

A large, vibrant sunflower with a detailed brown center and bright yellow petals is the central focus. The background is a soft, golden-yellow gradient, suggesting a sunset or sunrise. The sunflower's stem and green leaves are visible at the bottom and right edges.

CHRISTIAN WATCH

Issue 46

A Protestant Biblical Witness

Jul/Aug 2023

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

Mark 13:37

Christian Watch Annual Subscription (2023),
including UK postage — £12

DIVINE PROTECTION

Ps. 3:3-6. 121:4; 1 Sam. 7:12

A Sovereign Protector I have,
Unseen, yet for ever at hand;
Unchangeably faithful to save,
Almighty to rule and command;
He smiles, and my comforts abound;
His grace as the dew shall descend;
And walls of salvation surround
The souls He delights to defend.

Kind Author and ground of my hope,
Thee, Thee for my God I avow;
My glad Ebenezer set up,
And own Thou hast helped me till now.
I muse on the years that are past,
Wherein my defence Thou hast proved;
Nor wilt Thou relinquish at last
A sinner so signally loved.

IN THIS NEWSLETTER:

Letter from the Chairman	4
Pastor Issues Statement	6
Pastor Peter Simpson	
“Those that walk in pride...”	8
J. C. Philpot	
Unrestrained Man	10
Rev. Ivan Foster (Rtd)	
Patriotism	13
Ambrose Serle	
Is Christ your Lord?	15
Arthur W. Pink	
An Antidote for Discouragement	19
Rev. John Greer	
News and Current Affairs	20
“If God be for us, who can be against us.”	24
George Rose	
All-Needful Grace for all Times...	26
‘Old Jonathan’	

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

July 2023



Dear Friends,

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

Over several decades we, without a shot being fired, have allowed ourselves to become a nation under occupation by secularists, humanists and other destructive elements who work tirelessly to undermine both the family and the Church. It is particularly the children who are being targeted – being brainwashed with LGBT ideology to turn them against the values and morals of the parents; politically-correct dogma about sexuality; climate change and British history. Such indoctrination never ceases to irritate but, even more than this, these brainwashed youngsters of today will become the revolutionaries in the future. We already see signs of this in our universities where no dissent is allowed against a politically correct view of history, literature and sexuality. So what can be done?

Currently, we have a Conservative Government – what do we expect from them?

Before anything else, we expect protection from predators teaching pornography in schools; we expect protection of the family unit – the conservation of all that is good and the expulsion of all that is evil; we expect freedom to speak, teach and preach the Gospel of free grace to needy sinners without fear of arrest or persecution; we expect the re-introduction of Christian Assemblies in all our schools; we expect the outlawing of the aborting of our children; and the list goes on. Our children, our families, our safety – national and personal – are of vital importance and we expect protection from evil outside forces seeking and gaining entry into our country to destroy our society and our Christian values.

Please take every opportunity to write to your MP; to your local and national media; to express your view on local radio in the many available talk programmes. There is a decided increase in immorality in our land –

and a growing indifference to religious worship – and we have a voice that must be used to let those in authority know that enough is enough.

We can take encouragement from Archibald Brown – Pastor of the Metropolitan Tabernacle in London from 1908 to 1911 – who said the following:

“The Church does not rest on man or on any number of men - and if the day should come when a faithful man will be so scarce that you will have to hunt for him – and there shall be apostasy on the right hand and on the left – and the pillars of the Church give way on every hand – and it seems dark beyond all power of exaggeration, even in that day the Lord will say unto His people – ‘I bear the pillars of it. My Church is not dependent upon man’.”

Martin Luther wrote the following verse:

Feelings come and feelings go,
And feelings are deceiving;
My warrant is the Word of God
Naught else is worth believing.

Though all my heart should feel condemned
For want of some sweet token,
There is One greater than my heart
Whose Word cannot be broken.

I'll trust in God's unchanging Word
Till soul and body sever,
For, though all things shall pass away
His Word shall stand forever!

Let us determine to be soldiers for Jesus Christ!

Yours in His service,

Ian Henderson

Ian R. Henderson (Chairman)

PASTOR ISSUES STATEMENT:

Not everyone has wanted to celebrate Pride month

By: **Pastor Peter Simpson**, Penn Free Methodist Church

All around the country throughout June big commercial concerns, including major retailers, promoted Pride month. In my local town the main shopping Mall is called the Eden Centre. Along one of the thoroughfares of the Mall there was a specially erected photo station. It had steps up to a platform to stand on, along with rainbow-coloured surroundings, to enable shoppers to take selfies. The construction carried the words 'Pride 2023' and the hashtag #Edenjoy. The Eden Centre management have thereby assumed that shoppers were joyful about the very concept of a Pride month and, by doing so, they also demonstrated to the world their impeccably woke credentials.

In the local Tesco supermarket shoppers were greeted by a large Pride flag and a post which told us - 'Standing Proud Together...We stand together and make everyone feel welcome, every day'. This was a somewhat inaccurate statement, because Tesco executives obviously do not have any concern about the sensitivities of their customers who are Christians and who believe the Bible's plain teaching that homosexuality is sinful.

At a nearby retail park, shoppers at M&S had to walk by a noticeboard which announced - 'We'll double your donation to celebrate Pride', the reference being to an LGBT charity. The presumption behind this notice was that the customers at M&S, being decent upright citizens will, of course, wish to celebrate Pride. This presumption, however, is totally dismissive of those who adhere to a Christian worldview.

