

CHRISTIAN WATCH

A PROTESTANT BIBLICAL WITNESS

"And what I say unto you

I say unto all, Watch"

Mark 13:37

NEWSLETTER

July/August 2015

August, 2015

To all Christian Watch Members

Dear Friends,

It is alone through the mercy and favour of our kind and gracious Lord God that we are spared to address you again in our Newsletter. We have to prove by personal experience that if we are travelling to a heavenly destination, we have to be weaned from the pleasures of this life. The Lord does not take any of His people reluctantly to the place in glory He has prepared for them. However, when we consider our own personal position, in the light of God's Word and Commandments, doubts and fears so often arise and we question our standing before a Holy God. How vitally important it is for us to look away from ourselves and - with the Lord's merciful help - to consider and plead the sin-atoning merits of His dear Son, Jesus Christ.

We apologise that it has been necessary to combine the July and August Newsletters but two Committee Members have been unable to work on them due to affliction and bereavement. In addition, our Vice-Chairman has been away in the USA for the marriage of his son.

We feel it increasingly important for all who are true professing Christians to earnestly contend for the Word of God. It is a sad reality that so many professing Christians in our day are failing to contend for the vital elements of a Biblically based religion. Some religious denominations, which in earlier days held firmly the vital doctrines of Biblical Christianity, have now departed from them and replaced them with articles that are based upon human reasoning and natural understanding. How few of the young people and children in our day have any knowledge or understanding of the Biblical doctrines and laws upon which they will have to give an account in that final Day of Judgement, which is before each one of us. This is an event which not one person in the whole human race can escape.

In order to pursue our aim of promoting the Word of God, we plan, GW, to attend the Christian Resources Exhibition to be held at the NEC, Birmingham on 8th October. Whilst we appreciate that these 'shows' are very reminiscent of 'Vanity Fair' in *Pilgrim's Progress*, yet we believe it is a good opportunity to show the weak, the wavering and the false, the true Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ. It is surely time to cry out against heresies and false brethren in the Church and we pray the Lord will own and bless our endeavours. (See Page 14 for details of our stand.)

Because of our concern, particularly for the younger generation and the dear children, we are continuing our work on the Ten Commandments Project. This involves supplying schools in pre-selected specific areas with material to encourage them to teach the Ten Commandments and the benefits which accrue to individuals and the whole of society if they are followed. We are thankful particularly to those of our Members who have offered practical and financial support for this important project.

We are clearly told in the Word of God that during the end times upon earth, prior to Christ's return, there will be a period of trouble and persecution that will exceed all that has been previously experienced. Several items we include in this Newsletter express both warnings and concerns as to what the Lord's people may be called upon to endure. We must ever remember, however, that according to the Lord's promise, He will never leave nor forsake His chosen people – those for whom He suffered bled and died.

We include an article entitled '**JESUS**' by Mr. B. A. Ramsbottom in which he shows why the Name of Jesus is above every name and how precious it is to every sinner saved by grace. We hope the Prayer Meeting Address by the late Mr. J. Delves, based on Isaiah 55, will be an encouragement to our Members.

We are pleased to report that one of our Christian Watch Members in Russia, who is a Minister of the Gospel, has been favoured with fruit to his ministry. He has recently set up a new Church in a remote area of his country and baptized several believers. He asks for our prayerful concern that the new Church may be settled and established and that the Lord may continue to help him in his labours.

Finally, we wish you each the Lord's blessing.

Yours in the Lord's service.



David Crowter
Chairman

Management Committee

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

When thy soul is like the thirsty ground in desiring the blood of Christ, then is faith begun, then is Christ realised, though thou feel it not. Blessed are they that hunger and thirst. To eat the flesh and drink the blood of Christ is to believe; but whosoever hungers after His flesh hath already eaten; whosoever thirsteth after Christ's blood hath already drunken. Desire of faith is an argument of love, love of knowledge, knowledge of experience; for faith is known chiefly experimentally. Therefore, "come, taste, and see how gracious the Lord is." First, we taste before we see, feel in our own experience before we know God's sweetness; and unless a man by his own taste hath felt the sweetness of Christ, he cannot desire Him. Pregnant to this purpose is that place: "As new-born babes desire the sincere milk of the Word;" but he adds, "If so be ye have tasted that the Lord is gracious." So that there must first be a knowledge of God's goodness before there can be a desiring; where also note that desiring is a property of a new-born babe. **Daniel Dyke, B.D.**

Choosing Sides in the War Against Evil

By: Rob Schwarzwalder
(Family Research Council)

The writer of Ecclesiastes said “there is nothing new under the sun.”

