



CHRISTIAN WATCH

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A Protestant Biblical Witness

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Thou visitest the earth, and
waterest it: thou greatly
enrichest it with the river of
God.

- Psalm 65.9

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

Mark 13:37

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Christian Watch

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Dear Friends,

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

Do we, as believers, in these dark days in which we live, hunger after Christ? Song of Solomon 1 v 7 states *"Tell me, O thou whom my soul loveth, where thou feedest, where thou makest thy flock to rest at noon."* These words express the desire of the believer after Christ and his longing for present communion with Him. May the Lord grant us this hunger and thirst after Him and the desire to know and do His will.

Since our last Newsletter, the former Secretary of State for Education and Minister for Equalities, Justine Greening, has left the Government. It is hoped that the Government will now take the opportunity to review many of Miss Greening's more extreme proposals before they begin to impact upon families; proposals which include using compulsory lessons to teach children as young as five about same-sex marriage and her stated intention to allow anyone to choose their gender. However, we should not build up our hopes as the Prime Minister, Theresa May, speaking at an Awards Ceremony run by Pink News said – and I quote – *"we are pressing ahead with inclusive relationships and sex education in English schools, making sure that LGBT issues are taught well."* (N.B. Relationships include same-sex marriage and transgenderism – mandatory from 5 years of age).

So where is the Church when these decisions are being made? It seems to me that the Church of England jumped on the equality bandwagon, capitulating to the State agenda on fundamental issues of abortion, homosexuality, same-sex marriage etc. and, in doing so, lost her identity as the moral voice of the nation. The Church of England died of niceness because she substituted the religion of the cross for the cult of snowflakery. She bartered the badge of her identity with the emblem of all that is cowardly and vacillating – the snowflake. Snowflakes are very nice; nobody is offended by a snowflake; they can be shaped into snowballs and snowmen but, sadly, they cannot bear strong light. A snowflake melts and dies – its life is limited by its superficiality. Psalm 94 v 16 asks – *"Who will rise up for me (God) against the evildoers? or who will stand up for me (God) against the workers of iniquity?"* Charles Haddon Spurgeon, in his Daily Help Devotional, makes the following observation: *"It is the general rule of the moral universe that those men prosper who do their work with all their hearts, while those are almost certain to fail who go to their labour leaving half their hearts behind them. God does not give harvests to idle men, except harvests of thistles, nor is He pleased to send wealth to those who will not dig in the field to find its hid treasure. It is universally confessed that if a man would prosper, he must be diligent in business. It is the same in religion as it is in other things. If you would prosper in your work for Jesus, let it be*

heart work, and let it be done with all your heart.”

Whilst there is much confusion in the nation – and a British Government which is considering a Private Members’ Bill to introduce civil partnerships for opposite sex couples, so as to undermine the status of marriage, a new Government in Bermuda (a British Overseas territory) has restored the traditional definition of marriage by banning same-sex marriages – only six months after they were introduced. Same-sex marriage laws are NOT irreversible – encouraging news indeed. Keep on praying.

In our current Newsletter, **Encouragements** by Rev. Edward Malcolm outlines how God’s people are blessed, so that we can continue on the pathway in which He leads us.

Reclaiming Religious Freedom in the UK is a campaign by Barnabas Fund to reclaim the heritage of freedom in the UK. You may wish to sign the petition that is available by contacting their HQ. **Something Easily Overlooked** reminds us that Christ is our righteousness, goodness and satisfaction.

Walking with God – are you? Am I? Let us consider what this really means. Then the sermon extract by J.C. Philpot – **Cyrus** – gives us great encouragement – *“I will go before thee, and make the crooked places straight.”*

Various **News and Current Affairs** items are followed by **The Love of Christ to the Church** which shows us that His love is everlasting; it has neither beginning nor end. No sinner ever deserved it; no sinner ever will, but the precious love of Christ flows freely to sinners – eternally.

May these articles be of encouragement to us as we endeavour in 2018 to live our lives for Him in this fallen world.

Please remember that the annual subscriptions are now due. Many thanks if you have already paid, thus enabling the work of Christian Watch to continue.

Yours in His service,

Ian Henderson

Ian R. Henderson (Vice-Chairman)

DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

7 – 9 June 2018 : South of England Agricultural Show, Ardingly, West Sussex

16 – 18 October 2018 : CRE International Exhibition, Sandown Park, Esher, Surrey

Encouragements

By: **Rev. Edward Malcolm**, Editor,
Protestant Truth Magazine - January/
February, 2018

The Word of God is full of encouragements to the people of God, our Heavenly Father knows us and the weakness and frailty of our flesh and the ease with which we are turned aside from the walk of faith. He has therefore set before us a record of the encouragements with which He blesses His people, that we might learn to trust and obey and continue to the end on the path into which He leads us. If we are honest about our own walk, we know we need to be encouraged. That we might face the challenges of life more prepared and more trusting in God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ, let us have some of the promises and encouragements before us.

