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Daily Remembrancer

January 6th Morning

“Be careful for nothing.”

James Smith

The Lord cares for us. He knows our wants, and has promised to supply them; our foes, and will deliver us from them; our fears, and will make us ashamed of them. All creatures and things are in His hand, and at His disposal; all circumstances are absolutely under His control. He directs the angel, feeds the sparrow, curbs the devil, and manages the tempest. He is your *Father*. His love to you is infinite. You are His *delight*, His dear son, His pleasant child. Will He neglect you? Impossible. Cast then your cares upon Him. Tell out all your desires, fears, and troubles to Him; then in the confidence of faith expect Him to fulfil His word, and act a parent's part. Bless Him for all He has given, for all He has promised; plead with Him for all you need; but never for one moment, or under any circumstances, distrust Him. He cannot love you more. He is a present help. He will make all His goodness pass before you. He will rejoice over you to do you good, with His whole heart, and with His whole soul.

*Then let me banish anxious care,
Confiding in my Father's love;
To Him make known my wants in prayer,
Prepared His answer to approve.*

News of the Fellowship

On Saturday November 24th we held our annual church fellowship meal, this year at the Glyn Clydach Hotel. The Rev. Dafydd Morris gave an apt message based on the parable of the Great Supper recorded in Luke 14. He called upon us to feed upon the rich spiritual provision that Christ gives. As eating is necessary to sustain physical life so is Christ for spiritual life. Additionally, we cannot eat by 'proxy' but must eat ourselves. Rev. Morris then had to make the long trip to Wattisham in Suffolk to preach there on the Lord's Day.

The Rev. Roland Burrows of Cradley Heath in the West Midlands ministered to us on the Lord's Day November 25th. Pastor preached in Cross Hands to a small company of God's people.

Sunday November 18th saw a new chapter in the life of Margam Road Evangelical Church, Margam, Port Talbot with the work coming under the superintendence of Pastor Pfeiffer. The work from this date commenced with one service held on the Lord's Day at 3:15pm and the prayer meeting (as usual) on Thursday afternoon at 2:30pm. There is also a sisterhood on Tuesday afternoons. The folk there continue to bear witness to the encouragement that they're receiving. The new arrangement makes it possible for men to take a series of messages. Consequently the Sunday afternoon adult Sunday School class is in abeyance. It is good to see many friends from Margam with us in the services at Peniel Green. We continue to pray for the work. Encouragingly a new member was received into the fellowship at Margam on Sunday 27th January.

On Thursday 29th November a preaching service was held at Peniel Green to promote the Christian Worship hymnbook project. The aim of the meeting was to make the work known more widely. The Rev. Stephen Ford from Dawlish Warren in Devon gave a brief explanation of the rationale behind the project (included in this magazine). The Rev. Vernon Higham preached a message based on Colossians 1:21-22 emphasising alienation, reconciliation and presentation. Refreshments were provided afterwards. A fair number of friends were with us from Cardiff,

Tonypandy, Swansea, Neath, Pencoed and Port Talbot. We are very thankful for the way that the work is progressing.

On the Lord's Day 2nd December four Bibles were awarded to the children who completed the Peniel Green Scripture Memorisation Scheme. We congratulate Ellis Wilkinson Jones, Megan Morris, Ffion Morris and Nia Morris.

On Saturday 15th December our Sunday School party was held. We thank God for the number of children who have been attending Sunday School and the hard work of the teachers. The Sunday School continues to follow the 'lessons for life' scheme produced by the Metropolitan Tabernacle, London. On the Lord's Day a full Chapel gathered for the Open Sunday School service. It was good to see so many parents present.

Two thousand calendars with Biblical texts have been distributed locally over the Christmas period. We are becoming more aware of new estates being developed in the area. We hope to distribute a larger number in 2008.

The Rev. Dafydd Morris took our services on the Lord's Day 30th December with our Pastor being in the congregation.

We are thankful for the way the Lord has undertaken for Mrs Higham regarding her operation and to see her back amongst us in the services. Mrs Avril Edwards is making progress after her heart attack and hopes to be back in church soon.

At our Prayer Meeting Wednesday 13th February Mr David Young, director of the Albanian Evangelical Mission, shared with us something of the work in Albania.

