

CHRISTIAN WATCH

Issue No. 18

A Protestant Biblical Witness

Nov/Dec 2018



'And what I say unto you I say unto all, Watch.'
Mark 13:37



Christian Watch Annual Subscription (2019),
including UK postage - £12

DATES FOR YOUR DIARY:

13 - 14 March 2019

CRE North 2019, Manchester Event City, Stretford,
Manchester, M41 7TB

6 - 8 June, 2019

South of England Agricultural Show, Ardingly,
West Sussex, RH17 6TL

29 August, 2019

Bucks County Show, Weedon Park, Aylesbury.

15 – 17 October, 2019

CRE International Exhibition, Sandown Park,
Esher, Surrey, KT10 9AJ

“I thought it had been an easy thing to be a Christian and that to seek God had been at the next door; but oh the windings, the turnings, the ups and the downs that He hath led me through! And I see yet much way to the ford.”

Extract from a letter by Samuel Rutherford

Front cover: Traybake at Ashers Bakery, who recently won their ‘gay cake’ case at the Supreme Court.

(Some articles may not necessarily reflect the opinions and beliefs of Christian Watch but are included for information only and not as an endorsement.)

IN THIS NEWSLETTER:

Letter from the Vice-Chairman	4
The Spirit of the Age <i>Rev. John Thackway</i>	6
Endued to Stand <i>Alan Cairns</i>	14
“And what I say unto you, I say unto all, Watch.” Outline of a sermon by <i>Alfred Hewlett, D.D.</i>	15
Report on CW Annual Meeting <i>Ian Henderson</i>	16
News and Current Affairs	17
Report on the CRE Exhibition <i>Michael Hobbs</i>	22
On Reading the Bible <i>John Newton</i>	23
The Suitability of the Saviour <i>J. C. Ryle</i>	24
End of Year Thanksgiving Hymn <i>Philip Doddridge</i>	27

Dear Friends,

As we draw to the close of another year, let us give thanks to Almighty God for His innumerable blessings and rejoice without ceasing that our God is sovereign over all. Politicians come and go – laws are passed which are contrary to God’s law - sin and depravity are the order of the day, but our God is still on the throne. Let us encourage ourselves in the words of Hebrews 13:8 – *“Jesus Christ the same yesterday, and today, and for ever.”*

In this current Newsletter we include, amongst many excellent articles, one entitled “The Spirit of the Age” by Rev. John Thackway, Minister of Holywell Evangelical Church in North Wales. Although somewhat lengthy, please take the time to prayerfully read what he has to say and then seek the Lord that this once great nation of ours – and the Church itself – will return to the old paths. *“Thus saith the Lord, stand ye in the ways, and see, and ask for the old paths, where is the good way, and walk therein, and ye shall find rest for your souls”* (Jeremiah 6:16).

Over the past four years, the Ashers bakery has been in the news because of its decision not to produce a cake with a message backing legislation of same-sex marriage. How we rejoice today that God has given the victory in the Supreme Court. The Ashers case showed how ‘equality’ was being used to silence anyone who disagreed – with devastating consequences for free speech. Even a leading gay activist, Andrew Sullivan, in his book ‘Virtually Normal’, warned that the attack tactics being carried out by the LGBT community were backfiring with the general public. However, one battle won is not the end of the war as marriage is under constant threat and, as it is attacked and undermined, we see the heartbreak and destruction on our streets, in our schools and in society at large.

Brexit – 77 years ago, on 10th December, 1941, Japanese planes sank the battleship *Prince of Wales* and the cruiser *Repulse* when they sailed north of Singapore without air cover in an attempt to attack the Japanese forces invading Malaya. The two ships went to their doom with the loss of 840 lives because the British under-estimated the

Japanese threat. As Britain now fumbles its way towards the EU exit door, let us not today under-estimate the power of Europe and its 27 Member States and that the return of our sovereignty is paramount to re-establishing Britain once again as a great nation. On 23rd June, 2016, the British people voted to come out of the EU and yet many politicians, business leaders and even the Bank of England are now telling us that Brexit doesn't really mean Brexit; No doesn't really mean No; Out doesn't really mean Out; Leave doesn't really mean Leave. I have quoted Winston Churchill before but his words are worth repeating again – *“We are linked but not compromised. We are interested and associated but not absorbed. If Britain must choose between Europe and the open sea, she must always choose the open sea.”*

Please remember that your subscriptions are due on 1st January for 2019. The Annual Subscription is now £12 and we look forward to hearing from you as you renew your membership.

May God have mercy upon us as a nation as we come to the close of the year and the beginning of 2019.

We wish you the compliments of the season and trust that the Lord will continue to bless you in the new year.

Yours in His service,

Ian Henderson

Ian R. Henderson
(Vice-Chairman)

A LASTING LEGACY

If you are thinking of leaving something to Christian Watch in your Will, please contact our Secretary who will provide you with the necessary information.

THE SPIRIT OF THE AGE

and the Church in our day

By J. P. Thackway

Christians often use the phrase “The spirit of the age.” By it we refer to certain attitudes and values in society. This prevailing “spirit” can either be that influenced by Biblical standards, or by atheistic secularism, or something in between. Others have defined it as “... the spirit of the times ...the set of ideas, beliefs and aims that is typical of people in a particular period in history. The German equivalent is “zeitgeist.”

Deeper

We know that, through the Fall and the entrance of sin, something deeper lies behind this. This world, in its organised rebellion against God and its default to sin, has a “god” who holds sway over people (2 Cor. 4:4). Here, “this world” literally means “this age” (Greek *aiōn*). Therefore “the spirit of the age” can be a devil-inspired outlook, a world away from what the Holy Spirit-inspired Scriptures would produce.

Again, Paul in Ephesians 2:2 refers to “the course of this world” that we once “walked according to.” Now “quicken,” we are alive to these things and can see this present world for what it is. The current liberal values, absence of moral absolutes, political correctness, false belief systems are all part of this. Such is the rejection of Biblical norms in modern Western society, that the “spirit of the age” is a strong current against

Christianity. It is also defensive. Dare speak against it and we are rounded on as “extremists,” “intolerant,” and almost guilty of “hate-crime.” Today’s much-vaunted tolerance turns remarkably *intolerant* when we speak up for God’s Word and His righteousness.

