

THE REVEREND THOMAS CHALMERS



**“NARRATIVE HISTORY” AMOUNTS TO FABULATION,
THE REAL STUFF BEING MERE CHRONOLOGY**



THOMAS CHALMERS

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1780

March 17, Friday: [Thomas Chalmers](#) was born in Fife, [Scotland](#).

NOBODY COULD GUESS WHAT WOULD HAPPEN NEXT





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1796

November 1, Tuesday: Instructions on the Art of Playing the Piano Forte or Harpsichord by Jan Ladislav Dussek and Ignaz Pleyel was entered at Stationer's Hall, London. Also entered was Pleyel's Six Progressive Sonatinas with violin accompaniment B.574-579.

Jean Nicolas Paul Francois Barras replaced Louis Marie de La Revelliere, dit La Revelliere-Lepeaux as President of the Executive Directory of France.

[William Adam](#) was born in Dumfermline, Scotland. His life would be under the influence of the Reverend [Thomas Chalmers](#), who had been born in Fife.

**LIFE IS LIVED FORWARD BUT UNDERSTOOD BACKWARD?
— NO, THAT'S GIVING TOO MUCH TO THE HISTORIAN'S STORIES.
LIFE ISN'T TO BE UNDERSTOOD EITHER FORWARD OR BACKWARD.**



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1815



Glasgow had become the second city of the Empire. A parish priest, the Reverend [Thomas Chalmers](#), was reassigned from the village of Kilmany, where the church was still the primary dispenser of the local poor relief, to the parish of Tron, a transitional neighborhood of Glasgow in which poor relief had for more than three generations been handled by government agencies handing out tax-supported subsidies. At this point, church support for poor relief in Glasgow had dwindled to a mere 7%. In a properly functioning parish, per the Reverend Chalmers's experience, the well-off among the parishioners as part of their Christian and neighborly duty take an interest in the local indigents, offering them personal, face-to-face assistance and constructive advice. But in his new urban parish, the Reverend found conditions that went against his principles: this system of poor relief built on assessments by impersonal bureaucracies could not conceivably fill all its functions, for it was allowing the rich to escape any contact with the poor! Chalmers formed an agenda to visit personally all 11,000 of the residents of his new parish, a task that would take him four years.



The Reverend obtained a waiver from the Glasgow establishment exempting his parish from its contribution to the public welfare system, in exchange for itself assuming full responsibility for parish poor relief. Chalmers reactivated the long-neglected office of deacon, by commissioning 25 servant-leaders to take responsibility for all the residents within their assigned blocks. The collections made at the church's entrance would be used to meet the health and hunger needs of the poor, but only when absolutely necessary. Ordinarily, his deacons were to restrict themselves to offering advice, and help in finding employment. Chalmers contended that this "rural parish" approach with which he had become familiar in Kilmany would work in the urban parish and would bring back long-lost values of personal care and accountability. By being utterly tight-fisted, the Reverend and his 25 deacons were able to redirect a good part of the funds from food to the building of schools for the children of the working poor. They were able to enroll more than 700 children from working families able to pay a small tuition, and began some 45 Sabbath Schools at which impoverished children and their parents could learn to read and write as part of religious training.

For the first time in Scotland, an urban parish, in a city dependent upon a legal assessment for poor relief for over ninety years, had "voluntarily" abolished the assessment and "retraced" its past back to the traditional rural parish system of relief based upon church door collections.¹

1. Cleland, ANNALS OF GLASGOW, I, pages 270-3, cited in Brown, S.J., THOMAS CHALMERS AND THE GODLY COMMONWEALTH IN SCOTLAND, Oxford UP, 1982, page 98



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1817



September: After an education at the Baptist College in Bristol and at the University of Glasgow, arranged by the [Reverend Thomas Chalmers](#), the [Reverend William Adam](#) set out for a missionary life in Serampore, near Calcutta in [India](#).

THE FUTURE IS MOST READILY PREDICTED IN RETROSPECT





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1818

→ [John Edwards Holbrook](#) graduated from the University of Pennsylvania with the degree of MD. He would briefly practice as a physician in Boston, and then continue his medical education in London and Edinburgh. Edinburgh he would notice to be “inferior only to London.” While at Glasgow he would have “the satisfaction of hearing one of the most eloquent preachers of the age, [Doctor Chalmers](#). His broad scotch dialect disappointed me in the commencement of his discourse ... but when he was fairly begun I was more directly sensible of the power of eloquence that ever was my lot to be before.”



