

# CHRISTIAN WATCH

Issue 61

A Protestant Biblical Witness

Jan/Feb 2026



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

Mark 13:37



**Christian Watch Annual Subscription (2026),**  
including UK postage — **£12**

**I cannot choose my own path**, nor would I wish to do so, as I am sure it would be a wrong one.

I desire to be led of the Lord Himself into the way of peace and truth and righteousness – to walk in His fear, live to His praise and die in the sweet experience of His love.

I have many enemies, but **fear none so much as myself**. O may I be kept from all evil and all error and do the things which are pleasing in God's sight.

**Our days are hastening away** swifter than a runner. Soon with us it will be time no longer and, therefore, how we should desire to live to the Lord - and not to **self**.

*Extract from a letter by 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.)

January 2026

*Dear Friends,*

Joshua 3:4 – “Ye have not passed this way heretofore.” What a challenging thought as we commence another New Year. Under Joshua’s leadership, Israel had passed over Jordan into the Promised Land. Every new day was a step of faith in which they faced dangers, opposition, warfare, conquests and possessions of which they had only dreamed of before. An unknown future lay ahead. King Solomon stated – for *thou knowest not what a day may bring forth*” (Proverbs 27:1). However, in 2026, there will undoubtedly be opportunities for each one of us. Each new day begins with the assurance of God’s love and faithfulness. He has a plan for each day and, on that day, there is the opportunity to live for Him and serve Him. So, as the year progresses, there are several discoveries that we can make as we step forth –

1. We can discover the Sovereignty of God (Romans 8:28).
2. We can discover the sufficiency of God’s grace (2 Cor. 12:9).
3. We can discover the stability of Scripture (Psalm 119:89).
4. We can discover the strength of prayer (Jeremiah 33:3).
5. We can discover the success of the Gospel (Romans 1:16).

We can therefore walk on the untrodden path of 2026 with confidence.

2026 has already started in turmoil with the USA involvement with Venezuela; the Iran crisis; President Trump’s Board of Peace; the Greenland crisis and, in our own country, the cancellation or postponement of a variety of elections and the seeming crash of the two Party system in Westminster with politicians almost daily (at both

local and national level) moving from one Party to another without a thought being given to the electorate who gave them their vote in the first place. What can we say? There are undoubtedly rights and wrongs to every situation, but our God is Sovereign and nothing takes Him by surprise. We rejoice in the fact that - *"I know who holds tomorrow, and I know He holds my hand."*

The tragedy of the King's Christmas Day broadcast – following on from his visit to the Pope in October last year – cannot be under-estimated. It is apparent that his Coronation vows were meaningless as he stressed the fact that 'a few weeks ago, the Queen and I were delighted to make a State visit to the Vatican, where we prayed with Pope Leo in an historic moment of spiritual unity.' Later in the clip we saw Camilla – dressed in black – acknowledging the Pope's superiority over them. It is very hard to be loyal to a disloyal King. The second verse of our National anthem – rarely sung these days - needs to be more widely known. It reads as follows;-

O Lord our God, arise  
Scatter His enemies,  
And make them fall:  
Confound their politics,  
Frustrate their popish tricks,  
On Thee our hopes we fix,  
God save us all.

In closing, may I take this opportunity to thank all of you who have already sent in your subscriptions and donations for 2026. Every gift is greatly appreciated and your financial and prayerful support is most welcome.

Yours in His service,

*Ian Henderson*

Ian R. Henderson  
(Chairman)

# THANKFULNESS FOR PAST MERCIES

“Hitherto hath the Lord helped us.”

1 Samuel 7:12

**Pastor James Smith**

God is faithful - and He has written out His faithfulness in our experience in very legible characters. He promised to help us, and though we have passed through the fire and through water, though our journey has been long, our road rough, our foes many, our sins great and our faith feeble, He has ever been to us a very present help in trouble. He has helped us in darkness and light, in summer and winter, in soul and body.

Let us record His mercies; let us lift up the Ebenezer; let us bear witness to His faithfulness; and from the past let us draw encouragement for the future. He who has helped us in time past, will help us now, will help us in all times to come. He says - “I will not fail thee, nor forsake thee, until I have done that which I have spoken to thee of.” Let us rejoice and be glad, singing with the Psalmist - “Our help is in the name of the Lord, who made Heaven and earth.” Let us boldly say - “The Lord is my helper, and I will not fear what man can do unto me.” Remember, whatever may change, whoever may change, your God is in one mind – and none can turn Him; therefore trust in Him and He will help you out of every trial.