At my local Waitrose store there was a sign by the entrance declaring - 'Proud to be ourselves – celebrating Pride together'. This highly trendy

rejoicing in being 'inclusive' is, however, strangely exclusive of those who choose not to follow the new national religion of promoting all things LGBT. May I courteously ask the John Lewis Partnership - what about those customers who are Christians and who want to 'be themselves' without having to endure the virtue-signalling of supermarkets intent on rubbishing Biblical morality?

Many will doubtless claim that these comments are 'homophobic', but the concept of homophobia has simply been invented to smear anyone who dares to



disagree with the LGBT agenda. It is a device to shut down civilised debate and to silence all opposition. However, it is the duty of a Christian Minister to point out the seriousness of sin – and it is in fact an act of love to one's neighbour to do so.

The endless propaganda by Government, big business and the media in promoting the LGBT cause is also encouraging many people to reject the Christian faith in their desire to be fashionable. The situation is made worse by many compromised churches which are willing to abandon the Bible's authority in order to swim with the tide.

What the executives at Waitrose, M&S and Tesco and various other major commercial concerns are publicly saying in their endorsement of Pride is quite simply this: The Bible is wrong and we, in our 21st century enlightenment, know better than God.

So this is where we are now in modern Britain: one of big business's most desired marketing techniques is to publicly trash the Word of God and effectively to tell Christians that they are bigoted people, because they believe in keeping the commandments of God.

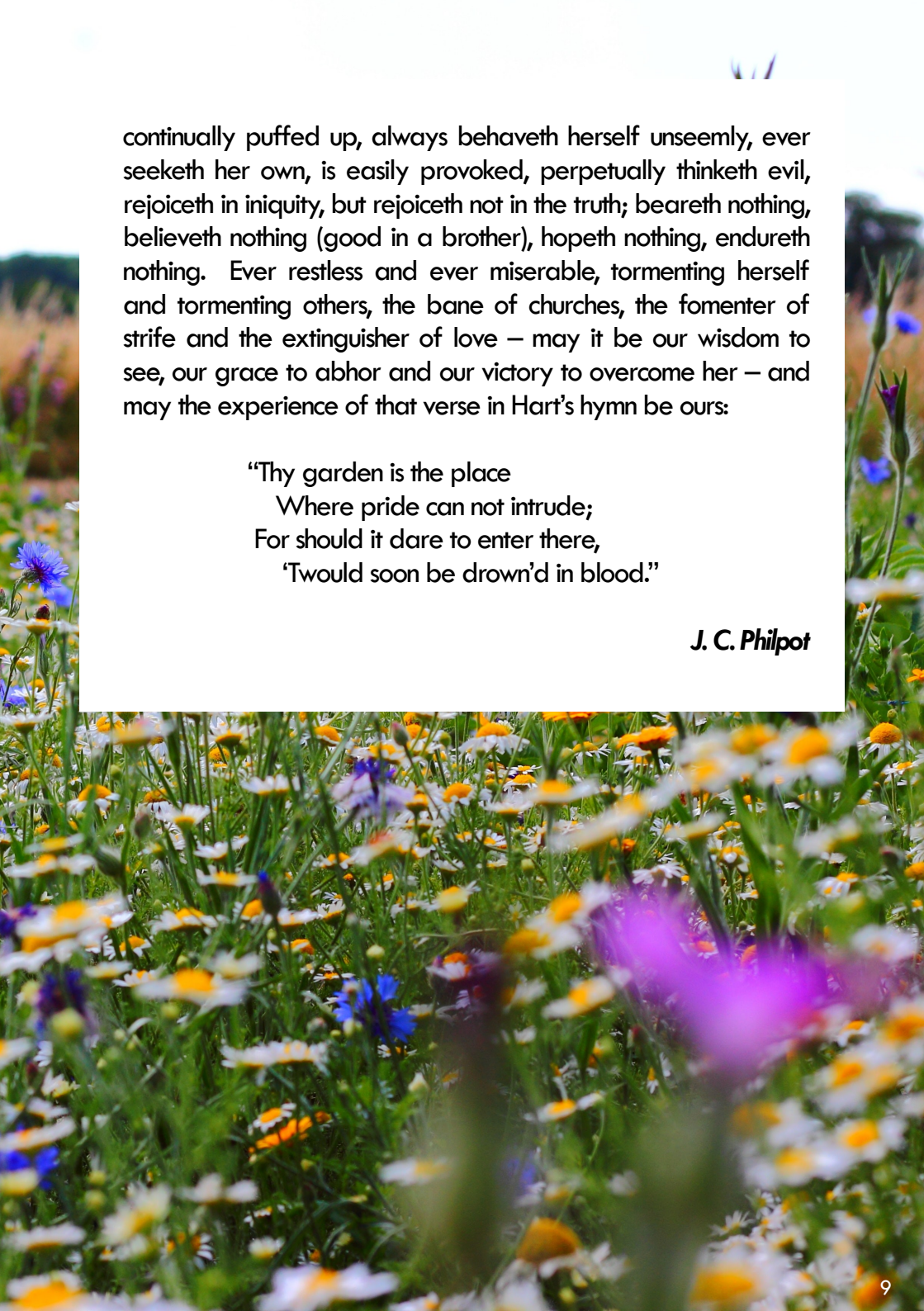
“Those that walk in pride He is able to abase.”

