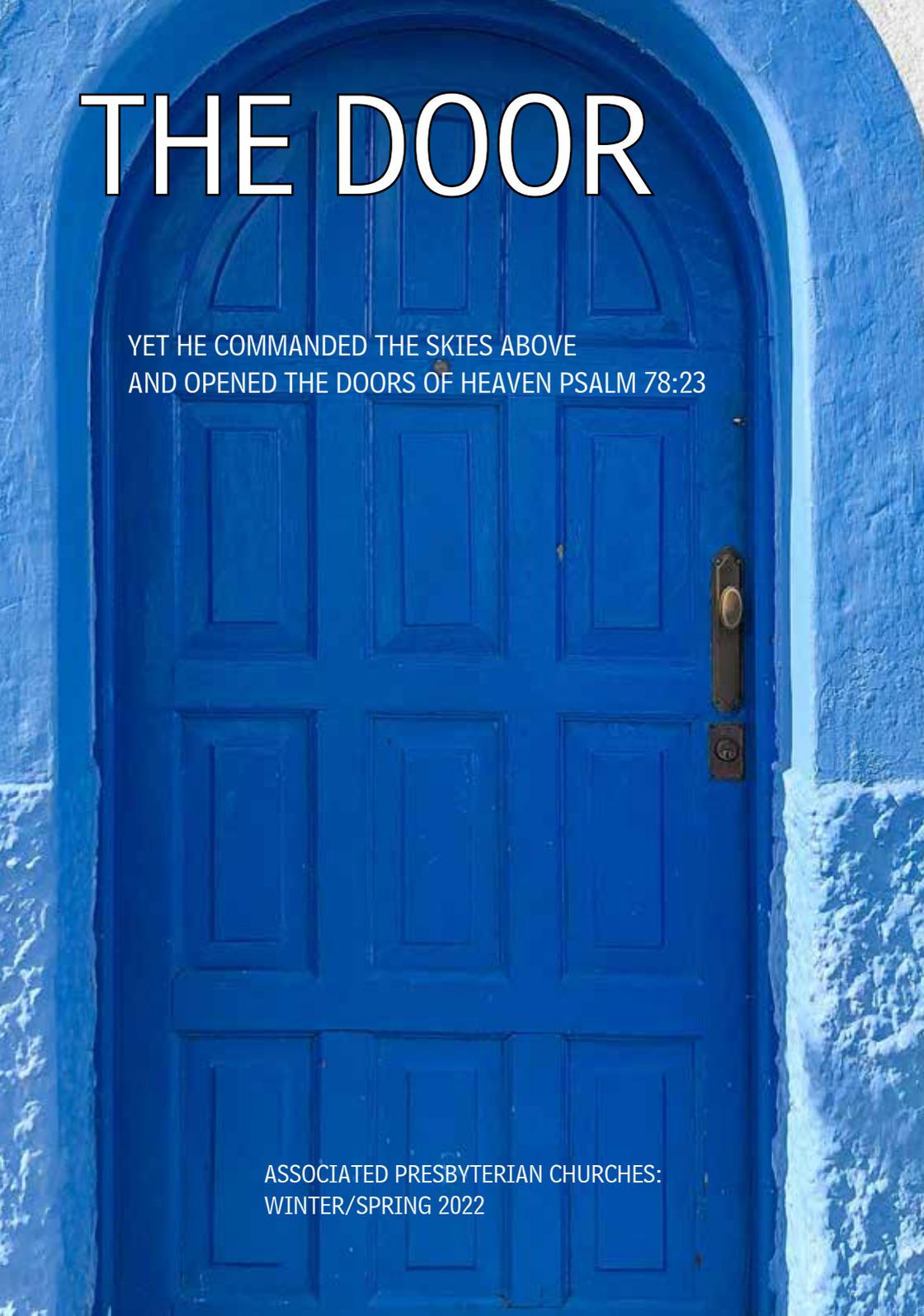


# THE DOOR

A photograph of a blue arched door with a brass handle and lock, set in a blue wall. The door has a traditional panel design with a semi-circular top section. The wall is a textured, light blue color.

YET HE COMMANDED THE SKIES ABOVE  
AND OPENED THE DOORS OF HEAVEN PSALM 78:23

ASSOCIATED PRESBYTERIAN CHURCHES:  
WINTER/SPRING 2022

## FROM THE EDITOR

This issue has a selection of different people in it... mostly from the past ... Matthew Henry, Andrew Murray, Jonathan Edwards and one who might be new to you William Borden. But their advice is very modern - about the integrity that is needed in bringing up your family, what our true source of true happiness should be, how we must remain in Christ.

Also look out for information about the Watch List from open doors - and what persecution really means to many of our believing brothers and sisters across the world.

