

April – June 1998

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**North Road Chapel (Evangelical)
BIDEFORD**

Lessons from John's Gospel chapter seventeen.

"These words spake Jesus, and lifted up His eyes to heaven, and said, Father, the hour is come; glorify thy Son, that thy Son also may glorify Thee" (John 17:1).

In the first article of this series, practical lessons were drawn from this verse of our Lord's prayer, with particular reference being made to the word '*spake*'. The benefit of praying audibly, though alone in private, was identified, but there is further important instruction contained in this opening verse.

"These words spake Jesus and said, Father". It is with the word 'Father', that the Lord Jesus commenced His prayer and there are at least two distinct truths suggested to us by this expression:

1. The relationship of Sonship; His right to be heard. Christ is reminding God of the eternal existence which is theirs, at one, in absolute unity of being and purpose. At the Father's will He, the Son, became incarnate in order that He might redeem unto God a peculiar people; He becoming the Great Head of that company. In this capacity, He comes to God saying, '*Father*'.

2. The term '*Father*' denotes affection, it is expressive of confidence, veneration and love. In whom can a son trust, if not in his father? In view of all that was immediately ahead of our blessed Lord, how meaningful is this one single word, '*Father*'. Christ knew God's purpose and the part He had to fulfil to carry out the will of God; directly confronted with this reality, He simply cries, "*Father!*" In this one word we see the Son implicitly casting Himself upon God. All God's children are to pray in precisely the same way. When giving His own an example and a pattern of prayer our Lord said,

"After this manner therefore pray ye: Our Father" (Matthew 6:9); this expresses our relationship, confidence and trust.

As our Lord continued in His prayer, it is most important to note that He prayed in the third person. He did not say, 'Father glorify Me that I may glorify You'. This is the way vast numbers of Christians, including many ministers pray today. These modernists tell us that it does not matter; it does matter. Where does the authority come from for us to approach the most high God and address Him in any form of language which pleases us? Familiar, colloquial, common place phraseology which is used by many today in prayer, finds no place whatsoever in Holy Scripture. Those who use slipshod language in prayer are totally ignoring *"this manner"* in which we should approach Almighty God.

There are many examples in Holy Writ of how our Lord, and men and women prayed, giving the manner in which the God of heaven was addressed; it follows **one** pattern. This principle is exemplified in John 17 and will be seen in future articles, God willing. *"Thee"*, *"Thy"*, *"Thou"* and *"Thine"* are used throughout. Many argue that we are taking our pattern from the Authorized Version of the Bible, which they describe as archaic with quaint words and terms which are now obsolete and should therefore be replaced by a modern version. They endeavour to justify their approach to God by reference to the grammar and form of speech of modern translations. Here lies the trouble. In translating, men have tampered with the grammar as well as the truth.

It is acknowledged that there are words and terms used in the Authorized Version of the Holy Scriptures, which are not in every day use. This should be obvious to any thinking person, because the Word of God deals with spiritual matters which are not common or

popular subjects. The terminology and phraseology of Scripture is not the common language of the street.

If a person is a pharmacist, that person will have to become familiar with and use many strange words and unusual terms. For a young person taking up pharmacy, this will mean diligent study to become familiar with unusual words and their meaning; how many of those words does the ordinary person use, let alone understand? What chaos and devastation would ensue if a chemist was not aware or took no notice of the specific and precise instructions given by a doctor on a prescription form.

Just as there is a language peculiar to the world of pharmacy, and words and terms which are only used in the medical and pharmaceutical world, so in the spiritual. When a person is brought from the kingdom of darkness into the kingdom of light, he or she has entered another realm; they are brought in touch with things with which they were previously unacquainted. In consequence they have to learn the language and the meaning of spiritual terms; such words as propitiation, sanctification, justification and many others which they have never used before. They have not only to become acquainted with them, they have to understand their meaning, for they are terms which are absolutely fundamental to Biblical Christianity.

In other callings and professions the text books are not altered to suit the student; the student has to learn the terminology and conform to the standards laid down. Precisely so in the spiritual. No successful person in secular employment where specific definition is required, would alter or devalue that precise language. But how many professing Christians have altered the Divine Text Book, changed the wording, meddled with the phraseology, tampered with essential

terms and watered down its truth. All this has been done under the pretext of making things easier.