Daniel 4:37

Amongst all the evils which lie naked and open before the eyes of Him with whom we have to do, pride seems especially to incur His holy abhorrence; and the outward manifestations of it have perhaps drawn down as much as, or more than, any other sin His marked thunderbolts. Pride cost Sennacherib his army and Herod his life; pride opened the earth to Korah, Dathan and Abiram and hung up Absalom in the boughs of an oak; pride filled the breast of Saul with murderous hatred against David and tore ten tribes at one stroke from the hand of Rehoboam. Pride drove Nebuchadnezzar from the society of his fellow men and made him eat grass as oxen – his body to be wet with the dew of Heaven, till his hairs were grown as eagles’ feathers and his nails like birds’ claws; and as it has cut off the wicked from the earth and left them neither son nor nephew, root nor branch, so it has made sad havoc even among the family of God.

Pride shut Aaron out of the promised land and made Miriam a leper white as snow; pride, working in the heart of David, brought a pestilence which cut off seventy thousand men; pride carried captive to Babylon Hezekiah’s treasure and descendants – and cast Jonah into the whale’s belly and, in his feelings, into the very belly of Hell. It is the only source of contention; the certain forerunner of a fall; the instigator of persecution; a gin for the feet; a chain to compass the whole body; the main element of deceitfulness and the grave of all uprightness.

The very opposite to charity, pride suffereth not long - and is never kind; she envieth always and ever vaunteth herself; is

A vibrant field of wildflowers, primarily white daisies with yellow centers, interspersed with blue cornflowers. The flowers are in various stages of bloom, creating a textured and colorful scene. A white rectangular text box is positioned in the upper half of the image, containing a paragraph of text and a poem. The background is slightly blurred, emphasizing the flowers in the foreground.

continually puffed up, always behaveth herself unseemly, ever seeketh her own, is easily provoked, perpetually thinketh evil, rejoiceth in iniquity, but rejoiceth not in the truth; beareth nothing, believeth nothing (good in a brother), hopeth nothing, endureth nothing. Ever restless and ever miserable, tormenting herself and tormenting others, the bane of churches, the fomenter of strife and the extinguisher of love – may it be our wisdom to see, our grace to abhor and our victory to overcome her – and may the experience of that verse in Hart’s hymn be ours:

“Thy garden is the place
Where pride can not intrude;
For should it dare to enter there,
‘Twould soon be drown’d in blood.”

J. C. Philpot

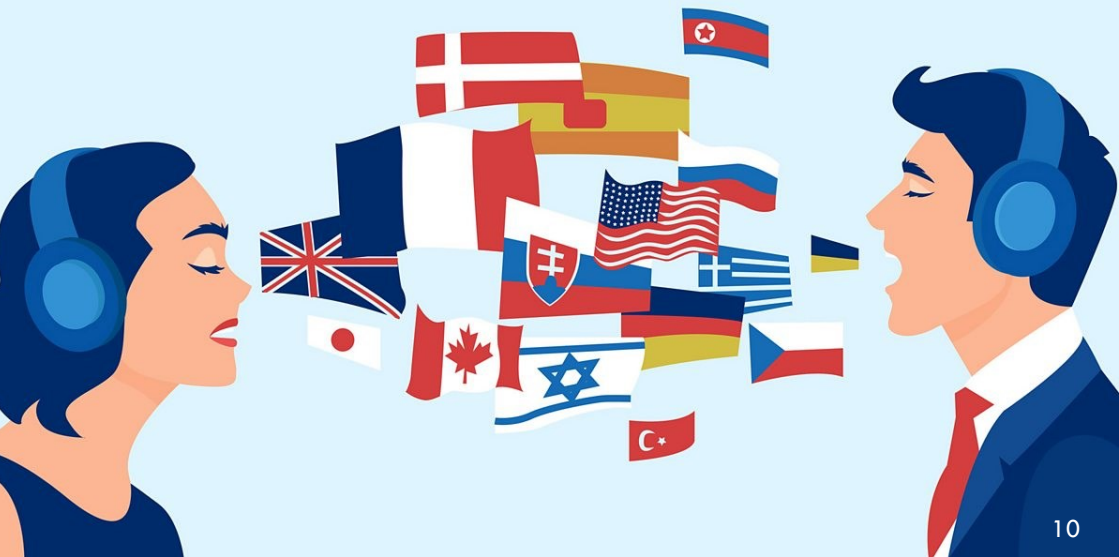
UNRESTRAINED MAN

By: Rev. Ivan Foster (Rtd)

“And the LORD said, Behold, the people is one, and they have all one language; and this they begin to do: and now nothing will be restrained from them, which they have imagined to do. Go to, let us go down, and there confound their language, that they may not understand one another’s speech. So the LORD scattered them abroad from thence upon the face of all the earth: and they left off to build the city” (Genesis 11:6-8).

Man was never prepared to remain within the territory assigned him by the Lord; but like a recalcitrant animal, he has stalked up and down the boundary line looking for a means to escape the limitations that the Lord has placed upon him (for his own good and safety) and enter upon territories forbidden of God.

