

CHRISTIAN WATCH

Issue No. 9

A Protestant Biblical Witness

May/June 2017

The eyes of the LORD are in every place, beholding the evil and the good.

Proverbs 15:3

'And what I say unto you I say unto all, Watch.'

Mark 13:37

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June, 2017

Dear Friends,

As our thoughts and prayers go out to the families of the bereaved and those that have been injured and traumatised in the recent Islamic bombing in Manchester, I would like to remind you of a statement made by the U.S. Department of Homeland Security in September, 2016. It reads as follows: *“Terrorists are focused on concerts, sporting events and outdoor gatherings because such venues often pursue simple, achievable attacks with an emphasis on economic impact and mass casualties.”* So as the politicians of the UK, the USA and Europe line up to condemn yet another Islamic atrocity – *“shocking,” “horrific,” “a terrible incident,” “a tragic incident,” “incomprehensible”* - we must ask the question why is there a persistent resolve to pretend, at whatever cost, that the UK, the USA and Europe are NOT at war, even though it is blindingly obvious that others are at war with them? Islamic terrorism is not mindless violence - it is clear calculated terror tactics to force the eventual submission of its target. Quote from 1968 – *“We must be mad, literally mad, as a nation to be permitting the annual inflow of some 50,000 dependants, who are, for the most part, the material of the future growth of the immigrant-descended population. It is like watching a nation busily engaged in heaping up its own funeral pyre. As I look ahead, I am filled with foreboding; like the Roman, I seem to see ‘the River Tiber foaming with much blood’”* (Enoch Powell, 20th April, 1968).

On 8th June, we have the opportunity again to cast our vote for a new Government and Parliament. As Bible-believing Christians, we must pray earnestly for guidance on where to place our X. There is much to concern us as, as well as Islamic terrorism, there is mounting opposition in all Parties to Christian values. Whatever your thoughts may be, pray that the Lord will give Godly direction. We are instructed in God’s Word to pray for those in authority over us – *“I exhort therefore, that, first of all, supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks, be made for all men; for Kings, and for all that are in authority, that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and honesty. For this is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Saviour; Who will have all men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth (1 Timothy 2 v 1-4).* Let us particularly remember to pray for those whom we

know to be Christian, that their stand in Parliament is made for His glory.

Much of this current Newsletter is concentrating on the 500th Anniversary of the Protestant Reformation, when Martin Luther nailed his 95 theses to the Church door at Wittenburg – **Why do the 5 Solas Matter Today** and **Luther's Snow Storm**. **Fight the good fight of faith** emphasises that true Christianity is a fight – a battle – and the true Christian is called upon to be a soldier for the Lord Jesus Christ. **Should such a man as I flee?** calls upon us as Christians to consider the life of Nehemiah and to know our calling – it is the work of God.

News & Current Affairs commences with a report on Ashers Bakery. The Supreme Court has agreed to hear legal arguments at a Hearing scheduled to take place over two days in October. This is a vitally important case, as the ruling in the Belfast Court undermined democratic freedom. It undermined religious freedom and it undermined free speech.

A Report on the CW Outreach at Devon County Agricultural Show is also included in the Newsletter. Please continue to pray for the CW stand and workers in the South of England Show (8th – 10th June) and the Christian Resources Exhibition in Sandown Park (17th – 19th October).

Finally, an uplifting portion by J. C. Philpot, **“Oh that thou wouldest bless me indeed!”**

In closing, may I ask for your prayers for both our Chairman, David Crowter, and his wife. Both are battling ill health at the present time and are currently in temporary respite care (David has had a fall and broken a bone in his ankle). Pray that the Lord would bless them with His Presence at this difficult time.

Yours in the Saviour's Name,

Ian R. Henderson
(Vice-Chairman)

Why do the 5 Solas Matter Today?

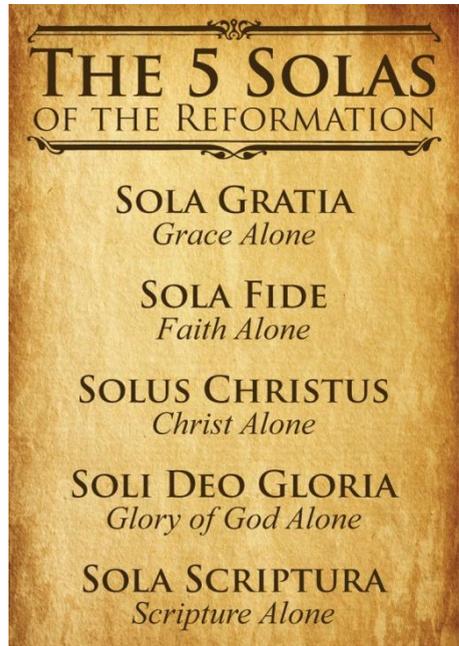
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Large companies spend millions of pounds designing their logos and branding. Should this go wrong, it can be embarrassing and expensive. However, when done well, a firm, institution, or even a concept can gain widespread public recognition and have a huge advantage over its rivals.

Here we will consider the core message or ‘brand message’ of the Reformation.

Still going strong

Nearly five hundred years ago, the core message of the Reformation was summed up in the Five Solas. They cover a huge amount of theological ground quickly and memorably. They have stood the test of time and, the fact that we still know and write about them today, proves this. Our Reformed forefathers did not use focus groups or slick marketing strategies to create them – in fact, we don’t know who thought of them or when or where they first appeared. Not knowing this is a positive, because we focus on the substance of the message rather than personalities!



What are the Five Solas?

