

The Journal
of
The Church of England
(Continuing)

*Jesus Christ the same
yesterday, and to day, and
for ever. Heb. 13:8*



Issue No: 29
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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.

Please write to

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Would contributors please note that they can send their news via email, to edward@netvigator.co.uk

Contributions toward postage costs are gratefully received.

From the Presiding Bishop, Edward Malcolm

15, Bridge Street
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Dear Friends,

“Who is like unto thee, O Lord, amongst the gods? Who is like thee, glorious in holiness, fearful in praises, doing wonders?” *Exodus 15. 11*

So sang Israel by the Red Sea. God had both freed them and destroyed their enemies, so they were beside themselves with joy. I admit elation, though for somewhat different reasons, in the first days after setting out together in 1994. Others also expressed their relief and joy.

Years on, both Israel then and we now have learned that God brought us into the desert to reveal to us more of Himself. Yet can we say we know Him more now?

Israel and we share a certainty that God is, and that He cannot be compared to the gods of Egypt, to Aphis, Ra, Osiris and the rest long ago, nor with the gods of Islam, Hinduism, Animism and the deification of man today. The reason is simple: such gods do not and never did exist. The spirits behind the concepts are evil, vengeful, capricious and un-knowable. Islam even boasts in that last! Animism may have its Great Spirit, but how distant, not as important as the minor local spirits who take such an unhealthy interest in one's affairs, and have to be kept on the right side of. No, we can say with quiet certainty that we know God. Yet O how little!

Even so, we glory in God's holiness and purity. Every failure on our way is ours alone. God is glorious in holiness. Like as Israel was led straight to Sinai, learning to trust by suffering want, and being brought up sharp by the Law's purity, so are we.

We are therefore fearful in praises, in fear though praising. Yet we must praise, in good and ill, because He is doing wonders. Who could have forseen the Twin Towers, the Iraq scene, the laws being framed against Christians, the rampant pride, godlessness and self-seeking, and the unrestrained sin and evil changing the face of the world? God's people are being slaughtered like sheep in Muslim and other lands. O great God of wonders how we fear Thee! Spare us, good Lord!

The Church of England may have led the way in the observance of Trinity

Sunday, some saying because Thomas a Becket was consecrated on this day in 1162, but the reason we exist is because we are deeply dissatisfied with her receding knowledge of God. The Continuing Church exists to lead us to obey Psalm 4. 4, “Commune with your own heart upon your bed, and be still. Selah.” Pause, God’s people need to think much more deeply about God.

Your friend and bishop,

Edmund Malatesta

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A number of the congregations within the Continuing Church are in the habit of recording sermons onto tape. These are available to readers of the *Journal* who may wish to hear sermons in this way.

Contact Mr J Westmacott, 1 Salisbury Close, Wokingham, Berkshire, RG41 4AJ for details of sermon texts available, and to request copies of tapes.

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THE FIRST TEN YEARS

by Edward Malcolm

LOOKING BACK

Widespread unease amongst faithful members of the Church of England.

There had been growing unease over a long time, as long as I can remember. My parents, who joined BCMS in the early days, showed us the attitude of their generation. The Rev. J. C. Rundle under whom I grew up in Greyfriars, refused to attend the local clergy Chapter because he refused to accept Anglo-Catholics as members of the Church of England. They had climbed up some other way. He refused all communication with the newly appointed Bishop of Reading on the same grounds. He himself had served as an Assistant Curate to Bishop Ryle in Liverpool, having been converted through the ministry of a young woman in a South Wales Bible Class. God used her greatly, some forty young men being converted under her later going into the ministry. She then became engaged to a man in the Brethren who immediately forbade her to continue. Mr. Rundle said the man was wrong. Spurgeon accepted the greatly blessed Gospel ministry of Lavinia Bartlett, calling her “my best deacon”.

Anglo-Catholicism

The Anglo-Catholics never ‘officially’ changed our Church of England doctrinal basis, or touched the XXIX Articles; rather interpreting them, by Tract Ninety and their other writings, in a way to suit their own doctrines. Their attempt to remove the 1662 Prayer Book by the 1927/28 Book, failed officially, although they at once published the new Book with the Bishops’ official blessing. There was also the introduction of the ‘collegiate system’, meaning that no bishop would step out of line. My father told me that he heard one of the last Protestant bishops hint largely that this had now become so, in the 1920s.

The victory of Anglo-Catholicism over Evangelicalism was made certain when our Proctors in Convocation spoke against the legalisation of the stole (that garment essential to performing the mass), and then after a night-long prayer meeting, the next day withdrew their opposition! It went through on the fictitious ground that it was a neutral garment. You do not pray for guidance over doing what the Bible forbids.

There continued an uneasy co-existence. When asked how we stayed in the Church of England, we always replied that we were the only ones marching in

step to the Articles and Book of Common Prayer; the rest were out of step and had no right to be there, remaining only through dishonesty. We felt and taught that they were hypocrites. Why, if they did not accept the Protestant Church of England, then join it, and worm away and refuse to obey their bishops, as is so well set out by Walsh and George Borrow. If honest men, they would have started their own church.

It was really a state of war. It became impossible for any Protestant to be promoted in the Church. The ones who were, soon proved by their actions why. They had compromised. Indeed, evangelicals soon came to mistrust any other evangelical who ‘rose in the ranks’. This ended officially however at Keele in 1967, when the evangelicals ‘abandoned their entrenched position’, and ceased their opposition the Anglo Catholics. They did *en-masse* what the earlier promotees had done – sold the pass. What Keele really proved is that grace cannot co-exist with any teaching that contradicts it. Just look at BCMS (now Cross-Links), set up to fight liberalism in CMS, and Anglo-Catholicism in the body of the C of E, and to train Protestant clergy and missionaries. Today it works in with unreformed CMS and has ceased its opposition. That did not happen in a moment. Yet like as with the parting of CMS/BCMS back in 1922, some say, ‘We agree with your action, but God has given us a work we cannot leave.’

Theological Liberalism

Ever since Hensley Henson had been offered Durham in 1920, as he stated in his autobiography, on the understanding he could ‘be’ a liberal, who denied the miraculous and the God-breathed nature of the Scriptures, but that he must not ‘say so openly’, another force had been introduced into the C of E, which could not co-exist with grace and revelation. And with such appointments as Barnes to Birmingham, the eating-out process accelerated.

The final *coup-de-grace* was the proposal to officially accept what the Bible had been understood by millions, including the Greek-speaking Early Fathers, to forbid. It had been accepted unanimously by the Church for millennia, that women could not be in authority over men. An evangelical Archbishop got it through Synod, thus proving all we had always thought about such promotees. Once that anti-Biblical principle was enshrined, as official doctrine or not, the Church of England was finished. Non-grace and grace had been given equal status. Grace, that great Reformation re-discovery, was dead. ‘The Great Evangelical Disaster’ had happened.

The Thinking Behind the Setting up of the Church of England (Continuing)

It became obvious that joining in with other mixed groups, including Anglo-Catholics and even in some cases Liberals, was only a recipe for re-living all the

troubles, and settled nothing. Plenty disliked the ordination of women on other grounds than biblical ones. Grace had to be given a unique shelter if it was to grow, and we must set it up. We were not Baptists, nor Presbyterians, not anything but most loyal members of the Church of England. Like the setting up of CMS, unpopularity, or kind words – but with shunning, was likely to be the lot of the resultant group.