In the text, we are reminded of the occasion, just after the flood, when sinful man manifests his failure to learn anything from the display of judgment against sin which wiped out all of humanity, save the eight members of Noah’s family.



The will of God for the family of Noah and their descendants is set forth in God's command to Noah after the flood waters had completely dissipated from the earth. "And God spake unto Noah, saying, Go forth of the ark, thou, and thy wife, and thy sons, and they sons' wives with thee. Bring forth with thee every living thing that is with thee, of all flesh, both of fowl, and of cattle, and of every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth; that they may breed abundantly in the earth, and be fruitful, and multiply upon the earth. And Noah went forth, and his sons, and his wife, and his sons' wives with him" (Gen. 8:15-18).

The earth was to be replenished with a new race of humans and animals, springing from those borne to safety in the ark; but, as our text shows, post-diluvian man was as stubbornly opposed to doing God's will as was ante-diluvian man!

Rather than spreading across the lands of the new earth they said: "Go to, let us make brick, and burn them thoroughly. And they had brick for stone, and slime had they for mortar. And they said, Go to, let us build us a city and a tower, whose top may reach unto Heaven; and let us make us a name, lest we be scattered abroad upon the face of the whole earth" (Gen. 11:3-4).

This was not just a defying of God's command to spread abroad and re-populate the earth; it was also a defying of God in that they were determined to abandon the spiritual and religious commands of God and institute a new, a false and idolatrous system of worship.

The reference to "a tower, whose top may reach unto Heaven" was not a building of extreme height, but rather a building in which would be provided, in their estimation, a way to reach Heaven, an alternative to God's way of salvation. The response of God is but another act, subsequent to His flooding of the whole earth, to curb and curtail the obstinate rebellion of man who, under the devil's

urgings, as was seen in the case of Adam and Eve, wanted to wrestle free of God's rule.

The words of the rejectors of Christ, set forth in Christ's parable – “We will not have this Man to reign over us” (Luke 19:14) – are but a sinful chant that man has repeated throughout the ages and the Tower of Babel was but one of the many locations where it was sung!

What God says of man in our text was true back then and is true still today. “Nothing will be restrained from them, which they have imagined to do.” Man will stop at nothing in his determination to defy God and go beyond the limits God has set for him. He will not abide within the terms of God's Law. He will not abide within the boundaries of moral and social behaviour that God has ordained; but rather man, “professing themselves to be wise, they became fools, and changed the glory of the uncorruptible God into an image made like to corruptible man, and to birds, and fourfooted beasts, and creeping things. Wherefore God also gave them up to uncleanness through the lusts of their own hearts, to dishonour their own bodies between themselves: who changed the truth of God into a lie, and worshipped and served the creature more than the Creator, who is blessed for ever. Amen. For this cause God gave them up unto vile affections: for even their women did change the natural use into that which is against nature: and likewise also the men, leaving the natural use of the woman, burned in their lust one toward another; men with men working that which is unseemly, and receiving in themselves that recompense of their error which was meet” (Rom. 1:23-27).

It is to be noted that religious apostasy is followed by moral depravity and a sinking down into abominable practices which, in turn, has brought upon those engaged in such, a “recompense of their error which was meet.” One has only to think of the plague of ‘AIDS’ and the mental problems that have reportedly afflicted those who follow the sodomite lifestyle.

PATRIOTISM

by Ambrose Serle (1742-1812)

Political hypocrisy hath made the laudable name of patriotism almost suspicious; but he that is sincere in the best things and walks as in the sight of God will, of all men, be faithful in lower matters and carry a sterling integrity from religion into every duty of social life. On the other hand, he that regards not God, nor yet other men but as they are convenient to himself, may very justly be suspected in his fidelity to his country. Profit and vain glory, indeed, will carry some men very far, as they have done; but strip a worldly man of these and where are his motives for promoting the national welfare?

The Christian is not a mere showy patriot, for lucre or for fame; but he is, what none but a Christian can be, a patriot in spirit and in truth, pouring out his secret and earnest prayers before God for the true prosperity of the land. The world, indeed, hath a low opinion of this artillery of Heaven; but one who is wiser than the world hath told us that the effectual, fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much. And if one such person, like an Elias, can be instrumental in drawing down public blessings, what may not be hoped for from the prayers of legions of Christians throughout the nation? We may read what the prayers of such men have done in Hebrews 11: 33,34.

The Christian patriot will rejoice in all the good done to his country, though other hands rather than his have been employed in the doing of it. That man deserves not the name of a patriot to whom the peace,



honour and prosperity of his country are valuable only as they may contribute to his own.

As the Christian's patriotism is founded upon the pure principles of religion, he is more desirous of his country's prosperity in true worth and virtue than in mere power and riches, which are often the dangerous fuel of luxury and pride both to States and individuals. He is no enemy to commerce, for a thousand reasons, but an utter enemy to commercial vices, for reasons infinite and eternal.

In wishing for his country all kinds of temporal blessings, he cannot forget to ask before God for a greater abundance of spiritual mercies. His heart's desire is, that the Gospel and religion of Jesus Christ, happily countenanced and established by the laws, may forever flourish through the land in all its genuine power and purity. Though he is not - and cannot be - an enemy to any man - yet he is a well-principled adversary to all wicked and blasphemous errors and opinions and to all profligacies of heart and life which flow from them and which have over-run the country with guilt and shame.

