

The Journal
of
The Church of England
(Continuing)

*Jesus Christ the same
yesterday, and today,
and forever. Heb. 13:8*



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The Association of the Continuing Church Trust. Registered Charity Number 1055010

CONSTITUTION

1 **Doctrine:** The doctrine of the Continuing Church shall be that of the 39 Articles of Religion understood in their original, natural and intended sense.

2 **Worship:** The worship of the Continuing Church shall be generally according to the Book of Common Prayer (1662).

The Authorised Version of the Bible shall be the only version used in the lectern and the pulpit and in public readings and expositions at all meetings of the Continuing Church.

3 **Ministry:** The consecration and ordination of ministers shall be according to the Ordinal of the Book of Common Prayer (1662). The Continuing Church believes in the ministry of women according to Scripture which does not permit them to teach or exercise authority, particularly as bishops, priests, and deacons.

4 **Discipline:** The church shall be episcopally governed. A general assembly shall be held not less than once a year consisting of the bishop and the ministers of the church and representatives of the local congregations to transact the business of the denomination and for mutual encouragement and edification.

5 **Membership:** New churches may apply for membership of the Continuing Church on the basis of their agreement with the doctrine, worship and discipline of that body.

Membership of the local church shall be on the basis of baptism and confirmation and approval by the local presbyter.

Any matters incapable of resolution shall be referred to the Ordinary.

The Continuing Church publishes a prayer letter, "Intercessions."
It is available free of charge to those who would like to receive news
and to pray for the various needs.

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Would contributors please note that they can send their news via email, to
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Contributions toward postage costs are gratefully received.

Dear Friends,

The thing that struck me about the evangelicals in France around 1960, was their fewness and great need of each other, yet their inability to work together. Once the tide of the Spirit recedes, only isolated pools are left on the beach. It struck me forcibly, as my experience within the Church of England had been of a certain generosity of spirit, a breadth, a gracious tolerance, amongst the evangelical clergy I had known.

Going on from France to a Muslim land, I soon discovered that all the resultless missionaries got on well enough - until God gave one a convert! At once differences arose, and hurtful remarks were made about the convert - even engineering to detach him and bring him into their group! We ourselves saw, by the grace of God a very few saved - and seized. The reason was monotonously the same; the Church of England was not to be trusted, whereas their group was! I met it once and again. In fact one country's missions especially supported missionaries who got results, and if you could not show results, your support evaporated, hence the need. How easily we delude ourselves!

The situation repeated itself when a few converts came together as a church, for Adam begat a son in his own likeness. I could not tell you how often a convert would come and say, "I am a real believer, but so and so and so and so in the church, are not - beware!" I can truly say I lived in an atmosphere of mistrust and quarrels, and was not entirely innocent myself.

Returning to this country, I found myself landed with a second, already closed church which had literally quarrelled itself to death. I reopened it, and two years later a 75-year-old will matured, and through that we received a great deal of money for the work. It was a battle! One evening service, I saw the organist stop playing and rise to his feet in his organ-loft. Raising his arms, he swore at a member of the choir, who replied by shaking his fists at him shouting across the aisle that he hated him. Later that week the organist found me alone in the church and we sat down on the communion rail step and he told me a long history of wrongs, ending, "God is on my side." I replied, "Mr. G—, in every quarrel there

are three sides: your side, the other side, and God's side. God is on neither of your sides."

As the Spirit now recedes in this land, I see all repeating itself. My senior missionary long ago told me he had the situation of two missionary ladies whose differences had got to the stage of locking each other out. In the end things got so bad that he spoke to both parties. He said, with a sort of laugh, "They both turned on me - who had only tried to help!" He advised me never to try peacemaking.

With forces against us growing daily, God has given us each other to rely on. The devil rejoices to see Christians fall out. I may misquote Augustine's words, but they have often been with me. "Lord, save me from justifying myself." How often, how often, I have taken those words to my heart, when the heat was past, and conscience reawoke. I had persuaded myself I was in the right, when really the foot of pride had come against me. Whose foot? Why, my own.

Remember the words of Baxter looking back at the end of the Puritan era, which had been roughly equal to his working lifetime. Again, my memory is not word-perfect, but he said with great sadness: "God gave us the hearts of the people. The country was at our feet - and we quarrelled it all away."

Pray against this spirit and do not let it in, or we will look back with similar regrets.

Yours sincerely,



The Continuing Church has a web site, at
www.cofec.org

Various articles from the 'Journal', plus congregation details,
can be found here. Please tell friends about the site.

NATIONAL REPENTANCE*

by David N Samuel

Proverbs 29:18 “*where there is no vision, the people perish*”, which might also be translated, “where there is ignorance of God, the people run wild”. Ignorance of God has characterised our generation. It can be seen today in many different ways: in the decline of the national Church, in particular, but also in the decline of the other historic churches. Today there is less than half the number of clergy that there was at the beginning of the last century, though the population has doubled.

Closed Churches

All around the country are closed, redundant churches and chapels, altars to an ‘unknown God’. They are like hulks stranded upon the seashore, as the ‘sea of faith’ recedes. They testify to the estrangement and alienation of this generation from God, from the God of their fathers, from the God of the Bible. They are empty because people are no longer drawn to them in their search for God. The lights have gone out in their darkened windows as the light of religion has gone out in the homes of our communities.

Social Conditions

But ignorance of God is not reflected merely in neglected church building; it is reflected also in the moral and social conditions of our society. God is increasingly absent from men’s thoughts. They are guided and motivated principally by material aims. The main areas of public discourse and debate are the economy, the distribution of the nation’s wealth, and the state of the social and health services. The concerns of people are secular, ‘this-worldly’. There is very little awareness of man’s spiritual destiny. A survey of attitudes among young people stated that, ‘those surveyed disliked rigid moral codes, puritanism, authoritarianism, pessimism, and family values ... they seek excitement, risk and hedonism’.

The Media

Television not only registers and reflects these trends, but also drives them. Religion figures less and less on it, in any meaningful way. In contrast to the attitude of the BBC under Lord Reith, today the media hold religion and morality at arm’s length. If they portray them, it is as social phenomena, to be examined objectively and often destructively. Rarely are they presented as something good, to be embraced by all. The media reflect the rapid secularisation of our society, and the way in which it has taken leave of God.

**This address was first given at the Day of Prayer and Fasting for National Repentance, at Westminster Chapel, June 1, 2002*

Morals

The area of morals is the most illuminating when we are considering the prevailing ignorance of God. The objective moral standards, which once obtained universally in society, have been abandoned in favour of moral relativism. Morals are to be determined by the culture and consensus of the community, or are regarded as mere individual preferences or lifestyles - like clothes. What is right in one situation is not necessarily right in another. The idea of absolute transcendent values has largely disappeared, and people make up their morality as they go along. It need never be the same for any two communities or generations or individuals. This is all part of what it means to be ignorant of God - but how did we get there?

The Root Of The Problem

The roots of all this lie very deep. They go back to the 19th century, when man's mistaken view of science began to distort his understanding of the world, of himself, and of his relationship with God. He came to believe that he lived in a 'billiard ball universe', that is, a world in which everything was rigidly determined and controlled by natural physical laws. In such a world miracles were impossible, the incarnation unthinkable, the Bible could not be inspired, and there could be no revealed truth. Man and material causation occupied centre-stage. Religion, Karl Marx explained, was merely a side effect of economic causes.

