



# CHRISTIAN WATCH

Issue 48

A Protestant Biblical Witness

Nov/Dec 2023

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

Mark 13:37

**Christian Watch Annual Subscription (2024),**  
including UK postage — £12

## **“JESUS ONLY”**

(Matthew 17:8)

(An Acrostic)

**J ESUS ONLY!** Great Source of truth and grace! — *John* :14

**E** lect in Thee, Thou art my Hiding place — *Ephesians* 1:4

**S** ought out by Thee, I love to seek Thy face. — *Isaiah* 62:12

**U** nited to Thee, who now can sever? — *Romans* 8:35-39

**S** aved once in Thee, I am saved for ever! — *John* 10:28

**O** nward, then, I press; upward I aspire. — *Philemon* 3:14

**N**earer to Thee — this is my heart's desire. — *S. of Solomon* 1:4

**L** ife in Thee is joy — without Thee lonely. — *Psalms* 16:11

**Y** ea, my all's in Thee, my **“JESUS ONLY!”** — *Colossians* 3:11

**R. Cornall** (1876)

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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,*

As we draw to the close of another year, let us give thanks to Almighty God for His innumerable blessings and rejoice without ceasing that, whatever circumstances arise, our God is Sovereign over all.

In the Book of Habakkuk, we read of how the Jewish people had departed from Almighty God. They had chosen the path of compromise and worldliness, much to the displeasure of both the Lord and the prophet Habakkuk. In verse one of the first chapter we read the following – “The burden which Habakkuk the prophet did see.” When I read these opening words, I ask myself – do we possess the same burden for our own nation? Sin and immorality of all shades seem to be the order of the day. In the national realm, we find laws legalising the most wicked of things – from sodomy to the murder of the unborn. In the sphere of education, our children are being bombarded with the devil’s attacks in the most perverse of ways. We live in days when, even in Christendom, apostasy seems to be prevalent amongst evangelical Christians - and compromise and worldliness seem to be the norm.

So what can we do? Habakkuk encouraged himself with the knowledge that God is Sovereign. In chapter 1:12 he writes: “Art Thou not from everlasting, O Lord my God, mine Holy One?” and also with the knowledge that better days lie ahead at the return of Christ when he writes in chapter 2:14 – “for the earth shall be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the Lord.”

Let us learn from the lessons of Habakkuk. We ought to hate sin and to be burdened whenever we see compromise abound. Let us encourage ourselves in the knowledge that God is still Sovereign and He continues to answer the prayers of His people today.

A few years ago – 2016 to be precise – our Prime Minister, David Cameron was forced to resign following his humiliating defeat in the Brexit campaign. Now – 7 years on – we learn that he is to be brought back into front-line politics as Foreign Secretary. In addition, we are informed that another former Prime Minister, Tony Blair, has recently set up a meeting between the Leader of the Labour Party, Sir Keir Starmer and Emmanuel Macron, President of France – a meeting planned to coincide with the announcement of an EU ‘associate membership’, a scheme which France is said to be keen for the UK to be part of. An insider is quoted as saying that Tony Blair is ‘convinced that Brexit is now a vote-winner’ and he is pushing for Sir Keir Starmer to open the door to its reversal in order to win the next election. Although Brexit has still not been fully implemented – as we see in Northern Ireland (an integral part of the Union of Great Britain and Northern Ireland) – we must be on our guard against any underhand activity to reverse the Brexit vote.

At the end of His earthly ministry, the Lord Jesus Christ sent out His small band of followers to continue the work He had begun. The disciples were few; the task was vast; the message appeared to many as a stumbling block or foolishness but, wonderfully, He promised to be with His followers to the end of the age. He is still with us today, so when we share the Gospel message, we have that assurance that the Lord is with us, with all authority in Heaven and on earth.

We wish you the compliments of the season and trust that the Lord will continue to bless you in your labours for Him in 2024. The subscription rate for 2024 remains unchanged and our Secretary looks forward to hearing from you in the next few weeks.