William Hazlitt

The actual phrase “spirit of the age” has a less sinister origin. It comes from the title of a book written by William Hazlitt. He was an English writer, drama and literary critic, social commentator and philosopher who lived from 1778 until 1830. His book, *The Spirit of the Age: Or, Contemporary Portraits*, came out in 1825. It consisted of character sketches of mostly men – 25 of them – whom he believed stood for the thought, literature, and politics of the time. They included thinkers, social reformers, politicians, poets, essayists and novelists.

It is interesting that Hazlitt included Edward Irving, William Wilberforce and John Home Tooke in his sketches – a preacher, Christian social reformer and clergyman respectively. Yet, it is not they who are seen to have moulded the age, but all the individuals, irrespective of religious belief. This may be because Hazlitt believed in what one writer called “liberty and the rights of man, and confidence in the idea that the mind was an active force which, by disseminating

knowledge in both the sciences and the arts, could reinforce the natural tendency in humanity towards good."

Seeds

However, by the time Hazlitt and his like were flourishing, seeds were already sown that would make nonsense of his view of human nature. Those seeds would eventually bear fruit in the unbelief and liberalism of the Downgrade Controversy of Spurgeon's time and, fast forward to our day, to the catastrophic consequences of a society that rejects God completely and abandons Biblical righteousness.

At that time, secular literature was also contributing to the downgrade, undermining confidence in Scripture and the evangelicalism of former times. Iain Murray's book, *The Undercover Revolution: How Fiction Changed Britain* (Banner of Truth, 2009), chronicles this sad change. Little did William Hazlitt realise that the name of his book would be the catchphrase for all we lament today!

However, the Bible and true religion can mould the spirit of the age as well and it

has done so to a remarkable degree. We need only go back to half-way through the last century for evidence. When Princess Elizabeth became Queen in 1953, her coronation reflected the outwardly Christian character of Great Britain. She solemnly vowed to "maintain the Laws of God and the true profession of the Gospel." She undertook also "to maintain...the Protestant Reformed Religion established by law." Her Majesty was given the Holy Bible as "the rule for the whole life and government of Christian Princes."

Heritage

This Christian heritage goes back to Anglo-Saxon times and King Alfred the Great in the 9th century. He drew up an important code of laws and blended with it the 10 Commandments and so established a basis for laws, recognising God as the ultimate Lawgiver and Judge.

This gave sanctity to the law of the land and characterised British society, coming to its height in Victorian times when Great Britain professed to be a Christian nation. It was officially characterised by Sunday observance, hard work, thrift, honesty, moral decency, respect for others and their property and the sanctity of life. It was said that Victorians expected the Day of Judgment at the end of the world as surely as they expected their wages at the end of the week.

By the end of the Great War in 1918, however, confidence in the Bible diminished. Theological liberalism, combined with the horrors of suffering, brought disillusionment and undermined respect for Christianity. By the end of the



Second World War in 1945, Christian standards also were questioned. Someone has said that World War I undermined Christian *doctrine* and World War II undermined Christian *morality*.

This double hit meant that by our Queen's coronation in 1953 we were living on borrowed Christian capital from better days. It was steadily running out. It only needed what happened in the next decade to use up almost all that was left.

Ruinous

The 1960s and 70s were the most ruinous decades in recent history. During that time British society, in common with other Western countries, underwent a social revolution that changed us almost beyond recognition. Before the 1960s, Britain's Christian past and Biblical heritage were generally accepted. However, the 1960s challenged this and all but swept it away.

a) Music became a new and powerful influence.

During the 1950s, Rock n' Roll came from the USA with Bill Haley and the Comets and Elvis Presley. The young Cliff Richard at first modelled himself on Presley. As new bands came and Rock advanced, its music and lyrics gloried in rebellion against authority, in immorality, outrageous dress, drugs, drunkenness and even witchcraft. The 'Pop' music of the 60s followed, as seen in the later history of the Beatles. It was not just a new kind of music. Music is never neutral. It was a *driven* thing, with a message and purpose. David Samuel summed it up: "Popular music was no longer simply a medium of light relief, but a battering

ram for moral and social change."

b) The cult of the teenager

Before the 1950s and 60s, growing children tended not to have a separate identity. Older sons and daughters looked like smaller versions of their parents in dress, tastes and lifestyle. It was a straightforward navigation into adulthood. However, Rock and Pop defined a new age group: the 'teenager,' from 13 – 19 years old. It gave them their own music and with it their distinctive clothes, haircut, lifestyle, culture, language and worldview. The post-war baby boom saw many disgruntled and rebellious young people becoming a distinctive section of society.

c) Broadcasting media

Hugh Greene was the Director-General of the BBC who pioneered programmes that pushed the standards of taste and decency to limits never before allowed. Swearing, blasphemy, obscenity and violence characterised its output. Satirical programmes mocked politicians and the revered institutions of our country. Mrs. Mary Whitehouse with her Clean-up TV campaign was its bitterest critic. She once wrote, "If anyone were to ask me who, above all, was responsible for the moral collapse which characterised the sixties



and seventies, I would unhesitatingly name Sir Hugh Carleton Greene, who was Director-General of the BBC from 1960 – 1969.”

d) The Government of the day

The Labour Government of the 1960s had, as its Home Secretary, the Rt. Hon. Roy Jenkins. During his office (1965-1967) he helped create “The Permissive Society.” That included abolishing capital punishment for murder, abolishing theatre censorship, legalising homosexuality, relaxing the divorce law and legalising abortion. In his book *The Abolition of Britain*, Peter Hitchens accuses him of being a “cultural revolutionary,” largely responsible for the decline of traditional values in Britain; and the distinguished *Daily Telegraph* columnist Charles Moore wrote, “Sixties liberalism swept away our shared sense of decency.”

e) The Church

While the dismantling of our Christian heritage was going on, the Established Church gave little Biblical and moral leadership. It tended to go with the new

spirit and even encourage it. A notorious example was the Anglican Bishop of Woolwich, John A. T. Robinson. In 1961, he defended the publication of D.H. Lawrence’s immoral book, *Lady Chatterley’s Lover*. His own book in 1963, *Honest to God*, criticised traditional Christian theology and caused a storm of controversy. Social liberals and theological liberals together changed a Christian-based society into a secular one. A brave new world was arriving.