THE FUTURE CAN BE EASILY PREDICTED IN RETROSPECT





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1830



The President of the Royal Society, Davies Gilbert, Esq., the Archbishop of Canterbury, and the Bishop of London, implementing the last will and testament of the Right Honourable and Reverend Francis Henry, Earl of Bridgewater, who had died during February 1828, invited the Reverend [William Kirby](#) to craft one of the offerings in a series that would become known as the “Bridgewater Treatises.”²

2. The Earl of Bridgewater had directed his trustees to invest £8,000 in the public funds, and use the accruing dividends to subsidize the publication of 1,000 copies of a work “On the Power, Wisdom, and Goodness of God, as manifested in the Creation,” illustrating such work by all reasonable arguments, as, for instance, the variety and formation of God’s creatures in the animal, vegetable, and mineral kingdoms; the effect of digestion, and thereby of conversion; the construction of the hand of man, and an infinite variety of other arguments: as also by discoveries, ancient and modern, in arts, sciences, and the whole extent of literature. The immediate inspiration for this project had been the [Reverend William Paley, archdeacon of Carlisle](#)’s 1802 crowdpleaser, NATURAL THEOLOGY: OR, EVIDENCES OF THE EXISTENCE AND ATTRIBUTES OF THE DEITY, COLLECTED FROM THE APPEARANCES OF NATURE.

NATURAL THEOLOGY, I

NATURAL THEOLOGY, II

With the advice of his Grace the Archbishop of Canterbury and the Bishop of London, and with the concurrence of a nobleman immediately connected with the deceased, the Royal Society settled upon eight authors they could trust to write with appropriate piety and tendentiousness on different aspects of the assigned topic:

[The Reverend Thomas Chalmers](#): THE ADAPTATION OF EXTERNAL NATURE TO THE MORAL AND INTELLECTUAL CONSTITUTION OF MAN.

[Professor John Kidd](#): ON THE ADAPTATION OF EXTERNAL NATURE TO THE PHYSICAL CONDITION OF MAN.

[Professor William Whewell](#): ON ASTRONOMY AND GENERAL PHYSICS.

[Sir Charles Bell KH FRS FRSE FRCSE MWS](#): THE HAND: ITS MECHANISM AND VITAL ENDOWMENTS AS EVINCING DESIGN.

[Dr. Peter Mark Roget, FRS](#): ANIMAL AND VEGETABLE PHYSIOLOGY CONSIDERED WITH REFERENCE TO NATURAL THEOLOGY.

[The Reverend Professor William Buckland, D.D., F.R.S., Dean of Westminster](#): GEOLOGY AND MINERALOGY CONSIDERED WITH REFERENCE TO NATURAL THEOLOGY.

[The Reverend William Kirby](#): ON THE HISTORY HABITS AND INSTINCTS OF ANIMALS.

[Dr. William Prout, FRS](#): CHEMISTRY, METEOROLOGY, AND THE FUNCTION OF DIGESTION.



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1843

May 18, Thursday: The Reverend [Thomas Chalmers](#) and his evangelicals walked out of the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland, to establish a nationalistic and evangelical “Free Church.”

SHOW ME THE MONEY

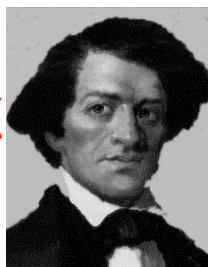


Money would of course always be a problem, since in doing this they were walking away from all existing government subsidies of religion. –But never mind, the Christian slaveholders of the American South would be glad for this opportunity to ease their consciences and reassure their senses of their own worthiness by donating to such a good cause! After all, had not the patriarch Abraham himself owned slaves, and did not the apostle Paul himself send a runaway slave back to his master?³

3. Abolitionists would develop a “Send Back The Money” crusade. [Frederick Douglass](#) would orate:

When the Free Church says — Did not Abraham hold slaves?
the reply should be, Send back that money!
When they ask did not Paul send back Onesimus?
I answer,

SEND BACK THAT MONEY!





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1845

May 12, Monday: Gabriel Faure, composer, was born.

The Reverend [Thomas Chalmers](#) wrote to the Witness, admitting that slaveholding was problematic in that indeed it did create temptations toward error, toward, that is, fornication, covetousness, idolatry, intemperance, etc., but insisting nevertheless that it in itself was not one of the seven deadly sins. A slavemaster could be a good and decent man. He did not need to free his slaves in order to be a good and decent man — all that was expected of him in this life was that while he owned other human beings, he treat them as decent as was their due. Being an unrepentant slaveholder is no sin in and of itself, and therefore should not exclude a person from the communion and the fellowship of the righteous.

