

CHRISTIAN WATCH

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A Protestant Biblical Witness

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

Mark 13:37

THE ANSWER TO OUR PERPLEXITIES

In all the multiplicity and variety of circumstances that have distressed the children of God, has the Lord ever taken a wrong step? Though He has baffled nature, though He has disconcerted reason, though He has turned our plans upside down, though perhaps He has done the thing that we most feared – and thwarted every natural purpose and inclination of our heart – can we say that He has erred? that He has made a mistake? that He has acted unwisely? that He has not done that which is for our spiritual good?

Murmuring, rebellious, unbelieving heart, hold thy peace! Shall man, foolish man, a worm of the earth, a creature of a day, lift up his puny voice and say that God can make a mistake?

Your path is very dark, very intricate, very perplexed; you cannot see the hand of God in the trial that is now resting upon you; you cannot believe that it will work together for your good. I admit it; I have felt it; I have known it; but the time will come when this dark path in which you are now walking shall be seen full of radiancy and light, when you will prove the truth of these words: “He brought the blind by a way that they knew not.”

When we know God to be infinitely wise, that He cannot err, that all His dealings must be stamped with His own eternal wisdom, we are silenced, we hold our peace, we have nothing to say.

J. C. Philpot

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

Dear Friends,

We have probably just witnessed the most spectacular event of our lifetime – the pomp and pageantry associated with the coronation of King Charles III – it was undoubtedly a most splendid and uplifting spectacle. The massive crowds who lined the streets of London gave a lie to those who claim that there is no longer mass support for the institution of monarchy, but it has to be admitted that there were certain aspects of the ceremony which were regrettable, not least the King's desire to be known as the 'defender of faith' rather than 'defender of the faith'.

It is important, of course, to know our history. Following the trial, conviction and execution of King Charles I in 1649, Britain was declared a Commonwealth, but in 1653 the Council of State (which had superseded the Privy Council) offered the Crown to Oliver Cromwell. Cromwell refused the Crown, but was then elected Lord Protector, which meant that he was King in all but name. During this period – 1653 – 1659 – the Government of the British Isles was termed a Protectorate and it turned out to be one of the most stable, prosperous and happy periods in British history. His sudden death in 1658 meant that his son Richard Cromwell was installed as Lord Protector but this did not work out and the Crown was offered to Charles I's eldest son in 1660 and so Britain again reverted to being a Monarchy, albeit now a Constitutional Monarchy.

Extracting from the Westminster Abbey Order of Service, I quote – "A Bible is presented to the King, upon which he swears oaths to govern the peoples with justice and mercy and uphold the Churches. Then, for the first time at a Coronation, the King prays publicly for grace to be a 'blessing to all...of every faith and belief' and to serve after the pattern of Christ."

Having noted the above, we then proceed to the Service itself and hear the words of the King, as follows -

Archbishop of Canterbury: *'Will you to the utmost of your power maintain the laws of God and the true profession of the Gospel? Will you to the utmost of your power maintain in the United Kingdom the Protestant Reformed religion established by law?'*

King Charles III: *'All this I promise to do. The things which I have here before promised, I will perform and keep.'*

'I, Charles, do solemnly and sincerely in the presence of God profess, testify, and declare that I am a faithful Protestant, and that I will, according to the true intent of the enactments which secure the Protestant succession to the throne, uphold and maintain the said enactments to the best of my powers according to law.'

I do not wish to be pernickety on such a notable occasion, but it appears to me that to be a blessing to every faith and belief contradicts the vow to be a faithful Protestant!

In addition, we must ask ourselves a most important question – can we celebrate the coronation of an adulterer and an adulteress? I think not! There is an honour that is due to “Kings, and for all that are in authority” (1 Timothy 2:2) but it does not entail such an honouring of sin by showing endorsement of their immorality.

My final thought on this subject is quite simple. I am a Loyalist, not a Royalist – loyal to the British Crown and Constitution, being Protestant.

Archibald G. Brown (1844 – 1922) – successor to C.H. Spurgeon at the Metropolitan Tabernacle stated the following in 1892 -

'They would see a day when a faithful man will be so scarce that you will have to hunt for him and there shall be an apostasy on the right hand and apostasy on the left. The truth of Christianity rests upon Scripture. When the foundation is gone, an uncertain message is the result.'

In January, 1913 the South African Baptist Magazine stated: 'Back to the Bible – the need of the day is Bible teaching; evangelical preaching – this is the road back to greater spiritual power in our churches; faith in the Holy Spirit – is to give results to our teaching in saved and sanctified souls.'

May we know the blessing of God on our nation in the days that lie ahead.

Yours in His service,

Ian Henderson

Ian R. Henderson
(Chairman)

CW CORONATION LEAFLET

THE KING'S CORONATION AND THE BIBLICAL FOUNDATIONS OF BRITAIN'S CONSTITUTION



Ever since 1688, when any British monarch is crowned, he or she must take an oath before the one true God who has manifested Himself to the world in the Person of the Lord Jesus Christ.

This is the one of the promises which the incoming monarch must make before God:

“Will you to the utmost of your power maintain the laws of God and the true profession of the gospel and the Protestant reformed religion established by law”.

