

2<sup>nd</sup> February 2021

## States

**“How many ages hence  
Shall this our lofty scene be acted o’er,  
In states unborn, and accents yet unknown!”**

*Shakespeare, Julius Caesar*

I’m working on my “elegant sufficiency” list of what has sustained me during this pandemic, and high on that list is the *Guardian* crossword, something I touched on several months ago. One of my all-time favourite crossword clues is this one (ponder it for a moment before your read on):

*a b c d e f g ..... p q r s t u v w x y z (5)*

And the answer is ... *water*. What fits the space in the clue? It’s *h* to *o*. And what’s a way of writing this? That’s  $H_2O$  – and you have *water*! Clever, eh?

Water is one of the only things we experience in the three different states in which matter can exist – solid, liquid and gas. A few days ago, I was surprised to come across a random patch of ice, about a metre square, on a pavement. A down-pipe from a gutter had been leaking, and, in the overnight frost, the patch of water across the pavement had turned to ice. Back home, I filled the kettle for a morning coffee, and soon the water was steaming away, ready for the hot drink to be poured. Water in the three states of matter within a few minutes – solid, liquid and gas. Amazing!

Over the years, I’ve come to believe that God is revealed to us in different states – and not limited to three! Moses found God at a burning bush; Daniel found God in the wisdom of dreams; Paul found God on the Damascus road; John Bunyan found God in prison; Charles Wesley found God in the preaching of a Moravian woman; David Livingstone found God in an exploration of nature and science. Need I go on?

And for you and me? A personal call, the wonder of nature, a worshipping community, a moment of peace, a clarity of purpose? God will not be confined to one form or presence. There will yet be “states unborn” through which we will know God. And then, in “accents yet unknown”, we will express our amazement again at the wonder of it all.

### **A prayer for today**

*Wonderful God, when I think I know you,  
reveal yourself again, and keep me amazed. Amen*

*An original reflection by © Tom Gordon*

Also available at <https://swallowsnestnet.wordpress.com>