

DON BECKLEY

David C F Wright DD

Donald Edgar Beckley died on 2 September 1997. He was 82. His funeral service at Avenue Road Evangelical Church, Sandown, Isle of Wight was conducted by the late Bracey Cardy of Southsea. At this service one of his own hymns was sung. There is a home I long to see, which was written about 1943.

He was born in St Albans on 16 December 1914 to Henry John and Rose (nee Richards) and they originally came from Whitstable in Kent. His father was a solicitors managing clerk. Don won a scholarship to a public school in St Albans where he was until he was 19. With his family, he worshipped with the brethren at a Lowe-Kelly meeting. On leaving school, he was a company secretary in Widnes and then came the war. He was in a non-combative corp.

He met his wife-to-be Berta (short for Alberta) Stuart at the assembly in St Albans. She came from the north of England, Saltburn by Sea near Whitby in Yorkshire and was a teacher having had posts at Luton and Watford. They married during the war in Guisborough, North Yorkshire and she moved with Don during his war time locations. She had no difficulty finding teaching posts because most male teachers were occupied with the war. One of Don's posting was in Carlisle.

After the war, Don trained to be a chiropodist and came to the Isle of Wight in 1946. Don had had holidays in the Isle of Wight in Nettlestone with relatives of Peter Baldwin. Mr Beckley did become a chiropodist and in the late 1940s and 1950s practised in Freshwater. He worshipped at a Lowe-Kelly meeting in Victoria Road, Freshwater.

His parents retired to the Isle of Wight in 1956 and lived at Priory Drive in Nettlestone. Don's sister Dora, who married John Davis, moved from St Albans with their son Ralph and lived in Upton Road, Haylands, Ryde. Dora died in Swanage in 2011

Berta's parents, Mr and Mrs Ben Stuart came down from Yorkshire to the Island and lived with the Beckleys at Shelley House until they took a house next to Elmfield Congregational Church, Ryde.

The Beckleys had two children Susan and Peter.

Don and Berta moved to Flagstaff, Rope Walk, Seaview in 1956 and worshipped at a brethren meeting, first in George Street, Ryde and then at the Vectis Hall in Ryde. In 1971, he joined the Open Brethren at Bethany in Newport along with his sister-in-law Margaret Biddlecombe who was married to Arthur. Mrs Stuart, Bertha's mother worshipped at Bethany from 1971 until her death in 1985.

I met Don in about 1976 when he came to speak at the brethren meeting in Abingdon Road, Ryde.

It was a major change in his life when he became pastor at Beulah Church Seaview succeeding George Pike in 1981 where Don was for about ten years. He had a potters shop in Seaview, first on the Esplanade and then at Salterns. He had started to make pottery in Freshwater with Joe Lester who was a well-known Island potter.

In 1986 Don had a period of illness and was a patient at the neurological unit at Southampton General Hospital following a fall. I deputised for him as pastor at Seaview for about three months

He moved to a bungalow in Merrie Gardens, Lake in 1991. He attended Avenue Road Evangelical Church in Sandown.

Around this time I was very badly treated by The Gospel Hall, Shanklin. Don, and other brethren, investigated this matter independent of me and of each other and found that the assembly was a rogue assembly and exonerated me completely.

Don was brethren through and through and an avid reader of the books of these great scholarly men. He said that he was an ultra-dispensationalist and there are people who condemn dispensationalists. But a dispensation is an age, a period of time, and the Bible makes the various dispensations very clear. Why people should object to this is beyond me.

He seemed at first meeting to be somewhat severe and aloof but he was not. He had a sense of humour and a fascinating way of looking at you which was friendly and never intimidating.

He was a wise man. Together we dealt with a couple who had a flat at Thornton Manor. They had some psychological problems and when they had two children the authorities took them into care. This couple had gone to a brethren meeting in Southsea before coming to the Isle of Wight. Eric would talk about wanting to kill himself on the beach at Southsea but he saw a vision of Christ on the Cross which prevented his action. Eric did have some doubtful dealings with children and once threatened a Baptist minister with a knife.