In one sense, this isn’t quite true. It is doubtful that any of the Old Testament writers used iPads or laptops. But in the sense Ecclesiastes means, it is dead right. Human nature and our patterns of behaviour, the character of temptation and the need for redemption: these and other elemental things remain unchanged across the time-space continuum.

Certainly one of the unpleasant constants of the human experience is the ongoing battle to defend conscience rights and religious liberty, the family unit as it was designed by its Creator and the sanctity of human life from conception to natural death. Although some of the technologies (abortifacient drugs, for example) and laws (*Roe v Wade*) by which this battle is waged have changed, the essential tactics have not:

- Rhetorical deception and manipulation (“Can’t you see it’s about choice – or do you hate women?”)
- Denigration of truth as final and knowable (“You Christians – you’re so intolerant!”)
- In the name of compassion, continue enlarging the State so it usurps the role of God (“Don’t you care about the poor?”)
- In the name of security, lose more and more of your liberties (“Oh, come on you conspiracy theorist – you can trust the Government!”)

And so on.

In the 1920s, orthodox Christian faith had no greater champion than J. Gresham Machen, the brilliant Presbyterian scholar whose winsome communication of Gospel truth made a profound impression even upon such opponents as the caustic agnostic, H. L. Mencken.

The moral, social and intellectual crises of Machen’s day mirror those of our own. Following are quotes by Machen and quotes by more contemporary Christian thinkers. See if you can determine the rough periods in which each is written:

1. Place the lives of children in their formative years, despite the convictions of their parents, under the intimate control of experts appointed by the State; force them to attend schools where the higher aspirations of humanity are crushed out and where the mind is filled with the materialism of the day and it is difficult to see how even the remnants of liberty can subsist.
2. No society that disregards ethical finalities can long postpone ignominious collapse.
3. Paganism is that view of life which finds the highest goal of human existence in the healthy and harmonious and joyous development of existing human faculties. Very different is the Christian ideal. Paganism is optimistic with regard to unaided human nature, whereas Christianity is the religion of the broken heart.
4. There is a simple way to understand the deep conflict of contemporary worldviews. Don’t be intimidated by the word “worldview.” According to the Apostle Paul, there are only two: You worship creation or you worship the Creator (Rom 1:25). This is the ultimate “binary,” by which I mean things that are and remain distinct or different, and will never be fused into one.

5. What is today a matter of academic speculation begins tomorrow to move armies and pull down empires.
6. Today, reality is so privatised and relativised that truth is often understood only in terms of what it means to each person. A pragmatic culture will see truth as whatever works for any given person. Such a culture will interpret the statement that Christianity is true to mean simply that Christianity is one way of life that has worked for someone, but that would not be to say that any other way of life might not work just as well for someone else.

Give up? One, three and five are Machen; two, four and six are respectively theologians: Carl F. H. Henry, Peter Jones and David Wells – all three are from the late-20th and early-21st centuries.

The point is that we are waging a war that proceeds from eternity. The enmity between God and evil is ancient; its manifestations vary, but all involve defiance to the Lord who made us and the establishment of a counter-kingdom in which man seeks insistently, if pathetically, to dethrone Him.

What is new under the sun is not sin but merely the variety of its eruptions.

We either fight well, with grace and truth, with wisdom and courage, in the power of the Holy Spirit, or we choose what ultimately is the losing side. Jesus does win. What is your choice?

The Day of Judgement

(John 12: 44-50)

In these verses there is the certainty of a judgement to come. We find our Lord saying, “He that rejecteth me, and receiveth not my words, hath One that judgeth him: the word that I have spoken, the same shall judge him in the last day.”

There is a last day! The world shall not always go on as it does now. Buying and selling, sowing and reaping, planting and building, marrying and giving in marriage – all this shall come to an end at last. There is a time appointed by the Father when the whole machinery of creation shall stop and the present dispensation shall be changed for another. It had a beginning and it shall also have an end. Banks shall at length close their doors for ever. Stock Exchanges shall be shut. Parliaments shall be dissolved. The very sun, which since Noah’s flood has done his daily work so faithfully, shall rise and set no more. Well would it be if we thought more of this day! Rent days, birthdays, wedding days are often regarded as days of absorbing interest, but they are nothing compared to the last day.