I am the Lord; I change not, Malachi 3:6.
The constancy of our Heavenly Father is the most encouraging and comforting

fact known to us. That God does not change means that everything He has promised will come to pass and everything He has done will achieve its purpose. From the beginning of the work of creation, to the last act in the revealing of the new creation, everything will come to pass as promised and nothing will fail. This is particularly encouraging for us who observe change in everything. The

“ God does
not change ”

attitudes of our society today are in many respects unthinkable when we consider what they were even twenty or thirty years ago. The wholesale departure of the Churches of our nation from the revealed and confessed truth of God is a scandal that cannot be ignored. We may very well feel that our nation is ripe for the judgment of God and we may confess that such judgment is richly deserved. But what of those who trust in the Lord, who have not changed their position and who have not denied the Lord Jesus Christ? Hold fast to this: “I am the Lord; I change not.” The failures of society and nation do not in any way upset or change the will of our Father in Heaven.

Jesus Christ the same yesterday, and to day, and for ever, Hebrews 13:8. On a similar vein we have this encouragement concerning our Lord Jesus Christ. He who was glorious before the incarnation, John 17:5 etc,



was seen to be glorious in His incarnation, Matthew 17:2 and is shown to have that glory now, Revelation 1:12-18. The magnitude of His glory is surely declared in that 18th verse, where He says, "I am He that liveth, and was dead; and, behold, I am alive for evermore, Amen; and have the keys of Hell and of death." Our risen Lord Jesus Christ has power over the grave and power to deliver

“ Trust in the Lord Jesus Christ ”

from eternal damnation all who come to Him. This vision which John saw was not only true then, but shows us the present power of Christ. For this reason, we have every encouragement to believe that the Gospel has the same power and authority today that it had when Paul and Peter and John and James preached it to hard sinners. Those hard sinners, full of prejudice, pride and ignorance, included some who were broken by the Gospel and who therefore came to trust in the same Lord Jesus Christ. Let us be encouraged to hold fast the Gospel, the faith once delivered to the saints, and never to doubt the declaration of salvation.

But when the Comforter is come, whom I will send unto you from the Father, even the Spirit of truth, which proceedeth from the Father, He shall testify of me, John 15:26. The encouragements given to us are Trinitarian; God our Father does not change, Christ our Saviour is the same in all time and God the Holy Spirit testifies or bears witness to that same Lord Jesus Christ. He, therefore,

cannot change, else His witness would become untrustworthy; there might be occasions when He bore witness to what was, but not to what *is*. Such a thing is unthinkable and so we are encouraged that God the Holy Spirit does not change. That encouragement is greatly increased when we consider the reason for His coming forth, as the testifier or witness about the Lord Jesus Christ. He leads us into all truth and He confirms what is true. "Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of His" (Romans 8:9). We who trust in Christ have the Spirit of Christ and so, if we are humble before Him, we are those to whom the Spirit testifies of Christ. Let us be encouraged by this.

“ Hold fast the Word of life ”

For ever, O Lord, Thy Word is settled in Heaven, Psalm 119:89. There is nothing to which God the Holy Spirit bears witness concerning our Lord Jesus Christ that is not written for us in God's Holy Word. The Word of God does not change. It is a profitable Word, 2 Timothy 3:16. It was written by men who were moved by the Holy Spirit, 2 Peter 1:21. It is a powerful Word, Isaiah 55:11. It is an eternal Word, Matthew 24:35. Let us be encouraged, therefore, to hold fast the Word of life, and know that it has been given to us that we may know the truth and will of God, our duty towards Him and our duty towards our neighbours. Knowing these things, let us be doers of the Word and not hearers only.

I will strengthen thee: yea, I will help thee, Isaiah 41:10. The truth and unchangeableness of our triune God and the eternal and powerful nature of His Word stand in stark contrast to our own failings and weaknesses. We have in this promise an encouragement to look outside ourselves

“ Trust in Christ’s shed blood ”

for help. Albert Einstein defined madness as repeating the same action or actions in the hope of achieving a different result. How many of Christ’s people, one might wonder, would be counted mad on this basis? How many, having fallen into sin in one form or another, have considered that they have the strength of will to defeat the temptation next time? Instead, we must learn to look outside ourselves to Christ. “The blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanseth us from all sin”, 1 John 1:7. If we would overcome sin, we will only do so by trusting in Christ’s shed blood. This means that we are to trust in His atoning death, for He only shed His blood once. That blood is the only disinfectant from the corruption of sin. It is the only bleach to take away the stain of sin. It is the only medicine by which we are made whole before God our Father. When temptation comes, let us seek Christ and His shed blood, knowing that we have been redeemed and cleansed and, therefore, sin has no actual hold over us. It is fear and doubt that gives sin its power and only trust in Christ’s atonement, will strengthen us to overcome the tempter.