Naturalistic View

This so-called scientific, and naturalistic view of world and man led to an naturalism in morals. Man's nature, it was claimed, had been repressed, and constrained by an arbitrary moral code, derived from the old notion of divine revelation. Men and women must be liberated and allowed to be themselves, and to give free expression to their true nature. That nature was found in its affinity with the animal world, as Darwin asserted, and in its deep, instinctive urges, which had been repressed, as Freud argued. Men and women must be liberated from these unnatural constraints and limitations, which had denied their true nature. They must be free to be themselves, to sweep away the taboos of Christianity and the moral constraints associated with it.

This whole movement that was taking place at the end of the 19th and the beginning of the 20th century, can be described as 'the revival of primitivism', that is, the gradual enthronement of the elemental, instinctive forces of human nature. Dean Inge wrote in his journal, at the time, that he feared an upsurge of irrationalism, which would herald the beginning of a new dark age. This movement, which Inge discerned, was to find expression in the Nazi creed of blood, race and paganism. Reason and conscience were dethroned in favour of the assertion of man's basic instincts.

Sexual Revolution

Alongside this came also the sexual revolution, which has so profoundly changed society. D.H. Lawrence was its prophet, and declared that man was to obey his feelings, which were his true guide and sufficient justification: 'what is natural is right'. That creed has fashioned consciously or unconsciously, modern thought and behaviour.

The Second World war was an attempt to roll back these forces of irrationalism that threatened to overwhelm the old Christian civilisation of the West, on the political front. Churchill described it in these words. "Upon this battle depends the survival of Christian civilisation." And, indeed, that was true. But, sadly, the War was but an interlude in this protracted struggle. Since then the the revival of primitivism has gathered pace and momentum. The call has been for even greater freedom from restraints. Modern methods of contraception have facilitated this in the realm of sexual relationships, leading to the break-up of stable marital relations and family life. 'Pop' music has instilled the same message of licence. The 'pop' culture has brutalised and warped the understanding and outlook of the young over the past forty years, and accelerated the trend towards unreason and ignorance encapsulated in the euphemism 'dumbing down'. Consequently, the condition of, and prospects for our society are alarming.

Losing Control

The situation is best captured in an illustration used by Dr Martyn Lloyd-Jones, in his little book *Truth Unchanged, Unchanging*, in which he deals with this phenomenon of a man setting aside reason and conscience, and allowing free rein to his animal nature. He likened it to a horse and rider. The horse and rider are safe as long as the rider is in control, and holds the bridle. I remember talking to a man once who had had the very unnerving experience of riding a horse when it bolted. There was nothing he could do, but hang on to it neck until tired and stopped. This is a picture of the condition of man and society today. 'Where there is ignorance of God, the people run wild.' Where conscience and religion are rejected, the restraints have been removed by which man and society may be ordered and saved. Powerful, destructive forces are then set in motion, and take their own course carrying us wherever they will.

Licentious Society

The apologists of this state of things are fond of calling it 'the permissive society'. It is no such thing. Its proper name is the licentious society, the lawless society. Anyone who knows the least thing about the subject knows that ethics cannot be 'permissive'. It can be 'non-permissive' or else it can be 'assertive'. The commands 'Thou shalt not' and 'Thou shalt' are both valid, but to say 'Thou mayest' is the disavowal of all morality. And that is where our society now stands.

But what of the Church's part in all this? What warnings has it raised, what restrained has exercised in the name of religion? Sadly, that the answer is, that it has done little to restrain. Its role has been largely to acquiesce in what has taken place, to match the revolution in society with a similar revolution and the Church, in doctrine and morals. Thus the bit and bridle have been removed, and the horse has been given its head.

Liberalising Doctrine

In the 19th century many attempts were made within the Church to liberalise doctrine, and to reconcile it with what was regarded as the unassailable 'scientific' view of the world and man. These attempts at accommodation of religion to the prevailing philosophy went on through the last century also, but a watershed was reached in the early 1960s with the publication of the book, *'Honest To God'* by Bishop John Robinson, the then Bishop of Woolwich. Until then, it was largely true to say that traditional ideas of doctrine had prevailed and the Church, at least in terms of a supernaturalist framework. But the publication of that book, and the furore it caused, brought about a fundamental realignment. It represented the transition to a new mode of thought and life in the Church, in which radical ideas would predominate. Dr Robinson's thesis was 'our image of God must go'. No longer was he the God 'out there', but the God 'within'. God is to be thought of not as transcendent, but as the 'ground of our being'. He is not to be found in the heights, but in the 'depth of our being'. The whole supernaturalist framework was being thrown out. It was a reductionist exercise; and God has been accommodated to a natural world. Alistair Macintyre, the philosopher said, "what is striking about Dr Robinson's book is first and foremost that he is an atheist." People wrote to Dr Robinson to say that he had lifted a burden from their hearts, they no longer felt it necessary to believe in God.

Liberalising Morals

With regard to morals, we find the same thing happened; churchmen, generally speaking, followed the lead of the world. Along with the new theology there came in the 1960s 'situation ethics', that is, the substitution of subjective insights and feelings for the revealed commandments of God. The authority for what we do, it was argued, is within. We must not be guided by rules, but by love and feelings. That is how we decide what is right and what is wrong.

So the moral thinking of the Church followed in the wake of the revolution that had taken place in the world. The Church was being made conformable to the world, and doing little more than sanctioning the 'permissiveness' of the age.

Revolution

There is no doubt that a society has, in the last 40 years undergone a revolution,

as significant in its way as the Bolshevik Revolution in Russia, or the Cultural Revolution in China. Our moral values, culture and outlook have been changed profoundly.

The judgment spoken of by Paul in Romans 1, has overtaken our society and civilisation. "Because that, when they knew God, they glorified him not as God, neither were thankful; but became vain in their imaginations, and their foolish heart was darkened. 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." (Romans 1.21-25)

Lawlessness

But now the chickens are coming home to roost. The consequences of our licentious, hedonistic society, and its godless way of life are manifesting themselves in lawlessness on our streets, illegitimacy, drug-taking, loutish behaviour and fecklessness. These are all becoming major problems for society and for politicians. And it is becoming increasingly apparent that they have no answers.

"Things fall apart: the centre cannot hold."

"Mere anarchy is loosed upon the world."

The rejection of God's word, the liberalising agenda of the last 50 years, the notion that people were being set free to be themselves, have all together dismantled the moral fabric of society. But now that the uncomfortable and unwelcome consequences of this are manifesting themselves the leaders of our society reveal that they do not really know how to put it back together again.

Restoring Order

There are two ways of restoring order in a lawless society. The first is the way of repression. You introduce draconian laws, you take away people's liberty, you crack down hard offenders. Dictators have no difficulty making the trains run on time, and maintaining law and order. You can have it at the price of liberty. I think there are ominous signs at present that this path could be contemplated if social disorder and crime increases. We ought never to be complacent and say that sort of thing cannot happen here. If we talk like that, we do not understand the depths of human nature. The second way is the regeneration of human society and human nature. But that is not something that politicians are even Church leaders can do. You cannot pass a Bill in Parliament for moral and spiritual regeneration of the nation. I know what politicians talk of urban regeneration, and they landscape a derelict industrial site,

and plant a few trees, and call it regeneration. But how do you bring moral and spiritual regeneration to people sunk in moral turpitude and spiritual ignorance? God confronted the prophet Ezekiel with a valley of dry bones, and asked him the question, “*Can these bones live?*” and the prophet was compelled to answer, “*O Lord God, thou knowest*”. Here we are to recognise our limitations; only God knows how to raise those who are dead in trespasses and sins.