The fact that the king is making promises on oath brings into the proceedings a far higher authority than Parliament, the laws of the land or the people of the kingdom : he is swearing before Almighty God. The coronation, therefore, must never be viewed as merely quaint tradition and pageantry. It is rather a deadly serious transaction carried out in the presence of the one true Trinitarian God, and with significance for the well-being of the whole nation.

The king's promise to "maintain the laws of God and ... the protestant reformed religion" means that the nation's government is under an obligation to govern according to the teachings of the Bible. The term 'protestant' comes from the Latin verb 'protestare', which means 'to testify publicly' and 'to bear witness to'. Protestantism testifies to the truth of Scripture as opposed to the teachings of any church. In other words, by promising to uphold protestantism the monarch is asserting that the Bible must be the nation's final authority, particularly in respect of any proposed legislation.

This means that the monarch's ministers and all members of Parliament (who are under the king as the head of state) are causing the coronation oath to be broken, if they pass laws contrary to the Bible's teachings, as has tragically happened in recent decades with, for example, the 1967 Abortion Act, the relaxation of Sunday trading legislation and the Marriage (Same Sex Couples) Act of 2013.

The king's promise to maintain "the true profession of the gospel" means that the message of salvation through faith in Jesus Christ is at the heart of the British constitution.

What is this gospel? It is the message that "all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God" (Romans 3:23), and need to come to the Lord Jesus Christ in repentance and faith, that they might be eternally saved. All people without exception have broken God's commandments and stand guilty before Him, but Christ has died in the sinner's place, and all who come to Him receive salvation and the gift of everlasting life.

These leaflets were distributed in London and other areas prior to the Coronation by Christian Watch.

THE COST OF MAKING VOWS BEFORE THE LORD

By **G.D. Buss**

Chairman of the TBS General Committee

(From: TBS Quarterly Record, October – December, 2022)

In Joshua chapters 9 and 10 we have much instruction as to how to manage and how not to manage matters that come into our pathway.

Jericho lay in ruins after the great shout on the seventh day at the seventh time of circling its walls: powered by God Almighty, the forty-foot thick walls fell. This miraculous victory was meant to hearten Israel as they began to take possession of the Promised Land. At the same time it was a solemn warning to the rest of the inhabitants of Canaan that their hour of judgment was nigh.



Gibeon was the next major city which lay in the path of the invading Israelites. The reaction of its inhabitants was a mixture of awe and deceit. They were awed by the fact that Jericho, one of the major cities, had been overcome and they realised that they were next in line. They reacted by deceit, pretending to be travellers from a far country whose shoes and clothes had worn out and whose food had become stale. To avoid the same outcome as Jericho, they bargained with the elders of Israel to become their servants and

entered into a league with them. We read a most significant sentence in Joshua 9: 14,15; “And the men” – that is the Israelites – “took of their victuals, and asked *not counsel* at the mouth of the Lord. And Joshua made peace with them, and made a league with them, to let them live: and the princes of the congregation swore unto them.”

Everything seemed right in the eyes of the elders. How true is the warning: “There is a way which seemeth right unto a man, but the end thereof are the ways of death” (Proverbs 14:12 and 16:25). Solomon’s words are so apposite: “I wisdom dwell with prudence” (Proverbs 8:12). If they had asked counsel of the Lord, He would have revealed the deception that was being played on them. When it was realised three days later that these alleged travellers were in fact near neighbours, there was dissent in the camp. Should they smite Gibeon or abide by the oath they had sworn in ignorance?

The decision to make a league with the Gibeonites contained an oath before the Lord, which to break would have brought reproach on the Name of the God of Israel as well as on Israel itself; so Israel refrained from attacking Gibeon. Instead, the Gibeonites were to become servants, hewing wood and drawing water. To give credit to the Gibeonites, having confessed their deception and the reasons for it, they readily agreed to serve Israel in these heavy duties.

In the very next chapter Gibeon was attacked by the armies of five of the neighbouring Kings who were angry that a pact had been made with Israel. Joshua, in keeping with the spirit of the promise made to Gibeon, went to defend them and to fight with their assailants. The Lord gave a further victory to Israel according to His promise when Joshua led Israel into the Promised Land. The Gibeonites proved true friends of Israel in its succeeding history.

Sadly, in later centuries, King Saul, in fleshly zeal, slew many of them in contradiction of the oath that had been given, an act which the Lord

noticed and required of Israel in David's reign (see 2 Samuel 21: 1-9).

The question arises, are promises to be kept at all times? We might immediately say, 'Yes, of course'. However, there are circumstances where it would be wrong to proceed with an oath or promise. If it is contrary to God's Holy Word and law, then it should not be fulfilled (indeed should not have been made in the first place). Herod made an oath to Herodias's daughter that he would give the girl whatever she asked of him (Mark 6:22,23). Being advised by her evil mother, whom Herod had taken as wife from his brother Philip, she asked for John the Baptist's head in a charger. Although Herod was sorry, yet for his oath's sake and lest he should lose credibility with his guests, he ordered John's beheading. In this case it was clearly the greater wrong to keep to his oath when it involved murder and the silencing of the burning and shining light that John the Baptist was (John 5:35).