Be strong and of a good courage, fear not, nor be afraid of them: for the Lord thy God, He it is that doth go with thee; He will not fail thee, nor forsake thee, Deuteronomy 31:6. This verse, to which the Apostle alludes in Hebrews 13:5, shows that our Christian walk is not precarious, nor in vain. Israel was about to embark on the conquest of the promised land and human reasoning would teach them the folly and danger of the venture. The promise of God, however, overcomes such poor excuses,

“ Do in faith what He has called us to do ”

and teaches them to go on in faith. It teaches us the same thing, not that we are to trust ourselves, nor to think that we should do nothing while our Heavenly Father does everything, but rather that we should do in faith what He has called us to do, knowing that the outcome and success is His and not ours.

So shall we ever be with the Lord, 1 Thessalonians 4:17. This encouragement was first given to those who mourned the death of friends and loved ones in a persecution. It is given to us who continue in the Church militant, to know that our eternal security is settled; Christ is coming again and will gather to Himself all those for whom He died. Let us be encouraged to serve.

Reclaiming Religious Freedom in the UK

This year Barnabas Fund will be launching a new campaign to reclaim the heritage of freedom of religion in the UK and elsewhere which previous generations of Christians endured hardship, persecution and even death to achieve.

“The Church has a duty to protect the free practice of all faiths in this country.”

Her Majesty, The Queen
Lambeth Palace, February 2012



Barnabas Fund is seeking a new Act of Parliament in the UK to guarantee seven fundamental aspects of freedom of religion. These seven freedoms have developed in the UK by various mechanisms over the last five centuries but are now under threat. A law to protect and guarantee them is urgently needed.

Tracing the heritage of religious liberty takes us back more than 800 years to Magna Carta in 1215. At that time, England, Scotland, Wales and Ireland were separate nations; it was long before Great Britain was created, let alone the United Kingdom; so Magna

Carta’s ringing call that “the English Church” must be free should not be seen as limited to England. We must see it as an affirmation to be embraced by the whole of the UK and far beyond, but expressed in the language of its time and context. Indeed, in later centuries, Magna Carta became a rallying cry for the freedoms of all the English-speaking people. For example, those who signed the American Declaration of Independence described themselves as “patriots” claiming their ancient rights as Englishmen which had been set out in Magna Carta and subsequent laws.

As will be explained in a new booklet which Barnabas Fund will shortly be launching, Magna Carta’s affirmation that “the English Church shall be free” was gradually worked out over the centuries into seven specific aspects of freedom of religion:

1. Freedom to read the Bible in public (achieved 1537)
2. Freedom to interpret the Bible without Government interference (achieved 1559)
3. Freedom of worship (achieved 1689)
4. Freedom to choose, or change your faith or belief (achieved 1689)
5. Freedom to preach and try to convince others of the truth of your beliefs (achieved 1812)
6. Freedom to build churches and other places of worship (achieved 1812)
7. Freedom from being required to

affirm a particular world-view or set of beliefs in order to hold a public sector job or stand for election, work in professions such as teaching and law, or study at university (achieved by the repeal of various Test Acts between 1719 and 1888)



— **Magna Carta**

Most of these were achieved by the repeal of various restrictions on freedom of religion, rather than a positive law affirming freedom of religion. They are therefore vulnerable to being eroded by those who are either intent on imposing a particular ideological agenda or by politicians who are simply ignorant of the enormous importance that previous generations played in developing freedom of religion and spreading it to other parts of the world.

The campaign will include a petition calling for a new law specifically guaranteeing all seven aspects of freedom of religion which over the centuries have emerged in the UK. We will also be organising similar petitions in Australia and New Zealand, but this campaign will be more than just petitions. We shall be calling on Christians to engage in numerous ways

to reclaim the freedoms which our forefathers endured hardship, persecution and even death to achieve.

We are thankful to God for His guidance, blessing, provision and protection of the UK over centuries. In times of great sin and impending judgment, through the prayers of His people and the work of His saints like Wesley, Whitefield and others, judgment was averted. God, in His mercy, intervened.

We believe that, as a nation, the UK has again left the pathways of God. We have forsaken His laws and we are faced with the possibility of the candlestick being removed from our country (Revelation 2:5). With this will probably come the loss of our fundamental religious freedoms. Yet, we believe it is not too late. We believe that we are still, as a nation, in the hands of our sovereign Lord, that it is He who will determine our destiny. Meanwhile we, as His people, must, like Nehemiah of old, pray, build and be equipped and ready to respond to every kind of attack (Nehemiah 4). Finally, we must heed the words of 2 Chronicles 7:14 "If my people, who 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."

(www.barnabasfund.org)



Something Easily Overlooked

From: **Evangelical Times**, January, 2018

Last year – 500 years on since the Reformation – was one of joyful commemoration, focusing on the exhilarating truths of the Gospel.

Scottish Reformer and martyr, Patrick Hamilton, explained in his little treatise, *Patrick's Places*, why the Gospel is such a glad herald: “The [moral] law saith: ‘Pay thy debt. Thou art a sinner desperate. And thou shalt die’. The Gospel saith: ‘Christ hath paid it. Thy sins are forgiven thee. Be of good comfort, thou shalt be saved’”.