No Way Out

What I am saying is that humanly speaking there is no way out of this situation into which we have got ourselves, no way out of a licentious society; no way out of this downward spiral of libertinism that we have chosen. The godless response of repression and tyranny is merely the substitution of one evil for another, a cure that is worse than the disease, or just as bad.

The truth is that man’s nature is depraved and fallen. That is the great fundamental truth that the Bible teaches, that God’s revelation declares, and which our generation has refused to heed, and rejected. But now we are witnessing the consequences of that rejection. Man left to himself and his own devices will do wickedly - he will choose either libertinism or godless authoritarianism. Both in their way are equally evil, and manifestations of the sinfulness and evil of man’s fallen nature. The truth, as the Bible says, that man in his natural state is “without God and without hope in the world”. When the world by its supposed wisdom rejects the wisdom of God, then it is shut up to its own evil and destructive tendencies. “Where there is no vision the people perish.” Where there is no knowledge of God and his revelation and truth the people run wild.

As our Lord said to the Jews, “Except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish”. The real choice confronting our nation today is exactly the same as that which confronted the Jews. Jesus told them not to imagine that those who had been killed by the fall of the tower in Siloam were especially sinful, and had been singled out for punishment. They were all sinners and except their repented they would all likewise perish.

Repentance

Similarly, today, the human condition admits of only one real answer, repentance. “God commands all men everywhere to repent”, and we have a duty to call upon people in our nation to repent, and ourselves to turn to God and seek his grace and mercy.

What does this mean? Well, ***first it means humbling ourselves, and acknowledging that we have been wrong.*** In our pride and supposed wisdom and self-sufficiency, we thought we knew how to live and conduct ourselves. We believed we did not

need the Lord and his word - the Bible. That our science and technology and philosophy would show us how to live without God. We were the men and wisdom would die with us. If we really mean to repent we must forsake that attitude and return humbly to God, and plead with him to guide and direct us, and rule over us.

Until there is a spirit of humility before God in a nation, I see no hope. It is this spirit of pride and self-sufficiency that is destroying us. Without humility, we can never be brought to acknowledge that we have been wrong. "Be clothed with humility: for God resisteth the proud, and giveth grace to the humble. Humble yourselves therefore under the mighty hand of God, that he may exalt you in due time." (1 Peter 5.5-6)

Secondly, it means that we must all turn to the Lord, from the least to the greatest. In fact, if blame is to be apportioned, the leaders of our nation, the learned and the opinion-formers share the greatest measure of blame. "All have sinned and come short of the glory of God. There is none righteous, no, not one. There is none that understandeth, there is none that seeketh after God."

A great stumbling block in the way of national repentance is the godlessness of too many of our leaders. They have a disproportionate influence upon the nation. People take note of what they do or do not do. They set the tone and character of society. Paul instructed that "supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks be made for kings and for all that are in authority" for that reason. Their faith, or lack of faith will be reflected throughout the nation. This must be pointed out, and their duty made plain, to lead the nation in repentance and a return to the ways of God; and the dire consequences for them and for the nation when they fail in this duty. Let them acknowledge that the Lord God has set them over the people, to be shepherds to them and to lead them, and to feed them all that which is good. The monarch used to call the nation to prayer. The leaders ought now to call the nation to repentance.

The leaders of the churches have a special duty in this respect, particularly in view of how badly the churches generally have failed the nation, and neglected to declare the true gospel of the whole counsel of God. Pure biblical doctrine is the stream that should run through our national life to cleanse and purify it. If things go wrong morally in the nation we can be sure it is because there has been corruption at the fountain-head, corruption of the doctrines that are taught and the beliefs that are held in the church. The departure of the Church of England, and other churches too, from biblical teaching has had disastrous consequences for the nation as a whole. As Luther put it, "when the law of God is cast out of the Church, there is no more acknowledging of sin in the world". If there is to be any meaningful national repentance, the Church must take a leading part in

confessing and acknowledging its own involvement in, and responsibility for, the moral and spiritual downgrade of the nation.

Thirdly, national repentance, if it is real will mean doing something about the sad state of our society, and that duty rests upon us all. As Bishop Ryle once said, “It is the very essence of genuine repentance, as the Church catechism teaches, to ‘forsake sin’. That repentance which consists in nothing more than feeling, talking, professing, wishing, meaning, hoping and resolving, is worthless in God’s sight”. If we mean business, if we wish to see a change in our society for the better we must all act to put things right that are wrong.

At the moment expressions of religious sentiment in our nation appear only to confirm the status quo, and engender complacency about the degenerate state of society. It reminds me of the words of the prophet, “Will ye steal, murder, and commit adultery, and swear falsely, and burn incense unto Baal, and walk after other gods whom ye know not; And come and stand before me in this house, which is called by my name, and say, We are delivered to do all these abominations?” (Jeremiah 7.9-10). Can we stand in God’s house, and give thanks for deliverance in two world wars, as we do on Remembrance Sunday, and yet do nothing about the insult and offence that our national conduct gives to Almighty God? Have we been delivered to do all these things? Deeds not words are the need of the hour. National repentance means doing something about the moral and spiritual condition of our country, and it must start with each one, individually, where God has placed us, from the highest to the lowest. But let us never forget the solemn warning, ‘except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish’.

But you may say, what hope is there of repentance in our nation, in view of the hardness of heart and the wickedness you have described? You might as well expect to get blood out of a stone, or fire from ice, as to look for repentance from our godless society. But Jonah was called by God to go to Nineveh and cry against the wickedness of that city. He refused to go, but God constrained him, and to Jonah’s amazement they repented. Peter preached to the Jews in Jerusalem - those very Jews who had crucified Christ, whose hearts were like adamant - and they repented.

Why is this so? How could it be possible? Because repentance is not a work of man, but a work of God, a miracle of grace. It is God who gives repentance. “God has exalted him (Jesus) to his right hand, to be a Prince and a Saviour, for to give repentance”. God is sovereign and with him all things are possible. If we did not believe this we would be wasting our breath. There would be nothing we could do, and the situation will be hopeless.

Thank God this is still the day of grace, and God can and does give repentance.