QED, if a slavemaster desires to make a contribution to the church, there is no reason to suspect that his money may be tainted, and may contaminate anything it touches.⁴



Nice try, Rev!

4. I think I'm not presenting this letter all that well. I'm too much under the influence of Frederick Douglass, who would describe this letter in his abolitionist lectures, and then characterize the Reverend, making reference to a Dickens character who picked pockets, as an "artful Dodger."



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1847

During this year Frederick Douglass would attend the 8th National Negro Convention, held at Troy NY. Nathan Johnson, the [New Bedford](#) businessman who had suggested to him his freedom name, was president of this convention. Douglass would quote the following lines in one of his antislavery speeches:

Go, let a cage, with grates of gold,
And pearly roof, the eagle hold;
Let dainty viands be his fare,
And give the captive tenderest care;
But say, in luxury's limits pent,
Find you the king of birds content?
No, oft he'll sound the startling shriek,
And dash the grates with angry beak.
Precarious freedom's far more dear,
Than all the prison's pamp'ring cheer!
He longs to see his eyrie's seat,
Some cliff on ocean's lonely shore,
Whose old bare top the tempests beat,
And round whose base the billows roar,
When tossed by gales, they yawn like graves,—
He longs for joy to skim those waves;
Or rise through tempest-shrouded air,
All thick and dark, with wild winds swelling,
To brave the lightning's lurid glare,

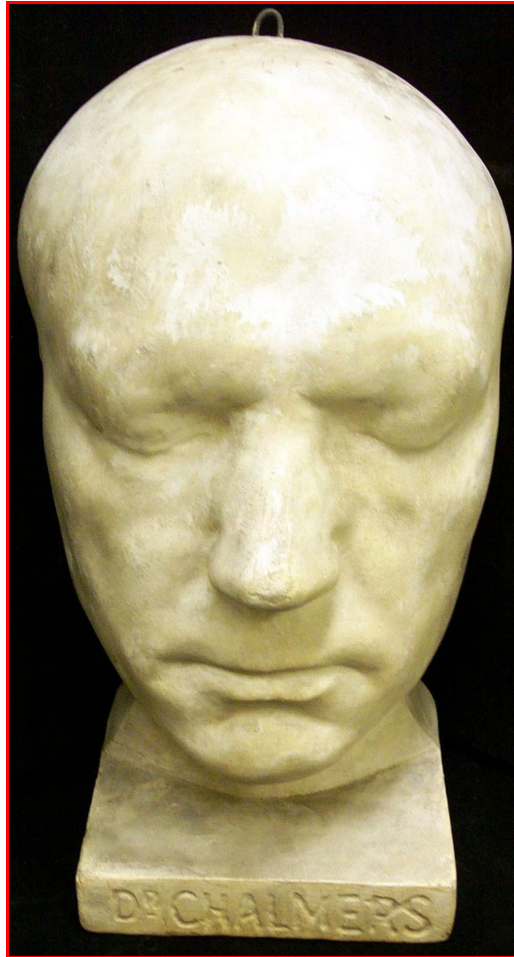


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And talk with thunders in their dwelling.

The Reverend Doctor [Thomas Chalmers](#), head of the Free Church of Scotland, the man who was being heavily mocked in speech after speech by Frederick Douglass as an “artful Dodger” with his hand gladly in the pocket of the slavemaster, in this year at the age of 67 made his appeal before the Bar of Judgment.



DEATHMASK

By this point, two editions of Douglass’s NARRATIVE had been published in Ireland and three in England. By 1850 there were some 30,000 copies floating around the English-speaking world. Beginning in 1848, a French paperback edition would be available. After Douglass returned during this year from his lecture tour of Great Britain, Scotland, and Ireland, 30 and with his [manumission](#) papers finally purchased, he would relocate his family from Lynn, Massachusetts to Rochester, New York and began an abolitionist newspaper, the North Star.

