

CHRISTIAN WATCH

Issue No. 16

A Protestant Biblical Witness

Jul/Aug 2018

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

Mark 13:37

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DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

30 August 2018

Buckinghamshire County Show
Weedon Park, Aylesbury

4 October 2018, 7.30pm

Christian Watch Annual Meeting
Holywell Evangelical Church, Halkyn Street,
Holywell, CH8 7TX
Speaker: Rev. John Thackway

16 – 18 October 2018

CRE International Exhibition, Sandown Park, Esher, Surrey

Peter was not only to “feed the sheep and lambs,” but to “strengthen his brethren.” For this end, he had to learn in the school of experience his own weakness, the deceit and treachery of his own wicked nature, the tempter’s power and the omnipotency of Christ. These are the men who are useful to the Church of God, who *can* say, “we speak that we do know, and testify that we have seen.”

By: J. Miley

From: The Gospel Magazine, 1876

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

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Dear Friends,

CHRISTIAN WATCH

On behalf of Christian Watch, may I again bring you greetings in our Saviour's lovely Name.

Are we losing our right to free speech? A recent newspaper headline read - "*We are living in a country where you daren't be anything but gay friendly*" - and these days those who refuse to embrace the full spectrum of gay and transgender life are often silenced. Weekly news reports cite incidents of Christians who have been censured for daring to oppose the gay agenda - for failing to align themselves with such. Diabolical world-wide forces are at work, demanding full endorsement of the LGBTQ agenda from all Government employees and their citizens. To object is a mark of intolerance. So, what are Christians to do in these times of deepening hostility to Christ and to His truths?

Let us turn to the Word of God. John 16:33 states - "*In the world ye shall have tribulation: but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world.*" The Apostle Paul also warns - "*All that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution. But evil men and seducers shall wax worse and worse, deceiving, and being deceived*" (2 Timothy 3:12-13). So, we must not think it strange that the world will push its ungodly agendas and be intolerant to the godly. Today, the Christian is called to patiently endure scorn from the world (because he or she chooses Christ) as opposed to courting the favour of men.

Today, we can no longer rest on the assets of a Christian heritage. Sadly, the tables have turned, so that the heritage of truth and righteousness is looked upon with disdain. The Bible warns - "*Woe unto them that call evil good, and good evil; that put darkness for light, and light for darkness; that put bitter for sweet, and sweet for bitter*" (Isaiah 5:20). Social norms have been turned upside down.

As society sinks further into the sea of sin, Christians must stand firm on the Scriptures of truth. We must lay hold upon God's law as the rule of life. The 10 Commandments, which are the summary of God's moral law, are the bedrock of our faith and practice, so they need to be firmly fixed in our minds and hearts. Today, the chasm between God's law and the immoral social agenda of the modern man is deeper and wider than at any time since the first century. Yet we can be encouraged - encouraged because in the first century, Christianity grew out of paganism amidst moral corruption and horrible persecution. This is a tribute to the power of the Gospel and a beacon of hope for us today.

And then, of course, we have the power of prayer. The Lord Jesus Christ

Himself said – “*Watch and pray.....the spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak*” (Matthew 26:41). Following prayer, the early Church experienced answers when the Holy Spirit was poured out on the day of Pentecost and many souls were won for Christ. The next time you read the Book of the Acts of the Apostles, pay attention to the number of prayer meetings that took place and the number of instances in which prayer is mentioned. You will discover that the believers prayed often – and in every kind of situation; whether it was to choose the next Apostle to replace Judas or to seek the Lord for protection against the threats against the Church by the Jewish authorities. Christians in the early Church prayed before choosing men to serve as deacons; they prayed before sending forth Paul and Barnabas to evangelise the Gentiles. It is with good reason that prayer meetings of a Church in our day are referred to as the life-breath (or the power-house) of the Church, as they often indicate the spiritual pulse of the Church. So, the next time you feel the weight of the flesh hindering you, remember the power of the Lord enjoyed by the early Church on account of their earnest prayers.

William Huntington (1745 – 1813) was a London Minister much maligned in his day – and ever since – by men far inferior to him in the knowledge of the Scriptures. He was a man greatly used of God – and I quote: “*I have sometimes thought, that a nation must be truly blessed, if it were governed by no other laws than those of that blessed Book (the Bible). It is so complete a system, that nothing can be added to it or taken from it. It contains everything needful to be known and done.....it is the first Book, the best Book and the oldest Book in all the world. It exhibits life and immortality from everlasting and shows the way to eternal glory. It reveals the only living and true God and shows the way to Him; it sets aside all other gods and of all that trust in them. In short, it is a Book of law, to show right and wrong; a Book of wisdom, that condemns all folly and makes the foolish wise; a Book of truth, that detects all lies and confutes all errors; and a Book of life, that gives life and shows the way from everlasting death.*” It is our earnest prayer that this Book (the Bible) will once again be read in homes up and down our land and that lives will be changed as a result.

Please remember our Annual Meeting to be held on Thursday, 4th October at 7.30 p.m. in Holywell Evangelical Church in North Wales – with Rev. John Thackway as the guest speaker. May you know the blessing of the Lord on your life in these days in which we live.

Yours in His Name,

Ian Henderson

Ian R. Henderson (Vice-Chairman)

Wartime Miracles & A National Scandal

From: www.internetpulpit.co.uk

There is an old story of two spiders, one the mother and the other her son. The story goes that mother spider made a lovely home in her web and she suspended this web from a single strand hanging from a tree branch far above. One day, her son paid a visit. As he surveyed her home he noticed this single strand seemingly ascending into empty space. Thinking it was useless he cut it and to his horror the whole web fell and was destroyed.

