chapter it was because of their distress occasioned by the terrible storm, they had been fasting for 14 days.

Two kinds of fasting

There are two kinds of fasting described in the scriptures. (1) Some was out of deep sincerity, where those who fasted truly humbled themselves, confessing and forsaking their sins, such as we have in 1 Sam. 7:6, Neh. 9:1-2, Joel 2:12, Dan. 9:3, Ezra 8:23, and Deut. 9:18.

(2) Mostly however the fasting was just an outward show, by which those who fasted hoped to attract God's attention, diverting His attention from the sins which they were practising, and which were blighting their lives, exposing them to the judgment of God. (Isa. 58:4-5.) Still others did it to attract the attention and praise of men, for their self-denial, and supposed devotion, (Luke 18:12.)

Still others were practising fasting for seventy years, yet Jehovah has to question them, "Did you do it unto ME?" They had obviously not fasted unto the Lord, but had carried on this empty ritual for so long, doubtless feeling quite proud of their self denial, but all was a useless, wasted exercise.

The spirit of fasting

God explained through Isaiah, (chapter 58:6-7,) what He desired from His people, and that was not just an outward show, but a real searching examination of their lives. A thorough and fearless confession and forsaking of every sin, and practice that was contrary to His nature, and His word.

The religious side of the fallen nature of Adam which is within each one of us, loves to have something in which to glory. Outward self-denial suits the flesh very nicely, as it makes the one who practices it feel very faithful and devoted, as if it is the manifestation of some superior spirituality. I have known young people who were very worldly

in their ways and attitudes, and never practised any form of separation from the world, but were guilty of many sinful habits, yet when asked to fast at a youth camp, gladly responded. I can only assume that it made them “feel good”, to think that they were going without food for a time, to “please God”, while all the time they were just pleasing their camp leaders, and themselves, It made them feel that they were being some kind of martyrs, but at the same time they were not willing to give up their worldly and sinful ways. Such fasting gives no pleasure to the heart of God.

The fasting that pleases God, is not merely going without food for a time, but abstaining from eating **because** of an overwhelming sense of shame, and grief, because of our sins, that takes away our desire to eat.

The people of Israel were practising all kinds of injustice, business dishonesty, violence and wickedness, yet they were fasting, and pretending to seek the Lord and His will, as if they were a nation who had done righteousness, and had not broken God’s laws, or forsaken His ordinances. Yet they were asking Him for just decisions, as if they delighted in His nearness.

They were going through the outward rituals of fasting, pretending to humble themselves, and wondered why God did not notice their devotion and self-denial. However God has to rebuke them, telling them that even in this their motives were selfish, and even while they were “fasting”, they were driving their employees all the harder. They “fasted” hoping that it might help them to win their arguments, and their fights.

Fasting is good, but only when carried on from pure and right motives. There were so many other things in their lives which God wanted them to judge, to cease doing, to put away, to deny to themselves, **before** they thought of denying themselves food.

He wanted them to be gentle, forgiving and gracious, not harsh, critical and judgmental of others. He wanted them to cease their greedy, selfish, grasping ways, their exploitation of others, their oppression of the poor, and instead to be generous, kind, and even willing to take the homeless poor into their houses.

He wanted them to put Himself, His pleasure, obedience to His word, first in their lives, and promised spiritual blessing, fresh and

fragrant, fruitful lives to them if they were willing to do as He asked. However they were not willing to do as He asked them, but preferred to continue their wickedness, but also to keep up their ritual fasting.

There are so many like that even today, such think it is smart if they can cheat their employer, by being lazy, or charging time that they have not worked. They will drink, smoke, use bad language, think nothing of having illicit affairs with other persons than their life-partner. They will worship the god of sport, and abuse their bodies in doing so. As well they will be violent to others in playing sport, or in arguments. They think that if they go to church once on Sunday, then the rest of the “Lord’s Day”, in fact the rest of the week is their own, to do “their pleasure”. Yet such will be proud of their fasting, will sometimes boast of it to others. Such “**fasting**”, is a waste of time, and gives no pleasure to God.

