



CHRISTIAN WATCH

Issue No. 17

A Protestant Biblical Witness

Sept/Oct 2018

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

Mark 13:37

**Christian Watch Annual Subscription (2018),
including UK postage - £10**

ORIGIN OF THE WORD ‘TRIBULATION’

The Latin “tribulan,” from which we derived our word “tribulation” was the threshing instrument whereby the husbandman separated the corn from the husks; and tribulation, its primary significance, was the act of this separation. Thus adversity (being the appointed means for the separating in men of whatever is light and trivial from the solid and the true) has been called “tribulation.” The following composition, from the pen of George Withers, a poet of the 17th Century, is quoted as being an excellent illustration of the expansion of this word:

Till from the straw the flail the corn doth beat,
Until the chaff is purgéd from the wheat;
Yea, till the mill the grains in pieces tear,
The richness of the flour will scarce appear.
So till men's persons great afflictions touch
If worth be found, their worth is not so much;
Because, like wheat in straw, they have not yet
That value which in threshing they may get;
For, till the bruising flails of God's corrections
Have threshed out of us all our vain affections –
Till those corruptions which do misbecome us –
We shall not up to highest wealth aspire;
But then we shall, and that is my desire.”

From: The Sower, 1883

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

IN THIS NEWSLETTER:

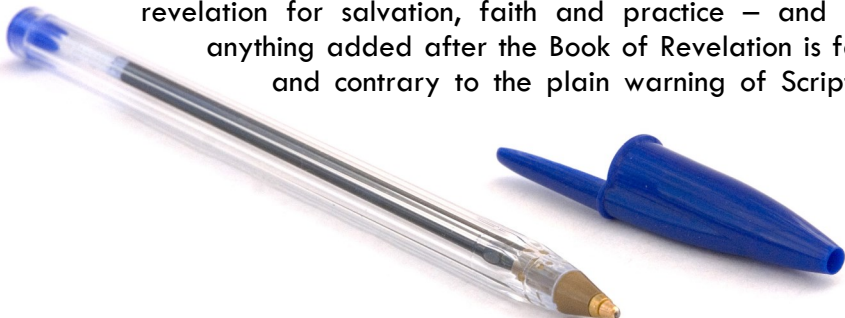
Letter from the Vice-Chairman	4
The 501 st Anniversary of the Reformation <i>Rev. Peter Ratcliff, English Churchman</i>	7
“Who is on the Lord’s Side” <i>Pastor James Smith</i>	9
Persecution: Will the Real Christians Please Stand Up <i>Bill Muehlenberg, CultureWatch</i>	10
A Man of Sorrows <i>Meditation by Robert Hawker</i>	14
The Christian Life <i>Mr. J. C. Philpot</i>	16
News and Current Affairs	19
Personal Religion <i>Mr. B. A. Ramsbottom</i>	25
Breathing after Holiness <i>Hymn by Isaac Watts</i>	27

Dear Friends,

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

Brexit, Brexit, Brexit.....the word reverberates around our news media. The political Party Conferences have been dominated by the subject. Cabinet Ministers have come and gone, but it is all too easy to forget that it is now over 2 years – 23rd June, 2016 – since the British people spoke in the referendum. We hear much about trade, tariffs, Border controls and a host of other subjects, but let us remind ourselves again that one of the major reasons – if not THE major reason – for our opposition to the European Union is the Roman Catholic influence that is prevalent in this European super-State. However, there is an Authority, higher than any political Party or Government, Who hears and answers the petitions of His people. May the Lord grant a spirit of prayer that He will intervene and bring about a real change in the politics of this country and that we will be freed from the stranglehold of European domination.

At this 501st anniversary of the Protestant Reformation (see the article included in this Newsletter written by Rev. Peter Ratcliff), I want to take the opportunity to examine for a moment the two basic differences between Roman Catholicism and Protestantism. Both are a question of AUTHORITY, REVELATION and the CHURCH. Firstly, Protestantism accepts the 66 Books of the Bible as the sole and final revelation for salvation, faith and practice – and that anything added after the Book of Revelation is false and contrary to the plain warning of Scripture



as found in Revelation 22:18 – “For I testify unto every man that heareth the words of the prophecy of this Book, if any man shall add unto these things, God shall add unto him the plagues that are written in this Book.” However, the Church of Rome only accepts the Bible as part of God’s Word – it adds the apocryphal Books – plus tradition – plus the decision of the Church Councils – plus the decrees of the Pope when he speaks from his throne as Head of the Church (ex-cathedra).

The second basic difference is the question of the nature of the Church. The Roman Catholic Church claims it alone is the true Church, with the Pope as its Head; whilst Protestantism believes that the Church is a body of living members of which the Lord Jesus Christ is the Head. This body takes its orders from its Head – Christ in glory – and not from a man in Rome and accepts His Word, the Bible, as its rule and guide of faith and practice.

The question must be asked – when will people realise that the Roman papacy is the enemy, not the vicar, of Christ?

We must love the individual Roman Catholic people – but help them to escape from the tyranny of the Vatican and break the grip of Roman Catholicism upon their lives. We must also reject the Ecumenical sell-out instigated by professing Evangelicals (with the emphasis on the *geli*) who kowtow to the cult of the Jesuit Pope, Pope Francis.

Another cause for concern at the present time is the clamour to overthrow the God-given institution of marriage. To quote the Coalition for Marriage - “the Revolution never stops” – and how right they are. No-fault divorce – civil partnerships for heterosexual couples who choose to live in sin, the legal protection of marriage to be given to unmarried couples -and it goes on and on. The demand to give marriage rights to people who have chosen to opt out of them by not marrying is grinding away at the very root of our marriage foundations – and making divorce easier makes marriage less secure and less attractive.

