

CHRISTIAN WATCH

Issue No. 39

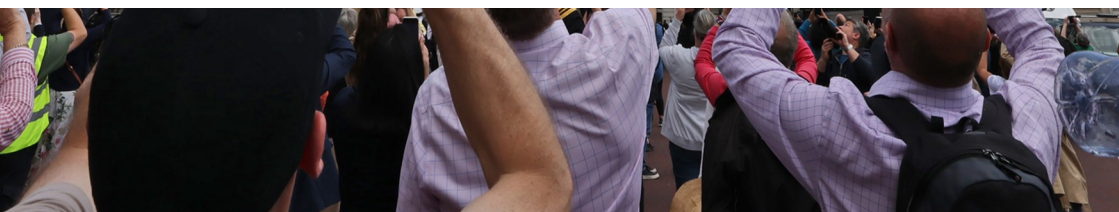
A Protestant Biblical Witness

May/June 2022



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

Mark 13:37



**Christian Watch Annual Subscription (2022),
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COMING TO CHRIST

by John Bunyan

Some souls that are coming to Christ are great tormentors of themselves upon this account; they conclude that, if their coming to Jesus Christ is right, they must be brought home thus and thus; as for instance:

Says one, "If God bring me to Jesus Christ, then will He load me with the guilt of sin till He makes me roar again?"

"If God be indeed bringing me home to Jesus Christ, then must I be assaulted with dreadful temptations of the Devil?"

"If God be indeed bringing me to Jesus Christ, then even when I come to Him I shall have wonderful revelations of Him."

This is the way that some sinners appoint for God; but perhaps He will not walk therein, and yet will He bring them to Jesus Christ. But now, because they come not the way of their own chalking out, therefore they are at a loss. They look for a heavy load and burden; but perhaps God gives them a sight of their lost condition and addeth not that heavy weight and burden. They look for fearful temptations of Satan; but God sees that they are not yet fit for them; nor is the time come that He should be honoured by them in such a condition. They look for great and glorious revelations of Christ's grace and mercy; but perhaps God only takes the yoke off their jaws and lays meat before them. And now again they are at a loss, though coming to Christ: "I drew them," saith God, "with cords of a man, with bands of love: and I was to them as they that take off the yoke on their jaws, and I laid meat unto them" (Hosea 11:4).

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

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May 2022

CHRISTIAN WATCH

Dear Friends,

On behalf of Christian Watch, may I again bring you greetings in the lovely Name of our Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ.

Then spake Jesus - John 8:12 - *I am the Light of the world: he that followeth Me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the Light of life.* Oswald Chambers describes the Light that never fails as follows:

“A servant of God must stand so very much alone that he never realises he is alone. In the early stages of the Christian life, disappointments will come – people who used to be lights will flicker out and those who used to stand with us will turn away. We have to get so used to it that we will not even realise we are standing alone. Paul said – “no man stood with me, but all men forsook me.....notwithstanding the Lord stood with me and strengthened me” (2 Tim. 4:16-17). We must build our faith not on failing lights but on the Light that never fails. When ‘important’ individuals go away we are sad, until we see that they are meant to go, so that only one thing is left for us to do – to look into the face of God for ourselves. Allow nothing to keep you from looking with strong determination into the face of God regarding yourself and your doctrine. A Christian servant is one who perpetually looks into the face of God and then goes forth to talk to others. The ministry of Christ is characterised by an abiding glory of which the servant is totally unaware – “Moses wist not that the skin of his face shone while he talked with Him” (Exodus 34:29). We are never called on to display our doubts openly or to express the hidden joys and delights of our life with God. The secret of the servant’s life is that he stays in tune with God all the time.”

Former Archbishop of Canterbury, Rowan Williams, has claimed that becoming transgender is – and I quote – ‘a sacred journey of becoming whole’. He has signed a letter to the Prime Minister written by LGBT activist Steve Chalke claiming that to be trans is precious, honoured and loved, by yourself, by others and by God. He further states that ‘it is a wrong-headed notion of care and a wrong-headed understanding of conversion to make prayer a means of one person manipulating another. (Steve Chalke is the author of “The Lost Message of Jesus” which denies that only Christ could take the punishment for our sin, calling such theology ‘cosmic child abuse’). I can do no better than quote the comment from the Christian Institute – “It seems remarkable that a former Archbishop should have such a poor understanding of salvation and discipleship. The Bible is clear that God created us male and female. It is equally clear that sexual activity is exclusively for marriage, which is only between one man and one woman. To reject these truths is not ‘sacred’ but sinful.”

The Western world is rapidly becoming a virtual Sodom. Last year, the Evangelical Lutheran Church of America installed an openly gay Bishop in San Francisco to lead one of the Church's 65 synods. Ezekiel 16 graphically describes this spirit of apostasy which is at work today – heed particularly verses 48-52. Such wickedness will surely herald the judgment of God upon these religious miscreants, just as it did in BC 594!

F.B. Meyer – the Founder of the Melbourne Hall in Leicester in July, 1881 said this – “Is it not time that all our Churches should separate themselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit and consecrate themselves again to the service of Christ.”

Walsingham Witness – following a two year absence because of Covid – and a change of date because of the Queen's Jubilee – a small faithful group of just 4 persons made the long journey to Walsingham in Norfolk (where there is a shrine to Our Lady of Walsingham) to give out Gospel tracts and to engage in conversation with the poor deluded ‘pilgrims’ who, in many cases, are being led astray by their religious leaders. Although a Church of England demonstration, Mary worship is predominant and a Mass is held in the Abbey Grounds. Were you one of the 4? If not, put the date in your diary for 2023 and determine to stand and witness for the truths of the Gospel – end of May Bank Holiday Monday. You will be very welcome.

Following one or two concerned responses as a result of the Newsletter for March/April, the Management Committee of Christian Watch acknowledge that there are differing viewpoints on the Ukraine/Russia conflict. The photo on the front cover in the last issue was simply to illustrate the reality of conflict and was not implying the taking of sides. We apologise for any misunderstanding in this matter.

As a nation and as a Commonwealth - as we celebrate Her Majesty's Platinum Jubilee - let us remember her before the Throne of Grace, praying that the gracious hand of Almighty God will be clearly seen in her life and in the affairs of Church and State to the great spiritual welfare of our nation. *‘Happy is that people, whose God is the Lord’* (Psalm 144:15).

Subscription Renewal Reminder – If you have renewed your subscription for 2022, may I take this opportunity to thank you for your continued support . However, it is still possible to renew on-line at www.christianwatch.org.uk or by sending a cheque to Christian Watch at PO Box 6526, Leamington Spa, CV31 9NL and we look forward to hearing from you. Maybe you would like to include Christian Watch in your Will – to leave a legacy for the future. Any enquiries please to the same PO number.