This shows us that we should only promise what is consistent with God's Word and that we should always count the cost before making such an oath before a Holy God. Furthermore, having made an oath or vow, it can only rightly be kept as enabled by the Lord in whose sight vows are made. However, having sworn or promised



solemnly to act in a certain way, we should endeavour at all costs to fulfil it unless unforeseen circumstances arise which make it impossible

so to do. Hannah counted the cost of giving her much longed for and long-awaited son Samuel back to the Lord. The Lord honoured her in that sacrifice, from which she did not flinch (see 1 Samuel 1).

In this light how important are the words in Psalm 15:4 where we read, “He that sweareth to his own hurt, and changeth not.” In the wedding service, vows are made ‘for better, for worse, for richer, for poorer, in sickness or in health, until death us do part’. Sadly, these days how many marriages founder on the cost of the vows lightly made! However, consider the Lord Jesus Christ, the Heavenly Bridegroom who, in the covenant of grace, entered into solemn oath with His Father to redeem His people and thus, by sacred inference, vowed to His bride in that covenant “ordered in all things, and sure” (2 Samuel 23:5). None can estimate the cost of that holy transaction. We can only look on in wonder and holy awe, as we see the Lord Jesus agonising in the Garden of Gethsemane as the full cost of His oath was laid upon Him.

This was compassion like a God,
That when the Saviour knew
The price of pardon was His blood,
He pity ne’er withdrew.

(I. Watts, Gadsby Hymns 438)

He swore to His own hurt and changed not (Psalm 15:4). May such sacred contemplation make us men and women of integrity in our promising and keeping of that which we have vowed before the Lord.

“The right to bind the conscience in matters of faith and to command the will in matters of practice. This right belongs properly to God alone.”

Alan Cairns

THE PROVIDENCE OF GOD

Peter L. Meney

Editorial in **New Focus** Magazine – October, 2022

Believers rightly take great comfort in the providence of God. In an uncertain world trusting God's providence calms our hearts for the present and gives us confidence for the future.

Yet by itself providence is not a word frequently used in our Bibles. It is used, I think, only once in the whole of Scripture. However, the sense of it is found in all God's dealings with His elect, particularly with respect to the tender loving care of our Saviour Jesus Christ, the everlasting faithfulness and grace of the Father and the comforting ministry of the Holy Spirit.

Providence literally means foresight or to see ahead. It means God knows and provides for His people's needs even before we know them ourselves. He supplies all we require, according to His goodness and wisdom, at the time it is needed.

Providence also bears the sense of God's upholding, preserving and governing all things by means of 'second causes', while working all things together for His people's good, according to His will and purpose, through the events and circumstances of our lives in the world.

In both of these senses it is important to always trace back God's goodness and mercy to the Lord Himself, the 'first cause'. Recently, I was having a meal with friends. Before we started eating, I said, "Will we give thanks?" Quick as a flash one of the little ones at the table looked at his mother and said, "Thank you, Mummy". That was very appropriate, it is good to thank those who prepare our food but, let us not neglect to thank God for providing it.

Let us always remember to say thank you to the Lord first, and then to those whom the Lord uses to bless us in accordance with His will. It is good to say thank you to the preacher after the service if we have enjoyed or been helped by the message; but let our souls be quick first of all to thank the Lord who speaks to our hearts and souls through the preaching of the Gospel; who is Himself the source of every good and perfect gift and the first cause of every blessing.

The greatest evidence of God's goodness and grace to you and me is the giving of God's Son, Jesus Christ, as a ransom to redeem us from our sins. Seeing beforehand the need of His beloved people, He established a covenant of peace whose terms provided for the free supply of every needful grace to forgive, cleanse and justify His elect people. The Lord is the first cause of our salvation.

There may have been many second causes in our experience of grace and personal conversion; the place and time, the circumstances and company, the preacher and the message preached. Yet the giving of Christ for the salvation of our souls is the one great and everlasting act of grace and mercy whereby we are redeemed and for which our hearts shall be eternally grateful.

Whatever else happens to us in this life, our gracious and loving God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit, is the first cause of our salvation, which is the greatest good of God's providence. From this first cause comes every stage of the outworking of God's sovereign purpose in the redemption and salvation of His elect. Having Christ we have every confidence and every good hope for everything else.

Romans 8:32: ***"He that spared not His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all, how shall He not with Him also freely give us all things?"***

THE BIBLICAL REASONS WHY ARCHBISHOP WELBY IS WRONG ON ILLEGAL IMMIGRATION

By Peter Simpson

Pastor of Penn Free Methodist Church and CW Committee Member

On May 10th, 2023 in the House of Lords, Justin Welby, the Archbishop of Canterbury, attacked the Government's attempts to deal with the ever-continuing problem of small boats illegally bringing asylum seekers into southern England from the coast of France.

He argued that Britain should only deal with the crisis by means of international Agreements, not by acting independently as a sovereign nation trying to protect its own borders. He referred to migrants coming into the country without any right to do so as 'refugees' who were escaping conflict and the effects of climate change. He described the Government's proposed legislation to stop this never-ending flow, and to deport those entering illegally, as a failure by Britain to meet its moral responsibilities.¹ His views, supported by other Bishops, must be challenged, using the authority of God's word to do so.