Fasting never commanded

Fasting is never commanded in the holy scriptures, though it is encouraged, when practised for godly reasons. In Matt. 6;16, the Lord Jesus says, “And whenever you fast”, clearly indicating that they were sometimes fasting even before He spoke to them, but they were doing it for wrong reasons, and as an outward show. Thus we may conclude that fasting is a voluntary thing, not obligatory, and to be pleasing to Him, and thus beneficial to us or to others whose blessing we seek, then it must always be to God.

..... to be continued

Good News

A psychic parrot's untimely end

In March 2011, the newspapers in India carried the story of the first casualty of the cricket frenzy that took place in Bangalore. It has been pronounced. It's not a human being, but a sad little parrot that had to forego its life at the hands of its master. Unlike Paul the Octopus who became famous during the 2010 FIFA World Cup, this "psychic parrot" made the mistake of predicting that Pakistan will win the Cricket World Cup 2011. Not only did it predict the win once but did the same grave mistake three times in a row!



The parrot named Mani did not know that the prediction would lead to such tragic consequences. The owner of the winged fortune-teller, Baba foreseeing that the prediction could hamper his prospects as a fortune teller as well, decided to kill the parrot before it could inflict more damages.

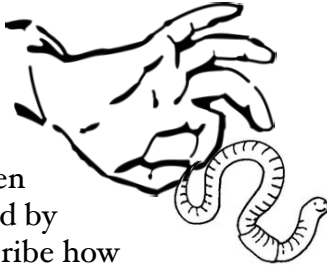
The Bible tells us that only God knows the future because He alone is omniscient. "Declaring the end from the beginning, and from ancient times the things that are not yet done, saying, My counsel shall stand, and I will do all my pleasure." (Isaiah 46:10)

How thankful we are that God has not left us in the hands of ignorant fortune tellers to know what the future holds. He has plainly told us things which are certainly going to come to pass.

The Bible foretells the next great event to take place in human history, the return of Jesus Christ. He is the Saviour now but He is coming back as Judge. "...The Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with his

mighty angels, in flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ.” (2 Thess. 1:8-9). Reader, are you saved? Have you been cleansed by the precious blood shed on Calvary’s cross? Are you ready for eternity?

How the Indian was saved



An American Indian, who had been converted, was asked by a white man to describe how religion came to him. He led the white man out to the woods, and gathering some dry leaves, arranged them in a circle, and put a little worm in the centre of it. He then set the leaves on fire. The worm sought escape, first on one side, then on another, but there was no way out; so, drawing itself again to the centre of the circle, it sank into a numb and listless state. The Indian then lifted the worm from the fire with his fingers, and said, This is the way God saved me! Jesus plucked me out of the flames. Salvation is by faith alone in Christ, not of works lest any man should boast. He alone can save.



“And the LORD said unto Satan, The LORD rebuke thee, O Satan; even the LORD that hath chosen Jerusalem rebuke thee: is not this a brand plucked out of the fire?” (Zechariah 3:2)

Church History

by Mark Beardall

The faith of King Edward VI



The reign of King Edward VIII lasted only seven years but it was a time of deliverance for the Lord's people. Edward was the son of Henry VIII by his third wife Jane Seymour. Henry VIII had made himself head of the Church of England, and had abolished the power of the pope in his kingdom. He closed down the monasteries and convents

and even had the Bible printed, but Henry VIII was still essentially Roman Catholic in his doctrine. Many were put to death for the faith during his reign.

Henry VIII under the influence of Gardiner and Bonner passed a law known as the Six Articles, which was also known as the “Bloody Statute.” Under this law anyone opposing transubstantiation, confession to a priest, vows of chastity and private masses or agreed with the marriage of the clergy or giving of the cup to the common man would be put to death.

Archbishop Cranmer tried to persuade Henry against this law, but he did not prevail. Hundreds of people were thrown into prison. Protestants were burnt for denying transubstantiation and Roman Catholics were hung for denying the King’s supremacy in England. It has been estimated that seventy two thousand people were executed during the reign of Henry VIII.