It was from the earliest days also obvious that we were open to opportunists who could not get ‘promotion’ in larger groups, or wished to push some line, so would have ulterior motives for joining us. What we wanted was to steer a course parallel to the Church of England, but outside its structures: to keep as close as the principle of unrivalled Grace allowed: to act as we felt the Lord Jesus Christ was calling us to do. Sadly, I cannot think of any subsequent event in any way showing the thinking behind our actions to be wrong. Just look at the beliefs of Archbishop Williams, the fêting of Walsingham, the moves over homosexuality or towards same-sex unions.

SETTING UP

The Cost

I can only speak of this in personal terms. To give up the Church of our fathers, in which we had a continuous line of Protestant clergy in the family at least as far back as the Napoleonic wars, was not done without tears and then only under a feeling we could do no other. Personally I had only a very few pounds in the bank, a family to feed and educate, and the prospect of being labelled a traitorous lunatic for stepping away from friends, home and income. Indeed, the most common reason given by clergy who have spoken to me, for not doing the same, was that they simply could not afford it, even though later Parliament ruled the Church of England had changed its basis, and as we had not, we should receive money. Let it be clearly stated that the Church of England gained financially much more by that settlement, than if I had stayed. Each year I live the balance in their favour increases. Yet let it be known that God has never let me down. He gave me the money for to put down to obtain a mortgage within a few days of that irrevocable step. Our children unitedly believe, and we have never lacked. Praise His Name!

Early Steps

On April 1 1993 the Reformation Church Trust held a meeting, ‘The Way Forward’, in the Bishopsgate Institute, for the purpose of setting up ‘alternative episcopal oversight in the case of the event of the Measure’s [the Ordination Of

Women Measure] becoming law.’ The aim was stated as ‘to arrive at general agreement on the plan to maintain Classical Anglicanism, and to be pursued by those of classic evangelical persuasion, if and when the Measure receives the Royal Assent’. The attendance was small.

Thus it is clear we waited as long as possible, far longer than other groups who set up, and that we did not set out to alter our position, or have any delusions of grandeur. On October 28 of that year we met again in the same venue and decided to proceed.

In March 1995, I attended the conference at Swanwick to set up ‘Reform’. It was a wide group, and the Bishop of Derby and other bishops spoke. In front of them, a number of clergy made personal speeches. They could be briefly summarised as, ‘I may be here, bishop, but I will not make any trouble.’ It was all too obvious that Reform was likely to include many who would compromise. I noted a former Curate of All Souls, who had sat as an evangelical on ARCIC (Anglican Roman Catholic International Commission) who made a speech, and was invited on to the Committee, and next I heard he had joined the Greek Orthodox Church. The most interesting feature of the conference was one who came to me and said that a group had sat at table by him, who together had organised Keele ‘67, and said they now recognised that they had made a great mistake.

A Definitive Meeting

On 10 February 1994, in a side room of St. Mary’s, Castle Street, Reading, under the chairmanship of the Rev. David Samuel PhD, eleven clergy and wives met. They named the new body ‘The Church of England (Continuing)’, and chose Dr. Samuel as Bishop-designate, and agreed that ‘the Church is committed to the Holy Scriptures (the Authorised Version for use in lectern and pulpit), the Thirty-nine Articles of Religion in their original, natural, and intended sense, the Book of Common Prayer (1662), and the Ordinal (1550)’. It was agreed to seek consecration for the bishop-designate.

Constitution and Journal

The Committee at a subsequent meeting on October 5 1994 unanimously agreed to the Constitution drawn up by the Rev. David Samuel, and to be found in this *Journal*. This was first published in September 1995, and from that first issue, which was produced by Dr. Napier Malcolm, it was an immediate success. It is now produced by the Rev. Edward J. Malcolm.

Churches Joining

On November 16 1993 I announced my resignation, at about the same time as the Rev. Allan Bowhill, and on May 31 1994, at the earliest opportunity, we

resigned our livings. On 6 June 1994 the first services with former members of St. Luke's, Wolverhampton took place above a wool shop, and application for membership of the Church of England (Continuing) was made on 19 February 1995. On 23 February 1994 the Rev. John Shearer wrote to the Bishop of Oxford refusing his further episcopal oversight, with the support of many of his congregation in Nuffield, stating his intention of accepting alternative oversight. On 4 January 1995 the Rev Brian Felce and a group with him applied to join, the first service having taken place on 10 December 1994 in South Wimbledon. On the 25 January 1995 the former congregation of St. John the Baptist with Mary-Le-Port, Bristol, resolved to join. The Chapel Council of St. Mary's in Reading decided to join on 3 March 1995, the great majority of the congregation having supported Bishop Samuel's stand throughout.

The Consecration of Bishop David Samuel

The first application to join from overseas was that of Bishop Albion Knight (Junior), a former Brigadier with the United States Army, ordained on 1954 in the Protestant Episcopal Church, where he served as a presbyter for 29 years. He was consecrated a Bishop in the United Episcopal Church of North America in 1984, becoming Presiding Bishop in 1989. He came to England and consecrated the Rev. David Samuel as Bishop in St. Mary's, Castle Street, Reading, on Trinity Sunday 11 June 1995. Most people's main memory of the occasion was the heart-condition of Bishop Albion Knight, with symptoms that had the congregations' hearts in their mouths.

Since Then

The first great trial was the passing into glory of the Rev. Allan Bowhill on July 16, having attended the consecration hardly able to walk. He had been accepted as Minister at the Chapel of the Three Kings in Bristol. However the onset of a brain tumor greatly affected his ability to minister. He is still very much loved and missed. He had stepped out in faith more than any of us, his short years of service entitling him to very little.

Our first Annual Assembly took place at North Nibley, the village below William Tyndale's monument, on 15 July 1995, and has been held each year since. It is now held in Benson, in Oxfordshire.

The first group to leave us was the Chapel of the Three Kings in Bristol. Great regret was expressed, and Dr. Napier Malcolm was thanked warmly for all the hard work he had done behind the scenes. The first to join us was in Boston, Lincolnshire, on 28 October 2001, under Mr. Alistair Turner, but who have subsequently ceased to function as a church. The last to join us was from Frinton-on-Sea, under Mr. Philip Lievesley, being inaugurated on 29 March 2003.

The Rev. J. Nathaniel Reed in the U.S.A., and the Rev. Lewis H. How in Nova Scotia, both became associate members. Mr. How has had a severe battle with the Canadian Parliament over the 'hate' law on homophobia. Others have shown interest, both in this country and overseas, but for a variety of reasons, including in one case the unexpected death of the Rev. David Rhategan, of CESA, who looked to take on the work in Boston, the Lord has not allowed us to be strengthened by their talents.

Ordinations to augment the first group of five clergy took place following attendance at Theological Seminary of Edward J. Malcolm, ordained deacon at St. Mary's on 21 June 1998, and presbyter on 18 July 1999, together with Ian R. Budgen's ordination as deacon. The consecration of Edward Malcolm (Senior) took place on 13 September 1998, and he became Presiding Bishop on 27 May 2001. Andrew R. Price was ordained deacon on 18 March 2000, together with Edward A. Powell of North Hollywood, U.S.A. Richard Mortimer was ordained deacon on 18 June 2000, and together with Andrew R. Price and Ian R. Budgen on 10 June 2001 was ordained into the presbyterate, but subsequently left. Peter J. Ratcliff was ordained deacon on 29 June 2003, and presbyter on 5 June 2004. John Rees-Evans is in training for the ministry.

There are many whom we cannot mention; faithful clergy wives, Readers like Mr. George F. H. Hall, Treasurers and Secretaries like Mr. David K. Mansell, to mention but two of many, without whom the work could not proceed. God is no man's debtor, and will repay in full. We honour all such unrecorded workers.