There is judgement coming! Men have their reckoning days and God will at last have His. The trumpet shall sound. The dead shall be raised incorruptible. The living shall be changed. All, of every name and nation and people and tongue, shall stand before the judgement seat of Christ. The books shall be opened and the evidence brought forth. Our true character will come out before the world. There will be no concealment, no evasion, no false colouring. Everyone shall give account of himself to God and all shall be judged according to their works. The wicked shall go away into everlasting fire and the righteous into life eternal.

These are awful truths! But they are truths and ought to be told. No wonder the Roman Governor Felix trembled when Paul the prisoner discoursed about ‘righteousness, temperance and judgement to come’ (Acts 24:25).

**An extract from Daily Bible Readings on the Gospel of John
by J. C. Ryle**

Facing Up To Persecution

By Bill Muehlenberg, Culture Watch

Hands up, who enjoys persecution? OK – so no one does. I don't either. But whether or not we like something has nothing to do with if it is bound to happen. And the Bible makes it perfectly clear from Genesis to Revelation that those who are God's people will have plenty of opposition, persecution and rejection.

This is one of the clearest themes running throughout Scripture. Those who love and serve God will always be hated and resisted by those who hate God. Yet many believers still think they can live a problem-free and easy journey through life. Well they can, but only if they refuse to be true disciples of Jesus Christ.

If they live like the world, love the world, imitate the world, and promote the world, then of course the world will have no problems with such people. And there are millions of such folks in the West. They claim to be followers of Christ but they are really followers of the world.

It is bizarre but I still find myself having to deal with this with other believers. A while back I had posted something on persecution – I forget now what the quote was – but it had to do with true Christianity always involving persecution. It may have been this one:

- There is an apostasy in the Church that is taking place even presently. What will it be when things become tough, when we have to pay something for being a believer, when we open ourselves to opposition and persecution by virtue of our faith? Now it's a snap; now we're not experiencing what they are experiencing in China and Vietnam and other places of persecution. But the day will come when the Anti-Christ spirit will be global, and to meet like this will be perhaps at the risk of our lives, when the doors could be broken in at any moment by the police or by the authorities because what we are about is illegal – society has determined that. How many of us will stand then? Do you see why it's so critical that our faith should not rest on natural things, on pseudo-spiritual things, affected spiritualities where choruses or catch-phrases sustain us? We need to become increasingly authentic in God.

But this way of thinking was not to everyone's liking. One fellow was not interested in talk about opposition and cited a familiar Scripture: "Then had the churches rest throughout all Judaea and Galilee and Samaria, and were edified; and walking in the fear of the Lord, and in the comfort of the Holy Ghost, were multiplied" Acts 9:31.

He seemed to think this should put a stop to any talk about persecution and suffering. This is how I replied to him at the time:

- Thanks ..., but of course context is everything, and a text without a context is a mere pretext. This passage makes perfect sense given the context. Saul had just been converted, so the main source of persecution of the early church was temporarily halted. But persecution obviously continues throughout the rest of the book of Acts. Indeed, what did Jesus tell Saul at the time of his conversion? Fifteen verses previously: "For I will shew him how great things he must suffer for my Name's sake" Acts 9:16.

This is in accord with the entire Biblical teaching. Jesus said, "Remember the word that I said unto you, The servant is not greater than his lord. If they have persecuted Me, they will also persecute you" John 15:20.

Or, as Paul said, "yea, and all that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution" 2 Timothy 3:12. Of course, we enjoy any time of relative peace, but the Bible from cover to cover makes it absolutely clear that those who are truly His will suffer persecution

and be hated by the world. I cannot see how any Biblical Christian can avoid this clear theme in Scripture.

The Timothy passage I mentioned above is given in the form of a promise. While so many believers like to speak about claiming every promise of God, it seems very few are willing to claim this promise. Indeed, such warnings about our fate as believers facing hostility from the world are repeated time and time again.

Jesus often spoke about facing persecution. A few more passages that can be appealed to include:

Matthew 5:10 “*Blessed are they which are persecuted for righteousness' sake: for theirs is the Kingdom of Heaven*”.

