

CHRISTIAN WATCH

Issue No. 14

A Protestant Biblical Witness

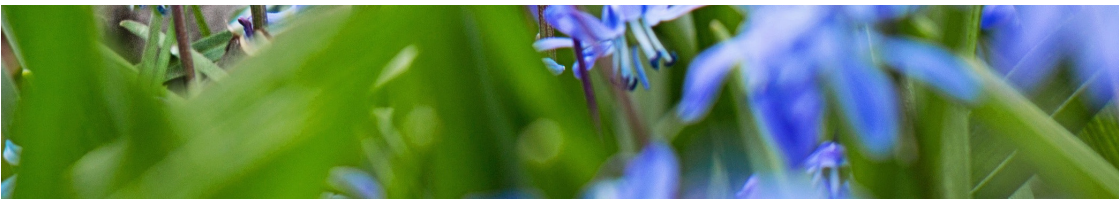
Mar/Apr 2018



Create in me a clean
heart, O God; and renew
a right spirit within me.
Psalm 51:10

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

Mark 13:37



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7 – 9 June, 2018

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Ardingly, West Sussex. (Stand 23D, Surrey Mews)

30 August, 2018

Bucks County Show, Weedon Park, Aylesbury

16 – 18 October, 2018

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Dear Friends,

Greetings in the precious Name of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.

Do we need God's help? I recently came across 70 resolutions of Jonathan Edwards and have highlighted a few which I trust will be of encouragement to you and, indeed, a challenge to the way in which we live our lives. I quote – "Being sensible that I am unable to do anything without God's help, I do humbly entreat Him by His grace to enable me to keep these resolutions, so far as they are agreeable to His will, for Christ's sake.

Resolved, that I will do whatsoever I think to be most to God's glory, and my own good, profit and pleasure, in the whole of my duration, without any consideration of the time, whether now, or never so many myriads of ages hence. Resolved to do whatever I think to be my duty and most for the good and advantage of mankind in general. Resolved to do this, whatever difficulties I meet with, how many soever, and how great soever.

Resolved, never to speak evil of anyone, so that it shall tend to his dishonour, more or less, upon no account except for some real good.

Resolved, never to say anything at all against anybody, but when it is perfectly agreeable to the highest degree of Christian honour, and of love to mankind, agreeable to the lowest humility, and sense of my own faults and failings, and agreeable to the golden rule; often, when I have said anything against anyone, to bring it to, and try it strictly by the test of this Resolution.

Resolved, to improve every opportunity, when I am in the best and happiest frame of mind, to cast and venture my soul on the Lord Jesus Christ, to trust and confide in Him, and consecrate myself wholly to Him; that from this I may have assurance of my safety, knowing that I confide in my Redeemer – etc. etc.

" "Continue in prayer" (Colossians 4:2). It is interesting to note how large a portion of the Word of God is occupied with the subject of prayer, either in furnishing examples, enforcing precepts or pronouncing promises. Here we find a wrestling Jacob; there a Daniel who prayed three times a day; or a David who with all his heart called upon his God; on the mountain, we see Elijah; in the dungeon, Paul and Silas. What does this teach us, but the sacred importance and necessity of prayer?

We may be certain that whatever God has made prominent in His Word, He intended to be conspicuous in our lives. If He has said much about prayer, it is because He knows we have much need of it. So deep are our necessities, that until we are in Heaven we must not cease to pray. Dost thou want nothing? Then I fear thou dost not know thy poverty. Hast thou no mercy to ask of God? Then, may the Lord's mercy show thee thy misery. A prayerless soul is a Christless soul. Prayer is the lisping of the believing infant, the shout of the fighting believer, the requiem of the

dying saint falling asleep in Jesus. It is the breath, the watchword, the comfort, the strength, the honour of a Christian. If thou be a child of God, thou wilt seek thy Father's face and live in thy Father's love. Pray earnestly that that mayst be holy, humble, zealous and patient; have closer communion with Christ and enter more often into the banqueting house of his love. Pray that thou mayst be an example and a blessing to others and that thou mayst live more to the glory of thy Master."

There are, of course, many issues which need our prayers at this time. Schools are often in the firing line – facing issues such as transgenderism (promoting that changing sex should be made easier); abortion – mounting pressure to further liberalise our laws (even the Royal College of Nursing has been infiltrated by the abortion lobby and they are pushing their radical agenda – introducing abortion up to birth! They want it to be legal to kill a fully formed baby right up until the moment that he/she is born; the smacking of children to be banned – making discipline a crime; the LGBT agenda being promoted through the new Relationships Education (a new compulsory subject for primary schools) – and much, much more. We must pray earnestly that God will raise up men in authority who will uphold the Christian faith, remembering the words of the Apostle Paul who stated "*all that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution.*" What a promise is that!

As Christians, our lives are centred around the promises of God. John 3:16 speaks about the promise of eternal life; Hebrews 13:5 states that "*God will never leave thee, nor forsake thee.*" God's character re-assures us that His promises can be relied upon:

"He is truthful" (Titus 1:2)

"He is faithful" (1 Corinthians 1:9)

"He is omniscient" (all-knowing) (Psalm 139:1-4)

"He is omnipresent" (everywhere) (Psalm 139: 8-10)

"He is omnipotent" (all-powerful) Psalm 103:19.

What a great God we adore. (See Numbers 23:19).

How time flies! It was in 2014 that the Asher's cake saga commenced in Belfast when the Northern Ireland Equality Commission took legal action against Daniel and Amy McArthur (owners of Asher's Baking Co.) for refusing to decorate a cake with the slogan '*support Gay marriage*'. The Belfast County Court – and then the Court of Appeal – ruled that they had discriminated on the grounds of sexual orientation, religious belief and political opinion. Please remember Daniel and Amy in your prayers as they (with the support of the Christian Institute) have appealed again - this time to the UK Supreme Court – and the Hearing has been scheduled for May, 2018 in Belfast.

