



CHRISTIAN WATCH

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A Protestant Biblical Witness

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“ I SEE NOTHING IN
SCRIPTURE EXCEPT
CHRIST CRUCIFIED ”

—MARTIN LUTHER

‘And what I say unto you I say unto all, Watch.’

Mark 13:37

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Cover Picture:

Statue of Martin Luther outside Dresden Frauenkirche

Dear Friends,

So the Brexit vote has now taken place and Parliament has accepted the will of the people as expressed in the referendum on 23rd June, 2016. Even a challenge in the courts has failed to slow the process down and we now await the beginning of the negotiations with expectancy.

It was on 1st August, 1961 that Britain applied to join the EEC (European Economic Community - Common Market), but the then President of France, Charles de Gaulle, laid down impossible conditions for British entry. It took another 12 years before the treachery of Prime Minister Edward Heath took us in – on 1st January, 1973 – and many of us have campaigned for over 40 years to have this decision overturned.

The aptly named Treaty of Rome was signed and the British people were told that the Treaty would NOT lead to any loss of sovereignty, but, in later years, Heath admitted that he had lied because he knew that the British people would not approve of him signing the Treaty if they knew the truth.

But, as Christians, we have that assurance that every event is under Divine control. Psalm 31 v 5 – *my times are in Thy hand* – are words of great comfort – assurance – nothing is left to chance. As Pastor James Smith (a predecessor to Rev. Charles Haddon Spurgeon) once remarked:

‘The hand of God is in all that occurs - directing, over-ruling and sanctifying to our good. He appointed all that concerns us and appointed all in infinite wisdom and love; therefore we should not judge rashly, or conclude hastily. We know not what may occur today, but we know that the purpose of God cannot be frustrated, nor can His promise fail. He ‘worketh all things after the counsel of His own will.’ He says: ‘My counsel shall stand and I will do all my pleasure.’ Let us consider then that everything passes under our Father’s eye; is over-ruled by our Saviour’s power and is directed by the Holy Spirit to do us good. Be not therefore anxious, troubled, or cast down; the Lord God Omnipotent reigns and He is God.’

In Scotland, a leading Church of Scotland Minister has been awarded one of the highest honours of the Roman Catholic Church. Dr. Sheilagh Keating, former Moderator, received the reward in recognition of her work to improve relations between the two Churches. The award was granted personally by Pope Francis. She said, “I have been watching this Pope with

tremendous interest and excitement about the things that he is saying and the encouragement that he is giving to ecumenical relations. So to have this honour from Pope Francis just adds to its significance. It is wonderful." Even ignoring the fact that this woman ought not to have been a Minister in the first place, the Word of God is clear – Amos 3 v 3 – *'Can two walk together except they be agreed?'* I don't expect to be receiving any such reward from Pope Francis on behalf of Christian Watch in the foreseeable future. May God enable us to be faithful to His Word.

This is the 500th Anniversary year of Martin Luther nailing his 95 theses to the Church door at Wittenberg. Our main article in this Newsletter is the first part of **Roman Catholics Join Lutherans in Commemorating the Reformation** by Shaun Willcock, emphasising the truth about Lutheranism.

Homeward Bound, although written over 100 years ago, forewarns of coming times when men will not endure sound doctrine. It is as relevant today as it was in 1896 and the warning is the same – Brethren, the time is short. Let us contend earnestly for the faith once delivered unto the saints.

The Importance of Political Involvement by Bill Muehlenberg (Culture Watch) is clear that politics is not everything and politics cannot save us, but it is incumbent upon all believers to have some political awareness and involvement. Items of interest from Australia and the USA are included.

Several items of **News and Current Affairs** concern President Donald Trump and the US Embassy in Jerusalem; the persecuted Church and the proposed 'British Values' oath.

Looking Back and Forward by J.C. Philpot is an encouraging message based on the well-known hymn lines – 'He who has helped me hitherto, Will help me all my journey through.'

In closing, may I take this opportunity to thank all of you who have renewed your subscriptions for 2017 and to those of you who have made additional donations. Please continue to remember Christian Watch in your prayers – and particularly the witness in several Exhibitions throughout the year. If you have yet to renew your subscription, we look forward to hearing from you.

May God richly bless you in your work and witness for Him in 2017.

Yours in His service,

Ian R. Henderson (Vice-Chairman)

**Almost 500 Years Later:
Roman Catholics Join Lutherans in
Commemorating the Reformation!**

By: Shaun Willcock

PART 1

In 1517, an obscure German monk named Martin Luther nailed his 95 Theses to the castle door of Wittenberg, Germany – and sparked a revolution that came to be known as the Protestant Reformation; and the world was never the same again. It was radically changed - and for the better.

The year 2017 marks the 500th anniversary of that momentous event and – not surprisingly – all kinds of celebrations have been planned to commemorate it, by various “Protestant” institutions; but the religious institution which should want nothing whatsoever to do with such commemorations and celebrations should be the Roman Catholic institution. After all, the Reformation struck the greatest blow to Papal power that it had ever experienced. As a result of the Reformation, the Papacy’s vice-like grip on almost all of Europe was broken in a number of countries. For the first time since the Papacy had assumed control of Europe centuries before, it experienced immense losses, politically and religiously.