The Thread of Faith

The spiritual lesson behind this story is very simple. Many people today look back upon the wartime generation and regard their faithful belief in Almighty God as something really strange and peculiar. As a Minister I have often heard comments like *“Oh Granny and Granddad went to church every Sunday. I don’t know why”*. Or *“Granny read her Bible every day. How boring that must have been!”* They might occasionally add *“We have no interest in anything like that, being religious is a waste of time.”* It is this kind of attitude which has led many people today to cut the thread of faith in God which supported previous generations and now to their horror the whole

structure of our society has collapsed in a myriad of social and moral problems. That thread, that faith in God; that Hope in Him, that Eternal Light which could never be extinguished, is precisely what kept previous generations going, through war and bloodshed. Today’s generation has largely dismissed this faith as being unimportant and we see the ruinous results all around.

It is often said that the past is like another country with regard to belief and behaviour and I am reminded of this truth time and again as I study the attitudes of those who experienced wartime. As a Minister for over thirty years, I have immersed myself in researching wartime events from both World Wars. I have personally talked to those who served in the trenches during the First World War and I have talked to numerous ex-service personnel from the Second World War. It has been a unique privilege to have been able to do this and I can say with total conviction that an underlying faith in Almighty God was absolutely integral to keeping people in this country strong and keeping them going. They believed that God was real and in turn they witnessed profound examples of God being at work in this world of chaos which men have made.

Dunkirk and Divine Intervention

An example of just how strong and how widespread this belief in God really was can be seen in the

National Day of Prayer

“PUT
YOUR TRUST
IN GOD,
AS I DO”

His Majesty the King

response of people, when King George VI called for a National Prayer Day at the time of the Dunkirk crisis. In May, 1940, when France had fallen and the British Army was trapped at Dunkirk where they were to be annihilated, King George called for a National Day of Prayer to plead for Divine Intervention. So widespread and so deep was faith in God that literally millions of people flocked into churches to pray. The special service held at Westminster Abbey

was so inundated that there is a famous photograph showing a queue a quarter of a mile long as people desperately tried to get in to pray. That's how important and how widespread faith was in that generation. They knew God was real and they knew He could be petitioned through heartfelt prayer. The result of that National Day of Prayer was, of course, the miracle of Dunkirk, without which none of us would be here today.

History shows that the faith of that generation was regularly rewarded. Only those who study the events of the Second World War can fully appreciate just how close we came to losing the war and losing our freedom. The facts show that, at numerous crisis points when it seemed all was lost, the people of this nation witnessed God's Hand at work, changing what should have been the natural outcome of an event into a deliverance.

More than Human Planning

Recently I came across an article written by no less than the Head of the British and American Planning



Staff, the body responsible for planning D-Day and the liberation of Europe. He was in the unique position of knowing fully what was happening on the war front. His name was Lt. General Sir Frederick Morgan and he wrote this article two years after the end of the war, as he looked back on events. These are his words:

“Miracles still happen. How many of them have we not seen enacted before our eyes in these past few years? There was Dunkirk and its flat calm sea. Who planned that? We saw no way out barring a miracle. Then came the miracle. Two years later, the British and American military convoy was sailing in order to land in North Africa. All the enemy submarines were on the lookout. A breath-taking moment came when a U-boat caught sight of the tall ship of one convoy. The rest of the convoy was obscured by a squall that appeared to be travelling along with our ships providing cover. The result was that the Nazi observer thought that what he saw was merely worthy of routine report. Then just as General Patton was due to land on the Casablanca beaches, open to the Atlantic swell, at the very moment it seemed inevitable that the whole affair must be called off, the wind changed from on-shore and let the small craft land successfully. There was surely more than human planning here too. Then there was the miracle of D-Day in 1944 with a last-minute change in the weather. The history of other theatres of war tell of many

similar happenings.”

When you read the reflections of those who were in authority, individuals who had direct knowledge as to what really happened behind the scenes during the War, they all describe the same thing – an overwhelming sense of Divine Intervention at critical moments.

We have a Guardian

Wartime Prime Minister Winston Churchill is another example. He, like Morgan, knew everything that was going on. Towards the end of 1942, as the tide turned in the War, he wrote:



“I sometimes have a feeling of interference. I want to stress that. I have a feeling sometimes that some Guiding Hand has interfered. I have a feeling that we have a Guardian because we have a great Cause and

we shall have that Guardian so long as we serve that Cause faithfully."

Altered Sequence of Events

Then there is the testimony of Air Chief Marshal Sir Hugh Dowding. He was the actual Commander-in-Chief of Fighter Command during the Battle of Britain. He knew all too well what was really going on and how desperate things were. After the Battle was over he wrote:

"I pay homage to those gallant boys who gave their all so that our nation might live...but I say with absolute conviction that I can trace the intervention of God, not only in the Battle itself, but in the events leading up to it. At the end of the Battle one had the feeling that there had been some special Divine Intervention to alter some sequence of events which would otherwise have occurred."