Matthew 10:23 “*But when they persecute you in this city, flee ye into another.*”

Mark 13:9 “*But take heed to yourselves: for they shall deliver you up to councils; and in the synagogues ye shall be beaten: and ye shall be brought before rulers and kings for my sake, for a testimony against them.*”

Paul also spoke so often about this:

2 Corinthians 4: 8-10 “*We are troubled on every side, yet not distressed; we are perplexed, but not in despair; Persecuted, but not forsaken; cast down, but not destroyed; Always bearing about in the body the dying of the Lord Jesus, that the life also of Jesus might be made manifest in our body.*”

1 Thessalonians 3:4 “*For verily, when we were with you, we told you before that we should suffer tribulation; even as it came to pass, and ye know.*”

2 Thessalonians 1:4 “*So that we ourselves glory in you in the churches of God for your patience and faith in all your persecutions and tribulations that ye endure;*”

And all the great men and women of God testify to these truths:

“I have often thought that the best Christians are found in the worst of times.” John Bunyan

“I was honoured today with having a few stones, dirt, rotten eggs and pieces of dead cat thrown at me.” George Whitfield

“Persecution is the heirloom of the church and the ensign of the elect.” Charles Spurgeon

“Laughter, ridicule, opposition and persecution are often the only reward which Christ's followers get from the world.” J. C. Ryle

“We have failed. We should have made the people strong for persecution rather than telling them Jesus would come first. Tell the people how to be strong in times of persecution, how to stand when the tribulation comes – to stand and not faint.” Corrie Ten Boom

“It was strictly forbidden to preach to other prisoners. It was understood that whoever was caught doing this received a severe beating. A number of us decided to pay the price for the privilege of preaching, so we accepted [the communists'] terms. It was a deal; we preached - they beat us. We were happy preaching. They were happy beating us, so everyone was happy.” Richard Wurmbrand

“Everyone recognises that Stephen was Spirit-filled when he was performing wonders. Yet he was just as Spirit-filled when he was being stoned to death.” Leonard Ravenhill

"The Christian need not expect to escape opposition. As long as Satan stands to resist the sons of God, as long as the world and the flesh remain, the believing man will meet opposition. Sometimes it will be sharp and obvious, but mostly it will be just the hidden and unsuspected friction set up by circumstances. No one need be anxious about this, however, for God has figured it in and made allowance for it." *A. W. Tozer*

"You mark my words, and it won't be long When persecution begins in this country [USA], and it strips everything from you, and most of the evangelical church goes totally apostate, and little groups are left to be berated, THEN you will see that Christ is enough." *Paul Washer*

"A true man of God prepares God's people for persecution. The false teaches them how to avoid it." *David Pawson*

"Persecution is an enemy the Church has met and mastered many times. Indifference could prove to be a far more dangerous foe." *Brother Andrew, God's Smuggler*

"One of the surest ways to guarantee church growth is to try to persecute it." *Ravi Zacharias*

Again, no one likes hostility, opposition, persecution and suffering - and we, of course, are not to go out of our way seeking such things – but if you are a true follower of Jesus Christ you will face this. If you are not experiencing this, then you may need to examine yourself to see if you are in fact really His.

"Jesus saith unto him, I am the way."

John 14:6

How is Jesus *the way*? In everything that He is to God's people He is the way. His *blood* is the way to Heaven; "for the whole path," as Hart speaks, "is lined with blood." By His precious blood shed upon Calvary's tree, He has put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself and opened a way of access to God. His *righteousness* also is part of the way; for only so far as we stand clothed in His glorious righteousness have we any access unto, any acceptance with, God the Father. And His *love* is the way; for if we walk in love, we walk in Him, for He is love. Every part of the way was devised and is executed by the love of His tender heart.

But the way, also, is the *way of tribulation*. Was not Jesus Himself the great Sufferer? And if He be the way, the only way, I must be conformed to His likeness in suffering. Not to know afflictions and tribulations is not to know Christ. He was "a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief!" And if so, to have no sorrow, to have no acquaintance with grief, and to know nothing of tribulation, is to proclaim to all with a loud voice that we have no union and communion with the Lord Jesus Christ. But we are continually turning aside "to the right hand" or "to the left." There is that cowardice in the heart which cannot bear the cross; there is that slipping into carnal ease and fleshly security, so as to get away from under the painful cross of affliction and suffering. But when we thus turn aside "to the right hand" or "to the left," the voice the Lord sends after us is, "This is the way" – the way of affliction; no other; the way of tribulation, the way of trial, the way of exercise. This is the way in which the King walked of old; and this is the way in which all His people have walked before Him and after Him; for this is the only path in which the footsteps of the flock can be found.

