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Clifton News

No 258 July - September 2012

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A photograph of Clifton Gospel Hall, a brick building with arched windows and a door, under a blue sky with clouds. The building has a gabled roof and a small sign above the entrance. A white sign stands in front of the building, listing church services. To the right, a street with parked cars and a sidewalk leads away from the building.



Easter Holiday Club



Rhea Sarai Roberts.

News

EASTER HOLIDAY CLUB

April's Easter Holiday club was well attended and around 65 children came with several parents staying to listen every day. As it was the hundredth anniversary of the sinking of the Titanic, this year's theme was nautical stories of the Bible and on the prize giving night there were many present to hear a gospel message based on the Titanic story.

WEDDING ANNOUNCEMENT



The assembly is looking forward to another wedding this year, as our brother Mark Beardall is engaged to be married to Anne Marie Rose from the assembly in Lewisham. The happy occasion will be on the 14th of September this year to be held, Lord willing, at Loampit Gospel Hall.

Birth announcement

The Lord blessed Ian & Preeti with a healthy baby girl, Rhea Sarai Roberts. She was born on Thursday 3rd of May 2012 at Croydon university hospital. Rhea shares the same birthday as her great grandfather the late brother P. P. John (India)



Bible Exhibition & Gospel Campaign

15 to 27 September 2012

See back cover for details. Prayers valued for blessing.

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Meetings

THE WEEK AT CLIFTON

Lord's Day

Breaking of Bread 11.00 am

Sunday School (Term time only for ages 5+)

Gospel Meeting 6:30 pm

Tuesday

First Tuesday of month - Bible Reading 8.00 pm

Wednesday

Seekers Club 6:30 pm (Term time only for under 10s)

Thursday

Prayer & Ministry 7:45 pm

Friday

Friday Club (Term time only for 10+) 7:30 pm

SUNDAY EVENING GOSPEL MEETING

July

- 1 Alastair Rodger (Family Service)
- 8 Glyn Davies
- 15 Alastair Rodger
- 22 Norman Gibbons
- 29 Richard Catchpole

August

- 5 Nitish Patel (Family Service)
- 12 Nitish Patel
- 19 Ferranti Wong
- 26 Nitish Patel

September

- 2 Richard Catchpole (Family Service)
- 9 Nitish Patel
- 16 Ian Jackson (Gospel Campaign)
- 23 Ian Jackson (Gospel Campaign)
- 30 Norman Gibbons

TUESDAY BIBLE READING

Currently studying Paul's Epistle to the Romans.
(Please note that it is sometimes not possible to have a Bible reading so if you plan to attend please contact us first.)

THURSDAY PRAYER & MINISTRY

July

- 5 Glyn Davies
- 12 Glyn Davies
- 19 Stephen Davies - Report of missionary work in Tanzania
- 26 Glyn Davies

August

Theme of brotherly relationships in the single chapter books of the Bible.

- | | | |
|----|-------------------|----------|
| 2 | Richard Catchpole | OBADIAH |
| 9 | David Penfold | PHILEMON |
| 16 | Richard Catchpole | 2 JOHN |
| 23 | Nitish Patel | 3 JOHN |
| 30 | Nitish Patel | JUDE |

September

- | | | |
|----|-------------------------------|------|
| 6 | Nitish Patel | JUDE |
| 13 | Norman Gibbons | |
| 20 | Ian Jackson (Gospel Campaign) | |
| 27 | Ian Jackson (Gospel Campaign) | |

Question Page

By Richard Catchpole

Is the call to 'awake' in Ephesians 5.14 'Wherefore he saith, Awake thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall give thee light', addressed to believers or unbelievers?

The opening words 'he saith' could equally be read as 'it saith' and since there is a rhythmical character to the clauses some commentators suggest that this is a quotation from an early Christian baptismal hymn. This interpretation is accepted by a number of commentators. F. F. Bruce in his commentary 'The Epistle to the Ephesians' wrote 'this interpretation is more probable than any other' but added 'it cannot be demonstrated to be the true one'! But understood thus it is suggested that in this verse the believers former condition in Adam is presented as being akin to sleep, death, and darkness, from which Christ has delivered those who believe. Conversion is thus understood to be like an awaking out of sleep, a rising from the dead and a coming out of darkness into light.