The law saith: “Make amends for thy sin. The Father of Heaven is wroth with thee. Where is thy righteousness, goodness and satisfaction? Thou art

bound and obliged unto me, to the Devil and to Hell.”

“ Christ is thy righteousness ”

The Gospel saith: “Christ hath made it for thee. Christ hath pacified him with His blood. Christ is thy righteousness, thy goodness and satisfaction. Christ hath delivered thee from them all.”

Rejection

Only those who don't understand such a Gospel could have react to this 500th anniversary, as some within the Established Church did last year, with joyless ambivalence. Only those without spiritual insight could find themselves apologising for the Reformation, as if the resulting schism in Christendom had been the Reformers' fault.

The division was actually Rome's fault. Its serious heresies had been endemic for centuries and its hierarchy clung to them doggedly in the face of overwhelming Biblical evidence presented by the Reformers. Justification by faith and the impossibility of being saved by the works of the law were anathematised by the Roman Catholic Church's Council of Trent in the mid-1560s and have remained so up to this day.

But Rome's intransigence is an important reminder to us that unbelief is not inevitably dispelled by irrefutable apologetics or by cogent



— Patrick Hamilton

Biblical argument, necessary as those things are. Some people can have Biblical truth set before them with overwhelming clarity and yet still react with vehement illogical hatred towards it (see Acts 7:54-59).

More than argumentation is needed in order that sinners see the Kingdom of God; they need a fundamental change in their “religious affections”, **a new birth**.

Persecution

In this way too, the Reformation has reminded us of something easily overlooked. Although God protected the lives of well-known Reformers like Martin Luther, John Calvin and John Knox, many others were called to bear

“ Pray for revival ”

witness to the Truth with their deaths – men such as William Tyndale, the Marian martyrs, George Wishart and Patrick Hamilton himself.

Today we pray for revival and a fresh reformation among Christian churches, but do we understand what such a visitation might involve? Do we realise that God often uses persecution to amplify and enhance the Church’s witness? It is easy to forget that, as early as the Apostles, John was reportedly the only one among the twelve not to meet a martyr’s death. The greatest torch-bearers have often been “martyrs” (the Greek word means “witness”).

It could be, in His mysterious providence, that the Lord will send to

Britain uncontested revival, for “with God all things are possible.” But if, as seems more likely, increased persecution is next on our menu, we will only be experiencing the same as millions of Christians elsewhere. In fact, we will only be going back to the world of the New Testament!

Courage

Nearly two millennia ago, Tertullian said: “The blood of the martyrs is the seed of the Church.” He also said: “The Lord challenges us to suffer persecutions and to confess Him. He wants those who belong to Him to be brave and fearless. He Himself shows how weakness of the flesh is overcome by courage of the Spirit.”

The heroes of the Reformation were those who show us the “courage of the Spirit.” Let us not forget to commemorate this aspect of their witness too.



— Tertullian

Walking with God

A letter to those who own the Name of the Lord

Dear Brethren in Christ,

Those saved by grace have a wondrous privilege; rather, they are filled with privileges.

“A new creation”, they have a new standing, sphere, attitude, life and hope. All things are changed. I am surprised that we are all so slow to realise the *far-reaching results*. The old life is *not* non-existent, but it is judged and, if we *manifest* instead of *mortifying* it, we deny the precious doctrine of the Gospel (Gal. 2:20). If believers *illustrated* the salvation they have received and were as distinct from the world as light is from darkness, there would be a wondrous witness. Men could see the “reality” of their testimony that Christ died for their sins; but if a child of God appears partly like a worldlyling and has some evident wishes of success, pleasure, physical luxury, bodily adornment, etc., which are contrary to the claim of a heavenly setting aside of the things on the earth (Col. 3:1-4), can we wonder if the men of this age misunderstand the position? Some go away with the impression that there is *much hypocrisy*; others with the thought that salvation is quite different from what it really is, and so they flatter themselves they are saved, whereas all the while they are dead in trespasses and sins.

This is a solemn thought. It is vain to be “religious” and to sing praise and to say prayers unless the heart is near to the Lord. He said, “This people honoureth Me with their lips, but their heart is far from Me; howbeit in vain do they worship Me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men” (Mark 7: 6,7).

If we say “Lord, Lord,” and *do not* the things which He commands, “we lie and do not the truth”. There is so much *self-deception* among those who say “Lord, Lord”. *Thrice* are we told that those who glibly use this Name will seek and expect to enter glory and will be surprised that the Lord does not know them! Why are we told this *thrice*? Because the Lord knows our forgetfulness and our tendency to ignore this painful teaching. Observe in each case the ones who *think* they are saved are those who have a fluent tongue concerning Christ. The life must be as spiritual as the tongue or there will be confusion. Many know they are not saved, many are indifferent to salvation, but there are those who imagine they are born from above and they often show “activities”, but with all their ready speech there is no deep work.