Later History

The later history since the 1960s and 70s are decades when all this has accelerated - and we are still going downhill. While we praise God for all His wondrous works of grace in and through His Church, we have not seen a move of God akin to revivals of the past that has arrested apostacy, transformed society and brought the fear of God upon the land. As a nation, the UK is sowing the wind and reaping the whirlwind (Hosea 8:7). Any news programme will tell the tragedy of a society without God: one which believes self-indulgence and pleasure to be the goal of life and where social evils and suffering are multiplying.

Influenced

And what about Evangelical and Reformed Churches in this new climate? My contention is that many such churches, instead of counteracting the spirit of the age, are capitulating to it. They are doing this by allowing themselves to be influenced by it. We can demonstrate this by considering two broad areas where this spirit manifests itself: entertainment and relativism.



1. Entertainment

To see how the spirit of the age is in the church, consider a parallel situation. Compare the type of music used to celebrate our Queen's 25th Jubilee in 1977 with her 50th Jubilee in 2002. In 1977, the music was serious. *"The classical music concert on Saturday, 1st June will feature two hours of some of the most popular classical music, performed by the greatest artists from Britain and around the world."*

By 2002 and her 50 years' reign, it was very different.

"Guitarist Brian May (of the Rock Band Queen – Ed) will open the Queen's Jubilee concert by playing the National Anthem on the roof of Buckingham Palace. Fellow members of the band, along with singer Phil Collins and a full orchestra will then join in from a plastic stage in the Palace gardens below. Organisers of the £4m extravaganza had been searching for an unusual way of performing "God save the Queen."

Such a thing would never have happened in 1977. In fact, at that Jubilee, an attempt was made to gate-crash it by Punk Rock band the Sex Pistols as they sailed down the Thames on Jubilee Day playing their controversial version of "God save the Queen." Radio stations were banned from playing the single. The group were arrested as they left the boat. The vast difference 25 years later reflects a massive cultural shift. It is not a question of tastes in music so much as a new spirit that deems nothing sacred.

This is now replicated in the Church. Rock music type worship would once have

been sacrilege to past generations of the Godly – now it is considered necessary to attract people into the services. It is getting hard to find an Evangelical or Reformed Church these days that does not have guitars and a drum kit at the front of the sanctuary together with a "worship leader."

Worship has been largely moulded by the craze to make things "enjoyable". "God Deserves Our Worship AND It's Fun!" greets the visitor to a certain Church web site (<https://gracehillchurch.com/god-deserves-worship-fun>). Much is made of the role of modern music in worship. Contemporary worship in many churches makes their "services" little different from a Rock concert. It is the music of our degenerate culture employed in the sacred worship of God.

Such "worship" is a gross misrepresentation of, and affront to, the Most High God. The solemn question needs to be asked...What kind of God are such congregations really worshipping? One who requires, or allows, this kind of debased and worldly performance? Is it not a god of their own imagination and not the true and living God? No wonder Iain Murray once wrote an article on this subject entitled "Sensual Worship – A sign of Impending Apostasy"

(<https://banneroftruth.org/uk/resources/articles/2010/sensual-worship-a-sign-of-impending-apostasy/>). This article should be read by everyone who is in any doubt about this matter.

When Israel sinned with the golden calf, one of the features of that heathen

worship was, after they had feasted, they “rose up to play” (Ex. 32:6). The word “play” is expressive in the original and can be rendered: “to laugh, mock, jest, toy with.” What does this say about modern evangelicalism and its conformity to the spirit of the age? Aaron, in a piece of wishful thinking, called it “a feast to the Lord” (v. 5). God called it something different. He said the people “have corrupted themselves” (v. 7). And Moses and Joshua, far from approving the entertainment, were the only serious men on that occasion (v. 19) – and they were the only ones who were right!

The same can be said of evangelism, which at one time was a sincere concern to further the gospel to needy sinners. Although sometimes more man-centred, nonetheless there was the awareness that evangelism was “commanded” by Christ (Matt. 28:19,20). The Lord owned much of this zealous endeavour, with true works of grace and conversions. People were invited to services to hear a Biblical gospel preached. As far as the Church was concerned, the only attraction was God.

Now the spirit of the age has taken this over as well. Instead of word-based spreading of the gospel message, worldly and entertaining devices are freely used. It started with music and drama in the 1960s, then, as the spiritual climate worsened, more daring means arrived. Puppets, conjuring, ventriloquists, now even Gospel clowns and Christian stand-up comedians “preach” the gospel and, in the words of one review, “had the congregation rocking with laughter as the Gospel of Christ was communicated.”

The spirit of the age is an entertainment mentality that trivialises the serious and does despite to reverence and respect; and the connection between worship and evangelism is clear. If the spirit of the age in the Church trivialises the worship of God, it also trivialises the next greatest thing we do: serving God in furthering the gospel of His momentous grace.

2. *Relativism*

In the great commission, our Lord includes the words, “Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever *I have commanded you*” (Matt. 28:20). It means that new disciples must be under Christ’s authority – not only for their conversion and baptism – but for all future obedience: they must “observe” ... “commanded” things. His word is regulative for church practice and daily conduct. In His own words: “If ye continue in My word, then are ye My disciples indeed” (John 8:31).

Relativism is the opposite of this. The Oxford dictionary defines it as “the doctrine that knowledge, truth and morality exist in relation to culture, society or historical context and are not absolute.” This is the spirit of the age and is implacably opposed to Biblical standards. However, we find something similar in churches and Christian lifestyle. A massive shift has taken place from “What saith the Scriptures?” to “Why can’t we do it?” Certain areas once considered sacrosanct are now invaded by the relativistic spirit of the age.