Yours in His service,

*Ian Henderson*

Ian R. Henderson (Chairman)

# AS THE WATERS COVER THE SEA

**Peter L. Meney**

*New Focus* <https://go-newfocus.co.uk>

It is a beautiful and powerful image which God the Holy Spirit supplies to His church when He tells us - “the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea” (Isaiah 11:9). Who has not stood beside the ocean and marvelled at the majesty and magnificence of its power? Its breadth, depth, volume, ceaseless tides and crashing energy humbles our mind.

Both Isaiah and Habakkuk employ this maritime imagery as though to emphasise by repetition the Lord’s promise - “the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord.” We call our earth ‘the blue planet’ because of the extensiveness of the oceans and seas. God’s prophets are telling us that just as extensive as the oceans of the world shall be the knowledge of God’s glory to His people. Seven hundred years before the birth of Christ, God’s prophets set down this truth.

## **Our Message to the World**

Isaiah speaks often of the last days and the Apostles tell us these



days are the last days. Accordingly, there has never been a time when the truth of the prophets' words could be more easily demonstrated. Communication has never been easier nor information more widely available. There has never before been a time when the Gospel of grace and the glorious message of God's salvation has been more globally available.

As the messages goes forth, we may wonder if people are listening, but that is God's business. For our part we eagerly seek an audience knowing the Lord has promised to save sinners by the preaching of the Gospel and the hearing of faith. While technology has vastly increased 'noise' in the world, the fact remains - there has never been a time of greater access to the message of Jesus Christ. The words of the prophets have been fulfilled in a very real way.

## **Our Promise of Success**

Our Gospel is the power of God unto salvation. It is the most potent message in the world. Gospel preaching does not merely change opinions, it changes hearts and minds. It converts souls. This message is both a privilege to possess and an honour to share. When Isaiah wrote of the earth being full of the knowledge of the Lord, he could not have conceived how it would happen. We have lived to see it fulfilled.

"The earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea." Paul confirms this - "the preaching of Jesus Christ," he says, "...now is made manifest, and by the Scriptures of the prophets, according to the commandment of the everlasting God, made known to all nations for the obedience of faith" (Romans 16:25,26).

Let us cast our bread upon the waters, brethren; after many days we shall find it.



## TRUST

How do we trust in the Lord? We cannot trust in Him till we know Him. Do I trust a man I do not know? It would not do in this metropolis. I must know a man to trust him. So it is spiritually. We must know the Lord deserves our trust before we can put our trust in Him; we must have proved His faithfulness before we can fully rest in Him. In a word, *trust* implies this: though we cannot see the object of our trust, yet we rely on Him from the knowledge we have of His faithfulness. It is like the wife, who has implicit confidence in her husband: he is away from her, but her confidence in his faithfulness fails not. It is the confidence of the child in his parents, at school and separated by many miles. It is the trust of friends divided by distance. Trust does not require sight, it relies upon the object trusted in, from what we knew of him [her], though present sight and present experience be denied.

The nature of faith is to trust in the dark, when all appearances are against it, to trust that a calm will come, though a storm be overhead; to trust that God will appear, though nothing but evil be felt. There is something filial in this, something Heavenly, spiritual. Not the bold presumption of the daring or the despairing fears of the desponding, but something beyond both the one and the other, equally remote from the rashness of presumption and the horror of despair. There is a mingling of holy affection connected with this trust, springing out of a reception of past favours, insuring favours to come and all linked with a simple hanging upon the Lord, because He is what He is. There is a looking to and relying upon the Lord because we have felt Him to be the Lord and because we have no other refuge.

*Joseph Irons*



# THE NEW ETHICS

By: **W. T. Foley**

The Gospel Magazine, March-April, 2023

The new gold standard of ethics today is the teaching of the LGBTQI+ and sadly the professional clergy seem to be taken into this position by the new pluralistic context of morality which is like shifting sand.