There was a strange woman who went to Beulah. She would write letters to people in authority, including the Queen, complaining about many things and her letters were grossly offensive. She would send copies to Don. She was often talking about immigrants and how we sent blankets to other countries as part of Foreign Aid and she would say that the natives used them to fornicate under.

She was probably in her late thirties, rode a bike and insisted on coming to me for music lessons which did take place for a while but she was so difficult that I soon had to stop this.

Because of her bad behaviour, Don would not allow her to take Communion and this was in accordance with the Scriptures such as 1 Corinthians 11. At this time, I was Don's organist at Beulah Chapel. He used to hold Bible studies in his house in Seaview and, my, how rich and deep they were. He had a thorough and commanding knowledge of the Scriptures. You came away from these studies having had 'a good meal'.

Such studies do not seem to occur today. Brethren do have such studies but, in other churches and denominations, the Bible and the study of it is relegated to a lowly place if any place at all.

Don was an individual and did not succumb to modern trends. I remember at a Keswick on the Isle of Wight meetings there were chorus singing for about 15 minutes before the meetings began. Don and Berta came in and bowed their heads in prayer when some enthusiastic individual kept thrusting a chorus sheet at him. Don looked up and said, "I have come to pray for God's blessing not to sing these jingles!" After Sunday evening services, he would go to Sunday Night at 8 and St James' Church Hall in Ryde. He regularly attended the monthly Prophetic Witness meetings.

Don was a real Christian. He would say "I have known the Lord all my life and I am looking forward to meeting Him!" Here follows one of his hymns which sets out his views:

There is a home I long to see
A place my Lord's prepared for me
Where He will bid me welcome home
He who is Heaven's blessed One.

Before the worlds were made, His love
had planned for me this blest abode

For me He left His glorious throne
He who is Heaven's Beloved One.

He had so deep a love for me
He came to die upon the tree
Nor will He rest until I am home
with Him, the Heavens' Beloved One.

I may now sound His glories forth
Yet who can tell His wondrous worth
The Father only knows the Son,
He who is Heaven's Beloved One.

So, till He comes, I'll lift my voice
His praises shall my heart rejoice
For I shall share that glorious home
With Him, the Heaven's Beloved One.

One of his later hymns, dating from 1984, is Song for Merari based on Numbers 4. 29-32

O Lord, Thy love has called us to Thy side,
Whose heart to cruel bondage lay in thrall
But sheltered by Thy grace can now abide
Where Thy rich service is my all in all.

Thus now I tread the desert's dreary sand
Filled full of care for those who are Thine own
Called now to walk with Thee and take my stand
Upholding all these glories grace doth crown.

O Lord, I have no strength to bear with those
Whose hearts despise the pattern Thou dost trace
Where can I rest when desolation grows
And sorrow fills the mind renewed by grace?

Yet still my heart may sing Thy glorious praise
Beholding with Thine eye that building grow
Whose unity reflects Thy Spirit's ways
And spreads abroad Christ's glories here below.

To form an edifice where Thou art praised
Where that which satisfies Thy heart is found
Where Thy full thought is in perfection raised
And grace in all its glories may abound.

Alberta Dorothea Beckley died on 15 December 2002. She was 87. Her service at Avenue Road was taken by David Barker of Beulah Chapel, Seaview, Bracey Cardy was too ill to attend.

Mr Beckley's other literary works appear below (see next page):

THY NAME

Thy Name is Jesus: precious Name
A sacrifice to God most sweet.
An ointment spread abroad, to claim
The love of those Thou hast made meet.
For Thou hast washed us, made us free
Within Thy house of joy, and fed
Our hearts with praise to worship Thee;
Thy love's broad banner overhead.

Oh keep us close near Thee, dear Lord,
We want to know Thy presence here,
To wait upon Thy precious Word,
Our griefs and joys with Thee to share.

To take from Thee our daily bread;
To count on Thee that Thou wilt bless;
To lean upon Thy breast, and tread
With Thee this waiting wilderness.

To wait - Ah! Lord we've waited long
With constant hope to hear Thy voice.
Arise, my love; the winter's gone
The day breaks; Come, with Me rejoice.

