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# LETTER FROM THE PASTOR

*“Many are the afflictions of the righteous: but the LORD delivereth him out of them all” Psalm 34:19*

We know that the above verse is true. Not only because it is inspired Scripture, but also because the Lord verifies it in our experience. The present conditions we live under, our own struggles and trials, the suffering and sorrows of many believers around us, all confirm David’s words. We should notice though,

1. These are “*the afflictions of the righteous.*”

It means that what the best Christians endure is not because of their sins, for the Lord is pleased to call them “righteous:” justified by faith, and upright in their lives. Not punishment, but precious lessons learned through experience, is the goal. It is to make us better Christians, knowing God more, made more like Christ, and helped toward heaven.

2. Sometimes they are “*many*”.

Yes, trials can multiply in our experience. The world says that things come “in threes,” but the Lord brings exactly the right number. One would be hard enough, but sometimes it does not stop there. However, like Job, if afflictions are many then many can be the gracious fruits, if the Lord sanctifies them to us.

3. Here is the comfort: “*but the LORD delivereth them out of them all*”.

Matthew Henry makes the point that there are two kinds of deliverance: the first is *in the affliction*, and the other is *from the affliction*. The first means the Lord will help us, so that we are profited in what we are going through, as we said earlier. The second is when the trial is ended, and the Christian graces come forth: “afterward it yieldeth the peaceable fruit of righteousness unto them which are exercised thereby” (Hebrews 12:11; compare Psalm 34:4,6).

There is a further aspect to this second deliverance, which is final and forever. To share it, I would like to quote from our good friend John Hooper. He writes about the Lord's deliverances, and then the further one:

Well *firstly*, there are temporal deliverances. These include deliverance from the fears and anxieties that afflictions bring in their wake. It may also include healing, recovery of that which was lost, providential relief from the sources of our pain and difficulty, but not necessarily so. The afflictions themselves may well continue. They may take the form of a life-long health problem or disablement, but deliverance comes by way of added spiritual grace, peace, and contentment. It may be the comfort of the Scriptures, the Lord speaking to us through His many words of promise and the Holy Spirit applying those promises to our hearts, to our circumstances, increasing our faith. Invariably as I used to read the Scriptures to my mother, it was noticeable that a peace and calm would come over her for those few minutes, giving her momentary deliverance from her trials. It might be a deliverance through prayer, or by way of the mutual love and care of the saints for one another, ministering to each other's needs. But as helpful as these are, none of them brings definitive and permanent relief.

For that, *secondly*, we must patiently await the final, eternal deliverance that comes at death. Only then are all our afflictions, all our pains and sorrows, all the difficult circumstances of life, put in the past and we know the immediate relief of the presence of our Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ. We are in heaven! The Lord has delivered us out of all our afflictions for evermore. And of course, that great work was accomplished by our Lord Jesus Christ in His life and in His death. "Surely he hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows" (Isaiah 53:4). For this reason, the final, complete, eternal deliverance is sure and certain because His work is a finished work. Yes, the Lord really does deliver the righteous out of all his afflictions.

With love in our Lord Jesus Christ to you all,  
*John Thackway*

# FELLOWSHIP NEWS

## Dan Tribe

As a congregation we give glory to the Lord for answering many prayers, and, in particular, for providing a new home for our sister in Christ, Chloe S. This has been a need and desire of Chloe's for a long time now and the Lord has proven that His timing is wise and good. We pray that this new home will be greatly blessed to Chloe, and that she will be happy and comfortable there.

On the Saturday afternoon of the 15<sup>th</sup> July about sixty friends gathered at Glebe Hall for our annual summer fellowship tea. We had missed this event for a few years, so it was extra special to meet again in this way. The day dawned wet, but the Lord was gracious, and the sun came out in time for the children and older ones to go outside for games on the grass. There was a real sense of fellowship as we were able to chat with friends and catch up with those we had not always managed to speak with. Andrew W arranged numbered photos of famous places on the walls, and we were invited to write a list of the names of these landmarks. Activities were provided for the younger children including face-painting. We were treated to a delicious tea, including plenty of strawberries and cream. We were grateful to all who had contributed, providing us with a variety of 'goodies' to choose from. The afternoon concluded with an Epilogue given by Pastor Thackway and the singing of a Psalm. Before we left a group photograph was taken and many hands made light work as the hall was cleared up and rearranged for further use. It was truly a happy occasion and thanks are extended to all who worked hard to make it so.

Following the pattern of the school-terms, the youth work has 'broken up' for the summer. We remain grateful to the Lord for sustaining the work by bringing the children along week by week and by providing the needed grace and strength to all the leaders. It has been a particular blessing that both groups have been able to hold special outings during the summer holidays, which have provided further gospel opportunities. We earnestly pray that the young people will return with enthusiasm when the work recommences in September.