Justin Welby appears to have no regard for the clearly stated Biblical principle that all people are under an obligation to keep the laws of the land (Romans 13:1-4, 1 Peter 2:13-14) and that those laws include respecting a nation's borders. In other words, to deliberately attempt to bypass Britain's immigration laws is sinful in God's sight.

As a Bible-believing Christian Minister, I must denounce the virtue-signalling and tedious playing of the compassion card by the liberal establishment, including church leaders, concerning the crisis, which is the premeditated criminal activity taking place almost every day across the English Channel.

Are illegal migrants who have already found the financial resources, and exercised the planning and diligence to travel enormous distances across various countries, really those whom it is our absolute moral duty to help? It is an obvious and oft-repeated fact, but France is a safe country from which there is no necessity to flee. The migrants choose to come to Britain, because they know that we are a soft touch.

Concerning the argument that asylum-seeking is all about fleeing persecution, if someone is trying to escape from a rampaging bull in a field, he runs to the next field. He does not carry on running across four or five extra fields. Having reached the fifth field, to claim that he was still running for his life would simply not be truthful.

One cannot help but notice that politicians, the media and church leaders are happy to condemn the people smugglers, but few appear willing to acknowledge the fact that the people smugglers only operate because they have willing customers. In terms of the sinfulness of actions before God, there is actually no difference between running a people-smuggling service and choosing to employ and pay those who run the service in order to benefit from it.

Furthermore, I would like to ask if the church leaders who speak much about the need for compassion are willing to condemn the criminal act of asylum seekers in destroying their identity papers before they reach the shores of southern England? As the Migration Watch website informs us, “Deliberate destruction of documentation by tens of thousands crossing the Channel in boats without prior permission must be treated as prima facie evidence of asylum abuse”.²

The Home Office is saying that illegal migration across the Channel this year could reach 85,000. There is currently a backlog of processing asylum claims in excess of 100,000 cases. The destruction of their papers by asylum seekers (along with the disposal of their mobile phones) obviously exacerbates this problem, but the Crown Prosecution Service ‘seems increasingly unwilling to prosecute (such) offences’.³

The migrants of course know that even if their claim is finally rejected, the chances of their being expelled from the country are very low indeed. Out of 20,605 migrants who have had their claims rejected, only 21 people have actually been deported.⁴

This problem of ongoing illegal entry into Britain is taking place against a background of enormous and continuing levels of legal immigration. In the year to June, 2022, net migration reached 504,000, and for the year to December, 2022 the figures are likely to be well in excess of this.⁵

Just where are all the arrivals expected to go in this small and already densely populated island? What about the pressures on our housing stock? We live in an age when many people are concerned environmentalists and eco-activists. May we ask - how many more of Britain’s green fields must be concreted over to accommodate the hundreds of thousands of new arrivals each year? What about the

strains upon the NHS and our infrastructure? What about the ever-growing bill for the British taxpayer? Do not these concerns come under the scope of Christian compassion?

In his speech in the House of Lords the Archbishop stated, 'In Matthew chapter 25 Jesus calls us to welcome the stranger'.⁶ This statement sadly represents an abuse of Scripture in order to conform to the fashionable agenda of Britain's new religion of cultural Marxism. Our Lord was not remotely referring to a situation whereby thousands of illegal migrants were arriving every year; nor was He arguing that the stranger has a special exemption to ignore the laws of the land, which is exactly what the unauthorised entrants into this country are seeking to achieve. In Matthew 25, the Lord is actually referring to those who were ostracised in society precisely because they were Christians, not to those who were seeking a better life by moving to a different country.

This article is not an attack upon the Archbishop of Canterbury's person, but upon his theology, and upon the abuse of Biblical concepts such as 'compassion' to condone the deliberate breaking of our law and the rewarding of that law-breaking with generous taxpayer-funded benefits, such as hotel accommodation amounting to £6 million a day. One speaks in love, but Mr. Welby's woke 'social justice' message must be rejected, for it is not Biblical, but rather represents conformity to the spirit of the age, and such conformity is explicitly condemned in God's word, in Romans 12:2, 1 Corinthians 3:19 and Colossians 2:8.

FOOTNOTES

¹ <https://www.archbishopofcanterbury.org/speaking-writing/speeches/illegal-migration-bill-second-reading-house-lords-speech> ² <https://www.migrationwatchuk.org/news/2021/12/20/deliberate-destruction-of-identity-documents> ³ Ibid ⁴ <https://www.migrationwatchuk.org/channel-crossings-tracker> ⁵ https://twitter.com/MigrationWatch/status/1654376127245303808?ctx=HHwVgIC-1dGUw_UtAAAA ⁶ <https://www.archbishopofcanterbury.org/speaking-writing/speeches/illegal-migration-bill-second-reading-house-lords-speech>

“The statutes of the Lord are right, rejoicing the heart: the commandment of the Lord is pure, enlightening the eyes.”

