

To be a pilgrim... ('He who would be valiant')

The words are by John Bunyan, written whilst in prison, and is a great British hymn. For a very good melodic medieval rendition go to He who would Valiant Be - John Bunyan

Unfortunately it was heavily modified in 1906 by Percy Dearmer for The English Hymnal, and a new tune was written by Vaughan Williams. The original song is thus:

"Who would true valour see,

Let him come hither;

One here will constant be,

Come wind, come weather

There's no discouragement

Shall make him once relent

His first avowed intent

To be a pilgrim.

Whoso beset him round

With dismal stories

Do but themselves confound;

His strength the more is.

No lion can him fright,

He'll with a giant fight,

He will have a right

To be a pilgrim.

Hobgoblin nor foul fiend

Can daunt his spirit,

He knows he at the end

Shall life inherit.

Then fancies fly away,

He'll fear not what men say,

He'll labor night and day

To be a pilgrim.”

Bunyan based his hymn on the text of Hebrews 11:13, ***“These all died in faith, not having received the promises, but having seen them afar off, and were persuaded of them, and embraced them, and confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth.”***

Let's be frank about this. Do you REALLY want to leave this life and be with Christ? REALLY? Or, like others, you want to stay here for as long as you can, gripping tightly to earthly life and trying to keep everything to yourself? Be honest.

Most fear death and don't want to leave this life, except for those who suffer much physically or even mentally. But, even these should ask themselves why they wish to leave this life. Is it just to escape pain or fear? Or, even to avoid loneliness or anxiety?

The Hebrew text refers us back to the time of Abraham, whose descendants were called 'Hebrews' (roughly meaning 'strangers'), as nomads who were looking for pastures new. Joseph's family was given the whole of Goshen (northern Egypt) as a mark of respect for

Joseph's prowess as a ruler under Pharaoh. But, after a new Pharaoh came along a while later, this respect turned to hatred and fear.

It always surprises me when Christians say with confidence that this or that unbeliever can be trusted or is his or her closest friend! Believe me (because I have gone through it many times and watched it happen to others), these 'friends' can become enemies in a heartbeat! That is why nothing we have on this earth can be counted on or thought of as permanent. It is why God warns us explicitly to avoid forming friendships with the ungodly – those who are unsaved and show it, by behaviour or ideas or false religion, or even actual scorn.

To rely on unbelievers as friends is as logical as laying down in a nest of vipers. The deadly bite will come, because it is in the vipers' nature! But, this simple maxim from God is often ignored by Christians who think they know better.

Hebrews tells us that the early people of God "died in faith" (and so were saved to Heaven) without having the promises we know today. As nomadic families they knew they were just 'passing through' this world, "strangers and pilgrims on the earth"... *xenos* and *parepidēmos*: *xenos* having a similar meaning to 'hebrew' (one from beyond; stranger, later to become a designation for the Israelites). *Parepidēmos* is an adjective meaning a stranger from a foreign country who stays temporarily with others of a different nation.

These words describe us as Christians, but few of us understand the idea, and do not really want such an appellation. Many like what they have on this earth. They look forward to enjoying their retirement in relative comfort, perhaps in a lovely location. But, they are travellers in the earth, whose real home is Heaven. And that is where they will go, like it or not! And, many go there sooner than they would have thought, so everything they looked forward to on this earth just evaporates. I've seen it too many times!

A pilgrim knows his native country (Heaven) and wants to return to it because it is a better place (verse 16), made and reserved especially for us.

Unfortunately, western Christians, even those with little money, tend to think of this earth as their home. Yes, in their churches they sing lustily of Heaven and a better place, but then thankfully go to their houses for supper. They enjoy their holidays, their homes, their incomes,

their pensions, their status in jobs, their aspirations... and think it will always be.

As one who has been all through the same scenario and lost it all, I can vouch for the fact that what we hold dear and rely on can be taken from us in an instant. So, I know it is just an illusion! I still live on this earth and much has now been paid off, but I know I can STILL lose what little we have got. That is why I have no earthly ambition, and hold lightly to anything we have.

Do you truly think you are a biblical pilgrim, passing through this earth to get to Heaven? Or, is your future wrapped up in what you have right now and look forward to as relative riches?

Those who do not see themselves as pilgrims on this earth are the ones who will fear death and suffer anxiety over leaving the world... because their spiritual life is very poor, so they do not fully know the Lord as real.