No, the Roman Papacy should have no grounds for celebration in 2017. *And yet...*

And yet, as unbelievable as it sounds, this very Roman Papacy, which condemned the Reformers as heretics, which has spent the past five centuries trying to destroy the “Protestant” institutions and stamp out Protestantism altogether – this very Roman Papacy *is* commemorating the 500th anniversary of the Reformation alongside “Protestant” institutions!

Who could ever have imagined that such a day would ever arrive? But it has. Even Romanists are open-mouthed with astonishment at how times have changed. Let this fact sink in: *the Papacy is commemorating the Reformation!*

What in the world is going on?

It would be more appropriate to ask: what, in the dark regions of Hell, is going on? For *that is where these astounding events*

were first planned and, what we are witnessing, is simply the outworking, in history, of satanic activity in Satan's underground.

Please note that I often put the term "Protestant" in inverted commas to indicate that these are not true Biblical Protestants at all. Most of what passes for "Protestantism" today is an absolute disgrace. In such cases it is nothing but an empty word. Likewise, I do the same with the word "church", when a false "church" is meant.

Kicking Off the Festivities: Lutheran/Papist Collaboration in Sweden - Led by the Jesuit Pope

Reformation celebrations got off to an early start in Sweden. Instead of waiting for the year 2017 to roll around, late October 2016 saw the Jesuit Pope, Francis I, travelling to Sweden to join Swedish Lutherans in their festivities – at their invitation!

Just stop right there for a moment. Think about this. Roman Catholics celebrating *with* Lutherans? The members of the very religious institution founded by Martin Luther himself? The man Rome denounced as an arch-heretic and a devil? The man excommunicated and damned to Hell by the Pope at the time? The man who called the Pope Antichrist?

Yes, indeed. *That* Luther. *That* Lutheran institution. In 2016, Francis I, the Pope of Rome, the current occupant of the throne of Antichrist, travelled to Sweden, at the invitation of Swedish Lutherans, to commemorate Martin Luther and the Reformation. And there they all were, high-ranking Lutherans and the Roman Pontiff and his cronies, smiling at one another, embracing one another and calling one another "brother".

Extraordinary, extraordinary times.

Romish Cardinal, Kurt Koch, President of the "Pontifical Council for the Unity of Christians" said, "This is not just the commemoration of the 500th anniversary of the Reformation, but



Pope Francis passes by a statue portraying Martin Luther as he arrives for an audience with Lutheran pilgrims at the Vatican.

also the celebration of fifty years of dialogue between Lutherans and Catholics.”¹ And Greg Burke, Director of the Vatican Press Office, said that the papal visit to Sweden for this joint ecumenical commemoration was a big step forward because Roman Catholics and Lutherans were “no longer defining themselves in opposition to each other,” but in communion with each other.² In essence he was saying: the Lutheran Reformation is now dead. It is over.

His sentiments were echoed by Martin Junge, Secretary General of the Lutheran World Federation, who said: “We are working on the last details of what we truly believe is an historic commemoration... We do this a year ahead of the 500th anniversary, thereby hoping to give a very strong ecumenical signal that we understand because of our dialogues, because of the trust that has grown among us, because also we have been able to remove some of the obstacles of doctrinal differences among us, that the time is mature, is ripe, to move ‘from conflict to communion’ [the name of the joint Roman Catholic/Lutheran document].”³

Yes, the Lutheran Reformation, the Lutheran break with Rome, is now over. The rift is all but healed. It took 500 years, but Rome has conquered and what Martin Luther began has been, essentially, obliterated. Yes, Lutheranism still exists, but the protest with Rome is over. The differences with Rome have been overcome. That which for so long divided Lutherans from Papists has been resolved. The Lutheran Reformation can now be related to the dustbin of history.

Junge also said: “I believe, only a few years ago, if you would have said that there would have been a joint commemoration of the Reformation on the day Lutherans and Protestants all together commemorate and remember the Reformation and, that that would be done together, Catholics and Lutherans, many would have said ‘impossible;’ so I take courage, personally, of the many impossible things that have become possible, because of dialogue and the many different ways in which we have been engaged.”⁴ He was right in saying that only a few short years ago such a thing would have been dismissed as impossible.

As one Romish writer put it: “This trip is further proof that the perception the Lutherans have of the Pope has changed. Nobody could have imagined years ago that they would unite to celebrate the anniversary [of the Reformation] together.”⁵ Note well: Lutheran perceptions of the Pope have changed – not Papist

perceptions of Lutheranism! It is always the “Protestants” who change, the “Protestants” who move towards Rome, the “Protestants” who surrender this, that or the next thing. Rome never changes, never gives up anything. She firmly maintains the errors, heresies and blasphemies she has always maintained – and even adds to them. She has no intention of changing anything. If the two sides come together, it must always be by the “Protestant” side moving Romeward. This is not both sides “finding common ground”, as ecumenists fondly imagine. It is always the “Protestants” moving Romeward.

Next, consider the comments of Jens-Martin Kruse, another Lutheran leader. This man has played a very prominent part in ecumenical dialogue, with Popes John Paul II, Benedict XVI and Francis I all having visited his “church” in Rome. “I think the world needs a gesture of Christian unity,” he said. “A gesture. A gesture that says Christians are committed to peace. There are no more wars between us. The world needs a gesture that says that peace is possible.”⁶

This Lutheran feels the need to show that “Christians are committed to peace”, because he thinks that Roman Catholics and Lutherans are true Christians and yet he well knows that both institutions have committed atrocities in the past. The Lutheran institution murdered those (such as the Anabaptists) with whom it did not agree (there is plenty of evidence, too often ignored by many Protestants who would prefer to view Lutheranism as a true Christian church⁷), just as its Papal mother had murdered Lutherans and others. But we have news for this deceived man: *true* Christians do not need to make any empty gestures about their commitment to peace, for *all* true Christians seek always to live peaceful lives, harming none, following Christ the Prince of Peace. It is only *false* religious systems, such as the Papist and the Lutheran, which have to try to convince an understandably sceptical world that they are peaceful, when their histories are so filled with violence.