Take feminism for instance. God has defined male and female roles - “from the beginning of the creation God made them male and female” (Mark 10:6; cf.

Gen. 1:27). This is to be honoured in marriage (Eph. 5:23), distinction in dress (Deut. 22:5), deportment (1 Tim. 2:9) and submission to the ministry of men in the Church (1 Cor. 14:34; 1 Tim. 2:11-14). While many and valuable services are open to women in the Church, the administering of the means of grace where men are present is not one of them. The modern pathological hatred for God-given gender distinctives is creeping into the church as well. We now find, to our astonishment, professed evangelicals weakening on same-sex marriage and justifying it on the grounds of “love”. Women are reading the Scriptures in Church services and even preaching the Word! Men are abdicating their responsibility and allowing women to have their way; some even conforming to current fashion and looking effeminate in their dress instead of exuding a Christian manliness that glorifies God.

Moreover, it is almost pathetic to see pictures of men in their fifties speaking at Christian conferences wearing jeans with open-neck shirts outside their jeans, trying to look contemporary. It is common now, even in professed Reformed Churches, to find Ministers casually dressed: no ties or jackets in many cases, aping the “dressed down” mentality of the world and looking less and less like Ministers of the Gospel. If the aim is to convince outsiders that Christians – even preachers – are not much different from them, the aim is succeeding; but is God being glorified and are sinners humbled before Him in repentance and faith? (1 Cor. 14:24-25).

This spirit ironically is encouraged by a

Bible: the gender-neutral edition of the New International Version, where references to males are changed in the way they are in our politically correct society. For instance, Proverbs 13:1 “A wise son heareth his father’s instruction” became “A wise child heeds a parent’s instruction.” This impudent wresting of God’s Holy Word was mooted by the International Bible Society back in 1997, but amid loud protests had to wait until the climate had changed. The time came, as it usually does, in 2005 and it appeared amidst both welcome and criticism. On the Bible League website there is a thorough review of this: <https://www.bibleleaguetrust.org/a-critical-assessment-of-todays-new-international-version-tniv/>.

The TNIV was eventually withdrawn, but has now re-appeared as the New International Version, 2011. This claims to be a revised, much less gender-neutral edition, but a glance at: <http://www.slowley.com/niv2011-comparison/> will show this is far from the case. Bible translations both catch and drive the spirit of the age at the same time; and the tragedy is that many in evangelical and reformed circles are enthusiastic for this “Bible”! See <https://fiec.org.uk/what-we-do/strand-blog/lost-in-translation/>.

Another feature of this degenerate age is its obsession with youth. The concept of God-given adult authority (Ex. 20:12) and the young respecting this and learning from them (Lev. 19:32) has suffered a levelling effect. The modern trend is to push children and young people forward and take their views and contributions seriously. Children are even

interviewed on news programmes and youngsters who have hardly begun to live are canvassed for their views. We have lived to see the spectacle of arrogant young people lecturing older people in high office on social and political matters. According to the liberal elite of our day, the voting age should come down to 16 and the age of consent lower than that; and this has seeped into Churches. Young people are encouraged to read the Scriptures in the services, lead worship and even have a try at preaching! If protest is made against these innovations, the retort is “the young people like it, and it helps bring more of them into the Church.” God’s judgement is upon the State when “Children are their oppressors, and women rule over them” (Isa. 3:12). The like judgement, we fear, is also happening to the Church.

Another feature of this present world is the love of pleasure and self-indulgence. Hedonism is the philosophy of life for so many; and, accordingly, John Piper’s Christian hedonism catches that spirit of the age and is making inroads at an alarming rate. Far from being Biblical, it is derived from the world and leaves its professed converts comfortably in the world.

There is much more that can be said, but it boils down to this: evangelicals who

drift with the spirit of the age are betraying the Biblical heritage our forefathers lived for, fought for and died for. It is nothing other than conformity to the world which is enmity with God (James 4:4). Yet such guilty perpetrators arrogantly maintain that every Church needs to adopt this modern model. If we do not, according to them, we have only ourselves to blame for being left behind and missing out on blessing!

It is not the spirit of the age that we need, it is the spirit of repentance and return to authentic evangelicalism. We cannot turn the clock back to better times, but we must ensure that the Church of God does not move with our decadent and degenerate times. What is outlined is a spiritual problem – and it can only have a spiritual solution. In place of following the current of the times, let us return to the old paths of authentic evangelicalism where the good way is and where the Lord’s favour rests (Jer. 6:16).

A worldly-wise Christian once said to G. Campbell Morgan: “The preacher must catch the spirit of the age.” In a flash Morgan replied, “God forgive him if he does. The preacher’s business is to correct the spirit of the age.” May the Lord help us all, whether preacher or hearer, to do likewise in our day!

Reproduced, with permission from the Bible League Quarterly, Oct. — Dec. 2018



ENDUED TO STAND

"The Lord is with thee, thou mighty man of valour."

Judges 6:12

When the Lord called Gideon, He addressed him not as he was, but as he would be by the power of grace. Until this point, all we know of Gideon is that he threshed wheat to hide it from the Midianites. That was a lowly task, though it did take some courage to defy the power of Midian by withholding his wheat from them; but it was a small action of defiance, one that was necessitated by widespread need and hunger. There were no other heroic deeds to Gideon's name up to this time. He had taken no stand publicly against the prevailing Baal worship in Israel. He was virtually unknown, a most unlikely candidate for the position of national deliverer; but God made him a chosen vessel and guaranteed to give him the power to do His will.

Men may not perceive in us much sign of greatness. We may well be discouraged from undertaking some service for the Lord because we ourselves feel that we are very ordinary. Yet grace can make every weak Gideon into a "mighty man of valour." Our personal weakness, our lack of past experience, even our past failures are no valid reason to avoid doing the will of God now.