*Thus far His arm hath led us on;  
Thus far we make His mercy known;  
And, while we tread this desert land,  
New mercies shall new songs demand.*

*From: Daily Remembrancer – Pastor’s Morning and Evening Visits*

# THE SETTLED MAJESTY OF CHRIST

Peter L. Meney

It is good for us as believers to be reminded often that the Lord is on His throne and doing all His will. Sometimes when we look around at the trouble in the world we are tempted to imagine things are spiralling out of control and we are in need of intervention from the Lord before it is too late. What a foolish notion! Our Lord Jesus knows the end from the beginning. He knows every successive step and has ordained the means to get there. All is under His charge. The glory of God and the glory of His church is the conclusion of the matter and these perceived troubles of ours are the most God-honouring means to that end.

The vision granted to Micaiah in the days of Ahab, the wicked King of Israel, may be applied to all ages. The faithful prophet declared - "Hear thou therefore the Word of the Lord: I saw the Lord sitting on His throne, and all the host of Heaven standing by Him on His right hand and on His left" (1 Kings 22:19). This has not changed. Our Mighty God is still on His throne. Our Lord Jesus is seated in the midst of the throne. Paul tells us of Christ "upholding all things by the word of His power" who, "when He had by Himself purged our sins, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high" (Hebrews 1:3).

What a beautiful picture this is of our sovereign and successful Saviour. What blessed assurance it conveys to His church. Our sins are purged and our future is secure. He who accomplished all our salvation is seated in the heavens, waiting until His enemies are gathered, humbled and silent before Him; waiting until they are made His footstool. Our sure and certain hope is in the ability of God to do all His pleasure and glorify the Son and His Bride.

This is the spiritual assurance and practical confidence Christ's people

carry with them into each new day. Whatever today holds, we enter it under the guarding and guiding hand of Jesus Christ who is faithful, mighty, good and wise. We enter it resting in the loving arms of Him who deals with His friends more tenderly than He deals severely with His foes.

Our daily protection and continuing preservation does not preclude times of trouble and hardship; nor for the present remove every cause of weeping, but that time will come. For the moment beneficial discipline and productive trials shall continue until we leave this sinful world. Nevertheless, a believer's comfort is in the love and grace, the blood and righteousness, the promises and presence of our Saviour and these extend into every aspect of our lives. The purposes of our sovereign God are unfolding according to His will. His decrees are serving His purpose, securing His objectives, accomplishing His pleasure and blessing His church.

Brethren, look up! Trust in the Lord! Do not forget the vision of Micaiah. The Lord is seated and settled on His throne, with all the host of Heaven standing by Him. They fly to do His bidding; they hasten to do His will. They serve at His command. Our Lord Jesus Christ is faithful to His promises, mighty to save and deliver, good to all them whom He loves - and He delights to supply our needs according to His holiness and perfect wisdom.

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

# PRAYER THAT GOD HEARS AND ACCEPTS

**Rev. Stephen Holland**

Protestant Truth Magazine January/February, 2023

*A sermon preached on Luke 18:10-14*

There can be no true Christian who does not pray. In fact, we become Christians by praying – calling upon the Name of the Lord. Not only does the Christian life start with prayer, it continues throughout the Christian's journey towards Heaven. But what is praying? Is all prayer the same? And more importantly, does God hear and answer all prayer? Here we have two men going to prayer. One is the type of man you would expect to find praying – he is a religious man. The other man is not even respected by his own community. He is a Jewish man collecting taxes for the Romans. All looking in from the outside would have expected God to answer the religious man, but He does not.

## **The Persons**

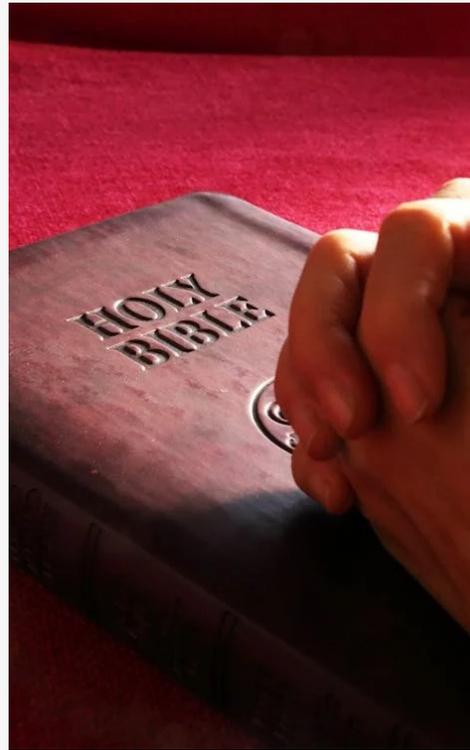
One thing we learn about this parable, spoken by Christ, is that all men are not the same - and God Himself does not see all men as the same. This is seen frequently throughout the Scriptures. We have God choosing one nation and preferring her above all others – Israel. In the New Testament, we learn that there are no national distinctions in the church, the bride of Christ and, ultimately, only those belonging to the spiritual Israel, the church, are saved through the redeeming blood of Jesus Christ. We know that it is only those belonging to the spiritual Israel, in both Old and New Testaments, that are destined for Heaven.