The Five Solas (this Latin word means ‘alone’) of the Reformation are: Scripture Alone, Grace Alone, Faith Alone, Christ Alone and the Glory of God Alone. They show us the foundation of our faith – the Bible, God’s word, that has been given to us. They bring us to the means of our salvation – “...by grace through faith”. We then

come to the very centre of our faith – Jesus Christ. Finally, we are reminded that whatever we do, we do it to the glory of God alone. This is summed up in words from the Shorter Catechism, “*Man’s chief end is to glorify God and to enjoy Him forever*”.

Are they theological, historical, or practical?

Are the Five Solas Theological, historical, or practical? If we try to put them into just one of these boxes, we will miss out! The greatest benefits and blessings will come when we view them in their historical context, realise how succinctly they sum up the central themes of theology and recognise that they are of great practical use.

The Church has been blessed with many clear statements of faith summarising what the Bible says: the Apostles’ Creed, the Five Solas, the Westminster Confession of Faith, to name just a few. However, there is no point in simply possessing them as ancient and respected documents; rather, we should apply them in our faith and practice today!

1. SCRIPTURE ALONE

Above all else, the Reformation was a return to the Bible. This return is as relevant and needful now as it was then. The society we live in has more or less rejected the Bible. Even among professing Christians, some doubt the authority, authenticity or accuracy of the Bible.

Others happily believe prophetic utterances that contradict the Bible. Some are guided by a ‘traditionalism’ that

shapes the Bible to suit what they believe, rather than vice-versa. Eventually the Bible, on a practical level, is ignored or rejected by those who claim to honour it!



Always Challenged

From the earliest times, reliance on the Word of God has been challenged. God's arch-enemy lied to our first parents regarding eating of the tree, telling them, "*Ye shall not surely die*" (Genesis 3:4), when God had told them the opposite. There have been constant attempts over the centuries to erode our foundational belief in the Bible. Every generation of Christians will face this challenge afresh in some form or other. Although it constantly comes in new forms, its aim remains the same! So, the Church and Christians need to be alert to this today.

A Strong Foundation

Examining where the Bible came from, what it contains and why it was given, helps us understand why Scripture Alone is so foundational.

The contents of the Bible came from our Triune God. Paul tells the young Minister, Timothy, "*All scripture is given by inspiration of God*" (2 Timothy 3:16). "Inspiration of God" is a single Greek word, "theopneustos", meaning '*God-breathed*'. Therefore, the Scriptures are '*inspired by God*'. 2 Peter 1:21 elaborates, "*For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man: but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost.*"

The Bible was written over 1500 years by more than 40 authors. These authors came from different backgrounds and from three different continents (Asia, Africa and Europe). The Bible contains 66 separate books; 39 in the Old Testament and 27 in the New Testament. The Bible starts with creation, tells of the Fall of man into sin, of the coming Messiah, Jesus; then gives a synopsis of Jesus' life on earth – His virgin birth, His ministry, His death, His resurrection and ends with the prophecy of His return and final judgement.

The Westminster Confession of Faith (Chapter 1, Section 10) states:

"...the supreme judge by which all controversies of religion are to be determined, and all decrees of councils, opinions of ancient writers, doctrines of men, and private spirits, are to be examined, and in whose sentence we are to rest, can be no other but the Holy Spirit speaking in the Scripture".

Presbyterians also believe (Westminster Shorter Catechism Q&A 3):

"The Scriptures principally teach, what man is to believe concerning God, and what duty God requires of man".

The “Just my Bible and me” attitude

Scripture Alone does not mean that we should not have creeds, confessions or statements of faith. Rather, these documents are useful to clarify theology. The best theological minds of each generation have debated them in the light of Scripture to ensure that they concur with Biblical teaching.

So *“the real question is not, as often pretended, between the Word of God and the creed of man, but between the tried and proved faith of the collective body of God’s people, and the private judgement and the unassisted wisdom of the repudiator of creeds”.* (Archibald Alexander Hodge, *The Confession of Faith*, p.2)

The Reformers’ insistence on Sola Scriptura brought the church firmly back to a position of adherence to the Scriptures as the final authority. It is good to recall what has taken place in the past. It is even more important to grasp the relevance and benefits that a reliance on Sola Scriptura will bring to our lives, our community and our Government.

2. GRACE ALONE

Grace has been described as “undeserved kindness”; “everything for nothing to those who deserve nothing”; the acrostic G-R-A-C-E stands for

God’s – Riches – At – Christ’s – Expense.

By God’s Grace Alone we are saved! Professor John Murray explained the absolute necessity and depth of God’s grace:

“We cannot think of sinners as merely undeserving; they are all so ill-deserving. The grace of God to sinners is, therefore, not simply unmerited favour; it is also favour shown to the ill-deserving, indeed to the Hell-deserving.”

(J. Murray, *Collected Writing of John Murray*, Volume 1, p. 119)



What is Sin?

Do you understand what sin is? Do you realise that everyone, including you, is a sinner? As the Shorter Catechism explains:

Q 14. What is sin?

A. Sin is any want of conformity unto, or transgression of, the law of God.

Scripture tells us “*For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God*” (Romans 3:23). Only when we understand what sin is and its consequences, do we even begin to understand the greatness and wonder of God’s free grace!

Terry L. Johnson points out, “*Grace, by definition, is that which is not required but given freely anyway...grace is the un-required, un-obligated, self-determined, self-motivated, freely given mercy of God in Christ*”. (Johnson, *The Case for Traditional Protestantism*, p. 111)

Old, yet ever new

Grace Alone is particularly relevant in a society that places a huge emphasis on self-reliance. In the past, this was simply called works religion! When individuals and groups simply rely on their own self-effort to gain acceptance with God, they, consciously or not, have rejected God’s grace.