However the same phrase 'Wherefore he saith' has been used earlier in the epistle at chapter 4 verse 8 to introduce a quotation from Psalm 68 and thus it seems more likely that in our present verse it introduces a composition of several quotations from the Old Testament possibly drawing upon Isaiah 60.1 'Arise, shine; for thy light is come, and the glory of the LORD is risen upon thee'; Isaiah 26.19 'Awake and sing, ye that dwell in dust'; Isaiah 51.17 'Awake, Awake, stand up' and Isaiah 52.1-2 'Awake awake ... Shake thyself from the dust', verses that in context are intimately related to the coming Millennial Kingdom of Christ and the recovery and restoration of the nation of Israel. Instead of being a baptismal hymn, and we might suggest consistent with the general tenor of the quotations from Isaiah it seems best to understand the verse as a call to individual believers who have settled down in the world into a general state of indifference to spiritual and eternal realities, a call to them to wake up. To illustrate the lesson we might picture in our mind a battlefield in which bodies are lying, some are merely corpses, but not all some are simply sleeping. In

appearance there is little to distinguish between them and as the sun rises the call goes forth that those who sleep should rise, stand up and stand out from those who are dead. Understood thus 'the dead' relates to 'the unregenerate', while 'thou that sleepest' has in view any believer who has settled down in this world, indifferent and asleep in regard to spiritual values and interests. The Greek word for 'sleepest' is 'katheudo' a word used with the same significance in 1 Thess.5.6 where Paul says 'let us not sleep as do others; but let us watch and be sober'. The word for 'Awake' is Greek 'egeiro' to awake or stir oneself, which W. E. Vine in his Expository Dictionary defines as used here 'metaphorically, of waking from a state of moral sloth'.

The call then embraces a warning to believers not to settle down into a state of spiritual lethargy, so that there is nothing to distinguish them from the lost, a call to any who have fallen into such a state to stand up and to stand out from the unregenerate, and the promise is added 'Christ shall give you light'.

In verse 13 Paul has mentioned 'light' twice, we know that light can expose and reveal what is hidden in the dark and that is the sense in which it is mentioned in v.13 'all things which are reprov'd are made manifest by the light: for whatsoever doth make manifest is light', the truth of God exposing what is sinful with a view to bringing conviction, confession and repentance, or so as to avoid it. But equally light can be used not with the primary objective of exposing what is shameful and hidden in darkness, but to illuminate and point out the way in which to go and that is the sense in which it is used in verse 14, Christ giving light to enable those who heed the call to 'awake' enabling them walk as 'the children of light' of which Paul has spoken earlier, at verse 8.

In Titus chapter 2 verse 12 Paul reminds us that the grace which has brought salvation within the scope of all men, teaches the believer 'that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world'.

Are we those who have settled down into a state of moral and spiritual inactivity, with little to distinguish, ourselves, our standards, our interests, our objectives from those of the unregenerate? May we heed the call of the apostle and be encouraged to stand up and stand out for Christ.

Bible Teaching

Thoughts and suggestions about worship

By the late Charles Wigg (Tasmania)

FOREWORD

As I have moved about amongst God's people, I find that the hearts and minds of many are exercised about the subject of worship. There is a real desire to have a better understanding and to be able to worship more intelligently.

When I have ministered on the subject there has been a very lively interest, and I have been asked to write something about worship. This article is a response to that request.

There seems to be a lack of teaching on the subject of worship, with the result that there is much ignorance about it. The following thoughts and suggestions are put forward for your consideration. May they lead us to search and study the scriptures, that we may learn what they have to teach us. May it result in a richer and more intelligent response in worship to our Great God. May His Holy Name be glorified!