The erosion of the monogamous heterosexual couple is happening in our society at an incredible pace.

Where will it end? I suggest the outcome that happened to Sodom and Gomorrah will indeed happen to the exponents of this view.

If the Bible is the basis of our morality, then it is abundantly obvious that this terrible evil will be judged by the Lord and wrath and Hell awaits those who seek to pervert God's plan in any way, which is the



union of one man and one woman in marriage for the procreation, companionship, fidelity and pleasure between only a Biblically defined husband and wife.

Man may try and reverse the order of God's creation, but he will dismally fail. Male and female is defined by God. God created male and female (Gen. 1:27; 5:2 and Matt. 19:4; Mark 10:6). No political agenda or legislation by any Parliament can change the truth of God concerning marriage between a God defined man and a God defined woman. Nature has fixed our gender and sexuality.

God has not advised humanity at any time in history or in the Bible that He has broadened the definition of marriage to include illicit sexual relationships between men and men and women and women. To go against God is folly and to go against nature will result in more harm and death. The Triune God of the Old Testament is the same Triune God of the New Testament and His attributes and character remain unchanged and unchanging.

Furthermore, the monstrous LGBTQI+ friendly media and the disinformation bubble they have created is a real threat to humanity's morality; and the sexualisation of children indicates that we are justly condemned under the wrath of God.

In addition, liberal and post-modern theologians seem to be most unclear in their interpretation of the Bible. They put a skewed perspective on texts which were previously considered as clear in their meaning in the teaching about morality. This, of course, suits admirably the argument that scholarship has moved on and therefore what the Bible teaches about morality can be interpreted to suit the circumstances. Nothing is fixed but moving and is only relative – this is the idea behind the thinking. This means, in effect, that there are no absolutes in morality. Go by your propensity or proclivities is the new narrative. Post truth, pluralism and post-modernism are all part of the new ethics. We are almost persuaded that it is a developing field of

knowledge.

Does it sound familiar? In the 1960s and perhaps earlier in the 1950s the push for so-called 'situational ethics' came into vogue; but the distorted morality has spread so wide now. There is a big push in other areas of ethics for abortion, euthanasia, infanticide, eugenics and cloning etc, all coinciding with the LGBTQI+ agenda – and so-called equality issues – which are seeking to permeate the entire world and reverse God's creation order. The idea of a Supreme Creator is called into question more and more and His Name is blasphemously used casually in the entertainment industry etc. Also, the notion 'More old people and more babies' – both are problems for society! This is why certain evil people are pushing euthanasia and abortion. The point that we are considering is this compromising morality which is being influenced/presented as progress by the LGBTQI+ equality agenda etc. Sadly, the intrinsic value of all human life and morality has been reduced in our day!

But God is not mocked - and what is set forth in God's commandments and laws and in the magnificent Book of Romans, in chapter one, is going to see fulfilment. Indeed, the Bible declares clearly the sinfulness of humanity and what we are witnessing should in one sense remind us what happens if "God gives us up to a reprobate mind." We are under wrath and judgement for ungodliness and unrighteousness. The only hope for sinners who are morally bankrupt is repentance towards God and faith in Jesus Christ, the Saviour and Redeemer of Adam's fallen race.

Note in particular Romans 1:18-19:

*"For the wrath of God is revealed from Heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who hold the truth in unrighteousness; because that which may be known of God is manifest in them; for God hath shewed it unto them."*

## RIGHTEOUSNESS

There are three kinds of righteousness, or at least three kinds of righteousness which bear that name.

There is **inherent** righteousness - of which we have none.

There is **imputed** righteousness - which is our justification.

There is **imparted** righteousness - when God the Spirit makes us new creatures and raises up in the heart that “new man, which after God” (that is “after the image of God”) “is created in righteousness and true holiness.”