Pope Francis gives a gift to Rev Jens-Martin Kruse during a visit to a German Evangelical Lutheran Church.

And also, no true Christian, or true Christian church, would ever seek “unity” with the Great Whore, the Mother of Harlots and Abominations of the earth, the Papal system! This would be to sin against God (2 Cor. 6:14-18; Eph. 5:11; Rev. 18:4,5).

This man also said: “We need strong Popes and Bishops with courage, because we must continue toward the path to unity. There is not enough theological dialogue. We must bear witness together.”⁸ Now why would a Lutheran Pastor be longing for “strong Popes”? And where in the Bible does it say that everyone must continue on the path to this false “unity”? Certainly, neither the Lord Jesus Christ, nor His Apostles, ever taught such a thing! As for “bearing witness together”, light cannot bear witness *with* darkness, nor does light bear witness *to* darkness. It is impossible. Therefore, if Lutherans are able to bear witness together with Papists, there is only one conclusion we can draw: they are *both* in spiritual darkness – for there is no Gospel light in Rome and, therefore, any other institution in fellowship with Rome has no Gospel light in it either.



Pope Francis leads a joint commemoration of the Reformation, together with the President and General Secretary of the Lutheran World Federation in Lund cathedral.

Why were the 2016 celebrations held in Sweden? The reason was that this country is the headquarters of the Lutheran World Federation, which invited

Francis, and which has been so committed to ecumenical relations with the Papacy for many decades.

And so it came to pass that Francis jetted into Sweden “on an ecumenical journey to commemorate the start of the Reformation by focusing on the 50 years of dialogue that have highlighted the points of unity between Catholics and Lutherans.”⁹ There always were many points of unity between the two, but today there are even more – thanks to half a century of devilish ecumenical deception.

The Truth about Lutheranism

It is vitally important to understand that Lutheranism has *never* been soundly Biblical. At no time in its history could Lutheranism

have ever been called a true, Bible-believing denomination. It has been a dreadful error, on the part of so many Bible-believing Protestants, to assume that Lutheranism is Biblical. If they only properly studied Lutheran doctrine and practice, they would discover just how *very close to Roman Catholicism* Lutheranism really is and always has been! Yes, Luther broke with Rome; but he retained so much from Romanism within his Lutheran movement, that it must truthfully be said Lutheranism was nothing but a “daughter whore” of the Papal system, the “Great Whore” of Revelation 17. In verse 5 of that great prophetic chapter it says: “And upon her forehead was a name written, MYSTERY, BABYLON THE GREAT, THE MOTHER OF HARLOTS AND ABOMINATIONS OF THE EARTH.” Rome, the Great Harlot, is the mother of other harlots - and Lutheranism was one of them. It was a rebellious daughter, yes, but a daughter nevertheless.

Among other things, Lutheranism retained the damnable heresy of baptismal regeneration – that by baptism, one is born again.¹⁰ It also retained the concept of a “State Church”, which meant it kept the persecuting spirit of its mother and was filled with unregenerate people who considered themselves to be Christians just because they were born to Lutheran parents and baptised in the Lutheran way; and its doctrine of consubstantiation was only marginally different from the doctrine of transubstantiation in the Roman Catholic Mass.

What, then, has been the situation these past five centuries?

Firstly, Lutheranism was *never* truly Biblical. It was *never*, in reality, a true Christian church! And as the years and then the centuries went by, it grew worse and worse, taking on board various errors which even Luther would not have permitted. Today it is even more of a religious monstrosity than it ever was before.

Secondly, precisely because Lutheranism was nothing but a modified version of Romanism, it was very easy, once the diabolical ecumenical movement began decades ago, for Romanists to find much common ground with Lutherans. In this way, Rome’s agenda for eventually taking full control of Lutheranism has been pushed forward by leaps and bounds.

And thirdly, the Jesuits have infiltrated Lutheranism for centuries, moving it even further away from the Bible than it was at the beginning (and it was never truly Biblical to begin with),

putting their own men (and even women!) in positions of authority within it and *gutting* it from the inside, turning it into an empty shell of its former self.

Therefore, true Bible-believing Christians should not be surprised at the fact that now, five centuries after Luther, Lutherans are tripping on their vestments in their haste to lay the gutted remains of their “church” at the feet of the Pope of Rome and to issue pitiful *mea culpas* for ever breaking with Rome in the first place. And make no mistake, the Pope and his henchmen have not been slow to begin to grind the Lutherans underfoot. For this is what has been happening, in essence. They may call it “Lutheran/Roman Catholic unity”, but this is not what it is. What it is, is the Papacy sucking the Lutheran institution back into its clutches. These are not equal partners. Rome is the winner, Lutheranism the loser.

To be concluded in the next Newsletter, GW.

