

A Service of Thanksgiving for the  
life of the Revd John Richard Bradley



9.8.1950 – 14.12.2015

The Church of Christ the Cornerstone  
2.00 pm 6 January 2016

Welcome

### **Philippians 3:20–21**

We, by contrast, are citizens of heaven and from heaven we expect our deliverer to come, the Lord Jesus Christ. He will transfigure our humble bodies, and give them a form like that of his own glorious body, by that power which enables him to make all things subject to himself.

**Author of faith, eternal Word**

*(John's favourite hymn)*

**Author of faith, eternal Word,  
whose Spirit breathes the active flame;  
faith, like its finisher and Lord,  
today as yesterday the same:**

**To you our humble hearts aspire,  
and ask the gift unspeakable;  
increase in us the kindled fire,  
in us the work of faith fulfil.**

**By faith we know you strong to save –  
save us, O Saviour always near!  
All that we hope, by faith we have,  
future and past subsisting here.**

**To those that in your name believe  
eternal life with you is given;  
then they into their lives receive,  
pardon and holiness and heaven.**

**The things unknown to feeble sense,  
unseen by reason's glimmering ray,  
with strong, commanding evidence  
their heavenly origin display.**

**Faith lends its realising light,  
the clouds disperse, the shadows fly;  
the Invisible appears in sight,  
and God is seen by mortal eye.**

*Charles Wesley*

### **Prayer**

Lord of all life and power,  
who through the mighty resurrection of your Son  
overcame the old order of sin and death  
to make all things new in him:  
grant that we, being dead to sin  
and alive to you in Jesus Christ,  
may reign with him in glory;  
to whom with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit  
be praise and honour, glory and might,  
now and in all eternity. **Amen**

*Agnus Dei – John Bradley arr. Adrian Boynton*

**Come, let us join our friends above  
that have obtained the prize,  
and on the eagle wings of love  
to joys celestial rise:  
let all the saints terrestrial sing**

**with those to glory gone;  
for all the servants of our King,  
in earth and heaven, are one.**

**One family we dwell in him,  
one Church, above, beneath,  
though now divided by the stream,  
the narrow stream of death:  
one army of the living God,  
to his command we bow;  
part of his host have crossed the flood,  
and part are crossing now.**

**Ten thousand to their endless home  
this solemn moment fly;  
and we are to the margin come,  
and we expect to die;  
e'en now by faith we join our hands  
with those that went before,  
and greet the blood-besprinkled bands  
on the eternal shore.**

**Our spirits too shall quickly join,  
like theirs the glory crowned,  
and shout to see our captain's sign,  
to hear his trumpet sound.  
O that we now might grasp our guide!  
O that the word were given!  
Come, Lord of hosts, the waves divide,  
and land us all in heaven.**

*Charles Wesley*

## **2 Corinthians 5:1–10**

**Jenny Bond**

For we know that if the earthly tent we live in is destroyed, we have a building from God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens. For in this tent we groan, longing to be clothed with our heavenly dwelling – if indeed, when we have taken it off we will not be found naked. For while we are still in this tent, we groan under our burden, because we wish not to be unclothed but to be further clothed, so that what is mortal may be swallowed up by life. He who has prepared us for this very thing is God, who has given us the Spirit as a guarantee.

So we are always confident; even though we know that while we are at home in the body we are away from the Lord – for we walk by faith, not by sight. Yes we do have confidence, and we would rather be away from the body and at home with the Lord. So whether we are at home or away, we make it our aim to please him. For all of us must appear before the judgement seat of Christ, so that each may receive recompense for what has been done in the body, whether good or evil.

*Behold I make all things new Revelations 21 Adrian Boynton*

## **Reflection and John's 'Last Word'**

### **Dying, and yet we live (2 Corinthians 6:9)**

I've been at death's door several times but so far found it not wheelchair accessible, but it looks as if this time I might manage it. Frank Sinatra sang that as he faced 'life's final curtain', at least he could say, 'I did it my way' and that has become an alarmingly popular hymn at secular funerals. Since I asked Jesus Christ nearly fifty years ago to be my Lord and master, I hope that, at least at my best moments, 'I did it his way.' I would be horrified to think I did it my way. I know that my passing will be excruciating for those who are closest to me but we know that the pain of grieving is part of the loving.