When the Lord, therefore, said - “Except your righteousness shall exceed the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees, ye shall in no case enter into the Kingdom of Heaven” - He did not mean only an **external** righteousness wrought out by His obedience to the law *for them, but an **internal** righteousness wrought out by the Holy Spirit *in* them. Thus we read of the inward as well as the outward apparel of the Church - “The King’s daughter is all glorious **within; her clothing** is of wrought gold.”*

Two kinds of righteousness belong to the Queen; her imputed righteousness is her **outward** robe - “the **clothing of wrought gold;**” but imparted righteousness is her **inward** adorning, which makes her “all-glorious **within.**” This inward glory is the new man in the heart, with all his gifts and graces, what Peter calls “the Divine nature” - “Christ in the heart, the hope of glory.”

*J. C. Philpot*

## NEWS AND CURRENT AFFAIRS



### **Finnish Christian MP acquitted over 'hate crime' Bible tweet - again** Christian Institute website, 16 November, 2023

An appeal court in Finland has dismissed all charges of alleged 'hate speech' against Dr. Päivi Räsänen after she shared the Bible's teaching on homosexuality. In a unanimous decision, judges in Helsinki could find 'no reason' to overturn an earlier ruling which had upheld Dr. Räsänen's right to free speech.

Legal proceedings began in 2019, when Finland's Prosecutor General claimed Rasanen's statements upholding Biblical sexual ethics were derogatory, discriminatory and may have violated the dignity of homosexual people.

Welcoming the verdict, Dr. Räsänen said: "I am deeply relieved. The court has fully endorsed and upheld the decision of the District Court,



which recognised everyone's right to free speech. It isn't a crime to tweet a Bible verse or to engage in public discourse with a Christian perspective. The attempts made to prosecute me for expressing my beliefs have resulted in an immensely trying four years, but my hope is that the result will stand as a key precedent to protect the human right to free speech."

At a Press Conference following the acquittal, she said that she had never thought of giving up. "Why should I? It was about the Word of God. My whole family supported me, but there have been difficult moments."

Paul Coleman, of religious freedom organisation ADF International, who are supporting Rasanen's case, bore testimony to her "brave commitment to standing firm."

He also said: "We are relieved to see courts enforce the rule of law when state authorities overstep by seeking to penalise and censor statements that they dislike."

He warned, however, that 'hate speech' laws risk shutting down "important public debates" and pose "a grave threat to our democracies."

State Prosecutor Anu Mantila has already indicated her readiness to appeal to the Supreme Court.

## **Chinese Communist Party Government Rewrites Portions of the Bible – 'Persecution' Magazine, September, 2023**

Reports indicate that the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) has rewritten portions of the Bible to 'provide active guidance for religion and



socialism to co-exist.’ According to Rep. Mike Gallagher, a Chinese university textbook rewrote the ending of the Gospel of John’s account of the woman caught in adultery with ‘Jesus himself stoning the adulterous woman to death.’

The CCP also replaced the Ten Commandments with quotes by Xi Jinping, such as, ‘Resolutely guard against the infiltration of Western ideology.’ Rep. Gallagher noted that the CCP is on a ‘quest to make the faithful serve the Party rather than God.’

### **Canada forbids prayer at Remembrance Day Services**

British Church Newspaper – 6 November, 2023

Justin Trudeau, Canada’s Prime Minister, has banned Canada’s Armed Forces from saying any prayers at this year’s Remembrance Day parades and services. Only ‘reflections’ will be allowed. The Directive also applies to all public events. The official Directive to the Armed Forces read:

*“While the dimension of prayer may occupy a significant place for some members, we do not all pray in the same way; for some, prayer does not play a role in their lives. Therefore, it is essential for chaplains to adopt a sensitive and inclusive approach when publicly addressing military members.”*

In 2022, a National Defence Minister’s



Advisory Panel declared its intention “to seek out the policies, processes and practices that enable systemic racism and discrimination in the Canadian Armed Forces and provide advice on how to eliminate them from our institution.”