General introduction to the Christian Worship project.

The word of God is the only definitive way for us to know what is pleasing to God. The central message of the scriptures is the Lord Jesus Christ as the Saviour sent in mercy to reconcile lost sinners to God. The worship of such saved sinners must therefore focus on Christ and be regulated by the Holy Scriptures. Colossians 3, 16 says “...let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom; *teaching and admonishing one another* in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs...” This tells us, not only that singing is a legitimate part of God’s worship, but also that it is an apostolically approved method of Christian instruction.

It is important to renounce the idea that singing merely provides the congregation with a little light relief between more heavyweight elements of worship – reading the word, prayer and preaching. Rhyming verse of any sort can make a powerful impression on the mind and memory. It has therefore great potential to contribute to “worship in spirit and in truth” by engraving Biblical truth in our minds. Unfortunately rhyming verse has equal power to engrave theologically deficient ideas in our minds, and these are very difficult to shift. So it is most important that we sing only hymns which contain theologically sound concepts.

It was considerations such as these which led to the launch of the Christian Worship project in 2005. The aim of the project is to put back on the market a book of Christian praise which would uphold reverent worship and emphasise the serious teaching aspect of hymnology. It is to stand completely separate from charismatic emphases or associations, and will renounce aspects of modern worship which are deemed to rest heavily on the ethos of worldly secular entertainment and popular music. In pursuit of these objective a charitable trust was established late in 2006. This is known as The Christian Worship Publishing Trust (registered with the Charity Commission – registration number 1117057).

Since the demise of Grace Hymns and the original edition of Christian Hymns the only book currently in print which fully meets these ideals is Psalms and Hymns of Reformed Worship, produced by the Metropolitan Tabernacle. We have absolutely no theological problems with this book, although we venture to think that its selection of hymns is a little limited.

The Trust proposes to compile a book, to be called Christian Worship, which will contain a slightly modernised version of the Scottish metrical Psalter of 1650, and approximately 1000 hymns. The Psalter section will not displace the well-known and well-loved evangelical psalm paraphrases in the style of Isaac Watts. The hymns will include a considerable number by well-known authors such as Watts, Wesley, Montgomery, Newton, Cowper, Toplady, Hart and so on. There will also be a number of hymns composed by more recent authors, not least by our esteemed Trustee, Rev Vernon Higham. We hope to cover the whole range of orthodox evangelical Christian doctrine and experience.

The selection of hymns is now near complete, though we decided that there was no point in finally “closing the book” until we were ready to go to print. There was no problem in finding sufficient hymns, only in deciding which ones to leave out. The heritage we have is exceedingly rich, and this was another reason for our hesitation and selectivity in accepting modern compositions which have not yet stood the test of time. The selection includes a substantial core of hymns found in the original edition of Christian Hymns, though many of these are also found in most traditional evangelical hymnbooks. The balance is made up of hymns drawn from various sources, including substantial numbers from Grace Hymns, Gospel Hymns, the Methodist Hymn Book (1933), Gadsby’s selection and a few others.

In terms of tunes, again we are ransacking many sources to discover or re-discover good tunes, many of which have undeservedly fallen into disuse. Our experience with Christian Hymns was that certain metres were inadequately represented, and we plan to redress this shortage in the new work. In view of the substantial size of the hymn collection, it was eventually (and reluctantly) decided to produce a separate book containing tunes only, rather than the more usual combined words/music book. We trust that this will not deter churches from using Christian Worship. Indeed we venture to suggest that the Christian Worship music book might find a wider place, helping churches which use other books to enlarge their repertoire of tunes.

We are very much aware that many churches (especially, but not exclusively, the small ones) have difficulty in finding people to provide musical accompaniment for the worship services. Accordingly we are looking to have available suitable electronic media from the time of publication in order to provide a facility for those who may need it.

The original plan was to publish the book in 2010, although we now think this can be brought forward to Autumn 2009. There is however considerable work yet to be done, including clearance of copyright issues for both words and music where necessary, and the preparation of suitable electronic files of text and music to supply to the printer. Not least, of course, we have to put in place the necessary finance. Our original estimate for the words and music books was around £50,000. However modern technology has substantially reduced this figure by allowing the economic production of smaller quantities of books than we had assumed.