C Mackenzie

## CONTENTS

1. Except Ye Abide, Andrew Murray
2. The Householder's Psalm, Matthew Henry
3. What is Discernment, Sinclair Ferguson
4. Take a Break with Jonathan Edwards
5. History, Peanuts and Sound Theology
6. Missionary Baptism - Book Review by Donald Macaskill
7. William Borden by Kevin Belmonte
8. The Open Doors Watch List

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# EXCEPT YE ABIDE

Andrew Murray

"As the Branch Cannot Bear Fruit of Itself, Except It Abide In the Vine; No More Can Ye, Except Ye Abide in Me" --John 15:4

We know the meaning of the word except. It expresses some indispensable condition, some inevitable law. "The branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine. No more can ye, except ye abide in me." There is but one way for the branch to bear fruit, there is no other possibility, it must abide in unbroken communion with the vine. Not of itself, but only of the vine, does the fruit come. Christ had already said: "Abide in me"; in nature the branch teaches us the lesson so clearly; it is such a wonderful privilege to be called and allowed to abide in the heavenly Vine; one might have thought it needless to add these words of warning. But no—Christ knows so well what a renunciation of self is implied in this: "Abide in me"; how strong and universal the tendency would be to seek to bear fruit by our own efforts; how difficult it would be to get us to believe that actual, continuous abiding in Him is an absolute necessity! He insists upon the truth: Not of itself can the branch bear fruit; except it abide, it cannot bear fruit. "No more can ye, except ye abide in me."

But must this be taken literally? Must I, as exclusively, and manifestly, and unceasingly, and absolutely, as the branch abides in the vine, be equally given up to find my whole life in Christ alone? I must indeed. The except ye abide is as

universal as the except it abide. The no more can ye admits of no exception or modification. If I am to be a true branch, if I am to bear fruit, if I am to be what Christ as Vine wants me to be, my whole existence must be as exclusively devoted to abiding in Him, as that of the natural branch is to abiding in its vine.

Let me learn the lesson. Abiding is to be an act of the will and the whole heart. Just as there are degrees in seeking and serving God, "not with a perfect heart," or "with the whole heart," so there may be degrees in abiding.

In regeneration the divine life enters us, but does not all at once master and fill our whole being. This comes as matter of command and obedience. There is unspeakable danger of our not giving ourselves with our whole heart to abide. There is unspeakable danger of our giving ourselves to work for God, and to bear fruit, with but little of the true abiding, the wholehearted losing of ourselves in Christ and His life. There is unspeakable danger of much work with but little fruit, for lack of this one thing needful. We must allow the words, "not of itself," "except it abide," to do their work of searching and exposing, of pruning and cleansing, all that there is of self-will and self-confidence in our life; this will deliver us from this great evil, and so prepare us for His teaching, giving the full meaning of the word in us: "Abide in me, and I in you." Our blessed Lord desires to call us away from ourselves and our own strength, to Himself and His strength. Let us accept the warning, and turn with great fear and self-distrust to Him to do His work. "Our life is hid with Christ in God!"

That life is a heavenly mystery, hid from the wise even among Christians, and revealed unto babes. The childlike spirit learns that life is given from Heaven every day and every moment to the soul that accepts the teaching: "not of itself," "except it abide," and seeks its all in the Vine. Abiding in the Vine then comes to be nothing more nor less than the restful surrender of the soul to let Christ have all and work all, as completely as in nature the branch knows and seeks nothing but the vine.

Abide in Me.

*I have heard, my Lord, that with every command, Thou also givest the power to obey. With Thy "rise and walk," the lame man leaped, I accept Thy word, "Abide in me," as a word of power, that gives power, and even now I say, Yea, Lord, I will, I do abide in Thee..*

# THE HOUSEHOLDER'S PSALM

Held in Honour, written by R Plummer and Matthew Haste,  
Christian Focus Publications

MATTHEW HENRY (1662–1714) : Matthew Henry was a Puritan pastor well-known for his sound exegesis and practical preaching. His Exposition of the Old and New Testaments is one of the most popular commentaries of all time and continues to be used by pastors even today. Henry, who pastored a congregation in Chester, England, for much of his ministry, was also a devoted family man. According to his biographers, he prayed with his family each morning, reviewed sermons with them throughout the week, and catechized his children in the evenings. The following quote, taken from his commentary on Psalm 101, illustrates his commitment to being a spiritual leader in his home.

DAVID HERE IN PSALM 101 CUTS OUT TO HIMSELF AND others a pattern of both a good magistrate and a good master of a family; and, if these were careful to discharge the duty of their place, it would contribute very much to a universal reformation. Observe ... the general resolution David took up to conduct himself carefully and conscientiously in his court

(v. 2) ... not only how he would walk when he appeared in public, when he sat in the throne, but how he would walk within his house, where he was more out of the eye of the world, but where he still saw himself under the eye of God.

It is not enough to put on our religion when we go abroad and appear before men; but we must govern ourselves by it in our families. Those that are in public stations are not thereby excused from care in governing their families; nay, rather, they are more concerned to set a good example of ruling their own houses well (1 Tim. 3:4). David had



his hands full of public affairs, yet he returned to bless his house (2 Sam. 6:20). He resolves: To act conscientiously and with integrity, to walk in a perfect way, in the way of God's commandments; that is a perfect way, for the law of the Lord is perfect. In this he will walk with a perfect heart, with all sincerity, not dissembling either with God or men. When we make the word of God our rule, and are ruled by it, the glory of God our end, and aim at it, then we walk in a perfect way with a perfect heart.

