



A letter from ALISTAIR BEGG

MAY 2022

Today *The Times* of London announced, “Ilkley, West Yorkshire, named best place to live in the UK 2022.” The article declared that the town, with its top-class schools, a buzzing high street, and breathtaking views, offers everything you need.

Unless you have visited, this will probably not mean very much, if anything, to you. So why am I mentioning it? For two reasons. First, because it made me smile to think that when we as a family moved to England in 1967, it was in Ilkley that my parents chose to make our home. My sisters and I were to enjoy all the benefits of such a lovely place. But secondly, because the idea of Ilkley or anywhere offering “everything you need” must be challenged.

It made me think of a passage in “The Weight of Glory” where C.S. Lewis addresses this desire for our own far-off country. Books, music, and places are images of our longings, but, he writes, “they are not the thing itself;

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they are only the scent of a flower we have not found, the echo of a tune we have not heard, news from a country we have never visited.” This human experience is surely heightened in the Christian, since “our citizenship is in heaven, and from it we await a Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ” (Phil. 3:20).

Years ago, Eric Alexander reminded a group of young ministers, “There is no ideal place to serve God except the place he sets you down.” For me this has been Cleveland, Ohio, where I continue to enjoy the immense privilege of being part of a loving, long-suffering congregation while surrounded and supported by a team of elders and pastors who know the worst about me and love me just the same.

It changes everything when we realize that this is true for all of us. Where we live and work is under the overruling hand of God, who loves us with an everlasting love. When I am convinced of this, there is no reason to ever grumble and show discontent and resentment at the circumstances in which God has placed me. All of our days and all of our deeds may, by God’s grace, set forward His purposes.

Now that it is spring and summer beckons, plan a visit to Chagrin Falls and to Parkside. Neither has everything you need—but you’ll be glad that you came!

With my love in the Lord Jesus,

A handwritten signature in red ink, appearing to read "A. B. ...". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, prominent initial letter.