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HOMEWARD BOUND

Pilgrim Papers - Gospel Magazine 1896

When this meets the eye of the reader, we shall have passed another milestone in life's little journey: the past year – its trials, its difficulties, its pleasures, its hopes – passed away for ever; but the progress of time accomplishes this fact for every soul of man – they are one year nearer home.

This is a blessed thought to a believer established in a full assurance that, through grace, Jesus has gone to prepare a place for him and, where Jesus is, there he shall surely be. But it carries with this fact an awful truth to the unbeliever – that he, too, is nearer home; for, *“as the tree falls, so it will lie.”* *“He that is unjust, let him be unjust still; and he which is filthy, let him be filthy still; and he that is righteous, let him be righteous still; and he that is holy, let him be holy still.”*

These words announce the solemn truth that all have their home and into it they enter when they die. So that the broad fact lies before us that every creature lives for his final home and, when death comes, he goes *“to his own place,”* his *“own*

company.” He is emphatically “gathered to his fathers,” godly or ungodly.

The character and spirit of ancient idolaters we have marked out by the prophet Jeremiah in these descriptive words: “*Whom they have loved, and whom they have served, and after whom they have walked, and whom they have sought, and whom they have worshipped.*” This fitly describes the whole human family who are living while here for their final home. By the change of the object worshipped, we may trace in these words the religion of saints as well as of sinners, the children of God and the seed of Satan. The elect who obtain grace and the rest who are blinded, all alike live for their final home; and the character of the religion of each, whether truth or error, may be defined by these words of the prophet.

The grand drift of Satan in the present day is to get rid of the boundary lines that mark the separation between the Church of God and the world, between truth and error, between false peace and the Spirit’s peace and so to mix up and unite together opposite elements that they may produce quietude in the minds of all upon this important point – ***Where shall I live when I die?*** All sorts of means are employed by Satan to lull souls to sleep and keep them in false and fatal security.



‘All Scripture is given by inspiration of God...’ – 2 Timothy 3.16

One especially prevalent now in the Churches is the absence of distinctive truths in the pulpits. Doctrine is considered as a bone of contention only and, to preserve peace, universal charity keeps it out of sight altogether. The Apostle Paul, in his admonitions to Timothy, forewarns him of coming times, when “*men will not endure sound doctrine.*” He counsels him to speak things that “*become sound doctrine*” and he reproves vicious practices as “*contrary to sound doctrine.*” Godly servants are admonished to walk in obedience to their Masters, “*that the Name of God and His doctrine be not blasphemed.*” The Apostle charges Timothy thus: “*Take heed unto thyself, and unto the doctrine.*” “*Give attendance to reading, to exhortation, to doctrine.*” “*Exhort with all longsuffering and doctrine.*” “*Speak things that become sound doctrine.*” “*Preach the Word, reprove, rebuke, exhort, with all longsuffering and doctrine.*” And of the authority to do this, he

declares, *"All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness."*

The fear of giving offence and producing strife and contention may account for the timidity of some who withhold the doctrines which our Lord preached and the Apostles proclaimed. The Word abounds with exhortations to fidelity to the truth, as declared by God in His Word, whether men will hear or whether they will forbear; and the "views" as truth, is designated in the present day, that are denounced as uncharitable, bigoted, one-sided, exclusive, narrow-minded, are held up in the Word of God as the only way to Heaven – not, it may be, to the full assurance of understanding to many of God's elect, but it is the foundation upon which they stand, whether they know it or not, whether they are clear or confused upon the matter. For the Gospel fact is, *"By grace are ye saved through faith, and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God."* This, in brief, comprehends the doctrines of grace. The Scriptures are express upon this point – the importance of doctrine – and there is a warning word for those who are led away *"by every wind of doctrine."* The Apostle, who is termed the "loving disciple" by the advocates of universal charity, shows no tenderness to those who deny the truth as it is connected with the person and work of Christ. He tells the elect lady, *"If there come any unto you, and bring not this doctrine receive him not into your house, neither bid him God speed."* – And again, he declares decisively, *"Whosoever transgresseth and abideth not in the doctrine of Christ, hath not God."* Is there less importance in doctrine at the present time than there was in the Apostle's day? Is there less cause to show to the family of God the foundation of their mercies, in setting forth the doctrines whereon these mercies are built? We think not. Declension in doctrine is sooner or later manifested by declension in practice and the mixture of the Church and the world is to be ascribed to the mixed Gospel of the day. The suppression of true doctrine and the proclamation of error is now the universal refuge of dead professors, carnal worshippers and sensational religionists. But there is a remnant, according to the election of grace, to whom the Lord will give Pastors after His own heart. *"He will feed them in their desolate places."* And of them it is said, *"Whom shall He teach knowledge? And whom shall He make to understand doctrine? Them that are weaned from the milk, and drawn from the breast."* And for those who are ignorant and out of the way the promise runs *"They also*

that erred in spirit shall come to understand, and they that murmured shall learn doctrine."

But the Lord's people, to whom the doctrines of grace have been experimentally revealed, must expect the same result which Scripture records as invariably belonging to truth, namely, the enmity of Satan and the opposition of the world. From the days of Abel downward it has been the same; and, when the God of Truth in human form preached the truth, it only proved the same fact.

The religion of the day that suits the multitude has this password – **Universal**, and it suits the devil well, as thereby souls are lulled into fatal security; but the password of the Church is – **Revelation**. *"This is the work of God, that ye may believe,"* and the subjects of this work know something of a personal religion wrought on the sinner, which is the issue of a limited love in the heart of their Redeemer (Ps. 136).