We have had a multiplication of signs, in the heaven above, and in the earth beneath; such as all mankind have ever esteemed forerunners of public calamities; and the more they are despised, the louder is their voice to the same purpose. God hath continued hitherto his word amongst us, wherein the ordinary rule of his providence in these things is openly declared. And if those unto whom the declaration of the word of God, in the dispensation of it, is committed, have not faithfully warned the people of their danger, their blood may be found at their door. Herein, at present, lies our greatest straight. The efficacy of all other calls of God unto repentance depends much on the application of them unto the souls and consciences of men in the preaching of the word. But whilst by some this work is despised, at least counted unnecessary, by some it is neglected utterly; and others, by reason of their private capacities, whereby they are disabled to speak unto magistrates, cities, and all the community of the people, think not themselves concerned therein, and it is almost wholly laid aside. For what, some will say, doth this speaking unto a few in a retirement signify, as unto a general reformation of the people of the land? But whereas we have all sinned in our measures, – churches, and all sorts of more strict professors religion – it is everyone’s duty to be pressing these warnings of God within his own bound and precincts. And if each of us should prevail but with one to return effectually to God, it will be accepted with him, who, in such a season, seeks for a man to stand in the gap, to turn away his wrath, and will save the city for the sake of ten, if they be found therein. Let us not pretend that the repentance and reformation called for respect the public enormous sins of the nation, in atheism, profaneness, sensuality, luxury, pride, repression, hatred of the truth, contempt of the ministry of the Gospel, and the like. They do so, indeed, but not only; – they respect also the decays in faith, love, zeal, with love of the world, conformity unto it, lukewarmness, that are found amongst the most eminent professors of religion. This is our present wound; here lies our weakness – namely, in the want of a quick, active, zealous ministry, to call and stir up magistrates and people to effectual repentance, and turning to God. Unless this be given unto us, I fear we cannot be saved. If it be otherwise – if we have a ministry that really do attend on to their duty in this matter – I beg their pardon for other apprehensions: but then I shall think it the most pregnant sign of approaching destruction; seeing it is apparent that all their endeavours have neither fruit nor success.

John Owen - *Sermons to the Nation*, Works Vol 8, p 627.

THE CHRISTIAN LIFE COMPARED TO A RACE

“So run, that ye may obtain” I Corinthians 9:24.

by John Newton

The scripture teaches us to derive profitable lessons from common occurrences: and since we cannot avoid seeing and hearing the vanities of those who know not God, unless we would go wholly out of the world, we may learn some instruction from them at a distance. The country of Greece, and especially the neighbourhood of Corinth, was famous for trials of skill in a variety of exercises, such as racing, wrestling, fighting, and the like. And because the children of the world are very wise in their generation, and spare no pains to accomplish the point they have in view, the Apostle would stir up believers to diligence from their example; and therefore, in several places, compares the Christian life to one or other of the contests which were managed in the public games, and here particularly to a race. In those ancient races much solemnity was observed. The ground or cause was exactly marked out; those who were to run went through a strict regimen and exercise beforehand; a vast concourse of people were assembled as spectators; authorised judges were appointed to award the prize, which was a crown of laurel or oak leaves, to the winner: and before it began, and herald publicly proclaimed the rules to be observed by the competitors; which unless strictly complied with, all the pains and endeavours issued only in disappointment and shame. To each of these particulars as the Apostle alludes in different parts of his writings.

Let us then briefly consider wherein the illusion holds, and take notice of some things in which there is a remarkable difference.

I. That the Christian life is compared to race, may intimate to us,
1. That it is a laborious and strenuous service, and incompatible with an indolent and careless frame of spirit. Not that we can do anything of ourselves: in this sense, “it is not of him that willeth, or have him that runneth.” Romans 9. 16. But when a believer is animated by a view of Jesus, and the prize of the high calling, to run the race set before him, he finds that it demands his utmost strength, courage, and patients. A spectator may divert himself with the prospect, or the company; he may make observations upon what passes around him, and ride as softly as he pleases: but then he has no pretensions to the prize. But those who are actually candidates for it, may be easily distinguished without being pointed out: they have no leisure for amusement; their eyes are fixed, and their thoughts wholly engaged, upon what they have in hand; and they exert all their powers,

and strain every nerve, to reach the goal. How inconsistent is the conduct of many professors? If they enter the lists, they inform themselves of the rules, they even presume to expect a prize, though they while away their whole lives, without once attempting to run in good earnest. And not so those are taught and called of God: a sense of the worth of their souls, of the love of Christ, of the glory that shall be revealed, of their own weakness, and of the many obstacles that withstand their progress, stirs them up to watchfulness, diligence, and prayer, and excites a holy jealousy, “lest, the promise being made of entering into his rest, any of them should come short of it”. Hebrews 4. 1.

2. That we should still press forward, and not rest in what we have received. If a man sets out in a race with greater speed, and seems to outstrip his antagonists; yet if he does not persevere to the end, he will be sure to lose. The Apostle alludes to a race in another place, where he says, “forgetting the things that are behind, and reaching forward to those things that are before, I stretch forward.” Philippians 3.13,14. The Greek word beautiful expresses the earnestness and energy of those who run, and are determined to be first: they make no account of the ground already passed over, but exert themselves to the utmost, labour with their hands and feet, and strain every joint to the utmost, as though the whole success depended upon each single step. We see too many instances of person who begin warmly, and seem to run well for a season; but they are hindered in their progress, slacken the pace first, and then stop short. Take notice of the exhortation in my text, “so run that you may obtain”: for it will be a dreadful disappointment if you should be set aside disapproved, when others receive the prize.

II. The heralds or criers in the Christian race are the ministers of the gospel; and their proper name of office is expressed by the same word. They have it in charge to invite all to run, and to declare the prescribed rules: and these must be carefully tended to, for if, or, as it might be rendered, although a man strive, (2 Timothy 2.5), although he wrestle, and fight, and run, and weary himself, and excel others; yet, after all, he loses the prize, he is not crowned unless he strive lawfully, unless he strictly conforms to the prescribe regulations: he will be judged unqualified, though in other respects skillful and diligent, unless he runs in the limits marked out, fights with the usual weapons, and observes in all points the discipline of the place. We are bound in duty, at the same time that we proclaim the race, and point out the prize to your view, to tell you that, without faith and holiness, there can be no acceptance, Mark 16:16, Hebrews 12:14. And we cannot but be grieved to see how little these cautions are regarded by multitudes. Some are labouring as it were in the fire, to establish a righteousness by their own works, and refuse to believe in Christ for salvation. Others, who profess indeed to believe in him, call themselves his people, and affect to speak highly of his Gospel, yet eventually deny him by their works and conversation.

But unless you can alter the sure determinations of the word of God, there must be an alteration in yourselves, or else, when you think you have attained, and shall confidently demand the prize. you will hear him say, "I know you not whence ye are; depart from me, all ye workers of iniquity" (Luke 13:27).

There is a circumstance in this resemblance which I would not pass over, because it is peculiar to the Christian race. The ministers or heralds are not only to invite others, but are likewise to run themselves. To this the apostle alludes, when he says, "lest, when I have preached to others, I should be myself a castaway;" 1 Corinthians 9. 27, or be disapproved of the Judge for breaking those regulations himself which he had been authorised to propound to all. We have need to preach to ourselves no less than to you, and to entreat your prayers for us, that we may stand perfect and complete in the whole will of God. And the caution may be proportional extended to everyone that is entrusted with any measure of gifts for the edification of the people of God. Keep close to his word, pray for his Spirit, be diligent and temperate in all things, and maintain a watchful jealousy over your own hearts. These are the means by which the Lord keeps his people from falling. But trust not to any outward talent, calling, or usefulness; for it is possible for a man to be instrumental to the good of others in families and societies, and yet to come short of the kingdom himself at last