Psalm 19:8

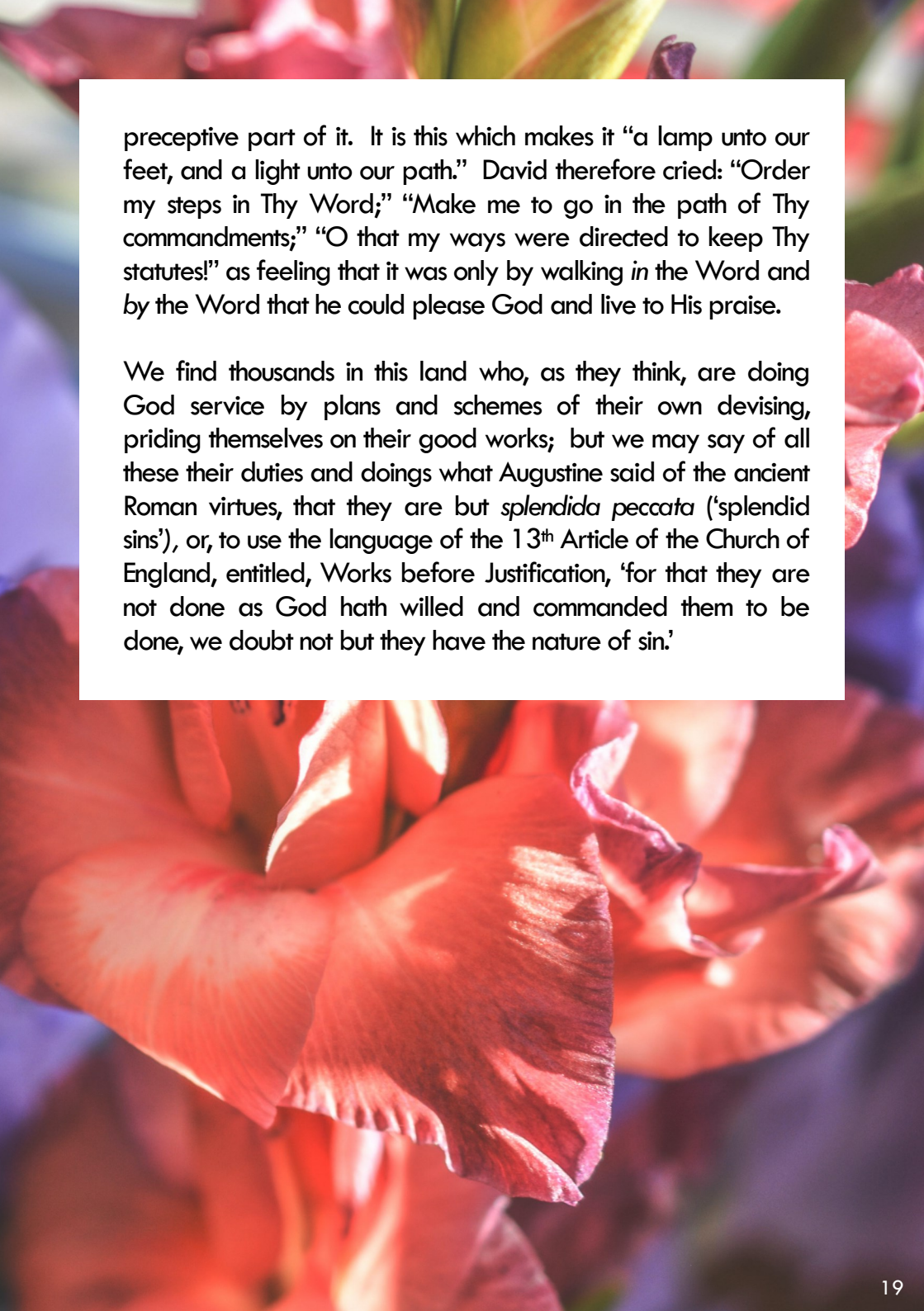
By J. C. Philpot

As without a revelation of the doctrine of salvation we should not know how a sinner could be saved, and thus could not glorify God by our faith; so, without a revelation of the precept we should not know how to serve God and thus could not glorify Him by our obedience.

Look at this point, believing child of God. You long to glorify God in your body and in your spirit, which are His (1 Cor. 6:20). You desire, whether you eat or drink, or whatsoever you do, to do all to the glory of God ((1 Cor. 10:31). There are times and seasons with you when you sigh and mourn over your barren, unprofitable heart and life and earnestly long to think and speak and act to His honour and glory who has done so much for you in providence and grace. At least, if you have no such desires, you are no Christian and are at the best but a poor, worldly dead professor.

When, then, and how far do you live to God's glory? Only then, and only so far as your life and walk and conduct harmonise with and are guided by the precepts of the Word. For see the connection. We can only glorify God outwardly by doing His will; we can only know that will, as regards our practical obedience to it, by the express revelation which He has given of it.

Where is that revelation? In His Word and chiefly in the



preceptive part of it. It is this which makes it “a lamp unto our feet, and a light unto our path.” David therefore cried: “Order my steps in Thy Word;” “Make me to go in the path of Thy commandments;” “O that my ways were directed to keep Thy statutes!” as feeling that it was only by walking *in* the Word and *by* the Word that he could please God and live to His praise.