We see this brought to the forefront with the two men before us, the Pharisee and the tax collector. On the surface, we would all pick the religious Pharisee above the suspect tax collector; but, as is so often

seen in the ministry of Christ, “Man looketh on the outward appearance, but the Lord looketh on the heart” (1 Sam. 16:7). So often, we live out lives that are coated in sugar. Inwardly, though, God sees all, in spite of the sugar covering, as being utterly depraved and sinful. The two men here standing before God are unworthy to enter His presence. If we could grade the sinfulness of sin (which we cannot), the greater sinner would be the religious Pharisee, rather than the suspect tax collector.

### **The Position**

It is not just these two men who stand before Almighty God. Whether we appear before God in acts of prayer, or never pray at all, there will come a day when all shall appear before the God and Judge of all the earth: “For He cometh to judge the earth: He shall judge the world with righteousness...” (Psalm 96:13). No-one can avoid this day of accountability, whether we like it or not: “It is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment” (Heb. 9:27). Although most people will acknowledge the existence of a supreme being, God – as there are really no true atheists, God Himself having put His print on every heart – yet we readily shy away from Him. This hiding goes back to the days of Eden, where we find Adam hiding his face from God - and we have been doing it ever since.



Who sets the standard for acceptance? Who says when prayer is to be answered - or what the conditions are? Is it the religious person, the one doing the praying? Or the one who knows they are not

worthy to pray and come to God? Or is it the God to whom we are praying? The answer is obvious; it rests with God Himself. We know this, because God is God and there is nothing above Him; He alone sets the score. We must never judge God by our standards, as our standards are sinful and our hearts are deceived. “The heart is deceitful above all things and desperately wicked: who can know it?” (Jer. 17:9). The rather popular song lyric of ‘listen to your heart’ is to be thoroughly rejected by the Christian. Never listen to your heart: listen to God’s word instead.

### **The Pride**

What was wrong with the religious Pharisee - and why did God reject him and his prayer? The answer can be found in one word: pride. By this we do not mean self-respect or a being well pleased with the achievements of others, but we do mean that state, found in every heart, that says, ‘I am sufficient of myself - and have a good heart that will permit me to enter into the presence of a Holy God.’ This was the Pharisee’s problem – he thought he was right with God, when in fact he was only right in his own eyes – he did not see himself as God saw him. Proverbs 14:12 reminds us: “There is a way which seemeth right unto a man, but the end thereof are the ways of death.” Pride was the sin of the devil - and it will also keep you from coming to God for the forgiveness of sin.

One problem of pride in the human heart is to make wrong comparisons. The Pharisee compares himself to one, the tax collector, that he considered below himself. This is done to elevate himself. He does this in a plea to God. God should accept him; after all, he states - “I am not as other men are...or even as this publican (tax collector)” (v.11). While we are looking at the sins of others, we are not looking at the sins of self. As we are not accountable for the sins of others, neither are we excused by the sins of others. Do not make the same mistake. Comparing yourself with the worst of sinners will not in any way excuse you before a Holy God. If you want to make

comparisons, make them with the perfect God-man, Jesus Christ, who had no sin at all.

### **The Pleasing**

Of these two men, we read of only one that was justified before God; that is, he was declared to be righteous and acceptable. It was not the self-proclaimed goodness of the religious Pharisee, but the pleading for mercy by the undeserving tax collector. What a contrast in his coming: “God be merciful to me a sinner” (v.13). And this is the only plea God will accept. This prayer is well-pleasing to the Almighty. You see two things here. One is the realisation of God’s holiness - and the other is man’s own sinfulness. We are so unclean and God is so clean, pure and Holy, that none of us can ever be pleasing to Him.