Malta's Very Present Help

Or what about the account of General Sir William Dobbie who was Governor of Malta during its siege which began in 1940. It was absolutely vital that this outpost be held from the Germans because its capture was key to gaining control of the Mediterranean Sea. Looking back he wrote:

"One of my best friends, Tom, with his whole platoon, were pinned down by mortar and artillery fire. They were given the order to move but they couldn't because the enemy had

full view of them from a hill and were zeroing their fire on them accurately. Tom is the most conscientious Christian boy I have ever met in the Services. He knew something had to be done to save the fifty men. He crawled from his foxhole and looked things over. Seeing the hopelessness of the situation, he lay down behind a tree and prayed earnestly for God to help him. This is true, mother....after he prayed a mist or fog rolled down between the two hills and the whole platoon got out of their foxholes and escaped. They re-organised in a little town behind the lines where there was a church building. They all went in and knelt down to pray and thank the Lord and then they asked Tom to take the service. This is true, mother, and it just shows how much prayer can mean. If that was not an answer to prayer, I don't know what is."

Why has God Preserved Us?

In April 1945 the Bishop of Chelmsford, Dr. Henry Wilson wrote in the Press:

"If ever a great nation was on the point of supreme and final disaster and yet was saved and re-instated, it was ourselves. That is a fact which should be written on the souls of us all in indelible letters of fire. It does not require an exceptionally religious mind to detect in all this the Hand of God. It has been a miracle and the person who does not recognise that is impervious to the deeper significance of events."

Challenging people as to why we had been saved, the Archbishop of Canterbury, Dr. William Temple, said in his sermon at St. Paul's Cathedral on Battle of Britain Sunday in 1943: "We may, and we must, believe that He who led our fathers in ways so strange and has preserved our land in a manner so marvellous, has a purpose for us to serve in the preparation for His perfect Kingdom."

The Single Strand....Broken

It is plain to see that between the wartime generation and today's generation the thread of faith has broken. In matters of faith, it really is like a different country between then and now. Just imagine if those individuals whom I have quoted, individuals who had personally witnessed God's intervention first hand, were by some miraculous means sent back to speak to our nation today, what do you think they would say? Their message would surely be: "*This nation must take Almighty God seriously and people must take the Bible seriously. They must carefully apply the Lord's Will, as revealed in Scripture, to their own personal lives, because faith does matter, it makes all the difference; it is the single strand that holds the whole web secure.*" But along with this message I think they would also have a question to ask those holding positions of influence. They would surely want to know why the events they witnessed, which were so profound and are so well

documented, are at the same time so rarely taught, talked about or even mentioned in churches, Parliament or schools today. **This is a national scandal and a betrayal of the very freedoms and democracy which this generation claims to appreciate.**

Faith is so important after all, that if it hadn't been for the faithfulness of the wartime generation praying to Almighty God, none of today's generation would ever have been born. This truth needs to be broadcast in every church and taught in every school, right across this nation of ours. "*Thank you, Granny, for reading your Bible every day and going to church. Your faith and the faith of your generation meant I could live.*"

What God dramatically did for that generation, He can also do for ours. Our nation urgently needs His help and protection. May we, like the wartime generation before us, turn to God in a true spirit of repentance and plead for Divine help. In 2 Chronicles 7:14 He promises: "If my people, which are called by My Name, shall humble themselves, and pray, and seek my face, and turn from their wicked ways; then will I hear from Heaven, and will forgive their sin, and will heal their land." If our nation, once again sought God's help as it did during wartime, now, just as then, miracles of blessing and protection would begin to happen.

The promise and sign of Christ's coming

2 Peter 3

Help, Lord, for men of virtue fail;
Religion loses ground;
The sons of violence prevail,
And treacheries abound.

Their oaths and promises they break,
Yet act the flatterer's part;
With fair deceitful lips they speak,
And with a double heart.

If we reprove some hateful lie,
How is their fury stirred!"
"Are not our lips our own?" they cry;
"And who shall be our Lord?"

Scoffers appear on every side,
Where a vile race of men
Is raised on seats of power and pride,
And bears the sword in vain.

Lord, when iniquities abound,
And blasphemy grows bold,
When faith is hardly to be found,
And love is waxing cold –

Is not Thy chariot hastening on?
Hast Thou not given the sign?
May we not trust and live upon
A promise so divine?

"Yes," saith the Lord, "now will I rise
And make oppressors flee;
I shall appear to their surprise,
And set my servants free."

Thy word, like silver seven times tried,
Through ages shall endure;
The men that in Thy truth confide
Shall find Thy promise sure.

Isaac Watts



CRIES IN CRISIS

'Then the mariners were afraid, and cried every man unto his god.

Jonah 1:5

A time of crisis is a most revealing time. It is then we discover who our real friends are; we find out then what our true priorities are; we come then to value genuine religion. Before the *Titanic* struck the fatal iceberg, the ship's band was playing "Roll out the Barrel and we'll have a Barrel of Fun." Reportedly, when tragedy came the tune was changed and the band began to play "Nearer, My God, to Thee."

In the first chapter of *Jonah* we see the reaction of heathen sailors to the greatest crisis they had ever faced. This crisis revealed how much these hardened men of the sea actually knew when they came face to face with death.

They knew that there was a Being superior to themselves. This is why they all cried to their gods. It is hard to be an atheist in the midst of a storm. The Frenchman Voltaire was a thorough-going atheist. His judgment on religion was "Crush the infamous thing." But when Voltaire came to his deathbed, his arrogant confidence failed him and he died in great fear. A nurse who attended him said she never wanted to see another infidel die.

The sailors knew also that God punishes sin. After crying to their gods, they decided to cast lots to find out who on the ship had offended so greatly as to cause the storm to come. In the crisis, they could see the connection between sin and judgment. They could see that there is One who is holy, who can discover sin and deal with the guilty.

