

2 Tim.1v10 'Our Saviour Jesus Christ has destroyed death and brought life and immortality to light through the gospel'.

Introduction:

There is a 'free press' in this country. The way news is spread is that during the night about a dozen journalists decide what news will be headlines in newspapers and the media the following day. At least it was like that until recently when it was said on Radio 4 that the Internet Blog has taken news outside the control of a few. Nevertheless 'News' is still controlled by people with an 'agenda'.

For example:- Martin Salter, MP for Reading West said in his final speech to the House of Commons at the end of what he called 'The Manure Parliament' referring to the Expenses Scandal, 'the stench of personal corruption and greed had overwhelmed the good that politicians try to do and the reasons why the vast majority entered the Commons. Sometimes, we must lead. We would not have delivered civil partnerships by referendum or votes on Sky. Sometimes we must stand up for what is right and lead public opinion'. But we ask, What 'agenda' motivated them to 'lead public opinion' like this?

LIBERTY is an organisation that campaigns for 'citizen's rights'. It used to be called the National Council for Civil Liberties, and along with Paedophile Information Exchange (PIE) & Paedophile Action for Liberty (PAL) which were affiliated to it, it campaigned for the rights of homosexuals and paedophiles in the 1970s. The legal officer for NCCL was a woman who later left to become an MP and then became the Minister for Women & Equality. The Treasurer of the recent outgoing party of Government served on the Executive of NCCL from 1970-79. He married the Minister for Equality in 1982.

The, until recent, Minister of State for Children, Schools and Families advocated policies for sex education, without a Christian moral framework, which sexualise children at an early age and disallows the right of parents to withdraw their children from such education, and also wishes to ban parents from home educating their children if they refuse to incorporate these policies in their curriculum. If re-elected the Govt has vowed to use the Parliament Acts to remove the present amendment which allows an exemption from the Equality Act for 'faith schools and churches and charities'. Sadly, the other main parties are committed to the same sex education policies. A Daily Telegraph journalist commented at the beginning of the Election Campaign of a 'cosy consensus' as to dealing with the real issues. We might add there was a 'corrupt consensus' in that sex education was not mentioned at all.

We detect an 'agenda for sexual license' controlling the news and media which seeks to shape public opinion and educate school children into thinking that promiscuity and perversion are normal. Parliament has given an unjust lead to public opinion and in so doing has abused its privilege of power. This will lead to the withdrawal of the privilege of power unless there is repentance.

The repeal of what is commonly known as Section 28 in 2003 has removed the protection of children from sexual exploitation by homophiles. This was a serious injustice for children but trumpeted as a removal of an injustice for homophiles. The concealed crocodile homophile can now come out of the river and wander at will and promote this way of life. Soon the concealed crocodile paedophile will also be able to come out onto the river bank as Judges are increasingly lenient in dealing with cases of sex with underage persons, and calls are made to lower the age of consent, and the sexualisation of children takes place in advertising and entertainment.

The institutional Church has lost its moral authority as a result of its failure to discipline cases of homophilia and paedophilia among its clergy. The only thing which stands against this 'agenda for sexual license' is the Gospel and Bible Christianity which has a very different agenda. This is why true Christianity is opposed in public life.

What was the 'agenda' of those who opposed the Gospel during our Lord's ministry and suffering and resurrection? The Cleansing of the Temple by our Lord removed those people who had an 'agenda' of using the things of God for financial gain and political control. When the news

of the resurrection of Jesus was carried by the frightened Roman soldiers to the Priests and Elders of Jerusalem they immediately set in motion a procedure for suppressing it and spreading their own version of the news. They gave a large bribe to the Roman soldiers who had been guarding the tomb and told them to say 'the Disciples came and stole the body while we slept'. But that posed a problem for the soldiers - Roman soldiers who failed in their duty were always executed. That in turn posed a problem for the 'news controllers' in Jerusalem - dead soldiers could not spread 'disinformation'. So they persuaded Pontius Pilate, the Roman Governor, not to execute the soldiers, and so the soldiers spread 'the news' that the Disciples stole the body while we slept!

But THE NEWS is ...

....'Our Saviour Jesus Christ has abolished (completely vanquished) death and brought immortality to light through the gospel' The bodily resurrection of Jesus is good news and a cause of comfort for Christian Believers concerning the Past, the Present, and the Future.

a) The Past.

2 Cor.5v19 'God was in Christ reconciling the world to himself, not imputing their trespasses to them, and has committed unto us the word of reconciliation'. Everyone has a guilty past. 'All have sinned and come short of the glory of God' Rom.3v23.

[iii] Recently the UK govt announced a scheme whereby compensation was to be paid to all victims of the political violence on both sides of the conflict in Northern Ireland regardless of blame. It was fronted by prominent Clergy and Politicians. But indignantly rejected as being unjust.