There is much to pray for. James 5:16 says it all – “*The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much*” - and we must pray for our schools, Christian teachers, parents and pupils who are on the

frontline of the LGBT onslaught; our families, that State interference will not further undermine the institution of marriage; and for our society in general, that the Christian values handed down to us and which have been such a blessing to our nation are not removed.

In closing, may I draw your attention to the Newsletter article **PERSONAL RELIGION** by Mr. B.A. Ramsbottom and the challenge that is there for each one of us. A verse of poetry comes to mind :

*If Jesus came to your house to spend a day or two –
If He came unexpectedly, I wonder what you'd do.
Oh, I know you'd give your nicest room to such an honoured Guest,
And all the food you'd serve to Him would be the very best,
And you would keep assuring Him you're glad to have Him there –
That serving Him in your own home is joy beyond compare.*

*But when you saw Him coming, would you meet Him at the door
With arms outstretched in welcome to your Heavenly Visitor?
Or would you have to change your clothes before you let Him in?
Or hide some magazines and put the Bible where they'd been?
Would you turn off the radio and hope He hadn't heard?
And wish you hadn't uttered that, last, loud, hasty word.*

Yours in His service,

Ian Henderson

Ian R. Henderson
(Vice-Chairman)

Faith assures the believer of the truth of God when His dispensations of providence seem to run cross to His promises.

Thomas Boston

THE 501ST ANNIVERSARY OF THE REFORMATION

By **Rev. Peter Ratcliff**

Editorial in English Churchman, Issue 8010, 14/21 September, 2018

It feels a little odd to be thinking about 31st October, the 501st anniversary of the Protestant Reformation. Perhaps we are a bit embarrassed to talk about it. While last year's 500th anniversary of this momentous event was a grand affair in much of the world, very little happened in the UK that reached beyond the ears of those who were already benefiting from that greatest revival of genuine Christianity since Pentecost.

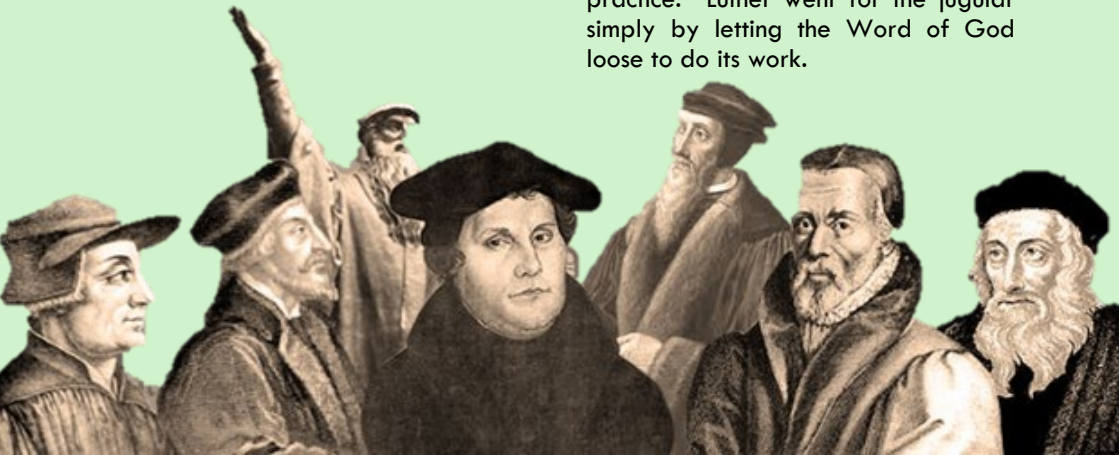
So far there is no sign of any progress due to Reformation 500, not that there are not good things happening. For example, while some churches are still struggling, others report a significant increase in enquiry, attendance and conversations. Significantly we hear of an unprecedented number of baptisms in Strict Baptist circles. This is significant because Strict Baptists never change, so an increase cannot be accounted for by new methods etc.

Yet anniversaries often disappoint. This is in part because they can never replicate the glorious events they mark. However, there is also something important which is missing. Consider what Luther did compared to what we are doing. Luther put the Word of God in a catapult and fired it at everything ungodly without fear of retaliation.

Today the Word of God is fired out like a tiddlywink from under a finger as if a few inches might be advanced, care being taken not to cause injury.

Today the fear of man is crippling the church and it is softening its whole warfare. The big guns have been replaced with tiddlywinks and, while there are sparks here and there, the sight of seeing the tiddlywink champions parading around is nothing to get very excited about.

What we need is to put our faith into practice. Luther went for the jugular simply by letting the Word of God loose to do its work.



We need to take on the big enemies. We need to smash today's tyrannies. Luther smashed the tyranny of his day, the Papacy, by letting the Word of God destroy the obvious fakery of Popery. Luther launched the bombardment with the Biblical atomic bombs of the sufficiency of the grace of God for righteousness to the exclusion of human works. This set people free to work without the oppression of tyranny pressing them down.

Today we need to set forth this same Gospel to blow up the tyrannies of our age which cause misery and lead to Hell. Secular culture is literally the belief in 'now only', so it is an overwhelmingly depressing slavery. Only the Bible can blow it up. The Lord Jesus Christ offers the peace that yoga can never produce.

Just as Luther let the Word of God beat down Satan's lies, so the Word of God can do the same today against the tyranny of peer pressure. Individuals can be raised up out of nowhere to be heroes of the faith.

Our role is to load up our guns with Bible texts and to fire away. You may not be such a bad shot as you thought because each Bible text is a guided missile and will not return void, but will accomplish that which the Lord designs; and it also comes with it's own support, backup, cover and early warning system for defence against counter-attack. The Christian is often too much on the defensive and makes little progress, but if he starts firing away at some big targets he will be pleasantly surprised how his little sling

will hit the target more accurately than he might have imagined.