*J. C. Philpot,
'Through Baca's Vale' Daily Portions*

NEWS ITEMS

1. Recent Dead Sea Earthquake Reminder of End Times Earthquake Warnings for Region, By Adam Eliyahu Berkowitz, Prophecy News Watch – 3 August, 2015

Thursday morning (30th July), at 5:39 local time, a 4.4 magnitude earthquake occurred in the Dead Sea region of Israel, an area that is the deepest depression on the face of the planet. Though there were no reports of injury or damage in Israel or neighbouring Jordan, it is certainly worth considering the meaning of the event, especially in the light of other recent earthquakes that have hit Israel and the catastrophic earthquake that hit and struck Nepal a few months ago.

Biblical scholars explain that the name of God, “Elohim”, refers to the aspect revealed through nature and linked to judgement. For early man, and even today, every natural phenomenon can be an awe inspiring experience, an occasionally fearsome reminder of our mortality. An earthquake is, quite literally, a moving experience.

Scientists have noted that the Dead Sea Rift has affected human civilisation through time as well as the flora and fauna of the region, causing migrations and creating water sources. However, it should be noted that the location of Thursday’s earthquake is the precise region of Jericho, known for its city walls that came tumbling down, and also the area of Sodom and Gomorrah. A Biblical perspective certainly seems in order when considering occurrences of geological proportions.

The recent quake was a result of tensions in the Dead Sea Fault which is part of the Syrian-African Rift, extending from Syria to Mozambique. Experts have predicted that a major earthquake could occur in the near future and local authorities have begun projects to bolster buildings against such an event. Tectonic tension is building and most geologists consider a major event to be inevitable.

An earthquake in 1837 in the area killed as many as 5,000 people. The last major earthquake to hit the centre of Israel was a 6.2 magnitude quake in 1927, killing over 500 people and damaging sites, like the Church of the Holy Sepulchre and al-Aqsa Mosque. On 22 March, 2012, a 3.7 earthquake hit the exact region as well.

Prophecies connected to earthquakes abound, seeming to emphasise their Biblical significance, especially in regards to End of Days prophecy:

“Then shall the Lord go forth, and fight against those nations, as when He fought in the day of battle. And His feet shall stand in that day upon the mount of Olives, which is before Jerusalem on the east, and the mount of Olives shall cleave in the midst thereof toward the east and toward the west, and there shall be a very great valley; and half of the mountain shall remove toward the north, and half of it toward the south. And ye shall flee to the valley of the mountains; for the valley of the mountains shall reach unto Azal: yea, ye shall flee, like as ye fled from before the earthquake in the days of Uzziah King of Judah: and the Lord my God shall come, and all the saints with thee.”

Zechariah 14:3 – 5

“And it shall come to pass at the same time when Gog shall come against the land of Israel, saith the Lord God, that my fury shall come up in my face. For in my jealousy and in the fire of my wrath have I spoken, Surely in that day there shall be a great shaking in the land of Israel; So that the fishes of the sea and the fowls of the heaven, and the beasts of the field, and all creeping things that creep upon the earth, and all the men that are upon the face of the earth, shall shake at my presence, and the mountains shall be thrown down, and the steep places shall fall, and every wall shall fall to the ground..”

Ezekiel 38:18 – 20

"In that day a man shall cast his idols of silver, and his idols of gold....To go into the clefts of the rocks, and into the tops of the ragged rocks, for fear of the Lord, and for the glory of His majesty, when He ariseth to shake terribly the earth."

Isaiah 2: 20 – 21

While Thursday's earthquake caused no damage in Israel, the geological occurrence has served as a wake-up call for many. Dr. Shmuel Marco, who has spent many years studying the timeline of earthquakes in the region, told the Jerusalem Post that geological experts should take a hint from the Bible when predicting the next "big one."

Marco noted that prophets became active a certain number of years after major earthquakes. Major earthquakes were recorded in the Jordan Valley in the years 31 BC, 363 AD, 749 AD and 1033 AD. "So roughly," says Marco, "we are talking about an interval of every 400 years. If we follow the patterns of nature, a major quake should be expected any time because almost a whole millennium has passed since the last strong earthquake."

Abbreviated

2. Welsh Religious Education shake-up 'may appal some' – BBC News, 5 August, 2015

Education and Skills Minister, Huw Lewis, told the Senedd he would support plans to re-brand the subject as "religion, philosophy and ethics" last month. The Welsh Government said a new curriculum could help "develop respect and understanding for other cultures."

But what difference would the potential shake-up make to how RE is taught in schools? Mr. Lewis said the potential changes to RE could encourage pupils to also consider "ethics and citizenship" and "what it means to be a citizen of a free country."

The move has been welcomed by the Humanist Society, which represents non-religious people. But faith groups have criticised the proposal with Rheinallt Thomas, former Head of the National Religious Education Centre, claiming there will be a campaign against it.