CONCLUSION

Our clergy are unpaid, and the congregations, though faithful, prayerful, warmhearted and generous, are small. We have a good number of 'scattered members', who support and help us forward. We owe a great debt to Bishop David Samuel under God, especially for his leadership, writing and speaking. He has produced many fine articles and leader columns and this tenth year a very clear book on the situation within the Church of England entitled, 'The Church in Crisis', which sets out today's position. We are grateful for the fellowship of the Free Church of Scotland (Continuing).

Most of all we give the glory to the Lord, who has met our every need, protected and guided us, and is preparing us for the difficult days lying ahead for all faithful people.

'Be patient therefore, brethren, unto the coming of the Lord. Behold, the husbandman waiteth for the precious fruit of the earth, and hath long patience for it, until he receive the early and the latter rain. Be ye also patient; stablish your hearts: for the coming of the Lord draweth nigh' (*James 5: 7, 8*).

LOVE NOT THE WORLD

David N. Samuel

1 John 2:15-18

“Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world. And the world passeth away, and the lust thereof: but he that doeth the will of God abideth for ever.”

Here is sound advice for every Christian, young, middle-aged or elderly. The world is a snare to the Christian. Therefore, do not love the world.

I. By “the world” we understand three things.

The word is used in three ways in the Bible. There is, first, the physical or natural world, the creation. When God made the natural world he pronounced it ‘very good’. But it has been marred by the Fall, by man’s sin and disobedience. The Fall of man has dragged the whole creation down. The Bible says that the whole creation groans and travails in pain, and that it is subject to vanity or futility, as a consequence of sin, but that it is not evil in itself, and it will one day be restored and renovated.

So we do not take these words to mean that we should not love the world God has made, that we ought not to delight in nature. It is a very wonderful and awe-inspiring world. We admire its beauty, the sunsets, the music of birds, the seas and mountains. Wordsworth, the poet of nature, wrote, “My heart leaps up when I behold a rainbow in the sky...” We all share that feeling. Nevertheless, we should, as Christians, also have a certain detachment from it. This is not our permanent home. We are passing through this world. We have here no abiding city. Using “this world”, says Paul, “as not abusing it: for the fashion of this world passeth away”. Our real home is not here, but we “look for a city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God.”

So moderation is the watchword for the Christian in relation to the creaturely things of this world; a certain detachment, and sitting loose to this wonderful creation and the things that are in it. “Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth,” was Paul’s exhortation to the Christians at Colosse.

Then, again, the word ‘world’ is used in the Bible to mean the dwellers on the

earth, mankind. But these words, “love not the world” are not intended to mean that we should not love our fellowmen. There is nothing misanthropic about Christianity! There is a tendency abroad today in certain circles to love nature, but to resent the presence of people who tend to spoil nature. I think there is an element of this in the Green Movement. “What a wonderful world this would be, if it were not for people spoiling it, and interfering with nature.” But there is nothing of that in this verse; it does not mean that we are not to love mankind. On the contrary, the Bible is replete with the exhortation to love our neighbour as ourselves, and to do unto others as we would have them do unto us.

And, lastly, the word ‘world’ in the Bible can mean human society organised apart from God and over against him. Mankind without true religion, and in rebellion against God and his Word – secular, humanistic, atheistic society, but it can also mean those who reject the true God and invent their own religion. The consequence of the Fall is that man is in rebellion against God, and wants to cast off his laws and his rule. In the days before the flood “God saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually.” And nothing has changed since, for John says in his first epistle, “the whole world lieth in wickedness.” It is that world we are not to love. We are not to make it the object of our affections or follow its godless ways.

II. John now adds, “neither the things that are in the world.”

The apostle goes on to explain more fully in our text what this world consists in (v. 16). It consists not so much in material things, but in lusts, passions, and desires.

(1) “*The lust of the flesh*,” that is, all that pertains to bodily appetites and their gratification. Our natural appetites as a consequence of the Fall have become inflamed, and satisfying them can become not a means to an end, as they were intended to be, but an end in themselves – living to eat instead of eating to live. Hedonism takes over, that is the teaching that pleasure or happiness is the chief end and purpose of life. We see how this view of life has come to the fore in recent years. John says, do not adopt this way of life, do not be drawn to it. People think that enjoyment and pleasure are life, but they are not.

People may call us killjoys for not behaving in this way, and say that we are being very narrow. But “strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it.” And it is also true, that “solid joys and lasting treasure none but Zion’s children know.”

(2) “*The lust of the eyes*”. “The eye is not satisfied with seeing” (*Ecclesiastes 1. 8*). It is always seeking out some new object. Ahab was not satisfied with his

possessions, though he was king. He saw Naboth's vineyard and coveted it. David saw Bathsheba and desired her though she was the wife of Uriah. Our Lord said, "If thine eye offend thee, pluck it out." He was not, of course, speaking literally. It is not the eye, but the desire of the eye that must be eradicated. The commandment is, "Thou shalt not covet."

(3) *"And the pride of life"*, that is, its vainglory. "The pomps and vanities of this wicked world", as the Catechism has it. All the pretentiousness of life, the boasting, the false glamour, the outward show. The world makes much of all this, it is very important, indeed, to the worldly-minded. Wealth, power, fame, all seem very attractive. They are like the stage props and scenery in a theatre. All the colours glow in the arc-lights and seem so very rich and splendid. But in the light of day they look cheap and tawdry. So all the show and boasting of the world will look in the light of eternity; and people will be astonished that they gave their immortal souls for it. There is that great passage in Revelation, chapter 8:16,17, which typifies all this when it describes the fall of Babylon the Great with all its wealth and power and pomp. "Alas, alas, great city, that was clothed with fine linen, and purple, and scarlet, and decked with gold, and precious stones, and pearls! For in one hour so great riches is come to nought."

III. "All that is in the world is not of the Father."

It does not proceed from him. If we love these things the love of the Father is not in us. The two cannot exist together in the same person, love of the world, and love of God. "No man can serve two masters." Like certain plants which grow in the garden, other plants cannot live next to them; they are incompatible. "Whosoever will be the friend of the world is the enemy of God" says James in his epistle, putting the matter simply and starkly. There can be no truce between God and the world, therefore there can be no truce between the world and the Christian. "Demas hath forsaken me," wrote Paul, "having loved this present world." (2 Timothy 4:10). It is a snare and temptation to the Christian, yet he is in the world.

In *Pilgrim's Progress* we read how Christian and Faithful had to pass through Vanity Fair, which in the allegory stood for the world and its ways. We have to pass through the world, but we must not be of the world. While the church has no choice but to be in the world, the world has no place in the church. The two must not get entangled and confused. What God has separated must not be joined together. The Christian is called to holiness because God is holy. "Be holy for I am holy," and holiness means separation from worldly and godless ways.

John also gives another reason for this separation. "The world passeth away, and the lust thereof" (v. 17). The Bible tells us that God created the world and

all things. It also tells us that he will cause it to pass away. "The fashion of this world passeth away" says Paul in 1 Corinthians 7:31. The ancient Greeks, Aristotle in particular, believed that the world was eternal. We ourselves speak of the solid earth, terra firma. But scientists tell us that in fact there is nothing solid about it; it is a mass of whirling atoms. The chair I sit on, the table I write at, the house I am in, all partake of the same insubstantial nature. Shall I not believe the Word of God then, when it tells me that "the fashion of this world passeth away"? And with it, John adds, will pass away the "lust" or desire, "but he that doeth the will of God shall abide for ever." He who holds fast the Word of God, he who believes and obeys it from the heart lays hold upon something enduring. He is committed to something outside the present world with all its flux and change and insecurity. He builds upon a sure foundation, for "the Word of God liveth and abideth for ever."