And the protective armour that we have is much better than we might expect. It works precisely as we put it to the test.

Incidentally, Rome is as demonic as ever, so reading the old Reformers is still very useful against Antichrist. Make sure reprints have not suffered at the penknives of Editors that abridge the old writers to remove 'irrelevant' references to Rome.

More often than not the enemies of the Gospel fall before we engage them. Muslims are converted before they leave Iran and LGBT advocates get fed up with the absurdity and seek reality. We recently met an ex-atheist who was brought to the conviction that he must turn to God before he found a church and now he wants to become a Pastor. These are all encouraging signs because while we know we must all be bold like Luther and fire our Gospel weapons, we also know that the reason for the Protestant Reformation was, in the most profound respect, nothing to do with Luther at all. It was entirely the sovereign will and grace of God.

So, let us not exaggerate the significance of Reformation 500 or 501. Our greatest need is simply to humble ourselves and to cast ourselves down at the feet of our Lord Jesus Christ. Then, like Luther, we will put the Bible in a canon, light the touchpaper and the rest will be history.

“Who is on the LORD’s side?”

Exodus: 32:26

Every believer is ready to answer, “I am.” Well, the Lord has a cause upon the earth; it is weak and wants your support; it is opposed and needs your countenance. If you are on the Lord’s side, you are on the side of truth, holiness, charity, of His worship and ordinances, of His people and His ways... and you are jealous of His honour. You unite with His people; go forth to Jesus without the camp, bearing His reproach. If you are on the Lord’s side, He will spare you as obedient children; supply you as faithful servants; protect you as loyal subjects; and honour you as brave and courageous soldiers. You will never see any just occasion to change sides; or regret that you decided to serve so good a Master. You will find the Lord to be on your side, supporting you in affliction; comforting you in trouble; giving you victory in death; and pronouncing you just in the judgment. If you are on the Lord’s side, avow it openly; prove it daily; and let your whole conduct say, “*I am the Lord’s.*” Use all your influence for His glory, consecrate all your energies to His cause and rejoice to suffer for His Name.

*There shall your eyes with rapture view
The glorious Friend who died for you;
That died to ransom, died to raise
To crowns of joy, and songs of praise:
Jesus, to Thee I breathe my prayer!
Reveal, confirm my interest there.*

By: **James Smith**
From: **Daily Remembrancer**



PERSECUTION: WILL THE REAL CHRISTIANS PLEASE STAND UP

By: **Bill Muehlenberg**

From: **CultureWatch**, 11 September, 2018

Millions of Western Christians are fully focused on living the good life and getting more 'stuff'. Their chief goal and driving passion seems to be bigger homes, more cars, even more European vacations, a terrific self-image and a problem-free life. They are fully focused on self.

But it is not this way with many other believers. Countless Christians around the world have their focus squarely on Christ and, because of that, they are paying an horrific price. Relentless persecution of Christians is raging throughout much of the world, yet most Western Christians either know nothing about it, or do not care about it.

They are too busy seeking to have their best life now. And the biggest churches in the West are those which tell believers just what they want (but not what they need to hear). They are promising them a life of ease, riches, splendour, happiness, self-fulfilment and having it all.

We have two completely different gospels being preached. In so much of the West it is a gospel of self – a damnable, heretical false gospel which is devoted exclusively to me, me, me; but the real gospel is focused on Jesus and is all about

self-denial, self-abnegation and service to God and others.

The two gospels could not be any more different. The former gospel is even loved by the world. And these false teachers actually boast about how many non-Christians happily attend their churches and listen to their sermons. And why not? Promises of wealth and happiness and complete self-fulfilment is what most folks covet.

But the real gospel always raises the hatred and enmity of the world. Non-Christians hate Christ and they hate real Christians. That is why the global war of Christians is found especially in the non-Western world. Real-deal Christianity is being practised in so many of these places, thus real-deal persecution is happening there as well.

While few Christians – if any – are having their churches destroyed or are being burned alive for their faith in the West, it routinely happens elsewhere. Let me look at two recent examples of this, the first in China. One recent report puts it this way:

The Chinese Government's campaign to "Sinicise" organised religion – to

make religion completely subordinate to the Communist Party – grew more aggressive this year and featured the destruction of Bibles, crosses and entire churches. Religious freedom activists call it the worst crackdown on Christianity since religious freedom was nominally granted by the 1982 Chinese constitution.

A Fox News report linked the crackdown with Communist Party Leader Xi Jinping's ascension to dictatorial power and the fulfilment of worst-case fears expressed by underground Christian leaders when Beijing began using Government-controlled churches to co-opt religion. (Source: www.breitbart.com)

My other example comes from Africa. Last week we read about a Nigerian Pastor and his wife and children who were burned alive by Muslim tribal herdsmen, the Fulanis. One story describes the situation this way:

"The attackers armed with machetes and AK-47 rifles stormed the village at about 8 pm on 28 August, shooting sporadically and burning houses, including part of the Reverend's house," a source told journalists. Pastor Adamu Jang and his wife died, along with their three children.

At least eight people were killed and churches and houses in several villages were set alight. Police later confirmed that 95 houses in Barkin Ladi County were burnt in the attack

and that 310 cattle were stolen. A local politician stated "many houses and churches were burnt to ashes."

On 26 June, 50 Christians were killed in an attack on two other villages in Plateau State by armed Fulani Muslims. The Christian Association of Nigeria estimated in June that attacks by Muslim Fulani herdsmen have claimed the lives of more than 6,000 Christians so far in 2018. (Source: www.barnabasfund.org)

Imagine that: burned alive for your faith and 6000 killed just this year in one country. Islam is the main religious persecutor of Christians and Christians are the main group to be persecuted worldwide. We desperately need to get the big picture here on all this.