We would feel concern for those who believe they are among the Lord's people, who attend meetings and take part in the same (Luke 13:25), who use the Name of Christ now very earnestly (Matt. 7:22), who may learn much of the Scriptures and emphasise the coming of Christ (Matt. 25:1), and yet to whom He will say that He has no recognition! *Three times* this fact is brought before us. These verses are

not dealing with the profane and outwardly evil, but with the talkative professor of Christ, who sometimes appears very encouraging. It is possible to humble ourselves as Ahab, to hear gladly as Herod, to receive the Word with joy awhile as the rocky ground hearer, to be baptised as Simon the sorcerer – and yet to remain lost. There are many hypocrites who know their hypocrisy, but our great concern just now is as to those who are carelessly ignorant of this and who believe they are right. How necessary it is to test ourselves by God's own standard and from God's standpoint.

Is there a *real walking with God*? Notice Gen 5:22-24; 6:9; Micah 6:8, contrast v. 16. What does “walking” imply? May we not answer:

- a) An evidence of life
- b) Uprightness
- c) Continuance
- d) Spiritual progress
- e) An object in view
- f) Leaving of other companionships
- g) Deep fellowship and acquaintance with the Lord
- h) Harmony “with” His will.

Observe that there is *not* the thought of isolation from others who walk with Him, but we meet *them* with *Him* – they are not first! And if there is walking with God there is a measure – a large measure – of isolation (Ps. 1: 2 Tim. 3:5)). The contexts in Genesis 5 and 6 suggest this. Enoch and Noah seemed to stand almost alone. If we cling to earth's friendships, we shall not know the meaning of the Lord's. We cannot serve God and mammon. Further, harmony as to His will is not only wrapped up in the word “walked”, but in the word “with”. It suggests that God Himself appoints the direction and the rate; the believer is lovingly submissive, glad to be guided. He walks “with”; he does not decide!

I do desire for you – and for myself – this walking with God. Those who experience it will understand Gal. 5:16; Eph. 2:10; 4:1; 5:2,8,15; Col.1:10; 2:6; 4:5; 1 Thess. 2:12; 4:1, 12; 1 John 1:7; 2 John 4; 3 John 3, 4. Thus Scripture bears a very definite witness as to the possibility of going onward in the paths of the Lord. No believer should be satisfied with anything else. His heart should be exercised: “Am I walking in the Spirit? Am I walking with God?” It is well to be concerned as to these simple, practical subjects. Some seem more ready for a “prophetic” address than for plain speaking as to daily life; but how solemn is the latter. Can I honestly say that I am *walking* with God? Let us think what this means.

If I am walking with God, how can I stoop to business dishonesties, however trivial?
If I am walking with God, how can I scheme for myself and leave out His *authority*?

If He is at my side, I shall seek, instinctively, His will and guidance at once. Israel took of their victuals and made friendship with the Gibeonites yet asked not counsel at the Lord's mouth. Jehoshaphat went to see Ahab and said he would unite in warfare, before he sought the will of God. Such impulses are quite natural, but they ruin the completeness of testimony. Further, if we, beloved friends, are walking with God, how can we be despondent? Can you imagine a man *murmuring*, or becoming bitter or slanderous while he walks with God? *His realised presence* will become such a check on common conversation!

Far from suggesting "familiarity" of a wrong character, this Divine expression involves a true reply of lowliness to God's own gracious condescension. It is, indeed, marvellous that the Lord should say of anyone, "I loved thee," and that He, whom the Heaven of Heavens cannot contain, should graciously give His people the privilege of being closely with Him, hour after hour. If I am offered the continue readiness to instruct me of one who is learned, I cannot think it means he will always be with me whenever I desire his guidance; but God is beyond men and will be always with His people who delight to trust Him. For a thousandth part of His instruction, yea, a millionth, men would give much, when perplexed; but His fellowship is free and so tender. He does not force himself upon us when we wish to ignore His nearness (cf. Song of Solomon 5:5). How solemn is this! We can erect a barrier between Him and ourselves. We can *draw away* and spend time away from *Him*. He does not compel unwilling friendship. He does not demand "unloving" obedience. How can He? The commandment is love and He will not lower His precious appointment. To walk complainingly is not to be with Him; it is to speak against Him (Mal. 3:14). How *unwise* to walk away from God, but sadly possible! Do we walk with God and dread any and every departure? Do we walk with God and *expect* His regulation of our life according to His Word? Is our *consistency* marked? Are we in step with His revealed will? Can men see we have been with the Lord in a spiritual parallel to Ex. 34:29 and in a measure of likeness to Acts 4:13?

I would feel a concern, beloved brethren, for you and for myself, that by our fruits we may be known and that our temperamental angles may be smoothed and our self-will laid aside as we walk with God. The *gradual* results of living with another are very real. The *habit* of dependence on God for everything may become a spiritual *characteristic*, so that it becomes, as we say, "habitual", and manifestly a part of our very nature, with the effect that we do not take steps without definite prayer and thanksgiving. The "theory" of salvation which ignores walking with God is very dangerous. It is impossible to be sleepy, impossible to be worldly, impossible to settle down while we enjoy the great privilege of "walking with God."

With all earnest wishes for this joyous privilege,
Yours in the Lord Jesus, by everlasting grace.