The Christian has to live in the world, but he must get the world out of his heart. Jonathan Sacks, the Chief Rabbi, writing in *The Times* stated, "It took a day to get the Israelites out of Egypt. It took much longer to get Egypt out of the Israelites." Only the expulsive power of the love of God can get the world out of the heart of the Christian. It is the process of sanctification, in which the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Spirit. He who loves God cannot love the world.

But there is something else which should also impress this upon us, and make us see the need and urgency of separation from the world. It is this, these are the "last times". "Little children, it is the last time..." (*1 John 2. 18*). This is the closing period of this dispensation. It is the eschaton, the technical term for the last period of the world. It was announced by the first coming of Christ, and will be concluded by his return. It calls for watchfulness and seriousness. These are critical days in which we live, we must be alert and attentive; it is no time for taking our ease. "The night is far spent, the day is at hand: let us therefore cast off the works of darkness, and let us put on the armour of light" (*Romans 13. 12*).

"Love not the world", for the world is hastening to judgment. But how do we know that? How do we know it is the last time? Because, says John, "antichrist shall come, even now there are many antichrists; whereby we know it is the last time" (*v. 18*). "Antichrist" means two things. First, "opposed to Christ", and secondly, "in the place of Christ".

There are many who are opposed to Christ today. We are living in a culture which has not only ceased to be overtly Christian but is actually opposed to Christ, and to the teaching and principles of the Gospel. We must now be conscious that those organs and bodies which mould thought and opinion, such as broadcasting, journalism, schools and universities, are antipathetic to Christianity. This is something which has crept up upon us over the last fifty

years or so, but none can deny that it is now an accomplished fact.

But in addition to that, there is the powerful influence of Islam. Muslims deny that God has come in the flesh, in the person of Jesus. They accept Jesus as a prophet, but not as God. The Jews did not really kill him, they say. On the cross he was represented by one who was like him, but God took him directly to heaven.

How do we know, then, that this is the eschaton, “the last time”? Because the sprit of antichrist is abroad in the world. Therefore, do not love the world, for it will soon pass away and all its lusts or desires.

But somebody may say, “I find it very hard not to love the world.” We must all, at times, feel like that. And the truth is that love of the world cannot be overcome by us on our own. We need the grace or love of God to overcome it. Somebody has spoken of the “expulsive power of a new affection”. That is simply, that a new love drives out the old love.

The Bible is full of this very thing. That is why its great message is the love of God for us. “God so loved the world...” “Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins.” When we realize the greatness of God’s love it has the power to drive out the love of the world. As Paul has put it, “The love Christ constraineth us...” (*2 Corinthians 5. 14*). He is referring to all he did and suffered as an apostle of Christ. Why did he do it? The answer was the love of Christ. He could not have done it of, or by himself.

That is why there is so much about God’s love in the New Testament. It is the key to everything in the Christian life. Without it we are nothing and can do nothing. “Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, and have not charity [or love as Tyndale translated it] I am become as sounding brass or a tinkling cymbal.”

If we would not love the world, we must “know the love of God, which passeth knowledge.” The words of Charles Wesley’s hymn fittingly capture the sense of this part of John’s epistle.

“O Love divine, how sweet thou art,
“When shall I find my willing heart
“All taken up by thee?”

“The world passeth away, and the lust thereof, but he that doeth the will of God abideth for ever.”

TRUST IN THE LORD

‘They that know thy name will put their trust in thee.’

Psalm 9.10

by Tom Budgen

In the middle of one of my GCSEs I came across a question to which I did not know the answer. I paused for several seconds and tried to clear my brain. I didn't know the answer. Then I tried to relax and focus on what the question was asking of me. Again I cleared my mind and halted for several seconds. What I didn't know was that those seconds were gradually turning into two minutes, and then onto four minutes. Suddenly I came back to the utter realisation of having to comply with a time constraint. I started to panic and before long my mind turned blank and I was left stranded in a world of confusion and fear – fear of not finishing the exam.

I have always regarded my GCSE's as a pivotal turning point in my life. Not just in a secular way of attaining a few grades but in a spiritual way. It was in this period of my spiritual life that I turned to God's grace and I started to believe in the truth of God's Holy Word. In other words, I started to 'trust' in the goodness and sincerity of the Bible.

But what is trust? And how precious is it to the Christian? To have trust in something requires a belief, a confidence, a certain degree of assurance and conviction. To have trust you have to put your faith in the dependence of something or someone. In this context, the subject is God and as true Christians we should strive to place our very trust in Him and in Him alone. I am currently in a musical and in one of the songs the lyric reads 'Believe in Yourself'. The idea of believing in yourself is a common practice, yet to the Christian this should not be the case.

“The heart is a very deceitful above all things,” writes Jeremiah in Chapter 17. 9, 10, “and desperately wicked: who can know it? I the LORD search your heart.”

The unconverted man will say with a profound sense of pride, “I deny it. Yeah, okay, to be sure my heart can be very careless and very thoughtless but it is honest after all.”

The Bible condemns this attitude because it clearly states that our hearts are sinful. Proverbs 20. 9 says “Who can say, I have made my heart clean, I am pure of sin?” and in Ecclesiastes 7. 20 “There is not a just man upon the earth, that doeth good and sinneth not” and in Proverbs, again by King Solomon, 28. 26

“He that trusteth his own heart is a fool.”

King Solomon declares that someone who trusts in his own self is a fool. Why? Because the heart is sinful and very deceptive. The devil knows our hearts are very deceptive and he exploits this weakness by preying on our minds, which can inevitably lead to sinful actions that displease our Lord. Therefore, if we trust our own hearts we are liable to perform sinful actions.

But, if we trust in God, the Almighty Heavenly Father who shall not forsake nor desert us in the wilderness, then and only then can we have “peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ,” as Paul puts it in Romans 5. 1.

Trust is a vital element of a Christian’s existence. It is the very upkeep that serves as a foundation upon which our lives rests on. In Proverbs 18. 10 it says, “The name of the Lord is a strong tower: the righteous runneth into it, and is safe.”

If we believe and trust in Him then he acts as a tower ready to shelter us and keep us from harm’s way. The Psalmist in the main verse I have chosen says: “They” – meaning the true Christian who has been cleansed from his sins – “that know thy name” – who ‘know’ Christ, who want to love and keep his commandments, who want to walk with Him as Enoch did – “will put their trust in thee.” The psalmist is sure, positive, certain that they that walk with Christ will put their trust in Him. They will automatically do it. Like a reflex action they will get up in the morning and say ‘Lord in thee do I put my trust.’

Trust is used most of the time when in a doubtful situation. Like I was in my exam, I was in a very worrying and doubtful circumstance, and it is then that we turn to the Lord our God. However, may I impress upon you that when we desire or ask something, especially from God, the object of our desire isn’t always granted. Trust is used when we ask God for something, yet not all the time does He give it us. As Jeremiah says in 17. 9,10, “I the LORD search the heart, I try the veins, even to give every man according to his ways, and according to the fruit of his doings.” Trust, yes is used when we ask God for something, but in order to attain that desire God will try us. He will even pull on the very reins of our hearts and minds, seeking to ever strengthen and encourage us in our trust in Him. So when we ask God for something, and God doesn’t give it us, remember that He is seeking to strengthen you in your faith. For if we continue, then our toils and labours will be rewarded plenteously.