Johnnie Moore

One helpful resource is a booklet published last year: Johnnie Moore's *10 Things you Must Know about the Global War on Christianity*

(Tyndale). Although a very small volume, it is packed with much-needed information and facts. For example, every month according to the lowest estimates:

- 322 Christians are killed for their faith;
- 214 churches and Christian properties are destroyed;
- 722 acts of violence (such as rape, beatings, forced marriages, arrests and abductions) are perpetrated against Christians.

He offers us “10 Things You Must Know About the Global War on Christians.” Those following this issue will find some of it familiar, but we need to keep being aware of what is going on with this. Let me just list each chapter heading:

1. Christians are the most persecuted religious group on earth – no exaggeration.
2. More Christians have been killed in the last century than in the previous nineteen combined.
3. Persecution has several root causes and takes many forms.
4. Persecution doesn’t usually begin with violence; it begins politically with marginalisation & discrimination.
5. Islamic terrorism reaches beyond the Middle East.
6. Totalitarian regimes remain the chief persecutor of Christians around the world.
7. Conversion is the most difficult

life decision many will ever face.

8. Christian persecution causes cultural genocide, not just physical genocide.
9. Persecution does not silence the church.
10. There are many things we can do to help.



Christian persecution in Nigeria

Let me briefly quote from two of these. Since I earlier mentioned Nigeria, let me look at the fifth chapter on Islamic terrorism. Says Moore:

According to Open Doors, the six countries where the most Christians have been killed by terrorists recently are all in sub-Saharan Africa. “In numerical terms at least, though not in degree, the persecution of Christians in this region dwarfs what is happening in the Middle East,” one report says. “Many of these Christian deaths in Africa are due to Islamic extremists, which accounted for one-third of the Christians killed worldwide in 2016. [Others were killed by State and non-State

persecution, including in places like North Korea.”]

And his ninth point about persecution not stopping the church is also worth detailing. While we must never minimise the horrors of persecution, nor glibly speak about how good it is for the church to go through it, it nonetheless is the case that often the church grows the most under such difficult times. Moore says this about one such place – China:

According to the ‘Financial Times’, there are now at least 100 million Christians in China – more than the 86.7 million members of the Communist Party! That’s an enormous increase from the fewer than 4 million Christians estimated to have been in China when the Communist Party took over in 1949. Despite decades of Government persecution, the church continues to grow. By 2030, some forecasts suggest that China’s total Christian population could be more than 247 million, more than any other country in the world. Purdue University Professor Fenggang Yang says, “Mao [Zedong] thought he could eliminate religion. He thought he had accomplished this... They actually failed completely.”

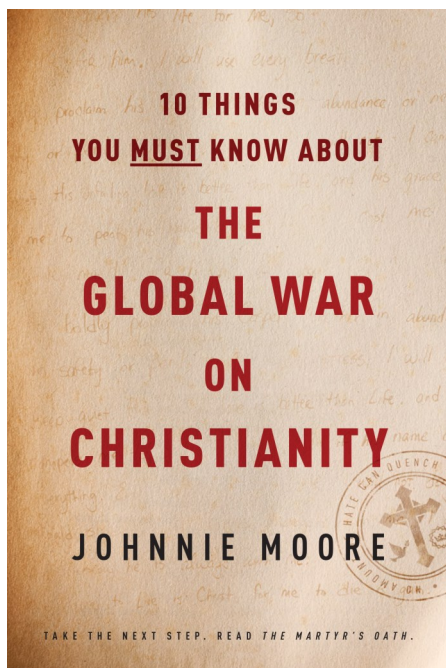
The sad truth is, all over the West the Church IS declining and withering on the vine. This is mainly due to carnality, compromise, worldliness and false gospels being tolerated everywhere – not by direct persecution. While Western

Christians seek to live the good life and be liked and accepted by the world, their growth and influence is in steep decline.

But elsewhere, Christians are seeking to please only one – their Lord and Master – and as a result, they are being persecuted ferociously. They would rather lose everything and even face torture and death, than to deny their Lord or settle for ‘cheap grace’ and a comfortable Christianity.

It is not hard to tell who the real Christians are and who are just mere fakes.

(Johnnie Moore’s book is available from www.eden.co.uk (Tel: 0800 612 2186 – order line) at £2.50 plus delivery)



A MAN OF SORROWS

“A man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief”

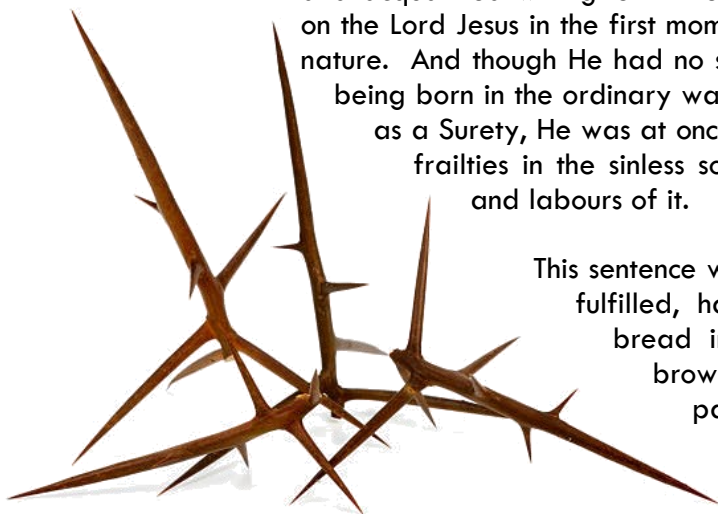
Isaiah 53:3

A Meditation by **Robert Hawker**

My soul, there is one feature in thy Redeemer's character, which, in the unequalled abasement of His person, demands thy constant contemplation. I fear it hath not been considered by thee as it ought. And yet it is so sweetly accommodating and lovely, that the more thou beholdest thy Jesus in this tender light, the more endeared He must appear to thee. The prophet, under the Holy Ghost, hath here in a few words sketched the outlines of it – “a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief”.