May it please the Lord to do a great work of grace in the hearts of many young people, turning them to Christ.

On Monday 24<sup>th</sup> July, the Cardiff Summer Conference began. By God's grace it proved to be a week of rich ministry and warm fellowship. Our retired Pastor, Malcolm Watts, preached two gospel messages: 'Life without Christ' and 'Life with Christ'. He also brought two teaching messages entitled, 'Union and Communion' and 'Less of Self and More of Thee'. The other main speaker was Pastor Robert Dickie, from Tennessee, USA. Pooyan Mehrshahi (Persian Fellowship Meeting), and Martin Williams (Welsh Gospel Service) also spoke at different times. Recordings of the Conference can be found on the Tabernacle Cardiff YouTube page. Further details will be found elsewhere in this present issue of *The Messenger*.

For our midweek meeting on 26<sup>th</sup> July we welcomed David Garrett of Friends of Africa Missionary Endeavour (FAME). We rejoiced to hear of the Lord's work in Kenya, as we were told of the orphanages, the clinics, the Bible college, and the translation work being carried out with the support of the Trinitarian Bible Society. We are grateful for the firm, biblical emphasis of this mission as they seek to serve the Lord and the people of Kenya in "word and deed". Please join us in prayerfully supporting this missionary endeavour.

On 9<sup>th</sup> August we were glad to renew fellowship with James and Rachael Swanson. James gave us a report of the Church in Cyprus and of his visits to support the Lord's people in Turkey and elsewhere. It was encouraging to hear of answers to prayer and we were given much matter for further prayer as we were reminded that we strive together with them in our prayers (Rom. 15:30). But, above all, we pray for a great outpouring of the Holy Spirit upon the gospel work in Northern Cyprus, all for the glory of the Lord Jesus Christ.

After a long illness, Peter Ridout of Devizes was called into the presence of his Lord and Saviour on 27<sup>th</sup> July this year. Many years ago Peter was a member with us here and served the Lord in our Sunday School work. At this sad time, we pray very much for his wife, and also for his three grown-up sons.

Margaret, our Pastor's wife, recently underwent a second cataract operation. We were thankful to hear that all went well. Margaret is now on the way to a full recovery.

We prayerfully remember those with concern for loved ones in their families. Susan R's mother has been unwell of late, as has Abi G's mother. May the Lord draw near to those in need at this time and grant them all needful comfort and strength.

It is with great joy that we report that our friend, Chris Buss has accepted the call to become the 'Teaching Elder' at Grace Reformed Baptist Church, Hilperton. We commit both Chris and Pat to the Lord in prayer, seeking that, as Chris begins his ministry at Hilperton in September, the Lord will favour that Church with His felt presence, building it up and granting it spiritual increase in every way.

On Saturday, 19<sup>th</sup> August, Pastor Watts' grandson, Noah, was married to Katie at Deeping Baptist Church, Deeping St. James. It was a blessed and happy occasion, and we were so pleased to hear that Jill was able to attend the wedding. We pray that the Lord will richly bless Noah and Katie as they seek to serve Him together in the future.

## **THE MESSENGER**

*The Messenger* has been a ministry of Emmanuel Church for many years, and so no charge has been made for the magazine.

The church is glad to know that so many find its content both informative and edifying; and we are more than happy to continue this ministry, sending free copies of this bi-monthly magazine to all who request it.

Many do receive it by post. If you no longer wish to receive it, please do let us know at [contact@salisburyemmanuel.org.uk](mailto:contact@salisburyemmanuel.org.uk).

Some friends who receive it in this way kindly make a donation from time to time. We are very grateful to them; and we take this opportunity of thanking them very much indeed.

Please note that we have had to change the bank account for the church, and cheques now are only acceptable if made payable to: **Salisbury Emmanuel**. For online banking the sort code is 08-92-99 and the account number is 67271979.

*Richard W,  
Emmanuel Church Treasurer*

## **TRINITARIAN BIBLE SOCIETY: NEW CHINESE NEW TESTAMENT**

The Society is pleased to announce the completion of the Chinese New Testament. Of all the languages in the world, Chinese has the second greatest number of speakers. China has a very large population of around 1.4 billion people, and the language is widely used in other countries in the surrounding area. The sheer size of the Chinese-speaking contingent in the world underlines the great need for a faithful translation of the Scriptures into the Chinese language, which until now has not existed.

By the providence of God, the Society was brought into contact with a small team of native Mandarin speakers. Since 2012, these men have been prayerfully undertaking a new translation of the Scriptures into Chinese. According to the good hand of our God upon them and us, we have reached an important milestone in this project: the publication of the New Testament. We are very grateful for the substantial financial support given by GBS (Gereformeerde Bijbelstichting, our sister society in the Netherlands) over many years for this major translation project.