Yours in His service,

Ian Henderson

Ian R. Henderson (Vice-Chairman)

STANDING FIRM IN A HOSTILE CULTURE

By: Thomas Fretwell

Newsletter for Creation Ministries
Intl. (UK & Europe) Jan. - March,
2018

A sure foundation

“Here I stand, I can do no other, so help me God”. These are the now famous words uttered by Martin Luther as he faced off with the powers of Rome. With his “conscience captive to the Word of God,” he stood firm in the face of a hostile crowd. Upon this act, the war cry of the Reformation was born – Sola Scriptura (by Scripture alone).

Similarly, the Church today seems to be fighting the battle on many fronts as an increasingly hostile culture encroaches upon our doors. The question we need to ask ourselves is, “will we be able to stand?” Is our foundation strong enough to withstand the onslaught from a secular world? Or have we unwittingly destroyed our own foundations? Jesus said, “Therefore whosoever heareth these sayings of Mine, and doeth them, I will liken him unto a wise man, which built his

house upon a rock” (Matthew 7:24). The Word of God is the only sure foundation that can support us as we seek to combat the challenges brought against the Christian faith in our world. The moment we step off the rock of God’s Word and place a foot on the sinking sands of popular culture or seek to add the prevailing wisdom of men to the Word of God, we compromise our foundation. Scripture must occupy the supreme position in our thinking. The respected British preacher and author, Dr. Martyn Lloyd Jones, once said, “There can be no doubt whatsoever that all the troubles in the Church today, and most of the troubles in the world, are due to a departure from the authority of the Bible.”¹

The light shines in the darkness

For those of us who seek to uphold the authority of Scripture from the very first verse, we need to be aware of a new battle that is emerging with ever-increasing vigour. Not only must we engage with a culture that seeks to openly mock God and His Word – a culture



that lauds the things that God opposes — we must also hold to account those from within our own ranks who claim that God's Word in Genesis needs to be re-interpreted in the light of evolutionary dogma. Theistic evolution is on the rise and, rather surprisingly, its advocates seem to set their targets more on Biblical creationists than upon the spiritual war waging around us. As paradoxical as this may seem, it is where we stand today! Such an overwhelming multi-directional attack can be disheartening. Yet, at the same time, we need not be alarmed if we stand on the right foundation. The Word of God can shine brighter as the culture gets darker! The Gospel of John says that "the light shineth in darkness; and the darkness comprehended it not." The prophet Isaiah reminds us that "the people that walked in darkness have seen a great light: they that dwell in the land of the shadow of death, upon them hath the light shined." There are no greater lights than Jesus and His Word. Why would we seek to stand on any other foundation? God is not looking for the strong or the popular; He is looking for the faithful. This is key to how the victory is won.

A light from Scripture

We do not walk this path alone. We have the examples of many great torch-bearers who have gone before us. The prophet Daniel was taken captive to Babylon when he

was just a teenager. In the midst of that pagan culture, he was taught the literature and language of the Chaldeans. It was an attempt to re-educate him and remove any loyalty he had to the God of Israel. He was subjected to all the wisdom and culture of the Babylonians. This is a strategy that Satan still uses today. He wants us to find our identity, our entertainment and even our religion in the culture where he operates as the "prince of the power of the air" (Ephesians 2:2). How did Daniel withstand such an onslaught? We are given an enduring spiritual lesson. It says that Daniel "purposed in his heart that he would not defile himself with the portion of the King's meat, nor with the wine which he drank" (Daniel 1:8). He would not break the dietary laws given in the Word of God. He made up his mind beforehand that no matter the cost, he would not compromise the Word of God.

A light from history

A little-known Reformation hero provides another clear example of how we should act in these times. Lady Jane Grey was Queen of England for nine days before she was overthrown, incarcerated, then executed by Queen Mary ('Bloody Mary'). Before Lady Jane's execution, Queen Mary sent her spiritual advisor, Benedictine monk John Feckenham, to persuade the 16-year-old Jane to leave her Protestant faith and return to

Catholicism. In the ensuing dialogue we are given another spiritual lesson. Feckenham pushed her regarding the sacraments:

Feckenham: How many sacraments are there?

Lady Jane: Two; the one the sacrament of Baptism and the other the sacrament of the Lord's Supper.

Feckenham: No, there are seven.

Lady Jane: By what Scripture find you that?²

Lady Jane's piercing final question should serve as the yard-stick by which we size up all the claims and debates we see around us today: "Where is that in the Bible? What is your Biblical authority for that teaching?" When people seek to fit deep time into Genesis, or imply that God used the evolutionary process in creating mankind, we must ask that very question: "Where is that in the Scriptures?" This will quickly expose the foundation, whether it is the Word of God or the words of men.

Always bearing fruit

In order to remain rock solid in this culture we need to make sure that we are standing on the Word of God. We do this every time we affirm the true history as recorded in Genesis and by doing this we also confirm the Gospel which is rooted in that history. From this stance we can have full confidence that the Gospel is constantly "bringing forth fruit" (Colossians 1:6) throughout the whole world.

As ambassadors for Christ, we have

the responsibility to communicate this message of reconciliation to the world. Now is the time to be equipped for the battles that are being waged all around us. Now is the time to join with Martin Luther and declare to the world what he is reputed to have said in the presence of Charles V at the Diet of Worms, near Frankfurt, in 1521, "Here I stand, I can do no other, so help me God."

We take our stand upon the truths of Biblical creation because they are so clearly taught in Scripture. The culture is increasingly hostile to our message, but God does use our faithfulness in these things to produce good fruit in people's minds and hearts. And what an encouragement that is.

¹ Lloyd-Jones, D. M. The Christian Soldier: Ephesians 6:14 – The Scripture of Truth, Baker Books, Grand Rapids, p. 210, 2003.

² Taylor, J., How a 16-year-old Girl Explained the Sacraments to a Catholic Interrogator, The Gospel Coalition, www.thegospelcoalition.org, 19 September, 2012.