Matthew Henry, *Commentary on the Whole Bible* (1706; repr., Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1991), 887.

## DEVOTION

"He must manage his own household well, with all dignity keeping his children submissive, for if someone does not know how to manage his own household, how will he care for God's church?" (1 Tim. 3:4-5) Matthew Henry is right to call on men to lead their families spiritually. Indeed, it is not uncommon in modern evangelical churches for men to be exhorted to lead their families. Yet, what does this mean? Below are some practical expressions that family leadership can take: Make sure your family attends a Bible-believing church and spends time around God's people. In committing to a church, have you chosen social relationships over spiritual truth? Or, have you perhaps 'neglected meeting together' with God's people (Heb. 10:25)—instead spending your weekends at the lake or at sporting events?

What priorities are your children unconsciously absorbing from you? Where there are behavioral or spiritual needs in your family, address them. Do not passively surrender your wife or children to whatever influences happen to be blowing through their lives. If you feel incompetent to help your wife or children, ask a mature Christian brother. Read good Christian books on parenting and marriage.

Read a chapter of the book of Proverbs daily. What does it say about life, money, marriage, diligence, children, and business? By the power of God's Spirit, seek to be a man who is characterized by a wise life—and who overflows with that wisdom to his wife and children. Resolve with King David and the Puritan Matthew Henry to "walk with integrity of heart within 'your house.'"

# WHAT IS DISCERNMENT?

Sinclair Ferguson

Someone I know recently expressed an opinion that surprised and in some ways disappointed me. I said to myself, "I thought he would have more discernment than that."

The experience caused me to reflect on the importance of discernment and the lack of it in our world. We know that people often do not see issues clearly and are easily misled because they do not think biblically. But, sadly, one cannot help reflecting on how true this is of the church community, too.

Most of us doubtless want to distance ourselves from what might be regarded as 'the lunatic fringe' of contemporary Christianity. We are on our guard against being led astray by false teachers. But there is more to discernment than this. True discernment means not only distinguishing the right from the wrong; it means distinguishing the primary from the secondary, the essential from the indifferent, and the permanent from the transient. And, yes, it means distinguishing between the good and the better, and even between the better and the best.

Thus, discernment is like the physical senses; to some it is given in unusual measure as a special grace gift (1 Cor. 12:10), but some measure of it is essential for us all and must be constantly nourished. The Christian must take care to develop his 'sixth sense' of spiritual discernment. This is why the psalmist prays, 'Teach me good judgment and knowledge; (Ps. 119:66).

## THE NATURE OF DISCERNMENT

But what is this discernment? The word used in Psalm 119:66 means 'taste.'



It is the ability to make discriminating judgments, to distinguish between, and recognize the moral implications of, different situations and courses of action. It includes the ability to 'weigh up' and assess the moral and spiritual status of individuals, groups, and even movements. Thus, while warning us against judgmentalism, Jesus urges us to be discerning and discriminating, lest we cast our pearls before pigs (Matt. 7:1, 6). A remarkable example of such discernment is described in John 2:24–25: 'Jesus would not entrust himself to them . . . for he knew what was in a man' (NIV).

This is discernment without judgmentalism. It involved our Lord's knowledge of God's Word and His observation of God's ways with men (He, supremely, had prayed, 'Teach me good judgment . . . for I believe Your commandments,' Ps. 119:66). Doubtless His discernment grew as He experienced conflict with, and victory over, temptation, and as He assessed every situation in the light of God's Word.

Jesus' discernment penetrated to the deepest reaches of the heart. But the Christian is called to develop similar discernment. For the only worthwhile discernment we possess is that which we receive in union with Christ, by the Spirit, through God's Word. So discernment is learning to think God's thoughts after Him, practically and spiritually; it means having a sense of how things look in God's eyes and seeing them in some measure 'uncovered and laid bare' (Heb. 4:13).

#### THE IMPACT OF DISCERNMENT

How does this discernment affect the way we live? In four ways: It acts as a means of protection, guarding us from being deceived spiritually. It protects us from being blown away by the winds of teaching that make central an element



of the gospel that is peripheral or treat a particular application of Scripture as though it were Scripture's central message.

Discernment also acts as an instrument of healing, when exercised in grace. I have known a small number of people whose ability to diagnose the spiritual needs of others has been remarkable. Such people seem able to penetrate into the heart issues someone else faces better than the person can do. Of course, this is in some ways a dangerous gift with which God has entrusted them. But when exercised in love, discernment can be the surgical scalpel in spiritual surgery that makes healing possible.