When the Lord calls, He will equip. Gideon was never sent forth to do a work for God without the gift of Divine grace and power sufficient to enable him to do all the Lord called him to do.

Who could have foreseen that the Lord would take a struggling monk in remote Germany to launch the Reformation? Who would have thought that He would use the untutored John Bunyan to give the world the greatest of Christian classics? Or who could possibly have dreamed that He would have employed four young rustics to bring about Ulster's great 1859 Revival? Who can tell what He will do through us if we but do His bidding?

Alan Cairns

From: Eagles Wings, Daily Meditations

**The world has yet to see what God can do with and for
and through and in a man who is fully and wholly
consecrated to Him.**

Henry Varley

“And what I say unto you, I say unto all, Watch.”

(Mark 13:37)

Outline of a Sermon by **Alfred Hewlett, D.D.**

Our blessed Lord, in all His exhortations to His people, had reference not only to their necessities, but to their comforts; and gave them such directions as should, by the blessing of the Holy Ghost the Comforter, lead them, by a comfortable way, through the thorny wilderness; a way whereby they might be kept at ease, though exposed to hardships and enjoy peace, though in the midst of war; and this desire gave rise to the exhortation. Praying that the Holy Ghost may enlighten our hearts in the understanding of it, I shall attempt to show the *reasons why* and the *seasons when*, the people of God should *watch*. *Four* reasons may be given drawn from our *ignorance* and *six* deduced from our *knowledge*.

- 1) We *know not* what a day may bring forth: “Watch, and be sober” (James 4:14; I Thess. 5:16).
- 2) We *know not* what the purposes of God concerning us may be.
- 3) We *know not* what attack our enemy Satan may make upon us: “Be vigilant” (I Peter 5:8).
- 4) We *know not* the depth of wickedness within, and to what it may lead us.

But we *know that*:

- a) we are *mortal* (Ps. 103:15; Job 14:1 and 7:1)
- b) that we are *sinful*;
- c) that God has *revealed His will to us* in His Word (Ps. 85:8);
- d) that *Satan* is a *crafty foe* and as powerful as crafty (2 Cor. 12);
- e) that our “*hearts are deceitful above all things*”
- f) that it is *easier* to resist evil in its *first conception*, than when the mind is enchanted by it (James 1:13-15).

The *seasons* when we should most particularly watch are:

- 1) In times of *difficulty*, for directions; for the pillar of cloud and fire, as the Israelites did.
- 2) In times of *darkness*, for the Day-star, the “Sun of Righteousness.”
- 3) In times of *affliction*, for the Comforter.
- 4) In times of *desertion*, or a want of feeling the Lord's presence, for His re-appearing.
- 5) In times of *temptation*, for deliverance (1 Cor. 10:13).
- 6) In times of *backsliding*, for restoration (Ps. 119:176; Jonah 2:4).
- 7) In times of *threatening*, for help and deliverance, as Hezekiah (see Isaiah 37).
- 8) In *praying* times, for an answer (Hab. 2:1).
- 9) In *dying* circumstances, for the chariot of Israel and for Israel's God and King.

This spirit of watchfulness is altogether the gift and work of the Holy Spirit; and when He says *Watch*, may He graciously impart that spirit that we may be thus employed on our watch-towers and thus glorify Him in all our ways and works.

REPORT ON THE CHRISTIAN WATCH ANNUAL MEETING

held at Holywell Evangelical Church, North Wales

By **Ian Henderson**, Vice-Chairman

On 4th October, 2018, a well-attended meeting heard the CW Vice-Chairman exhort those present to *“earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints”* (Jude 3:3). The need for Christians to be active, both prayerfully and practically, in the Lord’s service was emphasised and a number of areas for practical action mentioned. In these dark, evil days, faithful watchmen were needed to be on the Lord’s side.

Rev. John Thackway, Minister of the Church, then spoke powerfully on **‘The Work of the Lord’**, basing his comments on 1 Corinthians 15:58, *“Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye steadfast, unmovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord.”*

Corinth, he said, was a busy trading and commercial centre of the ancient world and the people had become ‘*Corinthianised*’. Wealth had led to moral decadence and religion was a vice. The city was a hotbed of sin. Who would be a Christian in Corinth, he asked? There was, however, a Church – there were those who had turned from sin and turned to Christ. Christians were living their lives to the glory of God.

Society today, he said, was much like Corinth but even today the Lord had a people. He works IN their hearts and AMONG them and THROUGH them – when He commands then are they constrained to rightly abound in His work. It is the most important work that can ever be done in this life for it has repercussions in the life to come...*“your labour is not in vain in the Lord.”* Every witness, every Gospel message preached, every tract distributed, every persecution suffered, everything - however small - done in love to the Lord and in union with Him will be rewarded – and that for ever and ever.

Rev. Thackway said that although we live in evil, dark days, there is a work to be done and the Master’s call to follow but, through His grace in us, we shall be victorious - it is not vain to give one’s all for Him. *“Knowing that of the Lord ye shall receive the reward of the inheritance: for ye serve the Lord Christ”* (Colossians 3:24).

Excellent refreshments were kindly served afterwards, which gave opportunity for further discussions and fellowship.

(Rev. Thackway’s full message is on our website www.christianwatch.org.uk or can be accessed via www.sermonaudio.com)

News and Current Affairs

Shame! – Voice for Justice Newsletter, 10 November 2018, www.vfjuk.org.uk

One hundred years ago, on the eleventh hour of the eleventh day of the eleventh month, the bloody carnage of World War 1 ended. A generation of young men had given their tomorrows in the hell-hole of the trenches so that those back home might be safe; so that the values upon which our nation was founded might continue to be enjoyed by us, today.

In 21st century Britain, how exactly do we honour that sacrifice?

Yes, we wear our poppies and, for a few brief days, light up the moat encircling the Tower of London with 10,000 lights in memory of those who died. We attend Armistice Services up and down the country and we bring out old photos of now far distant relations we never knew. Do we actually honour the supreme sacrifice of those who died in any meaningful way?