One veteran noted: “Watch any parade formation and one can observe Sikhs wearing turbans, Muslims wearing hijabs and hair colours of anything under the rainbow.” Another veteran said, “Now we are paying for our failure to stand up for our own culture and traditions. I would love to once again be proud of being Canadian. What about all the troops in WW1 and WWII who gave their lives, almost all of whom were believers. Isn’t Remembrance Day all about them?”

### ***Abbreviated***

**CW Note:** This decision – at least for the Remembrance Day Services - was thankfully reversed after a wave of public protest.

## **PETITION THE KING CAMPAIGN**

### **Why is this petition needed?**

We are facing an imminent threat to our liberty. Why? Because our Government has, in principle, already agreed to the Pandemic Preparedness Treaty being proposed by the World Health Organisation (WHO). This Treaty is aimed at centralising the WHO's control over health emergencies, including pandemics.

Alongside this, the World Health Assembly (WHA) is also amending the International Health Regulations (IHR) which have force under international law to give the WHO power to demand lockdowns and digital vaccines passports, mandate vaccines for you and your family and prevent you from travelling.

Together, these two international legal instruments will erode our democracy. So now we must exercise our constitutional right to petition the King - who swore an oath at his Coronation not to allow any external or international power to rule over us.

Do you remember the horrors of the Covid lockdowns? 'Stay at home'; quarantines and curfews; people sacked for refusing the experimental vaccines; mandated mask-wearing; elderly people dying alone in care homes; fines for standing too close; arrests for country walks and sitting on park benches . . .

These policies – now known to be totally ineffective – were recommended to us by the WHO. Yet now that same organisation wants even more powers: to declare an international pandemic, then order us to submit to whatever it tells us to do; and, believe it or not, last year our Government agreed to this! The WHO will be granted these draconian powers – from May, 2024 – unless the UK Government withdraws from the Treaty and the proposed changes to the IHR.

### **What do we need to do?**

We – the 'Petition the King Campaign' – believe that the King must hear from as many people as possible. We must tell him we do not accept that the WHO should have any power to decide our public health policies. We have made your protest possible – and really easy – by pre-printing postcards which you can simply sign and post off to King Charles III at Buckingham Palace. Order postcards for yourself, your family and friends today, then sign and post them off to the Palace as soon as they arrive.

To order your 'purple postcards', email [petitiontheking@btinternet.com](mailto:petitiontheking@btinternet.com) or call Anthony on 07835 716537, then post them off to King Charles III as soon as they arrive.

The prices for our cards, inclusive of postage, are: 10 cards - £2.50, 20 cards - £4, 40 cards - £7, 100 cards - £14, 200 cards - £25.

# CHRISTIAN RESOURCES EXHIBITION

in the West Midlands, 2023

**by the Chairman of Christian Watch**

After several years of holding this Exhibition in Sandown Park, Esher, Surrey, the organisers this year – at the behest of many contributors - moved to the West Midlands - to a Conference Centre at Cranmore Park, Solihull on 8<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup> November.

Over 200 exhibitors were present to display their wares - from church furniture and amplification on the one hand to holy socks, the ugly duckling company and even motorcycle funerals on the other. Every display had a 'vague' link to Christianity but, as it was pointed out to me by another Christian stall-holder, hardly any had Bible texts or Bibles on view. It was a somewhat sad spectacle to see so many so-called Christians who appear to have little or no understanding of the true faith.

However, the Christian Watch stall was a hive of activity throughout the two days with much good solid Christian literature being handed out free of charge. Five leaflets were distributed –

- *Why Christians must oppose abortion*
- *Why we keep to the Authorised Version of the Word of God*
- *Christian freedoms threatened by conversion therapy legislation*
- *The LGBT agenda: do we follow God's Word or the spirit of the age?*
- *Should nations control their borders? What does the Bible say?*

together with Gospel tracts, TBS calendars and copies of the latest edition of the British Church Newspaper. A selection of Bibles and good Christian literature was also available for those who were interested.