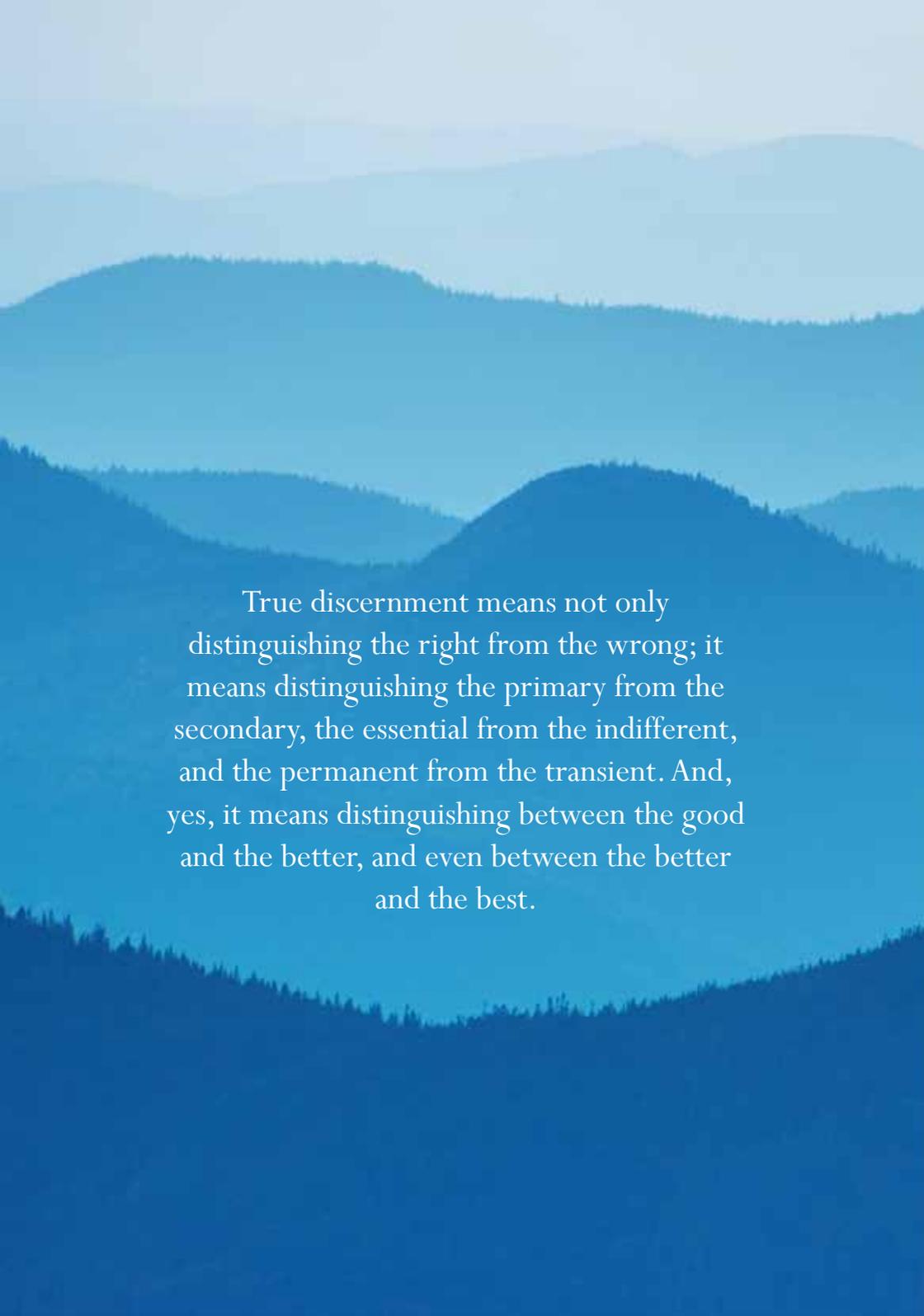
Again, discernment functions as a key to Christian freedom. The zealous but undiscerning Christian becomes enslaved—to others, to his own uneducated conscience, to an unbiblical pattern of life. Growth in discernment sets us free from such bondage, enabling us to distinguish practices that may be helpful in some circumstances from those that are mandated in all circumstances. But in another way, true discernment enables the free Christian to recognize that the exercise of freedom is not essential to the enjoyment of it.

Finally, discernment serves as a catalyst to spiritual development: 'The mocker seeks wisdom and finds none, but knowledge comes easily to the discerning' (Prov. 14:6, NIV). Why? Because the discerning Christian goes to the heart of the matter. He knows something about everything, namely that all things have their common fountain in God. Increase in knowledge, therefore, does not lead to increased frustration, but to a deeper recognition of the harmony of all God's works and words.

How is such discernment to be obtained? We receive it as did Christ Himself—by the anointing of the Spirit, through our understanding of God's Word, by our experience of God's grace, and by the progressive unfolding to us of the true condition of our own hearts.

That is why we also should pray, 'I am your servant; give me discernment' (Ps. 119:125, NIV).

This excerpt is taken from *In Christ Alone* by Sinclair Ferguson published by Reformation Trust, [Source Ligonier.org](http://SourceLigonier.org)

The background of the image is a monochromatic blue-tinted landscape. It features several layers of rolling hills and mountains, with the foreground being the darkest and the background being the lightest, creating a sense of depth and atmosphere. The hills are covered in what appears to be dense forest, though the details are softened by the blue tint and the overall aesthetic.