Only the façade left

Many once great denominations maintain a façade of adhering to the Gospel while rejecting Grace Alone. In many town re-developments, planners keep the façade of old buildings while changing the inner structure. Tragically, when Grace Alone is removed from the message of a church, it may look the same but the substance is gone!

The reality of grace

Today many speak about grace, but their message is not salvation by Grace Alone. In Galatians 1:6-9, Paul condemns in the strongest terms such departures from the message of Grace Alone. He exposes it as a false Gospel and those who teach such as ‘perverters’ of the true Gospel.

It was grace that moved John Newton to write the words,

**'Twas grace that taught my heart to fear,
And grace my fears relieved.
How precious did that grace appear,
The hour I first believed.'**

It is by Grace Alone we are saved.

3. FAITH ALONE

"Real faith in Jesus can exist only when the lofty claims of Jesus are taken as sober fact, and when He is regarded as the eternal Son of God, come voluntarily to earth for our redemption,



manifesting His glory to those who commit their lives to Him. The truth is that in great sections of the modern Church, Jesus is no long the object of faith, but has become merely an example for faith...".

(J. Gresham Machen, 'What is Faith?', 1925)

Faith is not an abstract notion. It has a focus - and that focus is Jesus Christ. It is not enough to 'have faith' if the object is not Christ. If we do this, we have created a works religion built on our own righteousness or good works. We trust that our faith in our good works will be enough to gain salvation rather than relying wholly on Jesus Christ and His death on the cross. Ephesians 2:8-9 warns us about this: *"For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: Not of works, lest any man should boast."*

Luther's faith discovery

The great cry of the Reformation, 'Faith Alone', was no new discovery but a re-discovery of Biblical teaching. Luther, seeking for acceptance with a Holy God on the basis of his works, found nothing but total despair. He wrote, *"I did not love God. Yes, I*

hated the righteous God who punishes sinners and secretly, if not blasphemously, certainly murmuringly greatly; I was angry with God.” Prior to his conversion, he wrestled with Romans 1:17, “...*The just shall live by faith*”. Night and day, he meditated on the word ‘righteous’.

Luther came to realise that sinners are justified (or declared righteous by God) by Faith Alone without works. This great insight led Luther to write that he “...*thereupon felt altogether born again and entered paradise through open gates.*” He now praised God “...*with a love as great as the hatred with which [he] had before hated the words ‘righteousness of God.’*” (Martin Marty, *Martin Luther a Life*. p.38)

False Faith

Many have flawed thinking on the subject of faith. For example, for some it is little more than a feeling. If they just think and feel something to be true, then it is true for them. This may lead to the denial of the primary fact of Christianity that Jesus death on the cross is enough – He paid the full price! Yet, in spite of such denials, these people still claim to be Christians! Paul declares in Romans 3:25 that it is by “*faith in His [Jesus’] blood*” that sinners are declared righteous before God.

Biblical Faith

Faith is knowledge-based and this knowledge comes from the Bible: “*So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God*” (Romans 10:17). Therefore, it is our responsibility to take what God has declared and proclaim it. We should always remember that one of the hallmarks of the Reformation was a resurgence of the centrality of Bible preaching.

Holy Spirit-led

God the Holy Spirit takes the Word and applies it to individuals:

“...when He is come, He will reprove the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment.” (John 16:8)

Christ-Centred

Our faith is in Christ Alone – who He is; why He came; and what He did. Ultimately, where we spend eternity is dependent on our faith in Him!

Faith illustrated

On 30th June, 1859, the French acrobat Blondin first crossed the Niagara Falls on a tightrope. In the days following, he walked across it on a tightrope, blindfolded, pushing a wheelbarrow and actually sat down midway while he cooked and ate an omelette.

When he announced to the thousands who witnessed his amazing feats that he could carry a man across, many publicly declared they believed he could do it. However, in spite of their professions of faith or belief in his ability, only one man was prepared to personally trust Blondin with his life – his manager, Harry Colcord.

The story paints a real life picture of what faith actually is.

Many profess their belief that Jesus Christ - the Just One - suffered in the place of sinners, so that He might bring us to God (1 Peter 3:18); yet they are not prepared to personally trust Him.

Harry Colcord was brought safely across the tightrope because he placed his reliance upon Blondin's ability. Saving faith places full reliance upon the Lord Jesus Christ to bring us to God.

The final two Solas – Christ Alone and The Glory of God Alone will be included in our next Newsletter, GW

(The booklet can be downloaded from www.justbyfaithalone.net - Resources)

“Let me lose the favour of princes and of men, but let me keep the favour of God. The favour of men may be recovered; and, if not, the favour of God is enough for me.”

Martin Luther

“In the day of prosperity, we have many refuges to resort to; in the day of adversity, only one.”

Horatius Bonar

“Fight the good fight of faith.”

(I Timothy 6:12)

By: **J. C. Ryle**

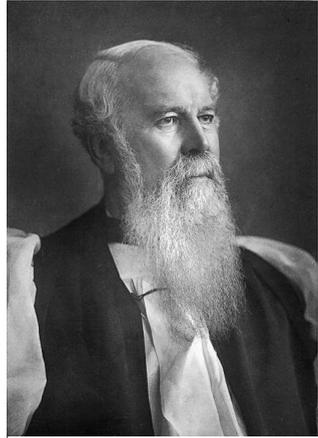
Extract from '*A Call to Holiness*', chapter 4 'The Fight'

True Christianity is a fight!

