

CHRISTIAN WATCH

A PROTESTANT BIBLICAL WITNESS

"And what I say unto you

I say unto all, Watch"

Mark 13:37

NEWSLETTER

June/July 2012

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To all Christian Watch Members

Dear Friends,

Greetings in that Name which is above every name, the Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.

As the months of another year hasten by, we should consider with gratitude and thanksgiving the many mercies and favours the Lord bestows upon us, particularly as - because of our sins - we are unworthy of the least of them. We are not always conscious that sin contaminates every aspect of our lives – sins of omission as well as sins of commission. However, what a favour it is to know there is One by whom our every sin may be forgiven. May we be given faith, as we endeavour to confess our sins, to plead forgiveness through the merits of the dear Lord Jesus Christ. We are encouraged by the promise given, **“If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness”** 1 John 1:9.

The British Government continues in its endeavours to re-define marriage in a way that is totally contrary to the order and commandment God has given for the benefit of the human race. The foolishness and ignorance of man is clearly manifest by the present proposals of those in authority. The foundation of God’s ordained union between one male and one female is clearly defined in two articles we included entitled, **MARRIAGE BLESSED BY HEAVEN** by the *Rev. Brian Garrard* and **Marriage** taken from *Peace and Truth* magazine.

In both the UK and the USA we are only just beginning to witness the consequences of our respective Governments’ devil-orientated determination to reject the commandments and exhortations of our all-wise God. We have much need to pray that the Lord will enlighten the vision and understanding of our rulers and that they be given wisdom to follow the Word of God in making their laws and statutes. With reference to the British Government’s proposed legislation to re-define marriage, it is very important that our UK Members send a letter to their Member of Parliament to express concern about this and request him/her to vote against it if/when it comes before Parliament.

We continue with our campaign, **Who is on the Lord’s side?** and include an update on the work of our National Co-ordinator, Michael Hobbis. His report confirms the urgent need for a Protestant witness, particularly in those areas of the country where other religious groups have been actively promoting their beliefs. Satan will do all within his power to oppose true Christian religion and his opposition will inevitably increase as we draw near the time of Christ’s return. May the Lord grant us each grace and ability to contend earnestly for the faith we trust He has granted us. We believe the formation of Local Contact Groups are particularly important as a witness for the Lord’s cause, and where these are being established, we trust our Members will give their active and prayerful support to them.

One of our Members, Dr. I. A. Sadler, has provided us with a report entitled **Congo – Bringing God’s Word to a Troubled Land**, in which he details some of his experiences and difficulties during his visit to Eastern Congo in May, to preach and distribute the Word of God. Many travelling difficulties were experienced and we are thankful that preserving mercies were granted in times of considerable danger. May the Lord bless the Word preached and the Bibles distributed to the benefit of the many people who heard and received them. Such reports as this should make us very thankful for the mercies and favours we receive, both providentially and spiritually, from the Lord. In addition, we should remember in our prayers the Lord’s people who live in very difficult and trying circumstances, compared with those we experience in the UK and in the other more prosperous countries where some of our Members are located.

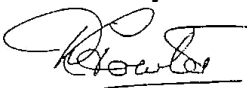
We believe many of the Lord’s people often question the reality of their religion because of the activity of Satan in sowing the seeds of doubt in their minds. The devil knows our many failings and poses the question, “Can you possibly be a child of God?” We include an article by the late John Vinall, ‘**The Evidences of Being Children of God**’, for the comfort and encouragement of those who are tempted and question the reality of their religion.

We are exhorted to pray for those in authority. The importance of so doing is increasingly necessary, particularly in the light of recent financial developments and our national involvement with the European Union. It would appear that wisdom is taken away from our leaders in the UK as well those in authority in other EU countries. In addition, that which has recently been revealed in Banking circles is a clear evidence that there are those in senior positions who do not fear the Lord. We are very concerned for the future, particularly for the younger generation, if the present decline in integrity and morality continues. Our only hope is that the Lord will appear for us, which emphasises the importance of prayer.

Finally, you will find enclosed a **Donation Form** requesting financial support for the work we are undertaking. Our operational expenses are inevitably increasing as the cost of fuel, postages etc. rise and this, therefore, limits the work we can undertake to defend and promote the Lord’s cause. We are very thankful for the prayerful and financial support of our Members but any additional financial contributions would be much appreciated.

May the God of all Grace bless you with all needful help and support in this wilderness journey which, we trust, will take us to a place where sin and sorrow will never be known.

I remain, yours, in the Lord’s service,



David Crowter

Management Committee

Mr D Boyd; Mr M Brockes (Hon Treasurer/Co Secretary); Mr D Crowter (Chairman); Mr. P. Baker; Mr I Henderson; Mr M Hobbis; Mr D Lawson; Mr M De Semlyen; Mrs J Cummins (Secretary)

MARRIAGE BLESSED BY HEAVEN

by the Rev. Brian Garrard

Blessed is everyone that feareth the Lord; that walketh in His ways. For thou shalt eat the labour of thine hands: happy shalt thou be, and it shall be well with thee. Thy wife shall be as a fruitful vine by the sides of thine house: thy children like olive plants round about thy table. Behold, that thus shall the man be blessed that feareth the Lord. The Lord shall bless thee out of Zion: and thou shalt see the good of Jerusalem all the days of thy life. Yea, thou shalt see thy children's children, and peace upon Israel. Psalm 128.