True discernment means not only distinguishing the right from the wrong; it means distinguishing the primary from the secondary, the essential from the indifferent, and the permanent from the transient. And, yes, it means distinguishing between the good and the better, and even between the better and the best.

## TAKE A BREAK WITH JONATHAN EDWARDS

Jonathan Edwards (1703 – 1758) was an American revivalist preacher, and one of that land's most important theologians. Edwards played a critical role in shaping the First Great Awakening from his church in Northampton, Massachusetts.

Edwards delivered the sermon "Sinners in the Hands of an Angry God", a classic of early American literature, during another revival in 1741. He is well known for his many books, *The End For Which God Created the World*, *The Life of David Brainerd*, and *Religious Affections*.



God is the highest good of the reasonable creature. The enjoyment of him is our proper; and is the only happiness with which our souls can be satisfied. To go to heaven, fully to enjoy God, is infinitely better than the most pleasant accommodations here. Better than fathers and mothers, husbands, wives, or children, or the company of any, or all earthly friends. These are but shadows; but the enjoyment of God is the substance. These are but scattered beams; but God is the sun. These are but streams; but God is the fountain. These are but drops, but God is the ocean.”  
Jonathan Edwards, *The Works of Jonathan Edwards*, Vol. 17: Sermons and Discourses, 1730-1733

If there be ground for you to trust, as you do, in your own righteousness, then all that Christ did to purchase salvation, and all that God did from the fall of man to prepare the way for it, is in vain. Consider what greater folly could you have devised to charge upon God than this, that all those things were done so needlessly; when, instead of all this, He might only have called you forth, and committed the business to you, which you think you can do so easily.  
Jonathan Edwards, *Dictionary of Burning Words*

# HISTORY, PEANUTS AND SOUND THEOLOGY

Catherine Mackenzie

My city is full of history as I realised when I walked past a local grave yard with a pillar in it from 1233 and a sandstone effigy of a knight of the realm. There was also a small grave from 1864 to the memory of 'Little Matthew, Seven years old.' No other information about him. What you take with you from that place is the realisation that time has passed and tears shed.

History has always been a personal interest of mine. During the 2020 Lockdown I wrote a book on Christian heroes and heroines. The characters ranged from Blandina and Augustine in the Early Church to Elisabeth Elliot and Billy Graham in the 21st century. Doing this research made me realise that the world and the church have been through worse than what we are currently experiencing. Chaos is nothing new as we look at the persecution and wars of centuries gone by. What a relief to know that God is the same yesterday today and forever.

Of all places to have that particular point reinforced you might not expect to see it in a children's cartoon. However, the other day I was browsing through *Peanuts* and saw Lucy staring anxiously at a heavy fall of rain wondering if it would flood the whole world. Her little brother turns to her and reminds her of Genesis chapter 9 and that God has said that he will never flood the world again. Lucy remarks that she is relieved, to which her brother replies, 'Yes, sound theology will do that for you.'

So, whatever problems we are facing be it plague or politics we can look at history and see the church in centuries gone by struggling, battling and coping with





the same. And we can read the same Bible that gave them their wisdom and comfort. Luther found himself instruction believers who were themselves dealing with pestilence. The Covenanters lived during what I think must have been one of the most complicated political climates. Spurgeon struggled with the church's treatment of the Word of God: 'We shall soon have to handle truth, not with kid gloves, but with gauntlets, – the gauntlets of holy courage and integrity. Go on, ye warriors of the cross, for the King is at the head of you.'

That could be a rallying cry from the past to the church of today.

If you ever visit the cemetery on Friar's Lane in Inverness take a look at the effigy of the sandstone knight. You will see a pale shadow of someone who fought in the past. As a believer you have been left a legacy of more robust warriors and weapons. Men and women of faith have wielded God's Word and they have found it strong - sharper than a two edged sword, eternal.

Elisabeth Elliot stood up for the reality of scripture and how it impacted the roles of men and women. John and Betty Stam gave their lives for the truth they believed in. Perpetua and Felicity, from the Early Church are counted amongst the first Christian martyrs. The Word that they declared in their lives and deaths, God's Word, stands forever. Isaiah 40:8.

The lives of faithful Christians from the past call out to us. May we call out to future generations in the same way. God's Word is our rallying cry.

Fight the good fight of faith, lay hold on eternal life, to which you were also called and have confessed the good confession in the presence of many witnesses.

1 Timothy 6:12

# MISSIONARY BAPTISM & EVANGELICAL UNITY

by J CAMERON FRASER BOOK REVIEW by DONALD C MACASKILL

This book is a plea for Christian unity on a subject that has divided Christians on all ages and cultures - Christian Baptism! Those, who like me, have found infant baptism however clearly commanded, difficult to articulate, will be relieved to read the quote from D Martyn Lloyd-Jones on page 86 of the book. Lloyd-Jones said in his book, *What is an Evangelical?*, 'I have been reading books on this subject for the last forty years and more, and I know less about it now than I did at the beginning. Therefore when I assert, and we must all assert, that we believe in baptism, for that is plainly commanded, yet we must not divide and separate over the age of the candidate or over the mode of administration.'