Yours in His service,

Ian Henderson

Ian R. Henderson
(Chairman)

**“Shall I not visit for these things? saith the Lord: shall not my soul
be avenged on such a nation as this?”
(Jeremiah 5:29)**

by **John Newton**

(Extract from ‘*The Guilt and Danger of Such a Nation as This*’)

Three times the Lord God repeats, by His prophet, this alarming question. Their ingratitude and obstinacy were so notorious, their sins so enormous and aggravated, the sentence denounced against them, however severe, was so undeniably just, that partial as they were to themselves, God is pleased to appeal to their own consciences and to make them judges in their own cause; inviting, or rather challenging, them to offer any plea why His forbearance and patience, which they had so long despised, should be still afforded them.

But the form of the question will not permit us to continue the application to Israel or Judah. The words are not *On this nation* particularly, but “On such a nation as this.” The Lord, the Governor of the earth, has provided, in the history of one nation, a lesson of instruction and warning to every nation under the sun; and the nearer the state and spirit of any people resemble the state and character of Judah when Jeremiah prophesied among them, the more reason they have to tremble under the apprehension of the same or similar judgments.

God brought Israel out of Egypt with an outstretched arm, divided the Red Sea before them, led them in the wilderness by a cloud and pillar of fire, fed them with manna and gave them water from the rock. He planted them in a good land and, though they often sinned, and were often punished, they were distinguished by many tokens of His presence and effects of His goodness, above any other nation.

We likewise are a highly favoured people and have long enjoyed privileges which excite the admiration and envy of surrounding nations; and we are a sinful, ungrateful people; so that, when we compare the blessings and mercies we have received from the Lord, with our conduct towards Him, it is to be feared we are no less concerned with the question in my text than Israel of old.

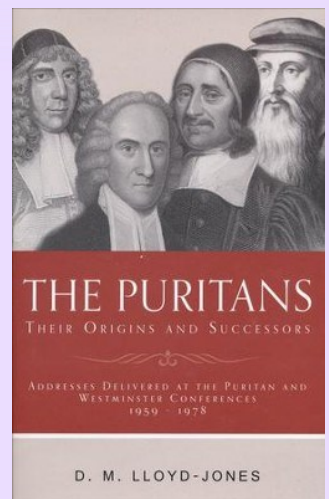
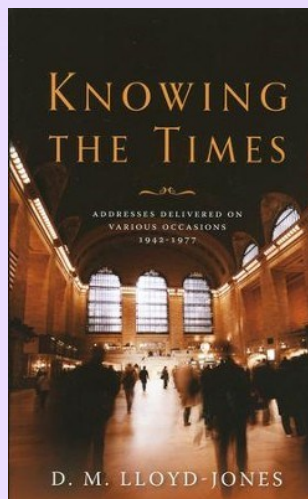
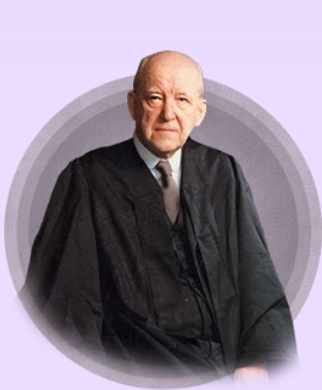
From: *Jewels from John Newton, Daily Readings*

UNDERSTANDING THE TIMES

Editorial by **Paul Austen**,
Protestant Truth Magazine, May-June 2022 edition

In 1 Chronicles 12 we read of those who met with David at various times and places, including as he was about to be made King of Israel at Hebron. Among these companies were two hundred Heads of the tribe of Issachar - “which were men that had understanding of the times, to know what Israel ought to do” (v. 32). Such wisdom would have been greatly needed in those turbulent days at the end of Saul’s reign and this description has often seemed suggestive of the pressing need of our own times, with the general decline that we see numerically and spiritually in the churches, and morally among the nations of the world. Is it not as important as ever that God might grant especial wisdom and discernment to those whom He has raised up to positions of responsibility and influence?

Speaking personally, the collection of addresses by Dr. D. Martyn Lloyd-Jones first published by the Banner of Truth Trust in 1989, entitled *Knowing the Times*, was a thought-provoking read to one newly interested in Reformed literature and church history. The title is, of course, a reference to the description of the men of Issachar in 1 Chronicles 12:32 – and perhaps it was the means of bringing others also to reflect on what this might mean in our own generation. The addresses themselves are wide-ranging in scope, but (together with that earlier book by Dr. Lloyd-Jones that sat so happily alongside it on the bookshelf, *The Puritans: Their Origins and Successors*) they seemed to point to a particular idea: that of gaining wisdom for the present from studying the past. Whether it was in considering John Calvin or the Puritans, delving further back into the history of the church, or evaluating more recent developments in the context of such questions as “What is Preaching?” or “What is an Evangelical?”, the necessity of a knowledge of our Gospel heritage – and an awareness of God’s past workings in the



world and with His people - was brought home. The Protestant Truth Society does what it can to help present-day Christians gain a deeper knowledge of Church history; for instance, the motto of the Time Travellers' Club runs thus: 'Learning about the past – Living in the present'.

The question might be asked: 'How does knowing about history help us in our modern-day situation?' Granted, there are some aspects of today's society that are very different to earlier times, even to the world of our grandparents' generation, let alone when considering Reformation and pre-Reformation history. Notwithstanding, there is much that can equip us for our own lives. For one thing, man's heart has not changed; it is still "deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked", as the Lord spoke through Jeremiah (ch. 17:9). In our natural state, we continue to accuse others and excuse ourselves (see Rom. 2:15), just as Adam and Eve did in the garden of Eden (Gen. 3:11-13). The "works of the flesh" (Gal. 5:19-21) remain very evident in fallen man. However, neither has God changed. He remains true to His covenant and to His promises. "God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it" (1 Cor. 10:13). The Holy Spirit still works His fruit in the lives of His people (Gal. 5:22-25). Therefore, the same forces of good and evil that have characterised human history are yet with us today.

Another aspect of our being aided by a knowledge of the past is that similar situations do arise from generation to generation and to be aware of how our forefathers have, with God's help, handled them will be a great advantage to ourselves. We remember, during a seminary class on church history, our tutor quoting the saying of Georg Hegel: 'The only thing that we learn from history is that we learn nothing from history.' May we not be among those who prove the truth of those words.

