

Articles on

Mr George Humberstone

from Zion's Witness
and Gospel Standard

THE BLESSED SPIRIT'S UNMISTAKABLE WORK.

BEING born into this world, the youngest but one of eight children, and my Father dying when I was three, my early days were spent in very poor circumstances. I had no religious teaching, except a year or so at the Parish Church Sunday School in East Ardsley, Nr. Wakefield, Yorks., the village in which I was born. At thirteen I had to leave weekday school, as each of us had to do, to bring in a little help towards our keep. I also dropped off the Sunday School. The whole family were worldly, public houses, and all the attractions of this world, theatres, music halls, fiction reading, etc., we all grew up, just living for these things. But when I was sixteen, I began to feel a measure of condemnation of my ways, and sometimes felt a consciousness of the being of God, Who saw us through and through. Under these feelings, there came such a longing for a different life to what I was then living, some things I left off. I found at times such a longing for perfection, but what a love to sin and my evils I found too. Just about this time, a brother of mine, older, took up physical culture, and obtained literature on the subject, which I read. In it I was told that by a regular system of exercising the body, clean living, proper diet, etc., a person could get back to the perfection Adam and Eve were in before they fell into sin. I didn't know anything about the fall of man, I never read the Bible at all for years. But there was this longing in me for perfection, and here there seemed to be the very thing to bring it about, Physical Culture. So I set to work with a will, and for two years I adhered to a system of daily exercises and really obtained a high degree of health and strength of body, and all seemed well and I was very happy, indulging in wrestling, boxing, weightlifting, etc. Even an evil thought I imagined I could turn out of my mind. What a degree of perfection I fondly thought I had now attained, but alas, in one

week, oh how my castle was brought down in ruin. In that never-to-be-forgotten week every sin imaginable sprung up in my heart, besetments that I thought were dead and buried rose up within with such force, I had no power against them. What a state of condemnation and hurt pride followed, until I was like one desperate. Yet all this time I had no thoughts of religion, there was none around me, and I had no thought of attending any place of worship. True, my Sister and Mother attended the Particular Baptist Chapel at Leeds, a five mile train journey away, but they did not influence me in the least. I wasn't at all desirous of going with them as yet. Often I was tempted to plunge headlong into sin, yet a power held me and I was kept outwardly. My sister some years before had given me a penny New Testament, which I had stowed away in the pocket of an old coat I had at work, which I kept to put on to do a dirty job with the machine I worked on (brick making). I had never read it, having no interest in it. At that time I could watch the machine and read a good deal too, but I had read nothing but fiction before. But one morning, in the midst of my frustration and trouble within, I took out this New Testament and began to read it, not with any felt regard for it, I was so ignorant. However, I began to read it, and something within impelled me to keep on reading. Until then I had hardly any knowledge of what it contained literally. I read on in it, in a few days, until I came to the Epistle to the Romans, and as I read the first three chapters, it seemed as if scales fell from my eyes. I read of the state of all humanity through the Fall of our first parents, and all at once such a solemn feeling of the Being of a Holy God came into my heart and such light upon the dreadful state of all humanity, myself included. In a moment I saw how abortive were all my strivings after perfection, as all the sin I had ever committed sprang from the heart I was born with, which was full of evil through the Fall. Mercifully I was held up in that awful moment as

a Holy God drew near, I can never forget it. What a solemn falling down before that Holy God I felt. I lifted my eyes to the ceiling, and I said, "Oh God, Thou would'st have been perfectly just if Thou had'st damned me at my first breath." Truly, "Old things passed away, and all things became new." Oh what a separation I felt from the world. I kept to myself, the vanities of the world, the fiction reading, and all the worldly things I had delighted in now lost all their attraction. As I read on, from day to day (there was now no other book but the Bible), I saw very plainly in Romans that God had elected a people out of all humanity, and that none could ever, but for this election, be saved. How they were saved, I knew as yet, nothing. I knew nothing of the finished work of Christ. At that time I burned a pile of books. For about a fortnight I kept my feelings and what I had seen in the scriptures to myself, but then I felt drawn to speak and tell Mother what I had seen and felt. I shall never forget how her face lit up, and she said, "Aye, lad, flesh and blood has not revealed this to you, but the Holy Ghost." She told me these very things were believed and preached at the Particular Baptist Chapel at Leeds, so I needed no persuasion to begin going there with her, this was in October 1913. Oh what love I felt to the people there, I felt they were God's elect, the first two Sundays I went I couldn't understand much of the preaching, they had Supplies. I hadn't been to a place of worship for years. The third Sunday, however, I shall never forget, the late Mr. Broomfield from Warrington, Lancs., was there, his morning text was Romans 11, 7, "But the election hath obtained it and the rest were blinded." What a power there was to me in all that sermon, Mr. B. described all I had passed through for years in my feelings. He quoted in conclusion, "He that hath begun a good work in you will perform it to the day of Jesus Christ." This word was sealed home to my heart with a wonderful power. It filled me with hope that I was one of the elect, and it