The Christian carries religion into his patriotism, but not his patriotism into his religion. The things of God are too holy and sacred with him, either to be mixed with or truckle to the little, low politics of men. He is the citizen of a better country and a pilgrim in all others, though a peculiar friend to that in which he was born.

As he can say with Samuel, God forbid that I should sin against the Lord, in ceasing to pray for this nation, so he would act upon all occasions - as Samuel did - and endeavour to promote the welfare of his country by being a good countryman. He will contribute fairly and cheerfully to her burdens, live in all Godly quietness and honesty among his people and pray faithfully and earnestly for the whole public weal as a Christian. Were all the subjects such patriots, the nation, with God's blessing, would have but small reason to live in fear of the most mighty and numerous enemies.

IS CHRIST YOUR LORD?

By: **Arthur W. Pink**

We do not ask: Is Christ your “Saviour?” - but is He, really and truly, your Lord? If He is not your Lord, then He is most certainly not your “Saviour.” Those who have not received Christ Jesus as their “Lord” and yet suppose Him to be their “Saviour” are deluded and their hope rests on a foundation of sand. Multitudes are deceived on this vital point and, therefore, if you value your soul, we implore you to give a most careful reading to this short article.

When we ask, is Christ your Lord? we do not inquire - do you believe in the Godhead of Jesus of Nazareth? The demons do that (Matt. 8:28-29) and yet perish notwithstanding! You may be firmly convinced of the Deity of Christ and yet be in your sins. You may speak of Him with the utmost reverence, accord Him His Divine titles in your prayers - and yet be unsaved. You may abominate those who traduce His person and deny His Divinity and yet have no spiritual love for Him at all.

When we ask - Is Christ your Lord? - we mean, does He in very deed occupy the throne of your heart and does He actually rule over your life? “We have turned everyone to his own way” (Is. 53:6) describes the course which we all follow by nature. Before conversion every soul lives to please self. Of old it was written - “Every man did that which was right in his own eyes” - and why? - “In those days there was no King in Israel” (Judges 21:25). Ah! that is the point we desire to make clear. Until Christ becomes your King (1 Tim. 1:17; Rev. 15:3), until you bow to His sceptre, until His Will becomes the rule of your life, self dominates - and thus Christ is disowned.

When the Holy Spirit begins His work of grace in a soul, He first convicts of sin. He shows the real and awful nature of sin. He makes

each one realise that it is a species of insurrection, a defying of God's authority, a setting of your Will against His. He shows that in going your "own way" (Is. 53:6), in pleasing yourself, you have been fighting against God. As the eyes are opened to see what a lifelong rebel you have been, how indifferent to God's honour, how unconcerned about His Will – you are filled with anguish and horror and made to marvel that the thrice Holy One has not long since cast you into Hell. Reader, have you ever gone through this experience? If not, there is very grave reason to fear that you are yet spiritually dead!

Conversion, true conversion, saving conversion, is a turning from sin to God in Christ. It is a throwing down of the weapons of warfare against Him, a ceasing to despise and ignore His authority. New Testament conversion is described thus: "Ye turned to God from idols to serve [to be in subjection to, to obey] the living and true God" (1 Thess. 1:9). An "idol" is any object to which we give what is due alone unto God - the supreme place in our affections, the moulding influence of our hearts, the dominating power of our lives. Conversion is a complete about face, the heart and will repudiating sin, self, and the world. Genuine conversion is always evidenced by "Lord, what wilt Thou have me to do?" (Acts 9:6); it is an unreserved surrendering of ourselves to His Holy Will. Have you yielded yourself to Him (Rom. 6:13)?

There are many people who would like to be saved from Hell, but who do not want to be saved from self-will, from having their own way, from a life of (some form of) worldliness; but God will not save them on their terms. To be saved, we must submit to His terms: "Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts: and let him return unto the Lord [having revolted from Him in Adam], and He will have mercy upon him" (Is. 55:7). Said Christ, "Whosoever he be of you that forsaketh not all that he hath [all that is opposed to Me], he cannot be My disciple" (Luke 14:33). Men must be turned [by God] "from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto

God,” before they can “receive forgiveness of sins, and inheritance among them which are sanctified” (Acts 26:18).