So, how was this unworthy sinner accepted? Well, the religious man thought he needed no God to save him – and that God should hear his prayer because he was worthy to be heard. Acceptance with God, however, is to be found through God Himself providing us with a righteousness that is not ours. It is given to the sinner upon the merits of Jesus Christ and what He has done. That work was carried out by Him dying on a cross, taking our punishment and providing us with God’s own acceptable righteousness. This is played out in Romans chapter 4, where only those justified by faith are saved, irrespective of whether they belong to the physical nation of Israel or not. May you be as the tax collector – resting only in Christ’s own finished work on the cross.

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*God be in my head, and in my understanding;  
God be in my eyes, and in my looking;  
God be in my mouth, and in my speaking;  
God be in my heart, and in my thinking;  
God be at my end, and at my departing.*

# ENGLAND'S PERIL

John Rusk (1772 – 1834)

Where is a nation that has been so highly favoured as ours for so many years? We have been preserved and protected from being invaded by our enemies. We have abounded with a plentiful supply of providence. We have liberty of conscience to worship God in His own way, sit under our own vine and fig tree, none daring to make us afraid. We have been blessed with the pure Gospel; many noble champions have been raised up who have not shunned to declare the whole counsel of God and who have stood firm for the truth for many years. Are not these great favours?

What has been our return as a nation to God for these favours? I answer with the prophet Isaiah - *"The Lord looked for judgment but behold oppression, for righteousness, but behold a cry"* - therefore God says, *"I will take away the hedge thereof and it shall be eaten up."* This hedge is God's blessing, care and protection; as Satan told the Lord respecting Job, *"Hast thou not made a hedge about him?"* And so God did to Israel; but for their idolatry the hedge was eaten up, God removed it *"and break down the wall thereof;"* that is in plain English - *"I will forsake them and let their enemies triumph over them; I will not save them out of their hands as heretofore."* Salvation is called a wall in Scripture - *"salvation will God appoint for walls and bulwarks;"* and God is called a wall - *"I will be a wall of fire round about them;"* and so He was and saved them from every foe.

But He says - *"I will take away the hedge and breakdown the wall and it shall be trodden down. I will lay it waste;"* that is, it shall be in a wilderness state, uncultivated. *"It shall not be pruned,"* just left to grow, meaning man is given up to his lusts. *"Nor digged"* - leaving them to a hard, impenitent state. *"And I will also command the clouds (faithful labourers or clouds of witnesses), that they rain no rain upon it."* And is not the Lord removing valiant soldiers away from our nation - and where are those raised up to succeed them?

# A COUNTERFEIT AND A TRUE FAST

J. Delves

*A Prayer Meeting address based on  
Isaiah chapter 58 (October, 1950)*

This chapter is very solemn in relation to the Jews who, while they outwardly observed the fast, yet did not do it in sincerity of heart, so that their professed fasting was a mere act of hypocrisy. They did not bring forth the gracious fruits of repentance. They made confessions before the Lord, but their hearts were not in those confessions. Then the Lord goes on to show the difference between a counterfeit and a true fast, the latter of which alone is acceptable to Him and will result in His blessing.

There was a right way of afflicting their souls and of showing certain acts of sacrifice and kindness towards others; also of observing the Lord's Day and keeping their feet from evil.

It is feared that in our own land there are many who may conform to outward worship and times of prayer, making confessions and petitions in a formal way, but – by their life, walk and conversation – do not evidence a real change of heart before God. For, as it is here in this chapter, if people make a religious profession and confess their sins and failings before God, but indulge themselves in worldliness in between times, there is no evidence of honesty and sincerity in their heart or in their profession.

It would appear that a true fast, such as that which is acceptable to God consists of three things. Firstly, in true confession there is real sorrow for sin – and it will not only be over personal sins, but also national sins and transgressions, in departing from the ways of God –

all of which we know are grieving to Him. This is to afflict the soul, to be inwardly and truly grieved with a Godly sorrow, to mourn over the abominations of our own hearts and of those in our nation. It is not simply to say a prayer and then carry on in an indifferent way, but to show by our life and conduct that we are concerned and truly grieved on account of the prevailing evils, as in the sight of God.

Secondly, it is not only to afflict our souls in the confession of our sins, but to forsake them and turn away from them and to separate ourselves from them.

In the third sense, it is to observe the laws and appointments of God, with regard to the Sabbath Day and many other things – and to abstain from all appearance of evil. How can there be that which is acceptable to God in our worship and prayers, if our heart is not in it?