Trust is a great asset to the Christian life, because when we are tempted by the devil then can we place our trust in Him. As we say in the Lord’s Prayer “and lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil.” If we place our trust in Him then can we achieve happiness and peace with God. We can also overcome and conquer our enemies. Trust can bring us a meaning, a purpose to our lives and I encourage every Christian to remember this, for it is an essential ingredient of the

Christian make-up.

Fortunately, I managed to remember the answer to the question that had made me panic. It was towards the end of the exam when the answer came like a bolt of lightning. I quickly rushed back through the paper, planned out my answer and wrote it down. I passed the exam.

I had placed my trust in God that day. I remember praying and I remember asking for God's strength. I believe that God helped me that day, and I sincerely believe that God was the One who granted me that answer. Since that period in my life, I have claimed myself as a Christian and I undoubtedly place my trust in Him in every minute of every hour of every day of every year.

Do you put your trust in God? Do you wake up and say 'Lord I will put my trust in thee?' If so, then continue doing so for you will be rewarded exceedingly. If not, then I strongly advise you my friend to start placing your faith and trust in Him, for He is the Lord and Deliver of all those who call upon Him.

CHURCH SURVEY

Our attention has been drawn to an interdenominational Church Survey which is being conducted to ascertain the reasons why church attendance is declining. People are asked to respond to the following questions:

- If you attend church regularly, what are the main things that encourage you to attend? If your attendance is merely out of a "sense of duty" what could be changed so as to make it more appealing?
- If you were a church-goer, but now attend infrequently or not at all, what were the main things that led to this decline? What could be changed in order for you to attend regularly again?
- If you have never been a church-goer, what things would encourage you to begin?
- The traditional custom of "clergy visiting" has steadily declined in spite of the maxim "a house-going minister makes a church-going people". Although a combination of factors will have led to a dwindling congregation, do you think the demise of this customary role is significant?

Respondents are asked to send their views to Church Survey UK, c/o the Rev. J Willans, the Vicarage, Clayhill Rd, Leigh, Surrey, RH2 8PD.

LOOKING UNTO JESUS

By J.C. Ryle

“Looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith; who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God.” (*Hebrews 12:2*)

The text of Scripture which heads this page is well fitted to supply useful thoughts for Christmas. At a season like this, when we are specially invited to remember how our blessed Lord came into the world, and was born of the Virgin Mary, we surely cannot do better than ask ourselves what we know of “Looking unto Jesus.” The Christianity which the world requires is a Christianity for everyday life. No other religion will ever receive much heart-felt attention from mankind. It may exist; but it will never strike deep root, and satisfy souls.

A mere Sunday religion is not enough. A thing put on and off with our Sabbath clothes is powerless. Thinking men feel and know that there are seven days in a week, and that life is not made up of Sundays.

A daily round of forms and ceremonies within consecrated buildings is not enough. Wise men remember that there is a world of duty and trial outside the walls of the church, in which they have to play their part. They want something that they can carry with them into that world.

A monastic religion will never do. A faith that cannot flourish except in an ecclesiastical hot-house, a faith which cannot face the cold air of worldly business, and bear fruit except behind the fence of retirement and private asceticism,—such a faith is a plant which our Heavenly Father has not planted, and it brings no fruit to perfection.

A religion of spasmodic and hysterical excitement will not do. It may suit weak and sentimental minds for a little season; but it rarely lasts, and does not meet the wants of many. It lacks bone and muscle, and too often ends in deadness, by the force of reaction. It is not the wind, nor the fire, nor the earthquake, but the still small voice, which shows the real presence of the Holy Ghost. (*1 Kings 20. 12*).

The Christianity which the world requires, and the Word of God reveals, is of a very different stamp. It is a useful everyday religion. It is a healthy, strong, manly plant, which can live in every position, and flourish in every atmosphere except that of sin. It is a religion which a man can carry with him wherever he goes, and never need leave behind him. In the army or in the navy, at the public school or at college, in the great hospital lecture-room and at the bar, on the farm or in the shop, in the market or ‘change, in parliament or at court, true heaven-

born Christianity will live and not die. It will wear, and stand, and prosper in any climate, in winter and in summer, in heat and in cold. Such a religion meets the wants of mankind.

But where is such true Christianity to be found? What are its special ingredients? What is the nature of it? What are its peculiar characteristics? The answer to these questions is to be found in the three words of the text which form the title of this paper. The secret of a vigorous, powerful, everyday Christianity is to be ever "Looking unto Jesus." The glorious company of the Apostles, the noble army of martyrs, the saints who in every age and land have made their mark on mankind, and turned the world upside down,—all, all have had one common mint-stamp upon them. They have been men who lived "Looking unto Jesus." The expression of the text is one of those pithy golden sayings which stand out here and there on the face of the New Testament, and demand special attention. It is like "to me to live is Christ,"—"Christ is all and in all,"—"Christ, who is our life,"—"He is our peace,"—"I live by the faith of the Son of God." (*Philip. 1. 21; Col. 3. 4, 11; Eph. 2. 14; Gal. 2. 20.*) To each and all of these sayings, one common remark applies. They are rich in thought and food for reflection. They contain far more than a careless eye can see on the surface.

In the phrase "looking unto Jesus," it is useful and interesting to remember that the Greek word which, in our English Bible, we render "looking," is only found here in the New Testament. Literally translated it means "looking off,"—looking away from other objects to one, only one, and looking on that one with a steady, fixed, intent gaze.

And the object we are to look at, you will observe, is a *Person*, not a doctrine, not an abstract theological dogma, but a living Person; and that Person is Jesus the Son of God. How much matter for thought lies there! Creeds and confessions are the necessary invention of a comparatively modern age. The first and simplest type of an apostolic early Christian was a man who trusted, and loved, a living Divine Person. Of head knowledge, and accurate definitions, perhaps he had but little store. Very likely he would have passed a poor examination in a latter day theological school. But one thing he did know: he knew, believed, loved, and could have died for, a living Saviour, a real personal Friend in heaven, even Jesus, the crucified and risen Son of God. Well would it be for the Churches of the nineteenth century, if we had more of this simple Christianity among us, and could realize more the Person of Christ.

But, after all, the grand question which rises out of the text is this: What is it that we are to look at in Jesus? If we are to live habitually fixing the eyes of our mind on Christ, what are the special points to which we are to have regard? If "looking unto Jesus" is the real secret of a healthy, vigorous Christianity, what does the phrase mean?

I answer these questions without hesitation. I dismiss as insufficient and unsatisfactory the idea that the Lord Jesus is only set before us here as an “example, and nothing more.” I hold with that great divine, John Owen, who was once Dean of my own college at Oxford, that “He is proposed to us as one in whom we are to place our faith, trust, and confidence, with all our expectation of success in our Christian course.” I consider there are four points of view in which we are intended to “look to Jesus,” and I shall try, briefly, to put these four before you in order.

I. First, and foremost, if we would look rightly to Jesus, we must look daily at His death, as the only source of inward peace.

We need inward peace. So long as our conscience is asleep, deadened by indulged sin, or dulled and stupefied by incessant pursuit of the things of this world, so long can man get on tolerably well without peace with God. But once let conscience open its eyes, and shake itself, and rise, and move, and it will make the stoutest child of Adam feel ill at ease. The irrepressible thought that this life is not all,—that there is a God, and a judgment, and a “something after death, an undiscovered bourne from which no traveller returns,”—that thought will come up at times in every man’s mind, and make him long for inward peace. It is easy to write brave words about “eternal hope,” and strew the path to the grave with flowers. Such theology is naturally popular: the world loves to have it so. But after all, there is something deep down in the heart of hearts of most men, which must be satisfied. The strongest evidence that old-fashioned creeds, as some are pleased to call them, are God’s eternal truth, is the universal conscience of mankind.