We do encourage contributions to the project, either by individuals or churches. Those individuals who pay UK income tax can make a gift through the government's Gift Aid scheme, allowing us to reclaim tax paid on the gift. We will be happy to provide further details and/or a Gift Aid declaration form on request. Gifts may be sent to our Administrator, Pastor Stephen Ford, at 4 Elm Grove Drive, Dawlish, Devon, EX7 0EU. (Tel : 01626 865230. E-mail : stephenford323@hotmail.com.) Alternatively gifts can be transferred by BACS direct to the Trust's bank account with CAF Bank Ltd, 25 Kings Hill Avenue, Kings Hill, West Malling, Kent. ME19 4JQ. Sort code : 40-52-40. Account no. 00014705 (The Christian Worship Publishing Trust).

We have agreed that any churches which contribute to the project will be eligible for a discount if they wish to purchase Christian Worship when published. Details of this scheme have not yet been decided, and will be made known nearer to the date of publication.

As we seek to promote the singing of worthy praise to the God of grace, we remind all readers of these words of the ancient Psalmist : "Let the saints be joyful in glory: let them sing aloud upon their beds. Let the high praises of God be in their mouth, and a two-edged sword in their hand." Psalm 149, 5 – 6.

Diary

Lord's Days:

March

2nd	–	Pastor	–	Communion - p.m
9th	–	Rev. W. V. Higham		
16th	–	Pastor	–	Communion -a.m
23th	–	Pastor		
30th	–	Pastor		

April

6th	–	Pastor	–	Communion - p.m
13th	–	Pastor		
20th	–	Pastor	–	Communion - a.m
27th	–	Pastor		

May

4th	–	Pastor	–	Communion - p.m
11th	–	Pastor		
18th	–	Pastor	–	Communion - a.m
25th	–	Rev. C. Jones		

Dates to note:

Good Friday, March 21st, 7pm, Preaching Service, Rev. J. Munday, Devizes

Thursday, 10th April, Evening meeting: “The Direction of Evangelism”

Conforming to the World	Rev. D. P. Morris
Departing from the Fathers	Rev. R. B. Higham

Works To Church Buildings

Please note building works are due to be carried out to Schoolroom. A porch is to be built on to it to prevent water ingress and heat egress.

A LIFTING UP FOR THE DOWNCAST

1 Kings 19: 4

“But he himself (Elijah) went a day’s journey into the wilderness and came and sat down under a juniper tree; and he requested for himself that he might die; and said It is enough; now O Lord take away my life; for I am not better than my fathers.”

We too live in depressing times as did Elijah. There is so much in the world and in the church that would cause us to give in and give up. But just as the Lord refused Elijah’s request that he might die so he refuses to let His church give up in despair. The ways in which He helped Elijah are instructive for us also. But before we consider them we must try to learn what precisely caused such anguish for God’s servant. We can glean the causes of his depression from two sources.

1 What Elijah tells the Lord
In v 10 Elijah’s concern is that the children of Israel have forsaken the Lord’s covenant. This grieved the prophet as did the throwing down of the Lord’s altars. This vandalism as regards worship cut him to the quick. They had also slain the Lord’s prophets with a sword. He’d held the prophets in such high regard and now he sees the possibility of his

own life being lost. What will become of a people without prophets and without a witness? You’ll notice as you read these complaints the repetition of the word “thy”. These departures were a slur and an attack on God himself and Elijah found it all unbearable.

And then if we consider

2 What the Lord tells Elijah
We gather in vv 15-18 that judgement would be ministered through the kings that Elijah was told to anoint. This was the Lord’s answer to Elijah’s disappointment because of the continuing presence of ungodly opposition represented by Jezebel and her threats. Elijah felt that his own jealousy for the Lord God of hosts had not been met with a similar jealousy in God himself for His own cause. But the Lord assures him that judgement is on the way.

Elijah’s depression then cannot be accounted for in terms of a simple feeling of anti-climax after the Carmel victory. This man is concerned for God and His cause and he cannot see how the Lord will maintain His own honour in the present circumstances. So, with similar feelings we may ask “Why doesn’t the Lord arise? Will He not put an end to the flagrant rebellion of an apostate nation?” As each piece of ungodly legislation becomes law and battle after battle is lost after

much prayer we wonder why God will not vindicate Himself.