It was most essential that Jesus should be all this, because it belonged to the curse which He became for His people, when He offered Himself as their surety. You will remember, my soul, the curse which God pronounced upon the earth, and man's passage through it, when he broke the Divine law. The ground was cursed; the product of it was to be thorns and thistles; in sorrow, and in the sweat of the brow was man to eat bread; and at length, death was to close the life. Now it behoved Him who undertook to remove the curse, to bear that curse before the removal of it; and, as such, it behoved Jesus to be “a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief.” Hence all these seized on the Lord Jesus in the first moment He assumed our nature. And though He had no sin in His nature; not being born in the ordinary way of our nature, yet, as a Surety, He was at once exposed to all the frailties in the sinless sorrows, and travails, and labours of it.

This sentence would not have been fulfilled, had not Jesus eaten bread in the sweat of His brow. So interesting a part, therefore, was it in Christ's life, that



He should labour in a common occupation, that this part of the curse might not go by, without being accomplished. And how eminently, my soul, was this part indeed fulfilled, when, in the garden, the sweat of His brow was drops of blood! How full of thorns and thistles was the earth to Jesus, may be in some measure considered, when we behold Him in the unequalled sorrows of the opposition He met with from the world, the unkindness of friends, the malice of enemies. The thorny crown put upon His sacred head was little considered by those that put it there; but yet it was, in reality, crowning Him Lord of sorrow and grief, beyond all men that ever were exercised with affliction. So great, indeed, was the continued load He bore of grief and – so much did it tend to waste and wear the spirits – that according to that expression of the Jews to Him – “Thou art not yet fifty years old,” evidently proved, that He had the visage of one of fifty, when only thirty. And it is remarkable, though we are told that Jesus rejoiced in spirit, yet we never read that He was once seen to laugh during His whole life.

Precious Jesus, enable me ever to be looking unto Thee, thou meek and lowly Lamb of God!
And may I never lose sight of this sweet part of Thy character also; that whilst Thou didst bear our sins, so didst Thou carry our sorrows; and in fulfilling the law, didst take away the curse also, when in sorrow Thou didst eat bread all the days of Thy life.

From: **“Consider Him”**

*Meditations on the Sufferings and Death
of the Lord Jesus Christ,
Gospel Standard Trust Publications*



THE CHRISTIAN LIFE

From: **Sin and Salvation**
Selections from J. C. Philpot,
Edited by B. A. Ramsbottom

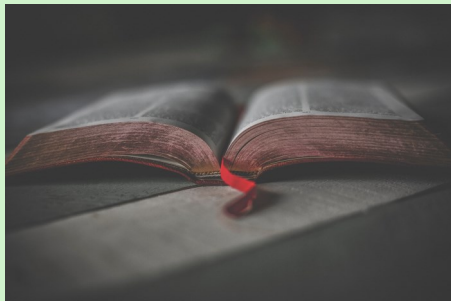
Our Lord tells us what is the posture, the only safe and happy posture of His people: *“Let your loins be girded about, and your lights burning, and ye yourselves like unto men that wait for their Lord, when He will return from the wedding; that when He cometh and knocketh they may open unto Him immediately.”* But though this posture can neither be obtained nor maintained except by special grace, yet the Lord does bless those means of His own appointment which He has afforded us; and most certain it is that without the use of these means the life of God cannot be sustained in health and vigour.

Let us glance at some of them:

1. A spirit of prayer is most certainly one of the most gracious means which the Lord employs in maintaining Divine life in the soul. A spirit of prayer is something very different from a custom of prayer, a form of prayer or even a gift of prayer. These are merely the fleshly imitations of the interceding breath of the Holy Ghost in the heart of the saints of God and, therefore, may and do exist without it. But that secret lifting up of the heart unto the Lord, that panting after Him as the hart panteth after the water brooks, that pouring out of the soul before Him, that sighing and groaning for a word of His grace, a look of His eye, a touch of His hand, a smile of His face, that sweet communion and Heavenly intercourse with Him on the mercy-seat which marks the Spirit's inward intercession – all this cannot be counterfeited. Such a close, private, inward, experimental work and walk is out of the reach and out of the taste of the most gifted professor. But in this path the Holy Ghost leads the living family of God, and as they walk in it under His teachings and anointings, they feel its sweetness and blessedness.



2. Having the eyes and heart much in the Word of truth is another blessed means of maintaining the life of God in the soul. O what treasures of mercy and grace are lodged in the Scriptures! What a mine of Heavenly instruction! What a store of precious promises, encouraging invitations, glorious truths, holy precepts, tender admonitions, wise counsels and loving directions! What a lamp to our feet and a light to our path! But O how little we know, understand, believe, realise, feel and enjoy of the Word of life!



For four or five and thirty years have we read, studied, meditated and sought by faith to enter into the treasures of truth contained in the inspired Word; but O how little do we understand it! How less do we believe and enjoy the Heavenly mysteries, the treasures of grace and truth revealed in it! Yet only as our heart is brought not only unto but into the Word of life and, only as faith feeds on the Heavenly food there lodged by the infinite wisdom and goodness of God, can we be made fruitful in any good word or work. We should seek, by the help and blessing of God, to drink more into the spirit of truth, to enter more deeply and vitally into the mind of Christ, to read the Word more under that same inspiration whereby it was written, to submit our heart more to its instruction, that it may drop like the rain and distil like the dew into the inmost depths of our soul and thus, as it were, fertilise the roots of our faith and hope and love.