This unwarranted interference with the truth and grammar of Scripture has led to erroneous belief and unbiblical practice. Great will be the condemnation of those pseudo-scholars in a coming day, for in the main it is this so-called scholarship which has changed the absolute purity of the second person singular '**Thou**' to the indefinite '**You**', the '**Thine**' to '**Your**'; this has resulted in the **only** true and living God being addressed as '**You**', which is a term not essentially exclusive to one person. 'You' is indefinite, which the dictionary defines as 'not determinate', 'uncertain', 'vague'. This is certainly not to be the manner of Christian praying; it runs contrary to every example of prayer given in the Word of God.

Having seen the manner of Christ's approach to God, we move on to the content of His prayer, and the first phrase is, "*The hour is come*". This is the seventh recorded time that the Lord had made reference to this momentous hour. There had never been such an hour as the one about to dawn, nor would there ever be another fraught with such issues. This was the hour when the Son of God was to terminate the labours of His earthly life with all the holy significance of those thirty three years; that life being brought to a close by a propitiatory death. This was the hour for the fulfilling of the many types and symbols, the accomplishing of that which had been set out by prophets over thousands of years. The entire universe could supply no parallel to the events which would transpire in **this hour**.

The Lord of glory was now to be made sin for His people. A sin-hating, sin-avenging God was to take the sins of all His elect and impute them to His only begotten Son; then in consequence unleash His holy wrath without mercy upon Him, till that wrath was utterly exhausted. The sword of Divine justice was to be plunged into the

heart of Jehovah's Fellow (cf Zechariah 13:7). The Shepherd must be smitten that the sheep might be saved. Christ knew that **this hour** had been determined from all eternity.

When the Everlasting Covenant was drawn up within the counsels of Deity, it was ordered in all things and sure (cf 2 Samuel 23:5). There was nothing left to chance; it was a most precise and carefully worded document; every eventuality was covered. The timing was fed into the Divine timepiece and "*when the fulness of the time was come, God sent forth His Son, made of a woman, made under the Law*" (Galatians 4:4). He was to be born in Bethlehem, He was to spend a brief time in Egypt, He was to be brought up in Nazareth, at the age of thirty years He was to embark upon a public ministry and it all happened; it was all on schedule; perfect timing throughout. Our Lord's eye was ever upon that heavenly timepiece and ready to fulfil the Father's will.

On several occasions men sought to destroy Him by varying means, but they could not, for the hour of His death had not yet come and Christ knew it; but now the hands of the Divine clock are almost on the hour and He exclaims, "*Father*", it has arrived, the momentous hour to which the clock had been set from eternal ages past was about to strike. The Saviour was fully aware of this, but did He seek a hiding place? Did He plan an escape by natural means such as fleeing into Egypt, as was the case at His birth when His life was in danger? Did He resort to supernatural means of preservation, for He was God and at one stroke could have annihilated all His enemies? No, for He had come to earth in the capacity of Mediator. He had entered into a deed of Suretyship. He had made Himself responsible for the debts of others and He must now pay those debts. He was to render a full discharge for the sins of all God's elect at the bar of Divine justice.

The penalty to be inflicted upon Him is totally beyond our comprehension. It was **every** sin of **every** elect person, of **every** generation of human history which He was responsible for, and He must endure the wrath of God in total. This was the cup of wrath which was passed to Him by Almighty God at **this hour**. His response was, "*The cup which my Father hath given me, shall I not drink it?*" (John 18:11). There was no hesitancy. Contemplating the arrival of this dreadful hour the Saviour said, "*What shall I say? Father, save me from this hour: but for this cause came I unto this hour*" (John 12:27). None will ever know all that was in the mind and heart of our blessed Lord when He lifted up His eyes to heaven and said "*Father, the hour is come*".

To be continued

W.H.Molland

An Unusual Death followed by a Unique Funeral

The story of the man, who as a babe was placed in a little ark and hid in some bulrushes in Egypt and whose life ended in isolation in the land of Moab at the age of one hundred and twenty years, is fascinating. His name was Moses. The first forty years of his life was spent in the luxury of the Egyptian palace; the next forty years, under the sovereign over-ruling of the Almighty, he spent in the loneliness of the deserts of Midian, shepherding sheep for Jethro, his father-in-law. Then at the age of eighty years, he was called by God to bring the Israelites out of Egypt. This he did, albeit because of much sin and rebellion on the part of those people, it entailed forty years of wandering in the wilderness.