The backdrop of the stall consisted of three full-length portraits of Martin Luther, Jon Huss and William Tyndale which attracted enormous attention, although the ignorance of so many ‘Christians’ was evident within minutes of the Exhibition opening when a lady said that she loved Martin Luther King for the stand he had taken. She had no idea at all who Martin Luther was or what he had done!

Hundreds of visitors passed by the CW stall and were presented with a carrier bag of literature to take home and peruse. Many clergy were present – including large numbers of women vicars – and numerous conversations were held which, we trust, were profitable to all who passed by.



We thank God for the opportunity to witness for Him on occasions such as this and we thank you for your support, both prayerfully and financially, which enables us to be standard-bearers for Him in the dark days in which we live. All the literature mentioned above – and much more – is available on our website – [www.christianwatch.org.uk](http://www.christianwatch.org.uk) – or by requesting copies from our CW Secretary. Please take the opportunity to obtain and distribute such in your church or local neighbourhood.

In 2024, the CRE is planning a May Exhibition in Manchester and an October Exhibition in Milton Keynes – please pray with us re the possibility of witnessing again at one or both venues. There is a great need in Christian circles today for a stand to be taken – “*righteousness exalteth a nation: but sin is a reproach to any people*” (Proverbs 14:34).

# **“Let Him do what seemeth Him good”**

1 Samuel 3:18

**Frances Ridley Havergal**

Eli spoke these words under the terrible certainty of heavy judgements upon his house - because the Lord had spoken it; but how often God's dear children tremble to say an unreserved "Let Him do what seemeth Him good," though they are under no such shadow of certainly coming events!

It is almost easier to say it when a crushing blow has actually fallen, than when there is suspense and uncertainty as to what the Lord may be going to do. There is always more or less of this element of suspense and uncertainty. One can hardly imagine a life in which there are no clouds, little or great, within the horizon, even when the sky is clearest overhead.

We hold not a treasure on earth which we are sure of keeping; and we never know whether gain or loss, failure or success, ease, or pain, lies before us; and if we were allowed to put our finger on the balance of uncertainties and turn it as we chose, we should be sure to defeat some ultimate aim by securing a nearer one and prevent some greater good by grasping a lesser. I think if we were permitted to try such an experiment, we should soon grow utterly puzzled and weary and find ourselves landed in complications of mistakes; and if we had any sense left, we should want to put it all back into our Father's hands and say - "Let Him do what seemeth Him good" - then we should feel relieved and at rest.

Then why not be relieved and at rest at once? For "it is the Lord"



who is going to do we know not what. That is a volume in itself, the Lord who loves you, the Lord who thinks about you and cares for you, the Lord who understands, who never makes a mistake; the Lord who spared not His own Son but gave Him for you!

Will you not let Him do what seemeth Him good? Then think what it is you are to let Him do. Something out of your sight, perhaps, but not out of His sight. For the original word in every case is “what is good in His eyes.” Those eyes see through and through and all round and beyond everything. So what is good in His eyes must be absolutely and entirely good, a vast deal better than our best! There is great rest in knowing that He will do what is right, that He crowns the rightness with the goodness; and when we see this, the rest is crowned with gladness. Ought it, then, to be so very hard to say - “Let Him do what seemeth Him good?”

*From:*  
*Starlight through the Shadows:*  
*Valuable Counsel on God's Compassion*

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THEORY AND PRACTICE – Peter was not only to “feed the sheep and lambs” but to “strengthen his brethren.” For this end, he had to learn in the school of experience his own weakness, the deceit and treachery of his own wicked nature, the tempter’s power and the omnipotency of Christ. These are the men who are useful to the Church of God, who **can** say, “We speak that we do know, and testify that we have seen.”

*J. Miley*

# TIMELY COUNSEL

Octavius Winslow

***“My times are in Thy hand”*** (Psalm 31:15)

Let this precious truth divest your mind of all needless, anxious care for the present or the future. Exercising simple faith in God - “be careful for nothing.” Learn to be content with your present lot, with God’s dealings with you and His disposal of you. You are just where His providence has, in its inscrutable but all-wise and righteous decision, placed you. It may be a position painful, irksome, trying, but it is right. Oh, yes! It is right.