READY FOR BATTLE

*"Hast thou given the horse strength?
hast thou clothed his neck with thunder?"*

Job 39:19

These words form part of the Lord's description to Job of the war horse of bygone times. Note in passing that the children of Israel were not encouraged to retain many of these noble animals, as they were always associated with earthly power and might. God's ancient people were to turn from such and rest solely upon Him. As it was then, so it is today. Salvation is of the Lord and power belongeth unto Him. Rest not in worldly works or deeds to justify. Only Christ can save and keep and deliver.

Nevertheless, the picture presented here in Job is of a magnificent animal, to be admired and honoured. The war horse was beautiful in appearance, attractive to the eye, of noble bearing and possessing a lively intelligence. As it served its rider, so we who are redeemed should serve Christ. In ancient conflicts, one of the most imposing sights on earth was the cavalry lined up for the charge of war – the riders armed for battle, the standards fluttering in the breeze and the horses bedecked with colour, heads plumed and hooves pawing the ground with impatience. These powerful beasts were not only instinctively aware of the atmosphere of battle and of the proximity of the foe, they were ready for the fray. In our Christian life we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities and powers. Our spiritual enemies are very near and the battle-lines are drawn. May we, like the war horse, be ready for the conflict, ever going forth in the strength of our King. Our spiritual warfare will end in glorious victory. In Revelation 19 we have the final mention of the war horse in Scripture. The Lord Jesus Christ's return is symbolised by John's vision of Him riding a white charger. Then will He be acknowledged by all as King of Kings and Lord of Lords. May we be there to share in His triumph.

Dr. S. B Cooke, Armagh, N.I.

From: Eagles Wings, Daily Meditations

Edited by Alan Cairns

It is impossible to be a true soldier of Jesus Christ and not fight.

J. Gresham Machen

THE AUTHORISED VERSION: a hindrance to evangelism?

By: Bryan Peters, B.A

(Abbreviated by Ian Henderson)

“Engaging in any kind of serious evangelism requires that we understand the Word of God. If we want un-churched people to join our congregations and learn under the ministry of the Word; if we want our children to be well-grounded in the Scriptures in an increasingly post-Christian society; if we take our calling seriously to feed the flock, to shepherd the Church of God which He has purchased with His own blood; we cannot do anything but acknowledge the urgent need of a new translation.”

So states a comment from a Minister in the monthly magazine of a denomination that was once a stalwart defender of the Authorised Version.

The point could not be made more plainly. At first glance, the complaints seem severe and challenging; but is it not true that the Lord continues to bless this faithful translation of His Word in today’s society? Can it not be seen that departure from the Divinely preserved Hebrew Masoretic and Greek Received Texts of the Holy Scriptures results in substantial loss in the theology and practice of evangelism?

The favouring of corrupted texts –

and the exclusion of phrases and verses – is of grave concern and when the foundations are weakened the Bible’s testimony is diluted and the dulling of evangelistic zeal becomes all the more probable. Christ calls sinners to repentance – a turning from sin unto God – yet sadly this important phrase “to repentance” is nowhere to be found in most modern translations. Many today seek to proclaim a Gospel call that does not end in repentance, but the AV’s strong testimony on this matter could not be more welcome.

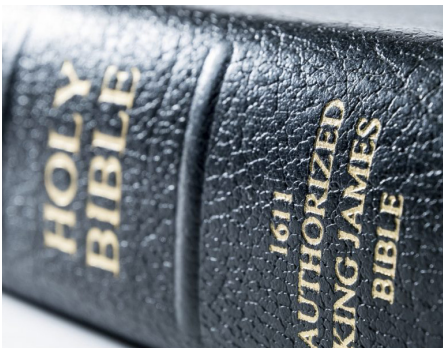
One of the benefits of the AV is the classic phrase that describes evangelism – “he that winneth souls is wise” (Prov. 11:30). This concept of soul-winning dominated the Protestant understanding of evangelistic witness and yet several modern versions wholly eradicate the application of this text to Gospel outreach. As Christians face a continual struggle to bring a perishing world to understand the spiritual and eternal consequences of sin, the AV unashamedly speaks repeatedly of the sinner’s dire need for salvation, not in body alone, but also in soul.

Some expressions seem somewhat archaic in the ears of modern hearers, but the “thou shalt nots” (Exodus 20 13-17); “the valley of the shadow of death” (Psalm

23:4); “labour and are heavy laden” (Matt. 11:28) and many other such phrases should not be lightly cast aside. It behoves the wise soul-winner to make ample use of these by utilising that Bible which God has blessed to shape and influence even the very culture about him.

Far from proving a hindrance to evangelism, a rich evangelistic theology is brought forth from these texts in the AV that the Lord has preserved throughout all ages. A passage from the AV will stay with a perishing sinner whether it is desired or not. May the AV continue to bring many souls before the Throne of Grace for years to come and continue to be singularly blessed by the Lord.

(The full original article by Bryan Peters can be obtained from the Trinitarian Bible Society (www.tbsbibles.org) - published in the Jan/Feb/Mar 2018 edition of the TBS Quarterly Record)



SAVING MERCY ONLY IN JESUS CHRIST

By: Robert Trail, MA

Some say within themselves and, it may be to God too, “*O that God would accept of me, of His great mercy, and look graciously upon me!*”

And is not this a good wish? Is it not a frequent prayer of saints in the Word? And is it not to be still used by all? Yes; all this is true; but it is only good when it is well meant; in many it is ill meant and, therefore, is a faulty wish.

All the mercy of God flows to men only in and by Jesus Christ. If Christ be forgot in your prayers, you can never put up one good one, nor get a good answer.

The mercy of God without Christ is a dream that the greatest part of the world dream to hell in - and all the while think they are in the right road to Heaven.

How oft you have heard that there is no God to be savingly known and righteously worshipped, but in Christ. And that there is no saving mercy to be found from God, but in Jesus Christ.

Faith and Love

Extract from a sermon by
Thomas Case (1659 – 89)

*“Hold fast the form of sound words,
which thou hast heard of me, in faith
and love which is in Christ Jesus.”*

- 2 Timothy 1:13

Faith and love are, as it were, the two hands whereby we “hold fast the form of sound words.”