GOD'S BELOVED SON

There is a home I long to see,
A place my Lord's prepared for me,
Where He will bid me welcome home-
He who is Heaven's Beloved One.

Before the worlds were made, His love
Had planned for me this blessed abode.
For me He left His glorious throne,
He who is Heaven's Beloved One.

In Him the Father found delight;
By Him were all things made, and light
And saving love by Him is known,
He who is Heaven's Beloved One.

He found His joy in me e'en then,
And, as I wandered far in sin
He came and died upon the tree,
He sacrificed Himself for me.

Then must I sing His glories forth;
He left them; but His matchless worth
The Father honours in the Son-
He who is Heaven's Beloved One.

So till He comes I'll lift my voice,
His praises shall my heart rejoice.
For I shall share that glorious throne
With Him, the Heaven's Beloved One.

c 1943

THE SERVANT

'I must about my Father's will'
O Lord, what grace and love were Thine
That Thou wouldst come with man to dwell
To leave Thy throne, and heaven resign
The Father's Well-beloved Thou art.
We worship Thee, praise fills our heart

A servant's form Thou would'st assume,
With human frame Thy glory hide,
The Father's will left only room
For Calvary's death, and naught beside.
For us Thou didst become so poor;
Lord, this Thy grace we now adore.

We saw no beauty then in Thee
Now, Lord, our All in all Thou art.
Thy sufferings and Thy death must be
What draws Thee closer to our breast.
Man cast Thee out; God Thee hast given
The highest place, and name in heaven.

30-4-1940

WHEN JESUS DIED

When Jesus died on Calvary,
The spotless One made sin for me
Full ransom for my debt was paid –
My every guilt on Him was laid.

Thus I am Thine, and, Lord would be
Such that all men may know of me
That Thine own precious blood alone
Has made me Thine, and not mine own.

So may I die, and only live
Within the faith that Thou dost give:
In heaven I'm hidden with Christ in God,
On earth a witness to His blood.

THE GARDEN

Behind a wall high-pitched and oft repaired
My garden lies; a place untended, bleak,
A private plot - one porch and door upreared
To admit the Gardener, when His fruit He seeks.

The winds, both north and south, blow o'er that wall
And sweetness draw, or withers seed self-sown.
To praise the care of Him who watches all;
The One with right to claim, 'This is my own'.

For He has found the price, and owns the ground.
Paid all He had; and when He bought it, tare
And thorn held sway - the wall was broken down,
And none but He had dreamt of value there.

And now He tends it, patiently to weed
Away the choking thorns, and train the soil
- As in His wisdom He supplies its need -
To praise with bud and fruit His loving toil.

Full many a bud may wither ere the bloom,
And blooms mature, yet still the fruit may waste,
Destructive worms may many fruit consume
Yet he has said that 'Tis His pleasant place'.

And there will come a day when He will show
To all creation, His reward for toil.
Each principality and power shall know
His wisdom, in His garden's fruitful soil.

c 1940

SPEAK TO ME, LORD

Speak to me Lord, and call me back to Thee,
Close to Thy side, where I would ever be,
Often my weakness causes me to stray,
Then, when I leave Thee - be not far away.

Speak to me Lord, and let me hear Thy voice,
When earthly cares have just eclipsed the joys
That must be mine when Thou art near my side;
Hold Thou me up, with Thee I would abide.

Yea, Lord, I know that love of Thine will hold
Fast to Thy lambs, tho' they may leave the fold.
Out of that hand none others pluck those sheep
Thy Father has entrusted to Thy keep.

Speak then to me Lord, whisper of Thy love;
Give me to know Thy presence, make me prove
Thy all sufficient grace, until I see
Thee, face to face, for all eternity.

c 1941

THE JOURNEY OF HOPE

When Thou, O Lord, wast crucified, 'twas night
And through the darkness Satan cast around
Thine own now make their pilgrimage. Before
Has always shone a star of brighter ray
Than that which led those wise of old: Thyself
Though risen now to glory, still art seen
By faith's keen eye; the Comforter has come
And through the desert leads Thy children home.