God uses the crises of life to show us what is of real value. Only then do we fully appreciate the true worth of the Saviour and His work for sinners on Calvary's cross.

Rev. Gordon Ferguson,

From: *Eagles Wings*, edited by Alan Cairns

The believer's future is as bright as the promises of God
and as secure as His throne.

Alexander Simpson

LETTER TO NATIONAL & LOCAL PRESS

By **Donald J. Morrison**

85 Old Edinburgh Road, Inverness, IV2 3HT

6 July, 2018

A very recent ‘blazing furnace’ in Glasgow, which has dramatically altered the city centre landscape, is a timely and indisputable reminder that God is not asleep, as many foolishly think. What happened is a powerful demonstration that the God of the Bible will not allow anyone to defy His authority, mock His laws, blaspheme His Name and ridicule His Word and then brazenly imagine they can somehow get away with it.

Yes, you can try and run away from God, as Jonah once did, but He will catch up with you, sooner or later. God has plenty of time to deal with those who either directly, or indirectly, desecrate and reject His Word, “Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap.” In other words, if a man sows sin, he will reap destruction.

Let me jog your memory. In 2009 the famous Glasgow School of Art was inundated with complaints after announcing they were going to sell a 200-year old Bible, deep fat fried in chip-shop batter, at one of its galleries! This was nothing less than a perilous act of Divine defiance. The public auction of God’s Word in this blasphemous manner, hosted by council-run McLellan Galleries, to raise money for students on the Master of Fine Arts course, was belittlingly termed by the Art School ‘just another exhibit of art!’ Unbelievable.

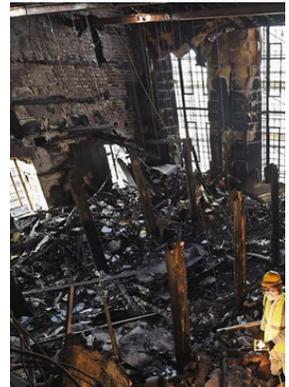
A few months earlier, Glasgow City Council also received hundreds of complaints when an exhibition at the city’s Gallery of Modern Art resulted in a Bible being defaced with obscene and offensive messages. Next to the Bible was a container of pens and a notice which read: ‘If you feel you have been excluded from the Bible, please write your way back into it.’ This sacrilegious invitation prompted visitors to write whatever they liked – and they did so shamelessly with hellish gusto.

Despite all the organisations involved receiving hundred of complaints, pleading with them to abandon the profane events, they completely disregarded them all and went ahead with their so-called ‘arty events.’ Little did they appreciate that sinful actions have dire consequences, “be sure your sin will find you out.”

Numerous Biblical warnings were given by those who were protesting, urging exhibitors and visitors to seriously consider what they were doing. In the Gospel tracts being circulated were the following Bible verses, “Whoso despiseth the Word shall be destroyed ...therefore as the fire devoureth the stubble, and the flame consumeth the chaff, so their root shall be as rottenness, and their blossom shall go up as dust: because they have cast away the law of the Lord of hosts and despised the Word of the Holy One of Israel.”

It is not surprising what happened on the night of 16 June, 2018 at the Glasgow School of Art; it “reaped what it sowed” when the iconic building and its priceless treasures, went up in flames. One word sums up what is now visible of the entire site: destruction.

The Bible reminds us that God is a “consuming fire” and when He unleashes His burning wrath, against sin, destruction follows: the Glasgow School of Art found that out to their miserable cost. Yes, “Vengeance is mine; I will repay, saith the Lord.”



News and Current Affairs

Christian doctor is sacked by the Government for refusing to identify patients by their preferred gender – MailOnline, 10 July 2018

A doctor has been fired from a top Government role for suggesting gender is determined at birth.

Dr. David MacKereth, 55, who has worked as an NHS doctor for 26 years, was deemed to be 'unfit to work' after he said he would refuse to identify patients by their preferred gender. The senior doctor, set to become a Disability Assessor for the Department for Work and Pensions, claims a person's gender is biological and said his right to freedom of speech had been denied.

The medic, from Dudley in the West Midlands, fears other 'professional people of faith' could lose their jobs simply for holding opinions about gender that are 'centuries old'.

The medic who spent most of his career in Accident & Emergency Wards, said: 'I am not attacking the transgender movement, but I am defending my right to freedom of speech and freedom of belief. I do not think I should be compelled to use a specific pronoun. I am not setting out to upset anyone; but if upsetting someone can lead to doctors being sacked then, as a society, we have to examine where we are going.' Dr. Mackereth, a Reformed Baptist, started training in May to become a Health and Disability Assessor for the Government department.

His role would have involved compiling independent reports about the health of those he interviewed who were claiming disability benefits; but matters began to sour when his Instructor said reports must only refer to the patient or client by the gender that person self-identifies as.

'I said that I had a problem with this. I believe that gender is defined by



biology and genetics and that as a Christian the Bible teaches us that God made humans male or female. I could have kept my mouth shut but it was the right time to raise it,' said Dr. Mackereth.

The tutor passed on his comments and Dr. Mackereth received an email from APM, the agency employing him, stating that the DWP was adamant that any report or contact with clients should refer to people in their chosen sex or it 'could be considered harassment as defined by the 2010 Equality Act'.