Another aspect of this "understanding of the times" – and of knowing "what Israel ought to do" – is prayer. During times of distress, David often (though, sadly, not always) took refuge in his God, as the Psalms show us. At Keilah and at Ziklag we read of him enquiring of the Lord, using the means appointed at that time (1 Samuel 23 and 30). David was not alone among the Kings of Israel and Judah in crying out to God: one thinks of Jehoshaphat's great prayer of entreaty on the occasion of the Moabite invasion (2 Chron. 20): "We have no might against this great company that cometh against us; neither know we what to do: but our eyes are upon thee" (v.12). As Christians, we know the great necessity of prayer, and we cannot expect to be shown what we "ought to do", either in our own lives or as churches, if we do not commit our matters into the hands of a gracious God. "Cast thy burden upon the Lord, and He shall sustain thee: He shall never suffer the righteous to be moved" (Ps. 55:22). Away from home, and as a relatively young member of a small church in which serious trouble had arisen, it was suggested by a family member that we call a prayer meeting in that church: refreshing advice in the midst of the many arguments and counter-arguments that surrounded us at

that period. Later in our journey, we recall a Pastor often speaking of matters ‘yielding to prayer’ - and we trust that we have at times found it so.

Most importantly, the Lord’s people must be men, women and young people of the Book. Doubtless the men of Issachar knew the Scriptures, as they then existed; later, Daniel’s understanding of the times’ arose from His knowledge of the writings of Jeremiah (see Daniel 9:2). Likewise, it is our responsibility as professing Christians to read the Bible for ourselves, as well as hearing it read and preached from in our regular gatherings for worship. We are to pray for the Holy Spirit’s help that we might not only *read* (or *hear*), but also *understand* the Word of God. Well might one ask each of us, as Philip did the Ethiopian eunuch, “Understandest thou what thou readest?” (Acts 8:30) – and may we be granted faithful teachers to guide us and, like Philip, to preach unto us Jesus (v.35).

God has given us the *whole* of Holy Scripture: the difficult parts and “things hard to be understood” (see 2 Peter 3:16) as well as the consoling promises that we often delight to quote. In the final Book of the Bible, the Revelation, we discover the last words given to the New Testament churches by the risen Lord Jesus Christ. Naturally speaking, we are interested in the latest words spoken to us by a loved one, just as we take particular note of a person’s final utterances while upon this earth. Similarly, the Lord’s people are (or should be) concerned to take note of this letter to the churches which, after all, is prefaced as follows: “The Revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave unto Him, to shew unto His servants things which must shortly come to pass...” (Rev. 1:1, see also v. 3). Admittedly, much of the language of this Book requires prayerful study in the light of the foregoing Scriptures, drawing heavily as it does from the Old Testament prophecies. However, is not the great theme of Revelation that, in the midst of the turbulence experienced upon the earth and the judgments poured out upon it, the Lamb Christ Jesus is utterly in control, being “worthy to take the Book, and to open the seals thereof” (ch. 5:9)? The cry of the great multitude in Heaven is “Alleluia: for the Lord God omnipotent reigneth” (ch. 19:6). Whatever the differences of interpretation might be among the Lord’s people, a familiarity with this closing Book of Scripture should encourage us and grant us a right perspective as we seek to understand our own times and human history as a whole.



WHERE IS THE POST-COVID DRIFT TAKING US?

Reformation Scotland website, April, 2022

www.reformationscotland.org

How should we respond to the massive upheavals that have taken place nationally and internationally over the last couple of years? If we think about it in the abstract, perhaps it seems obvious that after a time of turmoil and distress, we would re-dedicate ourselves to the Lord and more earnestly seek His grace to put more energy into serving Him. Now that restrictions on social and Church life have eased, we have many opportunities to do this; but instead of being re-energised as we emerge from the pandemic, many believers feel they are struggling to shake off a kind of spiritual lethargy. They feel they are doing little more than just drifting along. Could the Lord be leaving us to cope with the aftermath more or less by ourselves? How then can we possibly cope? Why does He not intervene mightily to invigorate His weary Church?

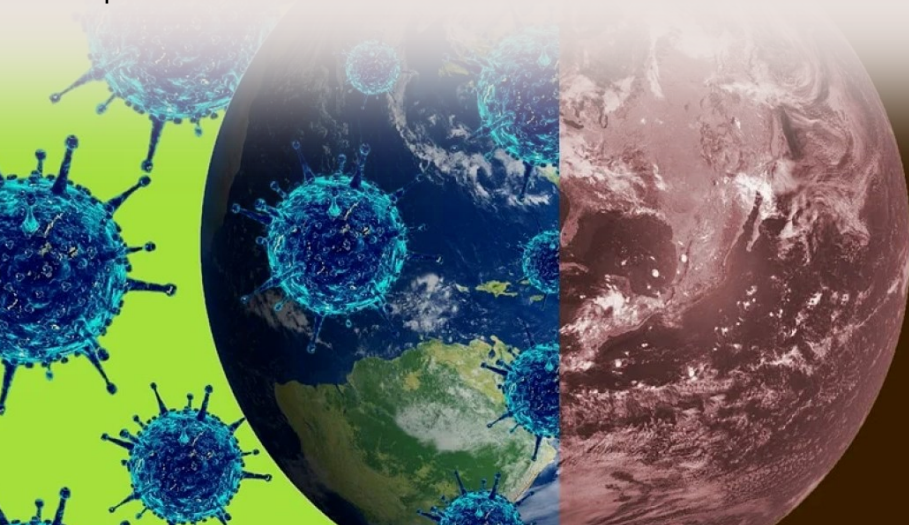
In this updated extract, James Guthrie shows he was familiar with this same problem. He looks first at where God is

going – is He coming towards us to bless us with more of His presence, or is He withdrawing? Then he looks at where we are going – turning inwards on ourselves or reaching upwards for God's help? What progress are we making?

WHAT DIRECTION IS GOD GOING?

When the Lord is present with us in society, this is manifested in what we call the common operations of the Spirit. For example, He gives people the gifts of knowledge, wisdom, fortitude, temperance, justice, courage and so on.

When the Lord is present with us in the Church, this can be seen in one of two ways. One way is in the ordinary gifts of the Spirit (ordinary as distinct from saving grace). These include the gift of ministry, or teaching, or exhortation, or Church-ruling, which he uses to enable the saints to grow and to edify the body of Christ (Rom. 12:6,7; Eph. 4:8,11,12). The other



way is in the special operations of the Spirit, when He gives sanctifying and saving grace and by His continued influences making His people more and more renewed in the inward man day by day. To the extent that God gives or withdraws His presence in these things, so His people prosper or decay.

Whichever of these we think of, we have to admit that God has to some extent or another departed from amongst us. He has left us under a cloud of desertion.

In society, wisdom and understanding, courage, strength and success have been taken from us. He has mingled a perverse spirit in the midst of us that causes us to err in every work.

Likewise in Church and Church administration, the Lord is not showing His presence. The unity and authority of Pastors and Church courts is gravely weakened. He has divided us in His anger and, though we have attempted to heal our wounds and recover our strength, yet our endeavours up to now have for the most part been frustrated by the Lord. There is bruising instead of binding up and much bitter contention and strife in many of our meetings. Instead of the sweet fruits of edifying unity and peace, whilst we should pull together in unison in the work of the Lord, some pull one way and others another, rendering our endeavours almost useless to the Church, comfortless to ourselves and despicable to others.