was the beginning of teaching me to look to and seek for Christ to be revealed to my soul, though I was yet very ignorant of the way of salvation. I was brought very low indeed before He did reveal Himself to me, yet received many helps; one Lord's day morning, Mr. G. Brown of Morley preached from the words, "This man receiveth sinners," oh, how my heart was melted as he exalted this "Man". I was the sinner, blessed with repentance, my tears flowed down, what a love I felt to this precious Christ. How sweet it was. At another time, the second verse of 143rd hymn was very powerful to me,

"Not the labour of my hands,
Can fulfil Thy law's demands;
Could my zeal no respite know,
Could my tears for ever flow,
All for sin could not atone;
Thou must save, and Thou alone."

But in the early part of 1915 I was brought extremely low in my soul. But on this never-to-be-forgotten Lord's day I went to Chapel, when I was filled with ardent longings after Christ; the word kept bubbling up within, "Give me Christ or else I die," yet nothing in the services all day came with any feeling to me until when they were singing the last hymn in the evening. Nothing in the hymn was used, but while they were singing, I felt despair seizing me, when all at once, everything faded away from my sight, and Christ seemed to stand before me in glorious white, and looking at me with love which filled my heart, He smiled and said, "Where I am there shall my servant be also." I can never describe the love and the deep solid peace that filled me, the blessed comfort, oh what a change indeed from guilt, bondage, and despair to Heaven in my soul. The vision was before my mind's

eye for many days, and the sweet peace for some months. But not very long after this, what a wilderness I came into, for I was very soon after in the Army in the first World War.

(Zion's Witness 1976/77 page 26-29)

A FEW PARTICULARS OF THE LORD'S DEALINGS WITH THE LATE MR. GEORGE HUMBERSTONE

I WELL remember going the last time to the chapel at Leeds before going into the Army, when an old lady, a member I think, said to me, "Don't forget your bible". Oh, how indignant I felt, me forget my bible, I should never do that, but I did forget it, to my shame. Oh what a backsliding state I soon got into in the Army, I never met with any one I could converse with on spiritual things all the time I was in the Forces, neither in England nor abroad. One man. who was a Wesleyan, a quiet person, seemed to want my company, although I told him my beliefs he still stuck to me, and we kept together friendly. This was a means of escape from the dreadful language all around us. I soon found a natural liking for the Army life, parades, drills, and the whole round of military duties I became quite interested in. I was in an Infantry battalion, West Yorks. Regiment. The open air life I loved, and it did me good physically. I soon learned all the drills etc., but as all these things grew stronger upon me, religion began to be neglected, indeed hardly thought about. Outwardly, kept very upright, but inwardly, indifferent and careless as to the state of my soul before God. That God Who had shown me such mercy. After a few months training, we were shipped off to France, even without a leave home. It was eighteen months before I saw home again. The abominable language of N.C.O.s and privates, I was mercifully preserved from. On Active Service there was everything to deaden anything of a religious nature, Sunday was just like any other day, and when away from the line of war, we were in the midst of Romish idolatry and awful wickedness. How many narrow escapes from death I could not count, pieces of shell have made my steel helmet ring on my head, once it was knocked off my head, yet I was uninjured. Pieces of shrapnel have hit the

edges of my boot soles, but my skin was preserved. Bullets have whistled by my ears, yet I was preserved; horses, mules, men and houses I have seen blown to fragments, and in the midst of these dreadful things, my poor fallen nature became as hard and callous as if I had never known anything of Divine teaching in my heart. In a few instances though, I did feel the awful solemnity of my life being in such jeopardy. On one occasion in June 1917, when we were about a mile behind the front line, supposed to be having a rest, a beautiful clear morning, we were sighted by the enemy. Shells began to just rain upon us, there was no cover, it was just open country. We all fell flat on our faces, oh how many were killed and wounded, what a terrible feeling came over me, "Shall I be the next to be hit?" When, all at once, the words seemed spoken powerfully within me: -

"Plagues and deaths around me fly;
Till He bids, I cannot die;
Not a single shaft can hit,
Till the God of love sees fit."