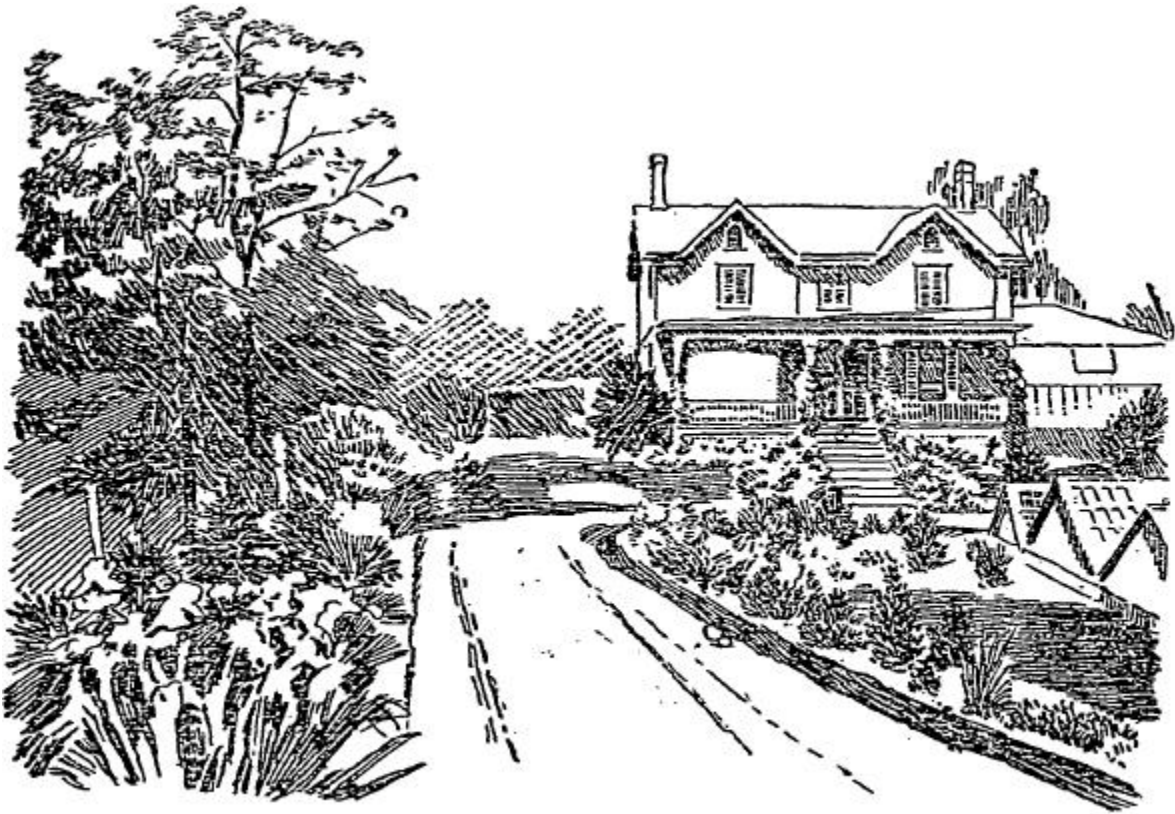
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Frederick Douglass's Homestead, Rochester, N. Y.

HDT

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(There were of course heavy penalties for distributing such materials where a slave might potentially access them.)