Hence the prophet was directed to cry aloud and to spare not. He was not to mince matters, but faithfully to reprove the people; to lift up his voice like a trumpet and show the people their transgressions and the house of Jacob their sins. Those who truly mourn over both their personal sins and the sins of the nation – and confess them before the Lord and seek to walk in His ways – are a great asset to any church and also to the nation.

May it be given us then to afflict our souls in a right way, and seeing that the Lord has given His gracious promise to such, can we not hope to be favoured with some personal experience of what is here described? *“And the Lord shall guide thee continually, and satisfy thy soul in drought, and make fat thy bones: and thou shalt be like a watered garden, and like a spring of water, whose waters fail not.”*

Amen.

## NEWS AND CURRENT AFFAIRS



### **Pooyan Mehrshahi's Response to Baptist, Methodist & United Reformed Churches Statement opposing Government policies on asylum-seekers**

British Church Newspaper, 12 January, 2026

**Note:** *In December, the above churches published a joint response to what they perceived to have been recent 'anti-migrant' statements by Sir Keir Starmer and other MPs. These large denominations formed the 'Joint Public Issues Team' (JPIT) in order to publish joint statements on topical issues. They sent an Open Letter to the Government, speaking of the Bible's calling to 'welcome the stranger.' They described the current Government policies as 'cruel, unjust and deadly' and accused it of multiple failures to uphold the UK's international obligations under the UN Refugee Convention.*

*The Open Letter was read by **Pooyan Mersshahi**, Pastor of Providence Baptist Chapel, Cheltenham, who felt moved to reply to the Government as follows:*

#### **"RESPONSE TO THE WOKE DENOMINATIONS"**

*My Thoughts on the Statement by the Various Denominations to the UK Government.*

Three of the denominations in England have written to the UK Government, calling her to be charitable and neighbourly toward those who want to trespass over UK borders and



**Pastor Pooyan Mersshahi**

enter the country illegally. Here is my quick critique and response to their letter:

## THE STATES'S GOD-GIVEN DUTY

The Bible gives rulers a limited and clear charge. Romans 13:1-14 says the magistrate is the 'Minister of God' who must punish evil and protect the good. This includes guarding borders, enforcing lawful entry and treating border-breaking as a real crime.

Acts 17:26 says God 'hath determined...the bounds of their habitation,' **so national borders are not optional.** God sets them and rulers must uphold them. Numbers 15:15-16 shows that the stranger within Israel had to submit to the same law as the native. Entry came with ***legal accountability, not entitlement.***

Deuteronomy 23:3-4 proves that nations have the right to restrict entry when stability or safety is at risk. 1 Timothy 2:1-2 calls rulers to secure a quiet and peaceable life, which requires controlled borders and predictable law enforcement.

Nehemiah 4:7-9 records a righteous Government, fortifying walls and setting guards to protect its people. Scripture consistently affirms law, order, boundaries and protection. The 1689 Baptist Confession of Faith agrees and limits rulers to justice, defence and order.

## THE FAILURE OF THESE DENOMINATIONS

The Baptist Union, Methodist Conference and United Reformed Church reject these clear Biblical teachings, which is not a surprise. ***Their article speaks as though border control is a moral failure, not a Divine duty.***

They urge the state to 'heal' society, prevent fear and encourage

'solidarity,' but the Bible never assigns the magistrate such responsibilities. They ignore Acts 17, which affirms God-given borders. They ignore Romans 13, which commands the punishment of evil, including unlawful entry and evasion of law.

They ignore Numbers 15, which shows that foreigners were required to come under the nation's law. They ignore Deuteronomy 23, which affirms a nation's right to regulate entry.

Their statement is full of sentiment and empty of Scripture. These bodies have not clarified God's Will. They have muddied it. They treat those who violate border laws as **victims by default** and rebuke lawful authority without a single Biblical principle. **Their approach shows that they are no longer safe guides for Christ's flock.**

## A NECESSARY CLARIFICATION

I pray for, but do not support this socialist Government – and I recognise its many contradictions, failures and complications. **Yet these denominations have only added confusion.**



They agree with globalism and multi-culturalism, which are unbiblical. They refuse to ground their claims in Scripture. They overlook the fact that those who by-pass multiple safe countries and arrive in the UK are no longer asylum seekers in any Biblical or legal sense. They are not fleeing persecution in France, Spain, Germany or the Netherlands. They have chosen to break border law and Romans 13 commands rulers to deal with lawbreakers with the force of the law.