Who is there among us all that can sit down and think over the days that are past,—school days, and college days, and days of middle life, their countless things left undone that ought to have been done, and done that ought not to have been done,—who, I say, can think over it all without shame, if indeed he does not turn from the review with disgust and terror, and refuse to think at all? We all need peace.

Where is the man in all England, the best and saintliest among us, whether old or young, who must not confess, if he speak the truth, that his best things now are full of imperfection, and his life a constant succession of shortcomings? Yes: the older we grow, and the nearer we draw to the light of perfect day, the more we see our own great darkness and multitudinous defilements, and the more disposed we feel to cry, “Unclean! unclean! God be merciful to me a sinner.” We need peace.

Now, there is only one source of peace revealed in Scripture, and that is the sacrifice of the death of Christ, and the atonement which He has made for sin by that vicarious death on the cross. To obtain a portion in that great peace, we have only to “look” by faith to Jesus, as our Substitute and Redeemer, bearing our sin

in His own body on the tree, and to cast all the weight of our souls on Him. To enjoy that peace habitually, we must keep “daily looking back” to the same wondrous point at which we began, daily bringing all our iniquity to Him, and daily remembering that “the Lord hath laid on Him the iniquity of us all.” (*Isaiah* 53. 6). This, I am bold to say, is the Bible way of peace.

This is the old fountain of which all the true sheep of Christ have drunk for 1800 years, and have never found its waters fail. Holy fathers and holy schoolmen, holy reformers on both sides of the Channel and both sides of the Tweed, holy Nonconformists and holy Episcopalians in our own land,—all have agreed on one point, at least, in their respective creeds. And that point is this, that the only receipt for peace of conscience is to “look” by faith to Jesus suffering in our stead, the just for the unjust, paying our debt by that suffering, and dying for us on the cross.

The wisdom of these latter days entirely fails to find a better way of peace than the old path of “looking” to the vicarious death of Christ. Thousands are annually growing grey, and blistering their hands in hewing out cisterns,—broken cisterns, that can hold no water. They are vainly hoping that they will find some better way to heaven than the old-fashioned way of the cross. They will never find it. They will have to turn at last, if they love life, like many before them, to the brazen serpent. They must be content, like Israel in the wilderness, to look and live, and to be saved by the blood of the Lamb.

For ever let us keep to this old path of peace, and never be ashamed of it. While others go back, and barely conceal their contempt for the so-called blood theology, let us boldly go forward, “looking unto Jesus,” and saying daily to Him, “Lord, I have sinned; but Thou hast suffered in my stead; I take Thee at Thy word, and rest my soul on Thee.”

So much for the first “Look to Jesus.” We must look back habitually to Christ’s death for peace and pardon. This is what St. Paul meant the Hebrews to do. Let this be the first item in our creed.

II. Secondly, if we would look rightly to Jesus, we must look daily to His life of intercession in heaven, as our principal provision of strength and help.

We must surely feel that we need Almighty help every day we live, if we are true Christians. Even when started in the narrow way of life, with pardon, grace, and a new heart, we soon find that, left to ourselves, we shall never get safe home. Every returning morning brings with it so much to be done and borne and suffered, that we are often tempted to despair. So weak and treacherous are our hearts, so busy the devil, so persecuting and ensnaring the world, that we are sometimes half inclined to look back and return to Egypt. We are such poor, weak creatures, that we cannot do two things at once. It seems almost impossible to do

our duty in that place of life to which God has called us, and not to be absorbed in it and forget our souls. The cares and business and occupations of life appear to drink up all our thoughts, and swallow up all our attention. What are we to do? Where are we to look? How many are exercised with thoughts like these

I believe the great Scriptural remedy for all who feel such helplessness as I have faintly described, is to look upward to Christ in heaven, and to keep steadily before our eyes His intercession at the right hand of God. Like the sailor boy who goes aloft for the first time, we must learn to look *upward*, away from ourselves and our weakness, and upward to Christ in heaven. We must try to realize daily that Jesus not only died for us and rose again, but that He also lives as our Advocate with the Father, and appears in heaven for us. This, surely, was the mind of St. Paul, when he said, "Being reconciled to God by the death of His Son, we shall be saved by His life." (*Rom. 5. 10*). This, again, is what he meant when he gave that confident challenge, "Who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died, yea rather, that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us." (*Rom. 8. 34*). This, above all, is what he had in view when he told the Hebrews, "He is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by Him, seeing He ever liveth to make intercession for them." (*Heb. 7. 25*).

Now I venture boldly to express a doubt whether modern Christians "look to Jesus" in this point of view, and make as much as they ought of His life of intercession. It is too often a dropped link in our latter-day Christianity. We are apt to think only of the atoning *death* and the precious blood, and to forget the *life* and priestly office of our great Redeemer. It ought not to be so. We miss much by this forgetfulness of the whole truth as it is in Jesus. What a mine of daily comfort there is in the thought, that we have an Advocate with the Father, who never slumbers or sleeps, whose eye is always upon us, who is continually pleading our cause and obtaining fresh supplies of grace for us, who watches over us in every company and place, and never forgets us, though we, in going to and fro, and doing our daily business, cannot always think of Him. While we are fighting Amalek in the valley below, One greater than Moses is holding up His hands for us in heaven, and through His intercession we shall prevail. Surely, if we have been satisfied with half the truth about Jesus hitherto, we ought to say, 'I will live in such fashion no more.'

And here let me declare my own firm conviction, that the habit of daily looking to the intercession of Christ is one great safeguard against some modern superstitions. If Jesus did *not* live in heaven as our merciful and faithful High Priest, I could understand a little the craving that exists in many minds for that deadly opiate, which, nowadays, usurps the name and office of spiritual medicine: I mean, habitual confession to earthly priests, and habitual absolution. But I

cannot understand it when I read the Epistle to the Hebrews, and see that we have a great High Priest in heaven, who can be touched with the feeling of our infirmities, and who bids us pour out our hearts before Him, and come to Him for grace to help in time of need. In short, I do not hesitate to assert, that a right view of Christ's priestly office is the true antidote to some of the most dangerous errors of the Church of Rome.

So much for the second "look to Jesus." We ought to look habitually to His life and intercession.

III. In the third place, if we would look rightly to Jesus, we must look daily at His example, as our chief standard of holy living.

We must all feel, I suspect, and often feel, how hard it is to regulate our daily lives by mere rules and regulations. Scores of circumstances will continually cross our path, in which we find it difficult to see the line of duty, and feel perplexed. Prayer for the guidance of the Holy Spirit, and attention to the practical part of the Epistles, are, undoubtedly, primary resources. But surely it would cut many a knot, and solve many a problem, if we would cultivate the habit of studying the daily behaviour of our Lord, as recorded in the four Gospels, and striving to shape our own behaviour by its pattern. Yet this must have been what our Lord meant when He said, "I have given you an example, that ye should do as I have done to you." (*John 13. 15*). And this is what St. Paul meant, when he wrote, "Be ye followers of me, even as I also am of Christ." (*1 Cor. 11. 1*). And this is what St. John meant when he said, "he that saith he abideth in Him, ought himself also so to walk, even as He walked." (*1 John 2. 6*). This is the chief end for which any one is said to be predestinated; it is "to be conformed to the image of His Son." (*Rom. 8. 29*). This, says Article XVII, with true wisdom, is the special character of God's elect,— "they be made like the image of God's only begotten Son, Jesus Christ." In the face of such evidence as this, I have a right to say that our "look" to Jesus is very imperfect, if we do not look at His example, and strive to follow it.