True Christianity! Let us mind that word 'true.' There is a vast quantity of religion current in the world which is not true, genuine Christianity. It passes muster; it satisfies sleepy consciences; but it is not good money. It is not the real thing which was called Christianity eighteen hundred years ago. There are thousands of men and women who go to churches and chapels every Sunday and call themselves Christians. Their names are in the baptismal register. They are reckoned Christians while they live. They are married with a Christian marriage service. They mean to be buried as Christians when they die; but you never see any 'fight' about their religion! Of spiritual strife, and exertion, and conflict and self-denial, and watching, and warring, they know literally nothing at all. Such Christianity may satisfy man and those who say anything against it may be thought very hard and uncharitable; but it certainly is not the Christianity of the Bible. It is not the religion which the Lord Jesus founded and His Apostles preached. It is not the religion which produces real holiness. True Christianity is a 'fight.'

The true Christian is called to be a soldier and must behave as such from the day of his conversion to the day of his death. He is not meant to live a life of religious ease, indolence and security. He must never imagine for a moment that he can sleep and doze along the way to Heaven, like one travelling in an easy carriage. If he takes his standard of Christianity from the children of this world, he may be content with such notions; but he will find no countenance for them in the Word of God. If the Bible is the rule of his faith and practice, he will find his course laid down very plainly in this matter. He must 'fight.'

With whom is the Christian soldier meant to fight? Not with other Christians. Wretched indeed is that man's idea of religion who fancies that it consists in perpetual controversy! No doubt it



**J.C. Ryle, Bishop of
Liverpool**

may be absolutely needful sometimes to appeal to law courts, in order to ascertain the right interpretation of a Church's Articles and rubrics and formularies; but, as a general rule, the cause of sin is never so much helped as when Christians waste their strength in quarrelling with one another and spend their time in petty squabbles.

No, indeed! The principal fight for the Christian is with the world, the flesh and the Devil. These are his never-dying foes. These are the three chief enemies against whom he must wage war. Unless he gets the victory over these three, all other victories are useless and vain. If he had a nature like an angel and were not a fallen creature, the warfare would not be so essential; but with a corrupt heart, a busy Devil and an ensnaring world, he must either "fight" or be lost.

He must fight *the flesh*. Even after conversion he carries within him a nature prone to evil and a heart weak and unstable as water. That heart will never be free from imperfection in this world and it is a miserable delusion to expect it. To keep that heart from going astray, the Lord Jesus bids us "Watch and pray." The spirit may be ready, but the flesh is weak. There is need of a daily struggle and a daily wrestling in prayer. "I keep under my body," cried Paul, "and bring it into subjection." – "I see another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity." – "O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death?" – "They that are Christ's have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts." – "Mortify your members which are upon the earth." (Mark 14:38; I Cor. 9:27; Rom. 7:23, 24; Gal. 5:24; Col. 3:5.)

He must fight *the world*. The subtle influence of that mighty enemy must be daily resisted and, without a daily battle, can never be overcome. The love of the world's good things – the fear of the world's laughter or blame – the secret desire to keep in with the world – the secret wish to do as others in the world do and not to run to extremes – all these are spiritual foes which beset the Christian continually on his way to Heaven and must be conquered. "The friendship of the world is enmity with God: whosoever therefore will be a friend of the world is the enemy of God." – "If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him." – "The world is crucified unto Me, and I unto the world." – "Whatsoever is born of God overcometh the world." – "Be not conformed to this world." (James 4:4; I John 2:15; Gal. 6:14; I John 5:4; Rom. 12:2.)

He must fight *the Devil*. That old enemy of mankind is not dead. Ever since the fall of Adam and Eve he has been “going to and fro in the earth, and walking up and down in it,” and striving to compass one great end – the ruin of man’s soul. Never slumbering and never sleeping, he is always “going about as a lion seeking whom he may devour.” An unseen enemy, he is always near us, about our path and about our bed and spying out all our ways. A “murderer and a liar” from the beginning, he labours night and day to cast us down to Hell. Sometimes by leading into superstition, sometimes by suggesting infidelity, sometimes by one kind of tactics and sometimes by another, he is always carrying on a campaign against our souls. “Satan hath desired to have you, that he may sift you as wheat.” This mighty adversary must be daily resisted. But “this kind goeth not out” but by watching and praying and fighting and putting on the whole armour of God. The strong man armed will never be kept out of our hearts without a daily battle. (Job 1:7; I Peter 5:8; John 8:44; Luke 22:31; Eph. 6:11.)

Some men may think these statements too strong. You fancy that I am going too far and laying on the colours too thickly. You are secretly saying to yourself that men and women in England may surely get to Heaven without all this trouble and warfare and fighting. Listen to me for a few minutes and I will show you that I have something to say on God’s behalf. Remember the maxim of the wisest General that ever lived in England – “In time of war it is the worst mistake to under-rate your enemy and try to make a little war.” This Christian warfare is no light matter. Give me your attention and consider what I say. What saith the Scripture - “Fight the good fight of faith, lay hold on eternal life.” – “Endure hardness, as a good soldier of Jesus Christ.” – “Put on the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the Devil. For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places. Wherefore take unto you the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand.” “Strive to enter in at the strait gate.” – “Labour for that meat which endureth unto everlasting life.” – “Think not that I come to send peace on earth: I came not to send peace, but a sword.” “He that hath no sword, let him sell his garment, and buy one.” – “Watch ye, stand fast in the faith, quit you like men, be strong.” – “War a good warfare, holding faith, and a good conscience.” (I Tim. 6:12; II Tim.