We give thanks for this wonderful news and pray heaven's richest blessing upon this Chinese New Testament.

## HUDSON TAYLOR MINISTRIES

Keith G heard recently from our friend, Abraham Jobse, who wrote as follows (lightly edited for inclusion here):

*Dear Keith,*

*I was in Ghana, West Africa, this week and I have just returned this morning. We had a conference there with 350 pastors and students about the book by Thomas Boston, "Human Nature in its Fourfold State". I had an historical lecture and two ministers from our Reformed Congregations (NRC) held lectures about the content of the book. It is on behalf of Bible & Book Ministries, which also has a website with e-books. We have been doing this work for several years, and I am once again involved in it. It was encouraging.*

*I still have good memories of our trip to Salisbury last year. Thank you for still sending "The Messenger". I read your article about Hudson Taylor Ministries expanding its work to other countries of Southern Asia. May the Lord help us and give us wisdom.*

*I hope your new Pastor, Rev. Thackway, is feeling at home and being appreciated. Please pass on my greetings to Rev. Watts.*

*Warm regards,  
Abraham Jobse*

## CHRIST ALONE

**James Smith of Cheltenham**

Reader, I wish to commend One to your attention, who is worthy of your love and suited to your circumstances. As an immortal being, you have many wants, many inward aspirations. Those wants no creature can supply; those aspirations no creature can satisfy. But Jesus can.



He has all you need. He is all you can desire. CHRIST ALONE is enough. I can speak from experience. I had those wants; I had those aspirations. I sought satisfaction from many quarters and in many ways, but only to meet with disappointment. At length my attention was directed to Jesus. I HEARD Him spoken of; I read His Word, I applied to Him, and I found that He was just what I needed; and, of a spiritual nature, *all* that I needed. I looked to Him; I believed in Him; I received from Him. I had peace. Peace! I had more: I was filled with joy; I was happy. I had found the priceless pearl. I was made for eternity.

This glorious Saviour I wish to commend to you; and my object will be to point out some of His excellencies, to show His exact adaptation to you, in order to induce you to believe on His name, and seek an interest in His glorious person and finished work.

*“His name alone is excellent; his glory is above the earth and heaven.” Psalm 148:13*

### **Jesus is Able to Save**

*“He is able to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him.” Hebrews 7:25.*

Great sinners need a great Saviour. Indeed, when the soul is soundly convinced of sin by the Holy Spirit, it will not build, but on a sure foundation; it will not rest, but in a place of safety. And in proportion to the depth of our convictions will be our concern to make sure work for eternity. Many things may be tried, but all will fail to give peace. Often, very often, will the suggestion be thrown into the mind, that the case is desperate, that deliverance is not to be obtained, that there is no salvation. This comes from Satan, and is intended to dishonour Jesus and distress the soul. No one can save but Jesus. It must be CHRIST ALONE. There is no salvation but in His perfect work. Our tears, prayers, efforts, will not save us. They sometimes stand in the way of our enjoying salvation, but they cannot save. There is no merit in them. They cannot procure our pardon or bring us peace. But Jesus *can* save. There is no creature under heaven that He is not able to save. His ability stands in His divinity — He is God, therefore to Him all things are possible — and in the

merit of His sacrifice, which is infinite, and therefore can expiate all sin. The atonement that Jesus made is sufficient to blot out all the sins of all men. It must be so, for it was the offering up of Himself as a sacrifice for our sins. As an infinite being, offering up Himself, He could not make a finite atonement; and an infinite atonement must be sufficient for any number of sinners, and for any sinner, however great his crimes. Reader, Jesus can save you. He can save you at this moment; He can save you with perfect ease. He can get glory by saving you. Doubt not, He is the Almighty; fear not, for His blood cleanses from all sin.

*“Who is this? I that speak in righteousness, mighty to save.” Isaiah 63: 1*

### **Jesus is Willing to Save**

*“If thou wilt, thou canst make me clean... I will; be thou clean.” Mark 1: 40, 41*