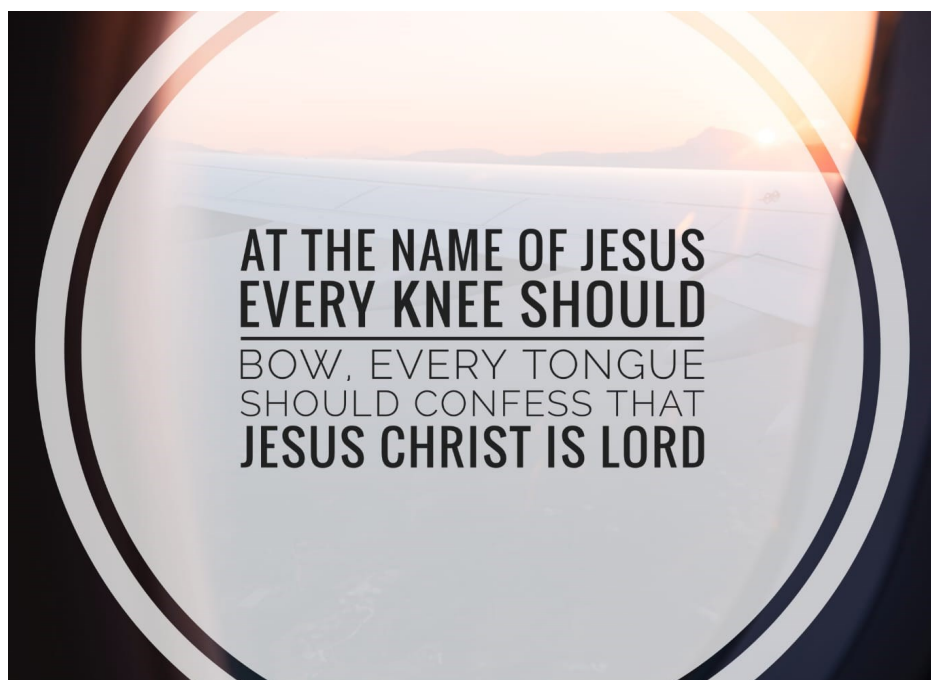
“As ye have therefore received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk ye in Him” (Col. 2:6). That is an exhortation to Christians, and its force is - continue as you began; but how had they “begun”? By receiving “Christ Jesus the Lord,” by surrendering to Him, by subjecting themselves to His Will, by ceasing to please themselves. His authority was now owned. His Commands now became their rule of life. His love constrained them to a glad and unreserved obedience. They “gave their own selves to the Lord” (2 Cor. 8:5). Have you done this? Have you? Do the details of your life evidence it? Can those with whom you come into contact see that you are no more living to please self (2 Cor. 5:15)?

Oh my reader, make no mistake upon this point: a conversion which the Holy Spirit produces is a very radical thing. It is a miracle of grace. It is the enthroning of Christ in the life - and such conversions are rare indeed. Multitudes of people have just sufficient “religion” to make them miserable. They refuse to forsake every known sin and there is no true peace for any soul until he does. They have never “received Christ Jesus the Lord” (Col. 2:6). Had they done so, “the joy of the LORD” would be their strength (Neh. 8:10); but the language of their hearts and lives (not their “lips”) is - “we will not have this man to reign over us” (Luke 19:14). Is that your case?

The great miracle of grace consists in changing a lawless rebel into a loving and loyal subject. It is a “renewing” of the heart, so that the favoured subject of it has come to loathe what he loved - and the things he once found irksome are now winsome (2 Cor. 5:17). He delights “in the law of God after the inward man” (Rom. 7:22). He discovers that Christ’s “commandments are not grievous” (1 John 5:3), and that “in keeping of them there is great reward” (Ps. 19:11). Is this your experience? It would be if you received Christ Jesus THE LORD!

But to receive Christ Jesus the Lord is altogether beyond unaided human power. That is the last thing which the unrenewed heart wants to do. There must be a supernatural change of heart before there is even the desire for Christ to occupy its throne - and that change none but God can work (1 Cor. 12:3). Therefore "Seek ye the LORD while He may be found" (Is. 55:6). Search for Him with all your heart (Jer. 29:13). You may have been a professing Christian for years past - and you may have been quite sincere in your profession - but, if God has condescended to use this article to show you that you have never really and truly "received Christ Jesus the Lord," if now in your own soul and conscience you realise that SELF has ruled you hitherto, will you not now get down on your knees and confess to God. Confess to Him your self-will, your rebellion against Him - and beg Him to so work in you that, without further delay, you may be enabled to yield yourself completely to His Will and become His subject, His servant, His loving slave, in deed and in truth?

Slightly edited



AN ANTIDOTE FOR DISCOURAGEMENT

“Consider Him” Hebrews 12:3

It is the plan of Satan so to attack and harass the people of God that they will become “wearied and faint” in their minds. The word *wearied* means ‘exhausted,’ being so despondent and discouraged as to have one’s spirit broken. The consequence of that is to be “faint” of mind. *Faint* literally means ‘to lose out,’ or to ‘relax.’ It signifies an abandonment of one’s stand for the Gospel and the Word of God. Surely this is Satan’s aim in these days. He is determined to break the spirit of the faithful remnant and cause them to relax in their stand against the enemies of truth.

How can such a tragedy be prevented? The words of our text signify the only preventative: *Consider Him*. The word *consider* means ‘to compute by comparing things in their due proportion.’ In the context here, Paul is urging believers to form an accurate estimate of Christ’s suffering and compare their own with it. The Apostle speaks of Christ enduring “such contradiction of sinner against Himself.” The idea is that Christ’s sufferings were unprecedented, unparalleled and unsurpassed. In effect, therefore, Paul is drawing our attention to the cross and Christ’s agony there. Ultimately, he is directing us to the love of Christ for His church. When we “behold, and see” (Lam. 1:12) that there is no sorrow like Christ’s, we are reminded of Christ’s mighty love for the elect. It is an unconditional, sacrificial and immutable love. Such love calls for faithfulness and steadfastness for Christ. May each of us catch a fresh glimpse of Christ’s love in His work on the cross and be strengthened as we strive against sin.

Rev. John Greer, from Eagles Wings, Daily Devotional Meditations

NEWS AND CURRENT AFFAIRS



Central Bank Digital Currency/Digital ID

by Ian Henderson, CW Chairman

The UK Government and the Treasury are planning, in the near future, to launch a Central Bank Digital Currency (CBDC). So what actually is CBDC?