WHAT IS WORSHIP?

Worship is the deepest spiritual emotion that the redeemed soul and spirit of man is capable of. True worship is addressed to God alone. The Triune, Eternal, Only Wise God, who has revealed Himself in the Person of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Son .

It may be addressed to God in His absoluteness, in His triune majesty and glory, that is including all the Persons of the God-head. The Father, The Son and The Holy Spirit.

Worship may also be addressed to the Person of the Father, or to the Person of the Son, but never in scripture is worship addressed to the Holy Spirit personally. In fact no where in scripture do we have an example of anyone speaking to the Holy Spirit. He is the one who

speaks to us. However when we worship God in the absolute, we worship the Holy Spirit as God, along with the Father and the Son.

The most intimate form of worship is addressed to God in a direct and personal manner; that is; using the personal pronouns. Worship may be impersonal, we have a demonstration of both in Revelation 5. In verse 9, we hear those surrounding the throne, the inner circle, saying "Thou art worthy", but the hosts of angels and other families of the redeemed, in verse 12 say, "Worthy is the Lamb". As the circle widens to gather in both heaven and earth, we hear the countless multitude saying, "To Him that sits upon the throne, and to the Lamb".... In both these latter cases the manner of address is impersonal.

THE DIFFERENT LEVELS OF ADDRESS TO GOD

It may help to point out the different levels of address to God, of which the scriptures speak, and seek to distinguish the one from the other. They are:

(a) PRAYER AND SUPPLICATION

Prayer is good, it is commanded of God, 1, Thess. 5:17, it is a desirable and wonderful privilege, but it is not worship. In prayer we are asking from God, whereas in worship we are giving to God. Some brothers pray publicly, asking God for things and mistakenly think that they are offering worship.

(b) THANKSGIVING

As with prayer, thanksgiving is commanded, is right and is desirable, but again it is not worship. It is right that we should give thanks to men, to those who help us, serve us, give to us etc., but we are never to worship men, we are to worship God alone. Thanksgiving should always be included in our prayers. To give thanks is greater than asking.

... to be continued

What Shall I Do Then With Jesus?

by Robert E. Surgenor

A QUESTION YOU MUST ANSWER!

HOW OFTEN in the lives of men do moments of tremendous decision cross their paths! Such was the case of a Roman governor in the city of Jerusalem many years ago. The crowning sin of the human race was about to be committed. A mob, represented by the chief priests and elders of the Jews, had gathered. They sought the Saviour's blood because they could not endure His teaching. Nothing else would satisfy them but His removal from earth, for He was a standing protest against their evil deeds.

A WOMAN'S DREAM

Before Pilate, Jesus stands with majestic dignity. For envy, the Jews had delivered Him (Matthew 27:18) and now Jesus is on Pilate's hands. As the fury of the mob who cried for His blood increases, it is written that Pilate's wife said, "Have thou nothing to do with that just (righteous) Man: for I have suffered many things this day in a dream because of Him" (Matthew 27:19). We are not told her dream concerning Christ but it caused much anguish in her soul. She suffered many things because of it. Perhaps she dreamed of hell, the Christ-rejector's end, or the awful judgment and consignment to the Lake of Fire for those who refuse God's salvation through Christ. Since it was Pilate's wife who had the dream, it seems that God was seeking to reach this poor man's conscience through his affection. Her warning was in vain. Pilate was obsessed with self-interest; to let Jesus go might cause him the loss of his lucrative position. Also, he was a coward who was afraid of a fool's laugh. He was more willing to content the people (Mark 15:15).