Only aim to glorify Him in it. Wherever you are placed, God has a work for you to do, a purpose through you to be accomplished, in which he blends your happiness with His glory - and, when you have learned the lessons of His love, He will transfer you to another and a wider sphere, for whose nobler duties and higher responsibilities the present is, perhaps, but disciplining and preparing you.

Covet, then, to live a life of daily dependence upon God. Oh, it is a sweet and holy life! It saves from many a desponding feeling, a corroding care, an anxious thought, a sleepless night, a tearful eye and an imprudent and sinful scheme. Repairing to the “covenant, ordered in all things, and sure” (2 Samuel 23:5), you may confide children, friends, calling and yourself, to the Lord’s care, in the fullest assurance that all their “times,” and yours, are in His hand.

# CHRIST THE SOURCE OF OUR SUPPLIES

From: Christ in the Book of Zechariah  
**B. A Ramsbottom**

*Please read Zechariah, chapter 4*

We remember an old preacher saying - 'If your religion is real, you will love the Word of God' - and then adding - 'There will be some parts you will love more than others'. We must confess that Zechariah chapter 4 is one of our favourite chapters. There is so much in it; but across it all one word shines, as if written in letters of gold: **"Not by might, nor by power, but by My Spirit"**.

There seems to be a 3-fold interpretation of the candlestick:

1. *The Jewish theocracy.* Even today the lamp with its seven branches is still used as a symbol for Israel. At this time the Jewish nation was no better than a dimly burning lamp, surrounded with dangers and difficulties which



threatened to extinguish it; but because of constant supplies of all they needed from Israel's God, they would prove a triumphant people despite all their fears.

2. *The church of God in all ages.* It derives all the grace, mercy and strength it needs from the fulness which dwells in Christ, an inexhaustible supply. We believe the two living olive trees represent Christ and the Holy Spirit.

3. *Every believer.* The work of grace in their hearts at times seems to them just a feebly burning flame and they fear the spark will go out. Yet feeling at all times weak and helpless and assailed by sin and Satan, of the Saviour's fulness they receive, and grace for grace. The golden oil flows to keep the candlestick alight. "A bruised reed shall He not break, and the smoking flax shall He not quench" – nor allow Satan to quench it.

We are reminded of Bunyan's Christian in the Interpreter's house when he was shown a dimly burning flame, with Satan throwing buckets of water to extinguish it. He was told this was the life of God in a sinner's soul and was then shown a glorious hidden Person adding oil, and yet more oil, to the flame, so that it burned more brightly. "He giveth more grace."

"His grace shall to the end,  
Stronger and brighter shine;  
Nor present things, nor things to come,  
Shall quench the spark Divine."

But to Zerubbabel, ruler over God's people, there were mountains in the way – the lethargy of the people, the fierce opposition from their enemies. How could the building of the temple be completed? How could God's work go on? Then the Lord answered: "Who art thou, O great mountain? Before Zerubbabel thou shalt become a plain: and he shall bring forth the headstone thereof with shoutings, crying, Grace, grace unto it."

Ezra chapter 6 tells how this word was literally fulfilled and the building of the temple finished; but this word is still being fulfilled as the church of God, composed of living stones built upon Christ the one foundation, daily grows higher and hastens to its completion.

“O what a sweet, exalted song  
Shall rend the vaulted skies,  
When, shouting grace, the blood-washed throng  
Shall see the topstone rise!”

Zerubbabel in this chapter is clearly an eminent type of Christ. He was a Prince of the house of Judah, an ancestor of Christ according to the flesh, the ruler of Israel and the builder of the temple – and some things spoken of Zerubbabel could never be entirely fulfilled in him personally. (We think especially of the closing verse in the Book of Haggai).