On 17th October, the Government announced that seven more faith and belief groups would this year, and for the future, be represented at the National Remembrance Service at the cenotaph. This, it was explained, would reflect the significant but little-known contribution made by minority ethnic communities to Britain's war effort, while at the same time sending out a signal across the world that this country values the contribution of its diverse communities. Highly commendable! Among the faith groups mentioned are Jains, Zoroastrians, Copts, Humanists, Mormons, Baha'is and Spiritualists.

While the honouring of minority groups who fought and died alongside British troops is to be commended, the inclusion of Humanists and Spiritualists as faith groups is surely a travesty. Humanists, after all, entirely reject any idea of God and advocate the removal of all religious belief from public life. Spiritualism too cannot properly be classed as a religion. Based on the belief



that spirits of the dead exist and can communicate with the living through the agency of a medium, any concept of 'deity' amongst adherents is open to wide variation and practitioners would say rather that it is a belief system embodying and based upon universal 'truth'. But perhaps more persuasively, neither group expresses the values on which our country is founded and for which those who gave their lives died – so why are we honouring them by inclusion? Especially is this true of Spiritualism. The strength of Christian faith amongst the soldiers is well chronicled and all soldiers were given a copy of the Bible, which they reportedly regularly read.

It is undeniable that over the course of the war many, who lost loved ones, did in their anguish turn to spiritualism – desperate to maintain contact with a dead child, husband or comrade, no matter how spurious the means. The most famous proponent of the movement that grew up is perhaps the writer, Conan Doyle; but at the same time, it was recognised that this, as an interest, could be deeply unhealthy and it was more widely regarded with concern.

It should be remembered that Britain at that time was very strongly Christian and not only was communication with the dead and all forms of divination expressly condemned in the Bible, but The Witchcraft Act, 1735 prohibited occult practices, including, within its broader definition of what constituted witchcraft, communication with (evil) spirits. This Act remained in force until 1951, when it was only finally repealed by the Fraudulent Mediums Act, which prohibited a person from claiming to be psychic, medium or other spiritualist in order to obtain money by deception. In other words, from that time seances without financial benefit were tolerated – but not encouraged, the harm such engagement could do being widely acknowledged.

The diverse, supposedly multi-cultural, mish-mash of ideas underlying the Home Office announcement does nothing to honour those who died. In fact, if anything, it renders their sacrifice essentially meaningless. How one wonders, if asked, would the fallen respond?

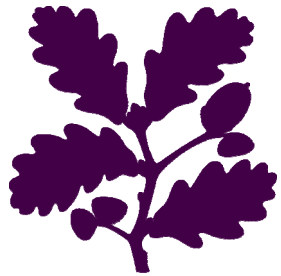
Shame then on this nation, that turns its back on our Christian heritage – on the values that once truly made Britain great – and celebrates sexual licence and the occult. We are a nation deservedly under judgment.



National Trust tells properties to stop dropping BC and AD – By Henry Bodkin, The Telegraph (www.telegraph.co.uk), 12 November 2018

The National Trust has warned against ditching the traditional terms “before Christ” and “anno domini” after one of its flagship properties switched to a modern alternative to “avoid offending non-Christians.”

Visitors to the Trust’s Neolithic village at Avebury in Wiltshire have complained of “mindless” political correctness after “BCE” and “CE”, denoting “before common era” and “common era”, were used on a large timeline explaining the history of the World Heritage Site. The terms have become more mainstream in recent years, having been adopted by parts of the BBC in 2011 and, more recently, a number of local Education Authorities. However, critics have condemned their use as meaningless, pointing out that UK leaders of major non-Christian faiths have said they do not consider the traditional versions to be offensive.



**National
Trust**

Now the National Trust has agreed, confirming that its internal style guide favours “BC”/”AD” and promising to instruct Avebury to amend the offending signage. Visitors told The Daily Telegraph that when they complained, staff admitted they had been inundated with similar negative comments.

Abbreviated

“If you can change sex by saying so, why not race or age?” asks columnist – Christian Institute (www.christian.org.uk), 13 November 2018

Permitting people to change their gender by self-declaration opens the door to similar challenges to the law by people who would like to alter their age or race, a columnist has warned. Writing in The Times, Janice Turner highlighted the logical progression of identity politics if self-declaration becomes the accepted norm. It follows the case of Emile Ratelband, a Dutch man who wants a court to change his birth date to make him 20 years younger.

Ratelband argued that if a man who identifies as a woman can obtain a new Birth Certificate which declares he was born female, he should be able to amend his Birth Certificate. Turner wrote: “A court has argued it would mean deleting part of Ratelband’s life, but is this different to trans people who

request no further mention of their birth name and childhood?” She also proposed that if society follows the transgender slogan ‘I am who I say I am’, then there should be no objections to those like Rachel Dolezal, who claim to be of a different race. She said that while “Dolezal was hounded for purporting to be black”, there is no logical coherent argument why racial identity is fixed while gender is fluid.

Turner added that when “identity is reduced to subjective inner feelings, who is it to say that Rachel Dolezal feels her blackness less profoundly than Caitlyn Jenner feels her womanhood”. The journalist pointed out that when the Gender Recognition Act was introduced - “no-one thought a trans person could literally change sex”. This understanding, she said, had now been lost, with post-modern identity politics taking over.



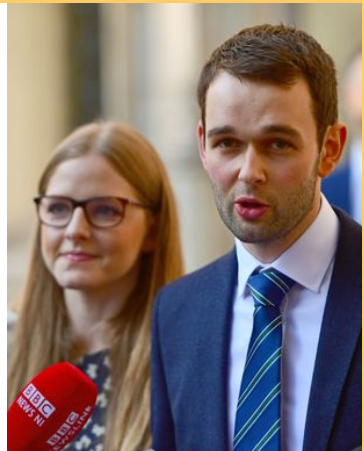
Times Columnist Janice Turner

She concluded: “An unqualified, unchecked policy of ‘I am who I say I am’ should apply to everyone or no-one at all.”