CBDC is different from cash – it is not just an alternative way of paying bills! It is more akin to Government-issued tokens, that can only be spent according to their conditions. It gives unprecedented level of control over each one of us – not simply as when buying or selling, but now involving trackable devices which will be required for all transactions.

Every financial transaction will be tracked, traced and controlled. Purchasing or selling so-called unapproved items will be banned. The elimination of cash is the eventual aim - and its introduction will be a hammer-blow to all respectable citizens (pro-life, pro-family etc.).

Governments and Central Banks are relishing the prospect – we must do all in our power to resist the move to a cash-less society. Say NO now by writing to the Chancellor of the Exchequer and expressing your concerns.



At the same time, the UK is heading towards a national ID system – aimed at easing the public's interaction with Government services.

However, while promising efficiency and seamless identity verification, this system – as with all centralised ID systems – also allows for excessive surveillance and tracking, posing a threat to personal privacy and freedom.

The One Login System enables individuals to access Government services – and plans to integrate Companies House, Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA) and the Department of Work and Pensions (DWP) and is set to debut in the coming months.

By Spring 2024, HM Revenue and Customs (HMRC) will start directing new users to the One Login System and the end of March, 2025 is targeted as the time-frame for integration of the 'vast bulk' of Government services.

We must pray that the Will of the Lord will be known in these matters and that decent law-abiding citizens will not be subject to undue harassment and interference as they live their lives to the glory of God.

“WOKE” Disney

Frank Bergman, American Slay News, 25th June, 2023

Disney lost nearly 900 million dollars at the Box Office in 2022, according to a new industry analysis – and is now facing an unprecedented financial crisis.

Disney CEO Bob Iger is attempting to slash 5.5 billion dollars in spending, including the laying-off of 7000 workers worldwide. Disney's financial woes come as the Company increasingly embraces transgenderism, critical race theory and other forms of WOKE politics in its entertainment aimed at children.

Persecution of Christians –

‘Notes and Comments’, The Free Presbyterian Magazine, July, 2023

A report prepared for the UK Foreign Secretary by the Bishop of Truro states - ‘Across the globe, in the Middle East, Asia and Africa, Christians are being bullied, arrested, gaoled, expelled and executed. Christianity is by most calculations the most persecuted religion of modern times.’ To give an idea of the numbers involved, the charity, Open Doors, shared the following statistics for 2022, which they say are a conservative estimate:

- 5,600 Christians killed for their faith.
- 2,100 churches attacked or closed (mostly in China).
- 124,000 Christians forcibly displaced from their homes because of their faith, almost 15,000 of whom became refugees.
- 360 million Christians suffering high levels of persecution for their faith in over 50 countries.

North Korea has long been the world’s most notorious country for persecuting Christians and, according to all the Agencies which monitor persecution, it remains in the number one spot. This dictatorship is a brutally hostile place for Christians to live. If discovered by the Authorities, believers are either sent to labour camps as political prisoners or killed on the spot. Even owning a Bible is a serious crime and will be severely punished.

Nigeria has a Christian majority in the south of the country, but Islamic militants from the north conduct raids on the Christian community; the Nigerian Government denies it is religious persecution and so the raids continue with impunity. In sub-Saharan Africa, Islamist extremism has spread well beyond Nigeria. Open Doors fears that Nigeria will soon trigger ‘a vast humanitarian catastrophe’ across the continent.

Christians face most physical violence in Nigeria, Pakistan and India.

During the Covid pandemic there was a great deal of discrimination, especially in Pakistan and India, with Christians often being refused help and food aid.

Christians are persecuted for a number of reasons, which include: Islamic oppression (8 of the top 10 persecuting countries), dictatorial paranoia (Syria and Uzbekistan), Communist and post-Communist oppression (North Korea and China) and religious nationalism (India and Myanmar).

In the United Kingdom, we should be thankful to have laws which protect our religious freedoms. However, there is an atmosphere, certainly in the workplace, where one must be very careful of expressing a Christian opinion, especially when it is opposed to the current wholesale acceptance of abortion, same-sex marriage, gender fluidity etc. There are many examples of discrimination and heavy-handed officialdom, but they cannot be compared with the persecution experienced in other countries. We must not permit our current religious freedoms to be eroded.

In our progressively 'liberal' society, some honourable vocations such as medicine, teaching and working as a Registrar are becoming intolerable for some to continue in without violating Christian principles. There is a steady drip, drip of subtle, and not so subtle, erosion of freedom of speech with the expression of some opinions being described as hate crimes. This may yet lead to the censoring of the preaching of the Gospel and must be resisted at all costs. "Watch ye, stand fast in the faith, quit you like men, be strong" (1 Cor. 16:13).

As for those who are persecuted and discriminated against for taking the name of Christ on their lips, we should prayerfully "remember them that are in bonds, as bound with them; and them which suffer adversity, as being yourselves also in the body" (Heb. 13:3).

“If God be for us, who can be against us?”