In the ordinances, the Lord is restraining and withholding the blessing which should come from them. Plenty is sown, yet little is harvested.

The Word of salvation is only rarely blessed in the hand of Ministers to the converting of souls. Faithful Ministers across the land feel that they labour in vain and spend their strength for nothing. Many souls who claim to be converted and have a real union with Jesus Christ are suffering a dreadful withering and decay. Tenderness is gone. Influences of the Spirit are withheld. Prayer is restrained and shut out. Faith fails. Love has grown cold. Hearts are hardened like stones. There is little or no delight in God or in His Word or in the fellowship of His people. Corruptions are rife and heart plagues abound. God hides His face and is like a stranger to His people, leaving them to wrestle along in their duties and difficulties.

And yet, while the Lord's people would admit all this, they make so little fuss about His departings! Maybe we have some remembrance of a better condition, when we enjoyed His fellowship and some sense of our loss and its bad consequences. This brings some sort of desire to recover our former state – but how faint and feckless these desires are! We are effectively content to live without God and to let Him go without even attempting to take hold of the hem of His garments.

If the Lord's gracious influences were strong on our hearts, we would not, we could not, easily contemplate His departing. We would not, and could not, hold our peace, night or day, until He returned and revived His work. The fact that we sit, almost satisfied and silent under His withdrawals suggest that many of us, though we have a name that we

are living, are actually dead, and that the spiritual life which remains in others is ready to die (Rev. 3:1,2).

WHAT DIRECTION ARE WE GOING?

1. Going on without basic Gospel truths

Multitudes of people go on in a profound lack of familiarity with the Gospel and the necessary truths of God. Light has come amongst us, but many love darkness rather than light. Often too this ignorance is unforced and perverse.

2. Going on in routines

Formalism – that is, a form of godliness without the power of godliness – abounds and prevails among us.

3. Going on fruitlessly

Even when we know and obey the Gospel, we are barren and unfruitful in our spiritual life. Our outstanding sin is that in spite of the fact that the Lord waters us plentifully with the dew of Heaven and the sweet rain of the Gospel day by day, yet most of us are still only an empty vine, which brings forth fruit to ourselves, but not to God.

4. Growing weary of the things of God

We have grown weary of the precious things of God and the blessed opportunities they bring us. Instead, we prefer our own worldly advantages. Many are tired of the ordinances. Many are tired of the Lord's Day and have it between God and the world. Many value our blessed Lord Jesus and the inestimable treasure of the Gospel at a very low rate, much less than thirty pieces of silver.

5. Going on without listening to God

We refuse to hearken to God. Are we not a rebellious and gainsaying people? We neither fear the threatenings of God to repent, nor embrace His promises to believe, nor listen to His commandments to obey.

6. Going on with unfaithful Ministers

Although there are many precious Ministers who study to divide the Word of God aright, warning the wicked to turn from the evil of their ways – and encouraging the godly in godliness, yet not all Ministers are like this. There are others who heal the hurt of the daughter of the Lord's people slightly and speak



peace to those to whom the Lord does not speak peace. They bite with the teeth those who ought to be encouraged and comforted (Mic. 3:5).

The goal of some Ministers is not to commend themselves to every man's conscience as in the sight of God. Instead, they handle the Word of God deceitfully, so as to make the hearts of the righteous sad (by turning the edge of their doctrine against them, referring to them as hypocrites and narrow-minded), and on the other side to strengthen the hands of the wicked to persist in his wicked way.

7. Going against our commitments

We keep dealing treacherously with God in the matter of His covenant. We have all made covenants with God (at least the covenant of our baptism). The terms and intentions of these covenants include walking close with God, zeal for the Kingdom of Jesus Christ and against His open enemies – and reforming ourselves in our various roles and capacities. Yet surely, we must acknowledge that most of us have not only come exceedingly far short in these, but we have palpably transgressed. The sinfulness of this is greatly heightened by the greatness of the Lord's mercies and His wonderful works on our behalf.

8. Going away from our first love

We have forsaken our first love (Rev. 2:4). Even if we compare ourselves with ourselves – what we are now with what we were, perhaps even a very few years ago – we will see this. But what is worse, we seem to have fallen further from our first love than the Church of Ephesus. Jesus Christ acknowledged some good points

about Ephesus. *"I know thy works, and thy labour, and thy patience, and how thou canst not bear them which are evil: and thou hast tried them which say they are Apostles, and are not, and hast found them liars: and hast borne, and hast patience, and for My Name's sake hast laboured, and hast not fainted"* (Rev. 2:2,3). Do we deserve a testimony like this? More likely, we come far short in all these things. Where are our works, and where is our labour and patience and where is our zeal against those that are evil? The reality is that we are a barren and fruitless people. Our way is full of murmuring and fretting. We allow many who say they are Pastors and are not, to go on without investigation. We decline to take up the cross of Jesus Christ and refuse to endure and labour for His Name. We either faint or turn aside to crooked ways; and shall we fall so far short of Ephesus in all these things and yet not fear the removal of our candlestick?

CONCLUSION

Are we and our God drifting apart? Of course, the Lord never leaves any of His people completely, or lets any of them leave Him completely; but, relatively speaking, there can be times when we back away from God and turn our backs on His ways and His grace. Correspondingly, God can hide His face from us instead of shining on us the light of His countenance; then the last thing we should do is let things go on as they are. Instead, we need to battle the inertia and shake off our lethargy. If we follow the advice to the Church at Ephesus, we will remember our first love, repent and do the first works.

THE WORK OF THE HOLY GHOST

by **Thomas Goodwin**
(1600 – 1650)

There is a general omission in the saints of God in their not giving the Holy Ghost that glory that is due to His person, and for His great work of salvation in us, insomuch that we have in our hearts almost lost this third Person. We give daily in our thoughts, prayers, affections and speeches an honour to the Father and the Son; but who almost directs the aims of his praise (more than in that general way of doxology we use to close our prayers with, 'All glory be,' etc.) unto God the Holy Ghost? He is a Person in the Godhead equal with the Father and the Son; and the work He doth for us in its kind is as great as those of the Father or the Son. Therefore, by the equity of all law, a proportionable honour from us is due to Him.

God's ordination amongst men is that we should "render to all their due, honour to whom honour is due." To the magistracy (which there he speaks of) according to their place and dignity; and this makes a debt, a due (Rom. 13:8). And the like is enjoined concerning Ministers that are instruments of our spiritual good, that we should "esteem them very highly.... for their work's sake" (1 Thess. 5:13). Let the same law, I beseech you, take place in your hearts towards the Holy Ghost, as well as the other two Persons of the Trinity.