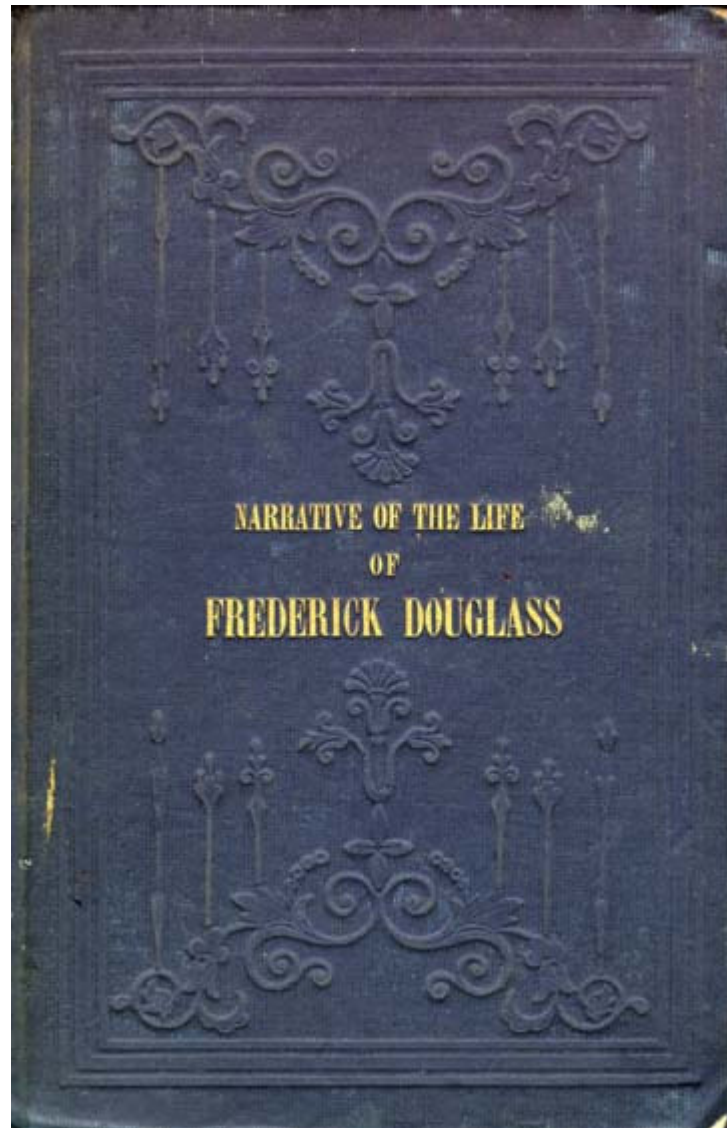
SLAVERY

WHAT I'M WRITING IS TRUE BUT NEVER MIND
YOU CAN ALWAYS LIE TO YOURSELF



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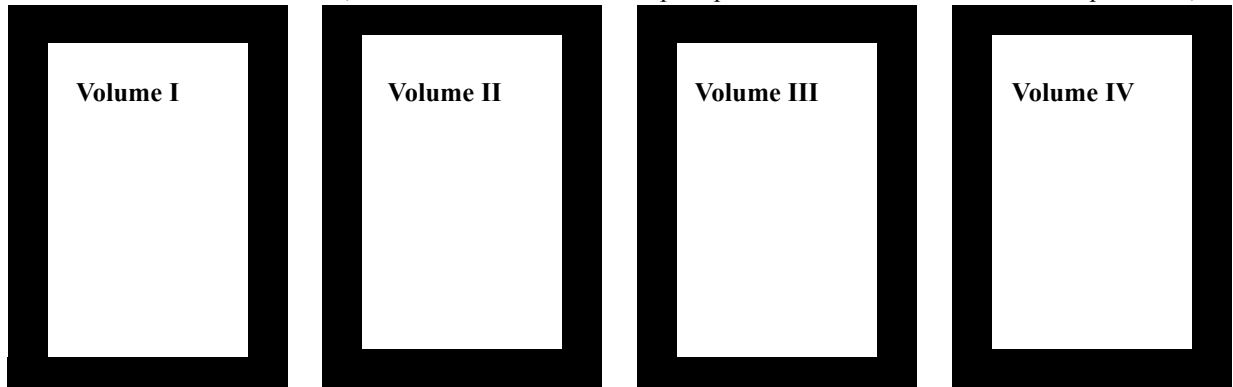


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1853

March 27, Easter Sunday: [Aunt Maria Thoreau](#) had wanted her nephew [Henry Thoreau](#) to read the MEMOIRS of Dr. [Thomas Chalmers](#), a Scottish minister who had put up container after container of these preserves, but



he had not promised that he would do this. Henry recorded that on this date “she was heard through the Partition shouting to my Aunt Jane [[Aunt Jane Thoreau](#)], who is deaf,



‘Think of it! He stood half an hour today to hear the frogs croak, and he wouldn’t read the life of Chalmers.’”

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Thomas Chalmers, D.D., LL.D.

DAILY SCRIPTURE READINGS.

EDITED BY REV. WILLIAM HANNA, LL.D.

Forming Vols. I., II., and III. of "Chalmers's Posthumous Works." 12mo, Muslin, \$3 00; Sheep extra, \$3 75.

All must concede that Dr. Chalmers's works are destined to exert no small influence on the character of the age. For the last quarter of a century and more, he has been regarded in both hemispheres as one of the greatest intellectual and moral lights of the world; and though dead, he yet speaketh, and will speak in his productions to the end of time. The first three volumes of his posthumous works consist of his observations in connection with his daily reading of the Scriptures; and while they bear the impress of a magnificent intellect, they breathe a spirit of ethereal purity and lofty devotion. One scarcely knows, in reading these pages, which to admire most, the great man or the humble Christian.—*Argus*.