Eventually these wanderings came to an end, the goal was in sight, that great company of Israelites had now reached the northern tip of

the plains of Moab; only Jordan, a river which they would have to cross, separated them from the promised land. At this juncture God called Moses aside to a mountain. From this vantage point he could see far beyond Jordan as Canaan stretched out before his gaze. Then was he told that, having had this glimpse, he would be gathered unto his people, as was Aaron his brother (cf Numbers 27:12-13).

Here, alone with his God, stood the illustrious veteran, a great man of faith who on many occasions had mediated between an angry God and a sinful people. Now at one hundred and twenty years of age, it was made clear to him that his life's work was ended. The opening verses of Deuteronomy chapter thirty four are awesome and touching, *"And Moses went up from the plains of Moab unto the mountain of Nebo, to the top of Pisgah, that is over against Jericho. And the Lord shewed him all the land of Gilead, unto Dan, and all Naphtali, and the land of Ephraim, and Manasseh, and all the land of Judah, unto the utmost sea, and the south, and the plain of the valley of Jericho, the city of palm trees, unto Zoar. And the Lord said unto him, This is the land which I sware unto Abraham, unto Isaac, and unto Jacob, saying, I will give it unto thy seed: I have caused thee to see it with thine eyes, but thou shalt not go over thither"* (Deuteronomy 34:1-4).

From the vantage point of Mount Pisgah, God gave to Moses a view of the land that had been the objective, for which they had left Egypt forty years before. The great leader's life on earth was at an end; Moses was to enter the heavenly Canaan, something infinitely better than passing over the river Jordan to an earthly inheritance. Although one hundred and twenty years old, Moses was not worn out, for at the time of his death it was said, *"His eye was not dim, nor his natural force abated"* (Deuteronomy 34:7). This man had walked thousands of miles in his lifetime, enduring hardships which would have taken their toll of many men half his age and yet he had no difficulty

climbing to the highest peak of Nebo. From this point of elevation, his vision extended to the "*utmost sea*" (Deuteronomy 34:2), a distance of some seventy miles. It was no doubt a great consolation to Moses to be given this view of the land which God had promised to His chosen people; although the deep spiritual significance of this event would have gripped his soul. Moses was a man of faith. God had just told him that he was to be gathered unto his people as Aaron, his brother, had been only a short time before. As he gazed out over Gilead and Dan, and cast his eyes across Naphtali, Ephraim and Judah, even to the shores of the Mediterranean, wonderful as it all was, we can be sure that now the thoughts of Moses rose far, far above the earthly; he was going **home**. This view of the Canaan which is below, had transported his thoughts to that better country which is the heavenly.

With this wonderful glimpse of the future glowing bright in his soul (this man brimming with good health despite his age), descended from the mountain into the valley of Beth-peor. There can be little doubt, if any man had met Moses that day, the great leader would have had little to say. His words would have been akin to those of Paul, the apostle, "*I am now ready to be offered, and the time of my departure is at hand. I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith*" (2 Timothy 4:6,7). However, no-one saw Moses, he was alone with God at the end; in that valley in solitude it is tersely stated, "*So Moses the servant of the Lord died there in the land of Moab, according to the word of the Lord. And He buried him in a valley in the land of Moab, over against Beth-peor: but no man knoweth of his sepulchre unto this day*" (Deuteronomy 34:5,6).

From the plains of Moab that day, the spirit of the man who esteemed "*the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures in Egypt*" (Hebrews 11:26), entered into the grandeur of the mansions of glory.

He, who had endured the rigours of the deserts of Midian for forty years, then the trials and disappointments of leading a rebellious and gainsaying people through a "*waste howling wilderness*" for another forty years, such endurance only possible by faith through seeing Him who is invisible (cf Hebrews 11:27), now entered into rest. His covenant-keeping God who had guided him by the cloudy pillar from Succoth to the brink of the river Jordan, Moses now sees face to face; he is in heaven. What about his body? There was no one there! Would it be left to decompose, or be eaten by wild beasts and birds of prey? No indeed! God buried him. A most remarkable thing. At some spot in a valley in the plains of Moab, lies the dust of Israel's commander.

"By Nebo's lonely mountain, on this side Jordan's wave,
In a vale in the land of Moab there lies a lonely grave:
No man knows that sepulchre and no man saw it e'er
For God upturned the sod and laid the dead man there."