Concerning this portion of Scripture, C. H. Spurgeon wrote: *It is a family hymn - a song for a marriage, or a birth, or for any day in which a happy household has met to praise the Lord.* Dr. George Home could also say: *The psalm was probably sung at the marriages of the Israelites.* As such, it gives a good description of a happy marriage where the couple are exhorted to fear God and walk in His ways. The results will be happiness and contentment between husband, wife and children and blessing upon family life and the church of God.

In a day when the right notion of marriage is little understood and the whole institution is trivialised, Christians of all ages, whether married or not, ought to have a Biblical understanding of what it means to be joined to another. Why?

- If married, it may help to bless and strengthen our own relationship, for we all need to grow in understanding and grace, whether we have been married for four or forty years.
- Perhaps we shall be encouraged to pray for others, as well as ourselves, especially in these times of great stress and strain. Young Christians in particular need our sympathy and intercession, for a goodly number do not always have the best of examples to follow or fail to receive the right teaching concerning the married state.
- It may be that in the providence of God we shall be given opportunities to teach younger people who are about to embark upon matrimony. In addition, perhaps we shall be a Godly example to them.
- Regrettably, even some professing Christians follow the modern practice of ignoring marriage and merely live together. We do need to be watchful and pursue a holy life-style and abstain from all appearance of evil.

HOW CAN WE DEFINE MARRIAGE?

It is a Divine creation. Genesis 2:18 says: *It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him an help meet for him.* Consequently, God made Eve from the rib of Adam and gave her to him as a wife. *Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife: and they shall be one flesh* (Genesis 2:24). Almighty God instituted and ordained the married state and we must emphatically reject the notion that it evolved or that human societies eventually came upon the idea after years of experimentation. In His wisdom and love, the Lord God gave us marriage for the blessing and benefit of *both* sexes. It was not something invented by tyrannical males to oppress women, but is provided for the good of all. Yet no one is to be forced into this state, for it is a voluntary union between one man and one woman to the exclusion of all others (Genesis 2:24).

Marriage is a covenant relationship. See Malachi 2:14, which speaks about *the wife of thy covenant.* Marriage is seen in Scripture as a solemn and binding covenantal relationship between husband and wife and one that is made before God. It is not to be hurriedly entered into or easily broken once a union has been formed. In addition, such a coming together must be formed before witnesses and thus be a proper and legal marriage. All

this is in stark contrast to 'co-habitation', which is often a casual and private affair and in no way corresponds to a legally contracted marriage.

Those who are married come into a bond of oneness. Genesis 2:24 describes the man as cleaving to his wife and of being joined to her, so that they both become one flesh. This intimate union manifests itself on a number of levels especially physically, mentally and, of course, spiritually. How can this oneness be maintained and deepened? By keeping Christ at the very heart and centre of our lives and marriages.

Husbands and wives are to be loyal to one another throughout their lives together. Only death should disrupt the uniting and cleaving of believing hearts. This union is an *exclusive* one and those who deliberately set out to steal the spouse of someone else will ultimately face the judgment of God. Husbands and wives must see to it that they do not grow tired or become bored with each other. Sadly this can happen and if it does, then serious prayer and reflection is needed along with possible Christian counsel. We live in perilous times and Christians are not immune from the temptations and sensual allurements of the modern world. "*God is the witness to every marriage ceremony,*" wrote T.V. Moore, "*and will be the witness to every violation of its vows.*"

God intended that marriage be a happy and joyful relationship of love. Consider Ephesians 5:25, for example: *Husbands, love your wives.* They are to love their wives as Christ loved the church and gave Himself for it. That is, it is to be real, sacrificial and completely unselfish. God has determined that husbands and wives should be loving, affectionate and friendly towards one another, remaining as lovers and best friends for the *whole* of their lives and never ceasing in mutual care and tenderness.

THE REASONS FOR MARRIAGE

Several could no doubt be considered but we will confine ourselves to three.

God gives the married state for the mutual help of men and women, especially the man. See Genesis 2:18; *And the Lord God said, It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him an help meet for him.* That is, someone who is, as Dr. Robert Jarnieson put it, 'altogether suitable to his nature and wants'. The man and woman are not to compete with each other or be constantly at odds. Instead, they are *heirs together of the grace of life* (1 Peter 3:7) and fellow servants of Christ who walk hand in hand to Heaven. As they do so, they must minister to and help one another in the affairs of this life. The oft quoted words of Matthew Henry on Eve being made from Adam's rib are worth recording at this point:- she was not made out of his head to rule over him, nor out of his feet to be trampled upon by him, but out of his side to be equal with him, under his arm to be protected, and near his heart to be beloved. It is important that there is mutual attraction and delight of the eyes, as was clearly the case when Adam looked upon Eve. This is an agreeable picture and, by the grace of God, a deep friendship and fellowship can grow between husband and wife that enrich all who come in contact with them.