1. Faith – Christians look to your faith. Faith is a hold-fast grace which will secure the believer’s standing in Christ. As unbelief is the root of apostasy and falling back from the doctrine of the Gospel (Heb. 3:12), so faith is the spring of perseverance: “Kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation” (1 Pet. 1:5). Faith keeps the believer and God keeps faith. Now faith keeps the believer close to His principles upon a twofold account:

(i) Faith is the grace which enables the soul to realise all the truths of the Gospel. Evangelical truths, to a man who hath not faith, are but so many pleasing notions, which are pleasing to the fancy but have no influence upon the conscience. They may serve a man for discourse, but he cannot live upon them. Suffering truths, in particular, are pleasing to speculation in times of prosperity; but when the hour of temptation comes, they afford the soul no strength to carry it through the trial

and to enable a man to “go forth therefore unto Him [Christ] without the camp, bearing His reproach” (Heb. 13:13). Faith makes Divine objects, although very spiritual and subtle in themselves, so many realities, so many solid and substantial verities. It gives them a being, not in themselves, but in the believer and makes invisible things visible; as it is said of Moses, he saw “Him who is invisible” (Heb. 11:27). How? “By faith” (v. 23,24). That which is invisible to the eye of nature is visible to the eye of faith. Faith brings the object and the faculty together. Hence, when men in the day of tribulation fall away and walk no more with Jesus, though so lately exalted to a high degree of Gospel notion, it is because, through want of faith, Divine truth hath no root in their heart. All their knowledge is but powerless notion floating in the brain and can give no reality nor substance to the Gospel verities. Knowledge gives lustre, but faith gives being; knowledge doth initiate, but faith doth realise; knowledge holds out light, but faith adds life and power. It is faith, my hearers, whereby you stand. Faith is that whereby a man can live upon the truth and die for the truth. “I know whom I have believed, and am persuaded that He is able to keep that which I have committed unto Him against that day” (2 Tim. 1:12). Look to your faith, Christians.

(ii) Faith enables the soul to derive

strength from Jesus Christ, to do, to suffer, to live and to die for Him and for the truths which He has sealed and ratified with His own blood. "I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me" (Phil. 4:13). Faith invests the soul with a kind of omnipotency: "I can do all things." Natural men's impossibilities are faith's triumphs. Faith is an omnipotent grace, because it places the work on an omnipotent God. "In the Lord have I righteousness and strength" (Isa. 45:24) is the boast of faith; righteousness for justification and strength for sanctification and for carrying on all the duties of a holy life. This is intimated in my text: "Hold fast" etc. "in faith and love which is in Christ Jesus." If it be asked, "How shall we hold fast?" The answer is "by faith." "How does faith hold fast?" "In Christ Jesus;" in proportion as it is moved by and acts upon Jesus Christ. Christ is a fountain of strength; and that strength is drawn out by faith. Hence David's resolve: "I will go in the strength of the Lord God: I will make mention of Thy righteousness, even of thine only" (Ps. 71:16).

2. The second grace you must look to is **love**. Love is another hold-fast grace. "I held Him, and would not let Him go," says the spouse of her Beloved (Song 3:4). I tell you, love will hold fast the truth when learning will let it go. The reason is - learning lieth only in the head, while love resteth in the heart and causeth the heart to rest on the thing or person beloved. "I cannot dispute

for Christ, but I can die for Christ," said the poor martyr. Love will say to the truth as Ruth said to her mother-in-law, "Whither thou goest, I will go; and where thou lodgest, I will lodge: thy people shall be my people, and thy God my God; where thou diest, will I die, and there will I be buried: the Lord do so to me, and more also, if ought but death part thee and me" (Ruth 1:16,17). Love is the glue which makes the heart cleave to the object; as it is said of Shechem, "His soul clave unto Dinah the daughter of Jacob" (Gen. 34:3). Love is the twist of souls. "It is but one love that entwines lovers." Christians, if you would hold fast the truth, love it. Love hates putting away. Whenever your love begins to decay, you are in danger of apostasy. "For this cause God shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie" (2 Thess. 2:11,12). For what cause? "Because they received not the love of the truth" (v. 10).

Christians, look well to your



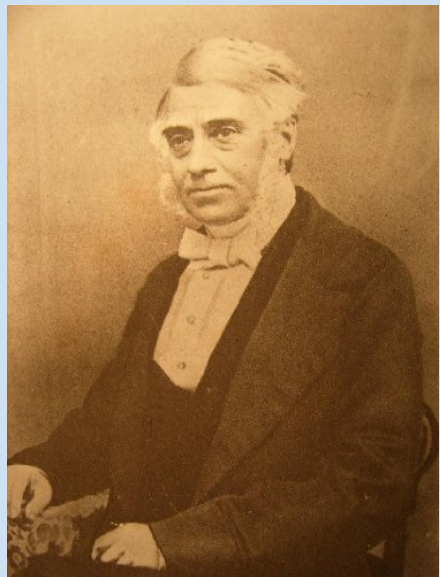
standing. There is much of this judicial blast abroad. The generality of professors content themselves with and rejoice in the light, notion and expression of the truth, but they have not any love to it. Parts without grace have been the practice of this evil and adulterous generation. The foolish virgins of this age have oil in their lamps, but none in their vessels, and so perish. "Ye therefore, beloved, seeing ye know these things before, beware lest ye also, being led away with the error of the wicked, fall from your own stedfastness" (2 Pet. 3:17). Let it be your care to receive the truth, in the power of the truth, in the impressions of it upon your hearts, and in the love of it. Love the truth, even when the truth seems not to love you; when it makes against your carnal interests; when it calls for your right eye and your right hand - the right eye of your sinful pleasure, the right hand of your dishonest gain; when it comes to take away all your false principles and all your false evidences; when it leaves you without so much as a duty or a church privilege, without even a creed or a good intention, but cast you out of all which self and flesh have counted your gain in point of salvation (as Phil. 3:7), to the loathing of your persons etc. (Ezek. 16:5); even then, I say "Receive the truth in the love of it." God intends you more good in it than you are aware of; and therefore say, with young Samuel, "Speak; for thy servant heareth" (1 Sam. 3:10).