No mortal knows that grave, but God knows and at the last day when all the graves give up their dead, the dust of Moses will spring out of Beth-peor and put on immortality as it is reunited with his spirit which went to be with Christ. What an amazing narrative to have recorded in Holy Scripture! What a theme for our consideration. Precious spiritual lessons are to be learnt from the death and burial of this great man of faith, lessons calculated to stimulate our hope and anticipation of the glorious eternal future which is ours by grace.

If we are not of the generation still alive when the Lord returns, then we like Moses and teeming millions of others will pass into heaven through the article of death. The thought of this fills many hearts with foreboding, but just as the Lord broke the news to Moses that he was to be "*gathered unto his people*", He immediately continues with the words, "*Get thee up into this mount*" (Numbers 27:12). There it

was that Moses saw the promised land. So it is with us in our day in a spiritual sense; God would have us get up into the mount of holy Scripture, for in His Word is revealed the glories prepared for us. It is feared that we as Christians do not spend sufficient time on the spiritual Pisgah, contemplating the heavenly Canaan.

Many believers are weighed down with earthly care, worry and anxiety. Sorrow and sadness has overtaken others; all joy seems to have gone out of their lives. Some realizing the speed with which age is creeping on, are secretly haunted by fear as to their end, when they have to face the last great enemy, death. What form will it take? Will it be sudden or will it be a long, drawn out, painful illness? We are all human and such thoughts can fill our minds. What is more, the Devil will ever use his skills to foster such thoughts. The Word of God to us is, 'Get thee up into the mount and see the land'.

When Moses came down from Pisgah, he was quiet, submissive and at peace; his attitude could well be summed up by the words found in 2 Samuel 10:12, *"The Lord do that which seemeth Him good"*. So should it be with every child of God. Isaac Watts appreciated these truths as he penned the words,

"Could we but climb where Moses stood,
And view the landscape o'er,
Not Jordan's stream, nor death's cold flood,
Should fright us from the shore".

The Christian should live in the absolute certainty that there is another world beyond this troubled scene and our heavenly Father desires that even here below we should have glimpses of it: that something of the bliss and joy of the eternal realm might be known and enjoyed by us; this would give poise and inward peace. In His Word He bids us *"look not at the things which are seen, but at the*

things which are not seen: for the things which are seen are temporal; but the things which are not seen are eternal" (2 Corinthians 4:18).

How different does this world appear when we have spent time in **the mount**, contemplating the eternal. Those all engrossing cares which so distract our hearts are comparatively small after a visit to Pisgah where we learn of those things which God has prepared for those that love Him. To dwell upon the mountain ranges of Nebo is to breathe something of the air of heaven. It is here that we are assured that 'ere long, we too shall be gathered unto our people. Does not the glorious prospect of the glad reunion with those who, through the soul cleansing blood of Christ, have gone before, touch our hearts? What a day that will be, yet infinitely more glorious is that of which Paul writes, "*Our gathering together unto Him*" (2 Thessalonians 2:1). How encouraging are our Lord's words to His Father concerning us, His redeemed ones, "*Father, I will that they also, whom Thou hast given me, be with me where I am; that they may behold my glory*" (John 17:24), and this glory given to Christ is to be conferred on us (cf v.22).

"On that bright and golden morning when the Son of man shall come,
And the radiance of **His glory** we shall see:
When from every clime and nation He shall call His people home-
What a gathering of the ransomed that will be!

When the blest who sleep in Jesus at His bidding shall arise
From the silence of the grave and from the sea;
And with bodies all celestial they shall meet **Him** in the skies -
What a gathering and rejoicing there will be!

When our eyes behold the city with its "*many mansions*" bright,
And its river, calm and restful flowing free,
When the friends that death has parted shall in bliss again unite -
What a gathering and a greeting there will be!

Oh, the King is surely coming and the time is drawing nigh,
When the blessed day of promise we shall see;
Then the changing "in a moment", "in the twinkling of an eye",
And forever in **His presence** we shall be."