***1 Timothy 2 shows Government must secure peace.*** Nehemiah 4 shows rulers must protect their people. Scripture never commands open borders. It commands justice, order and protection.

***What is needed is not more political moralising from apostate denominations, but a recovery of Biblical clarity.*** The State must stay within its God-given limits and ***the Church must return to its true mission to preach the Gospel and disciple the nations.***

## **Open Doors reports global rise in Christian persecution**

Christian Institute, 16 January, 2026

The number of Christians across the world suffering high levels of persecution and discrimination has reached unprecedented levels.

Speaking at the Parliamentary launch of Open Door's World Watch List 2026, charity CEO Henrietta Blyth reported that 388 million Christians globally are suffering for their faith, 8 million more than last year. North Korea, Somalia and Yemen remain the most dangerous countries in which to follow Jesus.

Highlighting trends from the latest report, Blyth also described sub-Saharan Africa as a 'death-trap for Christians.' She noted that fourteen countries in the region feature on the WW List this year, including Nigeria, the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Burkina

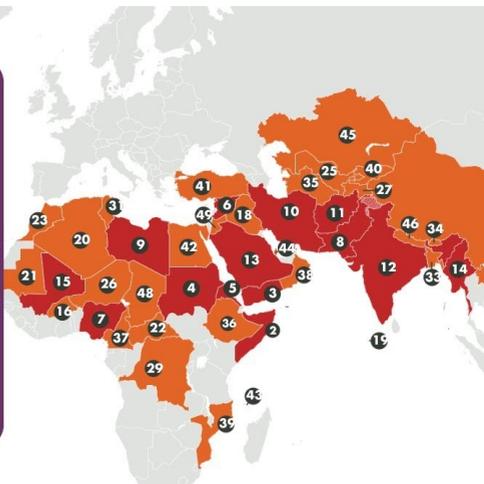
Faso.

She attributed Syria's rise – the nation has jumped twelve places up to sixth in the top 50 – to 'security vacuums, fragmented governance and local extremist groups,' all of which, she explained, 'increases the vulnerability of Christians.' She continued: 'Elsewhere, the increasing smash and squeeze continues to drive the church underground; and the tighter the squeeze, the more difficult it becomes to get word to the outside world about what's really happening.'

In a pre-recorded video shown at the event, Pastor Barnabas from Nigeria said: 'People should keep talking about Christians in sub-Saharan Africa, because every day we are attacked. We want people to spread this news to everybody, that they should keep talking about it, so that we will be saved.'

UK special Envoy for Freedom of Religion or Belief, David Smith, told the gathering, which included 110 MPs - 'We must be that voice that speaks on these horrendous stories. No-one should live in fear because of their faith or belief. The minimum we can do is speak up and I urge you to do that.'

Jim Shannon, MP called for 'fervent and frequent prayer' for the suffering Church. He added: 'faith can move mountains.'



# GOD'S WONDROUS GIVING

C. H. Spurgeon

**What a wondrous book this Bible of ours is!** When you have read the Bible through a score of times, you may have only walked over the surface then, or ploughed, at most, the upper soil. If you take one passage and dig deep for the treasure that coucheth beneath, you will find it inexhaustible. This Book has in it a matchless fullness. It were as possible to measure space, or to grasp the infinite in the hollow of your hands, as to take the entire compass of Holy Scripture. "It is high, I cannot attain unto it." It is broad, I cannot reach its boundary; and especially is there a fullness of comfort in the promises of God's Word. Our hymnwriter put it, I think, very properly -

*What more can He say than to you He hath said,  
You who unto Jesus for refuge have fled?*

Now, why is there this fullness in the Bible? "If the clouds be full of rain, they empty themselves upon the earth." If the Scriptures be full of comfort, they are intended to be enjoyed, to be believed, to be fed upon by you. There is nothing to spare in this Book. There is not too little, but rest assured that there is nothing too much. He that goeth out in the morning after this manna, though he gathereth his omer full, he shall have nothing over; and if he gathereth little, yet still he shall have no lack. There is enough for all and all its fullness is meant to be used.

I cannot apply that thought; I have not time to beat it out more, but I hope God means it for some of you. You do not trust God, some of you, as you ought to do. You measure His corn with your own bushel. You know that you would fail your fellow-men – and think that He will fail you. You know your own weakness and infirmity – and you imagine that He will faint or be weary.