Percy W. Heward

(From "*Thoughts from the Word of God*" September, 1919)



Trump chose anniversary of Allenby's entry into Jerusalem to declare it Israel's capital — British Church Newspaper correspondent, 22 December 2017

A little-publicised fact about President Trump's announcements concerning Jerusalem was that they coincided with the 100th anniversary of General Allenby's peaceful entry into Jerusalem. Trump made two key decisions:

- 1) To recognise Israel's decision to move its capital city to Jerusalem.
- 2) Shortly to move the U.S. Embassy there.

Both decisions effectively removed all doubt that Jerusalem will remain Israel's capital city, whatever view the Palestinians take about it and has given significant encouragement to Israelis that they are by no means alone in their struggle against the hostile forces surrounding them.



President Trump announced his move concerning Jerusalem on 6 December and the U.S. decision took effect the following day. Amidst the justified criticisms of Trump over his morals and his erratic and often provocative tweets, it may be remembered that God has in past times used imperfect men to further His plans for mankind.

It was on Friday 7 and Saturday 8 December 1917 that the Ottoman army, surrounded and facing defeat, withdrew from Jerusalem – but they did not by any means accept defeat. The Mohammedan army of the failing Ottoman Empire was



leaving Jerusalem. General Allenby, a committed and strong Christian believer, and mindful of God's purposes for Jerusalem, left the Ottomans a northern escape route, through which they retreated. It is said he had in mind Isaiah 31:5: "As birds flying, so will the Lord of hosts defend Jerusalem; defending also He will deliver it, and passing over He will preserve it".

The Ottoman army retreated to a nearby hill, preparing to shell the town. Allenby sent for British air support and the Turkish positions were bombed.

Judging the coast was clear and it was safe to enter the holy Jewish city, General Allenby famously entered Jerusalem on foot on Tuesday, 11 December 1917.

Abbreviated

"The God you serve is greater than the god I serve" — Christian Institute website 25 January, 2018

Christian missionaries working tirelessly in a dangerous and remote part of Nigeria have been highlighted for praise in The Spectator magazine.

David and Shirley Donovan have served the community of Enekorogha and helped save numerous lives.



— **David and Shirley Donovan**

Writing in The Spectator, journalist Colin Freeman revealed how their actions had prompted a village "idol keeper" to tell the couple, "the God you serve is greater than the god I serve".

Freeman also shared the story of Ian Squire, another British Christian working in Nigeria, killed last year while being held hostage with the Donovans. He had been playing Amazing Grace on a guitar moments before his death.

Foreign correspondent Freeman said Squire and the Donovans were examples of the "foot soldiers of a less fashionable and largely forgotten wing of aid work – Christian missionaries".

C of E braced for “controversial” vote on using Methodist Ministers

— Olivia Rudgard, Social & Religious Affairs correspondent,
The Telegraph, 20 January, 2018

Church of England leaders are braced for a “controversial” vote on whether it should share Ministers with the Methodists as part of plans set to boost struggling rural churches. The proposals will be debated at the Church’s governing body, the General Synod, next month – but senior figures warned that some will see the proposals as “very problematic.”

The plans would allow priests from each Church to preach at the other and would help areas where there are “serious challenges in sustaining a Christian presence”, Church leaders suggest.

In documents published ahead of the meeting, the Rt. Revd. Dr. Christopher Cocksworth, Bishop of Coventry, said the plans would also be a boost in “urban areas, perhaps particularly those where there are high levels of deprivation.

Whilst such co-operation is already possible and practised in many rural contexts, priest/presbyters exercising ministry in both Churches at the same time could build on that in new ways. These would include



helping one another to maintain a reliable pattern of public worship in the communities they serve, fostering imaginative initiatives in mission and enabling strategic decisions to be made about which communities will be the particular focus for Ministers serving overlapping geographical areas,” he added.

The Methodist revival grew out of a movement started at Christ Church, Oxford, in the 18th century by Anglican preacher John Wesley and they split from the Church of England after his death.

William Nye, the Church of England’s most senior civil servant, said the proposals would mean Methodist clergy - who had not been ordained by a Bishop – holding Church of England services, which is likely to be divisive.

He said Bishops felt this was a “bearable anomaly”, but others would be “concerned” that the plan would break the “continuous apostolic succession” that Church of England members believe links their clergy and Bishops to the original followers of Christ.

However, others in the Church see the division as a “terrible tragedy, in that John Wesley was an Anglican clergyman who never intended to set up a separate Church” and consider that “it was all a mistake, on one level,” he added.

The plan, which will be seen by many as a step towards the re-unification of the two Churches, is the latest attempt to bring them closer together after similar proposals mooted in 1972 and 1980 failed.

Abbreviated

Poll Watch - The Week, 20 January, 2018 issue

51% of British adults say that they pray; **12%** do so at least once a day.

20% of those who pray have prayed while doing household chores and **12%** during exercise or other leisure activities; **49%** think God hears their prayers.