The Holy Ghost is indeed the last in order of the Persons, as proceeding from the other two, yet in the participation of the Godhead He is equal with them both; and in His work, though it be last done for us, He is not behind Them, nor in the glory of it inferior to what They have in Theirs. And indeed, He would not be God, equal with the Father and the Son, if the work allotted to Him, to show He is God, were not equal unto each of Theirs.

And indeed, no less than all that is done, or to be done in us, was left to the Holy Ghost's share, for the ultimate execution of it; and it was not left Him as the refuse, it being as necessary and as great as any of Theirs; but He, being the last Person, took His own lot of the works about our salvation, which are the last, which is to apply all, and to make all actually ours, whatever the other two had done afore for us. I wish to set forth this work to you in the amplitude of it, to the end you may accordingly in your hearts honour this blessed and Holy Spirit. And surely if to neglect the notice and observation of an attribute of God, eminently imprinted on such or such a work of God's, as the power in the creation, justice in governing the world, mercy in bearing with sinners, grace in our salvation; if this be made so great a sin (Rom. 1), then it must be deemed a greater diminution to the Godhead

to neglect the glorifying of one of these Persons, who is possessed of the whole Godhead and attributes, when He is manifested or interested in any work most gloriously.

Blest Spirit of truth, eternal God,
Thou meek and lowly Dove,
Who fill'st the soul through Jesus' blood,
With faith, and hope, and love;

Who comfortest the heavy heart,
By sin and sorrow pressed;
Who to the dead can'st life impart,
And to the weary rest;

Thy sweet communion charms the soul,
And gives true peace and joy,
Which Satan's power cannot control,
Nor all his wiles destroy;

Come from the blissful realms above;
Our longing breast inspire
With thy soft flames of Heavenly love,
And fan the sacred fire.

Let no false comfort lift us up
To confidence that's vain;
Nor let their faith and courage droop,
For whom the Lamb was slain.

Breathe comfort where distress abounds,
Make the whole conscience clean,
And heal, with balm from Jesus' wounds,
The festering sores of sin.

Vanquish our lust, our pride remove,
Take out the heart of stone;
Show us the Father's boundless love,
And merits of the Son.

The Father sent the Son to die;
The willing Son obeyed;
The witness thou, to ratify
The purchase Christ has made.

John Hart

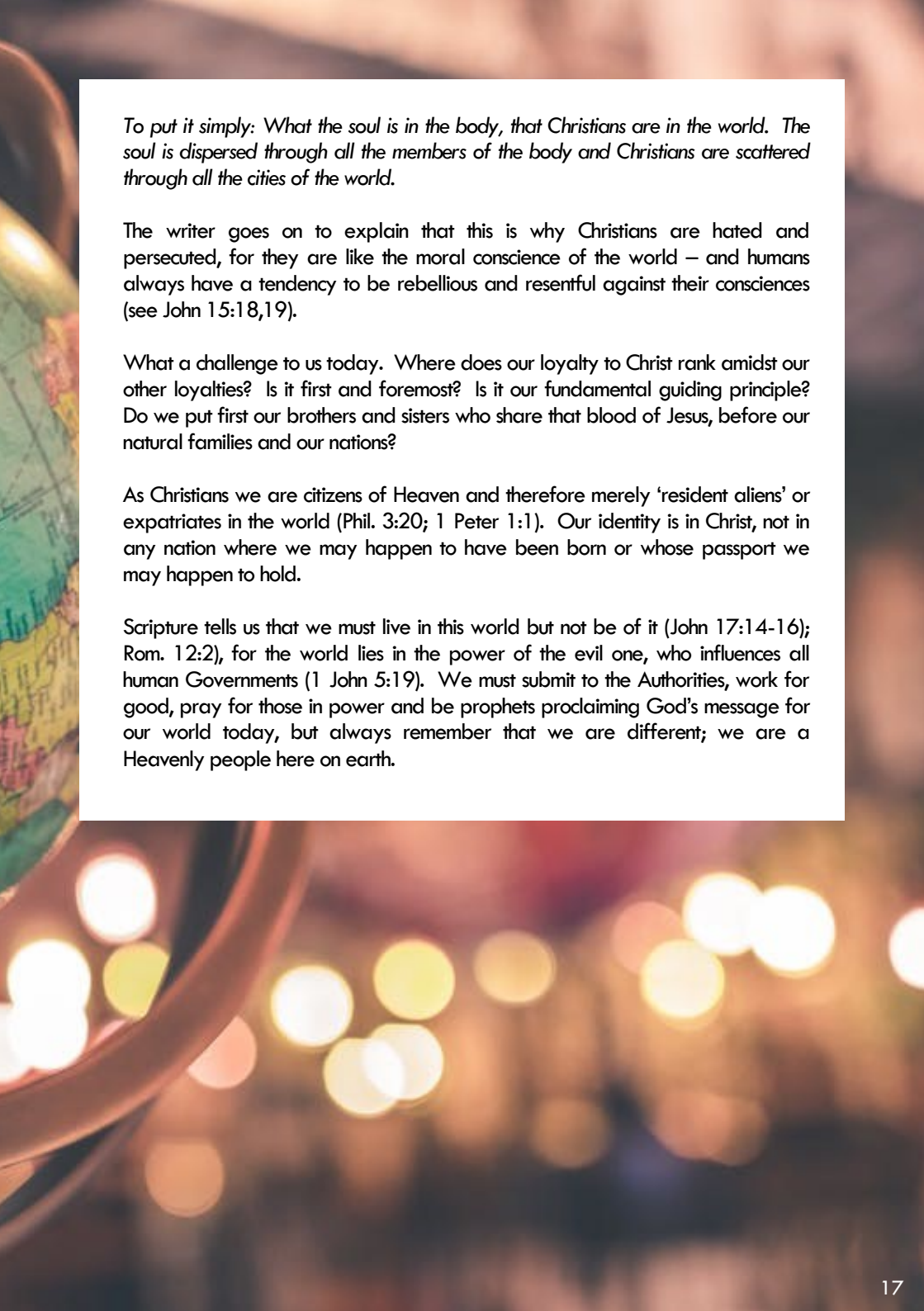
IN THE WORLD, BUT NOT OF IT

Editorial by **Dr. Patrick Sookhdeo**
in **BarnabasAid Magazine**, May/June, 2022
www.barnabasfund.org

In a broken and fragmenting world, the Christian stands out by having an identity that crosses all national boundaries, all tribal divisions, all economic disparities. The early Christians, too, lived in a greatly divided world, the main binary division being between Jews and Gentiles; but Christians thought of themselves as a third group. As Paul wrote, "There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female: for ye are all one in Christ Jesus" (Gal. 3:28). This brotherhood is reflected in the New Testament Greek word *adelphos*. Translated as "brother"; it literally means 'from the same womb' (α- 'together with' + *delphos* 'womb'). For we all share an origin in Christ our Saviour and, in a sense, His blood flows through our veins. It was the word that the first followers of Jesus took up from everyday language and used to refer to fellow believers, giving it a special and precious Christian meaning.