TRIALS AND TEMPTATIONS

By: J.C. Philpot

If you or I could see the issue of our troubles and trials, if we could believe that every temptation we are passing through was intended by God for our special good, it would take off half the object.

When the Lord sends a rod, He intends that rod to cut deep into our flesh. Trials not severe, temptations not harassing, exercises not perplexing, why, they are feathers, not troubles. It is because they are heavy, cutting and perplexing that they are profitable! The weight is the stamp that gives them value; take away that stamp, they are useless.



A background image of pink cherry blossoms in full bloom, with some branches and flowers visible in the foreground and others blurred in the background.

THE RETURN OF SPRING

(Song of Solomon 2:11-13)

The cold rains are over, the winter is past,
And the beautiful spring has return'd at last;
Though woodland and dale now delighted I roam,
For *"the time of the singing of birds is come."*

Sweet flowers are opening to new life and bloom,
And filling the air with their fragrant perfume;
All nature rejoices on every hand,
And, *"the voice of the turtle is heard in our land."*

How soft are the zephyrs* that play midst the trees;
The scent of the violet is borne on the breeze;
The thrush and the blackbird are warbling their lays,
And all seem to join in one sweet song of praise.

And can I refrain; nor His great love record,
When all things around me are praising the Lord?
No! His mercy I'll praise; His goodness I'll sing,
And thus will I hail in the beautiful spring.

R.S – The Friendly Companion, 1895

* Soft breezes

News and Current Affairs



'Christianity as default is gone': the rise of a non-Christian Europe -

Harriet Sherwood, Religious correspondent for The Guardian, 21 March, 2018

Europe's march towards post-Christian society has been starkly illustrated by research showing a majority of young people in a dozen countries do not follow a religion.

The survey of 16 – 29-year-olds found the Czech Republic is the least religious country in Europe, with 91% of that age group saying they have no religious affiliation. Between 70% and 80% of young adults in Estonia, Sweden and the Netherlands also categorise themselves as non-religious.

The most religious country is Poland, where 17% of young adults define themselves as non-religious, followed by Lithuania with 25%.

In the UK, only 7% of young adults identify as Anglican, fewer than 10% who categorise themselves as Catholic. Young Muslims, at 6%, are on the brink of overtaking those who consider themselves part of the country's established Church.

The figures are published in a report, *Europe's Young Adults and Religion*, by Stephen Bullivant, a Professor of Theology and the Sociology of Religion at St. Mary's University in London. They are based on data from the European social survey 2014-16.

Religion was "moribund", he said. "With some notable exceptions, young adults increasingly are not identifying with or practising religion." The trajectory was likely to become more marked. "Christianity as a default, as a norm, is gone, and probably gone for good – or at least for the next 100 years," Bullivant said.

But there were significant variations, he said. "Countries that are next door to one another, with similar cultural backgrounds and histories, have wildly different religious profiles." The two most religious countries, Poland and Lithuania, and the two least religious, the Czech Republic and Estonia, are post-Communist States.

The trend of religious affiliation was repeated when young people were asked about religious practice. Only in Poland and Ireland did more than

10% of young people say they attended services at least once a week.

In the Czech Republic, 70% said they never went to Church or any other place of worship and 80% said they never pray. In the UK, France, Belgium, Spain and the Netherlands, between 56% and 60% said they never go to Church and between 63% and 66% said they never pray.

Among those identifying as Catholic, there was wide variation in levels of commitment. More than 80% of young Poles say they are Catholic, with about half going to Mass at least once a week. In Lithuania, where 70% of young adults say they are Catholic, only 5% go to Mass weekly.

According to Bullivant, many young Europeans “will have been baptised and then never darken the door of a Church again. Cultural religious identities just aren’t being passed on from parents to children. It just washes straight off them.”

The figures in the UK were partly explained by high immigration, he added. “One in five Catholics in the UK were not born in the UK; and we know the Muslim birth rate is higher than the general population and they have much higher [religious] retention rates.”

In Ireland, there has been a significant decline in religiosity over the past 30 years, “but compared to anywhere else in Western Europe, it still looks pretty religious”, Bullivant said.

“The new default setting is ‘no religion’ and the few who are religious see themselves as swimming against the tide,” he said. “In 20 or 30 years’ time, mainstream Churches will be smaller, but the few people left will be highly committed.”



Turkey: Date set for trial of US Pastor, Andrew Brunson -
Barbara G. Baker, World Watch Monitor, 21 March 2018

Imprisoned US Pastor, Andrew Brunson, is set to stand trial before a Turkish criminal court in April* on espionage – and terrorism- related charges that could jail him for up to 35 years.

Seventeen months after the Pastor's arrest in the port city of Izmir, a formal indictment accepted by the Izmir 2nd Criminal Court has been released to Brunson and his lawyer – but only after the 62-page document was leaked illegally to the Turkish media.

His lawyer now has less than a month, before the trial hearings open, to examine the prosecution's legal file of its investigations, as alleged evidence supporting the indictment's claims against his client have been kept sealed until now.

The Turkish indictment accuses Brunson of links with both of Turkey's most prominent terrorist organisations but the accusations rest heavily on the testimony of several 'secret' witnesses interrogated by the prosecution.

Last June, spokesman Soner Tufan of the Association of Protestant Churches in Turkey challenged the vague accusations and he told World Watch Monitor on 21 March, "The indictment does not contain any real evidence. There is no real legal proof to use against him. It is a very political hostage case. This is why [the Turkish authorities] had to demand the worst punishment against him, to make him more valuable."



Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan declared openly last September that he was willing to exchange Brunson for Fethullah Gulen, the Turkish Muslim cleric living in exile in the US, who is accused by Ankara of masterminding the failed coup. This January, Erdogan went on to state that he would refuse to extradite any jailed "suspects" to the United States until Washington hands over Gulen.

From his prison cell in Izmir, Brunson recently wrote: "Let it be clear. I am in prison not for anything I have done wrong, but because of who I am – a Christian Pastor. I desperately miss my wife and children. Yet I believe this to be true: it is an honour to suffer for Jesus Christ, as many have before me. My deepest thanks for all those around the world who are standing with me and praying for me."