71% of people who pray have prayed for their families – more than any other subject. Only **24%** have prayed about global issues.

Com/Res/The Observer



“

To be a Christian without prayer is no more possible than to be alive without breathing

- Martin Luther

”

94 MPs Attend Launch of 2018 World Watch List — Open Doors, 18 January, 2018

Over 100 Parliamentarians attended or were represented at the launch of the 2018 World Watch List in Parliament, which was hosted by Theresa Villiers MP. The event was to highlight the extent of Christian persecution around the world.

Lisa Pearce, CEO of Open Doors UK & Ireland summarised the findings of the Open Doors report, including the rapid growth of persecution against Christians, citing religious nationalism as a key driver.

Open Doors has been campaigning to put freedom of religion or belief on the Government's agenda and she noted that the UK Government was becoming more aware of the issues facing Christians and other minorities in the countries which the UK engage with.



— Theresa Villiers in Parliament with Open Doors

Lisa Pearce said, “It is vital that the UK Government use all its influence – through its foreign policy, aid and trade agreements and its broader influence within the international community – to ensure that the right to freedom of religion or belief is established and then protected around the world. One opportunity unique to 2018 is the meeting of the Commonwealth Heads of State in London. This is a chance for the United Kingdom to lead the way in reminding the eight Commonwealth countries found on Open Doors’ 2018 World Watch List of the importance of the right to freedom of religion or belief.”

Concluding the event Lisa said, “There are no easy fixes – but I ask that our Government renew its effort and use all possible influence within the international community to begin to reverse the squeeze of persecution in these 50 countries and beyond. The need can seem overwhelming but all we are responsible for is that which is in our hands to do.”

Abbreviated

Cyrus: Extract from a sermon by J. C. Philpot

“I will go before thee, and make the crooked places straight.”

Isaiah 45:2

To whom were these words spoken? To Cyrus. And who was Cyrus? King of Persia. But how came Cyrus to be introduced into the Word of God; and how did it happen that the Lord gave such promises to a heathen monarch? Cyrus, though a heathen prince, was an instrument chosen of God to do an appointed work, which was to overthrow the great Chaldean Empire, take the city of Babylon and restore the children of Israel to their own land; and therefore, one hundred and seventy years before he executed the office thus assigned to him, he was expressly pointed out and personally addressed by name in the record of inspired prophecy. What a proof is

this of the inspiration of God's Word and that all events are under His appointment and control!

“All events are under His control”

Not only, however, was he thus called by name, but the very work which he had to do was expressly declared long before the necessity arose for its being accomplished. The work for which he was raised up and Divinely appointed was to rescue from captivity the two tribes of Judah and Benjamin, which, as a punishment for their sins, were to be carried into captivity to Babylon, where they were to continue for a definite period, the space, namely of seventy years. To rescue them, then, from this Babylonish captivity, when the seventy years were expired and to enable them to return, was the work that Cyrus, in the appointment of God, had to perform. This was a very great work for him to execute, a work, so great, that he could not have performed it unless he had been specially aided by God. For he had to take a city whose walls were fifty cubits thick and two hundred feet high, surrounded by a wide ditch full of water, and defended with one hundred gates of brass. The city was also well-manned and well-provisioned and altogether so strong and powerful as to defy every mode of attack then known. If the Lord, therefore, in the words of the text, had not “gone before him;” if He had not broken “in



— J.C. Philpot

pieces the gates of brass, and cut in sunder the bars of iron:”, Cyrus would never have taken that mighty city, but must have been utterly defeated in the attempt.

This, then, is the literal meaning of the text. But does it not admit of a more extensive application? The promise, it is true, was given to Cyrus, and we know was literally fulfilled; but are the words applicable only to Cyrus? Have we no fortress to take, no city of salvation to win? Do we not need the Lord to go before us and make our crooked places straight? Have we no gates of brass, no bars of iron, which shut out approach and access and which we need the Lord to break in pieces and cut in sunder for us? Does the road to Heaven lie across a smooth, grassy meadow over which we may quietly walk in the cool of a summer evening and leisurely amuse ourselves with gathering the flowers and listening to the warbling of the birds? No child of God ever found the way to Heaven a flowery path. It is the wide gate and broad way which leads to perdition. It is the strait gate and narrow way, the uphill road, full of difficulties, trials, temptations and enemies, which leads to heaven and issues in eternal life. If, then, we be Zion’s pilgrims, heavenward and homeward bound, we shall find the need of such promises, in their spiritual fulfilment, as God here gave to Cyrus.

Now I see, whate’er betide,
All is well if Christ be mine;
He has promised to provide;
May He teach me to resign.

When a sense of sin and thrall
Forced me to the sinner’s Friend,
He engaged to manage all,
By the way and to the end.

“Cast,” He said, “on me thy care;
‘Tis enough that I am nigh;
I will all thy burdens bear,
I will all thy needs supply.”

Lord, I would indeed submit;
Gladly yield my all to Thee;
What Thy wisdom sees most fit,
Must be surely best for me.