Now we must examine how the Lord ministered to his depressed servant in these circumstances.

Firstly there was

The Lord's Provision

Providentially the Lord sent an angel to minister to Elijah with food and water to refresh him physically. A rhythm of sleep and wakefulness is also established. When depression sets in these are the things that are interrupted. So the Lord is mindful and careful of Elijah's physical needs especially as he faced an arduous journey from Beer Sheba to Horeb. How gracious and kind the Lord is. "Like as a father pitieth his children, so the Lord pitieth them that fear him For He knoweth our frame; He remembereth that we are dust" (Ps 103:13, 14). The Lord recognises that we are physical as well as spiritual beings.

And then the Lord ministered to Elijah in another way. We perceive

The Lord's Presence

In the cave at Horeb "the word of the Lord came to him". It could be that the word of the Lord came to Elijah in person and that here once again we have a theophany. In v 11 we find that "the Lord passed by" and spoke to him in a "still small voice". The very fact of the Lord's coming to him

both to challenge and reassure him was invaluable. Do we not feel we can do impossible things if only the Lord is with us. "I will be with thy mouth" (Ex 4:12) cancelled Moses's disability. The presence of the fourth person in the fiery furnace protected the three Hebrew lads from the flames. The prospect of the presence of the Good Shepherd with his rod and staff in the valley of the shadow of death took away the fear of evil from David. The disappointment of the two on the Emmaus road was banished as they were instructed when "Jesus himself drew near and went with them". When we know such manifestations of Christ then all is well – even in the direst circumstances.

In one further way was Elijah helped.

The Lord's Plan

was revealed to him and he had a part in it. Elijah had requested that he might die, feeling useless but the Lord graciously involves him in His work, telling him to go and anoint two kings and a prophet to follow him. His work was not over yet. If we are overtaken by low frames and feelings let us remember our callings and the great privileges of still being involved in glorious things and of being co-workers with God.

As God revealed His plan to Elijah it was shown to be very wide. It included the anointing of Hazael to

be the king over Syria. This is because Christ is head over all things to (for the sake of) the church (Eph 1:22).

And God's plan was comprehensive. It included the provision of a prophet (Elisha) whose ministry demonstrated the mercy of God (in ten mercy miracles) as well as the judgement of God via Hazael and Jehu. So the Lord had not forgotten judgement as Elijah had feared. We also can be sure that the Lord will vindicate Himself.

And God's plan was long. It stretched into the future beyond Elijah's day. We occupy but a little

window in time and our view is limited. So we must stand back and survey the panorama of redemption – especially the eternal purpose of God stretching into the future and culminating in the Parousia and the delivering of the kingdom to God the Father when He shall have put down all rule and authority and power.

In these ways then was God's depressed servant helped and encouraged. May we be similarly lifted up to run the race that is set before us.

Dafydd Morris

THE AUTHORISED VERSION AND NEW TRANSLATIONS

Dr. Martyn Lloyd-Jones

Part of an address given at the National Bible Rally in the Royal Albert Hall, London, on October 24th, 1961

I suppose that the most popular of all the proposals at the present moment is to have a new translation of the Bible... The argument is that people are not reading the Bible any longer because they do not understand its language -particularly the archaic terms -what does your modern man... know about justification, sanctification, and all these Biblical terms? And so we are told the one thing that is necessary is to have a translation that Tom, Dick and Harry

will understand, and I began to feel about six months ago that we had almost reached the stage in which the Authorised Version was being dismissed, to be thrown into the limbo of things forgotten, no longer of any value. Need I apologise for saying a word in favour of the Authorised Version in this gathering? Well, whatever you may think, I am going to do it without any apology. Let us, first of all, be clear about the basic proposition laid down by the

Protestant Reformers, that we must have a Bible which is, as they put it, 'understood of the people'. That is common sense; that is obvious. We all agree too that we must never be obscurantist. We must never approach the Bible in a mere antiquarian spirit. Nobody wants to be like that, or to defend such attitudes. But there is a very grave danger incipient in much of the argument that is being presented today for these new translations. There is a danger, I say, of our surrendering something that is vital and essential.