This also followed it, "I shall not die, but live to declare the works of the Lord." All fear left me, and a solemn persuasion came that I should be preserved through the war, get home again, and one day I should preach the gospel. I began to help with the wounded around me, until we were ordered from the place. But, even after this, oh the awful backsliding inwardly, and to a great extent outwardly too. How I learned my utter helplessness, in spite of conscience doing her work. Mercifully I was preserved, when out of the line, and sometimes billeted with the French or Belgian people, from the wretched immorality all around me. There was no thanks to me that I was kept, for my heart was as

evil as sin could make it. This has often been a wonder to me since.

Passing over much that would not be profitable, I was preserved until the Armistice, November 11th, 1918. About this time I had such a wonderful manifestation of mercy that I feel I must mention it. We were granted leave home at this time, and a Jew from Leeds and I set off together for home. This Jew was a very decent chap, and we agreed to meet at the end of our fourteen days leave and return together, which we did. But on our arrival in Belgium, where we had left our Company, they had moved, and we were some days before we found them. We had lifts on Lorries, but also had to tramp along miles of muddy roads. I had felt one of my feet very sore as we trudged along, oh, what a relief when we did find them. But on taking off, at last, my boots, I found I had a blister on the sole of my right foot, covering the whole sole. It had burst and was terribly painful; I washed and bandaged it up as well as I could, wondering however I should manage duty next. But the next morning, to my astonishment, our Company Sergeant Major asked me if I would be his Batman. Oh how thankful I felt, I could hardly believe it, for this meant I should have none of the duties of the Company to do. I had just to stay in Camp, see after his meals, polish his equipment, etc. It was the first time I had been offered a position like this in all my war service, and coming as it did, just when I so needed it, I saw the goodness and mercy of the Lord in it, my heart was softened and repentance was given. I wrote home at the time, I remember, putting in my letter, "What shall I render unto the Lord for all His mercy to me, I will take the cup of salvation, and call upon the Name of the Lord." For some time after this I was kept more tender in spirit.

Demobilisation began after the Armistice. Employers could appeal to have their men returned. In my case, and in many others too, we were not applied for, trade was in a bad way, so I was kept in the Army until 1919. Units were all broken up, and a very mixed lot were then sent to look after prisoners of war, salvaging brass and iron in the devastated areas around Ypres in Belgium. Finally I was demobbed, but what a dreadful state things were in, thousands were unemployed. I was too. The place I had been employed at before the war was almost closed. What a time I passed through. I learned to drive a car, but I soon found, at that time, there were far more drivers than cars. I felt the Lord was dealing with me in solemn chastisement for my wretched backsliding in the Army. My way was hedged up in providence, and in my soul too. Oh the trouble within as the Lord frowned on all my efforts to get work. At the chapel there seemed to be nothing for me. Some there found fault with me because I had conscientiously refused to take a job with Sunday work. Truly the backslider was filled with his own ways. I remember in my simplicity asking a good old member if any of the Lord's people died of starvation spiritually whilst seeking Him, (for truly I did seek Him) I was favoured with longings in my poor soul for Him, but all seemed shut up against me. How I longed to hear His voice in the preaching. The answer the old member gave me was this, "No, lad, keep on seeking." This I was obliged to do out of sheer necessity, my case felt so desperate, but now and then the Lord mercifully began to give me a lift in hearing.

Previous to being in the Army, I had been often exercised about baptism, and I had a longing to follow the Lord, I believe in love to a merciful Jesus, Who had done so much for me, but I could never move in this solemn matter before the war. Although on one occasion a good old minister in the North, Mr. Hacking,

preached from Heb. 13, 13-14. "Let us go forth unto Him without the camp bearing His reproach, for here have we no continuing City, but we seek one to come." Mr. H. spoke very solemnly of how Christ suffered without the camp or City, and of the blessedness of being led to Him for salvation. Then of the poor sinner being enabled by grace to bear His reproach in an ungodly world; he then spoke of baptism, how sweet to be led by the Spirit to openly profess Christ. Lastly, he spoke of the vanity of everything here below. Oh how my heart was softened, as he spoke what a love I felt to the Lord Jesus. What a love and a longing I felt to follow Him in a public profession of His Name and Cause.