Christian Bakers win 'gay cake' Supreme Court battle –

The Independent (www.independent.co.uk), 10 October 2018

The owners of a Christian bakery did not discriminate against a customer by refusing to make a cake featuring the slogan “Support Gay Marriage”, the Supreme Court has ruled. Daniel and Amy McArthur won their legal battle against gay rights activist Gareth Lee, who had accused the pair of discrimination on the grounds of sexual orientation and political beliefs. Five justices on the Supreme Court were unanimous in their judgement over the dispute, which began in 2014. *Abbreviated*



Fossils made in one day at Bristol —
British Church Newspaper, 23 November 2018

An extraordinary experiment, conducted at Bristol University, has demonstrated that the fossilisation of animals can be completed within 24 hours. It was reported recently in the journal *Palaeontology*. The mainstream media have ignored the research, which fatally undermines the theory of evolution.

Researchers placed recently-dead creatures in large quantities of clay and then subjected the clay to intense heat (210 deg C) and pressure (241 bar - equivalent to being 7,900 feet underwater). The specimens were fossilised after just four hours. The rapid fossilisation process destroyed the less stable biochemical compounds, like fatty tissues and proteins, but preserved things like melanin, which colours skin. An article in the latest issue of *Creation*, the journal of the Creation Science Movement (CSM), noted: "This is exactly as is the case with 'real' fossils".

This experiment gives the lie to evolutionists' claims that the process of 'petrification' (turning dead creatures into stone) takes up to millions of years. In Genesis 7:11 we read that on the 17th day of the second month of the calendar year "were all the fountains of the great deep broken up". After 150 days (the 17th day of the seventh month), God "stopped the fountains of the deep" (Gen. 7:24 to 8:3). These "fountains of the great deep" consisted of hot, sediment-laden waters, underneath the earth's crust, arranged in layers according to their specific gravity, which poured out in rapid succession in parallel layers all over the world. The 'waters of the deep' escaped through gigantic rifts and faults during the Flood. These below-the-surface waters are heated by the 'mantle' which receives its heat from the centre of the earth. During the Flood, the pressure of sediments piled on top of each other, often two or three miles deep in total, would have created intense pressure – matching the 241-bar used in the Bristol University experiment. The heat from the underground waters would have helped to accelerate the fossilisation process.

As CSM point out, "The data from the Bristol research suggests that if these organisms were buried slowly under layers of silt, they would not even fossilise. Even if buried under waterlogged, water-softened clays and silts, the successive layers above them would probably not have hardened sufficiently". Researchers were unable under the microscope to distinguish the 'artificially-produced' 24-hour fossils from the 'real' ones.

Abbreviated

Report on CRE Exhibition

16th — 18th October at Sandown, Esher, Surrey

By **Michael Hobbis**, CW Committee Member

As our readers will no doubt be aware, this Exhibition is an eclectic mix of various professing Christian organisations and charities, together with some who are there in a purely secular capacity to sell their goods and services ...rather like the animal sellers and money changers in our Lord's day.

This year was no different in this respect, yet, there did seem to be a difference in the attitudes of visitors to our Stand. Instead of the usual outright opposition and criticism, we did experience that, generally, visitors to our stand were respectful, willing to discuss, listen and - as we contended for the true faith once delivered to the saints of the Church of Christ - some were even receptive to the claims of God's Word.



We again laid emphasis, with banners and literature, on the testimony of the Reformers and martyrs for Jesus Christ, their Lord and Saviour; this was mostly well received with much interest and often approval. A small number requested that they might join CW and paid their subscriptions.

Some years ago, two young men, Filipinos I believe, came to the Stand full of joy at their recent experience of the Lord's saving work in their lives. I believe it was the same two men who came back this year, more mature yet still filled with the joy of their salvation. How different we might say to some of us, who with the poet of old exclaim: "Where is the blessedness I knew, when first I saw the Lord?"

Many good conversations by Marcus Brookes, David Ansell and myself were had with the visitors, and while there is, as in the Church generally, some apathy, we felt there was more of a willingness to consider the eternal truths of Holy Scripture. Indeed, many folk expressed their approval of our witness and our stand for the true Gospel of Jesus Christ our Lord.

ON READING THE BIBLE

Extract from a letter by **John Newton**

I know not a better rule of reading the Scripture, than to read it through from beginning to end; and, when we have finished it once, to begin it again. We shall meet with many passages which we can make little improvement of, but not so many in the second reading as in the first, and fewer in the third than in the second: provided we pray to Him who has the keys to open our understanding and to anoint our eyes with His spiritual ointment.

The course of reading today will prepare some lights for what we shall read tomorrow and throw a further light upon what we read yesterday. Experience only can prove the advantage of this method, if steadily persevered in. To make a few efforts and then give over is like taking a few steps and then standing still, which would do little towards completing a long journey; but though a person walked slowly and but a little way in a day, if he walked every day and with his face always in the same direction, year after year, he might in time encompass the globe. By thus travelling patiently and steadily through the Scriptures and repeating our progress, we should increase in knowledge to the end of life. The Old and New Testament, the doctrines, precepts and promises, the history, examples, admonitions and warnings etc. would mutually illustrate and strengthen each other and nothing that is written for our instruction would be overlooked.

Happy should I be, could I fully follow the advice I am now offering to you. I wish you may profit by my experience. Alas, how much time have I lost and wasted, which, had I been wise, I should have devoted to reading and studying the Bible! But my evil heart obstructs the dictates of my judgment; I often feel a reluctance to read this Book of books and a disposition to hew out broken cisterns which afford me no water, while the fountain of living waters are close within my reach.

(The Works of John Newton, Volume 6)



THE SUITABILITY OF THE SAVIOUR

By J. C. Ryle

Matthew 1: 18-25

These verses begin by telling us two great truths. They tell us how the Lord Jesus Christ took our nature upon Him and became Man. They tell us also that His birth was miraculous. His mother Mary was a virgin.