The burden of the book is the need for unity among Paedobaptists and Baptists - after all, both believe in baptism as a clear command. However, a large part of the book is taken up with explaining the various views of infant baptism, of which there are many. Cameron's treatise is built on his personal conviction that the view of Dr William Cunningham in *Historical Theology*, is the most biblical view. In the Preface Cameron calls this view 'Missionary Baptism', more commonly known as 'household baptism' or 'convert's baptism'.

One of the most interesting points is that Cunningham opposed the idea of a dual confession advocated by Dr John Kennedy who distinguished between an 'uncontradicted profession' of faith required for baptism, and an 'accredited profession' required for admission to the Lord's Table, thus creating two different professions of faith! 'Cunningham was insistent that no sharp distinction should be made between the qualifications for baptism and the Lord's Supper. In this he was opposing the view discussed earlier, common in the Scottish highlands and championed by its most noted minister John Kennedy, that made a distinction between members in full communion and those who were merely baptised adherents' p27. Professor John Murray while disagreeing with Cunningham's view, nevertheless commended Cunningham for 'ably and cogently opposing the idea that there is such a thing in the New Testament as dual confession, one entitling to baptism and another, of a higher order, entitling to communicant membership' p31.

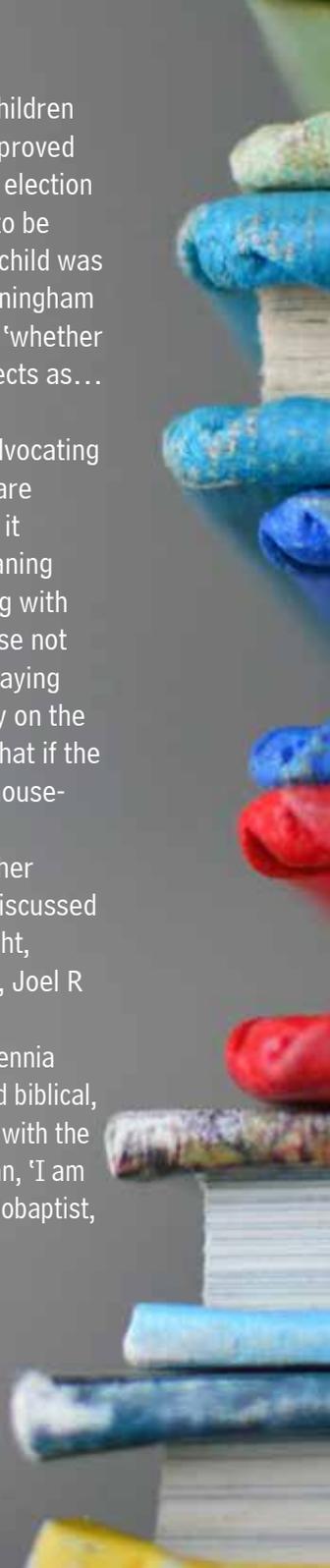
As hinted, the tweaking of some views of infant baptism is intriguing - with some fine distinctions having to be made. There are those who hold to 'presumptive regeneration' and those who hold to 'presumptive election'. On

page 19, we read 'Kuyper and others taught that baptised children should be presumed to be regenerate until and unless they proved otherwise. Hodge based the presumption on the doctrine of election rather than regeneration. Thus, a child might be presumed to be elect, but not necessary yet regenerate. In either case, the child was considered to be a child of God until proven otherwise.' Cunningham however, took the opposite view and believed that children, 'whether baptised or not, should be treated and dealt with in all respects as... unregenerate, still needing to be born again' p51.

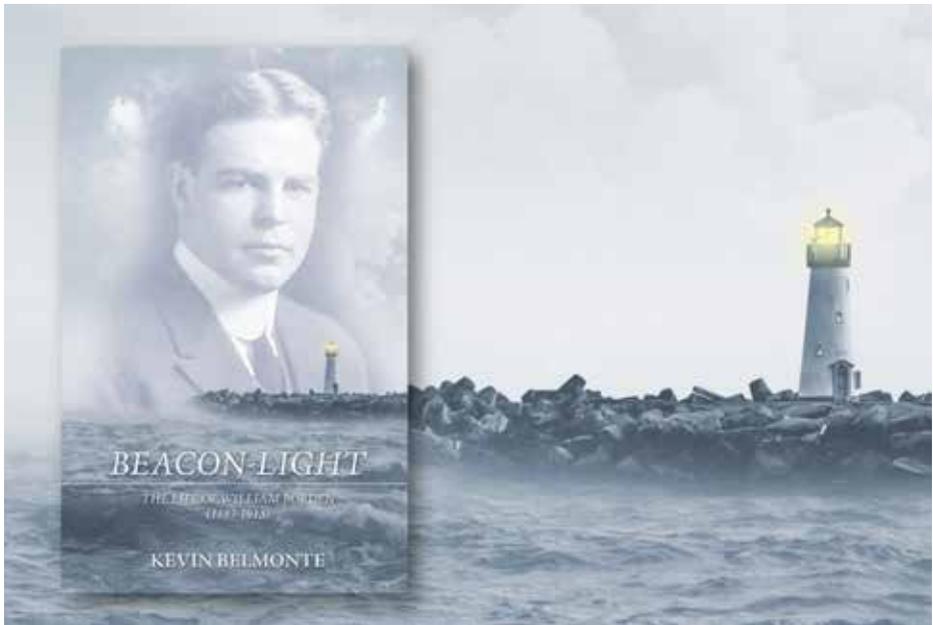
Coming to the unity aspect, Cameron states 'I am not advocating a broad ecumenicity in which central doctrines of the faith are negotiable. But within the bounds of evangelical orthodoxy, it should be possible to arrive at an understanding of the meaning of baptism (as understood by Cunningham and others) along with believer's baptism, with or without baby dedication, for those not so convinced' p85. It is here that he quotes Lloyd-Jones's saying about knowing less than he did at the beginning of his study on the subject. Cameron reminds us of Cunningham's statement, that if the church was more missionary-minded, we would see more household baptisms such as took place in New Testament times.