BARABBAS THE MURDERER

Pause for a moment and behold another man standing there. He is convicted for insurrection and murder (Mark 15:7). With every mark

of fury and hate upon his face, he stands like a wolf beside the gentle Lamb of God. Barabbas is his name. Now at that season, it was a custom that the governor release one prisoner unto them (John 18:39). Pilate asks, "Whom will ye that I release unto you? Barabbas or Jesus which is called Christ?" (Matthew 27:17). "And they cried out all at once, saying, Away with this Man, and release unto us Barabbas" (Luke 23:18)

*See how the patient Jesus stands
Insulted in His lowest case!
Sinners have bound the Almighty hands
And spit in their Creator's face.*

Now comes the most solemn event in Pilate's life: "Pilate saith unto them, What shall I do then with Jesus which is called Christ?" They cry, "Let Him be crucified" (Matthew 27:22). Pilate reacts by washing his hands before the multitude, saying, "I am innocent of the blood of this just Person" (Matthew 27:24). Pilate released "Barabbas unto them: and when he had scourged Jesus, he delivered Him to be crucified" (Matthew 27:26).

*Oh the sharp pangs of smarting pain
My dear Redeemer bore,
When knotty whips and rugged thorns
His sacred body tore.*

Oh, the sin of Pilate! It was heartlessness with regard to Jesus' sufferings - he scourged Him! It was also cowardice - he'd sooner be damned than ridiculed! Finally, it was the sin of self-righteous hypocrisy - he washed his hands! Pilate rejected Christ.

WHAT ABOUT YOU?

"What shall I do then with Jesus which is called Christ?" rings out today. Let me ask you - what have you done with Him? I fear that some among my readers have rejected Him. Many are guilty of the sin of heartlessness. They never think of His infinite sufferings for them

on the cross. What contempt! Others are cowards. They are afraid to trust and confess Him before others lest they lose their popularity and friendship with the ungodly. Then, there are those who are guilty of the sin of self- righteousness. They do not feel a need for the Saviour, but are trusting in their own good works for acceptance with God. Indeed, to present such a claim to God is like smiting Jesus on the face, it is like telling Him He was a fool to die for them since they don't need cleansing.

In what category does the reading of this tract put you? This question is being presented to you, "What shall I do then with Jesus?" You must do with Him - you can't avoid it! Judas sold Him; Pilate scourged Him; religious leaders mocked Him. Despised, forsaken, beaten and bruised, He went to Calvary to bleed and die on the cross, that through the shedding of His blood, you might be cleansed from your sin and be saved (Romans 5:6-10).

WHAT I DID WITH JESUS

I trust that you will do with Him as I did. I received Him as my personal Saviour and was immediately saved from coming wrath and judgment. God says, "Whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have eternal life" (John 3:15). You must receive or reject Him - there is no middle ground. "What shall I do then with Jesus which is called Christ?"

*Oh, what will you do with Jesus?
The call comes low and clear;
The solemn words are sounding
In every listening ear;
Eternal life's in the question,
And joy through eternity:
Then what will you do with Jesus?
Oh, what shall the answer be?*

Church History

by Mark Beardall

Richard Baxter of Kidderminster

Richard Baxter was born on the 12th November 1615 at Rowton, in Shropshire. His father who had 'the competent estate of a freeholder' was converted about the same time. He was not converted through any great preaching but through reading the Word of God. Richard's father had been a gambling man and had built up great debts on his property, so Richard was sent to live with his grandfather until his father had freed his property in Eaton Constantine, ten years later.



Richard's father was a good influence and a godly example to his son. He taught his son the scriptures and Baxter was troubled about his sins from an early age. Along with disobedience to parents, pride, lying, gambling and reading romances, he was troubled about "the excessive gluttonous eating of apples and pears" and he confessed "To this end, to concur with naughty boys that gloried in evil, I have often gone into other men's orchards, and stolen their fruit, when I had enough at home." Although he was troubled about his sins, the fear of man kept him from coming to Christ. Most people in his village had no interest in Christ and spent the Lord's Day partying in the street. The revelry would go on all day with pipers and dancing "even till dark night."

Richard feared the crowd who mocked his father and other Christians in the village calling them "Puritans." In contrast to all these revelries on the Lord's Day, Baxter's father spent the day praying and reading the scriptures whilst others were drinking and dancing. Baxter would sometimes joined them, but when he heard them slandering his father, he compared the behaviour of his father to theirs and concluded that his fathers reading of the Bible was better than their partying.