Many profess to believe that Christ is able to save them, but question if He is willing; whereas they have no more reason to believe in His ability than they have in His willingness. How do I know that Christ can save me, but by His Word? But the same Word that tells me He is able, informs me with equal clearness that He is willing. The poor leper might doubt if He would cleanse him, because he came to Him uninvited; nor had he a single promise on which to rest. Impelled by his distressing circumstances, he came at a peradventure; but he had no sooner professed his faith in our Lord's power, than he received the assurance that He was willing, and instantly enjoyed the proof of both. The heart of Christ has been set upon saving sinners from all eternity, and as soon as ever the divine arrangement would permit, He came into our world in order to do and suffer all that was requisite to save our souls from death. While upon earth, He showed His sympathy with human suffering, His ability to deliver from all kinds of evil, and His readiness to receive and bless every applicant. His heart was full of compassion and mercy; His hand was ready to help everyone that applied to Him. This was for our instruction. Surely, He is not less willing to hear us for spiritual blessings than He was those to those to hear those who applied to Him for temporal blessings? He cannot be backward to save from hell, when He was so ready to deliver from disease and pain. But we need not reason, for we have His Word. He says “Whosoever will, let him

come;" and, "Him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out". Reader, are you willing to be saved by Jesus? If so, Jesus is willing to save you, and your willingness is a proof of His.

*"Why are ye so fearful? How is it that ye have no faith?" Mark 4:40*

## **Jesus is Waiting to Save**

*"Therefore will the Lord wait, that he may be gracious unto you." Isaiah 30:18*

If the Lord had made us wait for Him, we had not wondered; but for Him to wait for us! Yet, the Lord Jesus does wait for the sinner. He is on His throne of grace; He has sent out His invitation; He employs His ministers and friends to send sinners to Him; He waits for them to come, that He may pardon their sins, give them peace, and bestow on them everlasting life. What wondrous grace! What marvellous condescension! Jesus is waiting this day. Reader, it may be that Jesus is waiting for you. He is waiting until you see your folly, give up your evil courses, are stripped of your self-righteousness, and are made willing to be saved by His merit and mercy alone. If anything will commend thee to Him, it will be your poverty, your misery, and your sinfulness. He waits to see you stripped of every false hope, driven out of every refuge of lies, and led to flee to Him for a full and free salvation. He is quite ready to bless you, if you are ready to be blessed. He is ready to receive you, if you are ready to receive Him. He has called you often; He is calling you still. Every solemn providence, every impressive sermon, every alarm in your conscience, every holy book that is put into your hand, is a fresh call from Jesus. It tells you that He is willing, and waiting to bless you; that there is nothing between you and everlasting life but your own ignorance, obstinacy, and unbelief. The love of Christ is wonderful, passing the love of women. No fond mother was ever so ready to receive to her home and to her heart her long-lost, wandering son, as Jesus is ready to receive you. No one can love thus but CHRIST ALONE. Then do not doubt His Word; do not fear rejection.

*"When he was yet a great way off, his father saw him, and had compassion, and ran, and fell on his neck, and kissed him." Luke 15:20*

# **SALISBURY CONFERENCE**

**22<sup>nd</sup> – 24<sup>th</sup> September 2023**

**Guest Preacher: Rev Dafydd Morris**

## **Friday 22<sup>nd</sup> Sep**

7.30pm — A Biography of William Gadsby

## **Saturday 23<sup>rd</sup> Sep**

10.30am — The Manifestation of Christ

*Lunch Break at 12pm (approx.)*

1.00pm — The Entertainment of Christ

2.30pm — Our Communion with Christ

*Tea at 4pm (approx.)*

## **Lord's Day 24<sup>th</sup> Sep**

11.00am — Morning Worship Service (Malcolm Watts)

6.30pm — Evening Worship Service (Malcolm Watts)

8.30pm — After Church Fellowship: A Testimony (Dafydd Morris)

We extend to all a very warm welcome at these services and meetings.  
Emmanuel Church, 8 Wilton Road, Salisbury. SP2 7EE. Free parking will be  
available at nearby Grove House, Wilton Road.

Further information can be found at:

[salisburyemmanuel.org.uk/conference](http://salisburyemmanuel.org.uk/conference)

# SUMMER CONFERENCE IN CARDIFF

24<sup>th</sup> – 28<sup>th</sup> July 2023

Guest Preachers: **Robert Dickie** (RD) & **Malcolm Watts** (MW)

God's gracious presence was known and felt throughout this conference, making it a very blessed time. We give below the main addresses which may be heard if you click on the relevant links below.