The evil days in which we live demand that we often climb to "**this mount**" and fix our minds and hearts on the heavenly Canaan. When something of the glory of Christ and of the eternal realm was revealed to John, the apostle, he wrote, *"I saw a new heaven and a new earth: for the first heaven and the first earth were passed away; and there was no more sea. And I heard a great voice out of heaven saying, Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and He will dwell with them, and they shall be His people, and God Himself shall be with them, and be their God. And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away. And He that sat upon the throne said, Behold, I make all things new"* (Revelation 21:1,3-5). *"And there shall be no more curse: but the throne of God and of the Lamb shall be in it; and His servants shall serve Him: and they shall see His face; and His name shall be in their foreheads. And there shall be no night there; and they need no candle, neither light of the sun; for the Lord God giveth them light: and they shall reign for ever and ever"* (Revelation 22:3-5).

*"New heavens and a new earth wherein dwelleth righteousness".
"They shall see His face".* Even more, for when we shall see Him,
"we shall be like Him" (1 John 3:2). The wonder of all wonders is
that through His grace, we shall be there. *"As for me, I will behold
Thy face in righteousness: I shall be satisfied, when I awake, with
Thy likeness"* (Psalm 17:15).

W.H.Molland

Recollections of Spiritual Work in the County of Devon in Generations Past cont'd

"We have heard with our ears, O God, our fathers have told us, what work Thou didst in their days, in the times of old" (Psalm 44:1).

The main character in this reminiscence is Robert Gribble, a draper in Barnstaple in the very early years of the last century. For this glimpse into the working of God through this humble man, one is indebted to the writings of the late Mr G.H.Lang in his book "**God at Work on His Own Lines**". It is from this publication that extracts are taken. Gribble states:

"While on my way to a distant village in July 1832, I was overtaken by a woman on horseback. She was quite a stranger to me and, to my surprise, slackened her pace and began to tell me of her unsuccessful errand to the town we had just quitted. She and her husband had recently been brought to know the truth through the ministry of some Wesleyans who came to preach in the village of Huntshaw where many souls had been awakened, and she had been to request the Wesleyan minister to come and preach at their forthcoming Revel, the annual season during which vice and iniquity, with intemperance abound in the villages of the area. She had however, been disappointed, as he was expected elsewhere. As it was not to take place for ten days and I had no particular engagement, I offered to go and minister in his stead, which she gladly accepted.

Much violence was encountered, earth and wood being flung, and we were afterwards pelted with mud until my clothes and the face of one of my companions, were quite covered with it." But the son of a Christian of that place was converted through the ministry that evening and a deep impression was made upon the leader of the

opposition, a daring character for whom nothing appeared too vile, but who confessed that Gribble had made him commit "hundreds of sins" that evening.

The next year another tumultuous occasion occurred at a fair at the large market town of Crediton. The cruel sport of bull-baiting, not yet wholly banished from England, was in progress. While Gribble was preaching, fighting arose and blood flowed. But quieter hearing followed and an aged man from the country was heard to say to himself, "Ah, I know it is all true".

"In the summer of this year (1832) I accompanied a beloved brother (believed to be Robert Chapman - Ed.), on a short missionary excursion into some destitute villages of our neighbourhood. We were without purse or scrip and had no settled plan for our journey, our object being to preach the gospel, distribute tracts, and ascertain the moral condition of the people. About noon on the first day we preached at Chittlehamholt, a village three miles from the parish church. The inhabitants were noted for lawlessness, having driven away all who had before attempted to minister there; yet about thirty persons heard with attention and a house was offered for preaching. More will be said of this place ere long. In the evening we preached in Chittlehampton, the church-town as it was called, of the same parish, which being under high aristocratic influence, no house had been used for preaching there within the memory of any inhabitant, and the rain prevented our ministering out of doors. In this emergency the Lord provided for our need. A cottage which had been quitted that same day was offered us, and crowded with attentive hearers. On the second day, a large company belonging to a club assembled to hear the Word at High Bickington, after which we walked until daylight, being unable to discern any shed to lie down in, and the rain falling during the greater part of the night.

Having lost our way, we found ourselves in the morning near Winkleigh, a small town where the Word was preached at nine o'clock. Here dwelt one family of disciples who received us gladly. On the morning of the fourth day we again lost our way and wandered to the small village of Kingscott, where our hearts were much cheered by finding many dear Christians, with whom we had a short season of happy communion. The news of our arrival spread so rapidly that thirty persons were soon gathered in one of the cottages to hear the Word of Life. We then went to the village of St Giles, a short distance away, where we purposed to spend the evening; my dear companion preached with great power to about one hundred persons. One of them who came from the village where we tarried in the morning was converted, so that our mistake in losing our way, through which our meeting was known at that place, was used by the Lord for bringing a soul to Himself. How wonderful are the ways of our God, who causes all events to fulfil His own blessed purposes! This village was very near the mansion of the most influential nobleman in the county, whose decided dislike to all public worship except that of the Establishment was well known; and in the whole surrounding district, which formed a part of his vast possessions, his word was considered almost as law. He is now dead, and his title extinct."