We find thousands in this land who, as they think, are doing God service by plans and schemes of their own devising, priding themselves on their good works; but we may say of all these their duties and doings what Augustine said of the ancient Roman virtues, that they are but *splendida peccata* (‘splendid sins’), or, to use the language of the 13th Article of the Church of England, entitled, Works before Justification, ‘for that they are not done as God hath willed and commanded them to be done, we doubt not but they have the nature of sin.’

NEWS AND CURRENT AFFAIRS



World Health Organisation and the Pandemic Treaty

Summary of forthcoming events - by the Chairman of Christian Watch

Following on from the Covid-19 pandemic, the World Health Organisation (WHO) is now seeking far-reaching and legally binding powers to - so they state - improve the so-called prevention, preparedness and response to future pandemics. Their plans are to make this future Treaty a legally binding Act of international law, thus eroding the sovereignty of individual countries.

WHO would give themselves increased powers to declare potential health emergencies, develop new world-wide surveillance and counter so-called 'misinformation' by declaring their statements to be 'official truth'.

Please add this matter to your prayer list as it seems to me that the Treaty could give unprecedented power to WHO, who would then make decisions on public health without any consideration for the needs of individual countries. The Treaty would be legally binding; it could introduce new worldwide surveillance thus infringing upon the privacy of individuals; it would erode the sovereignty of individual nations by the establishment of a worldwide strategy, thus limiting nations to determine and manage their own public health issues.



A progress Report is to be given to the World Health Assembly in Geneva in late May, 2023 with WHO's ultimate aim to have the pandemic Treaty made law by 2024.

To the Archbishops of Canterbury and York...define love

Voice for Justice UK Newsletter, 15 May, 2023 - www.vfjuk.org

If, when faced with Jesus, Pontius Pilate famously posed the question, 'What is truth?', we can perhaps justifiably ask today, 'What is love?'. Is it the unquestioning affirmation of life-style choices that have led to social fragmentation and a breakdown of order....that have left literally millions of lonely individuals incapable of forming committed and lasting relationships, and with spiralling rates of mental illness and additional problems affecting both young and old alike?¹ Or is it the defence of Christian values and traditional morality, which – though admittedly dismissed by many as outmoded – have, down the centuries, provided order and stability for both individuals and society and kept us strong?

Somewhat perversely, it may be thought – given its divinely-appointed charge to uphold the faith and protect the flock – the Church of England appears to take the former view. In its latest report, *Love Matters*, commissioned by the Archbishops of Canterbury and York and published in April this year, it aims to put forward a vision of the future based on what it calls 'love-in-action'.² Focussing on families and households, the Report's expressed aim is to be inclusive and more accepting of diversity – in fact, it doesn't just want to 'accept' but to celebrate diversity, recognising and affirming the legitimacy of all committed couple relationships, whether married, unmarried, in civil partnership, opposite or same sex...and everything in between. The Report says it wants to see a more forgiving, kinder and fairer society.

As might be expected, given the background to the Report, much is made of the Christian call to unconditional love. Citing Paul, the Report's authors define love as 'not envious, boastful, arrogant or rude...not irritable or resentful'. Rather, they say, love is patient and kind, putting up with all things. And they conclude, '(Love) is a commitment to give to – and promote the flourishing of – another person'. All of which is undeniably true, but the trouble is that at heart this is a policy document for social action. It is political. The call to honour God and obey His

commands, as set down in the Bible – which is the essence of Christian belief – is not just absent, but denied. In particular, the exclusive monogamous union of one man and one woman in marriage for life is set aside as irrelevant. It is life-long commitment that must be supported, the Report says, and marriage may well be seen as desirable towards achieving this end, but it is not of primary concern.

Harsh though it may sound, this is giving support to the belief system of a new religion – and that religion is, at core, hostile not just to Christianity, but to human flourishing and life. It is a doctrine that not only leaves people damaged and unhappy, but that denies them all possibility of redemption, because it locks them into sin, with no possibility of escape. Endorsing the transient satisfaction of what men and women *think* they want, but which leaves them with only the ashes of broken dreams, is not love. It's not even close. It's a manifesto for oppression.

Is it really for this that our Saviour went head-to-head with Satan in that terrible struggle on the Cross? Is this the freedom for which He died?

Since that decisive battle two thousand years ago, the devil has fought might and main to re-assert his hold. He can't ultimately win, of course, as he knows only too well. It is beyond question that the Lord will return in glory at the appointed time, but during this time of dispensation, while judgment is delayed, Satan still holds power and his will, as ever, is to subvert and destroy. The call of the Church is to take the message of salvation out into the world, to be a light in the darkness and to uphold truth, while guarding the flock against attack.

It is time for the Archbishops of Canterbury and York to recognise which side they are truly on - that of God or the devil. It must be one or the other, but it can't be both.