Baby Dedication, Confirmation, Child Communion and other matters are also looked at. Many opinions and issues are discussed in the book including from James Bannerman, David F Wright, Kenneth J Stewart, Sinclair Ferguson, Robert (Bob) Letham, Joel R Beeke and Lewis Bevens Schenck and others.

As the discussion of this subject has been going on for millennia without any sign of finality, Cameron's proposal is sensible and biblical, given the emphasis our Lord made about unity. The book ends with the wise statement from Scotland's theologian John 'Rabbi' Duncan, 'I am first a Christian, next a catholic, then a Calvinist, fourth a paedobaptist, and fifth a Presbyterian. I cannot reverse this order.'



# WILLIAM BORDEN BY KEVIN BELMONTE



History knows him today as ‘Borden of Yale,’ the subject of a now–classic book published in 1926 by Geraldine Guinness Taylor, the daughter–in–law of missionary pioneer Hudson Taylor.

Born in 1887, and a graduate of Yale in the Class of 1909, Borden left his mark there as a scholar–athlete. He played freshman football in 1905, the year Yale won a National Championship. He also rowed for his Class Crew, which won first place among the class crews in the fall of 1907. Most prominently, he was a Christian leader among his fellow students. He formed many lasting friendships, so much so, that he lives today in their recollections. One such friend, Dr. Kenneth Latourette, later became an eminent church historian, serving as Sterling Professor of Missions, and Fellow of Berkley College at Yale. He recalled:

*A potent influence in 1909 was William Whiting Borden. He was from a wealthy Chicago family...He entered Yale purposing to be a missionary. He planned to go to a real frontier, the Moslems in West China, and to seek appointment under the China Inland Mission. He was an able student, president of Phi Beta Kappa in his senior year. He was athletic, of great energy, handsome, and a born leader of men...Outstanding, he had a profound*

*influence on the members of his class, and I feel sure that his missionary vision was a major factor in Yale's record of 1909 in missions. After Yale, he entered Princeton Theological Seminary and graduated. Then he went to Egypt to study Arabic, planning to go from there to China for the Chinese language. While in Cairo, he was taken with spinal meningitis and died. His biography, Borden of Yale, '09, written by Mrs. Howard Taylor at his mother's request, has had a profound influence on successive generations of students.*

*William Borden was one of my dearest friends...I look back on his friendship as one of the richest I have known.*

## FRIENDSHIP

Of all the things born of Borden's deep Christian faith, and there were many, this facet of his life has always stood out. Guided by the Holy Spirit, his gift for friendship was a catalyst in the many instances we know of when he led someone to faith in Christ.

One example speaks powerfully of who William Borden was. After he'd given the princely sum of \$20,000 in 1907 to purchase the four-storey building near his college campus that became Yale Hope Mission, some \$500,000 in today's money, he went there two to three nights a week for the remainder of his college days to take part in the work of helping destitute and homeless men, many of them alcoholics, find faith and begin re-building their lives.

This rescue mission, so near to the halls of an ivy-league university, became famous in America, alongside stories of the exploits of The Wright Brothers. Tales of the men who found redemption at Yale Hope Mission, and how it was founded, captured the public's eye.

Guided by the Holy Spirit, his gift for friendship was a catalyst in the many instances we know of when he led someone to faith in Christ.

One such man was Jack Clark, a symbol of all that Borden's work at Yale Hope Mission stood for. Homeless, destitute, his life ravaged by alcoholism, he could neither read, nor write. His recollections, his tribute to William Borden, had to be taken down, and transcribed.