When he was about fifteen years old, he read a book called, "Bunny's Resolutions." He testified "In reading this book pleased God to awaken my soul, and show me the folly of sinning, and the misery of the wicked and the inexpressible weight of things eternal, and the necessity of resolving on a holy life, more than I was ever acquainted before. The same things which I knew before came now in another manner, with light, and sense, and seriousness to my heart." He did not know if this was the point of his conversion or not but he found greater assurance through reading a book by Richard Sibbes called Bruised Reed and was further helped by some of the works of William Perkins. He said "And thus, without any means but books, was God pleased to resolve me for himself,"

Baxter did not go to college or university but was educated by various private tutors. On completion of his education he became the headmaster of a grammar school in Dudley, Worcestershire and was also ordained by the Bishop of Winchester. He preached his first sermon in the upper parish church in Dudley. Later on in the same year he was invited to assist the pastor at Bridgenorth in Shropshire. Baxter saw a number of people converted at Bridgenorth, but not as many as he later saw in other places.

On the 9th of March 1640, Richard Baxter was invited to replace the vicar at Kidderminster in Worcestershire. He saw a number of conversions at the beginning of his ministry at Kidderminster and he used to write down the testimonies of those who were converted but so many people were saved that he had no time to keep up this practice. He laboured there for two years until the English Civil War began.

Baxter had little interest in the conflict and was not much in favour of either side. His religious sympathies were with the Puritans but he was also a Royalist. After refusing Cromwell to his face, he eventually accepted the post as a Chaplain in Cromwell's army. He was present at a number of battles but he did not take part in any fighting. He was more concerned with ministering to the troops.

Baxter's labours among the soldiers ended through exhaustion not long after the Battle of Worcester. He had a long period of illness but during this time he wrote one of his greatest works called, "The Saints' Everlasting Rest".

Baxter returned to Kidderminster when he recovered from his illness. The people were most attentive to his preaching. The services were so full that five galleries were built to accommodate the congregation. Nearly every family in Kidderminster was affected by his preaching. "On the Lord's Day there was no disorder to be seen in the streets, but you might hear a hundred families singing the psalms and repeating sermons, as you passed through the streets. In a word, when I came thither first, there was about one family in a street that worshipped God and called on his name: and when I came away, there were some streets where there was not more than one family in the side of a street that did not so; and that did not, by professing serious godliness, give us hopes of their sincerity. And those families which were the worst, being inns and alehouses, usually some persons in each house did seem to be religious." Though most of the services were full, he was disappointed that only six hundred people took the Lord's Supper. He visited every family in the parish and catechised them. He held a three-hour prayer meeting every week with the young people and there were various meetings in different houses throughout the week.

Baxter feared no man. He was once invited to preach before Oliver Cromwell and he rebuked him to his face. He preached against divisions in the church and against politicians meddling in the church to suit their own agenda, so that the church would not speak against them. This displeased Cromwell and his courtiers but they put up with

it. Cromwell then gave a long and boring speech claiming that the change of government was from God. Baxter told him, "We took our ancient monarchy to be a blessing and not an evil in the land." He also asked him how England had ever forfeited that blessing?

Baxter left Kidderminster on the Restoration of the monarchy. He became Chaplain to King Charles II on the 26th June 1660. In part of his speech to King Charles II, he charged him that "he would never suffer himself to be tempted to undo the good which Cromwell had done or any other had done, because they were usurpers that did it, or discountenance a faithful ministry, because his enemies had set it up."

Baxter was ejected from the Church of England in 1662 under the Act of Uniformity. This act demanded that ministers only pray according to the Book of Common Prayer. About two thousand men were thrown out of the Church of England for not conforming to the Book of Common Prayer and banned from coming within five miles of a town under the Five-Mile Act. They were banned from holding any meetings whatsoever.