Genesis 1:28 gives another purpose for marriage in the goodness of God. This is the increase of the human race, for it is God's will that families should spring up, replenishing the earth. The verse reads: *And God blessed them, and God said unto them, Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth, and subdue it: and have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over every living thing that moveth upon the earth.* It is God's plan that families should arise and be the means of producing children and populating the earth. God has also ordained that children should be brought up within that family unit and be taught, trained and disciplined in a Godly and loving way so that, hopefully, they will become regenerate members of the church of Christ, as well as being law abiding and loyal members of society and the nation.

Good marriages, and hence, good families, provide the necessary ingredients for making stable and secure nations. Where family life is weak, so individual countries are also feeble

and fragile. So too, are churches! A godly, well-regulated home will be reflected in churches where Christ is honoured and obeyed. Besides all this, marriage provides for the meeting of legitimate desires and needs and is a check to sin, weakness and temptation. We repeat; **families who are strong and devoted to Christ will also make for churches and nations who are morally strong.**

HELPS TO A HAPPY MARRIAGE

Put the Godhead first in all things. Remember the summary of the Moral Law (Luke 10:27) *Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy strength, and with all thy mind; and thy neighbour as thyself.* If the Lord is first in our love, faith, prayer, reading of the Bible and works of service, then there will be an antidote to selfishness. We shall love our neighbour as we love ourself, which also includes one's spouse. Why are so many marriages unhappy, including Christian ones? Because husbands and wives are basically self-centred and have forgotten the fundamental need to love God first and others second. All the while, self takes the lowest place we sacrifice and serve. Psalm 128: 1: *Blessed is every one that feareth the Lord; that walketh in His ways.* Indeed, the whole Psalm reflects a life and marriage lived for the Lord and taken up with catering for the needs of someone else.

Marriage requires work and effort if it is to be happy and blessed of God . . . Invest time and attention and it will repay the labour expended. Alas, too many marriages are in name only, because they consist of two people merely living together in the same building. Husbands should aim to improve on their love for their wives and constantly think up ways of caring for them. How does Christ love the church? As that question is pondered, especially in the light of such passages as Ephesians 5:25-33, the husband's attitude can be transformed and all bitterness soon evaporates. Wives, for their part, are to love and respect their husbands and give Scriptural submission. Indeed, throughout their lives together, husbands and wives ought to humbly serve one another.

Love is the key thing. We do not mean just the physical but real, true, genuine, heartfelt love. It will result in an abiding friendship and respect, which delights in helping and being considerate to one another, as well as forgiving and endlessly patient. Coupled with this will be what Robert Bolton called *mutual contentment* with each other.

Above all, husbands and wives need to pray much together, reading the Word and worshipping the Lord in the home and in public with other Christians. These ordinances must never be neglected, not only for our spiritual health's sake but also for the good of a marriage. In this way, the union becomes and remains blessed by God and truly happy. Thomas Watson wrote: *God's love ties the marriage-knot so fast that neither death nor Hell can break it.*

An important point should always be borne in mind for the Christian; never, ever contemplate marriage with an unbeliever. This is a sure formula for a marital catastrophe and gross folly. It is also blatant disobedience (see 2 Corinthians 6:14) and a terrible departure from Christ. If we love Him and our own souls, then always see to it that we marry only in the Lord. A pretty face or handsome figure may beguile some but that is not the vital thing, for physical attraction can fade but the beauty of holiness goes on for all eternity.

HOW CAN WE BE SURE WE ARE MARRYING THE RIGHT PERSON?

This is a question that can trouble a sincere believer, especially those who are young in years and in the faith. Older and more experienced Christians can be a real help to their younger brothers and sisters at this time of questioning and seeking to know God's mind. Consider the following:

If we have met someone whom we would like to marry, it is good to be a little unsure at first. Caution is a wise thing at the start of a relationship. Besides, it will make us reflective and more dependent upon the Lord to guide. Never rush into marriage but take time to know the other person as well as possible, especially in a family and church environment. Be very earnest in prayer to know the mind of God and patiently seek His will.

Is the other person a true Christian? As we have said above, do not even contemplate marriage unless they are. It would also help if they have a similar spiritual outlook and share the same views on churchmanship. Nothing can be more detrimental to a happy marriage than worshipping in separate churches or being in disagreement over important spiritual issues. Remember, if God gives children, then they need to be reared in a home where there is complete unity and harmony.

Are we truly in love or is it an infatuation or just sensual desire? Only prayer and time will tell, plus a genuine desire to put God and His Kingdom first in all things. Some Christians marry after only knowing each other for a few months, but in most cases this is unusual and probably not very wise either. Far better to patiently wait upon the Lord and be sure of His will, than marry in haste and regret it all our days.