Let us consider for a moment what a beautifier and marvellous portrait the four Gospels hold up to our eyes of the Man Jesus Christ. It is a portrait that extorted the admiration even of a wretched sceptic like Rousseau. It is a portrait which, even to this day, is one of the cardinal difficulties of infidelity, for there never lived the infidel who could face the question, "Tell us, if you refuse to believe the Divine origin of Christianity, tell us who and what Christ was?" Let us Christians trace all the footsteps of our Master's career from the carpenter's shop at Nazareth to the cross of Calvary. See how in every company and position, by the Sea of Galilee, and in the Temple courts of Jerusalem, by the well of Samaria, in the house Bethany, amidst the sneering Sadducees, or the despised publicans, alone with His faithful disciples, or surrounded by bitter enemies, He

is always the same,—always holy, harmless, undefiled; always perfect in word and deed. Mark what a wonderful combination of seemingly opposite qualifications is to be seen in His character. Bold and outspoken in opposing hypocrisy and self-righteousness, tender and compassionate in receiving the chief of sinners; profoundly wise in arguing before the Sanhedrin; simple, so that a child might understand Him, in teaching the poor; patient towards His weak disciples; unruffled in temper by the keenest provocation; considerate for all around Him; sympathizing, self-denying, prayerful, overflowing with love and compassion, utterly unselfish, always about His Father's business, ever going about doing good, continually ministering to others, and never expecting others to minister to Him,—what person born of woman ever walked on earth like Jesus of Nazareth? We may well be humbled and ashamed when we think how unlike the best of us are to our great Example, and what poor, blurred copies of His character we show to mankind. Like careless children at school, we are content to copy those around us, with all their faults, and do not look constantly at the only faultless copy, the One perfect Man, in whom even Satan could find “nothing.” (*John 14. 30*). But one thing, at any rate, we must all admit. If Christians, during the last eighteen centuries, had been more like Christ, the Church would certainly have been far more beautiful, and would probably have done far more good to the world.

It is a sorrowful thought that Christ's example should be so little remembered or looked at in these latter days. It is a striking illustration of man's mental littleness and inability to grasp more than a portion of the truth. You may lay your hand on a hundred books which profess to grapple with points of doctrine, before you will find one which handles the mighty subject of the true pattern of Christian practice. Yet no part of God's truth can ever be neglected without the Church taking damages; and I believe the Church has suffered greatly by neglecting the point of which I now speak. The famous book of Thomas a Kempis may have many defects, I have no doubt, and to some it is even mischievous. But I am sure it would be well if we had many more Christlike Christian men and women, who strive at home and abroad to imitate Christ.

Let us beware of this error in these latter days. Let us cultivate the daily habit of “looking to Christ as our pattern,” as well as our salvation. Let us not forget that a cunning artificer will tell you that he often learns more from a pattern in five minutes than from the best written rules and directions in an hour. We can never look too steadily at Christ's death and intercession. But we may easily look too little at the blessed steps of His most holy life. Let us shake off this reproach. Let us strive and pray that we may make the tone and temper of Jesus our model and standard in our daily behaviour. Let all men see that, as the poet says, “this example has a magnet force,” and that we love to follow Him whom we profess to love. “My Master, my Master!” as George Herbert loved to say. “How would my Master have

behaved in my position?" should be our constant cry. "Let me go and do likewise."

So much for the third "look" at Jesus. We ought to look habitually to His example.

IV. Fourthly and lastly, if we would "look" to Jesus rightly, we must look forward to His second Advent, as the truest fountain of hope and consolation.

That the early Christians were always looking forward to a second coming of their risen Master, is a fact beyond all controversy. You cannot read the Epistles and fail to see that one of their chief sources of comfort was the hope of His return. They clung tenaciously to the old promise, "This same Jesus shall come in like manner as ye have seen Him go." (*Acts 1. 11*). In all their trials and persecutions, under Roman Emperors and heathen rulers, they cheered one another with the thought that their own King would soon come again, and plead their cause. Persecutors and oppressors would soon be swept away, and the great Shepherd of the sheep would gather them into a fold of safety. "We look for the Saviour." "We wait for the Son of God from heaven." "Yet a little time He that shall come will come, and will not tarry." "Be patient unto the coming of the Lord." (*Philip. 3. 20; 1 Thess. 1. 10; Heb. 10. 37; James 5. 7*). Many, no doubt, in their impatience, misunderstood the times and seasons, and thought that the kingdom of God would immediately appear. But, for all that, it remains a fact that a second personal advent of Christ was the great hope of the early Church.

Now, I believe firmly that this same second advent was meant to be the hope of the Church in every age of the world. It ought to be the consolation of Christians in these latter days as much as it was in primitive times. And I doubt whether there ever was an era when it was so useful to keep the second advent of Christ steadily in view as it is just now.

Who can look abroad at public affairs all over the globe, and avoid the impression that this old, bankrupt world needs a new order of things? The cement seems to have fallen out of the walls of human society. On all sides we hear of restlessness, anarchy, lawlessness, envy, jealousy, distrust, suspicion, and discontent. The continuance of evils of every kind, physical, moral, and social, the constantly recurring revolutions, and wars, and famines, and pestilences, the never-ending growth of superstition, scepticism, and unbelief, the bitter strife of political parties, the divisions and controversies of Christians, the overflowing of intemperance and immorality, the boundless luxury and extravagance of some classes, and the grinding poverty of others, the strikes of workmen, the conflict of labour and capital, the shiftless helplessness of statesmen to devise remedies, the commercial dishonesty, the utter failure of mere secular knowledge to regenerate mankind, the comparative deadness of Churches, the apparently small results of missions at home and abroad, the universal "distress of nations with

perplexity,” and dread of something terrible coming, these strange phenomena and symptoms, what do they all mean? Yes: what indeed! They all seem to tell us, with no uncertain voice, that the world is out of joint, and needs a new administration, and a new King. Like a crying infant in the arms of a stranger, the world is ever fretting, and wailing, and struggling, though it hardly knows why, and will never rest and be quiet till its rightful parent takes it in hand, and puts the stranger aside. As Plato makes Socrates say, in one of his dialogues, before the *first* advent, “We must wait for some one, be he God, or inspired man, to give us light, and take away darkness from our eyes,”—even so we Christians must fix our hopes upon the *second* advent, and look and long for the rightful King’s appearing.

And who, again, can look round his own private circle, whether great or small, and fail to see many things which are most painful and distressing; things which, like a watcher by a dying pillow, he can only look on and feel deeply, but cannot mend? Think of the everflowing stream of sorrow arising from poverty, sickness, disease, and death,—from quarrels about money, from incompatibility of temper, from family misunderstandings, from failures in business, from disappointments about children, from separations of families in pursuit of callings. What hidden skeletons there are in many households! How many aching hearts! How many secret sorrows known only to God! How many Jacobs in the world, vexed by their children, and refusing to be comforted! How many Absaloms bowing down a father’s head by their thanklessness and rebellion! How many Isaacs and Rebeccas daily grieved by self-willed sons! How many weeping widows of Nain! Where is the thoughtful Christian who does not often sigh for a better state of things, and ask himself, “How long, O Lord, faithful and true, how long are we to go on weeping, and working, binding up wounds, and drinking bitter cups, and educating, and parting, and burying, and putting on mourning? When shall the end once be?”