Studying Scripture

Few Christians study scripture or read their Bibles. That's a very sad and worrying fact. Even fewer bother to expand on what little they know, by researching theology. But, many love to read lists of texts in 'read your Bible in a year' books. Some say that on certain days they find exactly the right word for their circumstance. Is this okay?

I would rather say "*It's better than nothing*". As for it being what God requires or what is good for us... no, it is superficial and unlikely to give us the kind of outlook every Christian needs in these darkening days.

EVERY Christian, from day one of salvation, should be reading God's word. I mean in depth, as much depth as the Lord gives to our intelligence and ability. Genuine and proper study is to read and read again, to understand the context of every part, to build an historical picture of the Bible.

The deeper we go the more it comes alive, as we see the machinations of ancient politics, military conquests, fleeting philosophies, the gradual enlightenment of God to His chosen ones.

In it are found answers for every person in every age, deduced from scripture and assimilated over time, so that wisdom becomes our key character. With wisdom comes the ability to know what to do, how to respond to life and God, and how to view worldly happenings.

It takes time and effort to read God's word. ANYONE can read a 'text a day' book, plus the interpretations of the writer. It saves us having to make the effort ourselves and the texts always seem to comfort the reader. But, it is all second-hand living!

We should find out for ourselves what God says. We should know what genuine interpretation is, and how to apply God's word to real life. If we don't put in the work and time, we will never be ready for the stark evils thrown at us every day, nor will we be able to find answers to problems.

To put it bluntly, the superficial reading of most is like preferring a McDonald's burger to a beautifully cooked meal by a Michelin chef! There is no comparison!

It is obvious from the majority of churches that Christians cannot be bothered with the word given by their supposed Lord. It is why their lives can often be a mess, or why they are unable to see reality.

Which Brings me To...

I'm nobody special, but I can usually detect when a person has sinned but is trying to avoid facing his or her guilt. Can you?

I know by the discernment given to me by God, when a teaching is heretical or bad. Can you?

I can usually see when a person is hypocritical or lying. Can you?

I know when to treat another with hard words, and when to speak softly in the hope he or she will repent and change. Do you?

These things should be an integral part of everyday Christian living. If they are not present, I wonder what is wrong with the one claiming to be a Christian.

The Iniquitous Greenbelt Festival

Many years ago, maybe at the end of the 1960s, I had reason to be critical of Greenbelt. Today, I am not just critical – I accuse the Festival of outright heresy and blasphemy. In the name of the Lord, I demand that its organisers repent and stop what they are doing. (Source: RNS, 18th August 2017).

I have always regarded Greenbelt as 'twee', of no value. But, it has become something far worse – it is now heretical and blasphemous by having Muslim speakers and that is probably why it also looked at 'social justice issues'. (I dread to know what those were!). There have been occasional Muslim speakers in the past (also heresy). But, this time came Sufi chants, dubbed by Greenbelt as "*a unique form of mystical worship*".

With the chanting came Islamic art, culture and spirituality, and the creative director is puzzled by negative responses! But, he was pleased by the "*healthy curiosity*" of many, which shows me how far down the ladder of truth the festival has gone.

Why have Islamic content? The answer is worrying... "*Since 9/11, the Greenbelt trustees have wanted the festival to engage with Islam more deeply,*" he said. "*We wanted to play our part in dismantling, as far as we could, the extremist stereotyping and narrative the Muslim faith and community laboured under and to introduce Greenbelters to Muslim thinkers, artists, activists and spirituality.*" 'Stereotypes'? No – just truth!

Do not be fooled. This is blasphemous. Did the good kings of Israel and Judah ask pagan priests to officiate at the Temple? No, they got rid of them.

Greenbelt wants Muslims and Christians to join together with a "*common cause*". What can that possibly be, when pagan worship is condemned outright by God?

HOW does Greenbelt KNOW they are dismantling stereotypes, when the idea of this comes from Muslims to confuse the west? And why show such sympathy for Islam when God hates it and Muslims?

Greenbelt is now beyond the pale. We pray the organisers will either be replaced, or that it will just collapse, because as it now stands it is an enemy of the Lord and a dangerous ally to Islam, against us.

Greenbelt goes farther still, by wanting Christians to show a friendly face to homosexuality. They will also encourage attendees to be good little Greens, and to involve themselves in 'poverty'... these are all socialist activities, not Christian. As umbrella terms they are worthless.

These supposed 'Christian' events are so cheap and nasty, and those who attend, knowing what is on offer, can only be superficial Christians, if they are of Christ at all. What comes next? Follow the WCC and have occultism? Probably.