The doctor replied that 'in good conscience' he could not conform to those demands and so the contract was terminated. He said: 'Firstly, we are not allowed to say what we believe. Secondly, as my case shows, we are not allowed to think what we believe. Finally, we are not allowed to defend what we believe.'

A DWP spokeswoman said the Equality Act made it unlawful to discriminate on grounds of a 'protected characteristic', such as gender re-assignment.

Abbreviated

Referendum on a “woman’s place” – The Week, 14 July 2018

Ireland is to hold a referendum on a clause in its 1937 Constitution that implies that a woman’s place is in the home – and not in the labour market. Article 41.2 says that “by her life within the home, woman gives to the State a support without which the common good cannot be achieved” and adds that mothers should “not be obliged by economic necessity to engage in labour to the neglect of their duties in the home”.

The Government has now passed a motion proposing the “outdated” clause be removed; some politicians, however, have argued that it should instead be made gender neutral, in order to give full-time carers of both sexes constitutional protection. This referendum, and another on abolishing the law against blasphemy, will be held this autumn, on the same day as Ireland’s presidential election.



Children's permission required before parents can view their medical records – Family Education Trust Bulletin, Issue 171, July 2018

Medical practitioners are denying parents access to their children's health records in the name of preserving the rights of the child to confidentiality. Following the implementation of the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) at the end of May, many GP surgeries have reviewed their data protection policies and are insisting on securing the consent of children as young as 11 or 12 before they will allow their parents to view their records.

According to updated guidance from the British Medical Association (BMA):

“Where a child is considered capable of making decisions about access to his or her medical record, the consent of the child must be sought before a parent or other third party can be given access via a SAR [subject access request]”¹.



The BMA guidance states that, while children under 16 in England, Wales and Northern Ireland must demonstrate that they have sufficient

understanding of what is proposed in order to be entitled to make or consent to a subject access request, ‘children who are aged 12 or over are generally expected to have the competence to give or withhold their consent to the release of information from their health records’. In Scotland, anyone aged 12 or over is legally presumed to have such competence.

Other BMA guidance on confidentiality and disclosure of health information stresses that ‘every reasonable effort must be made to persuade the child to involve parents or guardians particularly for important or life-changing decisions’. However, it is equally emphatic that the child must have the final word: health professionals should ‘respect the child’s wishes if they do not want parents or guardians to know’².

Abbreviated

(For complete article - www.familyeducationtrust.org.uk)

¹ BMA, *Access to health records: Updated to reflect the General Data Protection Regulation*, May 2018

² BMA, *Confidentiality and disclosure of health information tool kit*, June 2016.

“LGBT rights must trump religious freedom”, says John Bercow – The Christian Institute, 10 July 2018

Freedom of religion is less important than homosexual and trans-sexual rights, House of Common Speaker, John Bercow, has said. Mr. Bercow has been a vocal supporter of the LGBT agenda throughout his time as Speaker. He made the statement while hosting an event for a homosexual news website.

At the reception for Pink News at Speaker’s House, Mr. Bercow said: “I respect people’s rights to adhere to and profess their faith, but for me, where there is a clash between somebody’s adherence to faith on the one hand and the acknowledgement of and demonstration of respect for human rights, the latter has to trump the former.”



But he failed to mention that under Article 9 of the European Convention on Human Rights, everyone “has the right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion”. Mr. Bercow went on to object to people who raise concerns in the media with the radical trans-sexual agenda.

Gate discovered in Galilee through which King David might have walked – by World Israel News Staff, 10 July 2018

As the 2018 season of the Bethsaida Excavations Project comes to a close in Israel’s Galilee region, archaeologists announced a unique discovery dating back to the 10th century BC. The find consists of a city gate that may have served as the entry point for the Bible’s King David, when he arrived in the city of Tzer to collect a bride named Maachah.

Maachah was David’s wife and bore the King Absalom, who escaped to his mother’s ancestral Kingdom, Geshur, after murdering his half-brother Amnon. Later in the Bible, Absalom’s daughter marries Solomon’s son Rehoboam, King of Judah.

According to excavation director, Prof. Rami Arav, the 3-metre tall gate “is the largest and the best preserved city gate” in Israel, reported *Times of Israel*. The gate was used in the 11th and 10th centuries, after which the settlement was laid waste, remaining dormant until a subsequent Aramean settlement was established. According to Arav, Bethsaida may also have been the location of a city called Tzer, which is mentioned once in the Book of Joshua. Bethsaida is also a key location in Christian texts and history.

Abbreviated

Supreme Court Rules in favour of Christian baker Jack Phillips -
Samuel Smith, Christian Today, 4 June 2018

The United States Supreme Court ruled in favour of Colorado Christian baker Jack Phillips in overwhelming fashion, saying that the State Government's hostility towards his refusal to make a same-sex wedding cake violated the U.S. Constitution.

In a 7-2 vote, the nation's High Court ruled that the State of Colorado violated the Free Exercise Clause of the first Amendment when it penalised Phillips and his Masterpiece Cakeshop in Lakewood for violating a State discrimination law by refusing to bake a custom cake to celebrate the wedding of Dave Mullins and Charlie Craig.

"The laws and the Constitution can and, in some instances must, protect gay persons and gay couples in the exercise of their civil rights, however, religious and philosophical objections to gay marriage are protected views and, in some instances, protected forms of expression," a summary of the Court's majority opinion states."

"While it is unexceptional that Colorado law can protect gay persons in acquiring products and services on the same terms and conditions as are offered to other members of the public, the law must be applied in a manner that is neutral toward religion."