Former Cardiff Head Teacher and Methodist lay preacher, David Kitchen, told BBC Radio Wales: "Some people will be appalled because they will see it as dilution." However, he said the re-positioning of RE could be "interesting", pointing to the clear link between the big questions in philosophy and religion.

The Education Minister said schools needed to "rise to the challenge" of improving community cohesion, when outlining his vision to the Senedd in mid-July.

Saleem Kidwai, Secretary General of the Muslim Council of Wales, said only effective RE teaching could create a "better understanding" of the "similarities and values" of different faiths. He said positioning RE alongside other suggested subjects would not be helpful. "Ethics and philosophy are part of my religion. So, if religion is taught properly, then it will encompass all of those things," he added.

"The same goes for the Jewish and Christian community and other faith communities."

The teaching of RE is currently a statutory curriculum requirement for pupils from reception onwards, as part of Humanities. It would remain so under the recommendations.

The Welsh Government has invited schools to apply to become "pioneer" institutions, which will help to shape the "detailed design and the development of the new inclusive curriculum" across all subjects. It is expected the new curriculum will be in place in seven to eight years.

Abbreviated

3. Oldest Bible Text since Dead Sea Scrolls Deciphered – By Carrie Dedrick, Editor ChristianHeadlines.com, 21 July, 2015

Archaeologists in Israel have claimed to decipher writing on a 1,500 year old piece of parchment, the oldest Biblical text since the discovery of the Dead Sea Scrolls. Charisma News reports the archaeologists were able to interpret the writing through digital imaging and advanced technology. Though the parchment was found 45 years ago, technology was not able to decipher the script until now.

Israel Antiquities Authority curator, Prina Shor, said, “This is a really big discovery. After the Dead Sea Scrolls, this has been the most significant find of an ancient Bible.”

The parchment was reportedly discovered at Ein Gedi in 1970. Sefi Porat, who co-directed the dig, said the scroll is dated around the year 600; it was uncovered inside the remains of a synagogue.

4. Detroit's Satanic Statue – By Jon Corrigan of CBS News, 27 July, 2015

This past Saturday (25th July) a group unveiled an 8-foot tall statue of the Satanic Temple's Baphomet* in Detroit. The sold-out event took place at an undisclosed industrial building downtown, drawing an estimated 700 people. The location was kept secret because of the threat of religious protests. (*Abbreviated*)

CBS Detroit reports the Satanic Temple hopes the statue will eventually reside outside Arkansas' Statehouse, to be positioned next to a Ten Commandments monument scheduled at the same location.

* Satan represented as a goat with horns, hooves, wings and a beard.

The Saviour Smiles

Joseph Irons

When Jesus deigns to smile
On souls oppressed with grief,
Though sorrow's flood prevail awhile,
They shall obtain relief.

The shinings of His face
Beam from His loving heart;
His countenance will darkness chase,
And joy and peace impart.

One look from that dear Lord,
Whose brow compassion wears,
Will much of heavenly bliss afford,
E'en in this vale of tears.

Our Jesus' smiles reflect
The glories felt above:
The highest bliss I there expect
Is feasting on His love.

O that my soul may live
Beneath His smiling face!
And from His fulness, still receive,
Supplies of gospel grace.

JESUS

This is the Name which is above every name, the Name that is so precious to every sinner saved by grace. The reason for its preciousness is because of its blessed suitability to meet our need as lost, ruined sinners. We have to say:

“Here’s my claim, and here alone;
None a Saviour more can need;
Deeds of righteousness I’ve none;
No, not one good work to plead.”

We are not fond of acrostics, but we remember an old preacher describing the Name of Jesus: “J-E-S-U-S: Jesus exactly suits us sinners.”

The name of Jesus means the Saviour. It was given to the eternal Son of God on His coming into the world of sin and sorrow. “Thou shalt call His name Jesus, for He shall save His people from their sins.” So the Name Jesus has a blessed relationship with us as sinners.

Clearly does the Word of God reveal that Jesus is the *only* Saviour. “Neither is there salvation in any other.” One of Satan’s deceptions today is the popular teaching that there are *many* ways of salvation, and all lead to Heaven. This is a subtle attack on the truth. At one time it was, “You are wrong!” but now it is, “You are right *but...so are many other religions also!*” But there will always be something exclusive in real religion, for “there is none other Name under Heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved.” This is revealed to every grace-taught soul.