Gribble relates the establishing of a work at St. Giles. The village publican, converted under Gribble's ministry, built a chapel at his own expense for the continuation of this work; in later years this came into the hands of the Wesleyans.

In 1833 Robert Gribble moved from Barnstaple to the village of High Bickington. He continues the story: "I was prepared to enter on this new field of service as a pilgrim, and was soon made to feel myself one to an extent I had not anticipated. Leaving many dear friends behind, I was cast among strangers, of whom the majority were

scorners, immoral and profane, with only three or four individuals who knew the Lord.

Early in the summer of 1833 it was laid on my heart to go to Roborough, one of the villages visited by myself and my dear companion last year. My feelings on entering it on that occasion were very peculiar, such as I had never before experienced. It seemed as though the powers of darkness were near me, and busily active in opposing our entrance; all we saw of the people was discouraging beyond anything we had witnessed elsewhere. On the present occasion I had sent notice of my intention to preach and given tracts to the messenger to distribute previous to my arrival; but on coming there I was told that various threatenings had been heard, and that I might be interrupted by stones and rotten eggs if I attempted to preach. But the Lord restrained this open manifestation of rage by causing me to meet a farmer, of whom I had some knowledge, and who had much influence in the village. He was a vile character but came from curiosity to hear me. The Lord's hand was discernible here, as he lived at some distance and met me just at the needed time. My subsequent visits for the next two years were most discouraging, nor have I ever seen a place which manifested more entire hardness of heart and enmity to the gospel.

A week after my visit to Roborough it was strongly impressed on my mind, while dressing, that I must go and preach that evening at Chittlehamholt, and a friend who knew the road kindly consented to go with me. The distance of five miles was intersected by a river, half way on the road, which had to be crossed by a ferry. The people here seemed prepared to receive the gospel, and the preaching was attended by many hearers, some of whom showed much desire for its continuance and invited me to their houses, one of which was offered for ministry. It appeared even at the first visit as though the time to favour this hitherto dark neighbourhood was now come, especially as

they had, up to the period of our previous visit, resisted every attempt to introduce the gospel there. I continued to go there regularly during the summer and following winter, when the cottage was generally crowded to excess; and the Lord was evidently causing the seed sown to take root in many hearts.

In the following spring, a dear brother in the Lord went to reside there. His first sermon having been used by the Lord in converting one of the hearers, from this time conversions became numerous and many were gathered into communion. As I had abundant employment elsewhere my future service at this place was only occasional, but the history of the Lord's work there is sufficiently interesting to be noticed, though it will necessarily extend beyond the time of which I am writing.

The labours of the brother alluded to were abundantly prospered, so that about fifty children of God used to meet at His table to commemorate the dying love of the Lord Jesus. It soon became necessary to erect a chapel, work which was much furthered by a gentleman who had property in the village, and who kindly gave the land and also the stones for the building. He was led to do this from perceiving the moral influence produced by the preaching of the gospel. Very different was the conduct of others, who became alarmed at the attempt to enlighten the poor by any instrumentality save that of the Establishment. Up to this time no effort of any kind had been made to promote their spiritual welfare; but I had not been long there when the erection of a schoolroom was commenced, in which the clergyman ministered every Lord's Day evening. The nobleman who lived near St. Giles had also large possessions in this neighbourhood, and his sisters lived only a mile or two from this village; but the poor villagers still continued their attendance, attracted by the simple tidings of the gospel of the grace of God. When it was found that the schoolroom was not well attended a

church was built, and the occasional visits of a curate were exchanged for a resident clergyman. Yet the Word of the Lord continued to prosper, and has done so I believe to the present time (1858).