III. I have observed, that a great concourse of spectators attended at the ancient games. The Christian, in his race and warfare, has likewise innumerable eyes upon him, a great cloud of witnesses. We are exhibited a spectacle to the world, to the whole universe, both to angels and to men, 1 Corinthians 4. 9. Though he may be placed in an obscure situation, yet his neighbours at least will observe him, to see how his profession and practice agree. Invisible beings attend in every step; the good angels rejoice over the returning sinner, Luke 15.10; and it is probable, by God's appointment, support and refresh him in ways which are beyond our apprehension. The powers of darkness watch him with subtlety and envy, and go at the utmost bound of their commission, in their endeavours either to divert him from his course, or make it uncomfortable to him. How should this thought both animate and humble every sincere soul? Be not discouraged, because to appearance you are almost left to serve God alone. If the veil of flesh and blood could be drawn aside, you would see you are not alone; all the host of heaven are on your side; the glorious company that are before the throne of God day without night, rejoicing, are engaged in your cause, and drink of the same fountain from which you are supplied. The spirits of just men make perfect, who are now all eye, all ear, all love, were once as you are, partakers of the same infirmities, sorrows, and cares. And you before long shall be as they are, clothed with light, and freed from every burden. And Jesus, the Lord of Angels, the King of saints, beholds your toil and conflict with complacency, and says, "hold that

fast which thou hast, that no man take thy crown.” Revelation 3.11. He is always near to succour, strengthen, and to save. Rejoice, therefore, that you run not as unnoticed, but rejoice with trembling. Be ashamed to think how disproportionate your efforts are to the company that behold you, and to the prize that awaits you. Remember likewise other eyes are upon you; Satan envies your privileges, and scorns your profession; he is every minute waiting permission to sift you as wheat, Luke 22.31; he is incessantly spreading snares for your feet, and preparing his arrows against you: therefore be not high-minded, but fear, and give all diligence so to run that you may obtain.

IV. The Judge who presides at the end of the race is Jesus, the Judge of all. He holds forth the prize full in view to the eye of faith, and shall shortly crown the Conqueror with his own hand. How sweetly does the Apostle spiritualise upon this circumstance! “I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course; I have kept the faith. Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of life, which the Lord, the righteous judge,” (who does not decide by appearances, nor can be influenced by partiality, as is too frequent amongst men) “shall give me at that day; and not to me only, but all who love his appearing” 2 Timothy 4. 7, 8. Be of good cheer, believer: your case may be misrepresented, or misunderstood by men; but the Lord, the righteous and unerring Judge, will vindicate, approve, and reward in the great day, when he shall come to be glorified in his saints, and admired in all them that believe.

Thus much concerning the resemblance of the Christian life to a race, to which the Apostle alludes. I shall briefly take notice of some particulars in which the resemblance fails; and a very interesting and important difference may be observed,

1. In the reward. *The bodily exercise*, 1 Timothy 4.8, employed in the games (for to those the Apostle refers) *profitted little*: a crown of oak or laurel, or some such bauble, was their highest aim; and this the most of the competitors came short of, for though all ran, *but one received the prize*. Of little more value, and equal uncertainty, is the prize that has engaged the time and thoughts of many. *But godliness* (as a whole course and conflict in which the believing is engaged) *is profitable for things*, or in every view, having promises to support the live there now it's, and to crown a that which is to come. “He that overcometh, saith the Lord, shall inherit all things. I will be his Father, and he shall be my son. I will give him to eat of the tree of life, which is in the midst of the paradise of God. I will make him a pillar in the Temple of my God, and he shall go out no more; yea, I will grant him to sit down with me in my throne.” Revelation 2.7;3. 12-21; 22.7; Psalm 84.11. The Lord will give grace here, and will withhold no good thing from those who walk uprightly; and thereafter he will crown grace with glory, and place his servants out of the reach of every trouble and enemy, in the

kingdom which his love has prepared for them from before the foundation of the world. "Having therefore these promises, dearly beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God" 2 Corinthians 7.1.

2. In races, though many run, one only can receive the prize. But, thanks be to God, it is not so in the Christian race. All who run as the Lord has appointed, shall be sure to win. No opposition can prevail against them, nor the number of the candidates be any diminution to the happiness of each individual. The inheritance of the saints in light, like the light of the sun, is not diminished by being shared amongst many; each one possesses the whole, in the same perfection as he could do, if there was none to enjoy it but himself.

3. In the races the Apostle alludes to, none were compelled to run. The proclamation was general; but those who did not choose to engage suffered no disadvantage. But it is not so in the race to which you are invited by the Gospel. The Lord is greatly offended with those who slight the message, and refuse to enter the lists. If you only give his ministers a hearing, and return your farms and merchandise, Matthew 22. 5, forget the worth of your precious souls, and suffer your thoughts to be engrossed with the cares and pleasures of this life, to the neglect of this one thing needful, the Lord will account it a contempt offered to himself, and will ere long call you before his tribunal to answer for it.

4. Those who ran and did not win the prize, only lost their labour, or at the worst were exposed to shame, but they were liable to no positive punishment. But you who are professors of the Gospel, if you come short at last, will be lost for ever. "So run that you may obtain." Be not content with having set out; the promise is made to perseverance. "He that endureth to the end shall be saved;" Matthew 10.22; Hebrews 10.38, but if any draw back, or stop short, the Lord will have no pleasure in them. They will not only lose the prize, but will receive a heavier and aggravated doom. It would have been better for them not to have known the way of righteousness, than, after they had known it, to turn from the holy commandment delivered to them. If you are forced to run for your lives, you would be very thoughtful about the event. But if you are not found amongst those who come in for the prize of eternal life, you will be cast into outer darkness, and sink under the curse of God for ever. Fain therefore would I persuade you to address yourself with earnestness to run the race set before you. Flee for approaching wrath. The wrath of God is already revealed against all righteousness, and soon it will be poured forth upon the head of every transgressor. Though God is patient and forbearing he is angry with the wicked every day. If he turn not, he will whet his glittering sword; he hath bent his bow, and made it ready. He hath also prepared for him the instruments of death; he

hath ordained his arrows against those who shall finally disobey his great command, to receive the Gospel of his grace. It is impossible to elude his eye, or to withstand his power. You are upon the brink of danger, if you are not already entered in this race: you stand up on a precipice, and hell from beneath has opened his mouth to receive you. But a respite is still afforded; the Lord waits to be gracious; and as yet there is room. The gate of mercy is not yet shut; “turn therefore to the stronghold, as prisoners of hope:” no longer refuse his gracious invitation, or trifle with your precious souls; seek to Jesus, that you may live; apply to him for faith and repentance, and, up in his strength and name, prepare to run this important race. Mediate upon the glorious prize which is provided for all who endure to the end; it is freely proposed to all who run. Pardon, grace, and eternal life, are promised and bestowed, without money, and without price. If, after so many repeated calls, you still harden your hearts, then stop your ears, and determine that you will not come to Jesus that that you may have life, you must assuredly perish, without mercy and without excuse.

But if you are desirous to run, remember the admonition in my text, “so run but you may obtain”. Your steps must be regulated by the word of God, or you will wander wide from the good old way; you must derive your sufficiency in strength from Christ by faith in prayer, or you will faint and be unable to endure to the end. We read of some that ran well for a season, but were afterwards hindered and turned aside, Galatians 5.7. Be upon your guard, for there are many that will strive to divert you from your course. Satan, the world, and your own evil hearts will combine and form various attempts to slacken your pace, and withdraw attention from the one thing needful. Dread the thought of stopping short, or turning back; and the more you meet with opposition, be so much the more earnest to redouble your diligence, and especially to cry mightily to him who is able to keep you from falling, to preserve you unblameable in love while here, and at last to present you faultless before the presence of his glory with exceeding joy.