**Life Without Christ** — MW

[salisburyemmanuel.org.uk/cardiff23-1](https://salisburyemmanuel.org.uk/cardiff23-1)

**Union and Communion** — MW

[salisburyemmanuel.org.uk/cardiff23-2](https://salisburyemmanuel.org.uk/cardiff23-2)

**What Think Ye of Christ?** — RD

[salisburyemmanuel.org.uk/cardiff23-3](https://salisburyemmanuel.org.uk/cardiff23-3)

**Looking Back – Moving Forward** — RD

[salisburyemmanuel.org.uk/cardiff23-4](https://salisburyemmanuel.org.uk/cardiff23-4)

**Life With Christ** — MW

[salisburyemmanuel.org.uk/cardiff23-5](https://salisburyemmanuel.org.uk/cardiff23-5)

**Less of Self, and More of Thee** — MW

[salisburyemmanuel.org.uk/cardiff23-6](https://salisburyemmanuel.org.uk/cardiff23-6)

**Solemn Warning** — RD

[salisburyemmanuel.org.uk/cardiff23-7](https://salisburyemmanuel.org.uk/cardiff23-7)

**Altogether Lovely** — RD

[salisburyemmanuel.org.uk/cardiff23-8](https://salisburyemmanuel.org.uk/cardiff23-8)

## SIGNIFICANT AND UNUSUAL SERMONS

William Tennant once took great pains to prepare a sermon, to convince a notorious unbeliever of the truth of Christianity. But, in attempting to deliver this discourse, he was so confused, as to be compelled to stop, and he closed the service with prayer. This unexpected failure in one who had often astonished unbelievers with his authority and force of eloquence led the unbeliever present to reflect that Mr. Tennant had been, at other times, aided by divine power. This reflection convinced him of the reality of God and of His presence, and it proved to be the means of his conversion. Thus, God accomplished by silence what His servant wished to effect by persuasive preaching. Mr Tennant used afterwards to say that his dumb sermon was one of the most profitable that he ever delivered.

\* \* \* \* \*

Dr. Lyman Beecher was once engaged to preach for a country minister in an exchange, and that Sabbath proved to be excessively stormy, cold, and uncomfortable. It was in mid-winter, and the snow was piled all along the roads, making the journey very difficult. But the minister urged his horse through the drifts. At last, he arrived at his destination and, walking into the building, he took his seat in the pulpit. After a short while, the door opened, and in walked one other person. The time came for the commencement of the service, but there was still inly one worshipper.

Whether or not to preach to this audience was a question – and it was one which Dr. Beecher was not long deciding. He felt that he had a duty to perform and that he had no right to refuse it; and, accordingly, he proceeded through the service with just one hearer. When the service was over, he hastened from the pulpit to the door, but the worshipper had already departed.

Twenty years afterwards, the incident was brought back to the Doctor's mind. He was travelling in Ohio and, alighting from the stage-coach in a small village, a man stepped forward and addressed him by name. "I am sorry, but I do not remember you", said the Doctor. "I suppose not", the stranger said; "but we once spent two hours together in a house during a storm." "I do not recall it,

sir”, the Doctor said, “pray, when was it?” The man replied: “Do you remember preaching twenty years ago, in such a place, to a single person?” “Yes, yes”, the Doctor said, “and if you were that man, I have been wishing to see you ever since.” “I am that man, sir”, the stranger said; and that sermon saved my soul, made me a minister, and over there is my church! By God’s grace, the converts of that sermon, sir, are all over Ohio.” Dr. Beecher was deeply moved, and he praised the Lord his God.

\* \* \* \* \*

When George Whitfield and John Wesley began preaching, they faced very considerable opposition and misrepresentation. In many public-houses, their sermons were talked about and totally ridiculed. One critic, a young Yorkshireman called Thorpe, encouraged those present to mimic the preaching of those good men, and their attempts were met with loud cheering and applause. One after another in the crowd, stood on a table, to ridicule the preachers. At last, Thorpe rose up, and said, “I shall beat you all.” Handed a Bible, he opened it at Luke 13:3, “Except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish.” The moment he read that text his mind was powerfully impressed in a most extraordinary way: he realized the profound importance of these words; and, as he afterwards said, he began to speak with unusual authority and in unusual solemnity. His ‘sermon’ affected every hearer; and when he had finished, he himself broke down and wept over both his folly and his sin. He was converted by means of his own sermon! This man later joined the people of God, and became a great and powerful preacher of the Gospel. He died at Masborough, in 1776.

## **THE ECUMENICAL MOVEMENT**

**Malcolm H. Watts**

### **Part 1**

What exactly is meant by “the Ecumenical Movement?” The Greek word (oikoumene) is the word from which our word “ecumenism” is derived, and in the New Testament it means ‘the inhabited world’. It is used some fifteen times

in the New Testament Scriptures; as for example in Matthew 24:14: "This gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world." And earlier in connection with the birth of our Lord Jesus Christ, as it is recorded in Luke 2:1, "It came to pass that there went out a decree that all the world should be taxed." In these and like places the word signifies the inhabited world, the earth with all its people.

From earliest times in the Christian era, this word came, quite naturally, to be used with reference to the world-wide Church. Hence there were seven "Ecumenical Councils" between AD 325 and AD 787, attended by representatives of churches throughout the whole world. For example, there was the Council of Nicea in AD 325, Constantinople AD 381, Ephesus AD 431, Chalcedon AD 451.