The remarkable contrast between the two places noticed in this chapter may suggest an important enquiry. Whence is it that, while to all outward appearance there was such a great similarity, the gospel was so gladly received at one place and so entirely rejected at the other? The Word of God can alone help us in this enquiry. Paul and Silas were forbidden to preach the Word in Asia, and were not allowed to go into Bithynia; but when invited through a vision to go into Macedonia, they went, assuredly gathering that the Lord had called them to preach the gospel there, and there they found that harvest of blessing which they so desired to reap (cf Acts 16:6-10). Is it not thus that the Lord causes it to rain on one city and not on another (cf Amos 4:7), and are not these among the deep things of God respecting which the Lord says, "*Even so, Father: for so it seemed good in Thy sight*" (Matthew 11:26)? The sudden impulse through which I was led to the village where the gospel was so gladly welcomed and made a blessing to many souls, I have always judged to have come from the Lord.

An interesting fact has lately come to my knowledge respecting that neighbourhood. The ancestors of the family whose influence was now so painfully used to hinder the gospel were once its zealous supporters; and the mansion in which part of the family resided near Chittlehamholt, was an asylum for the persecuted non-conformists of former days.

To be continued

"In spiritual graces let us study to be great and not to know it".

Thomas Brooks

ANNOUNCEMENTS

We thank God for the addition into membership of Mr R.Boswell and Mrs S.Haws. Both have attended the services on the Lord's Day and Thursday evenings regularly for several years. It is a great joy to now have them in full Church fellowship.

Our sister, Mrs Grace Nethercott, was called home to be with her Lord on 7 January 1998, at the age of 91 years. She had been a member and a loyal supporter of the work at North Road Chapel for 57 years. Until the last few months of her life she regularly attended all the services. Now she is in the Redeemer's presence, where there is fulness of joy and at His right hand, pleasures for evermore (cf Psalm 16:11).

Annual Bible Convention

Saturday, 6 June 1998 D.V.

Afternoon 3.30 p.m. Tea 5.00 p.m. Evening 6.00 p.m.

Speaker: Mr W.Hughes (Glasgow)

Visiting Preachers D.V.

Lord's Day	26 April 1998	Mr M Wood (Bridgwater)
Lord's Day	17 May 1998	Mr G Thrussell (Truro)
Lord's Day	7 June 1998	Mr W.Hughes (Glasgow)

**THE TEN
COMMANDMENTS**

**THE ABIDING LAW
OF GOD**

W. H. MOLLAND

Few articles of the Christian faith are more neglected than the Ten Commandments. If ever there was a day when they needed great emphasis, it is in the present generation. This small volume of seventy four pages succinctly addresses the matter. Obtainable for the cost of postage only, singly or in quantities for free distribution. Contact:

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"The statutes of the Lord are right"
"The commandment of the Lord is pure"
"More to be desired are they than gold"

Psalm 19:8&10

Editorial

Longer hours for shopping and more time for leisure pursuits is the order of the day. *"Take thine ease, eat, drink, and be merry"* (Luke 12:19) is the accepted maxim for the masses today. Shops and supermarkets display large adverts, 'OPEN SEVEN DAYS A WEEK', some even offering 24 hours a day service. Public houses have recently been granted greatly extended opening hours; night clubs and disco halls now continue into the early hours of the morning. The further into the night that these so-called entertainments are extended, the more acceptable to this pleasure-seeking society. It is the 'in thing'; this is what the people want, we are told. Much energy, physical and mental is dissipated and money squandered, to say nothing of the vice and immorality which is so prevalent in these dens of iniquity, which operate under cover of darkness. How true it is that the pleasure-imbued masses of the late twentieth century have *"no fear of God before their eyes"* (Romans 3:18). Their great concern is what the world can give in the form of money, security, comfort, food, drink and pleasure.

Little does Godless humanity realize that the devil has blinded their eyes; a rude awakening is imminent. The judgment of the last day is fast approaching when the sovereign God of the universe will draw the blinds on this sin-benighted world. The door of mercy, the only approach to God will be locked, the light of this world switched off, not a ray of hope to penetrate the darkness; the human race brought to an abrupt halt. This will be the great and final '**shut down**' of this world and **all** its activities. Immediate fear will come upon the Godless, distress and anguish like a whirlwind. Then will men and women call upon God but He will not answer, they will seek Him but He will not be found (cf Proverbs 1:28). This day will come as a thief in the night (cf 1 Thessalonians 5:2). Totally unexpected! Tragic indeed, yea **fatal** for the unsaved, will be that day when the God of heaven will roll this world up as a scroll. As a vesture this earth and its solar system will be folded up (cf Hebrews 1:10-12). In view of this certainty, *"Be ye therefore ready for the Son of man cometh at an hour when ye think not"* (Luke 12:40).