3. Separation from the world and everything worldly – and that not in a monkish, austere, pharisaic spirit, but from the constraining influence of that love to the Lord which draws up the heart and affections to Him away from earthly things, is a gracious, we might almost say, an indispensable means of maintaining the life of God in the believer's breast. Nothing more deadens the soul to every gracious and Heavenly feeling than drinking into the spirit of the world. As long as *that* is kept out, more external contact with the world, as, for instance, in the calls of necessary and lawful business, does not injure. The world without and the world within are like two streams of different magnitude which run side by side. Keep them apart, then the smaller stream will not overflow its banks; but let the larger stream get an entrance into the smaller, in other words, let the world without rush into the world within, who shall tell the width of that flood or the havoc that it may make of the crops?

Some constitutions are so tender that every cold blast is sufficient to produce inflammation; and others are so susceptible to disease that they fall sick under

the slightest taint of every epidemic disorder. Such sickly constitutions must watch against the east wind and not expose themselves to the air of the marshy fen. But just such cold-catching, feverish invalids are we all in soul, whatever be the vigour and health of the body. Let us then be afraid of the very breath of the world lest it chill the heart or inflame the carnal mind; let us dread exposure to its infectious influence lest it call forth into active energy our latent disease.

4. To cleave to the Lord with purpose of heart under all cases and circumstances, under all trials and temptations, under all difficulties and perplexities, amidst a whole storm of objections and suggestions from the carnal mind, the sore thrustings of our pitiless and unwearied adversary and every obstacle from without or within that may obstruct our path – this, too, is indispensable to the life of faith. “*The Kingdom of Heaven suffereth violence and the violent take it by force.*” It is not folding the hands and crying, “Peace, peace,” that will not take us to Heaven; no, nor a sound creed, a form of godliness, or a name to live. This is not running the race set before us, or fighting the good fight of faith, or wrestling with principalities and powers and spiritual wickedness in high places. Sometimes we are tempted to presume and sometimes tempted to despair. The only cure for both diseases of the soul is to cleave to the Person and work, blood, love and grace of the Lord Jesus, so far as He has been revealed to our soul and according to the measure of faith which is given unto us. To hang upon Him at every step is the only way to be brought through.

5. The last gracious means which we shall name is to *live, walk and act in the daily fear of God.* This is, indeed, a most blessed fountain of life to depart from the snares of death. Only, then, as this fountain of life springs up in the soul, watering and thus making the conscience tender, the heart fruitful, the affections Heavenly and the spirit soft and contrite, can the power of grace be maintained in the breast. This Heavenly grace of godly fear, the believer’s treasure, the beginning and the end of wisdom, makes and keeps the eye watchful, the ear attentive, the smell quick and sagacious, the tongue savoury, the arm strong, the hand open and the foot wary; and thus amidst thousands of snares and temptations he walks forward to a Heavenly kingdom with his eyes right on and his eyelids straight before him.



News and Current Affairs

Home mission worker submits petition to stop Pride event in Inverness -
christiantoday.com, 17 September, 2018

A home mission worker with the Free Church of Scotland (Continuing) has submitted a petition with the local Council in Inverness to stop a planned Pride event. Proud Ness has yet to be formally approved by the Council but is planned for 6 October, with a march from the Scottish city's High Street to the Eden Court Theatre. However, Donald Morrison has submitted a petition signed by over 600 people to Highland Council to stop the event from going ahead.

He said that Pride events were too offensive and unsavoury to take place in city centres where children are often present, the Inverness Courier reports.

"This becomes evident especially in city centres when they thrust lewdness in the faces of men, women and children alike by frolicking unashamedly on rainbow-coloured floats making obscene sexual gestures," he said. Mr. Morrison said that as public spaces, city centres should be kept child-friendly.



Donald Morrison

A spokesperson for the Highland LGBT Forum told the Inverness Courier that the event would be family-friendly and "nothing untoward will take place during the march. I have no problem with him or the people who have signed the petition holding their views and I totally respect that, but there are a lot of other people who don't hold those views," she said.

Others felt more strongly, with one person starting a petition seeking to ban Mr. Morrison from Inverness and "all population centres in the Highlands".

A spokesperson for Highland Council confirmed to Pink News that it had received Mr. Morrison's petition and that it was currently being considered under the Council's Petitions Procedure. The spokesperson told the newspaper that the objections raised by Mr. Morrison were "not sufficient reason" for the council to refuse permission for the parade.

Abbreviated

Romania moves closer to ruling out same-sex marriage - Reuters, 11 September, 2018

Romania's Senate overwhelmingly backed a citizens' initiative on 11th September to change the definition of family in the constitution in a nationwide referendum, a move that could make it impossible to legalise same-sex unions in the future.

The Coalition for Family civil groups gathered 3 million signatures in 2016, seeking to hold a referendum to amend the constitutional wording to a union strictly between "a man and a woman", from the existing, gender neutral, "spouses". A referendum could be held as early as 7th October, the ruling party has said.



The lower House of Parliament voted to support the referendum last year. That move was slammed by LGBT groups locally and internationally and dozens of European Parliament members, who fear an erosion of democratic rights.

Same-sex marriage is legal, or about to be legal, in half of the European Union's 28 countries, with some others recognising same-sex civil partnerships.

Abbreviated

"Religious Education should be re-branded as "Religion and Worldviews" – by Camilla Turner, Education Editor, The Telegraph – 9 September, 2018

Religious Education (RE) should be re-branded as "Religion and Worldviews" in schools to ensure its survival as a subject, a new report has said.

The syllabus should be updated to reflect Britain's "wonderfully diverse" society, according to a two-year study carried out by the Commission on Religious Education.

New topics could include humanism, secularism, atheism and agnosticism, all of which could be taught alongside the traditional religions. It is one of a number of reforms proposed in a study published recently which sets out a national strategy for RE in schools.