US Muslims say Islam Should Change... but so what!

A recent poll, answered by Muslims in the US, suggested that many want Islam to change. I am willing to 'bet' (excuse the term) that almost no Christian will look into this, but will either rejoice or become warmer towards all Muslims.

Perhaps it is my inner-self, but as a researcher I cannot just accept the findings as they stand. For example, the poll spoke of changes to Islam, not to Muslims, or the Koran, or hadiths. It did not take into account the desire of a huge number of Muslims to have sharia as their foundation of law.

We must also ask ourselves if the answers were the result of well-prepared taqiyya (lying), or a deliberate act of propaganda to make Americans think all is well and they must learn to trust Muslims.

The fact is, we CANNOT trust Muslims. Muslim violence and deception throughout the world is an obvious reason. For myself I could 'trust' Muslims who worked for me, when they did their jobs, but very few of them were warm-hearted towards the elderly they looked after. Indeed, most were cold-hearted and looked on the older folk with disdain. For this reason I tried not to employ them. Added to that many were simply lazy... but they wanted plenty of benefits from us.

I have many other questions. There is an urgent need to look into the answers in the poll, but also a need to be wary. Muslims must prove themselves worthy of basic social trust. Why Muslims? Because from their fake religion comes violent men and women who wish to kill us. Not all want to do this, but sufficient numbers to warrant being very careful. Only a foolish soldier would accept the word of an enemy at face value!

Above all else, no matter what the respondents said in a poll, their false religion is hated by God and their end is hell. We cannot and must not forget that. It is why we must never willingly accept the growth of Islam in our societies. To do so is to reject God as Lord and spit in His face. So, be wary.

Why I Watch

I have mentioned in some of my daily emails that I watch two TV programmes in particular: one (with a variety of titles) is about the work of the police. The other is about the work of High Court Enforcement Officers.

I have analysed my motives and believe I watch the police programmes because a high number of criminals and villains are arrested, and I love the fact that nasty types have their comeuppance. To me it is necessary to see justice being served, even though I believe sentences are not tough enough and some arrests (say, of street preachers) is unjust and unnecessary, except for liberals and haters of God. It is, then, comforting to know that at least some in our society are stopped, if only temporarily, in their criminal tracks.

I watch the programme about High Court writs for a very different reason. I spent so many years in penury I wonder that I have never been given legal proceedings. Like many who are sent writs, I would have been unable to pay anything to avoid further action. So, I can fully understand the feelings of those thus served writs. On the other hand, many, if not most, who are given writs have attempted to pervert justice, or get away with massive debts fraudulently. I also see a lot of cases of unpaid rent... my son was almost driven to the wall by a tenant who

did not pay his rent, even though the local council paid it to him, to give to my son. Thus, my son had to pay for the place he lived in, plus the mortgage on the tenant's property, and had to take out a huge loan to help cover costs. So, I am no friend of rental arrears when a tenant otherwise lives luxuriously.

Then there are the owings of Muslims, who deliberately take on rentals with no intention whatever of paying a penny in rent. Am I just making Muslims my 'hobby horse'? No – the enforcement officers said that 70% of evictions were of Muslims who deliberately did not pay rent. They waited until they were forced to leave, and then moved to another property to repeat the same kind of fraud. And if they had children (paid for by our taxes), local councils were obliged to rehouse them! It is appalling, particularly when the Muslims are so arrogant (seems to be a feature of Islam) and ready to do violence.

Some Muslims were very irate to be kicked out – even when they had sub-let the property, thus earning thousands of pounds a month in illicit rents! It is very evident that Islam has its own peculiar and damaging mindset. The West should not encourage it!

Thus far God has kept me in all my time in poverty. Now, we 'tick along' but anything could upset our life at any time, so I have every sympathy with folks whose money problems are not of their own making. It is both a comfort (to see fraudsters getting kicked out), and a sense of thankfulness that God has thus far kept us just this side of total loss.

More than most, my wife and I have been very thankful for God's provision, but with the proviso that nothing in this world belongs to us. Christians who don't really understand this are in danger, for if they lose everything (and it can happen to the best) they will be an example of those who fail miserably and become depressed and frantic.

“Did not Solomon king of Israel sin by these things? Yet among many nations there was no king like him, who was beloved of his God; and God made him king over all Israel. Nevertheless pagan women caused even him to sin.” (Neh 13:26). I cannot understand why white women marry Muslims! They live to regret it. Nor is there any excuse for marrying Muslim women. The end result is always sin. Keep distant!

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