The Court reasoned that Phillips use of his artistic abilities to make a wedding cake carries a "significant First Amendment speech component and implicates his deep and sincere religious beliefs."

Abbreviated



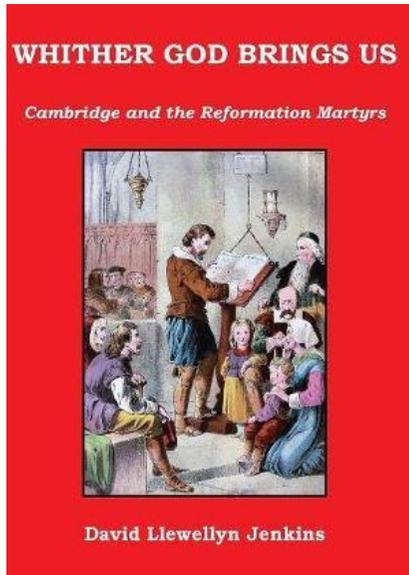
WHITHER GOD BRINGS US: BOOK REVIEW

Book review by: **Geoff Thomas**

Over fifty years ago, retired missionary Jock Purves wrote a series of articles in a magazine on the martyrdoms of the Scottish Covenanters. They were gathered together into an influential book entitled *Fair Sunshine* (Banner of Truth). The pathos with which Mr. Purves described these Christians' arrests, trials, wisdom in their self-defence before their inquisition and their sufferings in dying is intensely moving. Many have testified to the blessing of renewed faith and strengthening consecration in reading of the courage of the Covenanters during those desperate persecuting times.

I have often thought of what a fruitful well of encouragement has been tapped by Christian writers since John Foxe first wrote his six volume martyrology published in March, 1563. What is there better in giving to the 21st century Christian both backbone and a broken and contrite heart? Such a necessary combination divine grace alone can create; but other similar books have been written and read with profit. One thinks of J.C. Ryle's studies of the English Reformers burned to death under Queen Mary, *Light From Old Times* (Banner of Truth) or D'Augbigne's classic *The Reformation in England* (Banner of Truth) or Marcus Loane's exemplary *The*

Masters of the English Reformation (Banner of Truth), which book centres on the three leading lights of the period 1547 through 1556, that is Cranmer, Latimer and Ridley.



At least 300 evangelical Protestants were burnt alive during the reign of Mary. Young people, women - some of whom were pregnant, fishermen, farmers, people scattered throughout England and Wales and the Channel Islands were killed with such cruelty for what they believed and what they were unashamed to acknowledge. Who were they?

Who were the following men and women with their old English names? Robert Barnes, William Jerome, Thomas Garrard? Who was Anne

Askew? Who was Thomas Dugate and John Cardmaker? John Lambert? George Marsh? Laurence Saunders? Robert Glover? John Hullier? John Bland? Richard Yeoman? They were Christians mostly from Cambridge who were killed for their understanding of the Gospel of Jesus Christ as taught in the Bible.

Most English Christians know of the five American young men martyred in Ecuador on January 8, 1956 - Jim Elliot, Nate Saint, Ed McCully, Peter Fleming and Roger Youderian. People of my generation were stirred deeply and motivated by their supreme sacrifice. Should we not value many of the 300 people from England and Wales who knew more horrible deaths, whose last hours were faithfully recorded; what they said at the stake as they spoke to the crowds gathered to witness their being burnt alive, their heart-breaking bravery and trust in Jesus Christ with their scornful glance at the horrible equipment of their suffering, at the chains and the piles of kindling wood piled around it?

Now you can learn of these brave Christians whose names you have just read, and of Martin Bucer too, an inspirational teacher and lecturer who came to Cambridge University in 1549 and for a mere two years impacted students before his premature final illness. Of course, the luminaries are to be honoured - Thomas Bilney, Robert Ferrar, John Bradford, Nicholas Ridley, Hugh

Latimer and Thomas Cranmer, but Christ's 'little ones' must not be ignored. The author of a new book on these men and women has triumphantly rescued them from undeserved oblivion. Previous scholars refer to the twenty-five martyrs of Cambridge University. There is also a brief detour to consider a non-student, Anne Askew, but how moved we were to read of her life and death. George Wishart's martyrdom belongs to Scottish history, though a student at Corpus Christi, Cambridge and wisely he is not included in this book.



So what is this book to which I am tantalisingly referring you? The book is entitled *Whither God Brings Us: Cambridge and the Reformation Martyrs*, written by David Llewellyn Jenkins and published by Charenton Reformed Publishing, 2018 (ISBN 978-0-9929465-8-6) - a 350 page hardback. He tells his readers that spending these years in writing this book was not an impartial study. "My priority here is to record, as far as I am able, how the actions of the martyrs of the English Reformation

were dictated by what God says through His Word: how they cast aside pride and self-sufficiency and were enabled to 'stand fast in one spirit, with one mind striving together for the faith of the Gospel' (Phil. 1:27)" (pp.5&6). In other words, he writes as an unashamed admirer and advocate of all they stood for and died for. There is this gentle flame that burns brightly throughout these pages. We need to know what these men and women died for. As Calvin wrote, "Nothing is more to be dreaded than that the Lord should extinguish the light of sound doctrine and suffer us to go astray in darkness." There is no more fierce light to banish the darkness of the professing church today than that which comes from the bonfires on which these Christians were consumed.