*Court case now delayed until May.

Abbreviated

Guernsey could become the first place in the British Isles to have a suicide clinic - by Stephen Walter, The Telegraph News – 21 March 2018

Guernsey could become the first place in the British Isles to have a suicide clinic under proposals being put to a vote on the island in May. If pushed through by politicians, it would likely trigger an 18-month consultation period to pull together a legal framework to make the changes. However, sources have told the *Mirror* that the plans look likely to get the green light. If so, it could open up a pathway for UK mainland residents to travel to Guernsey to end their life if they so choose.

Campaigners in the UK who have long sought a change in the law to legalise assisted dying are likely to be paying close attention to proceedings in the hope of overhauling the law on the mainland. Currently patients wishing to end their lives travel to Switzerland, where the practice is legal. Although Guernsey lies within the British Isles in the English Channel and its residents hold British passports, it has its own legislative body and has the freedom to pass its own laws. Yet the UK Government has powers to intervene if there are implications for the UK and the matter will go before the Privy Council.

Gavin St Pier, the islands top politician, told the *Mirror* he is backing the proposal for terminally ill adults who are mentally competent and have been given six months or less to live. He said: "This is about giving people choice and a sense that they have some control themselves, rather than being frightened, out of control and in the hands of others. That for me is why it is such an important issue."

At the forefront of proposals will be measures to protect the vulnerable, while the cost is likely to be covered by the Island's health service for residents, it was reported. Doctors' rights to object to requests will also likely be considered. Assisted dying is illegal in the UK under the Suicide Act of 1961 and carries a sentence of up to 14 years in prison. However, if it is legalised, it would allow a person the choice to control their death if they decide their suffering is unbearable.

On average, a British resident travels to Switzerland every eight days for an assisted death, usually at the Zurich clinic of Dignitas at a cost of £10,000. Campaigners, including Dignity in Dying, have produced research suggesting 82 per cent of the public were in favour of assisted dying being legalised.

Guernsey previously tried to legalise it in 2002, but plans were dismissed. While it could open the door to the possibility of mainland nationals travelling to Guernsey, some believe that, if passed, the law should be limited to local residents only.

Abbreviated

Why did French hero Arnaud Beltrame give his life to save others? Christianity - by Peter Hitchens, MailOnline, 1 April, 2018

Last week saw one of the noblest acts of human courage in modern times. Yet it has been given far less attention than it should have been. We often hear it said of soldiers and others that they 'gave their lives' in battle. This is true in a way, though many actual soldiers will smile at the expression and mutter that they probably did not have much choice in the matter.

But the French police officer, Arnaud Beltrame, consciously and deliberately did give his life to save another. When the drug abuser, petty crook and jailbird Redouane Lakdim burst into the Super U Supermarket at Trèbes, in Southern France, he wasted no time in showing that he was capable of murder. He shot dead two people and was said to have laughed as he killed them. Then he took several hostages. He was persuaded to release all but one, a terrified woman.



Arnaud Beltrame calmly offered to change places with her. I believe he knew as he did so that this might well cost him his life and that by stepping forward he faced the strong possibility of a horrible and lonely death. Nobody ordered or asked him to do it. It would have been perfectly normal and acceptable for the police to have surrounded the mad killer and waited for him to give in, or kill himself, with the strong possibility that he would also kill his hostage.

Arnaud Beltrame went miles further than he was required to do by the normal rules of life, or even the normal rules of duty and bravery. The daily bargain, under which we behave decently to others and hope for the same in return, wasn't enough for him. Most of us couldn't have done what he did. Most of us will never be asked to.

But I very much doubt whether our civilisation would have reached the heights that it has reached if nobody had ever been ready to make such a sacrifice. I believe very deeply that Christian societies are different from non-Christian ones, precisely because all of us know that such selfless courage is the ideal of what we all should be. And I think that Lieutenant Colonel Beltrame did what he did because of the specifically Christian saying "Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friend". It is worth noting

that these words are recorded as having been spoken by Christ, shortly before He (knowing what was coming) was dragged off to face a mocking show-trial, torture, beatings and a savage public death. For Arnaud Beltrame had come, quite recently, to embrace Christianity*.

In aggressively secular, hard-boiled France, this must have been difficult to do. Those of us who try to cling to the shreds of religion in the modern world feel increasingly besieged and hopelessly unfashionable.

My late brother Christopher was a militant atheist. He used to delight crowds of his supporters by demanding: "Name me an ethical statement made or an action performed by a believer that could not have been made or performed by a non-believer."

In the end he tired of his own question and told me that he had found an answer. He thought that Lech Walesa, the lone and indomitable leader of Polish resistance to the might of communism, would never have dared take on such a huge merciless enemy without his faith to sustain him. I suspect he would have felt the same about Arnaud Beltrame. And, if this is true, and I think it is, is it time the rest of us wondered whether the West's long mockery and dismissal of religion as childish and outmoded should now come to an end?

We need to know the difference between how things are and how they ought to be, or what do we live and die for?

** We are unsure whether the Christianity Peter Hitchens refers to in this article is that of genuine repentance and faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, or that of Romanism. Nevertheless, the principle he expounds is a Biblical principle and is worthy of our attention.*



THE FUTURE

By: Rev. Maurice Roberts

With emotion and love in his heart the Apostle Paul could write: “...*my heart's desire and prayer to God for Israel is, that they might be saved*” (Romans 10:1). He says this as a Jew himself, but also as a Christian who longs for the blessing and conversion of God's people, Israel.