2:3; Eph. 6: 11-13; Luke 13:24; John 6:27; Matt. 10:34; Luke 22:36; I Cor. 16:13; I Tim. 1:18,19.) Words such as these appear to me clear, plain and unmistakable. They all teach one and the same great lesson, if we are willing to receive it. That lesson is - that true Christianity is a struggle, a fight and a warfare. He that pretends to condemn "fighting" appears to me to misunderstand his Bible and to make a great mistake.

One thing is certain - this Christian warfare is a great reality and a subject of vast importance. It is not a matter like Church government and ceremonial, about which men may differ and yet reach Heaven at last. Necessity is laid upon us. We must fight. There are no promises in the Lord Jesus Christ's Epistles to the Seven Churches, except to those who "overcome." Where there is grace there will be conflict. The believer is a soldier. There is no holiness without a warfare. Saved souls will always be found to have fought a fight.

It is a fight of *absolute necessity*. Let us not think that in this war we can remain neutral and sit still. Such a line of action may be possible in the strife of nations, but it is utterly impossible in that conflict which concerns the soul. The boasted policy of non-interference - the 'masterly inactivity' which pleases so many Statesmen - the plan of keeping quiet and letting things alone - all this will never do in the Christian warfare. Here at any rate no one can escape serving under the plea that he is a 'man of peace.' To be at peace with the world, the flesh and the devil, is to be at enmity with God and in the broad way that leadeth to destruction. We have no choice or option. We must either fight or be lost.

It is a fight of *universal necessity*. No rank, or class, or age can plead exemption or escape the battle. Ministers and people, preachers and hearers, old and young, high and low, rich and poor, gentle and simple, Kings and subjects, landlords and tenants, learned and unlearned - all alike must carry arms and go to war. All have by nature a *heart* full of pride, unbelief, sloth, worldliness and sin. All are living in a *world* beset with snares, traps and pitfalls for the soul. All have near them a busy, restless malicious *Devil*. All from the Queen in her palace down to the pauper in the workhouse, all must fight.

It is a fight of *perpetual necessity*. It admits of no breathing time, no armistice, no truce. On week-days as well as on Sundays - in private as well as in public - at home by the family fireside as well as abroad - in little things like management of tongue and temper, as well as in great ones like the government of the Kingdoms - the

Christian's warfare must unceasingly go on. The foe we have to do with keeps no holidays, never slumbers and never sleeps. So long as we have breath in our bodies we must keep on our armour and remember we are on an enemy's ground. "Even on the brink of Jordan," said a dying saint, "I find Satan nibbling at my heels." We must fight till we die.

Let us consider well these propositions. Let us take care that our own personal religion is real, genuine and true. The saddest symptom about many so-called Christians is the utter absence of anything like conflict and fight in their Christianity. They eat, they drink, they dress, they work, they amuse themselves, they get money, they spend money, they go through a scanty round of formal religious services once or twice every week; but the great spiritual warfare – its watchings and strugglings, its agonies and anxieties, its battles and contests – of all of this they appear to know nothing at all. Let us take care that this case is not our own. The worst state of soul is "when a strong man armed keepeth his palace, his goods are in peace" – when he leads men and women captive at his will," and they make no resistance. The worst chains are those which are neither felt nor seen by the prisoner. (Luke 11:21; II Tim. 2:26.)

We may take comfort about our souls if we know anything of an inward fight and conflict. It is the invariable companion of genuine Christian holiness. It is not everything, I am well aware, but it is something. Do we find in our heart of hearts a spiritual struggle? Do we feel anything of the flesh lusting against the spirit and the spirit against the flesh, so that we cannot do the things we would? (Gal. 5:17). Are we conscious of two principles within us, contending for the master? Do we feel anything of war in our inward man? Well, let us thank God for it! It is a good sign. It is strongly probable evidence of the great work of sanctification. All true saints are soldiers. Anything is better than apathy, stagnation, deadness and indifference. We are in a better state than many. The most part of the so-called Christians have no feeling at all. We are evidently no friends of Satan. Like the Kings of this world, he wars not against his own subjects. The very fact that he assaults us should fill our minds with hope. I say again, let us take comfort. The child of God has two great marks about him and of these two we have one. ***He may be known by his inward warfare, as well as by his inward peace.***

Slightly Abbreviated

We hope to continue with the second part of this sermon on 'True Christianity is the fight of faith' in our next Newsletter, G.W.

LUTHER'S SNOW STORM

From: The Gospel Standard - January, 1874

Most of our readers probably do not know that Martin Luther, one of the greatest men that ever lived was, in his boyhood, so poor that he went about the streets of the city singing songs for a little money to buy food to keep him from starving; but he was a faithful student and God raised up friends for him and made him, at last, the great and useful man that he was.



Martin Luther

On a cold, dark night, when the wind was blowing hard, Conrad, a worthy citizen of a little town in Germany, sat playing his flute, while Ursula, his wife, was preparing supper. They heard a sweet voice singing outside:

“Foxes to their holes have gone,
Every bird into its nest;
But I wander here alone,
And for me there is no rest.”

Tears filled the good man’s eyes as he said, “What a pity that voice should be spoiled by being tried in such weather!”

“I think it is the voice of a child. Let us open the door and see,” said his wife, who had lost a little boy not long before and whose heart was open to take pity on the little wanderer.

Conrad opened the door and saw a ragged child, who said,
“Charity, good sir, for Christ’s sake.”

“Come in, my little one,” said he. “You shall rest with me for the night.”