[The above ends Mr. Humberstone's own writing of the account. The earlier part of the account of Mr. Humberstone's experience was published in Zion's Witness in the October 1976 issue (page 26) under the heading of "The Blessed Spirit's unmistakable work."]

It is to be regretted that our dear friend did not complete the second part of his experience, as he had hoped to do during the Winter months, but our dear friend Mrs. Humberstone has supplied a few further particulars, which are as follows:

After he came out of the army, he was out of work for two years. Work was very scarce in the North of England, but during that time a promise was spoken unto him with power, "Seek ye first the kingdom of God" etc., which promise the Lord gave him grace to fulfil, for indeed he was kept alive in the things of God, and always, all through our married life, it was "first things first." It was during those two years that he passed through many heavy trials and temptations. It was whilst passing through these things, he had been to visit some godly friends, and on his way home he

had to walk on a very lonely common, but he was led by the blessed Spirit into Christ's sufferings all through His life and on the Cross, and in the garden of Gethsemane. Oh, as he related it what a blessed time it was. He hardly knew how he got home. so taken up with what Christ endured, he felt how light was his pathway. After those two years, a way was made for him to work down the Coal mine. He had not worked down a mine before but chose it rather than be out of work. Whilst working down the mine he had one or two miraculous escapes from death, but his life was preserved, because he had yet to preach the everlasting Gospel. The exercise about the ministry was still in his heart, especially when Jesus was made precious to him.

We were married in 1926. Many were our trials in providence, but still the promise was fulfilled, "All things were added." We lacked nothing, only, often, a thankful heart. My dear one was greatly exercised about our move to London, which was in 1949, whether the move was right, when the Lord gave him that sweet promise, "I will bring the blind by a way they knew not," and how he had to plead it right up to his death, but I have heard him say towards the end of his life, that the dear Lord had fulfilled His promise, and now he was walking out the latter part of the text, nor was he forsaken right to the end. Then we were led from there to Tunbridge Wells, and how we proved we were not forsaken, though sometimes we were very tried. From there the Pillar of cloud moved, and a way was made into our little cottage at Mayfield. From there he travelled North, East, South and West, many, many miles to preach the Gospel. His main theme being Christ's glorious finished work, His sufferings, death and resurrection. Nor did he shun to declare the whole counsel of God, warning the sinner, and comforting the saints. It was in July 1977 that he was preaching in Studley chapel, the text was, "Who

is this King of Glory," when he had such an opening up of this King of Glory from the manger to the cross, and then His glorious ascension into Heaven amidst great acclamation. It was a sweet morning. At the close of the sermon the deacon said, "After this morning's discourse, I must change the hymn to, 'All hail the power of Jesus' Name'." I believe many sung it from the heart.

It was before his 83rd birthday that he was knocked down in the High Street, though not injured he suffered from shock, from which he never really recovered. It was soon after the accident, our dear Pastor, Mr. Jupp, was preaching, when he said, I feel I have someone before me who is about to enter into a heavy trial. The last hymn to be given out was 257, which was a favourite of his, I think he had felt it good. After the service my dear husband turned to me and said, "I wonder what is before me. After what Mr. Jupp has said, I feel there is something before me." Not many days after, he was taken with a heavy stroke, which affected his right side and speech. This was in the early hours on Thursday morning. On Friday as I sat by his bedside, he said, "If I could talk, I could tell you a lot of things." On enquiring what he could tell me, he said, "My times are in Thy hands", and "Be still and know that I am God," and "Let me not murmur nor repine under these trying strokes of Thine," quoting the whole verse. On Sunday morning, going into the bedroom, he said, "I have had a nice morning;" on asking what he had had, he said, "Underneath are the Everlasting Arms." I said, did you feel it so?. He said, "Yes." He seemed to live in the sweetness of it the whole of the time he was at home. As many can testify who came to visit him he was kept in sweet submission to the Lord's will. He had to go into hospital for therapy treatment. For a few days he made good progress, but on Saturday, we could see a great change in him, his condition deteriorated until he passed away in the

evening on November 3rd. About 3 o'clock in the afternoon he asked for a drink: on receiving he said, looking with sadness in his eyes, "They gave Him vinegar to drink," which gave us to know where his heart was. His end was truly peace, not a shadow crossed his mind, three gentle sighs and his spirit fled to his dear Jesus, whom he had loved to exalt and praise whilst here below. His mortal remains were laid to rest by our dear Pastor Mr. Jupp, with whom he had walked in love and union, in Blackboys graveyard to await the glorious Resurrection morning in sure and certain hope of a glorious Resurrection.