HAPPINESS OF THE MARRIED STATE

Marriage rightly and properly entered into, and blessed by Heaven, will glorify God and is a means of sanctification to husband and wife. We began with Psalm 128 and we must conclude by drawing attention to the magnificent picture we are given of joy and fullness in these words. May it please Almighty God to bless our marriages and our homes and perhaps grant something of a spiritual revival and reformation because of them?

Marriage

From: Peace and Truth Magazine

The marriage relation lies at the very root of the social system of nations. The public morality of a people, and the private happiness of the families which compose a people, are deeply involved in the whole question of the law of marriage. The experience of all nations confirms the wisdom of our Lord's decision in this passage (Mark 10:1-12) in the most striking manner. It is a fact clearly ascertained that polygamy and permission to obtain divorce on slight grounds have a direct tendency to promote immorality. In short, the nearer a nation's laws about marriage approach to the law of Christ, the higher has the moral tone of that nation always proved to be.

It becomes all those who are married, or purpose marriage, to ponder well the teaching of our Lord Jesus Christ in this passage. Of all relations of life, none ought to be regarded with such reverence, and none taken in hand so cautiously, as the relation of husband and wife. In no relation is such earthly happiness to be found, if it be entered upon discreetly, advisedly and in the fear of God. In none is so much misery seen to follow, if it be taken in hand unadvisedly, lightly, wantonly and without thought. From no step in life does so much benefit come to the soul if people marry 'in the Lord.' From none does the soul take so much harm if fancy, passion or any mere worldly motive is the only cause which produces the union. Solomon was the wisest of men... "Nevertheless even him did outlandish women cause to sin" (Nehemiah 13:26).

There is, unhappily, only too much necessity for impressing these truths upon people. It is a mournful fact that few steps in life are generally taken with so much levity, self-will and

forgetfulness of God as marriage. Few are the young couples who think of inviting Christ to their wedding! It is a mournful fact that unhappy marriages are one great cause of the misery and sorrow of which there is so much in the world. People find out too late that they have made a mistake, and go in bitterness all their days.

Happy are they who, in the matter of marriage, observe three rules.

- The *first* is to marry only in the Lord, and after prayer for God's approval and blessing.
- The *second* is not to expect too much from their partners, and to remember that marriage is, after all, the union of two sinners, and not of two angels.
- The *third* rule is to strive first and foremost for one another's sanctification. The more holy married people are, the happier they are.

John Charles Ryle

Marriage is a covenant consecrated by God.

John Calvin

God made the human pair in such a manner that it is natural for the husband to lead, for the wife to follow.

William Hendriksen

The woman was made of a rib out of the side of Adam; not made out of his head to rule over him, nor out of his feet to be trampled on by him; but out of his side to be equal to him, under his arm to be protected, and near his heart to be loved.

Matthew Henry

First man must choose his love, and then he must love his choice.

Henry Smith

Man and wife are partners, like two oars in a boat.

Henry Smith

God is the witness to every marriage ceremony, and will be the witness to every violation of its vows.

Thomas V. Moore

There is no estate to which Satan is more opposed than marriage

Martin Luther

NOTE: '*Peace and Truth*' is a quarterly magazine and is available from:

Sovereign Grace Union,

43 Warwick Road, Rayleigh, Essex, SS6 8PQ

www.sgu.org.uk

Who is on the Lord's side?

Campaign report

The campaign continued in Devon/Cornwall with our representation on a stand at the Royal Cornwall Show where we were kindly allowed a section of the David Livingstone International marquee to exhibit the work and literature of Christian Watch and the current campaign.

Sadly, the first day was, as most will know by now, extremely stormy; the marquee opposite to us was destroyed in the high winds and many of us, including the police, in what some may consider an amusing scene, were hanging on to the remaining poles and sides while it could be dismantled. I hear the sheep tent and some others also suffered a similar fate.

Whilst our marquee received no small buffeting, we are thankful that all held up safely. The wild weather meant that, over the course of the show, there were 13,000 less visitors; however, it did have the effect of bringing some into our tent to shelter, where some profitable conversations were held. We also had new member enquiries, with a very zealous family from Wadebridge offering to help out with the work. Hundreds of the new Christian Watch 'About us' leaflets - with tracts inserted - were handed out during the show. We request prayer for the effectual working of the Holy Spirit through these as He wills.