This is well illustrated in an anonymous letter addressed to someone called Diognetus, thought to date from around 130AD. It is the earliest known piece of Christian writing explaining Christianity to specifically pagan readers; that is, to the majority of Graeco-Roman society at the time. Here is an extract:

...Christians cannot be distinguished from the rest of the human race by country or language or customs. They do not live in cities of their own; they do not use a peculiar form of speech; they do not follow an eccentric manner of life...Yet, although they live in Greek and barbarian cities alike, as each man's lot has been cast, and follow the customs of the country in clothing and food and other matters of daily living, at the same time they give proof of the remarkable and admittedly extraordinary constitution of their own commonwealth. They live in their own countries, but only as aliens. They have a share in everything as citizens and endure everything as foreigners. Every foreign land is their fatherland and yet for them every fatherland is a foreign land...They busy themselves on earth, but their citizenship is in Heaven. They obey the established laws, but in their own lives they go far beyond what the laws require. They love all men and by all men are persecuted...They are treated by the Jews as foreigners and enemies and are hunted down by the Greeks; and all the time those who hate them find it impossible to justify their enmity.



To put it simply: What the soul is in the body, that Christians are in the world. The soul is dispersed through all the members of the body and Christians are scattered through all the cities of the world.

The writer goes on to explain that this is why Christians are hated and persecuted, for they are like the moral conscience of the world – and humans always have a tendency to be rebellious and resentful against their consciences (see John 15:18,19).

What a challenge to us today. Where does our loyalty to Christ rank amidst our other loyalties? Is it first and foremost? Is it our fundamental guiding principle? Do we put first our brothers and sisters who share that blood of Jesus, before our natural families and our nations?

As Christians we are citizens of Heaven and therefore merely ‘resident aliens’ or expatriates in the world (Phil. 3:20; 1 Peter 1:1). Our identity is in Christ, not in any nation where we may happen to have been born or whose passport we may happen to hold.

Scripture tells us that we must live in this world but not be of it (John 17:14-16); Rom. 12:2), for the world lies in the power of the evil one, who influences all human Governments (1 John 5:19). We must submit to the Authorities, work for good, pray for those in power and be prophets proclaiming God’s message for our world today, but always remember that we are different; we are a Heavenly people here on earth.

News and Current Affairs



Wars and Rumours of Wars – Ulster Bulwark (Magazine of the Evangelical Protestant Society), April – June, 2022 edition

Since the fall of man into sin, this world has been an unhappy place. The Apostle Paul speaks of how “the whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain” (Romans 8:22) and we see this, not only in the natural world, but in the political. Our Lord warned of “wars and rumours of wars” (Matthew 24:6) and there have been times in history when those words seem to be more relevant than at others.

The geo-political landscape in the Spring of 2022 is as bewildering, turbulent and dangerous as it has ever been, and, as we go to press, a nuclear holocaust is being spoken of, not as some far distant apocalyptic nightmare, but as a distinct possibility. Events seem to be moving very fast. The issues which have given rise to Russia’s invasion of Ukraine are extremely complex and many people, it seems, have suddenly become social media ‘experts’.

What is clear is that the invasion has created yet another massive humanitarian crisis and we must pray for - and help - all who are suffering such heartache and pain at this time. We must pray, too, for the Christian church in Ukraine and for Christian missionaries and aid workers on the ground. As commanded by 1 Timothy 2:2, we are to pray “For Kings, and for all that are in authority” and that includes not only our Western Governments and related organisations, but the Russian Government as well. Things look bleak, but we pray for a drawing back from the brink and for a peaceful outcome to this crisis. And, as Christians, we must be careful to avoid panic and fear. The media are keen to create such reactions, but God is sovereign and His purposes are being worked out in the world in accordance with His sovereign plan. When Christ speaks of wars and rumours of wars, He goes on to say - “See that ye be not troubled, for all these things must come to pass, but the end is not yet” (Matthew 24:6).



Warnings from China of the coming Digital Currency

British Church Newspaper, 25 April, 2022.

A recent article: 'China's New Digital Currency: A Tool for Control' by Erik Bethel, a global finance professional, formerly the U.S. representative to the World Bank, warns the West about the coming, world-wide digital currency, which he believes could be adopted by most Western countries in the coming years.

In Britain, we are already familiar with the 'credit scores' maintained by companies like Experian, which are used by banks, lending companies, insurers and others to assess a person's 'credit-worthiness'. In China, this practice of 'credit-scoring' is being used by the State to roll out a national digital currency, which Bethel describes as a 'Trojan horse, disguised as a payment mechanism'. He explains: "There are many ways that the Chinese Government could use this as an instrument of surveillance, tying it to people's social credit scores and ultimately keeping an authoritarian regime alive, in effect, forever."

In his article he explains that a central bank digital currency, which China has developed, involves a legal obligation – like an IOU - of a central bank to its customer; "legal tender in digital form". China has been developing this, region by region, for eight years.

While this may seem convenient, Bethel warns: "It will allow the People's Bank of China to peer into everyone's purchasing history. You might say: 'Who cares if I'm just buying some food or furniture'? But what if you're an ethnic or religious minority in China?"

He continued: "Under the Chinese system, what if you buy a Bible, or give your tithes to a house church Pastor? The State will know about it."

In many parts of China, one's social credit rating, which typically ranges between 200 and 900, determines, for example, whether or not you can use long distance travel. Present a below average credit score via your mobile phone QR code at the ticket machine and up comes a message: 'Access Denied'. Already, millions of people in China in recent years have been denied travel to visit their relatives – due to a social credit below 500.

Bethel warns: "You can end up 'cancelled'. Will someone want to employ you, loan you money, or marry you – if you have a low credit score? You won't be eligible to be a member of the Chinese Communist Party, which hands out all the good Government jobs. You must toe the line or be cancelled."

(The full article is on the Epoch Times website: <https://www.theepochtimes.com/>
Search for the article 'Tool of Control')

Elon Musk 'last hope for freedom of speech on internet'

British Church Newspaper, 9 May, 2022.

Elon Musk, owner of the TESLA car business and one of the richest men in the world, bought Twitter two weeks ago (25 April) for \$44 billion (£33 billion). Twitter is one of the world's biggest internet companies, with over 440 million subscribers. It is used by political leaders, celebrities and companies who want to promote their products.

While Musk hopes to make money from the venture, he has made very bold statements in favour of freedom of speech on the internet.