The boy said, “Thank God!” and entered. The heat of the room made him faint, but Ursula’s kind care soon restored him. They gave him some supper and then he told them that he was the son of a poor miner and wanted to be a priest. He wandered about and sang and lived on the money people gave him. His kind friends would not let him talk much, but sent him to bed. When he was asleep, they looked in upon him and were so pleased with his pleasant countenance that they determined to keep him, if he was willing. In the morning, they found that he was only too glad to remain. They sent him to school and afterwards he entered a

monastery. There he found the Bible, which he read and from which he learned the way of life. The sweet voice of the little singer became the strong echo of the good news, "Justified by faith, we have peace with God, through our Lord Jesus Christ." Conrad and Ursula, when they took that little street singer into their house, little thought that they were nourishing the great champion of the Reformation. The poor child was Martin Luther! "Be not forgetful to entertain strangers."

The following is the whole of the song which Luther sang on that memorable night:

“ Lord of Heaven! Lone and sad,
I would lift my soul to Thee;
Pilgrim in a foreign land,
Gracious Father, look on me.
I shall neither faint nor die
While I walk beneath Thine eye.

I will stay my faith on Thee,
And will never fear to tread
Where the Saviour-Master leads;
He will give me daily bread.
Christ was hungry, Christ was poor;
He will feed me with His store.

Foxes to their holes have gone,
Every bird into its nest;
But I wander here alone,
And for me there is no rest:
Yet I neither faint nor fear,
For the Saviour-Christ is near.

If I live, He'll near me be;
If I die to Him I go.
He'll not leave me, I will trust Him,
And my heart no fear shall know.
Sin and sorrow I defy;
For on Jesus I rely.”

“Should such a man as I flee?”

(Nehemiah 6:11)

From: Mason's Spiritual Treasure

Nehemiah was engaged in a great work; his God was with him and gave success unto him; friends and enemies united against him; by base insinuation, craft and stratagem, they strove to dishearten and deter him from going on with God's work. Opposition is the Christian's lot; courage his honour; perseverance his jewel. Look at this man of God; he boldly repels all fear; instead of fleeing from his work as advised, he flees to his God and cries, "O God, strengthen my hands." Faith inspires prayer; prayer brings courage to the heart; then he boldly demands, "Should such a man as I flee?" A man so greatly favoured, so highly honoured, as to be employed by God, to work for him? No; I disdain such mean cowardice: I will work on, it is God's cause; let God see to the event, I fear it not.

Christian, know your calling, it is to work for God; expect opposition from within and without: this may call up fear and dismay; but consider your dignity, maintain and assert it: "Should such a man as I flee?" A man called by the grace of Jesus, to resist the Devil, to face carnal men, to vanquish sin, to overcome the world, to victory over death and to receive a crown of righteousness in endless glory; shall I flee? What, I, who am called to be strong in the grace which is in Christ Jesus? O my soul, put on Christ, and put off fear; put up prayer and put down dread. From whom should such a man as I flee? Of whom should I be afraid? Doth not my Lord say, "My grace is sufficient for thee; my strength is made perfect in thy weakness?" O Lord, strengthen my heart to resist Satan, that he may flee from me and to overcome the fear of man, which is a snare to me. I bless thee for Thy precious Word; strengthen my heart in the faith of it: "Fear not, neither be faint-hearted for the two tails of these smoking firebrands," Isa. 7:4. "Hearken unto me, fear ye not the reproach of men, neither be ye afraid of their revilings" Isa. 51:7. "I, even I, am He that comforteth you: who art thou, that thou shouldst be afraid of a man that shall die, and of the son of man which shall be made as grass; and forgettest the Lord thy Maker?" Isa. 51:12,13. The Lord God will help me, therefore shall I not be confounded; therefore have I set my face like a flint, that I shall not be ashamed: the moth shall eat them up (my adversaries) Isa. 50:7,9.

*Courage, my friends, Christ's strength is ours;
Though of ourselves we've none.*



News & Current Affairs

Ashers Bakery – by Mark Duell for Mail Online, 10 May, 2017

The Christian-owned bakers who refused to make a pro-gay marriage cake are being backed by customers who have helped their profits rise to £1.5 million.

Ashers Bakers in Belfast was found to have breached equality laws after declining to make a cake iced with the slogan 'Support Gay Marriage' in 2014; and the family-run



business was in the news again this week after refusing an online order for a cake decorated with the words 'Gay Marriage Rocks'; but the legal wrangle has not translated into financial damage yet – with the firm recording a £170,000 rise in profits last year, reported the Belfast Telegraph.

The Supreme Court will this Autumn consider a lower Court's judgement that Ashers, which has seven outlets in Northern Ireland, was discriminatory.

A two-day hearing for legal arguments has been listed for October over the case, which followed an order placed at its Belfast shop by Gareth Lee three years ago.

Daniel McArthur, the General Manager of Ashers, said: 'The fact that the Supreme Court is willing to hear arguments is very encouraging and reflects the importance of the issues and the high-profile nature of the case.'

Abbreviated

Free Speech – ‘In our opinion’ column, British Church Newspaper, 28 April, 2017

We must remind readers that the freedom of the Press, particularly of this paper, remains very much under threat.

We understand that Government is still consulting on whether to activate section 40 of the Crime and Courts Act. This would force us to belong to a Government approved body which would adjudicate between us and any complainant in libel or privacy cases. Such a referee is unlikely to approve our views on a number of subjects and could try to force us to apologise for statements regarding topics about which Scripture is very clear.

If we were to defy such an order, or if we did not belong to such a body, we would be liable to ‘exemplary damages’ and in any case we would have to pay the plaintiff’s legal costs *even if they lost their case!!*

Readers might join us in prayer over this matter.