A DESIRE FOR ISRAEL

The prayer of Paul for Israel's conversion should be echoed in the heart of every believer in the Lord Jesus Christ. We should, as believers, have a deep love for the Jews. There are very good reasons why we should have a special desire for their salvation and eternal welfare. Israel is God's ancient people. They were in the Covenant of Grace before the Gentiles were brought in. The Bible was written by Jewish hands. Above all, the Lord Jesus Christ, God's blessed Son, was born of the Jewish nation according to the flesh. How great is the debt of love and respect, which we owe to Israel! Sadly, through ignorance of God's Word, there is a great deal of anti-Jewish feeling in the

world today. At the heart of this anti-Semitism is a culpable ignorance of God's eternal purpose for both Jew and Gentile nations. At the root of this ignorance is a sinful failure on the part of educators and Church leaders to study the Bible. The Bible is God's infallible Word and it makes very clear, especially in Romans 9-11, that God has a plan in the future to bless both Jews and Gentiles with Gospel light and saving grace.

A DISTINCT ORDER

The salvation purchased by Christ is the supreme blessing, which the great God of Heaven has eventually prepared for our sinful world. In His wisdom, God has seen fit to bestow the blessings of salvation on mankind in a special way and in a distinct order. The blessing of salvation by Christ, as God has ordained, comes to the world in three phases. From Abraham to Christ, God offered salvation to Israel only. There were very few Gentiles saved in Old Testament times; but then, after Pentecost, the Jews were hardened. It was now the Gentiles who were saved. Very few Jews joined the



Church of Christ. This period, from Pentecost to the present day, is referred to in the Bible as **“...the times of the Gentiles...”** (Luke 21:24). Sadly, the leaders of the Jewish people have, for the past two thousand years, failed to recognise that Jesus is their Messiah, whom their fathers crucified. However, it is very clear from the writings of the Apostle Paul in Romans 11 that at some time in the future Israel as a nation will come to believe in Christ **“...God is able to graft them in again”** (Romans 11:23).

This illustration of a tree is very helpful. Paul argues that some branches of the Jewish tree have been cut out so as to graft in Gentile branches; but Israel as a whole is not to be thought of as forever cast off by God. **“...God is able to graft them in again”** means that there is a day coming when God will open the eyes of the Jewish people as a whole, so that they may recognise Jesus Christ as their Messiah. There is, Paul explains, a veil over the face of the Jewish nation (2 Corinthians 3:14-15). They are unable to see that Jesus is that long-promised Messiah and Lord; but this blindness is not to last forever. “...

when it [Israel] shall turn to the Lord, the veil shall be taken away” (2 Corinthians 3:16). When the veil is removed, the Jews as a nation will recognise Christ as their own Messiah. What a blessed day that will be! The prophet Zechariah describes how the Jewish nation will react when God’s grace opens their eyes to see who Jesus really is **“And it shall come to pass in that day, that I will seek to destroy all the nations that come against Jerusalem. And I will pour upon the house of David, and upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the spirit of grace and of supplications: and they shall look upon Me [Christ] Whom they have pierced, and they shall mourn for Him, as one mourneth for his only son, and shall be in bitterness for Him, as one that is in bitterness for his firstborn”** (Zechariah 12:9-10). The prophet here vividly describes the day when the Holy Spirit will be poured upon Israel. They will then see what their forefathers did not see – that Jesus, whom they crucified, is the eternal Son of God and promised Messiah. Their grief and sorrow as a nation will be one of **“...great mourning...”** v11. It will be a profound shock when they come to see that the One whom their ancestors crucified is



their promised Messiah! Their national sorrow will be so great that the prophet tells us ***“...the land shall mourn every family apart...and their wives apart”*** (Zechariah 12:11-14). There will be a happy outcome to this sorrow and repentance. Christ's blood, which is a ***“...fountain opened...”*** 13:1, will cleanse them from their sin after so many years of ignorance and unbelief. Jewish people will now come to believe in the Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. It will be the happy day of Israel's enlightenment after so many years of spiritual blindness. Then will be fulfilled the words ***“And so all Israel shall be saved: as it is written, ‘There shall come out of Sion the Deliverer, and shall turn away ungodliness from Jacob: For this is My covenant unto them, when I shall take away their sins’”*** (Romans 11:26-27).

Happy and blessed will our dear Jewish friends be when, after so many long years and after such sorrows as their forefathers experienced in the Holocaust, they come at last to place their faith in the glorious Saviour of the world, Jesus Christ.

In His sublime wisdom, God has ordered that, in His providence, there should be an order in the salvation of mankind. It seems clear that there is a three-fold order to the gathering of His elect into glory:

1. From Abraham to Christ, those saved were Hebrews, with whom very few Gentiles were believers in

Old Testament Times.

2. From the Day of Pentecost to the future Restoration of Israel, there are few Jews saved. The Gospel in this period of history goes out to the whole Gentile world.

3. When, in the future, the Spirit is poured out on the Jews, they will come into the Church of Christ along with Gentile believers. This will be a blessed day – a day for which we Gentiles should pray and yearn continually.

SIGNS OF THE INGATHERING OF ISRAEL

The question which now faces us as Gentile Christians is this: are there any indications in the world today that the day of Israel's ingathering into Christ's church is drawing near? It is the conviction of the present writer that there are significant events taking place which should give us hope to believe that the blessed day of Israel's ingathering again into the Church is drawing nigh. For nearly two thousand years the Jews were scattered over the whole world. They were unable for those many centuries to return to their ancestral land because it was governed and controlled by political powers that were hostile to Israel; but there came a change after the Second World War. In 1948, Jews were given their ancestral land back to them. In spite of the fierce opposition of Arab nations, Israel got back home. Then, a few years later, in 1967, Israel won a significant victory over hostile enemies. They got back home after

two thousand years of wandering! The prophecy of Christ was to the effect “...**Jerusalem shall be trodden down of the Gentiles, until the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled**” (Luke 21:24). This prophecy surely was fulfilled in 1967. Since that date, Jews have been returning to their ancestral homeland from all over the world. The population of the modern State of Israel has been rising steadily. Nations hostile to Israel have attempted to harass them in all manner of ways, but Israel is getting stronger. Still more significant is the fact that the number of Jewish converts to the Christian faith has been steadily increasing. Jews are coming to see that Jesus is the Christ whom their forefathers tragically crucified. The present writer has been informed by a Christian worker among the Jewish people that there are groups of Christians now in most towns and villages of the modern State of Israel. Jewish eyes surely are being opened to recognise the identity of Jesus Christ to be that of their God-sent Messiah and Saviour.