Thomas Chalmers, D.D., LL.D.

SABBATH SCRIPTURE READINGS.

EDITED BY REV. WILLIAM HANNA, LL.D.

Forming Volumes IV. and V. of "Chalmers's Posthumous Works." 12mo, Muslin, \$2 00; Sheep extra, \$2 50.

It is a book which few will open without deep interest and deeper reverence. There is no tinge of sectarianism in these pages: they are imbued throughout with a catholic spirit, and glow with that universal kindness which was so distinguishing a characteristic of the man.—*London Atlas*.

In heart and in brain, in mind and in soul, we may say Dr. Chalmers was one in a million of created beings; in these passages he has poured forth a rich stream of intelligence to interest mankind.—*Literary Gazette*.

These pages have the charm of originality—the mature fruits of a whole lifetime's study of the Divine Oracles.—*The Patriot*.

SERMONS BY THE LATE THOMAS CHALMERS, D.D., LL.D.,

Illustrative of different Stages in his Ministry. From 1798 to 1847.

EDITED BY REV. WILLIAM HANNA, LL.D.

Forming Volume VI. of "Chalmers's Posthumous Works." 12mo, Muslin, \$1 00; Sheep extra, \$1 25.

This volume contains sermons, beginning in 1798, and we need not speak of the peculiar eloquence and effect of the preacher. They stand well the examination of the closet, not only in style, but, what is far better, in moral discipline and doctrine. The Divine summary of human duty is a fine example of the enforcement of both religious and moral duties; on the guilt of calumny, a glorious moral discourse. His several farewell discourses are full of rich humanity and touching reflections; but there are thirty-three sermons, and we can not particularize their relative merits. Leaving the more theological subjects, we would say, that those on courteousness, and the duties of masters and servants, are worthy of being framed in letters of gold, as lessons for the right discharge of simple daily duties.—*London Literary Gazette*.



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1874

July 24, Saturday: In Aberdeen, [Scotland](#), [Oswald Chambers](#) was born to a Baptist preacher's wife who had been converted under the ministry of the Reverend [Thomas Chalmers](#).

CHANGE IS ETERNITY, STASIS A FIGMENT

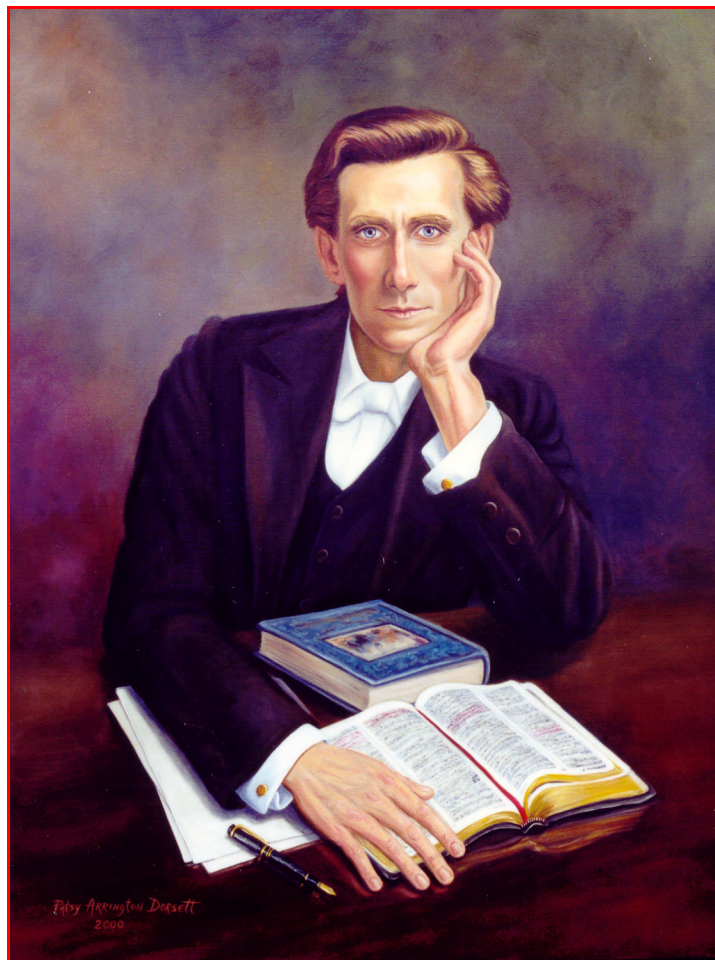


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THOMAS CHALMERS

1923

The most popular of the works of the Reverend [Oswald Chambers](#), a daily devotional entitled MY UTMOST FOR HIS HIGHEST, was based in this year on shorthand notes taken during his life by his wife. In its pages Christians are urged to expend their lives for Christ as if they were “broken bread and poured out wine.”