These are very mysterious subjects. They are depths which we have no line to fathom. They are truths which we have not mind enough to comprehend. Let us not attempt to explain things which are above our feeble reason. Let us be content to believe with reverence and let us not speculate about matters which we cannot understand. Enough for us to know that with Him who made the world, nothing is impossible. Let us rest in the words of the Apostles' Creed: "Jesus Christ was conceived by the Holy Ghost and born of the virgin Mary."

Let us observe *the conduct of Joseph* described in these verses. It is a beautiful example of Godly wisdom and tender consideration for others. He saw the "appearance of evil" in her who was his espoused wife, but he did nothing rashly. He waited patiently to have the line of duty made clear. In all probability he laid the matter before God in prayer. "He that believeth shall not make haste" (Isa. 28:16).

The patience of Joseph was graciously rewarded. He received a direct message from God upon the subject of his anxiety and was at once relieved from all his fears. How good it is to wait upon God! Who ever cast his cares upon God in hearty prayer and found Him fail? "In all thy ways acknowledge Him, and He shall direct thy paths" (Prov. 3:6).

Let us observe in these verses *the two names given to our Lord*. One is "Jesus," the other is "Emmanuel." One describes His office, the other His nature. Both are deeply interesting.

The name Jesus means "Saviour." It is the same name as Joshua in the Old Testament. It is given to our Lord because "He saves His people from their sins." This is His special office. He saves them from the guilt of sin by washing them in His own atoning blood. He saves them from the dominion of sin by putting in their hearts the sanctifying Spirit. He saves them from the presence of sin when He takes them out of this world to rest with Him. He will save them from all the consequences of sin when He shall give them a glorious body at the last day. Blessed and holy are Christ's people! From sorrow, cross and conflict they are not saved, but they are "saved from sin" for evermore.

They are cleansed from guilt by Christ's blood. They are made meet for Heaven by Christ's Spirit. This is salvation! He who cleaves to sin is not yet saved.

"Jesus" is a very encouraging name to heavy-laden sinners. He who is King of kings and Lord of lords might lawfully have taken some more high-sounding title. But He did not do so. The rulers of this world have often called themselves Great, Conqueror, Bold, Magnificent and the like. The Son of God was content to call Himself "Saviour." The souls which desire salvation may draw nigh to the Father with boldness and have access with confidence through Christ. It is His office and His delight to show mercy. "God sent not His Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through Him might be saved" (John 3:17).

Jesus is a Name which is peculiarly sweet and precious to believers. It has often done them good, when the favour of Kings and Princes would have been heard of with unconcern. It has given them what money cannot buy, even inward peace. It has eased their wearied consciences and given rest to their heavy hearts. The Song of Solomon speaks the experience of many when it says, "Thy Name is as ointment poured forth" (Song 1:3). Happy is that person who trusts not merely in vague notions of God's mercy and goodness, but in "Jesus."

The name "Emmanuel" is seldom found in the Bible, but it is scarcely less interesting than the name "Jesus." It is the name which is given to our Lord from His nature, as God-Man, as "God manifest in the flesh." It signifies "God with us."



Let us take care that we clearly understand that there was a union of two natures, the Divine and human, in the Person of the Lord Jesus Christ. It is a point of the deepest importance. We should settle it firmly in our minds that our Saviour is perfect man as well as perfect God and perfect God as well as perfect Man. If we once lose sight of this great foundation truth, we may run into fearful heresies. The name Emmanuel takes in the whole mystery. Jesus is "God with us." He had a nature like our own in all things, sin only excepted. But though Jesus was "with us" in human flesh and blood, He was at the same time very God.

We shall often find, as we read the Gospels, that our Saviour could be weary, and hungry, and thirsty – could weep, and groan, and feel pain like one of ourselves. In all this we see *the Man Christ Jesus*. We see the nature He took on Him when He was born of the virgin Mary.

But we shall also find in the same Gospels that our Saviour knew men's hearts and thoughts, that He had power over devils, that He could work the mightiest of miracles with a word, that He was ministered to by angels, that He allowed a disciple to call Him "my God," and that He said, "Before Abraham was I am," and, "I and My Father are one." In all this we see *the eternal God*. We see Him "who is over all, God blessed for ever. Amen" (Rom. 9:5).

If we would have a strong foundation for our faith and hope, we must keep constantly in view our Saviour's divinity. He in whose blood we are invited to trust is the Almighty God. All power is His in Heaven and earth. None can pluck us out of His hand. If we are true believers in Jesus, our heart need not be troubled or afraid.

If we would have sweet comfort in suffering and trial, we must keep constantly in view our Saviour's humanity. He is the Man Christ Jesus who lay on the bosom of the virgin Mary as a little infant and knows the heart of a man. He can be touched with the feeling of our infirmities. He has Himself experienced Satan's temptations. He has endured hunger. He has shed tears. He has felt pain. We may trust Him unreservedly with our sorrows. He will not despise us. We may pour out our hearts before Him in prayer boldly and keep nothing back. He can sympathise with His people.

Let these thoughts sink down into our minds. Let us bless God for the encouraging truths which the first chapter of the New Testament contains. It tells us of One who "saves His people from their sins." But this is not all. It tells us that this Saviour is "Emmanuel," God Himself, and yet God with us – God manifest in human flesh like our own. This is glad tidings. This is indeed good news. Let us feed on these truths in our hearts by faith with thanksgiving.

END OF YEAR THANKSGIVING

Great God, we sing that guiding hand
By which supported still we stand;
Throughout this year Thy mercy shown,
And mercy crowns it till its close.

By day, by night, at home, abroad,
Still are we guarded by our God;
By His incessant bounty fed,
By His unerring counsel led.

With grateful hearts the past we own;
The future, all to us unknown,
We to Thy guardian care commit,
And peaceful leave before Thy feet.

In scenes exalted or depressed
Thou art our joy and Thou our rest;
Thy goodness all our hopes shall raise,
Adored through all our changing days.

When death shall interrupt these songs,
And seal in silence mortal tongues,
Our helper God, in whom we trust,
Shall keep our souls and guard our just.

Philip Doddridge



CHRISTIAN WATCH

PO Box 6526,
Leamington Spa, CV31 9NL

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