Less than a quarter of schools do not teach RE during the first three years of senior school and around a third do not offer the subject as an option for GCSEs. The report also says that RE should be statutory for all publicly funded schools and that teachers should receive better training for the discipline.

The Very Rev. Dr. John Hall, who chaired the Commission, said that structural changes over the past two decades have “unintentionally undermined the integrity of RE”, adding that the subject needs a “fresh start”.

He said: “Life in Britain, indeed life in our world, is very different from life in the 1970s when Religious Education began to include other world religions and beliefs besides Christianity. Young people today are growing up in a wonderfully diverse society. Day by day they can encounter different cultures and worldviews, if not personally, at least through the media.

The Catholic Education Service said that the Commission had a “noble aim” to improve the quality of religious education, but they rejected the proposed syllabus changes, saying they would water down the subject.



“This report is not so much an attempt to improve RE as to fundamentally change its character,” a spokesman said. “The proposed name change to include ‘worldviews’ means that the scope of the subject is now so wide and nondescript that it would potentially lose all academic value and integrity. As we have always maintained, the quality of Religious Education is not improved by teaching less religion.”

Meanwhile the Church of England Education Officer said: “Today, most people’s experience of religion and belief is national and global, so we support the move away from a local determination of the subject. We believe this will help pupils make sense of religion and belief as it is lived today and this proposed change is educationally valid and would bring RE into line with all other curriculum subjects.”

The National Secular Society praised the report as a “potential game changer for the way we teach about religion in schools”, but described proposals as an “inevitable fudge”.

Abbreviated

What a Harvard Study Says about Kids Raised in Church –

by Jim Denison, Denison Forum on Truth and Culture, 21 September, 2018

A new Harvard study investigated the health and mental health of children and teenagers who were raised with religious or spiritual practices. What they found was fascinating.

Those who attended religious services at least once a week as children or teens were about 18% more likely to report being happier in their twenties than those who never attended services. They were almost 30% more likely to do volunteer work and 33% less likely to use drugs in their twenties.



Jim Denison

In addition, people who prayed and meditated individually on a daily basis had more life satisfaction, were better able to process emotions and were more forgiving. They were less likely to have sex at an earlier age and to have a sexually transmitted disease.

The *Forbes* article reporting on the study concludes: “Some of the fundamental habits that humans have been doing for eons (praying, meditating) might actually have a lot more value than we tend to think.”

By God’s design, a Divine-human partnership is essential to human flourishing. Consider an example.

“The sword of the Lord, and of Gideon”

The future of Israel was in jeopardy. A massive Midianite army numbering 135,000 (Judges 8:10) was ready to annihilate the Jewish forces. Gideon mustered 32,000 soldiers, but the Lord led him to dismiss all but 300 (Judges 7:2-8). God’s purpose was to show the Israelites that their deliverance came from the Lord and not from their hand.

Armies in the ancient world conveyed signals through “trumpets” (usually rams’ horns). They often marched at night to the light of torches. Gideon’s army had 300 such trumpets and torches. The torches were carried inside clay jars so as not to alert the enemy, then the jars were broken when the assault was to begin. The trumpets were used to convey orders to the troops.

Gideon’s forces advanced on the Midianite army, each carrying a torch in

one hand and a trumpet in the other. Note that they had no capacity to carry a sword, spear or shield. They were marching defenceless against a massive military enemy.

Then at Gideon's direction, they smashed the jars, blew the trumpets and shouted "The sword of the Lord, and of Gideon"! Then "the Lord set every [Midianite] man's sword against his fellow, even throughout all the host." In the darkness and their confusion, the Midianites slaughtered each other, then Jewish soldiers captured their leaders and completed the victory.

This was one of the most miraculous outcomes in military history; and it hinged on the binary faith of Gideon's men as they trusted in their Lord *and* in their General.

Why doesn't God work today as He did in the Bible?

I am sometimes asked why we don't see the Lord at work today in ways he worked in the Bible. God's nature cannot change—as the Supreme Being, by definition He can never be less than supreme. With God there "is no variableness, neither shadow of turning" (James 1:17), for "Jesus Christ [is] the same yesterday and to day and for ever" (Hebrews 13:8).

Charles Spurgeon noted: "If we only cry, 'The sword of God' alone, we shall be guilty of an idle presumption; and if we shout, 'The sword of Gideon' alone, we shall manifest idolatrous reliance on an arm of flesh: we must blend the two in practical harmony, 'The sword of the Lord, and of Gideon.'"

We are to trust God to do what only He can do, then join Him by doing what only we can do.

Abbreviated



'Woman = adult human female' poster deemed transphobic -
Christian Institute, www.christian.org.uk, 5 October, 2018

A billboard bearing a dictionary definition of the word 'woman' has been taken down following pressure from a trans activist.

Kellie-Jay Keen-Minshull paid for a billboard bearing the words "**woman, wŏmən, noun, adult human female**" for her campaign group Standing for Women.

LGBT activist Dr. Adrian Harrop complained to advertising company Primesight, demanding the poster be taken down, and branding Standing for Woman a "transphobic hate group".

Harrop said the billboard "makes transgender people feel unsafe", and added he had "no doubt" that the motivation for the poster was to elicit these feelings.



He lobbied the CEO and senior directors of Primesight via social media for its removal, accusing them of being complicit in "the spread of transphobic hate speech".

Keen-Minshull said the real reason for the poster was to start a conversation about women's rights. She criticised the company's decision to remove the poster, saying: "We're in a new realm of misogyny when the word 'woman' becomes hate speech", adding, "this is a new level of absurd".

The Mother of four hit out at Harrop's "sinister and pernicious attempts to shut down her free speech, saying: "If the word 'woman' can mean anything, then women lose their sex-based protections and nobody is protected".