The Pope’s Theology is Heretical – ‘Protestant View’ from the Free Presbyterian (of Scotland) Magazine – April, 2017

The Evangelical Times recently reported on a lecture given in London by an Italian Evangelical scholar, Dr. Leonardo De Chirico, on the theology and aims of the current Pope. Dr. De Chirico noted that the Pope’s public statements have been carefully calculated to win over backslidden Roman Catholics to the fold and to soften up opposition. Although



Pope Francis

Although Pope Francis’s doctrinal statements have been ambiguous, the lecturer referred to published lectures the present Pope gave in the 1980s which reveal a “hardline view against Protestants, the Reformation and evangelical Christianity.”

It is expected that he will make a pronouncement at some point in the near future that “The Reformation is dead, that Protestantism has had its day and that its devastating effects on world history are over”. This view of Protestantism is not surprising from a Jesuit and

is no doubt bolstered by the spiritual deadness and loss of moral influence in most Protestant churches in our day. However, we fully believe that a resurrection of the Biblical principles of the Reformation will yet do away with all false religion and that the Papacy's aims will ultimately be brought to the dust.

Dr. De Chirico then pointed out that the Pope's theology is heretical in its down-playing of the doctrines of original sin and the plan of salvation, as he holds that there is a fundamental goodness in mankind and that God's approval is more determined by man's own conscience than by the cross.

When questioned whether the Pope's approach would encounter opposition from within the Vatican, Dr. De Chirico replied that, as the real underlying intention is to bring more and more people within the fold of Rome, there would be little resistance. Dr. De Chirico draws a picture which confirms what we have suspected all along about the present incumbent of St. Peter's.

AWM

Nigeria: 82 Chibok Girls Released – Open Doors, 8 May, 2017

82 of the girls abducted by Boko Haram militants from a school in Chibok over three years ago have been released.

The girls met with President Buhari. "I cannot express in a few words how happy I am to welcome our dear girls back to freedom," Mr. Buhari told the girls in Abuja, according to his office.

The girls were released in exchange for Boko Haram suspects. However, over 100 of the abducted girls remain missing.

Government officials told media that most of the girls seemed to be in a good condition and only one carried a baby boy less than 2 years old. Sadly, some of those freed girls would be confronted with distressing news: 23 parents had died since their abduction.

Abbreviated

Report on the CW Outreach at Devon County Agricultural Show

Westpoint, Exeter on the 18 - 20 May, 2017

The attendance of Marcus Brockes and myself at the Devon Show this year was something of a first for Christian Watch. In previous years, we have exhibited and witnessed at CRE Exeter, Cornwall, Sandown, Birmingham, Manchester and London; while many years ago Northern Ireland was a chosen venue.

It was therefore a happy surprise to see so many visitors attend, especially so when considering the weather – heavy showers with intermittent sunshine. It is said that over 95,000 attended over the three days.

Our stand was located in a busy thoroughfare. The Protestant Alliance were also represented at the show and we were able to assist them by distributing some copies of the Reformer magazine.



Almost opposite to us was the Jehovah Witness area. Their presence was not really a distraction, but initiated some useful conversations and comparisons. One particular man came to our stand who had been in the JW cult for some 30 years. He had seen the errors in such a Movement, yet could not break free in his mind from their destructive teaching. He explained that he was, spiritually speaking, in a thick fog when he tried to pray. We did spend some time with him and it seemed he left genuinely thankful for the help we were able to give.

We had many opportunities to present the Gospel, but some stand out in the memory more than others. A lady visited the stand in the company of her son and daughter; both were soon to sit an examination in Theology and their mother wanted to talk about the Christian religion generally. She was very sympathetic to what we had to say, as were her children.

It was explained that, although head knowledge was useful, it was infinitely preferable to know the Lord Jesus Christ personally. They agreed with this and when we assured them of our prayers - that not only would they be successful academically - but also come to saving faith in Christ, the girl began to well-up with tears, as did her mother.... and, I would add, we did too!

Very little real opposition was encountered, and we left tired but hopeful that our labour had not been in vain in the Lord. To Him alone, who does glorious things, we offer thankful praise.

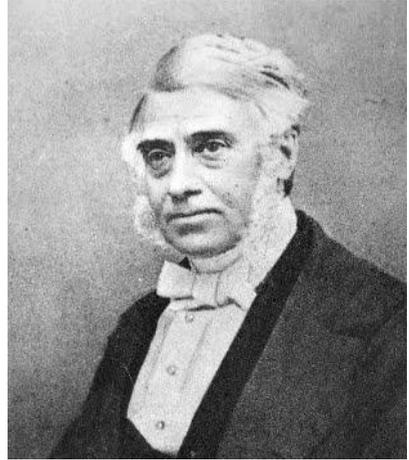
Michael Hobbis

“Oh that thou wouldest bless me indeed!”