FOOTNOTES

¹ <https://researchbriefings.files.parliament.uk/documents/SN06988/SN06988.pdf>

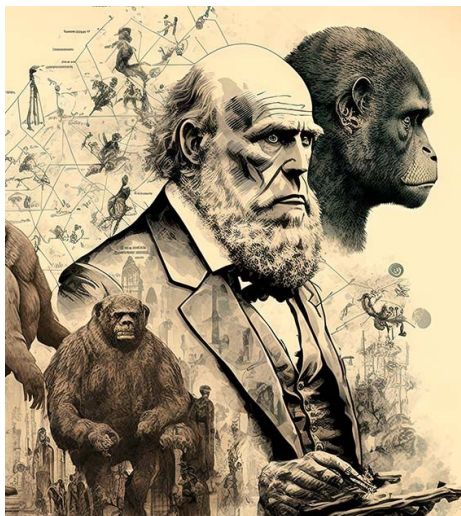
² <https://www.churchofengland.org/sites/default/files/2023-04/%26F%20report%20DIGITAL%20SINGLE%20PAGES.pdf>

India: Uproar over decision to remove Darwin from curriculum

British Church Newspaper, 8 May, 2023

Evolutionists are up in arms at the decision of India to remove Darwin's theory of evolution from the school curriculum and science textbooks, for Classes 9 and 10. The decision was made by India's *National Council of Educational Research and Training (NCERT)* – the equivalent of our OFSTED. Among the consequences, the chapters in science textbooks headed 'Heredity and Evolution' will now be headed merely, 'Heredity'.

The reaction from evolutionists worldwide has been furious. In India alone, over 1,800 scientists and educators signed an open letter to NCERT condemning the removal of Charles Darwin's theory. They say they are 'seriously dismayed by this travesty of education', adding, 'Students will be handicapped in their thought processes without exposure to this fundamental scientific discovery.'



Originally, NCERT claimed that the change was 'an interim measure of syllabus reduction because of pressures on students due to the Covid epidemic,' but now defends it as 'a step in content rationalisation'. Indian evolutionists suspect that the Government has decided that evolution is an unproven theory – and are desperate to get it back on the curriculum.

Abbreviated

Additional Note by BCN:

Back in 2018, Indian Minister of State for Human Resources, Satyapal Singh, declared that Darwin's theory of evolution was wrong. Many Muslim countries refuse to teach evolution, including Pakistan, Saudi Arabia, Oman, Algeria, Morocco and Lebanon, while Egyptian and Tunisian textbooks describe evolution as 'an unproved hypothesis'.

WILLIAM MASON'S 'SPIRITUAL TREASURY'

"Men ought always to pray, and not to faint."

Luke 18:1

Then there can be no room for despair; for prayer exports wants, and imports blessings. But our dear Lord knows there is in us all, at times, a backwardness to prayer; this He would remove. It arises from fainting; this He would prevent. Therefore, He opposes praying to fainting, for fainting prevents praying.

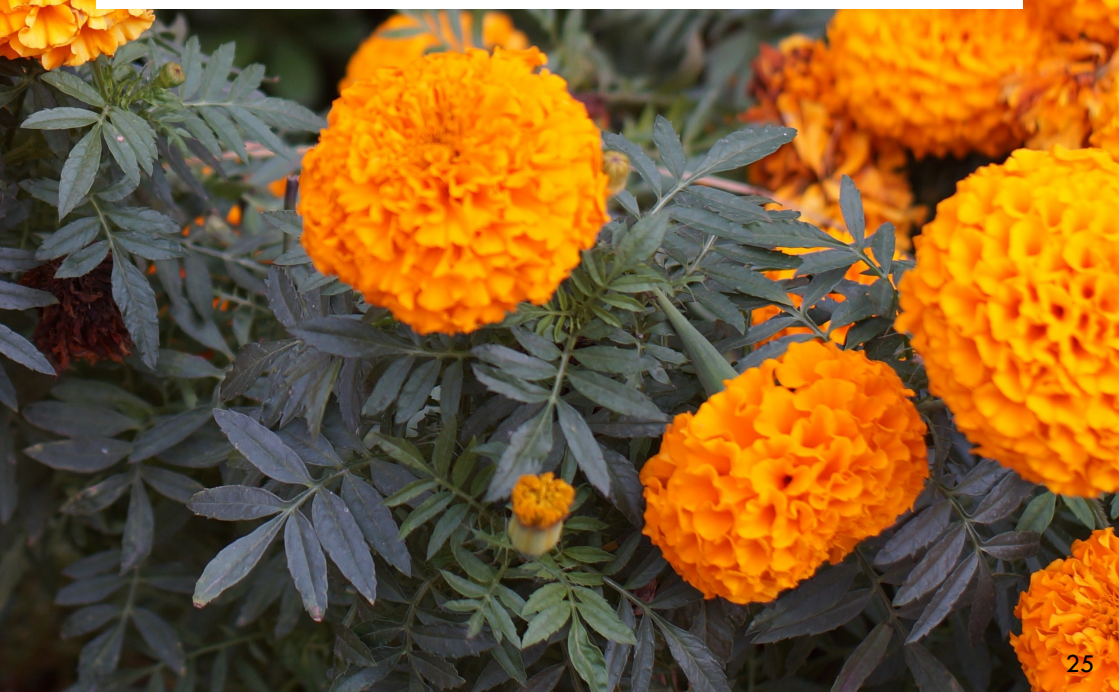
Have you not found it so? When weary and faint in your mind, when your spirits are oppressed, your frame low and languid, you have thought this is not a time for prayer. Yea, but it is! Pray always. Now, sigh out the burden of your heart and the sorrows of your spirit. Now, though in broken accents, breathe your complaints into your Father's ear. Now, cry to Him who loveth you and careth for you, with the love and care of the most tender and affectionate father.