Twitter, like other social media giants Google and Facebook, has in recent years heavily censored conservative and Christian viewpoints and groups.

Notoriously, Twitter banned former President Trump 15 months ago, for allegedly 'inciting violence', while a host of jihadist, Islamist groups are freely allowed to peddle their terrorist ideology. Google and Twitter routinely ban any content which refers to U.S. election fraud in 'swing States' in the 2020 U.S. election, or which contradicts the prevailing media narrative that all the Covid vaccines are 'safe' and 'effective'.

On completing his purchase of Twitter, Musk said: "I am a free speech absolutist. Free speech is the bedrock of a functioning democracy. Twitter is the digital town square where matters vital to the future of humanity are debated. I want to make the algorithms open source [Twitter currently keeps these secret] to increase trust. I hope that even my worst critics remain on Twitter, because that is what free speech means."

Although Musk doesn't claim to have any religious beliefs, he recently said - "I agree with the teaching of Jesus. There was great wisdom in His words: things like 'turn the other cheek' and forgiveness are very important."



We all are conscious of our own trials, struggles and burdens – they make our pilgrimage to Heaven difficult in ways unique to us. Perhaps some of your challenges are difficulties known only to you.

It is easy to give in to self-pity or to feel that we are burdened in ways that others do not appreciate. That being the case, we all benefit from embracing a key lesson from the Bible, which at first offends and grates. That lesson is that God, not us, is of central importance in the universe and our lives.

We feel we are the centre of our lives because we make our decisions, we feel our pains, we decide how to interpret the world we inhabit. Yet when we turn to Scripture, we find that God is the central actor in the story. It is God who created all things – not us. So the Bible starts.

It is God who is at the centre of His Heavenly city – not us. So the Bible ends. In the Old Testament, it is God who calls a people – we do not call Him. In the New Testament it is God in Jesus who comes to earth to save us – we do not save Him. At every point we see in the Bible that we are the weak, needy, rebellious ones – it is God who takes the positive action to solve a problem we only make worse – our sin.

Joy and fruitfulness come as we increasingly order our lives to revolve around not ourselves, but God. So Richard Baxter said that for ‘every look at ourselves we should take ten looks at Christ.’

The Westminster Catechism opens with a famous God-centred question:

Q. ‘What is the chief end of man?’

A: ‘The chief end of man is to glorify God, and to enjoy Him for ever.’

When we make ourselves the centre of our lives, we eventually discover that we are not enough to satisfy ourselves. We were created for God and only He can satisfy our desires.

If you are struggling and burdened with worries – real pressures and fear – try turning your focus and thoughts – even momentarily – away from self and look in faith to One who is bigger than you – and more generous than you can imagine.

“Now unto Him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us” (Ephesians 3:20).



On 6 February 1952, Queen Elizabeth II acceded to the Throne on the death of her father, King George VI. She is the longest reigning British Monarch and, as she celebrates her Platinum Jubilee, we rejoice in God's hand upon her during all those years.

Seven decades on, she remains a steady and re-assuring presence amidst the shifting sands of time - and we are thankful for her.

Thy choicest gifts in store,
On her be pleased to pour,
Long may she reign!
May she defend our laws,
And ever give us cause,
To sing with heart and voice,
God save the Queen!

FREE JUSTIFICATION

From a sermon by **George Whitefield** on
“What think ye of Christ?”

What think you about being justified by Christ? I believe I can answer for some of you; for many, I fear, think to be justified, or looked upon as righteous in God's sight, without Jesus Christ; but such will find themselves dreadfully mistaken; for out of Christ, “God is a consuming fire.” Others satisfy themselves with believing that Christ was God and Man and that He came into the world to save sinners in general; whereas, their chief concern ought to be, how they may be assured that Jesus Christ came into the world to save them in particular. “The Life which I now live in the flesh (says the Apostle), I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me.” Observe, *for me*: it is this immediate application of Jesus Christ to our own hearts that renders His merits effectual to our eternal salvation. An unapplied Christ will do us no service at all.

Others there are who go still further; for they think that Jesus Christ is God-Man; that He is to be applied to their hearts and that they can be justified in God's sight only in or through Him – but then they make Him only *in part* a Saviour; they are for doing what they can themselves and then Jesus Christ is to make up the deficiencies of their righteousness. This is the sum and substance of our modern divinity. And were it possible for me to know the thoughts of most that hear me this day, I believe they would tell me this was the scheme they had laid – and perhaps depended on for some years for their eternal salvation.

Is it not then high time, my brethren, for you to entertain quite different thoughts concerning justification by Jesus Christ? For if you think thus, you are in the case of those unhappy Jews who went about to establish their own righteousness and would not submit to, and consequently missed, that righteousness which is of God by faith in Christ Jesus our Lord.

What think you, then, if I tell you that you are to be justified freely through faith in Jesus Christ, without any regard to any work or fitness

foreseen in us at all? For salvation is the free gift of God. I know no fitness in man but a fitness to be cast into the lake of fire and brimstone forever. Our righteousnesses, in God's sight, are but as filthy rags; He cannot away with [endure] them. Our holiness, if we have any, is not the cause but the effect of our justification in God's sight. "We love Him because He first loved us." We must not come to God as the proud Pharisee did, bringing in as it were a reckoning of our services; we must come in the temper and language of the poor publican, smiting upon our breasts and say - "God be merciful to me a sinner"; for Jesus Christ justifies us whilst we are ungodly. He came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance. The poor in spirit only, they who are willing to go out of themselves and rely wholly on the righteousness of another, are so blessed as to be members of His Kingdom. The righteousness, the whole righteousness of Jesus Christ, is to be imputed to us instead of our own: "For we are not under the law, but under grace." And to as many as walk after this rule, peace be on them; for they, and they only are the true Israel of God.

In the great work of man's redemption, boasting is entirely excluded, which could not be if only one of our works were to be joined with the merits of Christ. Our salvation is all of God from the beginning to the end; it is not of works, lest any man should boast. Man has no hand in it; it is Christ who is to be made to us, of God the Father, wisdom, righteousness, sanctification and eternal redemption. His active as well as His passive obedience is to be applied to poor sinners. He has fulfilled all righteousness in our stead that we might become the righteousness of God in Him.

The sinner lays hold on this righteousness by faith and the very moment we do apprehend it by a lively faith, that very moment we may be assured that the blood of Jesus Christ has cleansed us from all sin, for the promise is to us and to our children, and to as many as the Lord our God shall call. If we and our whole houses believe, we shall be saved as well as the jailor and his house; for the righteousness of Jesus Christ is an everlasting as well as a perfect righteousness. It is as effectual to all who believe in Him now as formerly; and so, it will be till time shall be no more. Search the Scriptures, as the Bereans did, and see whether these things are not so. Search Paul's Epistles to the Romans and Galatians and there you will find this doctrine so plainly taught

you that, unless you have eyes and see not, he that runs may read. Search the eleventh Article of our Church: “We are accounted righteous before God, only for the merits of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, by faith, and not for our own works or deservings.”