Moreover, you know that you could not do a very generous thing for some who have been ungrateful and unkind to you and you think He cannot. Remember that passage - "My thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways My ways, saith the Lord. For as the Heavens are higher than the earth, so are My ways higher than your ways, and My thoughts than your thoughts." You think about saving; God only thinks about giving. You take a delight in getting; He takes a delight in bestowing. Go to Him! Go to Him! You would not need anybody to be long praying you to accept a gift, so do not think that God needs much beseeching in order to give, for it is as easy for Him to give as it is for you to accept; and as this accepting seems congenial to our nature, so does bestowing seem congenial to His. Go to Him - and He will empty out His grace upon you.

*Previously published in Bible League Quarterly Oct – Dec, 2025*

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It is a miracle how God has so long preserved His Book!  
How great and glorious it is to have the Word of God!

*Martin Luther*

**British Church Newspaper invites applicants for the post of**

**EDITOR OF BCN** (PART-TIME)

**Our current editor is retiring and we wish to appoint a successor**

We invite applicants who

- \* Hold firmly to the Reformed, Protestant Faith
- \* Have proven writing and management skills and
- \* Welcome a challenge!

*A wide range of readers contributes news & devotional content to the paper. If you are definitely interested, please contact our Editor for an informal discussion and an outline job description:*

**Tony Bennett, 14 Kingswood Road,  
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For over 20 years, the BCN has been produced as a non-denominational Protestant newspaper and we know that many of our Members are recipients of this paper. We have pleasure in helping support its future publication - and the advert below speaks for itself. If you are willing to take on the task of Editor - or know someone who is willing - please contact Tony Bennett as soon as possible in order to facilitate its continuation.

# GLAD TIDINGS IN SAD TIMES

Ralph Erskine

*“There is a river, the streams whereof shall make glad the city of God”* (Psalm 46:4). God Himself is the river, as in the following verse - “God is in the midst of her.”

1. **God the Father** is the river (Jer. 2:13): “For My people have committed two evils; they have forsaken Me the fountain of living waters, and hewed them out cisterns, broken cisterns, that can hold no water.”

2. **God the Son** is the river, the fountain of salvation (Zech. 13:1): “In that day there shall be a fountain opened to the house of David and to the inhabitants of Jerusalem for sin and for uncleanness.”

3. **God the Spirit** is the river (John 7:38): “He that believeth on Me, as the Scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water.” (John 4:14): “Whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst; but the water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life.”

What are the streams of this river?

*Answer.* **The perfections of God.** O! what an ocean of gladness and joy is here? Here is wisdom to direct; power to protect; holiness to sanctify; justice to justify; goodness to pity and faithfulness to make out all that He hath said. There is more ground of comfort in that one sentence - *I will be thy God* - than there is in thousands of words. What can they want that have a God to go to? Can they want water that have the ocean, or want light that have the sun? Besides this, God is a Spirit, infinite, eternal and unchangeable in all these perfections.

Here then is spirituality to make the gladness and happiness suited to the nature of the soul; the more spiritual the gladness is, the more pure and pleasant. Here is infinity, to make it boundless; here is eternity, to make it endless; here is unchangeableness and immutability, to make it steady and immoveable.

2. **The fulness of Christ** is another stream of the river: His fulness of purchase; fulness of wisdom, as a Prophet; righteousness, as a Priest; and power, as a King; fulness of grace, as a Surety to pay all our debts; fulness of skill, as a Physician to heal all diseases; and fulness of store, as a Treasury for supplying all wants: “And of His fulness have all we received, and grace for grace” (John 1:16, Col. 1:19 and 2:9-10).

3. **The operations, graces and influences of the Spirit.** Here is another source of pleasure and comfort: He is the Comforter – and He gives sometimes strong consolation. In all His various operations, there are manifold consolations; and hence the Spirit’s working is compared to wind – for fanning and stirring up the dormant graces (Song of Solomon 4:16); sometimes to water, for cleansing the foul heart (John 3:5); sometimes to fire, for warming the cold heart (Matt. 3:11); sometimes to oil, for softening the hard heart (Ps. 45:7, 1 John 2:27). This is the wind that fills their sails and forwards their voyage to the Heavenly harbour. This is the well of water that springs up in them to everlasting life. This is the fire that makes their hearts burn within them - and this is the oil of joy that anoints the wheels of their souls for running their Christian race; the joy of the Lord is their strength.