This book is well researched. The footnotes are helpfully put at the bottom of each page, not in endpapers. John Foxe's accounts are wisely trusted. The 1559 Geneva Bible is generally quoted. The libraries at Cambridge University, Corpus Christi College, King's College and the British Library have been well used. National Archives, the National Library of Wales, Norfolk Record Office, Dr. Williams's Library and York Minster Library have also been ransacked for assistance. Many friends have encouraged the author. The book is dedicated to David's parents, David and Megan.

So to the narrative itself. How moving it is! Who can read these pages without a tear being shed? For example, it was on 30 July, 1540 that three young men, Robert Barnes, William Jerome and Thomas Garrard were taken from the Tower of London, lain on hurdles and dragged through the streets of London to Smithfield. There each man addressed the crowd, but it was Robert Barnes who gripped the multitude, preaching with an awakening ministry to many of his hearers. "I believe that through the dying of Christ He overcame sin, death, and Hell; and that there is none other satisfaction unto the Father, but His death and passion only; and that no work of man did deserve anything of God, but only Christ's passion, as touching our justification: for I know the best work that ever I did is impure and imperfect."

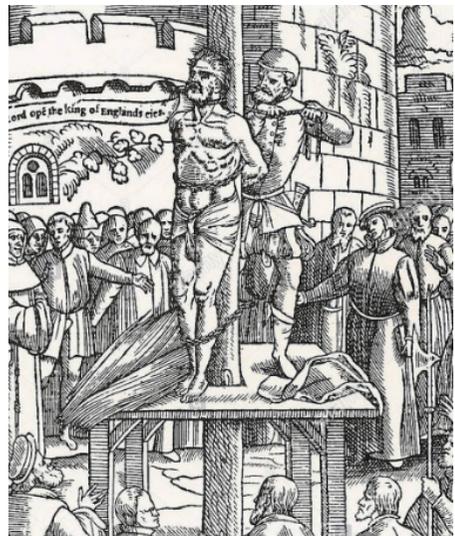
"Bear witness that I died in the faith of Jesus Christ, by whom I doubted not but to be saved," and then Robert asked all the crowd - in which many London evangelicals were gathered - to pray for him and he turned around and took off his outer clothes and made himself ready for the fire. The three young men joined hands and kissed one another, quietly and humbly offering themselves into the hands of those who held lighted torches in their hands to set the kindling wood alight. One of the young Christians in the crowd, Richard Hilles, wrote the next day to Henry Bullinger in

Switzerland telling him that the three men 'remained in the fire without crying out, but were as quiet and patient as though they felt no pain' (pp.33-35). It is one of the great scenes from British sixteenth century history, repeated hundreds of times, that lit a flame of eternal light that still burns all the world over today and shall shine until the last day.

Then there is Lincolnshire born Anne Askew, mother of two children, aged 24, then living in London, 'young and remarkably beautiful', handing out tracts and overheard saying that she 'would sooner read five lines in the Bible than hear five Masses in the church.' A spy, dispatched by the Bishop to gather information about her, was disarmed by all he saw and heard as 'the devoutest and godliest woman I ever knew.' She prayed for hours 'while I and many others sleep or do worse.' Yet she was arrested and kept for a short time in solitary confinement in the Tower of London. She answered her interrogators well and was released to continue her testimony to Christ. In a year, she was arrested again and grilled for five hours. "You will be burnt to death for your beliefs," she was told. She replied that she had searched the New Testament but never found one place where either Christ or his Apostles put any creature to death.

But Anne Askew, at 25, was taken to the torture chamber of the Tower of London and there, in the White

Tower, she was put on the rack and stretched until her limbs were out of joint and her bones almost broken. Her torturers were angry that she would not cry out and so repeated and repeated her racking until she was nearly dead, her shoulder and hips pulled from their sockets, her elbows dislocated and her knees broken. She was finally lifted off - and fainted on the cold floor. When she regained consciousness, it was to find one of her inquisitors speaking to her for two hours, persuading her to relinquish her evangelical convictions. God helped her and she said to him, "I would rather die than break my faith."



She was burned to death at Smithfield on 16 July, 1546. She was too crippled to walk after being on the rack. She was carried in a chair to the stake. A Romanist preached and she listened intently, nodding when he quoted Scripture,

but saying clearly at times, "There he misses and speaks without the Book." The flames slowly consumed her and an evangelical in the crowd cried out, "A vengeance on all of you who thus burn Christ's member!" and he was beaten up for his pains. Foxe says, "She left behind her a singular example of Christian constancy for all men to follow" (pp.52-59). Seven months later, the burnings ceased for a time as Henry VIII died and the young Christian, King Edward VI, ascended to the throne.



That short reign ending, Mary came to the throne and the burnings returned with hellish fury. John Rogers was the first in her reign to be burnt on 4 February, 1555. The night before, he slept so soundly that he had to be awakened 'with much shaking.' As he was chained to the stake and the wood was set alight he was presented with a royal pardon. He rejected it and urged the crowd to depend entirely

on the teaching of Christ. He slowly died while keeping his hands lifted up to Heaven, yielding his spirit to his Heavenly Father. The French Ambassador, Antoine de Noailles, came and watched the spectacle. He wrote that the crowd were overwhelmingly supportive of John Rogers in his dying; "They were not afraid to make many exclamations to strengthen his courage. Even Rogers' own children assisted at it, comforting him in such a manner that it seemed as if he had been led to a wedding" (p.86).