Look at it like this. Take this argument that the modern man does not understand such terms as 'justification', 'sanctification', and so on. I want to ask a question: When did the ordinary man ever understand those terms? ... Consider the colliers to whom John Wesley and George Whitfield used to preach in the 18th century. Did they understand them? They had not even been to a day school, an elementary school. They could not read, they could not write. Yet these were the terms which they heard, and the Authorised Version was the version used. The common people have never understood these terms. However, I want to add something to this. We must be very careful in using such an argument against the Authorised Version, for the reason that the very nature and character of the truth which the Bible presents to us is such that it is extremely difficult to put into words at all. We are not describing an animal or a machine; we

are concerned here with something which is spiritual, something which does not belong to this world at all, and which, as the apostle Paul in writing to the Corinthians reminds us, 'the princes of this world' do not know. Human wisdom is of no value here; it is a spiritual truth; it is something that is altogether different. This is truth about God primarily, and because of that it is a mystery. There is a glory attached to it, there is a wonder, and something which is amazing. The apostle Paul, who probably understood it better than most, looking at its contents, stands back and says, 'Great is the mystery of godliness' (1 Tim 3:16).

Yet we are told, it must be put in such simple terms and language that anybody taking it up and reading it is going to understand all about it. My friends, this is nothing but sheer nonsense! What we must do is to educate the masses of the people up to the Bible, not bring the Bible down to their level. One of the greatest troubles in life today is that everything is being brought down to the same level, everything is cheapened. The common man is made the standard of authority; he decides everything, and everything has to be brought down to him. You are getting it on your wireless, your television, in your newspapers; everywhere standards are coming down and down. Are we to do that with the Word of God? I say, No! What has happened in the past has been this: an ignorant, an illiterate

people in this country and in foreign countries, coming into salvation, have been educated up to the Book and have begun to understand it, to glory in it, and to praise God for it. I am here to say that we need to do the same at this present time. What we need is therefore, not to replace the Authorised Version with what, I am tempted at times to call, the ITV edition of the Bible. We need rather to reach and train people up to the standard and the language, the dignity and the glory of the old Authorised Version.

Very well, my friends, let me say a word for the old book, the old Authorised Version. It was translated by fifty-four men, every one of them a great scholar, and published in 1611.

Here is another thing to commend it to you: this Authorised Version came out at a time when the church had not yet divided into Anglican and Nonconformist. I think there is an advantage even in that. They were all still as one, with very few exceptions, when the Authorised version was produced.

Another important point to remember is this. The Authorised Version was produced some time after that great climactic event which we call the Protestant Reformation. There had been time by then to see some of the terrible horrors of Rome, and all she stood for. The early Reformers had too much on their plate, as it were; Luther may have left many gaps; but when this translation was produced,

there had been time for men to be able to see Rome for what she really was. These translators were all men who were orthodox in the faith. They believed that the Bible is the infallible Word of God and they submitted to it as the final authority, as against the spurious claims of Rome, as against the appeals to the Church Fathers, and everything else.

Here, I say, were fifty-four men, scholars and saintly, who were utterly submitted to the Book. You have never had that in any other version. Here, and here alone, you have a body of men who were absolutely committed to it, who gave themselves to it, who did not want to correct or sit in judgment on it, whose only concern and desire was to translate and interpret it for the masses of the people.

In view of all this, my argument is that the answer does not lie in producing new translations; they are coming out almost every week, but are they truly aiding the situation? No, and for this reason: men no longer read the Bible not because they cannot understand its language, but because they do not believe in it. They do not believe in God; they do not want it. Their problem is not one of language and of terminology; it is the state of the heart. Therefore what do we do about it? It seems to me there is only one thing to do, the thing that has always been done in the past: we must preach it and our preaching must be wholly based upon its authority.

John Newton
On Conformity to the World.