It is all running in the channel of the covenant of promise; for we receive the Spirit, not by the works of the law, but by the hearing of faith. “Although my house be not so with God, yet He hath made with me an everlasting covenant, ordered in all things and sure: this is all my salvation, and all my desire.” “This is my comfort in my affliction: for Thy Word hath quickened me.” One Scripture-promise is a cordial

beyond all riches, pleasures and honours of a world; these vanish, but “the Word of the Lord endureth for ever.” What comfort can we find without a promise? And what can give sorrow when God gives a promise? Sickness, with a promise, is better than health; poverty, with a promise, is better than riches; a prison, with a promise, is better than a palace; bonds and confinement, with a promise, are better than liberty; yea, death, with a promise, is better than life. All that you have, without a promise, you may lose this night and your souls and hopes with it; but all that you have, with a promise, you may be sure of it. Yea, believer, you may be vastly more sure of that which you have in a promise than of that which you have in possession. The comfort you have in possession is but the stream-comfort, that may be cut off; but the comfort you have in a promise is the fountain comfort, that cannot be cut off. Hence you are called to live by faith - and not by sense. We may go through death rejoicing, with a promise of life in our hand, while infidels lie down in the dust with desperation.

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*Whatsoever is upon you is from the Lord – and whatsoever is from the Lord - to you it is in mercy; and whatsoever comes in mercy ought not to be grievous to you. What loss is it when the losing of earthly things is the gaining of spiritual things? All shall be for your good, if you make your use of all.*

*Richard Greenham*



## ***“Set your affection on things above.”***

Colossians 3:2

If we are, indeed, believers in Christ and partakers of the power of His resurrection, we are bound by obligation and required by our rule, to set our affections on the things that are above, not on the things on the earth. He has called us out of the world and cautioned us against conformity to its spirit. While we are in the world, it is our duty, privilege and honour to manifest that grace which has delivered us from the love of it. Christians must indeed eat and drink and may buy and sell, as other people do; but the principles, motives and ends of their conduct are entirely different. They are to adorn the doctrine of God their Saviour and do all for His glory. By His wisdom and providence, He places them in different situations, that the power and sufficiency of His grace may appear under a great variety of outward circumstance... Whether they are rich or poor, bond or free, they are so by His appointment; with which if they cheerfully comply, they shall, in due time, be sensible that He chooses better for them, than they could have chosen for themselves.

The language of faith, when in exercise, will not be - ‘What is most conducive to my temporal ease and prosperity?’ but - ‘What will give me the fairest opportunity of glorifying Him, who has bought me with His blood and called me out of darkness into His marvellous light? Too much of my time has already been wasted: how shall I improve the little uncertain remainder for His service? I am too short-sighted to judge for

myself, but He has thus far determined it. I am where He has placed me; and the calling in which His mercy found me, (if it be a lawful one,) is that in which, for the present, I am to abide, as the best for me. When it ceases to be so, I may depend upon Him to appoint me another; but, till then, I desire to be contented with such things as I have and to be thankful for them. He knows my frame, my feelings, my wants and my trials; He permits, yea, invites me to cast all my care upon Him; He assures me that He careth for me and, therefore, I only wish to do or to suffer according to His Will today and to leave the concerns of tomorrow in His hands. While I live, may I live for Him; and when I die, may I go to Him! May His grace be sufficient for me and all shall be well.'

**From: Jewels from John Newton – by Miller Ferrie  
Daily Readings from the Works of John Newton**

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We laud Thy Name, Almighty Lord,  
The Father of all grace;  
We laud Thy Name, incarnate Word,  
Who savedst a sinful race;

We laud Thy Name, blest Spirit of truth,  
Who dost salvation seal;  
Incline the heart, unclosethe the mouth,  
And sanctify the Will.

*Joseph Hart*

## OUR SUFFICIENCY IS OF GOD

O Lord, with shame I do confess  
My universal emptiness,  
My poverty and pride;  
I cannot keep Thee in my sight,  
Nor can I think one thought aright,  
Unless Thy Spirit guide.

I cannot from my idols part,  
Nor love the Lord with all my heart,  
Nor can myself deny;  
I cannot pray, and feel Thee near  
Nor can I sing with Heavenly cheer,  
Unless the Lord be nigh.

Since Adam from God's image fell,  
On spiritual things we cannot dwell;  
The heart is turned aside;  
And none can raise to life the dead  
But He who raised Himself indeed,  
And for dead sinners died.

Then let this mighty Jesus be  
An all-sufficient help for me,  
Creating power and will;  
Thy grace sufficed saints of old;  
It made them strong and made them bold,  
And it suffices still.

*John Berridge*