DO I HAVE YOUR ATTENTION? GOOD.



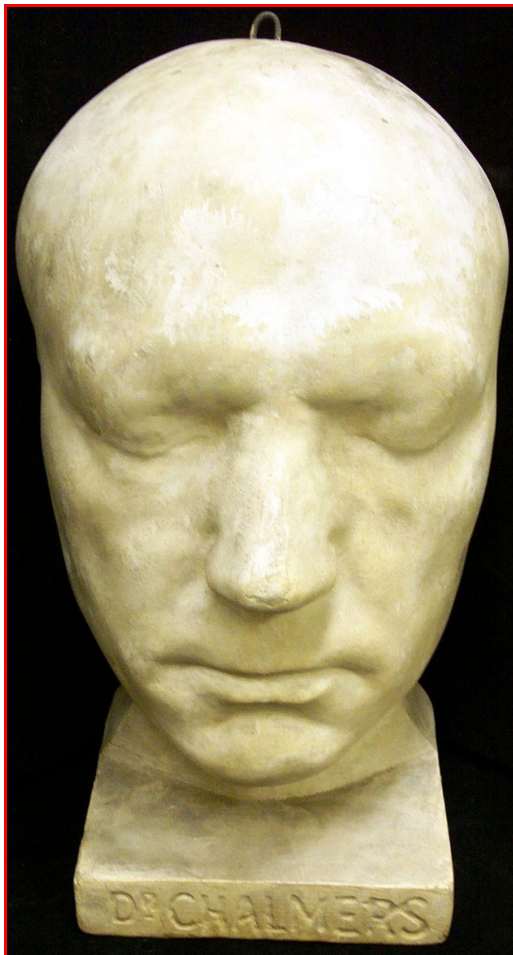
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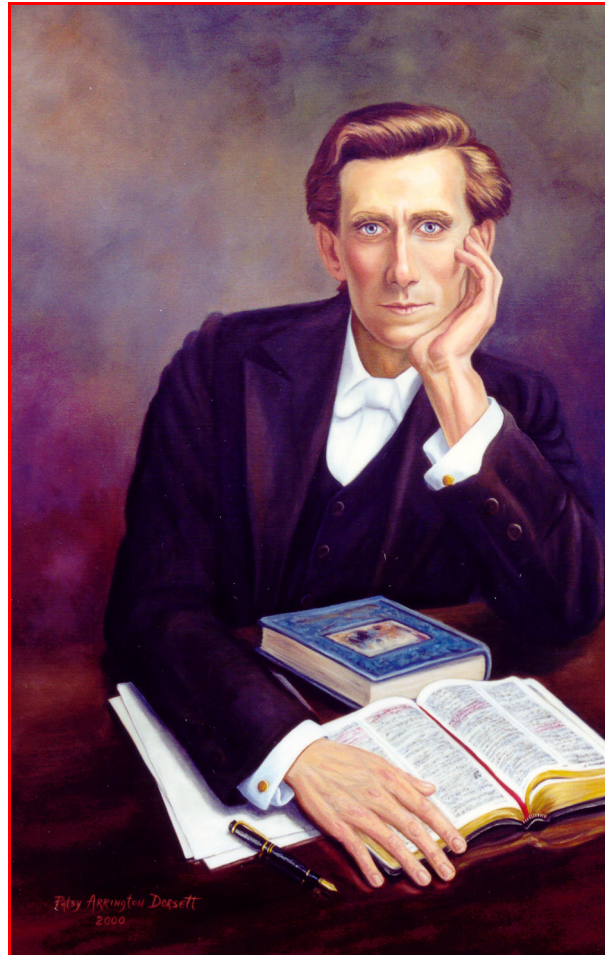
2004

Every other year, [President George W. Bush](#) confided to a reporter, he would read each day in the BIBLE, and then every alternate year he was in the practice of reading in a daily devotional by the Reverend [Oswald Chambers](#):

Oswald Chambers was one of the great Christian thinkers ... the easier it is to understand what he writes, I think, the more understanding of religion a person becomes.