Jesus is an Almighty Saviour, “able to save *to the uttermost* all that come unto God by Him.” What a view that is of the triumphant Saviour (Isa. 63:1), coming forth from Edom (the land of the enemy), with dyed garments from Bozrah (its chief city), “mighty to save”! The two vital lessons the Holy Spirit teaches a sinner are his inability to save himself and the gracious ability of the Lord Jesus. So the Word speaks of “a Saviour, and a great one” (Isa. 19:20). If a child wrote that, no doubt the teacher would correct it and say, “Just write, ‘A great Saviour’”; but here is Holy Ghost emphasis: “a Saviour, and a great one.”

This Name, the Name of Jesus, is exceedingly attractive to living souls. We believe this is one point that unites the whole family of God; they can all say, “How sweet the Name of Jesus sounds!” Some cannot speak much, but their desires and affections are drawn out when Jesus is exalted in the Gospel. They can all feelingly say, “The desire of our soul is to Thy Name, and to the remembrance of Thee.” They can sympathise with the old Welsh woman who walked miles each Lord’s Day over the mountains to the house of God. Her neighbours remonstrated with her about the foolishness of this. She could only understand Welsh and the Minister could only speak English, and yet wind, rain and snow could not keep her away. “Ah!” she said. “I can understand one word, the word ‘Jesus.’ And the Minister mentions it so much. It is worth going to hear that!”

In the Song of Solomon the name of Jesus is described as “ointment poured forth” – precious, fragrant, refreshing. Never shall we forget hearing a sermon, at the opening of a new chapel, on the text: “And maketh manifest the savour of His knowledge by us in every place.”

To the wicked the name of Jesus is as “the savour of death unto death.” We understand this to mean that if beautifully smelling roses were placed in a room where a dead man lay, their fragrance would mean nothing to him. So when Jesus is exalted in the Gospel, there is no sweet fragrance in His Name to those that are dead in sin – “the savour of death unto death.” How grace makes a difference!

“The vital savour of His Name
Restores our fainting breath;

Believing, we rejoice in Him,
The Antidote of death."

The Name of Jesus is a worthy Name, "that worthy Name by the which ye are called." Where the fear of God is in exercise, there is a dread lest we should be left to dishonour that Name that means so much to us. We can bear hearing our own name evilly spoken of, but O, the grief when the Lord's Name is blasphemed!

The Name of Jesus is the sinner's only plea, and he needs no other. It is an all-prevailing plea: "For Jesus' sake." It is our only plea in prayer, the ground upon which our prayers are answered. That is why often such poor prayers are so blessedly answered. It is "for Jesus' sake." It is also our only plea for acceptance with God. How can I, a guilty sinner, be accepted by a Holy God? This is the vital question. And there is a blessed answer:

"These He accepts for Jesus' sake,
And views them righteous in His Son."

Finally, Jesus is the ground and foundation of our hope. We have no other. Our only hope is in the Name of Jesus – that is, His precious Name, signifying all that He is, all He has done, all that He still does, exalted in Heaven;

"Then let the Name of Jesus be
To us supremely dear;
Our only, all-prevailing plea,
For *all* our hope is there."

Our prayer often is that our unworthy names might be written on the Saviour's heart. "Set me as a seal upon Thine heart." And His worthy Name is written upon the sinner's heart. It was said that cruel Queen Mary died with the word CALAIS written on her heart – she was so distressed about its loss to the French. The child of God dies with the name JESUS written upon his heart.

*B.A. Ramsbottom,
Gospel Standard, February 2000*

PRAYER MEETING ADDRESS

By the late Mr. J. Delves

Reading: Isaiah 55

The chapter can, by the application of the Holy Spirit, be confirming and re-assuring to those who have a real need of God, feelingly, and who hunger and thirst for the Gospel and cannot rest short of it or be satisfied with less than Christ Himself.

It is noticeable that the relevant invitations are repeated, "Ho, everyone that thirsteth, come ye to the waters;" "Incline your ear, and come unto me." "Seek ye the Lord while He may be found, call ye upon Him while He is near." We may be very familiar with these invitations of the Scripture but if we have a real thirst for Christ and are feeling ready to perish and have earnestly besought Him for some manifestations of His grace, we may be comforted and encouraged to press on, seeing that the Scripture holds forth the invitation to such a character. It is a mercy to be thirsting for God and for the Gospel. Many people spend their money for that which is not bread and their labour for that which satisfieth not. They rest in their own confidences and are comfortable, but they will, if they are out of Christ, prove them to be a refuge of lies and a false hiding place.