DEAR SIR,

You will, perhaps, be surprised to see my thoughts on your query in print, rather than to receive them by the post, as you expected. But as the subject of it is of general concern, I hope you will not be displeas'd that I have taken this method. It would do honour to the pen of an able casuist, and might be of considerable service in the present day, clearly to explain the force of the apostle's precept, ' Be not conformed to this world;' and to state the just boundary between a sinful compliance with the world, and that scrupulous singularity which springs from a self-righteous principle, and a contracted view of the spirit and liberty of the Gospel. To treat this point accurately, would require a treatise, rather than a letter; I only undertake to offer you a few hints; and, indeed, when the mind is form'd to a spiritual taste, a simple desire to be guided by the Word and Spirit of God, together with a due attention to our own experience, will, in most practical cases, supersede the necessity of long and elaborate disquisitions.

By the world, in the passage alluded to, Rom. xii. 2, I suppose the apostle means the men of the world, in distinction from believers;

these, not having the love of God in their hearts, or his fear before their eyes, are of course engag'd in such pursuits and practices as are inconsistent with our holy calling, and in which we cannot imitate or comply with them, without hurting our peace and profession. We are, therefore, bound to avoid conformity to them in all such instances ; but we are not oblig'd to decline all intercourse with the world, or to impose restraints upon ourselves, when the Scripture does not restrain us, in order to make us as unlike the world as possible. To instance in a few particulars :

It is not necessary, perhaps it is not lawful, wholly to renounce the society of the world. A mistake of this kind took place in the early ages of Christianity, and men (at first, perhaps, with a sincere desire of serving God without distraction) withdrew into deserts and uninhabited places, and wasted their lives at a distance from their fellow creatures. But unless we could flee from ourselves likewise, this would afford us no advantage ; so long as we carry our own wicked hearts with us, we shall be expos'd to temptation, go where we will. Besides, this would be thwarting the end of our vocation. Christians are to be the salt and the lights of the world, conspicuous as cities set upon a hill; they are command'd to

'let their light shine before men, that they, beholding their good works, may glorify their Father who is in heaven.' This injudicious deviation from the paths of nature and providence, gave occasion, at length, to the vilest abominations ; and men who withdrew from the world, under pretence of retirement, became the more wicked and abandoned, as they lived more out of public view and observation.

Nor are we at liberty, much less are we enjoined, to renounce the duties of relative life, so as to become careless in the discharge of them. Allowances should, indeed, be made for the distresses of persons newly awakened, or under the power of temptation, which may, for a time, so much engross their thoughts as greatly to indispose them for their bounden duty. But, in general, the proper evidence of true Christians is, not merely that they can talk about divine things, but that, by the grace of God, they live and act agreeable to the rules of his word, of the state in which his providence has placed them, whether as masters or servants, husbands or wives, parents or children ; bearing rule, or yielding obedience, as in his sight. Diligence and fidelity in the management of temporal concerns, though observable in the practice of many worldly men,

may be maintained without a sinful conformity to the world.

Neither are we required to refuse a moderate use of the comforts and conveniences of life, suitable to the station which God has appointed us in the world. The spirit of self-righteousness and will worship works much in this way, and supposes that there is something excellent in long fastings, in abstaining from pleasant food, in wearing meaner clothes than is customary with those in the same rank of life; and many other austerities and singularities not commanded by the word of God. And many persons, who are, in the main, sincere, are grievously burdened with scruples respecting the use of lawful things. It is true, there is need of a constant watch, lest what is lawful in itself become hurtful to us by its abuse. But these outward strictnesses may be carried to great lengths, without a spark of true grace, and even without the knowledge of the true God. The mortifications and austerities practised by the Bramins in India, (if the accounts we have of them be true,) are vastly more severe than the most zealous effects of modern superstition in our country. There is a strictness which arises rather from ignorance than knowledge, is wholly conversant about externals, and gratifies the spirit of self as

much in one way as it seems to retrench it in another. A man may almost starve his body to feed his pride : but to those who fear and serve the Lord, every creature of God is good, and nothing to be refused, if it be received with thanksgiving, for it is sanctified by the word of God and prayer.