Such has been the influence of Roman Catholicism in the South West that any Reformed Protestant work is a labour on hard and stony ground. However, there are faithful Ministers labouring here and there proclaiming the Word of life. I visited several believers and Pastors whilst in Devon and Cornwall and though there were some who claimed to be 'Reformed', they seemed quite happy to be connected with RC churches and spoke disparagingly of the glorious Reformation – others gave me an enthusiastic reception. I am to return in early August, DV, to speak at three separate prayer meetings about the work of Christian Watch. The dates, for those able to attend are:

- **Tuesday 7th August, 7pm at Whiddon Valley Evangelical Church, Barnstaple**
– Pastor David Kay
- **Wednesday 8th, 7.30pm at Penzance Baptist Church** – Pastor Jonathan Stobbs
- **Provisionally on Thursday 9th at Buddle Lane Evangelical Church, Exeter**
– Pastor Jonathan Munday

Christian Watch in the Exeter area now has a new Contact Group under the leadership of Mr. Shabytah, who is to shortly arrange an initial meeting with the local members. Where possible, please do support this concerned brother who is zealous in the Lord, both by prayer and also physically, in the work at Exeter. As a convert to Christ from the darkness of Islam, Mr. Shabytah objects to the term Islamophobic; as he points out – he is not afraid of Islam but rejects its false teaching.

In like manner the homosexuals and the police refer to Christians as being Homophobic. We, by God's grace, fear no man except the Lord – and Him with reverence and love.

On the subject of the world's opposition, there are increasing reports from all over this nation of harassment by the police and others for proclaiming the Gospel publicly: the actual legislation (Section 5 etc.) is by no means clear, even for legal minds, but I would, as space permits, in a future issue set out what little I know of the legal position as regards witnessing and preaching in the open air, either with amplification or without.

Whilst we are to obey God rather than man when it comes to publishing His truth, I believe that we are entering into days of persecution where, if we can minimise the trouble we encounter from the authorities and provide some lawful defence, so much the better. (See Paul in Acts 22 "but I was free born"). Of course there are those preachers who seem to rail against homosexual perversion and court persecution as if it were a badge of righteousness to be arrested, and we would not support that. But a proclamation of the Gospel and God's view of all sin is a dearly won right of our Christian heritage, as well as our duty when called by God.

If any of our members have had such experiences of police confrontation, please do contact me directly before the next issue of the CW newsletter (August).

Following our Sandown exhibition and meeting afterwards at Ewell, there has been some interest in forming a Kingston, Surrey contact group, with more interest by telephone as I write! I do hope to be able to give further details in our next issue on this.

The brethren in the contacts groups in Horsham and Chichester are jointly holding a meeting at **7pm on the 28th July at Heene Community Centre, 122 Heene Road, Worthing, West Sussex BN11 4PL**. This is to be preceded by an open air witness at Montague Street, Worthing. For further information, please contact **Steven Black on tel. 01903 719154**.

The pull-up campaign banner **'Who is on the Lord's side?'** has brought favourable comments from those who are not even affiliated with us. It is a question Moses put to the people who professed the name of the Lord all those many years ago, when he called them, in God's name, to step apart from all the sin of the people who had made the golden calf, and stand under the banner of holiness and truth.

In our spiritually dark times it is as relevant a question as ever. Who, who is really on the Lord's side?

"Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy Name? and in thy Name have cast out devils? And in thy Name done many wonderful works? And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity" Matt. 7:22,23.

Since this is a vital subject, about which we surely should not be mistaken, what is it then for Christ to know us now and in the Day of Judgment, and to walk with Him in white? It is to know Him in His communications to us through His Word and the love He has to us and we have to Jesus Christ and all His; who as the God/man purchased us with His own blood and lifted us out of the pit. Now, in our adherence to Him and hatred of sin, this makes us to love His Word and to be zealous for souls for His sake – not for any other motive; neither reputation nor profit.

In the language of inspired Scripture: "O Lord, have we waited for thee; the desire of our soul is to Thy Name, and to the remembrance of thee." Isaiah 26:8.

Who then is on the Lord's side? Let him stand with us now.

So we seek, under Jesus our Lord, to form groups of believers in every village, town and city in the UK, and even farther afield; with all who believe that all work done for Him is their reasonable service. In these days of darkness and gathering storm clouds of hatred to God and all His people, I am sure it is needful for us all to encourage each other in the Lord's work. If it was a blessing to Paul, when he received courage at Appiiforum and the Three Taverns, how much more we weak and timid flock need, under God, such a help from each other. If only for this reason alone, such groups comprised of often isolated believers can prosper, serve and glorify their Saviour and King: even Jesus.

In the will of God, I hope soon to be going next to Liverpool, where Christian folk have expressed a desire to have their own contact group there.

I would exhort all members to pray for the work and that the Lord will enable us to continue in it.

Michael Hobbis

National Co-ordinator

Mobile: 07702 431584

Congo - Bringing God's Word to a Troubled Land

By I A Sadler (Member of Christian Watch)

I must record the Lord's faithfulness and gracious hand in the midst of many difficulties during my visit to Eastern Congo in May, 2012 as Chairman of Free Grace Evangelistic Association (FGEA). This visit proved to be the most challenging I have ever made, given the recent civil war in Congo and extreme poverty. After flying via Addis Ababa (Ethiopia) and Entebbe (Uganda), I was met at Kigali airport in Rwanda by Pastor Wakula (co-ordinator of the FGEA branch in Eastern Congo). During the long journey the Lord blessed me with the words: "And the Lord preserved David whithersoever he went." (2 Samuel 8. 6). I had need of this Divine promise.