Believers, why are not we as wise in our generation as the children of the world? We see how those are fond of a common horse race are thinking and talking of it, and preparing for it every day. Does not their diligence shame us, who are so cold, faint, and dilatory, in the most important and honourable concerns? Let us gird up the loins of our mind; some of you have not far to run now; you have taken many a weary step since you were first called; but the end is at hand, the period of your complete salvation is now much nearer the when you first believed, Romans 8.11. Think of Jesus the Forerunner and Judge; he has already entered within the veil for us; his eye is upon us, he is near to assist, and waiting to receive us. May his Spirit and his example animate us to press forward to the prize of our high calling, to tread down every difficulty, and to be faithful to death, that we may receive the crown of life, Revelation 2.10.

BIRKENHEAD AND ALL THAT

A Protestant Martyr Remembered

by **Edward J Malcolm**

On the evening of Thursday 25 September, 1902, a large assembly gathered at the Clacton Music Hall in Birkenhead for a public lecture. There was nothing unusual in this, for such venues were often the only places able to accommodate the large numbers who attended public meetings in those days. There was nothing unusual in the fact that the speaker was a Protestant believer, for the cause of Protestantism was more fervently upheld at that time. What was somewhat unusual was that, at the close of the meeting, the speaker placed himself and his companions in the hands of the police, in order to ensure their safe conduct away from the crowds who had gathered outside the music hall. For the crowds included a number of individuals who had threatened “to do for” the speaker and his associates. The actions of the police ensured that the speaker and his party made their exit via a side-entrance, and were soon on a tram, on their way to their destination. However, the crowd was so great that it could not be avoided; the speaker was recognised, and a diversion was required. This proved to be a short-lived respite, for after leaving the tram, the party had to walk to the railway station. As they set off, the speaker suddenly let out a groan, and sank to the ground, clutching a metal file that had struck him a mortal blow in the face. He was taken to hospital, and on October 8, he died. The speaker’s name was John Kensit, and he is, to the mind of many, England’s latest Protestant martyr. This year marks the centenary of his death, and so serves as an opportune moment to consider what motivated John Kensit to take the stand he did, and to ask if there is not the same need today, for those who share his concerns.

Sowing the Seed

John Kensit was born an orphan, his father having died shortly before his birth. John’s mother was careful to nurture him in the Word of God, and sought a good education for him. At home, he was brought up with the Bible, ‘Pilgrim’s Progress’, the Book of Common Prayer, and Foxe’s Book of Martyrs. However, it would be a little time before the seeds of this stout diet would flourish.

Among John Kensit’s friends were some who were choir boys at St. Ethelburga’s, and he attended a service with them. The vicar’s daughter invited him to join the choir, for he had a good singing voice. The promise of an extra fourpence a week was encouragement enough, and so he became a participant in services where sacerdotalism and High Church practice were the norm. The vicar

of this church was keen that his methods and rituals should be practiced without opposition. Such opposition existed, and when the evangelical vicar of a nearby church began a series of lectures on 'Church subjects', John was among those who went with the intention of disrupting the meetings. However, the speaker's words, and his ability to answer challenges, led John to search the Scriptures. He found that his belief in 'Catholic principles' was badly shaken, and in later years would remember those lectures, and the vicar's biblical teaching, as playing a vital role in his understanding of Christian verity.

An event occurred at about this point in John Kensit's young life, which, while perhaps not influencing him directly, does illustrate the mood of the times.

1848, the Year of Revolution, had seen an uprising in Italy against the French army who had come to rescue Pope Pius IX from those who had established the Roman Republic. The Italian leader was Giuseppe Garibaldi, and his handling of the retreat following defeat turned him into a folk hero. Some time before his 1859 campaign against the Austrians in Northern Italy he came to London, and young John Kensit, then about seven or eight years of age, was one of the hundreds of scholars who congregated in Finsbury Square to cheer this international hero. What fired the popular imagination was less his warlike deeds than his military and political goal - the overthrow of the papal power that caused the popes to rule Rome and parts of central Italy as their private fiefdom. The Italians wanted Italy for the Italians, and Rome as their capital. Garibaldi was not alone in this aim. A former priest named Gavazzi was at work informing the Protestant nations of the dangers of Romanism, and he warned Protestant Britain by calling them back to the church and religion of "Latimer and of Ridley and of Cranmer... Will you save your glorious Reformation, the mother of your civil and religious liberties?... the Bible, and the Bible alone, and your Reformation and your country are safe. Stay by the Bible; shield the Bible with the mightiness of your nationality. Defend the Bible from all attacks within and without." He spoke vehemently against the ritualism of certain churches in England, and warned that such moves were precursors to the re-introduction of full-blown Romanism, with all its superstition, darkness and oppression.

That such men and such words could get a public hearing demonstrates to us the level of feeling in those days. Protestantism was seen as the mother and keeper of all liberty, because it is the religion of the Bible. Whether John Kensit heard his words at the time is unknown. Whether they themselves played a part in his religious understanding is unknown. But what is known is that he would become a defender of Protestantism when God called him to do so. Those religious liberties, which had been so long enjoyed in this country, were under threat throughout John Kensit's life, and he would stand in the breach when called.

The Work Begins

The events just recounted took place some time before June 1859. It would not be until 1898 that John Kensit would make his public protest against ritualism. In the intervening period he was at work as a Sunday School superintendent, at St. Mary-le-Strand. Under his leadership, the class outgrew its allotted quarters, and had to meet in the main church itself. He took many opportunities that came to him to speak of the dangers of ritualism, and to remind people of their Protestant heritage. He was at work in Paternoster Row, selling books. We know that at midnight on 19 May 1885, the doors of his shop were open as he took delivery of the first stock of Bibles in the new Revised Version. A conversation held with a woman of ritualist leanings shows that he was warning people of the dangers of Romanism, from which he himself had been delivered.

However, the incident that propelled him into the public eye was to take place on Good Friday, 1898. He and his son, also John, went to St. Cuthbert's church, in London. As in Rome, so in ritualist churches; the crucifix was unveiled and laid on the chancery steps. Clergy and people, in pairs, crawled to the crucifix to kiss the wood. John Kensit took up the crucifix, and said, "In the name of God, I denounce this idolatry in the Church of England - God help me." He was seized, pummelled, and dragged to Kensington Police Station. There the vicar pressed charges against him, though he was eventually cleared on appeal.

The newspapers were full of the incident. Many branded him an attention-seeker, but many others saw him as a new Reformer, calling the Church of England back to the Articles, back to Scripture. There is no indication of why he chose that particular service on that particular day, though it is clear that his action was not out of character. For months afterwards, the newspapers, both national and local, were filled with correspondence both from those who defended the antics of the Tractarians and those who opposed them. It was said that the laity had no difficulty in making a bold defence of Protestantism.

When he made his protest, John Kensit was forty-five years of age. His actions were not those of an impressionable youth, nor of a zealous but immature convert. He acted in accordance with his deeply-held beliefs, and his love for the Protestant and Reformed Church of England. When news of his protest became public, it spoke to the hearts of a large number of Protestants, clergy and laity, who rejoiced that such a stand had been taken.