Henry VIII died in 1547 and his son Edward VI reigned in his stead. Edward was acknowledged King on the 28th of January 1547 but was not crowned until February. Edward was only nine years old when he began to reign, but his natural abilities and wisdom were much greater than the average child. He was brought up under the influence of wise and godly teachers and was well conversant in Latin and French.

When Edward became King he released the persecuted believers from prison and abolished the Six Articles. This encouraged many exiled believers to return to the country. At his coronation procession Edward was presented with three swords which symbolised his three kingdoms. Edward said, "There lacks one." They asked him what it was and he replied, "The Bible." He also said "that book is the sword of the Spirit, and it is to be preferred before those. It ought in all right to govern us; without it we are nothing. He that rules without it is not to be called God's minister, or a King."

In the seven years of Edward's reign eleven editions of the Bible were published and six editions of the New Testament. Transubstantiation and confession to a priest were declared unscriptural. The graven images were removed, the clergy were allowed to marry and church services were to be carried out in English instead of Latin. Forty-two articles of religion were drawn up for the church. These were reduced to thirty-nine articles during the reign of Elizabeth I, and are still officially held in the Church of England today.

The Reformers were greatly impressed with the young King. John Calvin called him our Young Josiah. Hugh Latimer preached before him a number of times. His Godfather was Archbishop Cramner who was responsible for the Prayer Book and was burnt at the stake in the reign of Queen Mary I. The prayer book was revised in 1662 under King Charles II who forced it on the people and did not allow extemporary preaching. King Edward allowed men to preach the Gospel without fear.

Edward was helped in government by his uncle, Edward Seymour, Duke of Somerset and later John Dudley, Duke of Northumberland. These were strong Protestant men who gave good advice to the young King.



King Edward did not enjoy good health and he died on 6th July 1553 at Greenwich Palace. His dying prayer was, “Lord, I commit my spirit to Thee, O Lord, Thou knowest how happy it were for me to be with Thee, yet for the sake of Thy chosen, send me life and health, that I may serve Thee. O Lord God bless Thy people and save Thine inheritance. O Lord God, save Thy chosen people of England. O Lord God defend this realm from Papistry; and maintain Thy true religion, that I and my people may praise Thy name for Thy Son Jesus Christ’s sake.” We take Thy chosen people of England to mean His chosen people in England. He may have prayed in this way being under the influence of John Calvin who corresponded with him.

After his death his cousin Lady Jane Grey became Queen for nine days. He was anxious to have a Protestant succession. He knew the cruel nature of his sister Mary and tried to prevent her becoming Queen. He also did not want Elizabeth to become Queen. She was a Protestant, but Lady Jane Grey was a true believer in our Lord Jesus Christ.

Lady Jane Grey was executed and the infamous Bloody Mary became Queen who killed hundreds of the Lord’s people. Edwards prayer was answered after the death of Mary in that God delivered this realm from Papistry. Rome has not been successful in ruling this country ever since. James II attempted

to impose it on this country but King William III was invited by the British government to replace him. It seems that King Edward had a great desire to see people saved. Many people pray for themselves on their deathbed but he also interceded for the nation.



W St Clair Taylor said, “He sought as Josiah of old, to walk before the Lord, keeping His commandments, His testimonies and His statutes. Of Josiah it is written, “Like unto him there was no King before him that turned to the Lord with all his heart, according to the law of Moses: neither after him arose there any like him.” 2 Kings 23:25.

We do not personally like the practice of comparing men with Biblical characters as this practice often leads to a cult-like following. I have included this to show the esteem that men had for him. They were both boy Kings and were both righteous but it is not wise to go beyond that in comparison.

“I exhort therefore, that, first of all, supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving to thanks, be made for all men; for Kings and for all that are in authority; that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and honesty.” (1 Timothy 2:1-2)





Holiday Bible Club - 1994



Some Clifton Hall believers - 1950s



Past Days at Clifton Hall



South Norwood High Street 1920 where some brethren met above a coffee shop in the 1800s. The two assemblies at Clifton Hall and Denmark Hall formed from this original meeting.