She continued: "Every single organisation that capitulates paves the way for the next one to do the same. This is what transactivists do. This is how they silence women. I hope this will help people wake up to what's going on."

Abbreviated

PERSONAL RELIGION

By **Mr. B. A. Ramsbottom**
From: **The Gospel Standard**,
November, 2013

What a beautiful account is that of poor blind Bartimaeus (Mark 10:46-52)! And what a clear illustration of what *personal* religion is!

There was a crowd just outside Jericho, “a great number of people.” No doubt some were friends and followers of the Lord Jesus, some foes and many there out of curiosity; but there was one man who was different. He had an impossible case, which no one but Jesus could deal with. Bartimaeus knew He could, and he hoped He would. Is not this venturing faith?

The time came when Bartimaeus heard that Jesus of Nazareth was “passing by”: but he did not want Jesus to pass *him* by. So “he began to cry out.” In a sense, when we meet for public worship, the Lord Jesus *is* passing by”, but with living souls it is personal: *Do not pass me by*. We think of the old hymn:

“Saviour, Saviour,
Hear my humble cry;
When on others Thou art calling,
Do not pass me by.”

This has been the religion of the people of God from Bartimaeus’ day until the present.

“He began to cry out, and say, Jesus,

Thou Son of David, have mercy on me!” Have you noticed: *they* said, “Jesus of Nazareth” – a despised name; *he* said, “Jesus, Thou Son of David”? Who taught this poor, blind beggar that Jesus was the Son of David? The Son of David is the promised Messiah, the Son of God. And we wonder if Bartimaeus knew that it was promised that when the Son of David should come, He would open the eyes of the blind.

There was a true “looking unto Jesus” here – in dependence, in hope.

“To Thee I lift my eyes;
Thou Son of David, hear;
And let my feeble cries
Bring Thy salvation near.”

The feeble cries of poor Bartimaeus *did* “bring salvation near.”

And it was with sightless eyes that Bartimaeus looked to Jesus! What an encouragement for those who, when feeling their need and are crying to the Lord in prayer, they mourn over their spiritual blindness!

Sadly, many told him to be quiet, to “hold thy peace.” So a sinner venturing on the Saviour, looking to the Saviour, usually finds the opposition of Satan, sin, self and unbelief. But true prayer cannot be stifled and true faith will always fight its way through. “But he cried the more a great deal.” And it was the same *prayer*. The Lord is not

displeased with repetition; it is with vain repetition, empty repetition that He is displeased.

Bartimaeus could not give up – and that for one reason (as we sometimes sing): “Mine’s an urgent, pressing case.” He had no other hope. He had nowhere else to go.

“Jesus, Thou Son of David, have mercy on me.” It was the opening of his eyes that he wanted, but he began with “mercy.” So did the leper. So did the Canaanitish woman. So must we. If the Lord ever answers our prayers and bestows a blessing on us, it must be on the grounds of mercy. “Mercy through blood I make my plea.” Bartimaeus was conscious of his utter unworthiness of the Lord’s favour.

“And Jesus stood still.” The beggar’s cry caused the Lord of Heaven and earth to stand still. It seems as great a miracle as when the sun stood still for Joshua in the Vale of Ajalon (Josh. 10:12). “And commanded him to be called.” He was welcome – and “sinners are freely welcome still to Christ, the sinners’ Friend.”

“And he, casting away his garment, rose, and came to Jesus.” Many have interpreted this as a sinner casting away the garment of his creature-righteousness, which is as filthy rags, that he might be clothed with the righteousness of Christ. This is good divinity, but surely not the point here. Why did Bartimaeus cast away his garment? Not because it was dirty or unsuitable, but rather so

that, as a blind man, he would not trip up or stumble as he hastened to Jesus. A sinner in real earnest will be willing to part with everything which hinders his soul from going after the Saviour. Bartimaeus must have been very poor and his long, flowing outer garment must have been valuable to him; but he was happy to lose it if only he could reach the Saviour.

“What wilt thou that I should do unto thee?” “Lord, that I might receive my sight.” Notice that he called Jesus, Lord. “Thy faith hath made thee whole.”

Then follows a perfect, immediate cure and an immediate effect in the heart and life of Bartimaeus: “Immediately he received his sight, and followed Jesus in the way.”

The godly Puritans used to emphasise that when we read these lovely accounts, we must never forget that the Lord Jesus is just the same today: “Jesus Christ the same yesterday, and today, and for ever.” The miracles of the Lord Jesus are wonderful displays of both His Divine, almighty power and His tender compassion. Bartimaeus proved both.

“Look to Jesus, kind and strong, Mercy joined with power.”

The miracles are also sweetly typical of the Lord’s miracles spiritually and savingly in the hearts and lives of His people. But O how vital this: a personal interest. “Do not pass me by.”

BREATHING AFTER HOLINESS

Psalm 119:5, 20-37, 133

O that the Lord would guide my ways
To keep His statutes still!
O that my God would grant me grace
To know and do His will.

O send Thy Spirit down to write
Thy law upon my heart!
Nor let my tongue indulge deceit,
Nor act the liar's part.

From vanity turn off my eyes;
Let no corrupt design,
Nor covetous desires, arise
Within this soul of mine.

Order my footsteps by Thy Word,
And make my heart sincere;
Let sin have no dominion, Lord,
But keep my conscience clear.

Make me to walk in Thy commands;
'Tis a delightful road;
Nor let my head, or heart, or hands,
Offend against my God.

Isaac Watts



CHRISTIAN WATCH

PO Box 6526,
Leamington Spa, CV31 9NL

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

Published by CHRISTIAN WATCH.
PO Box 6526, Leamington Spa, CV31 9NL Registered Charity No. 1095108.