It was the great hope and prayer of our Puritan forefathers that the Jewish people would come to see that Jesus is the Christ. This Puritan hope stirred them to pray and long for the happy day of Israel's conversion to faith in Christ. O that the day may soon come when Jewish eyes will be opened to see that the Lord Jesus is their true Messiah! When that happy day dawns, we shall see why the Apostle Paul ends

his exposition of the restoration of Israel with those sublime words “**O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are His judgments, and His ways past finding out!**” (Romans 11:33).

(Previously published in the Nov/Dec 2017 issue of ‘**Lamp & Light**’.)



MEDITATION BY DR. ROBERT HAWKER

on Christ's appearance to His disciples at the lake

"But when the morning was now come, Jesus stood on the shore: but the disciples knew not that it was Jesus. Then Jesus saith unto them, Children, have ye any meat?"

- John 21:4, 5

Every incident in relation to Jesus, and His love to His people, becomes interesting; and here is a very sweet one. Jesus was now risen from the dead, but His disciples had only faint and indistinct notions of the immense importance of this glorious event. They therefore were returned to their employment of fishing, unconscious of what the resurrection from the dead should mean. All night they had been employed in a fruitless pursuit and, when the morning began to dawn, Jesus stood on the shore; but their eyes were holden, that they did not know Him.

My soul! learn from hence, that Jesus is often with thee, often looking on thee and often providing and preparing for thee, while thou art ignorant of His presence and His love. He speaks to them, before they speak to Him. Yes; if we love Him, it is because He first loved us. And what doth Jesus say? "Children, have ye any meat?"

Precious account of Jesus! My soul, turn over the several blessed particulars shown in it. He calls them children. Yes: His people are His children, for He is the everlasting

Father, as well as their Husband and Brother: indeed, He stands in the place of all relations and fills all. My soul! If thou didst but consider this and keep the remembrance of it always uppermost in thine heart, how wouldest thou delight to go to Jesus, as to a brother born for adversity, a friend that loveth at all times, and one that "sticketh closer than a brother!" Observe how earnest the Lord is concerning their present state and safety. Oh! That every child of God in Christ would learn from hence how Jesus takes part in all that concerns them. Surely this solicitude of Jesus takes in the whole of a believer's warfare. Are they poor in this world? Do they seek their bread out of desolate places? Like the disciples, do they toil all night and gain nothing? And shall not He, who providently caters for the sparrow, know it, and provide for them, amidst all their manifold necessities? Look up, my poor afflicted brother, look up, I say and behold Jesus in this endearing instance of tenderness to the wants of His few faithful disciples. He that caused a miraculous draught of fishes to supply the pressing necessities of His disciples, can and will equally now regard the state of all His redeemed, under their various temporal straits and difficulties. The promise is absolute and hath never failed: "*His place of defence shall be*

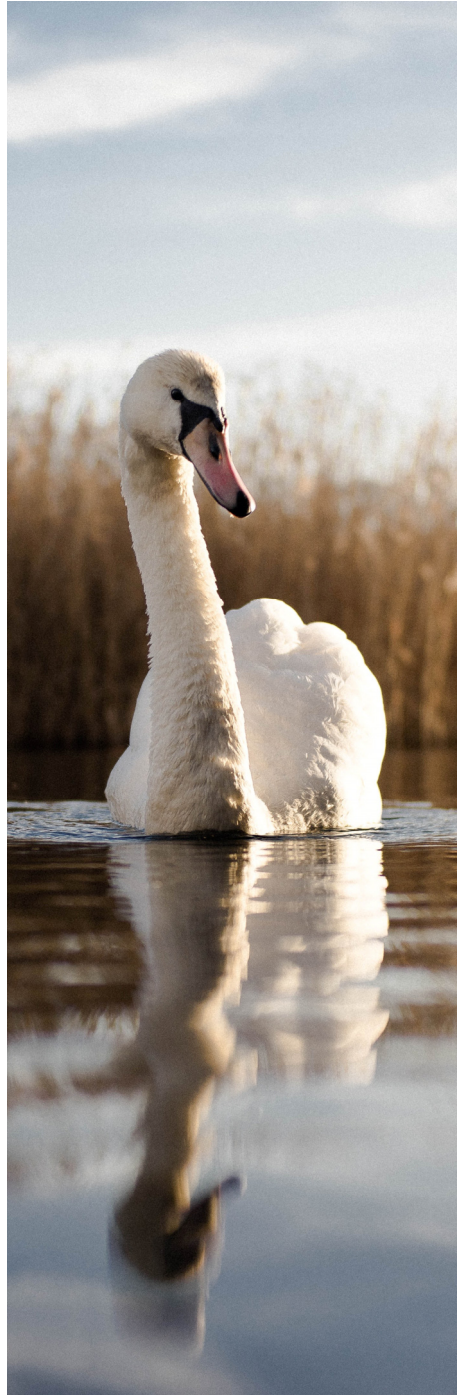
the munitions of rocks: bread shall be given him; his waters shall be sure” (Isa. 33:16).

And as for spiritual famine, when at any time the waters of the sanctuary run low, Jesus is the Almighty Governor, our Spiritual Joseph, through all the Egyptian state of His people here below; and He speaks to everyone, yea, to thee, my soul, in the number; “children, have ye any meat?” Lamb of God! though Thou art now in Thine exalted state, yet not all the church in glory above, nor all the hallelujahs of Heaven, can detain Thee one moment from knowing and visiting and supplying all the manifold wants of Thy church in grace here below!

Doth Jesus say to me, “Hast thou any meat?” “Lord,” I would answer, “Thou art the bread of life, and the bread of God; yea, the living bread, which cometh down from Heaven and giveth life to the world!” Precious Jesus! Be Thou my bread, my life, my hope, my fullness, my joy and my portion for ever!

*From: **Consider Him***

*Meditations by Dr. Hawker on the
Sufferings and Death
of the Lord Jesus Christ*





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