CALL TO MINISTRY

IT was during the first world war in 1917 that I received, I believe, my first real impressions concerning the ministry. I had volunteered for service very early in the war, but was, time after time, rejected, because of my short stature, being only 5 ft. in height. But in 1915, latter part, I was accepted and placed in a battalion of W. Yorks. Infantry, and not long after, I was in France and Belgium. In the Summer of 1917, I was on the Somme Front, and we were out of the front line for a short rest, in a village just behind the Field Artillery, when the enemy began to literally rain shells at the village. It was a dreadful time, and I was filled with solemn feelings and many fears, when the last verse in hymn 64 was spoken to me powerfully: -

"Plagues and deaths around me fly;
Till He bids, I cannot die;
Not a single shaft can hit,
Till the God of love sees fit."

Faith rose in a moment, but this followed just as powerfully, 'I shall not die but live to declare the works of the Lord,' and I felt a solemn persuasion that I should be brought

through, return home, and one day preach the Gospel. I was brought through some of the worst scenes in the war, had very many narrow escapes, without an injury.

Many years of exercise followed, concerning the ministry. When favoured and Christ was precious, it was desired and longed for; when darkness, trial and temptation were mine, which they often were, then I felt the biggest fool for ever thinking about it. Yet the exercise was more or less kept alive in my heart, and oftentimes the last verse in hymn 144 would be very precious: -

"Then will I tell to sinners round,
What a dear Saviour I have found;
I'll point to Thy redeeming blood,
And say, "Behold the way to God."

Under the ministry I was sometimes encouraged, but I must pass over much. In the providence of God, I was brought to London, in 1949, and ultimately joined Gower Street Church. The first two years there, it seemed as if the exercise about the ministry had died out, and many times I felt really relieved and thankful that it had. But at the end of this time, when Mr. Morris supplied the pulpit, it was all revived up again, and I mentally said, "Well, dear Lord, if it is Thy will, I'll go, but Thou wilt have to make the way," feeling a measure of willingness. Two more years went by of exercise and watching and waiting upon the Lord in this solemn matter. At this time I often had to fill the gap at the chapel at Hornsey Rise, Aged Pilgrims F.S. Home, when men failed who had been appointed to speak there. Often have I been surprised myself at the light and liberty enjoyed many times in those services. Then, on the first Lord's day in February 1953, Mr. Tyler preached at Gower Street in the evening from Psa. 65, 1. He went through the first part of the text, and I felt nothing in particular, but when he came to the words, "Unto Thee shall the vow be

performed," he said, "Not many people make vows nowadays, but there may be one here who has made a vow like I did." (Mr. T. knew nothing about me.) He went on: "When I began to be exercised about the ministry, it was a deep and solemn exercise, but after a time, it all seemed to fade out, and I congratulated myself that it was dead and buried. But after a time, under a certain Supply at the Dicker, it was all revived up again, and I said mentally, "Well, dear Lord, if it is Thy will, I'll go, but Thou must make the way. That was a vow; if you have made a vow like that, defer not to pay it."

It was not just the coincidence of his experience with mine, but the power with the last words. After service it was the Ordinance, and what a blessed Ordinance that was to me. I had been a member since 1920, but never had I been so blessed in the Ordinance as on this occasion. Christ was indeed precious to me, my heart was broken in contrition and godly sorrow for sin, which I kept pouring out in confession, but what love I felt, and a willingness to drop into His gracious Hand to be used by Him if His blessed will. Upon this I was constrained to go before the deacons, and afterwards the Church and ultimately spoke before them, and was sent out by them at a Church meeting, May 10th, 1953.

(Zion's Witness 1977/78 pages 273-281)

There is a photo of Mr. & Mrs. Humberstone in "With Mercy and with Judgement" my Matthew Hyde, page 223, with much of the above account.

OBITUARY FROM THE GOSPEL STANDARD

George Humberstone, an acceptable supply minister and an esteemed member of the church at Hope, Blackboys, entered his eternal rest on November 3rd, 1977, aged 83.

About the age of sixteen he began to feel a measure of condemnation of his ways and a realisation of the Being of God. A pocket Testament was given him which he began to read, the Holy Spirit revealing to him that there was an elect people as recorded in the Scriptures, and that none could be saved but they.