The night is dark - 'tis darkest near the dawn
As Satan's power becomes more manifest.
Yet we, as children with the mind of God
Can see His counsels ripen, hour by hour
That brings the dawning nearer. Christ who died
Leaves not His own as those that have no hope.
For God has raised Him up, and we shall prove
Throughout eternity, His boundless love.

For we in His perfection, wait to stand
Without apology before our God.
His claims are met when faith lays hold of Christ
Whose love has wrought this miracle of grace.
His matchless ways first dawned upon our sight
When we, as sinners saw God's gift to man
Refused, and crucified upon a cross;
And, as He hung there, saw Him die for us.

Our fears have been annulled by this His love,
And we rejoice, as in the world around
We watch God's judgments heading up for man
And know, as He has said, He must come soon.
So keep us Lord, with ears alert to hear
That trump of God, that archangelic voice.
We would walk worthy, as with joy of heart
We know with Thee we soon shall have our part.

This mortal shall be changed when He is come,
And all the clouds that dim Thy glorious face
Will veil our sight no more. Then heavenly things
Alone, shall gladden hearts like Thine; and we
Who by Thy present grace would like Thee walk
Shall find no further hindrance; then with Thee,
And like Thee fully, sharing all that's Thine
We'll taste the fullness then of Love divine.

TRUST

Lord, I would walk with Thee,
Dark tho' the way may be
I hear Thy voice that bids me come
What tho' the tempest roar –
I see Thy hand before,
And, holding fast, I journey home.

Thy word may quell the sea;
Thy will may let it be;
Yet, rage or calm, I'll trust Thee still.
Thou bid'st me be of cheer
I see thee ever near
And rest content, Thou doest well.

Thou, Lord, dost know my way:
So, till I see the day
With Thee my light, I'll travel on.
Then, when that Sun shall rise
I'll laud Thee in the skies
And praise the mercies I have known.

SONNETS

ACTS 1: 9-11

How long ago it seems; when those men view
The One whose love had won their hearts, the Man
Who shared their joys and sorrows; He who knew
The thoughts that stirred their minds e're they began
To know themselves. Now, as He goes away A cloud
impedes their sight. And those appear
Who say that, as He's gone, there dawns a day
When He will come again, their hearts to cheer.
So we are waiting, listening for that shout,
That trump of God, that arch-angelic voice,
When we shall be caught up: and all, without
A cloud between, for ever will rejoice.
Thus, like those men of old, we search the sky,
Because we know our Lords return is nigh.

JOHN 14: 3

For Thee Thy bride is waiting, Lord, and while
Her eyes grow tired with watching, yet the thought
Of seeing Him she loves, can reconcile
Her heart to patience: like the One who sought
So long for her, and paid so great a price.
There's nothing here but does distress her soul,
Yet in His strength she conquers the device
Of Satan: while she presses for her goal.
For all that hinders, tries to hold her here
Is reckoned nothing worth: 'tis laid aside.

She goes rejoicing to the One held dear.
A stranger here on earth, tho' earth deride.
For Thou has said that Thou will quickly come
And so she waits for Thee to take her home.

MATTHEW 24: 42

There's someone waiting there: I wonder why?
It's warm in here, and all the fair delight
That earth affords for man, or gold may buy
Are ours - for here is dancing, music, light.
Yet these attractions only earn her scorn
For there she stands, alone, an outcast. Say,
Are you remaining there until the dawn?
For whom art waiting? Come with us till day.
'When I was far from God, there came a Man
Who sought for me, that He might bring me near.
His was a love that, e're the world began
Had planned a righteous way to take me there.
When He had cancelled sin, He went away:
And, 'Watch' He said, 'I'll come before the day.' "

2 THESSALONIANS 1

The night is dark, O Lord. Beyond the rock
On which our feet were placed by Thee, and where
Thy mighty hand protects us from the shock
Of all our foes, and saves us from despair:
There, Satan stirs the heathen's scorn and hate
Against our Lord: preparing fast the way
For his demonic counterfeits, that wait
To lead to hell those nations that obey.
Yet, Lord, across this dreary waste of sin
And self-delusion: o'er this foaming sea
Of shame, whence souls at this late hour may win
To our sure refuge, if they turn to Thee,
We see a gleam, Lord, where our straining eyes
Are watching for the Daystar to arise.