What a mercy to have an aching void the world can never fill and in our hunger and thirst to have some view by faith of the sufficiency of Christ and the fulness of grace that is in Him. We may be too rich but we cannot be too poor. "He that hath no money" – that is the difficult point. That is so crucifying to proud flesh, because it means we must be brought down, stripped and emptied from vessel to vessel, so as to have room in our souls for Him, so that He may be welcome there. Such are invited to "Come, buy and eat." There must be sacrifice, but no equivalent, no purchasing of the Gospel by parting or paying with something of equal value. Oh no! "Mercy never can be bought, grace is free and all's the Lamb's." In order to be prepared for the Gospel and to receive it, we must part with our own righteousness. There must be a sacrifice, and a sacrifice of a painful nature, for Christ.

It is in this way as the Apostle Paul expressed it, "I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord; for whom I have suffered the loss of all things." This is where the "buy" intended here comes in. To be brought to nothingness, to lose, to sacrifice what we may have trusted in, to be emptied and then to be filled, to be killed and then to be made alive.

The promise is very re-assuring, "Incline your ear and come unto me." This is faith, the coming of a needy sinner, coming with his need and sin and hunger and thirst, coming with what he has which in itself is of no real value to him; yet if he comes to Christ he must come with his own rags and his own poverty and his own ruin. "Incline your ear, and come unto me; hear, and your soul shall live; and I will make an everlasting covenant with you, even the sure mercies of David." "Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts; and let him return unto the Lord, and He will have mercy upon him; and to our God, for He will abundantly pardon." The promises are linked with the invitations, and where repentance is real and is in the heart and where sin is forsaken, then God according to His promise, whoever it may be, irrespective of persons, will receive a repenting sinner. What a mercy this is! "Seek ye the Lord while He may be found." He may be found by His people sometimes in the means of grace, sometimes in prayer, sometimes in private reading. What a mercy it is that God is findable and that we are encouraged to wait upon Him to come over the mountains of our sins and to visit our souls with His salvation.

O may the Lord bring His Gospel to us in His own time and way and refresh our souls with the rich provision of His grace and give to those who hunger and thirst for Him a sealing of a promise of the covenant, as it says, "I will make an everlasting covenant with you, even the sure mercies of David." The sure mercies of David are the blessing of Christ, the blessings that He is exalted to give and when they are made over to us, are felt and applied and experienced in their healing efficacy. The Lord makes His promise with us, He makes His covenant with us, and does thereby seal us as His children. What a mercy to be brought to some feeling of this. May the Lord grant it to us and give us to feel something of it, that we may hope with some gracious persuasion that the Lord is our God.

FAITH'S POWER:

What can be more feeble than the ivy, the jessamine, or the vine? Yet these, by the assistance of their tendrils or claspers, rise and are supported, until they sometimes mount as high as the tree or the wall that sustains them. So the weak believer, laying hold on Jesus by the tendril of faith, rises into the fullness of God, defies the invading storm and becomes a fruitful vine upon the wall.

Toplady

"So teach us to number our days, that we may apply our hearts unto wisdom..." Psalm 90:12

A few more years shall roll,
A few more seasons come,
And we shall be with those that rest
Asleep within the tomb;

Then, O my Lord, prepare
My soul for that great day.

O wash me in Thy precious blood,
And take my sins away.

A few more suns shall set
O'er these dark hills of time,
And we shall be where suns are not,
A far serener clime:

Then, O my Lord, prepare
My soul for that blest day
O wash me in Thy precious blood,
And take my sins away.

A few more storms shall beat
On this wild rocky shore,
And we shall be where tempests cease,
And surges swell no more;

Then, O my Lord, prepare
My soul for that calm day.
O wash me in Thy precious blood,
And take my sins away.

A few more struggles here,
A few more partings o'er,
A few more toils, a few more tears,
And we shall weep no more;

Then, O my Lord prepare
My soul for that bright day.
O wash me in Thy precious blood,
And take my sins away.

A few more Sabbaths here
Shall cheer us on our way,
And we shall reach the endless rest,
Th' eternal Sabbath day;

Then, O my Lord, prepare
My soul for that sweet day.
O wash me in Thy precious blood,
And take my sins away.

'Tis but a little while,
And He shall come again
That died that we might live, who lives
That we with Him may reign;

Then, O my Lord, prepare
My soul for that glad day.
O wash me in Thy precious blood,
And take my sins away.

H. Bonar

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