He was persuaded by his dear mother to go with her to the Strict Baptist chapel at Leeds. Eventually Mr. W. Broomfield preached from Romans 11. 7: "The election hath obtained it, and the rest were blinded." The minister described his very feelings and concluded by saying, "He that hath begun a good work in you will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ." This word was blessed with power to show him of the need of Christ and an interest in His great salvation.

Another time was when Mr. George Brown of Morley was preaching from the text, "This Man receiveth sinners." This intensified his desires after Christ. Before he was favoured with a revelation of Christ by faith, he sank very low indeed. The time came when he saw Christ standing before him in a beautiful white robe and He looked on him with love. He smiled and said, "Where I am shall My servant be." The words of the hymnwriter were true in his case: "I looked for hell, He brought me heaven."

After this he was called for active service in the first World War and like many others had to endure much hardship and danger but was mercifully preserved from harm. When surrounded at times with bullets flying in all directions, and many

of his comrades killed, he had a strong impression he should one day be favoured to preach the gospel of God's grace. After leaving the army he was unemployed for two years but had this promise: "Seek ye first the kingdom of heaven, and all these things shall be added unto you." Also the promise in Isaiah 42. 16: "I will bring the blind by a way that they knew not," etc.

Work was eventually found, but it was necessary that a little attention should be given on the Sabbath morning, which tried him exceedingly. During this time he was exercised about baptism, and was baptized by Mr. W. Cousins at Morley in 1922. On that particular Sabbath he found a note left by his employer that he needed help in the afternoon. This caused much conflict, being the occasion for his baptism. He was enabled to leave everything in the Lord's hands and went to chapel, and as he was led into the water, he had by faith such a sacred view of Christ in His overwhelming sufferings, burial and resurrection, which produced a little of the peace of Christ. When presenting himself for work the next morning he was confronted by his employer and given a week's notice to leave.

After his dismissal from his occupation because of non-attendance, as requested by his employer to work the whole Sabbath the day of his baptism, work was found for him as a miner at Fitzwilliam. He continued here a year but found the atmosphere was too hot and humid which undermined his health, so had to leave. Then after a while a situation was found for him in another mine for about two years, which was more congenial to his health. He there became acquainted with the foreman, who was a godly man, and eventually invited him to his home. Here our friend met the daughter, who became his wife.

This occupation in the mine came to nothing in time, but the Lord opened another door in providence, by Mr. Shaw informing him of the need of workers at the Corporation at Ossett. To Ossett he transferred his membership during the period of employment. Then again through the providence of God he moved to Dewsbury and helped to carry on the cause of truth there.

After this he saw an advert seeking a Warden at the Aged Pilgrim's Hornsey Rise Home and was accepted for the position. During this time the exercise concerning the ministry was deepened. Having transferred his membership to Gower Street Chapel, London, he was enabled to relate his exercise and experience before the church and was sent out to preach on May 10th, 1953.

Later, in the providence of God, he and his wife left the Home at Hornsey Rise and moved to Tunbridge Wells, and then to Mayfield.

We as a church at Blackboys felt it to be a pleasure to receive them into fellowship on Tuesday, October 9th, 1973.

His ministry, as influenced by the Holy Spirit, was Christ-exalting while also laying the sinner low. Many causes of truth miss him very much, including us as a church and people at Blackboys. We miss his prayers, his ministry and his occasional Prayer Meeting addresses when the pastor was away.

One special sealing and anointing was given him while preaching at Studley from the words in Psalm 24. 7-10. The service was felt to be consecrated with the Lord's presence to such a degree that the deacon felt constrained to change the

hymn he had selected to hymn 730: "All hail the power of Jesus' name."

Not long before his stroke the pastor was preaching from Luke 22. 28,29 ("Ye are they which have continued with Me in my temptations"), when our friend felt there was something more bitter and painful to pass through yet. He said to his dear wife, "I wonder greatly what is before me." He was favoured with peace and some sweet meditation concerning his precious Christ during his affliction, which was really very short. He was eventually moved to Pembury Hospital for medical attention, and appeared to respond nicely at first, but his end came rather suddenly. For him sudden death was sudden glory.

He was buried in Hope Chapel Cemetery, Blackboys, on November 8, 1977, by his pastor in the presence of many sorrowing friends from neighbouring causes in sweet remembrance and estimation of his ministry. We can truly say, "The memory of the just is blessed."

R S Jupp.