We immediately met difficulties with the journey to Cyangugu (a town on the Congo border). Instead of being able to take a bus, we had to obtain a taxi for the 7 hour mountainous journey across Rwanda. By God's grace we arrived safely, and at first light we were able to cross the Congo border into the city of Bukavu, arriving just in time for me to speak at a 3 day pastors' conference on the subject "Building on the Sure Foundation of God's Word". I was shocked by the poverty of Congo. Most homes were of very poor construction, with roads and pathways full of mud. Given the daily rains, I had to walk through slippery mud to get to the church. The church building itself was built of very basic materials (corrugated steel sheet roof, propped up by tree trunks, with plastic sheeting for the walls and mud floors). However, it was where the Lord gathered with us. I felt much liberty in preaching on Christ the living and incarnate Word, the written Word and Bible versions, followed by practical godliness and the preaching of the Word. Pastor Wakula reported that I had said many challenging but necessary things for the churches in Congo.

What I spoke on Bible versions, and the corruption in many modern versions, was completely new to the Pastors present. As well as speaking about the English Bible, I also spoke about Bible versions in French. This led to animated discussions when I asked those with a French Bible (all were Segond versions - the most common French version) to look at 1 John 5. 7. One Pastor had a Segond French Bible with the full verse (which reads in English); "For there are three that bear record in Heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost: and these three are one." Some-one else had the name of the "Father" missing, and others had no such verse at all ! There were also vital differences with 1 Timothy 3. 16. I observed that Louis Segond was a liberal theologian who opposed the doctrine of the inspiration of the Scriptures, and that different organisations had used his corrupt translation and altered it as they saw fit. I then spoke about the most faithful version currently available in French, which is the David Martin version (but is difficult to obtain). I then turned to Isaiah 7. 14, where Christ, according to Segond, was born of a "jeune fille" (young woman), but in Martin was born of a "vierge" (virgin). In Revelation 19. 8, Segond states that the saints in heaven "se revêtir" (clothe themselves) with the fine linen which is "les oeuvres justes des saints" (the righteous works of the saints), whereas in Martin the saints in heaven "être vêtue" (are clothed) with the fine linen which is "la justice des Saints" (the righteousness of Saints - ie. Christ's righteousness). At this point one of the senior Pastors exclaimed "C'est différent" (It is different!). Their consternation increased further when I pointed them to Daniel 3. 25, where in the Martin version (as in the KJV) it says that the one with the three Hebrews in the fire is "un fils de Dieu" (a son of God - Christ), whereas in Segond it is "un fils des dieux" (a son of the gods - a Babylonish false god). The Bible College Principal who assisted me in interpreting into Swahili for this session had an English New International Version with him. I asked him to find Matthew 18.11 and Acts 8. 37. After searching in vain, he just covered his face with his NIV in embarrassment, as the NIV omits such vital verses. However, the local language Swahili Union version consistently agreed with the King James Version on all the key verses we examined; the apparent reason being that it is a translation of the English KJV.

We then distributed a number of English KJV Bibles and literature to those who could read English, which I had brought from the UK. I also gave some French Martin Bibles to senior Pastors. On the final day of the conference we distributed a large number of Swahili Union Bibles and a locally printed Swahili translation of my book "Jesus, the Way".

The following day we left Bukavu to head south along the Great Rift Valley to Fizi, a remote town in the mountains above Lake Tanganika. We again had the challenge that the road south of Bukavu had been cut by a flash flood. Having arranged 4x4 transport through the mountains, driving for 5 hours often at speeds of less than 10 miles per hour (such was the condition of the road), we reached the point where the road was broken to meet a confused scene of vehicles and crowds of people. After our baggage, Bibles and books were carried across the river, it remained for me to cross by clambering across a tree trunk (a sort of temporary bridge). We were then met by another vehicle and travelled towards Fizi along Lake Tanganika. This road was very poor with many un-bridged rivers, which led into a region where many terrible atrocities had been committed, with children in rags, some with signs of malnutrition. Many of the villages had notices commemorating massacres. In Fizi itself an atrocity took place as recently as January 2011. Thankfully, the region was calm with order maintained by UN peace-keepers and Congolese soldiers and police, who showed me courtesy throughout.

As we could not reach Fizi before dark, we stopped at a small town for the Saturday night, then set off at first light on the Lord's Day morning reaching Fizi in time for the morning service. I preached on the opening verses of Genesis to a packed church building, which was built of mud bricks with reed/plastic sheet roof. In the afternoon I was introduced to orphans that FGEA are assisting. I was also introduced to the brethren who care for them amidst appalling poverty. I was told that many of the orphans had suffered terrible experiences. On the Monday, I spoke at a one-day Pastor's Conference entitled "Faithfulness to God's Word and Calling"; this included representatives of the local administration, police and army, who also received Swahili Bibles and books.