Other protests followed. These were necessitated, he found, by the refusal of the bishops to take up points raised in correspondence. Thus action became his only means. At times, ancient custom allowed him opportunity of making a protest, as he found when he attended the Confirmation of the Bishop of London, Dr.

Creighton, at Bow Church, Cheapside. An official crier called for any who had objections to the appointment to voice them. John Kensit stood up, and was immediately ordered to sit down. The police were called, but he read out his protest anyway. No action was taken, nor was the protest heeded.

The church of All Saints, Lambeth, was the scene of his second protest. There, a special week-day service was held on behalf of the Ritualistic Society. Prayer was offered up for the reunion of the Anglican, Roman and Greek Orthodox churches, and the prayer was in the following form; "Holy Mary, Mother of God, pray for us now, and at the hour of our death. Amen." John Kensit stood up and asked where in the Prayer Book this prayer was to be found? He was told that it was one used and taught by 'the Catholic Church'. Is it to be found in the Scriptures of the true Catholic Church? 'Because our Church states in her Sixth Article that Holy Scripture containeth all things necessary for salvation.' The police were called, but when the clergy knew the identity of the protester, the charges were dropped immediately.

Kensit did not limit his protests to the capital. When the Church Congress sat at Nottingham, he attended a service at St. Matthias, Sneinton. There he witnessed a Requiem Mass, with the full Roman superstition and ritual. After the service, he made a public protest concerning the things he had witnessed. As was his practice, he referred to the Thirty-nine Articles, in order to inform his hearers of what they ought and ought not to be doing. Although the police were called yet again, a member of the Society of the Holy Cross advised against pressing charges, saying, "It will never do to lock up Mr. Kensit": such actions merely make martyrs.

The fourth public protest took place at a church John Kensit knew well, St. Ethelburga's in Bishopsgate. At an evening service, the officiating minister spoke on the rightfulness of reserving the sacrament and on transubstantiation, and, looking directly at John Kensit, told the congregation that "Even Cranmer, who some of you admire, believed in this doctrine and in reservation". Kensit took up the challenge, and stood to ask a question. This was refused, so he made a statement, saying, "Cranmer, Ridley and Latimer were burnt for denying the very doctrines you say they believed in". The minister, unable to answer this, instead threatened to call the police. Some time later, following a successful legal action, John Kensit saw the graven images being removed from this very building. However, the cost of litigation was too great to allow its regular use.

Kensit went to the highest court of appeal in such matters, to the bishops themselves in Convocation. A petition was presented, in which it was pointed out that in the past sixteen years, the number of churches using illegal Roman

vestments had risen from 336 to 2026. The Times, commenting on these figures, spoke of them as testimony to the “masterly inactivity” of the bishops. Indeed, some of the bishops present acknowledged both the truth of the claims being made, and of the illegality of the practices being protested against. However, the considered response of the Archbishop, Dr. William Temple, was to hope that those who were guilty of such things “would not object to being told...that what they were doing was inconsistent with the promises they had made”. Kensit’s biographer points out the absurdity of this approach, and asking if Dr. Temple, when a teacher, would have ever used this line with a boy caught out in a lie! The Bishop of Rochester expressed the opinion that the apparent lack of activity on the part of the bishops had been a good thing, and that it had allowed time for things that “cannot be helped and cannot be mended” to take their course. He also spoke of the apparent value in things that the Reformation had broken too sharply with. Clearly, the bishops did not value the Reformation, nor the doctrine of the Reformed Church of England. John Kensit received no support from the supposed pastors of the flock.

The final straw so far as protests were concerned, came when he attended another Confirmation of a Bishop of London at Bow Church. He stood to make his protest, on very sound grounds, when the call went out from the crier. To the astonishment of the group of protesters present, the official declared that while he had to listen to all objections, he had no authority whatsoever to act on them, and the Confirmation had to go ahead! It was clear that the apparent safeguards to which loyal churchmen looked were in fact devoid of any power, and were merely empty forms of words. Other protests followed for a while at ordinations, where various candidates were known to practice Romish rituals in Protestant churches. Each ordination went ahead anyway, the candidate swearing an oath he had no intention of keeping, and the bishop knowing full well that the oath was worthless. A new approach was called for.

The Work Grows

John Kensit saw himself, as many saw him, as a new Reformer. It is no surprise, therefore, to find him looking back to the Reformers himself. He had little patience with fellow Protestants who claimed to agree with him but refused to act, and would speak his mind to them. He looked in particular to John Wickliffe as a precursor to the Reformation, and concluded that the state of the church then was much as it had been in Wickliffe’s time, with superstition and ignorance abounding among and from the clergy in particular. The only way to combat such ignorance was through the preaching of the Word. To this end, Wickliffe had sent out itinerant preachers, to educate the common people in the truth of the Gospel, and to bring them to Jesus Christ. Kensit resolved to do much the same. So, the first band of Wickliffe Preachers was sent out in 1898. Their charge was

to take the Word of God to cities, towns and villages, “to expose sacerdotalism in the National Church, and to preach the simple Gospel of the Grace of God”. While they were engaged in this work, John Kensit and his son, John Alfred Kensit, were conducting missions and giving lectures wherever they could. In 1902, a mission was held in Liverpool. Such were the antics of the Romanists that the younger Kensit was ordered to pay over £400 as a surety and not to speak at any public meeting for a year. He refused to do this, and on 8th September, 1902, was sent to Walton Gaol for three months. On 25th of that month, his father came to Birkenhead, to what proved to be his last meeting. Following his death, the work continued under, first, John Alfred, then under his son, Alfred Latimer Kensit.

The work of the Protestant Truth Society continues today, with a total of five Wickliffe preachers mainly based in the South and East of the country. John Kensit’s work as a bookseller continues with the PTS bookshop in Fleet Street. There is a growing ministry on the internet, and through the Society’s magazine, ‘Protestant Truth’.

But what work is required? Was John Kensit correct in making public protests? Has his stand made a material difference to the Church of England, or indeed to Protestantism generally? What is the legacy of John Kensit, Reformer and martyr?

John Kensit’s Legacy

Up to the moment of his first public protest, John Kensit was like many hundreds, even thousands, of Protestant churchmen in England. He saw the growth of error around him, and took opportunities to speak out against it, warning men and women of the dangers of the Roman system, which puts stumblingblocks between the individual and the pure Gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ. He taught a Sunday School, and sought to educate people generally through the books he sold.

It is clear that he was educated himself, especially in the history and doctrine of the Church of England and of the Reformation. His knowledge of the Articles, and his ability to quote them, meant that he was able to call the clergy back to the things they had promised at their ordinations. He was able to show the people that the things being practiced by their vicars and rectors and curates were contrary to Anglican doctrine and practice, for they had no scriptural warrant to do these things.

The protests in which he engaged served to draw public attention to the illegal activities of the ritualist clergy, and to propel the matter into the public arena. It

became a matter for debate both in Convocation and in Parliament. The newspapers wrote on the matter, and quoted some as saying that no church member should pay one shilling to the Diocesan Fund, where that diocese supported churches and mission halls where illegal practices were taking place. Very often the newspapers sided with the protestants, reflecting the public mood. Yet, for all the apparent support, almost nothing changed among those churches where ritualist clergy had introduced the mass and the confessional. The bishops proved to be wilfully powerless to resist illegal practices, and the safeguards upon which loyal churchmen had relied proved to be worthless.