So what now? My little bit of Greek tells me that euthanasia, usually taken to mean either assisted or unassisted suicide, really means 'a good death' from the word thanasia (death) and the prefix eu- meaning good, as in eulogy – a good word. So a good death is to slip away peacefully in my sleep at some point in time and then the next thing you know is the alarm clock or some other sound waking you to a new day. Hours have passed but it seems like no time at all.

Resurrection is like that except that the time lapse may be a few days or thousands of years and the waking sound will not be an alarm clock but a trumpet. The Apostle Paul calls it a mystery: 'We will not all sleep, but we will be all changed in a moment, in a twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound and the dead will be raised imperishable,

and we will be changed.’ (1 Corinthians 15:51–2) Until then I hope to rest in peace as my mortal body decays, completing my personal entropy and ‘dying away in time and tone’, which is what I have been doing for the past twenty years.

What next? To speculate in this life about what resurrection life will be like is likely to be as far from the mark as twins in their mother’s womb discussing life after birth! ‘You mean there’s another way of living without the Cord which brings us everything from Mother? How can anything live outside?’ But I hope to meet up with many dear friends and family who have preceded me and meet many others of whom I have only read or heard. Most of all, I shall see my Master. ‘Dear friends we are now God’s children; what we shall be like has not yet been disclosed, but we know that when Christ appears we shall be like him, because we shall see him as he is.’ (1 John 3:2)

There are many secular sceptics who will insist that when you are dead, you are dead and there is nothing more. I believe in life after death and that belief is fundamental to the person I am. There are different levels of importance in the truth of what a person believes. Some say we only believe what we want to believe and that belief on God is nothing but expressing our desire for a cosmic father figure. I have never been to the USA and so have no personal experience that it really exists. I suppose Boston, New York, Washington and the Atlantic seaboard might exist, but California seems most unlikely. Perhaps something strange happens to people who sail too far west and fall off the edge

and think they have been to a real place. Maybe it's all created on a Hollywood film set, not in California but in Birmingham or near Belfast. But if I had crossed the pond and found it really does exist, it wouldn't make any difference to who I am.

My belief in the reality of God and that Jesus Christ rose from the dead, opening life in all its fullness to those who trust him, is as integral to who I am as my belief that my wife loves me. To analyse these beliefs objectively would itself be an act of distrust. In that sense they are not beliefs which can be proved or disproved by peer review, but relationships which can only be lived. The only way to show the truth of a relationship is my relating and acting in consistency with the relationship. Analysis merely splits the components from each other and leaves the relationship lying in bits on the bench. God is not open to such analysis because if we could analyse God then we would be greater than God and such an entity would not be God but an idol. But God does invite the exploration of a relationship, saying, 'O taste and see that the Lord is good.' (Psalm 34:8) Some have begun very tentatively with a prayer starting, 'God, if you are real...' but that can be the start of the greatest life change of all.

*John R Bradley, 22 September 2015*

**Rejoice for a brother deceased,  
our loss is his infinite gain;  
a soul out of prison released,  
and freed from its bodily chain.  
With songs let us follow his flight,**



**and mount with his spirit above,  
escaped to the mansions of light,  
and lodged in the Eden of love.**

**Our brother the haven hath gained,  
out-flying the tempest and wind,  
his rest he has sooner obtained,  
and left his companions behind,  
still tossed on a sea of distress,  
hard toiling to make the blest shore,  
where all is assurance and peace,  
and sorrow and sin are no more.**

**There all the ship's company meet  
who sailed with the Saviour beneath.  
With shouting each other they greet,  
and triumph o'er trouble and death:  
the voyage of life's at an end,  
the mortal affliction is past:  
the age that in heaven they spend  
for ever and ever shall last.**

*Charles Wesley*

### **Prayers – Ernesto**

Let us pray

Glory and thanks be given to you,  
Almighty God, our Father,  
because in your great love for the world  
You gave your Son to be our Saviour.  
He lived our life, bore our griefs,  
and died our death upon the Cross.