We must not conform to the spirit of the world. As members of society, we have a part to act in it in common with others. But if our business is the same, our principles and ends are to be entirely different. Diligence in our respective callings is, as I have already observed, commendable, and our duty; but not with the same views which stimulate the activity of the men of the world. If they rise early, and take rest late, their endeavours spring from, and terminate in, self, to establish and increase their own importance, to add house to house, and field to field, that, like the builders of Babel, they may get themselves a name, or provide means for the gratification of their sinful passions. If they succeed, they sacrifice to their own net; if they are crossed in their designs, they are filled with anxiety and impatience; they either murmur or despond. But a Christian is to pursue his lawful calling with an eye to the Providence of God, and with submission to his wisdom. Thus, so

far as he acts in the exercise of faith, he cannot be disappointed. He casts his care upon his Heavenly Father, who has promised to take care of him. What he gives, he receives with thankfulness, and is careful, as a faithful steward, to improve it for the furtherance of the cause of God, and the good of mankind; and if he meets with losses and crosses, he is not disconcerted, knowing that all his concerns are under a divine direction; that the Lord whom he serves, chooses for him better than he could choose for himself; and that his best treasure is safe, out of the reach of the various changes to which all things in the present state are liable. Notwithstanding these limitations, the precept is very extensive and important. ' Be not conformed to the world.' As believers, we are strangers and pilgrims upon earth. Heaven is our country, and the Lord is our King.

We are to be known and noticed as his subjects, and, therefore, it is his pleasure, that we do not speak the language, or adopt the customs, of the land in which we sojourn. We are not to conform to the world, as we did in the days of our ignorance. And though we have received the principles of grace, and have tasted of the goodness of the Lord, the admonition is still needful; for we are renewed but in part, and are liable to be drawn aside to our hurt

by the prevalence of evil examples and customs around us. We must not conform to the maxims of the world. The world, in various instances, calls evil good, and good evil. But we are to have recourse to the law and to the testimony, and to judge of things by the unerring word of God, uninfluenced by the determination of the great or the many. We are to obey God rather than man, though upon this account, we may expect to be despised or reviled, to be made a gazing stock or a laughing stock, to those who set his authority at defiance. We must bear our testimony to the truth as it is in Jesus, avow the cause of his despised people, and walk in the practice of universal obedience, patiently endure reproaches, and labour to overcome evil with good. Thus we shall show that we are not ashamed of HIM. And there is an hour coming when he will not be ashamed of us, who have followed him, and borne his cross in the midst of a perverse generation, but will own our worthless names before the assembled world.

We must not conform to the world in their amusements and diversions. We are to mix with the world so far as our necessary and providential connections engage us ; so far as we have a reasonable expectation of doing or getting

good, and no further. What fellowship hath light with darkness, or what concord hath Christ with Belial ? What call can a believer have into those places and companies where every thing tends to promote a spirit of dissipation; where the fear of God has no place: where things are purposely disposed to inflame or indulge corrupt and sinful appetites and passions, and to banish all serious thoughts of God and ourselves? If it is our duty to redeem time, to walk with God, to do all things in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, to follow the example which he set us when he was upon earth, and to work out our salvation with fear and trembling; it must, of course, be our duty to avoid a conformity with the world in those vain and sensual diversions which stand in as direct contradiction to a spiritual frame of mind as darkness to light.

The leading desires of every person under the influence of Gospel principles, will be to maintain an habitual communion with God in his own soul, and to manifest the power of his grace in the sight of men. So far as a Christian is infected by a conformity to the spirit, maxims, and sinful customs of the world, these desires will be disappointed. Fire and water are not more

opposite than that peace of God which passeth all understanding, and that poor precarious pleasure which is sought in a compliance with the world ; a pleasure (if worthy the name) which grieves the Spirit of God, and stupifies the heart. Whoever, after having tasted that the Lord is gracious, has been prevailed on to make the experiment, and to mingle with the world's vanities, has certainly thereby brought a damp upon his experience, and indisposed himself for the exercise of prayer, and the contemplation of divine truths. And if any are not sensible of a difference in this respect, it is because the poison has taken a still deeper effect, so as to benumb their spiritual senses, Conformity to the world is the bane of many professors in this day. They have found a way, as they think, to serve both God and Mammon. But, because they are double minded, they are unstable; they make no progress; and, notwithstanding their frequent attendance upon ordinances, they are lean from day to day ; a form of godliness, a scheme of orthodox notions they may attain to, but they will remain destitute of the life, power, and comfort of religion, so long as they cleave to those things which are incompatible with it.