The modern Ecumenical Movement is designed to recover Christian unity throughout the whole world. A re-united Christendom - Protestant, Roman, and Orthodox - would be the realization of the ecumenical dream.

There were a number of factors which gave rise to this Movement; some were good and some were far from good.

Among the former, there was, *first of all*, the formation in 1804 of the "British and Foreign Bible Society", which brought people together from different denominational backgrounds and allegiances in order that they might cooperate in publishing and spreading the Word of God.

*Secondly*, there was the experience of true Holy Spirit Revival in 1858 and 1859 in England, Scotland, Wales and Ireland, uniting multitudes in a common experience of God and His love, which led them to feel a common concern for the lost and to work together in order to reach them.

*Thirdly*, there was the renewed interest in missionary work, evidenced by various inter-denominational conferences in New York and London in 1854, and in Liverpool in 1860.



There can be no doubt that such things contributed in their own way to a hitherto unknown measure of co-operation among professing Christians. It is therefore a very strange fact of history that things perfectly good in themselves prepared the way for the rise of that phenomenon we now know as Ecumenism.

However, as I have said, some not so good things were also responsible for its rise. *First of all*, here, must be mentioned “Higher Criticism,” that sceptical crusade against the Bible led by men of various denominations. We had them in England and in Scotland: S. R. Driver, Robinson Smith, and the like. By them, God’s Word written was undermined, since they treated the Bible as any other book and sought to remove the evidently supernatural from it. Men, who had been separated from one another, now found that they shared a critical view of the Holy Scriptures.

*Secondly*, there was the development of what became the Oxford Movement. This was an anti-Reformation development within Anglicanism, led by such men as John Henry Newman and John Keble. If Higher Criticism had sought to erode the doctrine of authority in the Church, the Oxford Movement tried to lead people away from true Protestantism and in a Roman Catholic direction.

*Thirdly*, there was the upsurge of what was called the “Social Gospel.” Some began placing a great emphasis upon social concern and social order. Their aim was to “Christianize” society in the hope that this would establish Christ’s Kingdom. It was supported and advanced by men like Charles Kingsley. This also enabled and encouraged men with divergent views and different beliefs to come together on the platform of social reform.

So there you have it: “Higher Criticism” undermining Holy Scripture, the “Oxford Movement” weakening Protestantism, and the “Social Gospel” changing the true Gospel for a programme of reforms and improvements. These things contributed to the rise of ecumenism.

An important development in the rise of the ecumenical movement was the “Life and Work” movement, which held a great world congress in Stockholm in 1925. In the official invitation to that congress it was stated, “We believe that

there is a longing on the part of all followers of our Lord and Master to see Christendom so far united as to be able to work together." The slogan for this congress, which is still heard in certain quarters, was, "doctrine divides, service unites." As the tree of ecumenism grew, another branch spread forth, the "Faith and Order" movement. This was brought into being to discuss the theological issues which divide churches. It held a significant conference in Lausanne in 1927. Opening that conference, Bishop Brent publicly deplored the Church's divisions, and he contended for what he called, "organic unity."

In 1948 a significant development took place. These two movements - The "Life and Work" movement, and the "Faith and Order" movement - united to form at Amsterdam the "World Council of Churches." W. A. Visser't Hooft, the General Secretary of the World Council of Churches from 1948 to 1966 said at that time, "Whenever two or three churches are gathered together, the *un-sancta*," that is the one holy Church, "is in the midst of them, and demands to be manifested." No-one is quite sure, as far as I am aware of what he meant, and I am not sure that he knew himself. William Temple, the first president of the World Council of Churches said, "Almost incidentally the great world fellowship has arisen, it is the great new fact of our era." After the 1948 Assembly at Amsterdam other assemblies followed, at Evanston in 1954, New Delhi in 1961, Uppsala in 1968, Nairobi in 1975, and so on.

While this movement was maturing, it is important to observe that approaches were made to the Vatican. Leaders of the ecumenical movement, we are told in a World Council of Churches document, have repeatedly approached the Vatican with requests for co-operation. It was however difficult, if not impossible, for Rome to be involved directly in the ecumenical movement because it considered itself to be the *only* true Church. However, in 1959 a significant event took place, an ecumenical council was held at Rome, and in his encyclical letter, Pope John the 23rd said, "We direct a plea to all of you who are separated from the Apostolic See. We call you tenderly to the unity of the true Church." Now that is significant because hitherto there had been desire expressed that Christian bodies might come together and form a world Church. But in the encyclical, the Pope said, "we call you tenderly to the unity of the true Church." "We are not inviting you," he continued, "to a strange home, but to your very own, the common home of your Father." Some

Protestants were rightly shocked by those statements. They had no love for the “fathers” spoken of, nor for a home to which they were being invited.