Baxter had earlier resolved not to marry but now he had no congregation to look after, he decided to marry. He married Margaret Charlatan, a lady much younger than himself. She was a great helpmeet to him and comforted him in persecution. Baxter went to prison a number of times for his faith but she always stood by him.

Baxter preached at a number of places in London and was often arrested, but he won many of his accusers and those who informed on him to the Lord. Some even wrote letters of apology.

Baxter's "Paraphrase of the New Testament" caused such offence that the infamous Judge Jefferies tried him for sedition. "Thou art a nave, I can see it in your face" said Jefferies. "I knew not my face was so true a glass" was Baxter's reply. Baxter was imprisoned for two years and narrowly escaped being whipped through the streets.

Baxter lived long enough to see religious toleration under William of Orange but he was too ill to make use of it. He died on the 8th December 1691.

Notable quotes from Richard Baxter

"Study hard, for the well is deep, and our brains are shallow."

"Christ leads me through no darker rooms than He went through before."

"Be careful how you spend your time: Spend your time in nothing which you know must be repented of."

"Dangers bring fears, and fears more dangers bring."

"I preached as never sure to preach again, And as a dying man to dying men."

"If they can see you love them, you can say anything to them."

"In necessary things, unity; in doubtful things, liberty; in all things, charity."

Report of visit to India

by Nitish Patel

I made another visit to India in April for couple of weeks to help the little Gujarati assembly in Anand and at a young people's camp in Bombay.

In Gujarat, I was taken to see a Vacation Bible school for children that was being conducted by one of the assemblies there. Many Hindu children were present, singing choruses and eagerly listening to the Bible stories. The meeting are held in a believer's home and the neighbouring parents are happy to send them. The assembly has four other locations around the city where they conduct these holiday Bible clubs.

Sanjay is the evangelist who planted the assembly in Anand, and is seeking to spread the gospel around the villages. He introduced me to one young man who has come to the meetings for many months and is close to salvation but he comes in secret because he fears persecution. I was told that there is also a Hindu family who are secretly having Bible studies in their home. Pray that they will be saved and publicly confess Christ.

Gujarat has a Hindu militant government that has passed an anti-conversion law which means you have to register with the government if you become a Christian mentioning who converted and baptised you. This can result in persecution for the evangelist or a substantial fine or imprisonment for not registering. The believers face a lot of problems and opposition in this state.

In Bombay, the annual ABC camp for young people was well attended. Most are believers from Christian homes and the program is a hectic one with many Bible teaching sessions during the day and little time for leisure. They have a great love for Bible study which is refreshing to see. Pray for this new generation of believers who will bear responsibility for the assembly testimony in the days to come.



Vacation Bible School Gujarat



ABC Camp Bombay

Bible Exhibition

hands on | models | artifacts | displays

The Bible Exhibition comprises a visual display in the form of models, dressed figures, ancient artifacts and screens, which take you on a pictorial progression through the Bible.

Sat 15th Sept - Thur 27th Sept

Every day (except Sunday)

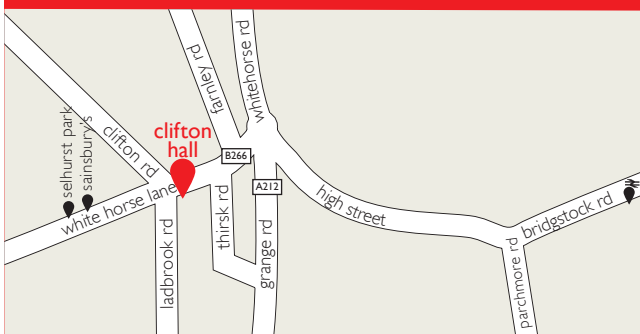
3:00 pm - 8:00 pm

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ADMISSION**



at Clifton Hall

45 Whitehorse Lane,
South Norwood, SE25 6RD



Bible Talks

Come and hear a talk from the Bible on how you can be saved and have peace with God.

When?

Every evening
(except Mondays)

8:00 pm - 8:45 pm

www.cliftongospelhall.com