

Note to the Reader

We are told, on the highest authority, to ‘cast our bread upon the waters’ (see Eccles. 11:1). In light of this command, I publish this booklet. It is, I admit, a tiny crust cast upon a very large and unfriendly ocean. Even so, God’s promise still stands: ‘After many days you will find it again’.

Some see in this biblical reference an allusion to the farmer, casting his seed upon watered soil. Only in that way will he find it again in the form of a multiplied harvest. Others see it as an allusion to the merchant sending his ships across the ocean. Only by taking such a risk will he get a return on his investment.

Whatever the rights and wrongs of that, I am sowing these tiny seeds – or risking a little of my literary capital – in the hope that this work might prove a blessing. Whether it will, I do not know. It is, however, the spirit in which I cast this collection of fugitive pieces out into the world.

These tracts started out as small booklets. They came about in this way. In February 2010, I was privileged to go to Mali and spend a few days working with Ibrahim AgMohamed in preaching and teaching the gospel. While I was there, Ibrahim suggested that I might write some tracts which he would translate and distribute, and he specified their size. The idea appealed to me, and I sent him a sample of five.

It then occurred to me that if the tracts might be of use in another language, might they not prove the same if distributed in English? Whether they had any value, I was not the person to judge. I thought they had, but was I right? What did others think? Would they use them? There was only one way to find out. I published fifty copies of each of the five titles, and sent them out to various friends who,

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I thought, might be interested. I wanted to ‘test the waters’, as it were.

The response was, at best, mixed. I received no adverse comments, and a few encouraging. Most people, however, simply ignored the samples; or, at least, said nothing.

Meanwhile, I found that ideas for further booklets kept coming. I felt a bit like John Bunyan; the more I tugged, the more it came. So, despite the underwhelming response I got from the samples, I still felt that it would be a pity if my work simply stagnated inside my computer. It could do no good there! But who knows: the pieces might do good – if people could get their hands on them.

Even so, I could not possibly run a tract-publishing business. But there was something I *could* do. I decided to make a collection of these fugitive pieces, and publish them as one small volume, casting them on the waters in that form. Hence this booklet.

Why have I written these tracts? I have had three aims.

First, I hope that they will be used by God to bring sinners to repent and believe in Christ and so be saved. I make no bones about it. We are all sinners, and we all need to be saved. I want my work, therefore, to be useful in the conversion of sinners. Only God can do it, of course, but he generally uses means. In this spirit, I cast this bread upon the waters.

Secondly, I hope these tracts will edify saints. By ‘saints’ I am not talking of the nonsense pedalled by Rome, needless to say. I am thinking of those who, as the Bible teaches, are ‘sanctified in Christ Jesus’. In the words of the apostle, I mean those who ‘have been chosen according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, through the sanctifying work of the Spirit, for obedience unto Jesus Christ and sprinkling by his blood’ (1 Pet. 1:1-2). I hope my work will do some good to all such. But let me state the obvious: these tracts are simply that – tracts. They must be judged

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and used in that light. It is in my books that I set out the full arguments behind what I say here.

Above all, in the *third* place, in aiming for the first two ends, I hope this small work will prove to be for the glory of God. I pray it may be so.

Finally, reader, if you would like to use anything you find in these pages – to produce and distribute by way of your own tracts or booklets, for example – please feel free. You are at liberty to edit as you will. You can find the relevant pdfs under the eDocs link on David H J Gay Ministry (sermonaudio.com). All I ask is that those who use this material acknowledge its source and any editing undertaken, and kindly send me an email to tell me about it. This would encourage me. Writing can be a lonely business, and I would be delighted to hear if this booklet has proved useful to others.