On the Tuesday we started the long journey back to Kigali stopping on the way at three rural churches, where I briefly preached and Swahili Bibles and books were given to the church. After travelling through Congo and Rwanda, we safely arrived at Kigali airport on Thursday morning for my return flight home. "God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble. ... The Lord of hosts is with us; the God of Jacob is our refuge. Selah." (Psalm 46. 1, 11).

(A fuller account with photographs may be found on the FGEA Website:
www.freegrace-ea.org, under "News")

The Evidences of Being Children of God

By John Vinall. Brighton, 15th June 1856

"Be ye therefore followers of God, as dear children; and walk in love, as Christ also hath loved us, and hath given Himself for us an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweetsmelling savour." (Ephesians 5:1-2)

This is a very sweet and blessed Epistle, as also is that to the Philippians. "All Scripture is given by inspiration of God" (2 Tim. 3:16). And I truly believe that Paul's Epistles were indited by God's Spirit. It is necessary for us to see whether this Epistle is directed to us. Paul addresses one Epistle "to all that be in Rome, beloved of God, called to be saints" (Rom. 1:7). That is the direction. This Epistle is addressed "to the saints which are at Ephesus, and to the faithful in Christ Jesus." If I cannot ascertain that it is written to me, I

should be stealing it. The world at large has nothing to do with these Epistles. "Christ hath loved us." None but the children of God can come in here. I want to know whether I am one of these "us." We have been increasing in our church lately, and some are about to join us this evening, and may have fears as to their being right in doing so. For their sakes I will speak of the evidences of being children. There are four classes – babes – children – young men and fathers. God must add to the church such as should be saved.

How many of you know that you are the children of God? I believe that those who are tender and walk in God's fear, being afraid lest they be doing wrong in coming, are children. The Word of God is addressed to the trembling sinner. Paul speaks of the children in Ephesians, chapter 1:3-5, "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ... Having pre-destinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to Himself." I shall come down lower than this, and speak of the evidences of our being children.

First evidence, "And they shall be all taught of God" (John 6:45). They are taught their sin, and generally learn that by the law. "Blessed is the man whom thou chastenest and teachest him out of thy law." "When the commandment came, sin revived, and I died" (Rom. 7:9). The law is our schoolmaster to bring us to Christ (Gal. 3:24) and a schoolmaster has to instruct children.

"Christ is the Friend of sinners;
Be that forgotten never;
A wounded soul, and not a whole,
Becomes a true believer;
To see sin smarts but slightly;
To own, with lip confession,
Is easier still, but O to feel
Cuts deep beyond expression."

I believe that all God's children are taught at first, more or less, that they are sinners. This brings them to the publican's prayer, "God be merciful to me a sinner."

"A sinner is a sacred thing,
The Holy Ghost has made him so."

How many of you can say that God has given you to feel the guilt of sin? The Lord convinced me that I was a sinner, and that if I died in that state I was lost. I do not say that all are so deeply convinced of sin as some are. Paul was pierced through when convinced of it. "I am Jesus whom thou persecutest." In Acts 2, we read of some that were thus convinced, and they cried out, "Men and brethren, what shall we do?" Then Peter said unto them, "Repent, and be baptised every one of you in the Name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins" (Acts 2:37, 38).

"The contrite heart, and broken,
God will not give to ruin;
This sacrifice He'll not despise,
For 'tis His Spirit's doing."

Secondly, when the heart is broken with a sense of the guilt of sin, God will teach us to fear His holy Name. "Come ye children, hearken unto me, I will teach you the fear of the Lord." If there is no fear, there is no grace. "The fear of the Lord is to hate evil."

Thirdly, they are taught of God to love Christ supremely, and His image in His children. They cannot love without being thus taught. "Love is of God; and every one that loveth is born of God, and knoweth God" (1 John 4:7). "No man can come to me, except the Father which hath sent me draw him: and I will raise him up at the last day" (John 6:44). They shall

come “with weeping, and with supplications will I lead them.” “For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God” (Rom. 8:14). Are you taught that without this love you cannot go to Heaven? “I love them that love Me, and those that seek Me early shall find Me.” “We love Him because He first loved us” (1 John 4:19). You and I can no more create love than we could create the world; for “love is of God.”

A fourth evidence is faith in Jesus Christ. These children never can be satisfied until they appropriate the benefits of Christ’s death, like the poor woman who said within herself ‘if I may but touch His garment I shall be whole.’ Here was the divine principle within. She pressed through the crowd and touched, and Jesus perceived that virtue had gone out of Him. Her faith brought out the virtue.

“True faith’s the life of God;
Deep in the heart it lies;
It lives and labours under load;
Though damped, it never dies.

This is working out your own salvation with fear and trembling (Phil.2:12). “This faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen” (Heb. 11:1). This made the poor woman go through the press. Have you ever found a pressing hard to get to Christ? This is not so easy as many think. The poor woman was constrained to come forward, and confess that she was the person who had touched Christ, and found the healing. “With the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation” (Rom. 10:10). When the Lord speaks pardon and peace to the poor sinner, this will be done.