(Gospel Standard 1978 p. 126)

JESUS IS PRECIOUS – LETTER BY G HUMBERSTONE

Dear friend - I have had it on my mind ever since Whit Monday that I would like to write a line or two to you to tell you what a sweet hearing time I had in the afternoon at L. It is a long time since I had such a hearing. The evening was good indeed, but the afternoon was so sweetly applied I could hardly refrain from weeping. Christ, "yon lovely Man," was so precious to me.

He has many times drawn near and been my All in All, but O! for a long season of late I have travelled a weary wilderness journey, helped in preaching but left, in between preaching times, so much to self and sin and Satan's havoc within, I often wondered whether He would ever smile on me again. He did under your afternoon sermon.

It also took me back to about forty years ago. We then lived in Yorkshire near Leeds, where I was born and brought up, and where in my youth I went right into the world. I never went to a place of worship for years but was at last made glad to attend the cause at Leeds, a law-wrecked sinner. Mr. Broomfield of Warrington was used to raise me up to a hope of mercy after a time. That was in 1913. Then early in 1914 George Brown preached. I had never seen him before, but he took for his morning text, "This Man receiveth sinners"; no more, just those words. But O! what a power there was to me in the whole sermon. I was the sinner. How precious was Christ made to me that morning, and though it was not a full deliverance, it was a blessed time. My tears rolled down my cheeks as he preached Christ. A full and blessed deliverance in a revelation of Christ was given to me early in 1915. I was very soon after this in the army and abroad in the first Great War for three and a half years.

The sweetness and blessedness of these early favours of love and mercy through the eternal love, blood and righteousness of Immanuel were revived in my soul as you were enabled to set forth the work of the Holy Ghost in making this Man more precious than all the gold in the universe.

May the Lord ever bless you and make you a blessing to His poor, tried family. I hope He will preserve and keep you humbly dependent upon Him amidst popularity and flattery, which I am afraid would soon turn my head if I had much of it. But if you are kept preaching the truth as the Lord has taught you, and you did at L., many who sing, "Hosannah!" now will cry afterwards, "Crucify him, crucify him!" The path of a suffering Saviour we tread in some little measure here below, but a blessed eternity with Him will make amends for all.

My wife joins in Christian love to you and yours.

Affectionately yours,

Geo. Humberstone

Mayfield, May 25th, 1964

(Gospel Standard 1978 p. 116)

FROM DEATH TO LIFE

By George Humberstone, who died November 3rd, 1977, aged 83.

Mr. Humberstone has become quite well known in the U.S.A. through a number of his sermons appearing in Zion's Witness.

Being born into this world the youngest but one of eight children, and my father dying when I was three, my early days were spent in very poor circumstances. I had no religious teaching, except a year or so at the Parish Church Sunday School in East Ardsley, near Wakefield, Yorkshire, the village in which I was born. At thirteen I had to leave week-day school, as each of us had to do, to bring in a little help toward our keep. I also dropped off the Sunday School. The whole family were worldly – public houses and all the attractions of this world, theatres, music halls, fiction reading, etc. We all grew up just living for these things.

When I was about sixteen, I began to feel a measure of condemnation of my ways and sometimes felt a consciousness of the being of God who saw me through and through. Under these feelings there came such a longing for a different life to what I was then living; some things I left off. I found at times such a longing for perfection, but what a love to sin and my evils I found too!

Just about this time a brother of mine, older, took up physical culture, and obtained literature on the subject which I read. In it I was told that by a regular system of exercising the body, clean living, proper diet, etc., a person could get back to the perfection Adam and Eve were in before they fell into sin. I did not know anything about the fall of man; I never read the Bible at all for years. But there was this longing in me for perfection, and

here there seemed to be the very thing to bring it about – physical culture.

So I set to work with a will, and for two years I adhered to a system of daily exercises and really obtained a high degree of health and strength of body. And all seemed well and I was very happy, indulging in wrestling, boxing, weight-lifting, etc. Even an evil thought I imagined I could turn out of my mind.

What a degree of perfection I fondly thought I had now attained! But alas, in one week O how my castle was brought down in ruin! In that never-to-be-forgotten week every sin imaginable sprang up in my heart. Besetments that I thought were dead and buried rose up within with such force, I had no power against them. What a state of condemnation and hurt pride followed until I was like one desperate! Yet all this time I had no thoughts of religion; there was none around me, and I had no thought of attending any place of worship. True, my sister and mother attended the Particular Baptist Chapel at Leeds, a five mile train journey away, but they did not influence me in the least. I was not at all desirous of going with them as yet. Often I was tempted to plunge headlong into sin, yet a power held me and I was kept outwardly.