By: George Rose

There is much need of prayer to God at this time that He will once more appear for us as a nation and give our rulers wisdom in difficult days. He is the Almighty disposer of nations, men - and *“His eyes run to and fro through the whole earth”* (Zech. 4:10). Also, *“It is He that sitteth upon the circle of the earth, and the inhabitants thereof are as grasshoppers”* (Isa. 40:22). Nations have thrown aside the Word of God and, consequently, they have forsaken all right regard for truth and equity. With some “might is right,” as we have already witnessed. No confidence can be placed in rulers who have no regard or fear of God.

Those who are led by the Spirit of God to read that which is happening today in the light of God’s Word can see that the last days are upon us, as the Scriptures are being fulfilled before our eyes. This is evidenced by abounding wickedness and the “distress of nations, with perplexity; the sea and the waves roaring; men’s hearts failing them for fear, and for looking after those things which are coming on the earth” (Luke 21:25,26). However, nothing can take place to frustrate God’s purposes; and, although men do not mean it to be so, they are fulfilling what He has foreseen and foretold shall come to pass.

The Judge of all the earth will do right; and may He give us grace to leave all things in His hands. He judges nations and individuals and, although judgment may seem to slumber, yet according as nations sow, they will surely reap. God over-rules the wickedness of men to execute His judgments. When Nebuchadnezzar invaded Judah and carried away the Jews

into captivity, God was fulfilling His words of threatening to them for their sins, as He had spoken by His prophets; yet He afterwards judged the Babylonians for their cruelty and delivered the Jews by Cyrus. Also, when the Jews crucified Jesus, God judged them for it, because it was by wicked hands that He was crucified and slain. Truly,

His judgments are too deep
For reason's line to sound.

We have had much for which to be thankful. God has preserved us in many instances, when nothing but His direct interposition could avail. May we put our trust in the Lord, who is able to make the devices of men of none effect and seek for a thankful heart for our many mercies, praying that they may be continued to us and to our children.



All-Needful Grace for all Times and All Circumstances

**Letter from 'The Gospel Magazine' (date unknown)
by 'Old Jonathan'**

My Dear Aged Friends,

Although there are trials and afflictions specially connected with age and increasing infirmities, when, as it is written, “the grasshopper shall be a burden and desire shall fail,” yet there are the promises of all-needed grace and strength for such conditions and circumstances.

The Lord has declared, in His most blessed Word, that He will never leave nor forsake His people. The parting words of Jesus to His disciples, you will remember, “Lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world.” He knows well – yea, infinitely better than they can know – the manifold weaknesses, sins and infirmities of His people. He knows, too, full well, all the besetments of the dangerous world through which they are called to pass on their way to their Heavenly inheritance. He knows, moreover, the spleen and subtlety of that great enemy who warreth against their souls.

Our comfort and satisfaction are the covenant assurance of His own infallible Word, that He has mercifully provided for and against all. Every privation, difficulty, temptation and sorrow, falling to the estate of His people, is endorsed with “My grace is sufficient for thee.” The Lord Jehovah can make no mistakes. He is infinitely wise, as well as boundless in love and omnipotent in power. He sits as a Refiner, to purify the sons of Levi. He watches with unwearying interest the fiery process to which He subjects the faith of His dear people. Not one atom of fuel more than is actually needful will He put into the furnace. There shall be enough – and only enough – to burn up the refuse – the “wood, hay, and stubble” – which cleave to our poor, proud hearts and fallen and corrupt nature; for “the fire shall try every man’s work, of what sort it is.” At the same time, it is written, for the comfort and peace of every such tried one - “If any man’s

work shall be burned, he shall suffer loss; but he himself shall be saved; yet so as by fire.” Hence, whilst there is a positive engagement – an engagement as sure and as complete as Jehovah can make it – that all the Lord’s people shall be sustained and finally brought off more than conquerors through Him that hath loved them, yet there is not, at the same time, the least ground whatever for creature-boasting, or fleshly pride and satisfaction. From first to last, it shall be seen that the salvation of any poor sinner is wholly and solely by an act of rich, free and sovereign grace, or God’s goodwill and free favour.

Now the great question is, are we personally *willing* thus to be saved – yea, upon the same humbling terms as a Mary Magdalene, or a dying thief, or poor publican was saved? Have we been shown, by the Spirit of the living God, our own utter vileness, destitution and incapability of good? And, are we sensible that it is only the blood of the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world – that blood which cleanseth from all sin – that can atone for and cleanse our poor sin-polluted souls? Oh, then, if this be the case, we have nothing to fear; but, on the contrary, every cause for rejoicing, because it is written by the Apostle, “Being confident of this very thing, that He which hath begun a good work in you, will perform it unto the day of Jesus Christ.”

Again, it is written, “The righteous shall hold on his way, and he that hath clean hands shall be stronger and stronger.” Moreover, how special and how gracious are the promises to the old and declining: “Those that be planted in the house of the Lord shall flourish in the courts of our God. They shall still bring forth fruit in old age; they shall be fat and flourishing; to shew that the Lord is upright: He is my rock, and there is no unrighteousness in Him;” and again, “And even to your old age I am He; and even to hoar hairs will I carry you: I have made, and I will bear; even I will carry, and will deliver you.”

That the Lord the Spirit may apply these precious words to your hearts, my dear aged friends, is the hearty prayer of your fellow-pilgrim and companion in tribulation.



CHRISTIAN
WATCH

PO Box 6526,
Leamington Spa,
CV31 9NL

christianwatch.org.uk
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