Deathmask of the Reverend Chambers's inspiration, the Reverend Thomas Chalmers



Portrait of the Reverend Oswald Chambers with his BIBLE and his DAILY DEVOTIONAL

To learn about the "Six Degrees of Kevin Bacon" game, consult <http://www.louisville.com/loumag/mar/bacon.htm>. Here is how I construct a "Six Degrees of Kevin Bacon" linkage between [Henry Thoreau](#) and "Wubya":



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1.) On Easter Sunday, March 27, 1853, Aunt Maria Thoreau, who had been unable to prevail upon her nephew Henry Thoreau to read the MEMOIRS OF DR. [THOMAS CHALMERS](#), a Scottish minister who had put up four containers of these preserves, “was heard through the Partition shouting to my Aunt Jane [Aunt Jane Thoreau], who is deaf,

‘Think of it! He stood half an hour today to hear the frogs croak, and he wouldn’t read the life of Chalmers.’”

2.) A young Scots woman was converted under the ministry of the Reverend [Thomas Chalmers](#).

3.) In 1874, [Oswald Chambers](#) was born to this Scots woman who had been converted under the ministry of the Reverend [Thomas Chalmers](#) (who had since become the wife of a Baptist preacher).

4.) The Reverend [Oswald Chambers](#)’s ministrations were taken down during his lifetime in shorthand by his wife.

5.) After the death of the Reverend [Oswald Chambers](#), the shorthand notes taken by the wife were published in 1923 as a daily devotional entitled MY UTMOST FOR HIS HIGHEST. In the pages of this book Christians were urged to expend their lives for Christ as if they were “broken bread and poured out wine.”

6.) [President George W. Bush](#) confided to reporters that his practice was to read each day in the Bible, one year, and then in the alternate year to read in a daily devotional by the Reverend [Oswald Chambers](#). The President’s comment was:

Oswald Chambers was one of the great Christian thinkers ... the easier it is to understand what he writes, I think, the more



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understanding of religion a person becomes.



Since we have now belatedly become aware, courtesy of YouTube's <http://www.juancole.com/2010/05/kirchner-bush-angrily-said-war-would-grow-us-economy.html>, that in January of this Year of Our Lord 2004, President Bush was decidedly of the opinion that the way for the US to improve its economy was for us to go to war. What I would like to point out here is how exceedingly congruent that attitude toward war is with this Chambers/Bush attitude toward the Christian religion, that, and I quote from point #5 above, what Christians should do is "expend their lives for Christ as if they were 'broken bread and poured out wine'." Two trains of thought, apparently quite different but leading to the exact same Hitlerian conclusion: war is good for us.

[A truncated version of this "Six Degrees of Kevin Bacon" linkage would be: The sort of religious literature that [President Bush](#) wanted to read while in office is the sort of religious literature that once upon a time [Thoreau](#) refused to read.]



REVEREND THOMAS CHALMERS

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“MAGISTERIAL HISTORY” IS FANTASIZING: HISTORY IS CHRONOLOGY



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“It’s all now you see. Yesterday won’t be over until tomorrow and tomorrow began ten thousand years ago.”

– Remark by character “Garin Stevens”
in William Faulkner’s INTRUDER IN THE DUST





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Prepared: October 27, 2014



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ARRGH AUTOMATED RESEARCH REPORT

GENERATION HOTLINE



This stuff presumably looks to you as if it were generated by a human. Such is not the case. Instead, someone has requested that we pull it out of the hat of a pirate who has grown out of the shoulder of our pet parrot "Laura" (as above). What these chronological lists are: they are research reports compiled by ARRGH algorithms out of a database of modules which we term the Kouroo Contexture (this is data mining). To respond to such a request for information we merely push a button.



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Commonly, the first output of the algorithm has obvious deficiencies and we need to go back into the modules stored in the contexture and do a minor amount of tweaking, and then we need to punch that button again and recompile the chronology – but there is nothing here that remotely resembles the ordinary “writerly” process you know and love. As the contents of this originating contexture improve, and as the programming improves, and as funding becomes available (to date no funding whatever has been needed in the creation of this facility, the entire operation being run out of pocket change) we expect a diminished need to do such tweaking and recompiling, and we fully expect to achieve a simulation of a generous and untiring robotic research librarian. Onward and upward in this brave new world.

First come first serve. There is no charge.
Place requests with <Kouroo@kouroo.info>. Arrgh.