So, there we have some holy samples of what this book more fully reveals, but with much more of the convictions and the defence of the faith that these brave Christians displayed. The issue is alive and relevant today as this year and every year many new martyrs die horrible deaths for the Gospel. But here are our ancestors on this our island – some burnt alive a couple of miles from where I sit in comfort writing these words - whose courageous convictions eventually bought us the freedom to propagate the Bible's truths and the finished work of our God and Saviour Jesus Christ. Few things could serve His cause more than to grasp why these martyrs died, appropriating their Saviour as our own and making their dying faith our living faith. What a sparkling introduction to the Reformation is this book.

LIVING SPEECHES OF DYING CHRISTIANS



Polycarp to the pro-Consul, urging him to deny Christ: "I have served Him eighty-six years and He hath not once hurt me; and shall I now deny him?" When he should have been tied to the stake, he required to stand untied, saying, "Let me alone, I pray you; for He that gave me strength to come to this fire, will also give me patience to abide in the same without your tying."

Ignatius: "I am the wheat or grain to be ground with the teeth of beasts, that I may be pure bread for my Master's tooth. Let fire, racks, pulleys, yea, and all the torments of Hell come on me, so I may win Christ."

Edward VI, King of England: "Bring me into Thy Kingdom; free this Kingdom from Antichrist and keep thine elect in it."

Bishop Latimer to Bishop Ridley, going before him to the stake: "We shall light such a candle, by God's grace, in England this day as I trust shall never be put out again."

Thomas Bilney: "I know by sense and philosophy that fire is hot and burning is painful, but by faith I know it shall only waste the stubble of my body and purge my spirit of its corruption."

John Bradford, embracing the reeds and faggots, said "Strait is the way and narrow is the gate, and few there be that find it." And speaking to his fellow-martyr: "Be of good comfort, brother, for we shall have a merry supper with the Lord this night; if there be any way to Heaven on horseback or in fiery chariots, this is it."

George Tankerfield, when he had put one leg into the fire: "The flesh shrinks and says, Thou fool, wilt thou burn and needest not? The spirit says, Hell fire is sharper, and wilt thou adventure that? The flesh says, Wilt thou leave thy friends? The Spirit answers, Christ and His saints' society is better. The flesh says, Wilt thou shorten thy life? The spirit says, It is nothing to eternal life."

PRAYER

By: **Thomas Manton**

We must not only continue praying, when Christ seemeth to neglect us, or to give no answer, but when He giveth a contrary answer; when He (to appearance) rejecteth our persons and prayers and seemeth to forbid us to pray. Sometimes He seemeth to neglect us and pass us by as if He took no notice; but yet He heareth when He doth not answer; yea, His not answering is an answer; pray, or continue your prayer.

It is said, "He saw them toiling in rowing; for the wind was contrary unto them: and about the fourth watch of the night He cometh unto them, walking upon the sea, and would have passed by them" (Mark 6:48); but yet He came with an intent to appease the storm and help them.

Christ taketh notice of the distresses of His people; but they shall not know so much, but He delayeth to help till all their patience be spent, and yet then seemeth to pass by, for their thorough trial and exercise, and so move them more earnestly to pray.

Sometimes He giveth them a seeming contrary answer and rebuke; instead of an expression of favour, He seemeth to pursue us in anger. God is the main party against us; we have to do with an offended God; but yet we should not quit Him; but follow Him when He seemeth to forsake us and fly to Him when He is pursuing us in hot displeasure. Such is the admirable power of faith that it dares call on an angry God, and follow Him when He goeth away from us, and lay hold on Him when He smiteth, and cast itself into His arms in the midst of His rebukes and frowns: "Then I said, I am cast out of Thy sight; yet I will look again toward Thy holy temple" (Jonah 2:4).

God seemeth to cast us off, as those He will not favour or care for, which is a great trouble to a child of God, who liveth by His favour and valueth that above all things else. Now, for such a one to be rejected by God in his own sense and feeling, it goeth near his heart; yet, in such a case, we should not cast away our confidence, nor give over all addresses to God, but yet look to Him and wait upon Him.

THE POWER OF PRAYER

**And call upon Me in the day of trouble:
I will deliver thee, and thou shalt glorify Me.**

Psalm 50:15

This is a merciful, loving, kind, blessed exhortation. What shall I do in the day of trouble? The Lord says, *“Call upon Me.”* I am impressed with this. He does not give any qualification and say, ‘If you are very gracious call upon Me,’ but just *“Call upon Me.”* It is an open invitation to all who feel it in their hearts to seek the Lord. *“And call upon Me.”* There are so many Scriptures which seem to cut you off: here He just says, *“And call upon Me”* to any poor, wretched, worthless, vile sinner on earth who feels a disposition to seek God. That is the Gospel. It is the same in the Sermon on the Mount. *“Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you.”* (Matt. 7:7). Some will say you cannot do it unless you are among the elect. True: the whole point is, never mind who it is, if they have a heart to seek God, *“Ask.”* All those who ever sought truly are found among the blessed elect. *“And call upon Me in the day of trouble.”* You look on those who manifest the life of God in their spirit, walk and conversation and feel, ‘They have liberty to call on God.’ But when poor sinful mortals who wandered into the ways of iniquity, like the prodigal, begin to be in want – *“Call upon Me in the day of trouble.”* Wonderful word of infinite condescension! What a blessed word is the text! Go down on your knees and call: the remedy is at hand. Who can ever tell the wonders God has wrought in answer to crying and calling on Him in the day of trouble! The Lord delights to answer prayer.

From: *‘Handfuls of Purpose’*
J. W. Sperling-Tyler



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