We thank you that you have brought him back from death with power and great glory,  
that he has conquered sin and death,  
and opened the kingdom of heaven to all believers.  
We praise you for the great company of the faithful,  
whom Christ has brought through death to behold your face in glory,  
who join with us in worship, prayer and service.  
For your full, perfect and sufficient gift of life in Christ,  
all praise and thanks be given to you,  
for ever and ever. **Amen**

Eternal God, in your wisdom and grace  
you have given us joy  
through the lives of your departed servants.  
We thank you for John  
and for our memories of him.  
We praise you for your goodness and mercy  
that followed him all the days of his life,  
and for his faithfulness to the tasks to which you called him.  
We thank you that for John  
the tribulations of this world are over and death is past,  
and we pray that you will bring us with him  
to the joy of your perfect kingdom;  
through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen**

Father of all mercies, and giver of all comfort,  
deal graciously with those who mourn,

that they may cast every care on you  
and know the consolation of your love;  
through Christ our Lord. **Amen**

### **The Lord's Prayer**

Our Father in heaven,  
hallowed be your name.  
Your kingdom come,  
your will be done, on earth as in heaven.  
Give us today our daily bread.  
Forgive us our sins  
as we forgive those who sin against us.  
Save us from the time of trial  
and deliver us from evil.  
For the kingdom, the power  
and the glory are yours,  
now and for ever. **Amen**

*How lovely are thy dwellings fair - Brahms*

### **Funeral Litany** *by John, to be read at the service*

The life on earth of John Bradley has come to an end  
**Thank heaven for that!**

He was born at an early age  
**But lived to the end of his life.**

He was never really with it  
**But he was quite happy without it.**

He never tried to be a nuisance;

**He did it quite effortlessly.**

We won't need to hear his jokes any more

**But listen carefully and you might hear an angel groan.**

He was an MSDOSser

**But now he's been upgraded through Windows to a whole new Vista.**

*Time for recollection*

***For me to live is Christ, to die is gain  
to hold His hand and walk His narrow way  
there is no peace, no joy, no thrill, Like walking in His  
will, For me to live is Christ, to die is gain***

**Now once my heart was full of sin and shame  
Till someone told me Jesus came to save  
When He said 'Come home to me'  
He set my poor heart free  
For me to live is Christ, to die is gain**

**Now there are things that I still do not know  
But of this one thing I'm completely sure  
He who called me on that day  
Washed all my sin away  
For me to live is Christ, to die is gain**

**John 17:1–5** Then Jesus looked up to heaven and said:  
'Father, the hour has come. Glorify your Son, that the Son

may glorify you. For you have made him sovereign over all mankind, to give eternal life to all whom you have given him. This is eternal life: to know the only true God and Jesus Christ whom you have sent. I have glorified you on earth by finishing the work you gave me to do; and now, Father, glorify me in your own presence, with the glory which I had with you before the world began.

### **The Blessing**

Now may the peace of God which passes all understanding, keep our hearts and minds in the knowledge and love of God and of his Son, Jesus Christ our Lord, and the blessing of God, The Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit, remain with us always. **Amen**

*All are invited to Join Marian and Mairyn for refreshments in the Guildhall. Donations to The Church of Christ the Cornerstone for Cornerstone Music*

If all people had wings like birds,  
those who could not fly would be considered impaired.  
In our towns and cities there would be no roads or  
pavements,  
no steps, or stairs, or lifts.  
Most people would just fly everywhere.  
Instead of having seats or chairs they would have perches.  
It would be the lack of roads, pavements, steps, stairs, lifts,  
seats, chairs, which would make the flying-impaired  
(avionically challenged?) people disabled.

If all people had gills like fish,  
those who could not breathe underwater would be  
considered impaired.  
In our towns and cities there would be no roads or  
pavements, no steps, or stairs or lifts:  
most people would just swim everywhere.  
Instead of arms or legs, they would have fins.  
It would be the lack of roads, pavements, steps, stairs, lifts,  
fins, which would make the swimming-impaired (scubaless?)  
people disabled.

So where is the disability: in us or in our environment?