But what a blessing this word has been made over the years to the people of God! They all have their mountains: things too high for them; they cannot get over them, or round them, or through them. These big, black mountains! They fear they will fall on them and crush them. There are their sins, their temptations, their fears concerning eternity; things in their family, the church, the nation, their circumstances, their trials – not least, the day of their death.

“Who art thou, O great mountain?” The word is not a question, but rather a challenge. It matters not how great or what the nature of the mountain is – “before Zerubbabel (that is Christ) thou *shalt* become a plain.” The Lord has a most blessed ability to level mountains.

So God’s work must be carried on and must succeed – the building of the temple at Jerusalem; the building of the church of Christ; the work of grace in a sinner’s heart. “Moreover the word of the Lord came unto me, saying, The hands of Zerubbabel have laid the foundation of this house; His hands shall also finish it.” Grace will complete what grace begins. God never leaves His work unfinished. An unfinished work is the mark of man. The temple shall be completed, the church shall be built and “He which hath begun a good work in you will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ.”

“Who hath despised the day of small things?” It *was* a day of small things for God’s people, but it was to have a blessed end – because God was with them. In the Book of Job we read – “Though thy beginning was small, yet thy latter end should greatly increase.” We think of an old deacon who, speaking of *small* things, used to say – “What a mercy if they are not *dead*

things!” Also we are reminded of the wise and gracious saying of Dr. John (“Rabbi”) Duncan: “A *perhaps* of salvation? Let no man rest in it. Let no man despise it.”

“For they shall rejoice, and shall see the plummet in the hand of Zerubbabel” – the clear mark that the work of building the temple was going on. (*Plummet - a plumb line.*)

“In His hand” is a beautiful word. “The Father loveth the Son, and hath given all things into His hand.” “The pleasure of the Lord shall prosper in His hand.” Well may we sing:

“The work is in His hand;  
His gracious purpose He will do,  
And all His word shall stand.”

But more especially:

“If I am found in Jesus’ hands,  
My soul can ne’er be lost.”

And so we are reminded of where we began, the key to the whole chapter:  
**“Not by might, nor by power, but by My Spirit.”**

Before closing, one last point in the chapter is worthy of mention. Zedariah was an eminent man, a God-ordained prophet, but he did not think he knew everything. He asked questions. He confessed there were some things in the vision he did not understand. He waited for answers – and received them.

There is a pattern for us here. How little we really know and understand. All God’s saints in Scripture were humbled before Him, confessing their lack of knowledge; so with David. He was a great man, a mighty King and also described as “the man after God’s own heart,” yet in the Psalms he is constantly saying - “Lord, tell me...”; “Teach me...” “Show me...”

As we turn from reading God’s Word, our prayer constantly needs to be:  
**“That which I see not, teach Thou me.”**

*Slightly abbreviated*



## **“Jesus was born in Bethlehem.”**

Matthew 2:1

**When** Jesus was born, we do not exactly know; God has concealed it; but **that** He was born is most plainly revealed. We know **where** He was born and **why** He was born. He had eternally existed as God. He was one **with**, and equal **to**, the Father; but He became man. He was conceived in Mary's womb. He was born in Bethlehem. He was a weak and helpless infant and yet at the same time the Mighty God, the Everlasting Father, the Prince of peace. Deity and humanity united in His person. He took our nature to take away our sins. He became a man in order to be a Saviour. He came on purpose to save sinners. This was His object. This was His work. For this He lived and laboured and suffered and died. He came to be our substitute. He was born once, that we might be born again. He died once, that we might not experience the second death, but live for ever. His love passes knowledge. His birth was the greatest display of condescension which Heaven or earth ever witnessed. It was introductory to His obedient life, meritorious death, victorious resurrection, triumphant ascension and glorious second advent. He **was** born in Bethlehem, in weakness and poverty; He **will** soon come to earth again, with power and great glory.

*God is in our flesh revealed,  
Heaven and earth in Jesus join,  
Mortal with immortal filled,  
And human with Divine.*

**Pastor James Smith**  
*From: Daily Remembrancer*



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