One year nearer home may well remind the saints of the words of the Apostle: *"Brethren, the time is short: it remaineth that they that wept be as though they wept not, and they that rejoiced as though they rejoiced not, and they that buy as though they possessed not; and they that use this world as not abusing it."* Then *"let us do good unto all men, especially to the household of faith; "let us seek to spread and circulate the pure truth of God; let us maintain the cause of God by liberality if in a position so to do and by self-denial if straitened in means; let us not be ashamed to take up the cross, which adherence to the doctrines of grace unfailingly brings; let us "contend earnestly for the faith once delivered unto the saints;" and let us each in our lowly path endeavour to "adorn the doctrine of God our Saviour, and walk worthy of the vocation whereby we are called."*

"All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works." 2 Timothy 3:16,17

On all subjects connected with our most holy faith, it is most desirable to have clear views. Every point of Divine truth is laid down with the greatest clearness and precision in the Word of God. The darkness, the ignorance, the confusion which prevent us from seeing it are all in us. But as we search the Scriptures; as we meditate upon them; as we by prayer and supplication draw

light, life and wisdom out of Him “in whom are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge;” and, above all, as we mix faith with what we read, there is often, if not usually, a gradual breaking-in of light; and as we follow up its Heavenly rays, it shines more clearly and broadly and the truth stands out more fully and prominently before our eyes. This is the only way in which we can be “filled with the knowledge of God’s will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding,” and thus be established in the faith, abounding therein with thanksgiving. To understand the Scriptures, to see in it the mind of the Holy Spirit, to be deeply penetrated with, and inwardly possessed of, the Heavenly wisdom, holy instruction and gracious revelation of the counsels and will of God unfolded therein, demands much and continual patient and prayerful study. As in business, diligence and industry lead on to prosperity and success and sloth and idleness are the sure road to ruin; so in the greatest, most serious and important of all business, the concerns of the soul, there is a holy diligence, a Heavenly industry, whereby it thrives and grows, and there is a slothful indolence whereby it becomes clothed with rags (Proverbs 22:21).

*J. C. Philpot,
‘Through Baca’s Vale’*

THE IMPORTANCE OF POLITICAL INVOLVEMENT

By: Bill Muehlenberg

Culture Watch – November, 2016

Politics is not everything and politics cannot save us, but the political realm is nonetheless quite important and we avoid political engagement to our own detriment. It is incumbent upon all believers to have some political awareness and involvement. If we don’t, the other side will keep winning by default.

That means Christians should not only be informed voters and intelligent participants in a democracy, but also be willing to become politicians as well, if God so leads. Evil triumphs in the political realm when good Christians do nothing politically.

While not everyone can stand as a candidate, we all can be active in the political arena by learning as much as we can,

sharing as much as we can and seeking to be salt and light there; that includes getting in the public arena to share your political interests and being in touch with politicians to let them know your concerns.

Several recent political outcomes demonstrate the importance of Christian political involvement and engagement.

Australia - The first comes from a vote taken in South Australia in November. Another pro-euthanasia Bill was introduced, debated and then voted on. Thankfully, the pro-life side won, but only just. As one news report opens:

“The 15th attempt to pass voluntary euthanasia laws in South Australia has failed by one vote in the South Australian Parliament. After an over-night sitting, the latest bill was defeated in Parliament’s Lower House on the casting ballot of Speaker, Michael Atkinson, after MPs were deadlocked at 23-23 on a conscience vote. It had earlier passed a second reading vote, the first time such legislation had got so far.”



South Australian Parliament

This is tremendous news indeed. Various groups and individuals were involved who fought long and hard on this.

Another important political battle almost succeeded in Victoria, but was defeated because it ended up in a tied vote. I refer to a motion to scrap the wretched Safe Schools programme introduced in the State by Victorian MP, Dr Rachel Carling-Jenkins, of the Democratic Labour Party.

Groups like the ACL (Australian Christian Lobby) were also involved in this battle. Dan Flynn of the Victorian ACL said about the 18 MPs who voted for the motion: -

“These MPs were standing up for thousands of parents who had not been consulted in the implementation of this programme which is, according to its founder, Roz Ward, ‘not about stopping bullying...but about supporting gender and sexual diversity’.

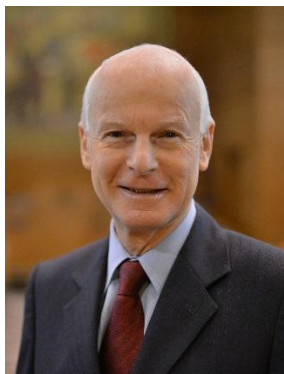
The MPs voted on a motion..... which called for the removal and subsequent review of the programme. The motion has elevated the

voice of Victorian parents concerned about their children being taught that gender is fluid and that Safe Schools continues in Primary schools, transitioning boys into girls and girls into boys.

Unfortunately, the Government, the Greens and the Sex Party remain together in supporting the controversial programme and hence the vote to remove Safe Schools was tied at 18 all.

Finally, a brief story of a pleasant political victory coming out of America:

U.S.A - Oregon Labour Commissioner Brad Avakian, who came to national attention for heftily fining a local bakery that refused to make a wedding cake for a lesbian couple, lost. Avakian, a champion of the LGBTQ community, was running for Secretary of State. In the end, the opponent, Dennis Richardson, won 48% of the popular vote, beating Avakian by nearly 100,000 votes – the first Republican to win a State-wide office in Oregon since 2002.