Only when the way is rough,
And the coward flesh would start,
Let Thy promise and Thy love
Cheer and animate my heart.

John Newton

From: **Sidelights on Bible Characters**
By J. C. Philpot, Edited by G.D. Buss



— *Cyrus, King of Persia*

The Love of Christ to the Church

By: **Mr. B. A. Ramsbottom**

(From: *Saturday Evening Meditations*)

Please read Ephesians 5:25-33

This is the sweetest of all things, the precious love of Christ to His people. There are one or two things which make the love of Christ so precious – would that we knew more of it by sweet experience! One thing is this: that love is to sinners; it is to those who are unworthy, who are undeserving, that the love of Christ freely flows. No sinner ever deserved it; no sinner ever will. But this precious love of Christ freely, eternally, flows to sinners. Then there is this: this love is everlasting; it had no beginning; it never can end. The Lord loves His people eternally.

Here they are spoken of as “the Church,” and there is this sacred comparison, this union of the Heavenly Bridegroom and His beloved bride. Many things might be said on this union. The hymnwriter says,

*“Hail, sacred union, firm and strong!
How great the grace! How sweet the song!
That worms of earth should ever be
One with incarnate Deity!”*

It is a union of love, a union that cannot be broken. Once on the Isle of Patmos the angel said to John, “Come hither, I will shew thee the bride, the Lamb’s wife.” There is a sacred view of it here in this chapter. Across these words might be written, “Come, I will show thee the bride, the Lamb’s wife.” How

is she to be seen? As loved eternally and as standing in union with Christ. Many things might be said of her. It is opened up especially in the Song of Solomon.

I just confine myself to two points concerning this marriage union between the Church and Christ. The first thing: as the beloved bride, she takes the Bridegroom’s Name. We are told that His Name shall be called the Lord our righteousness. We are also told that “this is the Name wherewith she shall be called, The Lord our righteousness.” The other thing is this: the Lord Jesus takes all her debts. This is what redemption is – it is the paying of every debt the Church of God ever owed – and it was a great debt. True it is that we had nothing to pay. The Lord Jesus, in laying down His life for His beloved Church, paid all her debts. This is the ransom price and that sovereign decree goes forth: “Deliver him from going down to the pit: I have found a ransom.”

There are also here the precious outworkings, the gracious effects of the love of Christ to His Church. The first and greatest effect is this: He gave Himself for her. Venture to Calvary – it all flows from the love of Christ. He gave Himself. There were many high priests under the ceremonial law. They offered many sacrifices that could not take away sin, but Christ gave Himself. He gave Himself for sinners. He gave Himself to the cross, to the bitter curse. He gave Himself to be made sin.

There is the gracious effect of it.

I feel this is an amazing word. The Church of God is viewed – not just one sinner – the whole Church of God in all ages. If you consider those embraced in that number no man could number, if you consider all their sins and then you find them described like this: “Not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing.” There is not a spot, not a stain upon the Church of God as Christ has given Himself for it. This is the value of redeeming blood. It cleanses from all sin; it blots out every spot. And then this is amazing: *nor wrinkle*. I take it like this. There are some of God’s people have very strange ways and many peculiarities and many things which we wish were different. Perhaps you dare not call them spots; perhaps it would be too extreme to call them sins; but they certainly are wrinkles. When Christ looks at His beloved Church He sees her “not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing.”

Sometimes in legal language, a lawyer makes a special provision at the end in case there is any contingency, or if something comes which was unforeseen. Well, this touches every contingency: “Or any such thing.” Whatever Satan may bring forward, or your own unbelief to keep you out of Heaven, the Lord views the Church “not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish.” The point which stands out to me here is that this is the description given so often of the dear Lamb of God Himself. He is “holy and without blemish,” and it is just the same description of the Church, for they are all this in Him. Christ takes the Church’s

sins. He gives the Church His perfect holiness - “Holy and without blemish.”

There is a great day hinted at. It is a solemn day. We find Paul so often speaks of it like this: “That day.” “The day shall declare it.” “He is able to keep that which I have committed unto Him against that day” – as if there is only one day which really matters. “The great and terrible day.” And this day is alluded to. What is the Lord going to do with His beloved bride? He is going to present her to Himself a glorious Church. When I began to preach, an aged Minister said to me, “There are only two glorious things to preach. One is Christ; the other is the Church in union with Christ.” She is a glorious Church.

Two observations. One is this: I wonder if the Holy Spirit has ever given you a little glimpse of the Church in all her glory as she stands complete in Jesus. It will be a most blessed sight. O you will view the glories of the Church of God loved eternally and saved eternally! You will view the Church as you never viewed it before. The other observation is this: these sacred truths here do not just belong to the whole Church of God as viewed in Jesus. They belong to every poor, trembling believer, born of the Spirit. If you are born of the Spirit, they belong to you and, if you are that trembling believer leaning on the Lord the Lamb, these sacred truths belong to you. It is a great mercy to be led into it personally.



CHRISTIAN WATCH

PO Box 6526
Leamington Spa, CV31 9NL

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