John Kensit's protests did prove a number of points. Firstly, it was abundantly clear that the clergy had no defence for their actions, beyond vague appeals to 'Catholic practice'. Those who wore mass vestments, who crept to the crucifix, who encouraged confession, the mass, the other 'sacraments', and so forth, did so against the teaching of their own church, and in contradiction to their ordination vows. It meant that they could not pretend that they acted with any authority.

Secondly, John Kensit exposed the duplicity of nearly all the bishops in such illegality. His direct appeals to them, and their collective and individual refusals to act, exposed them to charges of guilt by association. It was clear to all that the rot in the national church extended to the very roof itself, and there was no likelihood, humanly speaking, of a reversal of the situation.

Thirdly, the activity of the Protestant Truth Society in bringing legal actions against individual clergymen, showed that the relationship of the church to the state still had value. Magistrates and judges could and did uphold the law, proving beyond all doubt that what the proto-papists were doing did not have the protection of the state, for their actions were outside the law.

Fourthly, the sending forth of Wickliffe Preachers, and the reception they received, showed that the most effective tool against the tyranny of Rome is the preaching of the pure Gospel. All the protests and legal actions could not change the hearts of individuals, but the Gospel can and does. The Reformation of the Sixteenth Century succeeded, not because Cranmer had the support of the king, nor because the power of the church was such that all had to obey. It succeeded because it was a work of God in the hearts of men and women whereby they were converted, and turned from error to truth. So John Kensit built on the true Reformation foundation by sending out such preachers.

It should be clear to all what the need of our day is. Not only are we surrounded by churches where services are conducted in a manner more fitted to Rome than

the Church of England, but we also have to contend with liberals who deny the Gospel, arch-charismatics who effectively deny Scripture, and 'open evangelicals' who are not clear on anything any more. For the first time since before the Reformation, both the Archbishop of York and the Archbishop of Canterbury-elect are keen advocates of Mariolatry. What hope is there for true religion in the Church of England today?

The only hope - what a hope! - is in the Gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ. I would suggest that two things are required. The first is that this Gospel must be preached. Preaching the Gospel involves more than the mere recounting of historical events. It requires the exposure of the human heart to the light of God's all-searching Word. It requires that men and women are confronted with Truth, and left with nowhere to hide. This cannot be done in the power and strength of men, but requires the inner working of the Holy Spirit. And so all Gospel preaching must be accompanied by, salted with, and borne up on the prayers of all faithful people. The second requirement is that Christians live as Christians, at all times. John Kensit could not understand how Christians could agree with him, yet feel unable to do anything about it. If any know the power of the Gospel, if any have been brought to faith in Jesus Christ, if any love the Son of God, how can they fail to live accordingly, and be ready to give a reason for the hope that is in them? We are familiar with the words of the Lord Jesus given in Matthew 5.13, "Ye are the salt of the earth: but if the salt have lost his savour, wherewith shall it be salted?" William Tyndale translated it slightly differently, "Ye are the salt of the earth: but and if the salt have lost her saltness, what can be salted therewith?" John Kensit remained 'salty' all his life, because he did not loose his savour. He walked with his Saviour, and lived as such.

One hundred years ago, a man died because he spoke to the hearts of men and women about the errors they loved, and they hated him for it. The same speaking is needed today. The Gospel will always be hated, but that is because it actually reaches hearts. Christian witness through consistent living is despised, but that is because it convicts. Yet the Gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the witness of those who have come under its power, is the means God has appointed to the saving of them that perish. As we reflect on the life and work of a faithful man of God, may we ask God to lead us to do such good works which He has prepared for us to walk in.

***From* FAITH'S CHEQUEBOOK**

by Charles Haddon Spurgeon

"Thou shalt not be termed Forsaken." Isaiah 62.4 (OCTOBER 8)

'Forsaken' is a dreary word. It sounds like a knell. It is the record of sharpest sorrows, and the prophecy of direst ills. An abyss of misery yawns in that word "forsaken". Forsaken by one who pledges his honour! Forsaken by a friend so long tried and trusted! Forsaken by a dear relative! Forsaken by father and mother! Forsaken by all! This is woe indeed, and yet it may be patiently borne if the Lord will take us up.

But what must it feel like to be forsaken of God? Think of that bitterest of cries, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" Have we in any degree tasted the wormwood and the gall of "forsaken," in that sense? If so, let us beseech our Lord to save us from any repetition of so unspeakable a sorrow. Oh that such darkness may never return! Men in malice said to a saint, "God hath forsaken him; persecute and take him". But it was always false. The Lord's loving favour shall compel our cruel foes to eat their own words, or, at least, to hold their tongues.

The reverse of all this is that superlative word, *Hephzibah* - "the Lord delighteth in thee". This turns weeping into dancing. Let those who dreamed that they were forsaken hear the Lord say, "I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee".

"Faithful is he that calleth you, who also will do it." 1 Thess 5.24. (NOVEMBER 1)

What will he do? He will sanctify us wholly. See the previous verse. He will carry on the work of purification till we are perfect in every part. He will preserve our "whole spirit, and soul, and body, blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ". He will not allow us to fall from grace, nor come under the dominion of sin. What great favours are these! Well may we adore the Giver of such unspeakable gifts.

Who will do this? The Lord who has called us out of darkness into his marvellous light, out of death in sin into eternal life in Jesus Christ. Only he can do this; such perfection and preservation can only come from the God of all grace.

Why will he do it? because he is "faithful" - faithful to his own promise which is pledged to save the believer; faithful to his Son, whose reward is that his people shall be presented to him faultless; faithful to the work which he has commenced in us by our effectual calling. It is not their own faithfulness, but the Lord's own faithfulness, on which the saints rely.

Come, my soul, here is a grand feast to begin a dull month with. There may be fogs without, but there should be sunshine within.

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1766 – 2002

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St. John's Church, South London Meeting at the Shaftesbury Home, Trellis House (Mill Road (off Merton High Street), Colliers Wood, SW19), for 11.00 a.m. Morning Prayer and 6.30 p.m. Evening Prayer. Midweek as intimated. *Enquiries* Rev. A.R. Price, 0208 642 7885 or 0208 742 0151

St. Mary's, Castle Street, Reading. Sunday Services: 11.00 a.m. Morning Prayer (first Sunday Lord's Supper), 6.30 p.m. Evening Prayer (third Sunday Lord's Supper). Tuesday 8.00 pm Bible Study. *Enquiries* Rev. E.J. Malcolm 0118 959 5131. www.castlestreet.org

St. Silas Congregation, Wolverhampton, meeting in St. John's Cloisters Chapel, St. John's Square (A-Z p29 H2). 11.00 am Morning Prayer (1st Sunday Holy Communion); 6.30 p.m. Evening Prayer (3rd Sunday Holy Communion). Tuesdays in term time 7.00 p.m. Bible Study; 7.45 p.m. Prayer Meeting. On-street parking. *Enquiries* Rt. Rev. E. Malcolm 01547 528815. Hon. Curate Rev. I.R. Budgen, 01902 656514.

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