Conformity to the world is equally an obstruction in the way of those who profess a desire of glorifying God in the sight of men. Such professors do rather dishonour him ; by their conduct, as far as in them lies, they declare that they do not find the religion of the Gospel answer their expectations ; that it does not afford them the satisfaction they once hoped for from it; and that, therefore, they are forced to seek relief from the world. They grieve the people of God by their compliances, and oftentimes they mislead the weak, and by their examples, encourage them to venture upon the like liberties, which otherwise, they durst not have attempted. They embolden the wicked, likewise, in their evil ways, while they see a manifest inconsistency between their avowed principles and their practice; and thus they cause the ways of truth to be evil spoken of. The paper constrains me to conclude abruptly : may the Lord enable you and me to lay this subject to heart, and to pray that we may, on the one hand, rightly understand and prize our Christian liberty ; and, on the other hand, be preserved from that growing evil, a conformity to the world !

I am, &c.

The epilogue: "...as He said..."

There are times, in the experience of life, when one has to admit to the notorious difficulty in differentiating between that which is truth, and that which is downright falsehood. More often than not, evidence of what is true, or otherwise, is revealed only with the passage of time, as proven from past history. Furthermore, the veracity of some thing stated depends, to a large extent, upon the integrity of the person who had spoken it. In these strange and uncertain times, how wonderfully comforting it is to recognise that in the Bible generally, and in the preeminent Person of the Lord Jesus Christ particularly, there resides truthfulness par excellence, for '*as He said*', "...thy word is truth"; "...I tell you the truth..." and "I am...the truth..." (John 17:17; 16:7; 14:6). Furthermore, it should not go unnoticed that the truth of God's Word is established throughout the eons of past millennia!

Have you ever wondered why God permitted the long lapse of time between the fall of Adam and the coming of His Son? Why was the revelation of the coming of Jesus Christ spread over such a long preparatory period? Surely one answer was in order to ably demonstrate, and fully substantiate, the absolute reliability of all that God had said regarding the desperate plight of man, and the great plan for the redemption of man. All was being unfolded in the adumbration of priestly types and prophetic utterances of the coming Messiah! Did you know, that from His birth to His death, the Lord Jesus Christ fulfilled, to the letter, some *sixty* Old Testament prophecies concerning Him directly?

In his book '*Science Speaks*', Peter W. Stoner, (1888-1980), hypothesised the likelihood of such occurrence in one person as almost too incredible to even contemplate. By way of example, Professor Stoner calculated, by recognised and accepted mathematical analysis, that the probability of one person fulfilling, *literally*, just *eight* prophecies, would be 1 in 100,000,000,000,000,000. Please forgive the following bizarre illustration: the likelihood of winning the Lottery is 1 in 14,000,000, which, by comparison, becomes almost a certainty!

Now in addition to the fidelity of that which was prophesied of the Lord Jesus Christ in the Old Testament, it is important to observe that the Word of God records that He also had much to say Himself concerning His mighty work of redemption. Referring to Moses act of making a “serpent of brass” as the antidote to God’s judgement for sin to all who looked to it, He reveals it was but the foreshadowing of His own crucifixion, (John 3:14; Numbers 21:9). Then, He further announced that, “...The son of man must be delivered...and be crucified...” (Luke 24:7), which of course quite literally took place, *‘as He said’!*

Although we cannot begin to enter into the sufferings of our blessed Lord, we can however understand what is meant when we are told that He died a physical death, for death is known for what it is in this world. What is completely and absolutely beyond our ken, is the whole notion of being ‘raised from the dead’, for this is something only the Lord Jesus Christ knows! Nevertheless we are here faced with two inscrutable, yet undeniable, facts. The first is that “...he **is** risen, **as he said...**” (Matthew 28:6; Luke 24:7), and confirmed by “...many infallible proofs” (Acts 1:3). The second is that having “...finished the work...” (John 17:4), *‘as He said’*, and having returned to be with His heavenly Father, *‘as He said’*, we have this absolute assurance that ALL that He has said concerning that which is yet to be, WILL happen! Hear, O hear His glorious promise, “...I will come again and receive you to myself...” (John 14:3)! And so He will, for it must come to pass *‘as He said’*. AMEN.