At the Second Vatican Council in 1965 there was a decree on ecumenism which said that “The separated brethren should be welcomed back into the fold.” Rome’s position is therefore most interesting. Whilst officially outside the World Council of Churches, Rome has been involved very much behind the scenes. And in 1968 a joint working group was initiated between the Vatican and the World Council of Churches.

A further ominous development took place in 1986. That year saw 150 religious leaders of various faiths meeting in Assisi with a view to setting aside their histories of strife and divisions. There in a baroque Basilica, Pope John Paul II greeted each of the leaders as quoted, “Brother among Brothers.” A procession began in the Town Square following the route to where St Francis was buried. The Church Times reported that yellow robed Buddhist monks were at the head. Then came the representatives of other religions, Muslim, Shinto, Jain, Hindu, Zoroastrian, Sikh, Jewish, Traditional African, and American Indians. The General Secretary of the World Council of Churches was present.

It is impossible to predict the end of the ecumenical movement; but it will certainly widen and broaden, ultimately, I believe, to embrace more than those who profess the Christian religion. There is already talk of the integrity and unity of all creation. There is the universal brotherhood of all mankind which believes in all religions and none.

In Britain, the British Council of Churches was formed in 1942 to search for Christian unity in these islands. More local efforts were made through the Week of Prayer and through Christian Aid. The British Council of Churches initiated in 1986 the “inter-church process,” which culminated in the Swanwick Conference in 1987. “Our Churches must now move from co-operation to clear commitment to each other.” That was a statement made at that time. Then, in 1990, the British Council of Churches was replaced by “Churches Together in England,” a body representing many Churches - Roman Catholic, Anglican, Orthodox and Free.

In brief, this is the history of ecumenism, at least in its present and modern form.

*To be continued, and in the next issue we shall state the biblical and important reasons for rejecting Ecumenism and the Ecumenical Movement.*

## SHORT MEDITATIONS

Two Christian women were talking together. One said to the other, "I have found a very comforting text which helps me much: 'What time I am afraid, I will trust in thee'" (Ps. 56:3).

The other replied, "I have found one even more comforting: 'I will trust, and not be afraid'" (Isa. 12:2).

An elderly person was asked what had most robbed him of joy. The prompt reply was: "Things which never happened."

The Lord says, "Fear not" (Lk. 12:32).

\* \* \* \* \*

A minister, who found no-one at the prayer meeting, began to toll the church bell. A few people came running in, and one asked, "Who is dead?" "The church", replied the minister as he went on pulling at the rope. "Thou hast a name that thou livest, and art dead" (Rev. 3:1).

\* \* \* \* \*

After his death, this verse was found written on the fly-leaf of Michael Bruce's Bible:

"Tis very vain of me to boast  
How small a price this Bible cost;  
The Day of Judgment will make clear  
'Twas very cheap or very dear."

“Very cheap”, if, by it, we have freely received everlasting life and the promise of a place in heaven; but “very dear” if, on account of unbelief and hardness of heart, we have despised divine mercy revealed, rejected the only Saviour of guilty sinners, and we are therefore cast into hell’s blackness and darkness for all eternity.

\* \* \* \* \*

On stepping into a poor woman’s house, a man saw – framed and glazed upon a wall - a French note for a thousand francs. He said to the elderly couple who lived in that house, “How did you come by this?” They informed him that a poor French soldier had been taken in by them and that they had nursed him until he died. It was just before he died that he gave them this picture as a kind of memorial of him. They thought it unusual and most attractive, and so they had it framed and hung on the cottage wall. They were greatly surprised when told that it was worth a great deal and that, if they would but use it, turning it into money, it would make a fortune for them. It was of very considerable value, but it had not been used, and so it had not really benefitted them at all. In a way it is like the Gospel message. Many take an interest in it and even admire it; but it must be *used*: that is, it must be believed, pleaded before God in prayer, and become the means whereby we receive so great salvation. This “gospel of Christ” proves to be “the power of God unto salvation *to every one that believeth*” (Romans 1:16).

\* \* \* \* \*

*The Glasgow Herald* of March 4, 1905, relates the following incident of a young Irish woman: “Whilst walking alongside a mill dam in Follydemesne, Armagh, last evening the little niece of Thomas Kilpatrick, solicitor fell in. Her governess at once sprang in after her, but, being unable to swim, both were in danger of losing their lives. Hearing their screams, Ellen Taggart, the gate-keeper’s wife, heroically plunged into the dam and succeeded in rescuing both, but, becoming exhausted, was herself drowned. Her age was 23, and she was the mother of two children.”