(1 Chronicles 4:10)

From: Through Baca’s Vale by J. C. Philpot

An “indeed” blessing is what the soul is seeking after which has ever felt the misery and bitterness of sin and ever tasted the sweetness of God’s salvation; and these “indeed” blessings are seen to be spiritual and eternal. Compared with such blessings as these, it sees how vain and empty are all earthly things, what vain toys, what idle dreams, what passing shadows. It wonders at the folly of men in hunting after such vain shows and spending time, health, money, life itself, in a pursuit of nothing but misery and destruction. Every passing bell that it hears, every corpse borne slowly along to the grave that it sees, impresses it with solemn feelings as to the state



J. C. Philpot

of those who live and die in their sins. Thus it learns more and more to contrast time with eternity, earth with Heaven, sinners with saints and professors with possessors. By these things it is taught, with Baruch, not “to seek great things” for itself, but real things; things which will outlast time, and fit it for eternity. It is thus

brought to care little for the opinion of men as to what is good or great, but much for what God has stamped his own approbation upon, such as a tender conscience, a broken heart, a contrite spirit, a humble mind, a separation from the world and everything worldly, a submission to His holy will, a meek endurance of the cross, a conformity to Christ's suffering image and a living to God's glory. As, then, the gracious Lord is pleased to indulge it with some discovery of Himself, shedding abroad a sweet sense of His goodness and mercy, atoning blood and dying love, it is made to long more and more for the manifestation of those blessings which alone are to be found in Him. For His blessings are not like the mere temporal mercies which we enjoy at His hand, all of which perish in the using, but are for ever and ever; and when once given are never taken away. They thus become earnest and foretastes of eternal joys, for they are absolutely irreversible. When Isaac had once blessed Jacob in God's Name, though the blessing had been obtained by guile, yet having been once given, it could not be recalled. He said therefore to Esau, "I have blessed him, and he shall be blessed." So when the Lord has blessed His people with any of those spiritual blessings, which are stored up in His inexhaustible fulness, these blessings are like Himself, unchanging and unchangeable; for "He is in one mind and none can turn him," "the same yesterday, and today and for ever.

Ye saints on earth, your voices raise,
And sing the eternal Father's praise,
 And glorify the Son;
Give glory to the Holy Ghost,
And join with all the angelic host
 To bless the great Three-One.

Joseph Hart

(Based on 1 Chronicles 16:28)

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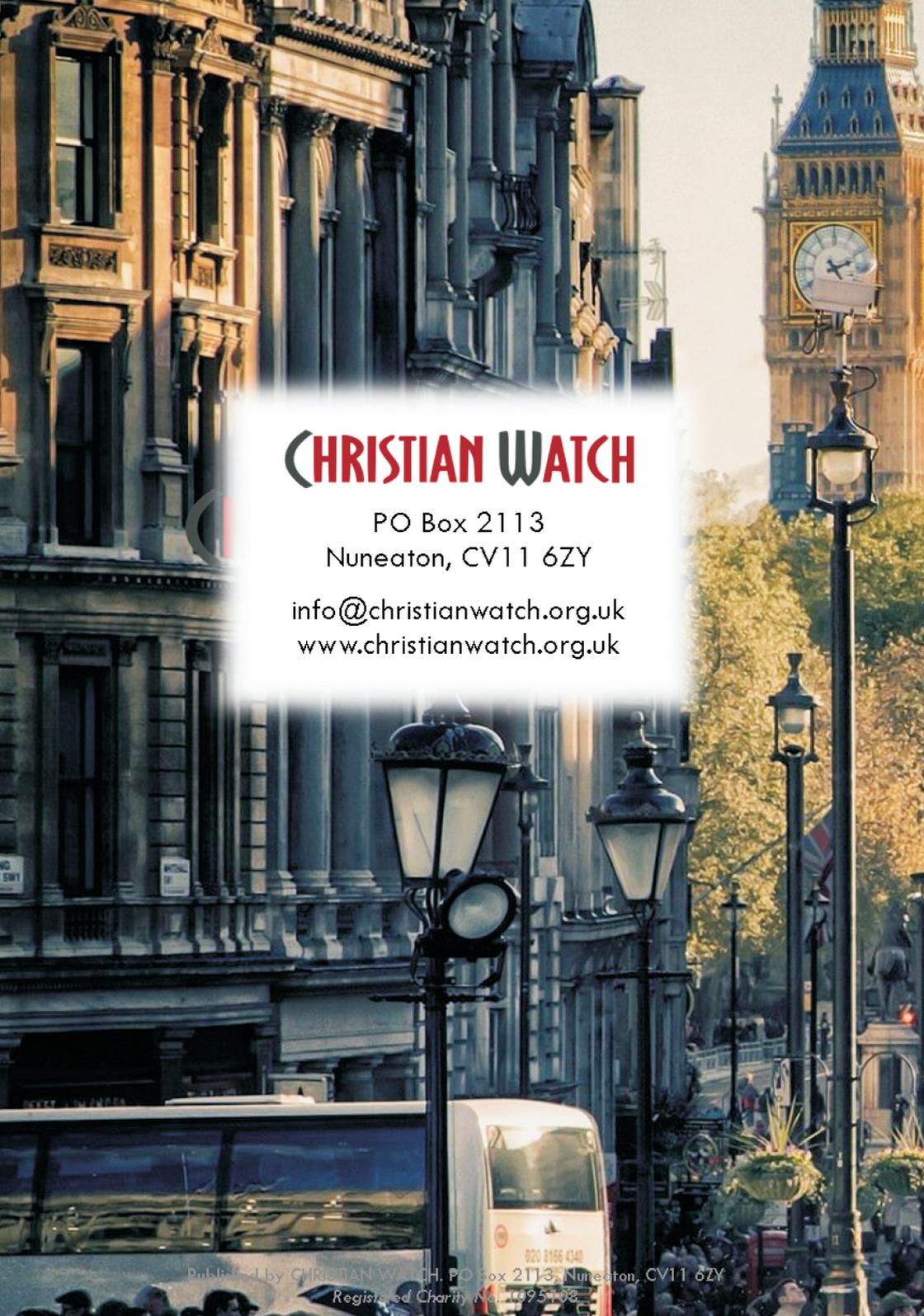
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