No, he couldn't write his thoughts down; but he could speak, with great depth of feeling, of what he knew. Here is what he wished people to know about William Borden:

*I came in here ... a drunk and hadn't much use for religion. I'm not going to tell the worst part of my life, but I was a rambler all right: a down-and-out*

*bum... I had heard of the Mission, same as a good many of them do. I knew it was the only thing that would save me from booze. Well, I went out and left the building, that first night. But I had a Christian mother, and I got thinking of her, and I came back. That was the twenty-ninth of March, and that night Bill was there, and he spoke to me.*

*Bill was a great personal worker. He always believed in getting right down and talking to a man. If Bill had anything to say he gave it right out. ...He would tell you to hope again; tell you of the God who'd made the universe and held you in the hollow of His hand, and could help you, if you'd only ask. That's the way he talked. He was one good boy. I could never forget him as long as I breathe—no, I never forget him. And he barely twenty that night when I first knew him!*

*I went forward and kneeled down; and Bill came and kneeled down beside me, and he explained as much as he could the power of Christ, and how it was only Him who could help me. I never drank from that night to this, never felt like it ... and before that, I was drunk most of the time. Well, after I was converted, I come every night for seven weeks.*

*About two years after I was converted, I was re-married right in this building, right up—stairs. ... We've got a home now in Yalesville, Connecticut, and a big garden, plenty of land, lots of chickens, and a piano in the house—makes quite a change from when I first came to the Mission drunk, with no prospects but whiskey... If Bill hadn't opened up this Mission, I'd be dead... Not till the books of heaven are opened will you know what Bill Borden done by opening Yale Hope Mission. I never knew a feller just like Bill... He could talk to anyone, didn't matter who they was... Never knowed his like in this world. I know he must have done for hundreds what he done for me. He was always trying to study into the lives of men, to see how they'd work out, and how he could help 'em.*

## MISSION ACCOMPLISHED

No, William Borden never made it to the China mission field that was his cherished hope. But during his time at university, he did what he could to show the light of Christian hope to others in need—whether fellow-students or the homeless. More than one hundred years on, we remember and celebrate his legacy of faith. It shone wherever he was, for all the time he was given.

A biography of William Borden has been published by Christian Focus Publications: Beacon-Light, ISBN: 9781527107199

Christ also suffered for you, leaving you an example, so that you might follow in his steps. He committed no sin, neither was deceit found in his mouth. When he was reviled, he did not revile in return; when he suffered, he did not threaten, but continued entrusting himself to him who judges justly.

He himself bore our sins in his body on the tree, that we might die to sin and live to righteousness. By his wounds you have been healed. 1 Peter 2:21-24



# THE OPEN DOORS WATCH LIST

Every year, Open Doors research teams create the World Watch List: a list of countries where Christians face the most severe persecution.

There is no international, legal definition of persecution. However, World Watch List methodology has opted for a theological rather than a sociological definition: "Any hostility experienced as a result of one's identification with Christ. This can include hostile attitudes, words and actions towards Christians".

This broad definition includes (but is not limited to) restrictions, pressure, discrimination, opposition, disinformation, injustice, intimidation, mistreatment, marginalisation, oppression, intolerance, infringement, violation, ostracism, hostilities, harassment, abuse, violence, ethnic cleansing and genocide.

Broadly, the methodology distinguishes between two main expressions of persecution: 'squeeze' and 'smash'. 'Smash' is relatively easy to identify and track, since it refers to concrete acts of overt violence against Christians, because of their faith. 'Squeeze', on the other hand, is the persecution experienced as pressure in many areas of Christian life.

Christian experience is thus considered in five different areas of life – which can be considered 'squeeze' – as well as the final category being the 'smash' of violence:

- Private life. What freedom does a Christian have to worship and own religious material? Is conversion to Christianity allowed? Is freedom of thought permitted?
- Family life. How free are Christians to express their faith within their family? Is it possible to hold Christian family milestones, such as Christian marriages and funerals?
- Community life. Can Christians live without harassment and discrimination in their local communities? How does their faith affect their education or employment?
- National life. Does the government allow Christians to express their faith? Can converts call themselves Christians on official documents? Do the police target Christians?
- Church life. Are Christians allowed to meet together? Can they build churches? And if they can, are they heavily monitored? Are Bibles freely available?

- Violence. Are Christians attacked mentally or physically? Do they face sexual harassment? Are they arrested, abducted, tortured, imprisoned or even killed?

While the published World Watch List currently includes 50 countries each year, this research is conducted in 150 countries.

To read more information about the Watch List and how Open Doors gathers and scores the information they receive visit [Opendoorsuk.org](http://Opendoorsuk.org) The top ten countries on the Watch List from a list of fifty are:

1. Afghanistan
2. North Korea
3. Somalia
4. Libya
5. Yemen
6. Eritrea
7. Nigeria
8. Pakistan
9. Iran
10. India



A top-down view of a wooden surface with a white cup of tea, a metal bowl of strawberries, and a red rose. A white card with handwritten text is placed on the surface. The text is written in black cursive and is partially overlaid by a watercolor wash that transitions from yellow to orange to red. The date 'Jan 3, 22 & 23' is written in the bottom right corner of the card.

His mercies  
never come  
to an end,  
they are  
new every  
morning.

Jan 3, 22 & 23