Dennis Richardson

These three stories should remind us all in no uncertain terms just how important politics is and why we all must be involved in the political realm. Sure, we win some and we lose some, but on some occasions, we can have some very substantial victories indeed.

But refusing to be involved will mean that we will just keep on losing – and everyone suffers if that happens. Let me conclude with a few useful quotes from past and present and the place and importance of politics:

- *“The price of apathy towards public affairs is to be ruled by evil men.”* Plato
- *“Just because you do not take an interest in politics doesn’t mean politics won’t take an interest in you.”* Pericles
- *“A society of sheep must in time beget a Government of wolves.”* Bertrand de Jouvenel
- *“Good Governments can’t bring Heaven down to earth, but bad Governments can bring Hell up from below.”* Akos Balough

Abbreviated

Mahmoud Abbas: US Embassy move to Jerusalem would hurt peace. BBC website, 14 January, 2017

Palestinian leader Mahmoud Abbas has warned that peace could suffer if President Donald Trump carries out plans to move the US Embassy in Israel from Tel Aviv to Jerusalem.

He spoke at the inauguration of the Palestinian Embassy to the Holy See, after meeting Pope Francis. The Vatican recognised Palestinian statehood a year and a half ago.



Mahmoud Abbas

The status of Jerusalem is one of the most sensitive and complex issues of the entire Middle East conflict.

Palestinians view East Jerusalem as the Capital of their future State but Israel proclaims the entire city as its Capital.

The Pope has repeatedly supported moves to re-start the peace process.

Relations between the Holy See and Palestinian territories were upgraded in 2015 with the signing of a treaty recognising Palestinian statehood – a move that angered Israel.

Abbreviated

91 Parliamentarians Attend Launch of 2017 World Watch List

– Open Doors, 12 January, 2017

At least 91 Parliamentarians, including 80 MPs and 11 Peers, attended the launch of Open Doors, 2017 World Watch List, which was hosted by Theresa Villiers MP. Parliamentarians and other guests heard testimonies from Aminu Sule, a Church leader from Northern Nigeria, Daniel, a Church leader from Erbil, Iraq and Lisa Pearce, CEO of Open Doors UK & Ireland, who called on Parliamentarians to act on behalf of persecuted Christians.

In opening the event, Theresa Villiers said, “This is increasingly a well-recognised and important event on the Parliamentary calendar.” The annual launch of the World Watch

List in Parliament of those countries where it is toughest to be a Christian has gained real momentum thanks to people like you speaking out for your persecuted Church family and contacting your MP to tell them that international freedom of religion and belief is important to you – thank you! Your voice makes a difference.

Aminu Sule, a Church leader from northern Nigeria, talked about the violent attacks his congregation have experienced at the hands of radical Islamic group, Boko Haram.

In 2011, his Church had over 400 members; today, there are fewer than 20, as members have been killed by the militants or fled for their safety. “I can’t count the number of people I have buried,” he said. He also had received a text message from



Boko Haram, telling him that they were going to kill him.

Theresa Villiers opens the launch of the World Watch List 2017.

He also explained about the discrimination Christians in his State, Yobe, face from the Government. Yobe is one of the States that has adopted Sharia (Islamic law). “We have been treated as second class citizens,” he said. He also described how Christian communities are often denied access to basic amenities, such as water and electricity and displaced Christians are often denied access to vital aid when it is distributed by the local Government. “They have no food to eat and their children are cryingthey are dying of hunger and I cannot help them.”

He asked for prayer for Christians in northern Nigeria. “Pray that God will give us a heart of forgiveness.”

Those attending then heard from Daniel, a Church leader in Erbil, Iraq, via video - due to travel disruptions. “We are being killed every day and counted as lambs for slaughter,” he said. “We have unlimited stories of persecution.”

He described how his family were forced to flee Baghdad on his 16th Birthday when they were threatened by Al-Qaeda. He also spoke of the more recent invasion of the self-proclaimed Islamic State, who forced Christians to convert to Islam, pay a tax, or leave their homes. The other alternative was that ‘they will be executed and killed in public.’ Daniel’s Church in Erbil is one of

Open Doors local partners and has been supporting thousands of displaced families.

He emphasised the important role the Church has to play in bringing reconciliation to Iraq and the vital importance of a continuing Christian presence. “Christians are representing an example of love and peace in Iraq. Imagine if my country will lose this example – who else will be the example of peace and love in my country? IS? Al-Qaeda?”

He went on to say, “Many people in the West are afraid, but we are on the frontline of the battle. We are not afraid. I ask you, your people and your Governments, on behalf of the Christians of Iraq, please stay in solidarity with us. Please pray for us.”

Lisa Pearce then summarised the findings of the report, including the rapid growth of persecution against Christians in south Asia in the past year. “In India alone last year, there was a violent attack on a Christian or a Church on average 15 times per week.”

She then called on Parliamentarians to act to protect international freedom of religion and belief. She said, “Not only should Article 18 – Freedom of Religion or Belief – not be the human right that somehow comes lower in the priority list than many of the others, but it should be recognised that freedom of religion or belief is the necessary pre-cursor for many other human rights in a huge number of countries that the UK has relationships with. The UK is connected through aid or trade with at least 30 of the 50 countries on this year’s list. That means we have influence with those countries to varying degrees.”