HYMN

The fragrance of Thy presence, Lord
Excites our hearts to praise,
We savour from Thy precious Word
The odour of Thy ways.

Thy Name exudes an ointment sweet
That captivates our soul:
Draws after Thee our willing feet,
And makes Thyself our goal.

A blended sweetness all divine,
That knows no human art:
Its wondrous fragrance tempered fine
Contents the Father's heart.

How precious all Thy sufferings are,
Thy grief and anguish sore.
We long to know this perfume rare,
To cherish Thee the more.

Thy Father's portion, too, we see
As frankincense ascend:
And at the sight we bow the knee
And grateful hearts low bend.

This mount of myrrh this holy hill
Of frankincense will draw,
Lord, praise from ransomed hearts, until
The night shall be no more.

c 1942

IT IS I

The road I knew was blocked,
And as I sought a way,
A path I knew not opened out
Where skies were low and grey.
I stopped and looked to Him for aid;
"Behold, 'tis I, be not afraid"

It seemed a storm would break
On my defenceless head:
And trial and sorrow gathered round,
Till faith and hope seemed dead.
'Twas then He came - "Be not dismayed,
Behold 'Tis I, be not afraid"

He went before me, and I
Just followed where He led;
For as I looked to Him, I saw
The darkling skies had fled.
And I found peace that does not fade
In His "'Tis I, be not afraid"

So now when trials draw near,
I seek His guiding hand.
His love will take me through, until
Complete in Him I Stand.
Into His care my all I've laid.
I'm trusting His "Be not afraid"

Easter 1942

ONWARD

Gracious God we bless Thee - Giver
Of Thy gift unspeakable,
And Thy love that like a river
Flows so wide, so deep, so full.

Saint of God, His called, His chosen.
Thou for whom His Son He gave,
Yield you now; this love from Heaven
Bears you on upon its wave.

Bears you on, refreshing, cleansing,
Linking you with those, His own;
Hearts made pure with praises blending
For the precious "Corner Stone"

Onward then with hope's sweet urging,
On through strife, and care, and woe;
Onward bourne by Love's strong surging,
On, and never cease to grow –

-More and more like Him who suffered,
More His loveliness to see;
Taste His fellowship thus proffered,
Till with Him eternally.

A SONG IN THE NIGHT

The stars in their courses are led by His hand,
Their seasons appointed they keep.
Upheld by the Word of His power they stand –
He knows neither slumber nor sleep.
I'm fashioned anew by that same living Word,
By death He has made me to live.
My steps are now guided by Jesus my Lord,
And strength for the way He will give.

And what if the path that my feet are to tread
My short-sighted eyes cannot see?
Through death to the throne is the way He has led,
The glory is waiting for me.
But sweeter than knowing the end of the road
Is walking with One who came down
As man amongst men, though the equal of God
And made all my burdens His own.

I cannot be anxious with cares of this scene,
His eye watches over my way;
On the arm of the loved One I ever must lean,
His strength is my strength every day.
He died to redeem me: the love He displayed
Is pledge for today and for aye:
For soon He will take me to mansions He's made
His own habitation on high.

PSALM 45

The King desires thy beauty: He
Is rightful Lord of all; yet, lo,
He woos thee thus: He yearns for thee.
He greatly seeks thy beauty. So
Forget thine own, thy father's home.
The king is calling thee, so come.
But I, am I thought beautiful?
Behold, my hands are stained with blood,
My clothes are only rags, and full
Of rank pollution. How can good
Be seen in me, when never yet
Can I my misery forget?

'Tis not what thou dost see, for He
Knows all about thee and thy sin.
He died that He might shew to thee
How great His love: to bring thee in
His palaces. Thy place is there
As holy, spotless, without fear.