My sister some years before had given me a penny New Testament which I had stowed away in the pocket of an old coat I had at work, which I kept to put on to do a dirty job with the machine I worked on (brick making). I had never read it, having no interest in it. At that time I could watch the machine and read a good deal too, but I had read nothing but fiction before. But one morning, in the midst of my frustration and trouble within, I took out this New Testament and began to read it, not with any felt regard for it, I was so ignorant. However, I began to read it and

something within impelled me to keep on reading. Until then I had hardly any knowledge of what it contained literally.

I read on in it, in a few days, until I came to the Epistle to the Romans, and as I read the first three chapters it seemed as if scales fell from my eyes. I read of the state of all humanity through the fall of our first parents, and all at once such a solemn feeling of the being of a holy God came into my heart and such light upon the dreadful state of all humanity, myself included. In a moment I saw how abortive were all my strivings after perfection, as all the sin I had ever committed sprang from the heart I was born with, which was full of evil through the Fall. Mercifully I was held up in that awful moment as a holy God drew near; I can never forget it.

What a solemn falling down before that holy God I felt! I lifted my eyes to the ceiling and I said, "O God, Thou wouldest have been perfectly just if Thou hadest damned me at my first breath." Truly, "Old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new." O what a separation I felt from the world! I kept to myself. The vanities of the world, the fiction reading, and all the worldly things I had delighted in now lost all their attraction. As I read on from day to day (there was now no other book but the Bible), I saw very plainly in Romans that God had elected a people out of all humanity, and that none could ever, but for this election, be saved. How they were saved I knew as yet nothing. I knew nothing of the finished work of Christ. At that time I burned a pile of books.

For about a fortnight I kept my feelings and what I had seen in the Scriptures to myself. But then I felt drawn to speak and tell mother what I had seen and felt. I shall never forget how her face lit up and she said, "Aye, lad, flesh and blood has not

revealed this to you, but the Holy Ghost.” She told me these very things were believed and preached at the Particular Baptist Chapel at Leeds, so I needed no persuasion to begin going there with her. This was in October 1913. O what love I felt to the people there; I felt they were God’s elect. [It seems unbelievable that his mother had never taken him there!]

The first two Sundays I went I could not understand much of the preaching; they had supplies. I had not been to a place of worship for years. The third Sunday, however, I shall never forget. The late Mr. Broomfield from Warrington, Lancashire, was there. His morning text was, “But the election hath obtained it, and the rest were blinded” (Romans 11. 7). What a power there was to me in all that sermon! Mr. B. described all I had passed through for years in my feelings. He quoted in conclusion, “He which hath begun a good work in you will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ.” This word was sealed home to my heart with a wonderful power. It filled me with hope that I was one of the elect, and it was the beginning of teaching me to look to and seek for Christ to be revealed to my soul, though I was yet very ignorant of the way of salvation.

I was brought very low indeed before He did reveal Himself to me, yet received many helps. One Lord’s day morning Mr. George Brown of Morley preached from the words, “This Man receiveth sinners.” O how my heart was melted as he exalted “this Man.” I was the sinner, blessed with repentance! My tears flowed down! What a love I felt to this precious Christ! How sweet it was! At another time the second verse of hymn 143 was very powerful to me: “Not the labour of my hands, can fulfil Thy law’s demands,” etc.

In the early part of 1915 I was brought extremely low in my soul, but on this never-to-be-forgotten Lord's day, I went to chapel, when I was filled with ardent longings after Christ. The word kept bubbling up within, "Give me Christ, or else I die," yet nothing in the services all day came with any feeling to me until when they were singing the last hymn in the evening. Nothing in the hymn was used, but while they were singing I felt despair seizing me, when all at once everything faded away from my sight, and Christ seemed to stand before me in glorious white, and looking at me with love which filled my heart, He smiled and said, "Where I am, there shall My servant be also." I can never describe the love and the deep solid peace that filled me, the blessed comfort. O what a change indeed from guilt, bondage and despair to heaven in my soul! The vision was before my mind's eye for many days, and the sweet peace for some months.

But not very long after this what a wilderness I came into, for I was very soon after in the army in the first World War.

(Gospel Standard October 2008 p. 320)