What makes us faint? Do troubles and afflictions? Here is a reviving cordial, "Call upon me in the day of trouble: I will deliver thee, and thou shalt glorify Me" (Ps. 50:15). Does a body of sin and death? Here is a supporting promise, "Whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord, shall be saved" (Rom. 10:13). Do we faint because we have called and prayed again and again to the Lord against any besetting sin, prevailing temptation, rebellious lust, or evil temper and yet the Lord has not given victory over it? Still, says the Lord, pray always. Persevere; be importunate; faint not. Remember that blessed word, "My time is not yet come: but your time is alway ready" (John 7:6). "Watch

and pray, that ye enter not into temptation” (Matt. 26:41). Note the difference between being tempted and entering into temptation. We are assured, in due time we shall reap, if we faint not (Gal. 6:9).

Do we find the spirit willing, but the flesh weak and because of our coldness, deadness and languor in prayer, do we faint? You cannot pray to please yourself: you think your prayers are irksome to God; and therefore, do you faint and are ready to give over praying?

Look at David, he begins to pray in a very heartless, hopeless way. “How long wilt thou forget me, O Lord? For ever?” See how he concludes. He breaks out in full vigour of soul, “I will sing unto the Lord, because He hath dealt bountifully with me” (Ps. 13:6). Above all, look to Jesus, who ever lives to pray for you. Look for His Spirit to help your infirmities (Rom.8:26).



CHRIST IN THE BOOK OF ZECHARIAH

THE FOUR CARPENTERS – Zechariah 1:18-21

By: **B.A. Ramsbottom**

This is Zechariah's second vision – short but remarkable; and we must confess that we see a real beauty in it.

In his vision, the prophet saw “four horns” coming against the people of God. The meaning is obvious. Throughout the Old Testament, in many places, we have the horn used as a symbol of power – for obvious reasons to a pastoral people, who knew the ferocity of the bull or the ram, especially when angered. Here were the enemies of Israel, fierce, powerful, ready to tear in pieces.

And why “four horns”? Assaults, opposition, from every quarter – north, south, east and west; from without and from within. Wherever the people of God looked at this time, there were powers to oppose them – the Assyrians, Chaldeans and Samaritans to the north; the Egyptians to the south; the Philistines to the west; the Ammonites and Moabites to the east.

How true is this of us today! “Encompassed with clouds of distress, and tempted all hope to resign.” The church of God, as never before, is surrounded by the powers of Hell.

But Zechariah saw “four carpenters” coming on a special mission, to fray the horns and to cast them out (verse 21). The whole point of the vision lies in the coincidence of the numbers: *four horns, four carpenters*. *For every possible enemy of the church of God, the Lord has made complete provision to destroy them.* “Upon this Rock I will build My church, and the gates of Hell shall not prevail against it.”

“Gates of Hell shall never
'Gainst His church prevail;

We have Christ's own promise,
And that cannot fail."

What happened proved the truth of the prophecy. The temple at Jerusalem was completed, despite all the powerful opposition; but what of those mighty enemies? They are long since forgotten, and their once gorgeous cities are now heaps of desolation.

But all this looks forward to gospel times; for every evil there is a remedy and, for every enemy, a deliverer. And we cannot help thinking of Him, that glorious Lord and Saviour, of whom it was said, "Is not this the carpenter's son?" (Matt. 13:55; Mark 6:3).

It is an interesting thing that the prophet "lifted up mine eyes, and saw, and behold four horns" (verse 18), but, "The Lord *shewed me* four carpenters" (verse 20). May the Lord *show us* the carpenters! We are reminded of Moses at the waters of Marah when "the Lord shewed him a tree." We cannot help seeing sin, sorrow, Satan, foes, but may we not look on them (cf. 2 Cor. 4:18). Everywhere we look today we see things to distress, but may the Lord *show us* the remedy in the full provision made by His beloved Son. Above all:

"Show us that loving Man
That rules the courts of bliss,
The Lord of Host, the Mighty God,
The eternal Prince of Peace."

"Let it be a settled principle in our minds in reading the Bible that Christ is the central sum of the whole Book. So long as we keep Him in view, we shall never greatly err in our search for spiritual knowledge. Once losing sight of Christ, we shall find the whole Bible dark and full of difficulty. The key to Bible knowledge is Jesus Christ."

J. C. Ryle

“He shall call upon Me, I will answer.” Psalm 91:15

Come, come, my soul, with boldness come,
Unto the throne of grace;
There Jesus sits to answer prayer,
And shows a smiling face.

Our Surety stands before the throne,
And personates our case;
And sends the blessed Spirit down
With tokens of His grace.

There's not a groan, nor wish, nor sigh,
But penetrates His ears;
He knows our sins perplex and tease,
And cause our doubts and fears.

But He upholds us with His arm,
And will not let us fall;
When Satan roars and sin prevails,
He hears our mournful call.

He knows we have no strength at all;
He knows our foes are strong;
But though ten thousand foes engage,
The weakest shan't go wrong.

Then let us all unite and sing
The praises of free grace;
Those souls who long to see Him now,
Shall surely see His face.

D. Herbert