Abbreviated

Letter to a local MP on the subject of the proposed Equality Oath which is to be based on ‘British values’

(The following excellent letter from Dr. Alan C. Clifford, Pastor of Norwich Reformed Church to his local MP, may be used in whole or in part for anyone wishing to write to their MP on this important subject.)

Dear...

Writing as one of your concerned constituents, I ask that you call on the Prime Minister to drop the planned Equality Oath.

Surely everyone should support equality before the law and equality of opportunity, but in practice equality is being used to promote political correctness.

As a Christian, I am alarmed that an Equality Oath will be used to marginalise Christians from public life.

The equality agenda promotes things most people object to, for instance:

- * The banning of well-known public figures from speaking on university campuses.
- * Sacking or disciplining staff who object to same-sex marriage.
- * Requiring church schools to become secular.
- * Dropping the titles Mr. and Mrs. from Council websites and leaflets.
- * Asking children to choose from a list of 23 genders.
- * Providing only 'gender neutral' toilets in schools.

Furthermore, the on-going court case against Ashers Baking Company shows how the equality agenda is increasingly used to marginalise Christians and suppress free speech.

One can only conclude that Ofsted inspections of schools with a religious ethos have shown clearly that it is not capable of assessing 'British values', which are traditionally Judeo-Christian.

Regarding the Conservative manifesto promise at the General Election to oppose "sweeping, authoritarian measures that would threaten our hard-won freedoms", how can the Prime Minister consistently and honestly propose the Equality Oath?

One fears that the Equality Oath will not work because extremists will have no hesitation subscribing to it while having no intention of obeying it.

Can you vote for the proposed Oath that will take away freedom of speech in public life?

For my part, the Government's 'British values' policy is too broad and is threatening my freedom.

May I remind you that Christians are law-abiding citizens who support democracy and we should not be treated as extremists for our Biblical beliefs?

I trust I may count on your sympathetic response to my concerns.

Yours sincerely,

“In Him we live, and move, and have our being.”

Acts 17:28

Before the blessed and only Potentate, all the nations of the earth are but as the dust upon the balance, and the small drop of a bucket, and might be thought (if compared with the immensity of works) scarcely worthy of His notice; yet here He presides, pervades, provides, protects, and rules. In Him His creatures live, move and have their being: from Him is their food and preservation. The eyes of all are upon Him: what He gives they gather and can gather no more; and at His word they sink into the dust. There is not a worm that crawls upon the ground, or a flower that grows in the pathless wilderness, or a shell upon the sea-shore, but bears the impress of His wisdom, power and goodness.

With respect to men, He reigns with uncontrolled dominion over every Kingdom, family and individual. Here we may be astonished at His wisdom in employing free agents, the greater part of whom are His enemies, to accomplish His purposes: but, however reluctant, they all serve Him. His patience likewise is wonderful. Multitudes, yes nearly our whole species, spend the life and strength which He affords them, and abuse all the bounties He heaps upon them, in the ways of sin. His commands are disregarded, His name blasphemed, His mercy disdained, His power defied – yet still He spares. It is an eminent part of His government to restrain the depravity of human nature and, in various ways, to check its effects, which, if left to itself, without His providential control, would presently make earth the very image of Hell: for the vilest men are not suffered to perpetrate a thousandth part of the evil which their hearts would prompt them to. The earth, though lying in the wicked one, is filled with the goodness of the Lord.

From: **Jewels from John Newton**

Daily Readings from the Works of John Newton

– Selected by **Miller Ferrie**

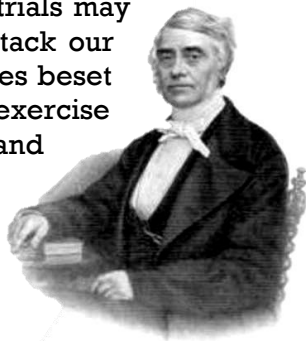
Cardiphonia – Letters to a Nobleman

LOOKING BACK AND FORWARD

(Part of a New Year Address)

By: **J. C. Philpot**

But now let us look forward as well as backward. The year before our eyes may hold in its bosom events which may deeply concern us and affect us more sensibly than those of that which is past. We know what is past, but we know not what is to come. What personal, what family, what providential trials may await us, we know not. Sickness may attack our bodies, death enter our families, difficulties beset our circumstances, trials and temptations exercise our minds, snares entangle our feet and many dark and gloomy clouds make our path one of heaviness and sorrow. Every year hitherto has brought its trials in its train; and how can we expect the coming year to be exempt?



J. C. Philpot

What then? Shall we sit down and wring our hands at the prospect of anticipated trials? Shall we go forward to meet them, or wait till they meet us? Anticipation is often worse than the reality and for this simple reason, that no strength or support is either promised or given for trials of our own forecasting. "As thy days" (not "as thy fears") "so shall thy strength be." "Hitherto," said Samuel, "hath the Lord helped us"; but the Ebenezer ("the stone of help") was the memorial of a battle won, not of a battle in prospect.

The well-known and often-sung lines,

"He who has helped me hitherto,
Will help me all my journey through"

well express the hope and confidence of a believing heart. If indeed we are His, whatever our trials may be, His grace will be sufficient for us. He who has brought us thus far on the road, who has so borne with our crooked manners in the wilderness and never yet forsaken us, though we have so often forsaken Him, will still, we trust, lead us along; will still guide and guard us and be our God, our Father and our Friend, not only to the end of the next year, if spared to see it, but the end of our life.