At one time I came to Brighton heavily burdened with my sin and almost in despair, and I left my daughter at home under distressing circumstances, and supposed to be dying; but when I was here this word was spoken to my heart, “Son, be of good cheer; thy sins be forgiven thee.” This raised me to hope, and my daughter was also raised from that time and restored. She has since gone to glory, as I fully believe.

Has God ever spoken pardon and peace to you? “They shall all know Me, from the least of them unto the greatest of them, saith the Lord: for I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more” (Jer. 31:34). When God speaks peace, and sheds abroad His love in the heart, this is done.

Another sweet evidence, and the substance of all is this, the witness of the Holy Spirit. “The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God” (Rom. 8:16). “Ye have received the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father” (Rom 8:15). This is the crowning evidence. It is the privilege of all God’s children to sit down at His table. Christ, after His resurrection, appeared to His disciples when they had been fishing, and said to them “Children, have ye any meat?” They answered, “No.” And He said unto them, “cast your net on the right side, and ye shall find.” When they had done so and brought the fish to land, they found a fire of coals and fish laid thereon, and bread, all ready for them. The Lord provided all for them. “Jesus saith unto them, bring of the fish which ye have now caught.” The Lord’s love prompted Him to take care of His dear children in this way. Peter had said to the Lord, “I will lay down my life for Thy sake.” He meant what he said, but his fall is to teach us not to speak too fast. Consider first. Now the Lord said to Peter, “Lovest thou me more than these?”

“My standing does my fall procure,
My falling makes me stand more sure.”

Peter once thought he could stand and do more than all the rest. He said, “Though all men should be offended because of Thee, yet will I never be offended.” Now Peter was more

cautious, and his confidence was of a more trembling sort, and he replied to the Lord's enquiry, "Yea, Lord, thou knowest that I love thee." "He saith unto him, feed my lambs." They stand first – the little ones. He saith unto him the second and the third time, "Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou me? Peter was grieved because he said this the third time." It brought so fresh to his remembrance his three times denying the Lord. Let Christ go before, and you follow. "When He putteth forth His own sheep, He goeth before them, and the sheep follow Him, for they know His voice." This is yielding obedience to His call. When Christ called his disciples, He said, "Follow me." That was all He said; and they left all and followed Him. As soon as they hear, they obey. It was seeking Him earnestly with all the heart. When Christ speaks, it is as one having authority. "Return, ye backsliding children, and I will heal your backslidings. Behold we come unto thee, for thou art the Lord our God." This is the new man of grace that responds to God's call. Jesus saw Matthew sitting at the receipt of custom, "and He saith unto him, follow Me. And he arose and followed Him." Thomas was so shut up in unbelief that he said he would not believe unless he put his finger into the print of the nails. But Jesus spoke to him, and faith came by hearing, and he said, "My Lord and my God." "This is the work of God, that ye believe on Him whom He hath sent" (John 6:29).

To follow God is not yielding an unwilling obedience, but faith works by love. Peter said to the Lord, "What shall this man do?" Jesus answered, "If I will that he tarry till I come, what is that to thee? Follow thou me." Here is a cleaving to Christ with all the heart and soul. I have had some foretastes of this precious love. David says, "I will run the way of thy commandments, when thou shalt enlarge my heart" (Ps. 119:32). Be ye followers of Christ; He is very good. Sometimes the following means to copy after. "Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that ye should follow His steps" (1 Pet. 2:21). If you love a person, there will be a copying more or less his ways and manners. Christ loved us: that went first. It was from everlasting. Therefore as the fruits and effects of this love, "with lovingkindness have I drawn thee," (Jer. 31:3), which brings us to say,

"I love the Lord with mind and heart,
His people and His ways;
Envy, and pride and lust depart,
And all His works I praise."

This is a little of the breathing of the soul after Christ. See the further effects of His love, "Hath given Himself for us." "Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends" (John 15:13). This was from His pure love. "Without shedding of blood is no remission" (Heb. 9:22). Paul says, "I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave Himself for me" (Gal. 2:20). He had a personal knowledge of this love. There is such a reality in true godliness: it brings its own evidence. If you can show that you have the fear of God and His love, you need not fear presumption in coming to His table. "Whosoever shall confess me before men, him will I confess also before my Father which is in Heaven." "If ye love me, keep my commandments." This is one of the last commandments that He gave, to observe this ordinance. Christ laid down His life. He said, "I lay down my life that I might take it again, No man taketh it from me, but I lay it down of myself" (John 10:18). "The soul that doeth aught presumptuously, that soul shall be cut off." "He that eateth and drinketh unworthily, eateth and drinketh damnation to himself, not discerning the Lord's body" (1 Cor. 11:29). These words have often been a terror to the little trembling ones, who can discover but little of the Lord's body, but their trembling approach is not presumption, but real faith. "And walk in love," in faith that works by love. "There is but one precious atonement." This I know by heartfelt experience. "God commendeth His love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us" (Rom. 5:8).

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Email: info@christianwatch.net Web: www.christianwatch.org.uk

Registered Charity No 1095108