His matchless beauty now is thine
All His perfections thine: for grace
Will triumph over need, and shine
In thy reflection of His face.
Thy beauty perfect is, no less,
In His surpassing comeliness.

To be His bride – Oh, what can love
Or even love divine, give more?
Like Him, and with Himself above
To praise through Heaven's eternal hour.
Thou, whom love did call the fullness
Of Him that filleth all in all.

c 1975

PRAISE

Lord, no tongue can tell the story
Of Thy vast unchanging love.
Soon Thy saints with Thee in glory
Then shall all its fullness prove.
High exalted
Every knee
Soon shall bow to worship Thee.

To our place of sin and danger,
Laying all Thy glory by,
Thou didst come, on earth a stranger:
Love had brought Thee low to die.

God has raised Thee
From the dead,
Placed Thee over all things, Head.

Fruit of such a mighty labour,
Sharers now of all that's Thine,
Lord, we ever would remember
Love abounding, love divine.
Glory, honour,
Power, and praise,
Shall be Thine through endless days.

27-5-41

PILGRIMAGE

Lord, we are Thine; we own Thy sovereign sway
And, pilgrims here, we wait to see Thy face.
For Thou hast led us all along the way;
We give Thee now our thanks for daily grace.

In all things Thou dost guard our stumbling feet,
For we have known the power of Thy strong hand.
Thou art our Helper, Thou our drink, our meat,
That we may soon in Thy perfection stand.

We wait to see the end of desert ways,
Tho' heavenly pleasures Thou dost give e'en here.
We long to hear those myriads sound Thy praise
And dwell with Thee in all Thy glory there.

Lord, we want nothing here apart from Thee;
With Thee are joys too deep for mortal song.
What rapture when Thy glorious face we see,
And raise those praises that to Thee belong.

c 1940

SONG OF SOLOMON 2: 10-13

Lord, Thou hast washed us, made us free
Within Thy house of joy, and led
Our hearts in praise to worship Thee
Thy love's broad banner overhead.

O keep us close to Thee, dear Lord:
We want to know Thy presence here,
To wait upon Thy precious Word
Our griefs and joys with Thee to share.

To take from Thee our daily bread
To count on Thee that Thou wilt bless,
To lean upon Thy breast, then tread
With Thee this barren wilderness.

To wait - Ah! Lord, we've waited long –
With constant hope to hear Thy voice:
'Arise, my love, the night is gone
The day breaks, come with me rejoice.'

c 1940

SONGS FOR THE SONS OF LEVI

A SONG FOR KOHATH

Numbers 4: 4-15

I bear as my burden an emblem of blue
The mark of the heavenly Stranger, who came
Manifested in flesh, to settle my due
And make me His bonds slave - The Lord is His Name.

With all those who cherish their heavenly calling
I walk as a stranger, He only to guide
His hand will protect me, and keep me from falling
While joy will be perfect, with Him at my side.

I'll cherish the glories of Him who thus sought me
The Son of the Father Eternal His Name.
I'll sing of His beauties in songs He has taught me,
Proclaiming His worthiness, honour and fame.

These songs are the cheer of my wilderness journey
As onward I go in a separate way.
Not the world, nor the flesh, nor the devil can turn me
While thus I still follow my Glory and Stay.

c 1984

A SONG FOR GERSHON

Numbers 4: 24-28

I journey on, entrusted with the knowledge
Of all those glories that adorn my Lord
Tho' hidden now, I have my Father's certain pledge
They will be seen, as foretold in His Word.
What wondrous hopes: they keep my eyes fixed forward
And are my strength, when sorrow fills my path.
For occupation with my Lord calls onward
In ways provoking Satan's deadly hate and wrath.

So tho' I strive, with circumspect decision
To follow in the holy steps He trod

Rebellious man will still reject the vision
If in my ways he sees my perfect Lord.
Yet very soon that rapture will enfold me
When I shall see Him whom I long to see
And trials past shall blazon out His glory
For His, will be the praise through all eternity.

c 1984

A SONG FOR MERARI
Numbers 4: 29-32

c 1984

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