The young woman died in saving others. It strangely echoes the cry concerning the Lord Jesus, "*He saved others; himself he cannot save*" (Matthew 27:42), and the believer can say, in heartfelt gratitude, "*(He) loved me, and gave himself for me*" (Galatians 2:20).

\* \* \* \* \*

Alexander the Great, in besieging a city, hoisted a *white* flag, signifying that if the city yielded at once, they would be kindly treated. After a time, he raised a *red* flag, a warning that if people were not spared, they would be doomed along with the city. Last of all, he waved a *black* flag, to signify that his attack would bring death to all.

Even so is it true for us. The *white* flag of grace flies now (Romans 5:15); to be followed by the *red* flag of danger in the near future (John 8:21); and all too soon the *black* flag of death and destruction will soon be unfurled, confirming that for the impenitent and unbelieving there is *no hope* (Matthew 25:46).

\* \* \* \* \*

A nobleman, accused of being involved in a conspiracy, was compelled to hide himself. His wife was asked where he was, and she answered, "I have hidden him." Brought before the King, Charles II, the King demanded, "Where is he?", solemnly warning her that nothing but the discovery of his whereabouts could save her from torture. "And will that do?", she inquired. "Yes", replied the King, "I'll give my word for it." "Then", said the woman, "*I have hidden him in my heart*, there and there alone you will find him."

Can you answer the same question - "Where is he?" - concerning Christ? Can you say, "*He is in my heart*" (Ephesians 3:17).

\* \* \* \* \*

An old Christian, passing by a mansion on his way to meeting with other believers, was accosted by the lord of the manor. "What right have you on this path?", said the lord. "None at all, sir", the man meekly replied; "but I thought

you would not mind an old man, who has lived many years on your estate, and is now going on his way to a meeting, taking this path, especially since the other way is such a long way around.” The lord’s countenance expressed compassion; and he said: “Give me your walking-stick”; and then he handed the old man his gold-mounted stick, with his crest upon it, and he said; “If anyone asked you what right you have to take this path, show him this stick, and tell him that I gave it to you.”

By God’s free grace, we have “access” (Ephesians 2:18) and we can “draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith” (Hebrews 10:22).

\* \* \* \* \*

Lady Powerscourt lay dying in her castle. A friend came into her bedroom, and said, “How are you today, Lady Powerscourt?” “Very well”, she said, “very well; and I will tell you what I have been thinking about. I have been thinking that one needs a great many Scriptures to live by, but only one to die by.” “And what is that, your ladyship?” asked the friend. Lady Powerscourt replied, “The only Scripture that a person needs to die by is this: “*The blood of Jesus Christ, His Son, cleanseth us from all sin*”, and that verse (1 John 1:7) never was sweeter to my soul than at this moment.”

\* \* \* \* \*

“Unto me, who am less than the least of all saints, is this grace given...” (Ephesians 3:8). “I do not quarrel with Paul’s language”, said an old puritan, “but I do dispute his right to push me out of *my* place.”

\* \* \* \* \*

Charles Spurgeon wrote to Andrew Bonar for his photograph and autograph, to be placed in Bonar’s Commentary on Leviticus, which Bonar had kindly sent to him. In replying, Bonar wrote, “I will do as you request, but I am sorry you could not wait a while, for I could have sent you a better picture, for *I shall be like him*” (1 John 3:2).

## EPILOGUE

If you have ever tuned into a commercial radio-station, whether for music, news, or current affairs, it won't be long before your listening is interrupted by quite a long period of repetitive adverts with companies trying to sell their products. In fairness, this is the way that the radio station pays for itself to remain on air.

Have you noticed that many adverts end with the speaker announcing, at a very fast and barely understandable speed, all of the "small-print" ending a little slower with, "terms and conditions apply."

This last statement will close the door to many applicants depending on the product for sale it seems. Age may be a factor, under 18 for various things, over 65 for other things, perhaps monthly income and job security if the product is a loan of some kind.

It might be that in reading the "terms and conditions" that the applicant is just not going to meet the requirements for the product and it is therefore a non-starter.

Becoming a Christian does have a few "terms and conditions" to it (obliging us to respond in a certain way if we are to enjoy God's saving blessing):

First, **Come!** — *"Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavily laden, and I will give you rest". Matthew 11:28*

Secondly, **Repent!** — *"Repent ye therefore and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out." Acts 3:19*

Thirdly, **Believe!** — *"Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved." Acts 16:31*

Very simple terms and conditions which exclude no-one; and it is completely free of charge, "Come and buy without money" - What a gracious and merciful God, in giving us a gospel with no hidden attachments.

*Steve Storey*