This doctrine of our free justification by faith in Christ Jesus, however censured and evil spoken of by our present masters in Israel, was highly esteemed by our wise forefathers; for in the subsequent words of the aforementioned Article, it is called a most wholesome doctrine and very full of comfort; and so it is to all that are weary and heavy laden and are truly willing to find rest in Jesus Christ.

This is the Gospel, this is glad tidings of great joy to all that feel themselves poor, lost, undone, damned sinners. *Ho, everyone that thirsteth, come ye to the waters, and he that hath no money; come ye, buy, and eat; yea, come, buy wine and milk without money and without price.* Behold a fountain opened in your Saviour’s side for sin and for uncleanness. “Look unto Him whom you have pierced”; look unto Him by faith and verily you shall be saved, though you came here only to ridicule and blaspheme – and never thought of God or of Christ before.

Not that you must think God will save you because, or on account of, your faith; for faith is a work – and then you would be justified for your works; but when I tell you we are to be justified by faith, I mean that faith is the instrument whereby the sinner brings home the redemption of Jesus Christ to his heart. And to whomsoever God gives such a faith (for it is the free gift of God), he may lift up his head with boldness, he need not fear; he is a spiritual son of our spiritual David; he is passed from death to life, he shall never come into condemnation.

This is the Gospel which we preach. If any man or angel preach any other Gospel than this, of our being freely justified through faith in Christ Jesus, we have the authority of the great Apostle to pronounce him accursed.

'T IS I'

An address by **Mr. C. H. Frost**

Reading: John 6: 16-21

We often stand in need of Heavenly power. No doubt each one of us who is being taught by the Lord feels his need of this from time to time; and there are times when we feel somewhat like the disciples of the Lord Jesus. We read - "It was now dark, and Jesus was not come to them." No doubt they felt His presence made all the difference; for though we are very sinful and very needy and guilty, it is His gracious presence with us, in our hearts and in our circumstances, that makes all the difference to us. What a mercy it is to be in those places from time to time, not only where we *feel* our need of Jesus, but where He really comes to us, gives us to *feel* that He is ours, gives us to realise that He is indeed guiding us!

One said, "Jesus o'er the billows steer me,
By my pilot in each storm."

And are there not storms in our little lives sometimes? We do not really expect to get free from them here below, do we? Trials, afflictions, temptations and sorrows, adverse circumstances, things which come to us and surprise us, though they come in answer to our prayers that the Lord would keep us from pride and self-sufficiency; I say, these storms do come into our little lives.

We read that it was eventide and "when even was now come, His disciples went down unto the sea; and entered into a ship, and went over the sea toward Capernaum." Really the sea is quite a dreadful place when it is dark and rough and stormy. It is a very different matter when the sun shines and everything is calm and peaceful.

However, "it was dark." Is it dark with us sometimes, so that we beg of the Lord to shine into our poor, benighted hearts, to shed abroad on our pathway His Heavenly light? Is it a very great concern with us that we cannot feel the presence of our dear Lord? "Jesus was not come to them." O, it pleases the Lord Jesus to withhold Himself sometimes, to withhold a feeling sense of His presence. He is near us all the time, but we cannot feel it. He has said, "I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee"; but we cannot always seem to find the comfort that there is in a personal application of it.

“Jesus was not come to them.” And, as we might say, as though that was not bad enough, “the sea arose by reason of a great wind that blew.” We do not know what is before us. We do not know what the Lord may be pleased to use for our humbling, for our instruction, for our stabilising in the truth and in His ways, but it may please Him to use these great winds that blow in our consciences. He does, sometimes. He does not always give us to feel that He is using it, but when He does, we can say - “with Christ in the vessel, I smile at the storm.”

But these great winds. A wind of temptation, how it rocks us, doesn't it? It rocked poor Peter pretty much; it rocked David too, very solemnly; and we may depend upon this, as sure as a wind of temptation blows in our hearts, it will rock us and we shall need the steadying influence and power and weightiness of grace and Divine help in order that we may stand.

It may be a “great wind” of affliction. O, the Lord knows what is best for us. We sometimes think we do, but really, we do not, you know. We stand in need of rebuke. Do we feel it? It may be that the Lord will rebuke us in a wind of affliction; or it may be a wind of trial, of solitariness, of having to walk just alone. It may be a wind of darkness and of tempest; but, let us remember that it is all subject to Him, who can say, and who has said - “Peace, be still.”

“And when they had rowed about five and twenty or thirty furlongs.” They tried, they desired to see whether they could get to the other side. O, in your trying, and in your difficulties and sorrows, Jesus knows all about it. “They see Jesus walking on the sea, and drawing nigh unto the ship: and *they were afraid.*” Ah, sometimes we have reason to be afraid. Sometimes we have reason to tremble. Sometimes we stand in a very near view of eternity. It may not be very far away from us, God knows; but they were afraid.

And Jesus spoke to them. O, what a difference this makes! How this puts everything in its right place! I remember one particular occasion in my life, when it was just such a time with me. There was a wind blowing in all directions and, do what I could, nothing availed; but O, I wanted something for myself and about three o'clock in the morning I turned on the light and opened the Bible – my eye fell upon this: “It is I; be not afraid.” Now that put everything in its right place. If we can feel that Jesus is with us, that He is near us, guiding us, leading and teaching us, then – guilty though we are, helpless and often very fearful – we have no need to fear. If Jesus says - “It is I; be not afraid,” then everything will be well with us.

“We are saved by hope.”

(Romans 8:24)

What is the meaning of being saved by hope? It does not mean saved actually, but instrumentally; not saved as regards our eternal security, but as regards our experience of salvation. By hope we are instrumentally saved from despair, saved from turning our backs upon Christ and the Gospel, saved from looking to any other Saviour, or any other salvation; and especially saved from making this world and this life our happiness and home, as “waiting patiently for what we see not,” even “the redemption of our body.”

Now it is by hope that we hang upon and cleave to the Lord Jesus and thus by this grace we abide in Him. It is therefore spoken of as an “anchor of the soul both sure and steadfast and which enters into that which is within the veil.” What holds the ship firm in the storm and prevents it falling upon the rocks? The anchor. The ship abides firm as long as the anchor holds; so by hope the soul abides in Christ. He is within the veil; we are without and, it may be, tossed up and down on a sea of doubt and fear, distress and anxiety – and yet there is a bond of union between Him and us, firmer than the Atlantic Cable.

J. C. Philpot



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PO Box 6526,
Leamington Spa,
CV31 9NL

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