Now, I believe that the true Scriptural source of consolation, in the face of all that troubles us, whether publicly or privately, is to keep steadily before our eyes the second coming of Christ. Once more I say, we must “look forward to Jesus.” We must grasp and realize the blessed fact that the rightful King of the world is returning soon, and shall have His own again; that He shall put down that old usurper, the devil, and take away the curse from off the earth. Let us cultivate the habit of daily looking forward to the resurrection of the dead, the gathering together of the saints, the restitution of all things, the banishment of sorrow and sin, and the re-establishment of a new kingdom, of which the rule shall be righteousness. Anything may be borne, I believe, even hell itself, if men only have a hope of an end. All the sorrows of this world will be cheerfully borne, and we shall work on with a light heart, if we thoroughly believe that Christ is coming again without sin unto salvation.

After all, one principal cause of human unhappiness is the indulgence of unwarrantable expectations from anybody or anything here below. I ask my younger readers especially to remember *that*. The less we expect from statesmen, philosophers, men of money, men of science, ay, even from visible Churches, the happier we shall be. He that leans on staffs like these will find them pierce his hand. He that drinks only of these fountains shall thirst again. Let us learn to fix our chief hopes on the second coming of Christ, and work, and watch, and wait confidently, like those who wait for the morning, and know for a certainty that in the time appointed by the Father, the Sun of Righteousness will arise, with healing on His wings. Then, and then only, we shall not be disappointed.

So much for the fourth and last look to Jesus. We ought to look habitually to His second personal coming, as the hope of the Church and world. He that looks at the cross of Christ is a wise man; he that looks at the intercession and example is wiser still; but he that lives looking at all four objects,—the death, the priesthood, the pattern, the second advent of Jesus,—he is the wisest of all.

(a) *And now let me wind up all by offering a word of friendly advice to all into whose hands this paper may fall.* I offer it in all affection as one who longs to help you in the right way, who desires to promote in your heart a healthy, vigorous, everyday Christianity, and would gladly guard you against mistakes.

Our greatest poet truly says, “We know what we are; but we know not what we may be.” All before us is dark and uncertain, and mercifully kept from our eyes. I cannot tell you where the lot of many of my readers may be finally cast on earth, or what they may be called to do and bear before the end comes. But one thing I say confidently,—let the keynote of your Christianity, in every quarter of the globe, be the phrase of my text,—“Looking to Jesus,” Jesus dying, Jesus interceding, Jesus the example, Jesus coming again. Fix your eyes firmly on Him if you would so run as to obtain. Value the pure and reformed branch of Christ’s Church, to which you belong, and all her many privileges. Love her services. Labour for her peace. Contend for her prosperity. But for your own personal religion, the salvation of your own soul, take care that your ruling idea is, “Looking to Jesus.”

(b) *Together with friendly advice, let me offer a friendly warning.* Beware, if you love life, beware of a Christless religion. A watch without a mainspring, a steam engine without a fire, a solar system without the sun,—all these are but faint and feeble images of the utter uselessness of a religion without Christ.

And next to a Christless religion, beware of a religion in which Christ is not the first, foremost, chief, principal object,—the very Alpha in the alphabet of your faith. He that enters upon a vast series of arithmetical calculations, requiring

weeks and months of brain-exhausting toil, he knows well that his labour will be all in vain, and his conclusions faulty, if a single figure is wrong in his first line. And he that does not give Christ His rightful place and office in the beginning of his religion, must not be surprised if he never knows anything of joy and peace in believing, and goes cheerless and comfortless on his way to heaven, with “all the voyage of life bound in shallows and in misery.”

(c) *Finally, may I not say to all, both old and young, with this great text in view, that we shall do well to aim at greater simplicity in our own personal religion.*

The early Christians lacked many privileges and advantages that we enjoy. They had no printed books. They worshipped God in dens and caves and upper chambers, had few and simple ecclesiastical garments, and often received the Lord's Supper in vessels of wood, and not of silver or gold. They had little money, no church endowments, no universities. Their creeds were short. Their theological definitions were scanty and few. But what they knew they knew well. They were men of one book. They knew Whom they believed. If they had wooden communion vessels, they had golden ministers and teachers. They “looked to Jesus” and realized intensely the personality of Jesus. For Jesus they lived, and worked, and died. But what are we doing? And where are we in the nineteenth century? And what deliverance are we working on earth? With all our countless advantages, our grand old cathedrals, our splendid libraries, our accurate definitions, our elaborate liturgies, our civil liberties, our religious societies, our numerous facilities, we may well doubt whether we are making such a mark on the world as Clement and Justin Martyr, and their companions, made 1700 years ago.

I know we cannot put the clock back, and return to the A B C of early Christianity. But one thing we can do: we can grasp more firmly, with every returning Christmas, the grand old primeval principles around which our modern Christianity has clustered, and swelled, and grown to its present proportions. Such a principle is that laid down in our text, “Looking unto Jesus.” Then let us covenant with ourselves, that for the time to come we will try to run our race, fight our battles, fill our position, serve our generation, like men who are ever “looking to Jesus.” So looking while we live, we shall see face to face when we die. And then when the last great Christmas gathering takes place, we shall joyfully exchange faith for sight, see as we have been seen, and know as we have been known.

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**MATERIAL FOR DECEMBER ISSUE OF *THE JOURNAL*
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We thank all those who sent the names and addresses of others requiring the Journal, or whose names needed deleting. We are very grateful to all who sent donations. Please note that all address details supplied to the Editor for mailing purposes are treated as confidential. We do not pass on addresses to anyone.

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CHURCHES IN UK

Nuffield Congregation meeting with Nuffield Parish Church, near Henley-on-Thames, the Rev John F Shearer. Sunday Services: 11.00 am Morning Prayer, 6.30 pm Evening Prayer. Lord's Supper 8.00 am first Sunday, 6.30 pm third Sunday. Bible Study Wednesday 8.00 pm. *Enquiries* 01491 641305.

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 am Morning Prayer and 6.30 pm Evening Prayer. Midweek as intimated. *Enquiries* Rev Peter Ratcliff, 020 8417 0875.

St. Mary's Castle Street, Reading. Sunday Services: 11.00 am Morning Prayer (first Sunday Lord's Supper), 6.30 pm Evening Prayer (third Sunday Lord's Supper). Tuesday 8.00 pm Bible Study. *Enquiries* Rev EJ Malcolm 0118 959 5131.

St. Silas, 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); 6.00 pm BST Evening Prayer (4.00 pm GMT) (3rd Sunday Holy Communion). Tuesdays in term time 7.00 pm Bible Study; 7.45 pm Prayer Meeting. On-street parking. *Enquiries* Rt Rev E Malcolm 01547 528815. Hon Curate Rev IR Budgen, 01902 656514.

Holy Trinity Church, Frinton-on-Sea. Sunday 11 a.m. Morning Prayer—Room 5, The Frinton Community Centre, Soken House, The Triangle, Frinton-on-Sea, Essex. Sunday 6.30 p.m. Evening Prayer, Tuesday 8.00 p.m. Bible Study and Prayer Meeting—1, Chaplins, Frinton-on-Sea, Essex. For more information please contact Mr Philip Lievesley Tel: (01255) 679572. <http://beehive.thisissessex.co.uk/holytrinitycofecfrinton>

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