

October 27th

For now we see through a glass, darkly;

but then face to face:

now I know in part;

but then shall I know even as also I am known.

I Corinthians 13:14

Younger children can learn the words in **bold**.

Something to think about¹



In 1991 the communist USSR gave way to the Russian Federation: communism had fallen in Eastern Europe. The Cold War between soviet communism and western capitalist democracy was over.

American political theorist Francis Fukuyama (born on 27th October 1952) had been watching events very closely. A follower of the German nineteenth century philosopher Hegel,² who believed that there was a universal plot or shape to history,

Fukuyama thought he could see a pattern. Harsh undemocratic rule had ended in Portugal, Greece, Spain, Argentina, Turkey, Uruguay, the Philippines and South Korea and now communism was ending in Russia and Eastern Europe. Was history leading to a point where eventually the whole world would become a liberal democracy like America? If so what then? Would history, having arrived at if not a perfect society at least the best possible, come to a sort of full stop after which there would be no further change?

Fukuyama thought this would happen, although he acknowledged that it might still take a long time with reversals of the trend in places along the way. His 1992 book *The End of History and the Last Man* outlined his theories and it became a famous book.

While we might smile (especially in the light of more recent events) at such an optimistic view, we should acknowledge that the idea of “progress” in history is very deeply embedded in our way of thinking today. We find it hard to consider that we are not “more advanced” than our ancestors.

Where do such ideas come from and is there any support for them in the Bible?

“There is a fundamental process at work that dictates a common evolutionary pattern for *all* human societies,” wrote Fukuyama and this shows us where his ideas are rooted; human beings are evolving. It is evolutionary thinking that makes us interpret change we see around us as progress whether technological or moral.

The Bible does not teach that human beings are improving. In fact, the consequences of the Fall in the garden of Eden are working themselves out in degeneration rather than in progress for humanity. It is certainly true that we have (in many parts of the world at any rate) access to very sophisticated technology that would have amazed our ancestors. However, this has been built up step by step with each generation building on the work of the generation before. It does not mean that the skill and intelligence of the builders themselves has increased; it could well have gone downhill. There is plenty of evidence that people of long ago were every bit as bright as we are now and probably a whole lot brighter.

1 Image By Gobierno de Chile - Jefa de Estado se reúne con Francis Fukuyama, CC BY 2.0, <https://commons.wikimedia.org/w/index.php?curid=47987675>. Information from <https://www.theosthinktank.co.uk/comment/2019/08/07/why-history-didnt-end> and other sources.

2 See 27th August (yet to come.)

That there is an end or purpose in history is something that the Bible does teach. But it is a different one to that envisaged by Fukuyama or any other thinker who bases his ideas on evolutionary principles. All things are indeed working together as we read in Romans 8:28 but this is not some great evolutionary progress to human perfection. Rather, the Bible shows us that the deceitfully wicked heart of man constantly causes wars to break out and societies to become corrupt. The Apostle Paul says, speaking of Jesus Christ, “all things were created by him, and **for him**,” (Colossians 1:16) and, astoundingly, all things are working together not towards human perfection but for the benefit of “them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose.”

Believers cannot, as today's memory verse explains, see that pattern of good very easily now but the day is coming when they will.

Some Revision

Raymond VI (1135-1222) of Languedoc was born on **27th October**. If you did the lesson for 16th March earlier in the year you will have read about him. He was the ruler of the territory in which the Albigenses flourished. If you have never heard of the Albigenses because you missed that lesson you can go back and read about them now. If you have forgotten you can also go back and revise the lesson today.



Something to eat



Do you enjoy yoghurt? The discoverer of the main bacterium used in making yoghurt, Stamen Grigorov (1878-1945), was born on **27th October**. The bacterium he discovered was *Lactobacillus bulgaricus* and you may find it listed on a yoghurt tub as an ingredient or culture – have a look in your fridge.

It is this bacterium that gives yoghurt its thick creamy texture and also its flavour which blends so well with fruit. When Bulgarian microbiologist Dr Grigorov discovered it he was working in a laboratory in Geneva and had brought some yoghurt with him from his home country where it had been a staple food for many generations. At the time (1905) the health benefits of yoghurt were just becoming known and Dr Grigorov did further research in this field. He also did experiments proving the effectiveness of the penicillin fungus in treating tuberculosis. During World War I he discovered that soldiers who ate mouldy bread did not contract cholera. Again this pointed to a use for penicillin since it is this fungus that is growing on “mouldy” bread.

If you have some *Lactobacillus bulgaricus* you can make your own yoghurt. Where would you get it from? Well, from some yoghurt of course – here's how to do it: the instructions are based on an old method that was used in Bulgaria.³

The milk you use to make yoghurt has to have the *Lactobacillus bulgaricus* bacteria in it and no others.⁴ To ensure that the milk is bacteria free before you start adding your *Lactobacillus bulgaricus* culture, you can either boil the milk or (easier) use UHT milk straight from a freshly opened carton.

Ingredients:

600 mls UHT or freshly boiled milk. I find full cream is best but semi-skimmed will do.
Generous tablespoon of powdered milk. This is not strictly necessary but I find it gives thicker

³ We made yoghurt in a flask on 20th April. If you prefer the flask method you can refer to that lesson.

⁴ An exception is *Streptococcus thermophilus* which is also a yoghurt making bacterium and may also be found in the bought yoghurt you use to make your own.

results.

Generous tablespoon fresh plain yoghurt. Ideally this should be removed from the fridge a little in advance so as to come up to room temperature.

Method:

Before you start you need to organise a warm place for your yoghurt to sit over night.

An airing cupboard will do if you have one that is warm overnight. If not you can get a blanket (or some thick shawls) and fold it until you get a longish rectangle shape. Lay it out somewhere away from draughts and out of everyone's way. Lay a clean tea towel on top in the centre. You will need a bowl big enough to hold your 600 mls of milk, such as a small casserole dish. It needs a lid or you can cover it with an inverted dinner plate. Test your blanket arrangements with the empty dish. Place it on the tea towel. Fold one long end of the blanket over the top of the dish. Then fold over the other long end on top. The folded blanket should be just wide enough to overlap the dish on the sides so that when you have finished the dish is not really visible.

Put the milk in the dish and stir in the powdered milk.

The next step calls for common sense. Adult assistance may be needed. Use a microwave to heat the milk until it is just hot enough for you to keep a (clean) finger in it until you have counted 10 slowly. If you over heat it and you can't put your finger in with out it feeling scalding, just wait for it to cool down.

Now you can stir in the yoghurt and put the lid or plate on top of the dish. Put it in the airing cupboard or, if you are using a blanket, put the dish on the top of the tea towel. Fold one long end of the blanket over the dish and then the other end so that it is as snug as possible.

Now leave it all overnight. In the morning you should have a bowl of fresh yoghurt. It will still be warmish so put it in the fridge to cool down before you add some fruit or honey and eat it.



For older children at parents' discretion:

An Act to amend and clarify the Law relating to termination of pregnancy by registered medical practitioners (i.e. the Abortion Act) was passed after heated political and moral debate, under a free vote, on **27 October 1967**, coming into effect on 27 April 1968. Over 10, 000,000 preborn children have been killed since that date. A sensitive discussion of the topic for older children might be appropriate. I found some useful information here: <https://care.org.uk/news/2023/04/55-years-of-uk-abortion-act-marked>. Some families might want to mark the date with a two minutes' silence. A revival of the Church in Britain bringing Christian influence into the public sphere could lead to an end to the killing just as it lead to the abolition of slavery and other evils in the past. We can pray to that end especially today.