May He bring us very near to Himself; may His fear be ever alive in our heart; may He hold up our goings in His paths, that our footsteps slip not; may He keep us from evil, that it may not grieve us; and may He constrain us, by every constraint of His dying love, to live to His praise that we may glorify Him in our body and spirit, which are His. Blessed with His presence, we need fear no ill; favoured with His smile, we need dread no foe; upheld by His power, we need shrink from no trial; strengthened by His grace, we need apprehend no suffering.

Knowing what we are and have been when left to ourselves, the slips that we have made, the snares that we have been entangled in, the shame and sorrow that we have procured to ourselves, well may we dread to go forth in the coming year alone; well may we say, "If Thy presence go not with me, carry me not up hence", and may we not add, "For wherein shall it be known here that I and Thy people have found grace in Thy sight? Is it not in that Thou goest with us? So shall we be separated, I and Thy people, from all the people that are upon the face of the earth." May we be thus manifested as those who have found grace in the Lord's sight; and, as a peculiar people, zealous of good works, may we be separated from all the people, profane or professing, who think and act otherwise, that are upon the face of the earth.

*From: Sin and Salvation, Selections from J. C. Philpot,
Edited by Mr. B. A. Ramsbottom*

*"If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things
which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right
hand of God.
Set your affection on things above, not on things
on the earth.
For ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in
God."*

Colossians 3:1-3

“Exceeding great and precious promises”

2 Peter 1:4

How firm a foundation, ye saints of the Lord,
Is laid for your faith in His excellent word!
What more can He say than to you He has said,
You who unto Jesus for refuge have fled?

In every condition – in sickness, in health,
In poverty's vale, or abounding in wealth;
At home, or abroad on the land, on the sea,
“As thy days may demand, shall thy strength ever be.

“Fear not, I am with thee; O be not dismayed;
I, I am thy God, and will still give thee aid;
I'll strengthen thee, help thee and cause thee to stand,
Upheld by My righteous, omnipotent hand.

“When through the deep waters I call thee to go,
The rivers of woe shall not thee overflow;
For I will be with thee, thy troubles to bless,
And sanctify to thee thy deepest distress.

“When though fiery trials thy pathway shall lie,
My grace all-sufficient shall be thy supply;
The flame shall not hurt thee; I only design
Thy dross to consume, and thy gold to refine.

“E'en down to old age, all My people shall prove
My sovereign, eternal, unchangeable love;
And when hoary hairs shall their temples adorn,
Like lambs they shall still in My bosom be borne.

“The soul that on Jesus has leaned for repose,
I will not, I will not desert to his foes;
That soul, though all Hell should endeavour to shake,
I'll never, no never, no never forsake.”

K. 1787

Gadsby Hymn Book (329)

Dates for your diary:

CW OUTREACHES IN 2017

Devon County Show,

Westpoint, Clyst St. Mary, EX5 1DJ

18 - 20 May, 2017

South of England Show,

Ardingly, West Sussex, RH17 6TL

8 - 10 June, 2017

Christian Resources Exhibition

Sandown Park, Portsmouth Road, Esher, KT10 9AJ

17 - 19 October, 2017

Footnotes for the article on pages 3 - 9

¹ *To Celebrate or Not to Celebrate: a Look at Pope Francis' Multifaceted Trip to Sweden*, Rome Reports, October 26, 2016, www.romereports.com

² *Cardinal Koch: Pope's Visit to Sweden Emphasises 3 Aspects*, October 28, 2016. Zenit.org.

³ *Cardinal Koch: Pope's Visit to Sweden Emphasises 3 Aspects*, October 28, 2016. Zenit.org.

⁴ *To Celebrate or Not to Celebrate: a Look at Pope Francis' Multifaceted Trip to Sweden*, Rome Reports, October 26, 2016, www.romereports.com.

⁵ *The Pope Has Already Arrived in Sweden*, Rome Reports, October 31, 2016, www.romereports.com.

⁶ *Why Pope Francis Goes to Sweden for the 500th Anniversary of the Protestant Reformation*, Rome Reports, October 22, 2016. www.romereports.com.

⁷ For example, see *Martyrs Mirror*, by Thieleman J. Van Braght, 1660, reprinted by Herald Press, Scottsdale, Pennsylvania; and *The Reformers and their Stepchildren*, and *The Anatomy of a Hybrid*, both by Leonard Verduin, The Christian Hymnary Publishers, Sarasota, Florida.

⁸ *Why Pope Francis Goes to Sweden for the 500th Anniversary of the Protestant Reformation*, Rome Reports, October 22, 2016, www.romereports.com.

⁹ *Pope in Sweden: Our Separation Has Enabled Better Understanding of Some Aspects of Faith*, November 1, 2016. Zenit.org.

¹⁰ *See Born Again Through Baptism? The Lutheran Teaching Compared with the Bible*, by Shaun Willcock (Gospel tract for Lutherans), Bible Based Ministries, www.biblebasedministries.co.uk

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by **Pastor Roland Burrows**

‘Who is on the Lord’s Side?’

“After these things.....Sennacherib”

II Chronicles 32:1

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CHRISTIAN WATCH

PO Box 2113
Nuneaton, CV11 6ZY

info@christianwatch.org.uk
www.christianwatch.org.uk