[iii] The UN recently has tried to bring about reconciliation concerning the 1994 Rwanda Genocide when Hutus killed 800,000 Tutsis in 100 days. The plan failed because no attempt had been made to bring to justice the Hutu perpetrators who had run off into the Congo jungle and are still hiding there.

The Gospel is different - it is about God's justice and mercy. Jesus Christ came to give his life a ransom for many. He is the Lamb of God that takes away the sin of the world. God has made him who knew no sin to be sin (a sin offering for atonement) that we might be made the righteousness of God in him.

The cross of Christ changes God's attitude, as Judge, toward us. By grace, we have 'repented' of our sin against God, and also we 'believe' that Jesus bore our sins for us on the cross (the punishment of a criminal). He experienced death as 'the wages of sin' - death as being separated from God which includes physical death. Jesus cried on the Cross 'My God, why have you forsaken me?'

[iii] DEBT is the most topical word in the UK at the moment - national debt and personal credit card debt - debt is a term that everybody knows about but which many ignore - but everyone has to painfully learn that all debt has to be repaid. SIN is a moral debt owed to God that has to be paid. But on the cross Jesus uttered the words 'It is finished' - the Greek word *tetelestai* was written on bills that had been paid in full in the time of Jesus.

The resurrection of Jesus proved that the debt of our SIN had been paid and therefore we are FREE from debt i.e. our sins are forgiven us for his sake. Death could not hold Jesus any longer after paying the debt of our sin, because he had no sin himself. We are reconciled to God but also God, as Judge, is reconciled to us through Jesus.

'Our Saviour Jesus Christ has abolished death and brought immortality to light through the gospel'. The bodily resurrection of Christ is a cause of comfort for us concerning The Past because it proves the debt of our sin has been paid.

The bodily resurrection of Jesus Christ is a cause of comfort for -

b) The Present.

Because Christian Believers identify with Jesus Christ the world hates them as it hated Him. Jesus Christ is the Light of the World i.e. He is light (moral righteousness) but the world is darkness (moral evil). So the Christian is liable to opposition and persecution from the world. Jesus warned us to expect this. 'In the world you will have tribulation, but cheer up, I have

overcome the world' John 16v33. 'Don't be afraid of them which kill the body but have no more that they can do, but fear Him who after the body is killed has power to cast into hell'.

Jesus said, 'I am the Good Shepherd who gives his life for the sheep. I give to my sheep eternal life and they shall never perish neither shall anyone pluck them out of my hand'.

Before becoming a Believer the Christian's relationship to God was like that of a fugitive criminal evading justice appearing before God the Righteous Judge. Now, because he has been reconciled to God by the cross, and God has been reconciled to him, the relationship has changed to that of a child or son and Father. Unlimited love and power now work all things together for good for the child or son who loves and obeys his heavenly Father.

During his earthly ministry the Disciples walked with Jesus by sight. But after the resurrection the Disciples saw Jesus no more by sight but by faith - the relationship became spiritual. Jesus said, 'It is expedient for you that I go away. I will send the Holy Spirit, the Comforter, to abide with you forever. I will come to you. I and my Father will come to you and make our home with you'. 'I am with you always even to the end of the world'.

Anxieties experienced by the Christian are sympathetically understood by Jesus who prayed to the Father, 'I do not pray that you should take them out of the world but that you should keep them from the evil one' John 17v15. 'They are not of the world just as I am not of the world. Sanctify them through thy truth. Thy word is truth (the Bible). This is eternal life, that they may know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom you have sent'.

Rom.8v35-39 'Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril or sword? As it is written: For your sake we are killed all the day long; we are accounted as sheep for the slaughter. Yet in all these things we are more than conquerors through him that loved us. For I am persuaded that neither death nor life, nor angels nor principalities, nor things present nor things to come, nor height nor depth, nor any other created thing shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord'.

'Our Saviour Jesus Christ has abolished death and brought life and immortality to light through the gospel'. The bodily resurrection of Jesus is a cause of comfort for the Believer because it means he has the risen presence of Jesus with him by the Holy Spirit. Jesus has promised never to leave him.

The bodily resurrection of Jesus Christ is a cause of comfort for -

c) The Future.

The Christian faces a future of persecution and glory - 'All that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution' 2 Tim. 3v12 and 'The sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us' Rom.8v18. For the present the Christian is promised the 'peace of God which passes all understanding to keep his heart and mind in the knowledge and love of God and of his Son Jesus Christ our Lord' Phil.4v7, and in the future, because the bodily resurrection of Jesus Christ means death is a defeated foe and its sting (SIN) has been dealt with. The Apostle Paul says 'for me to live is Christ and to die is gain' because it means he would be 'with Christ which is far better' Phil.1v21 -23 . Death is not a doorway to Judgement and Hell but an entrance to Heaven. Jesus said 'In my Father's house are many rooms. I go to prepare a place for you I will come again and take you to myself that where I am you may be also' John 14v2.

After Jesus performed the miracle of Feeding the 5000 he went up a mountain to pray. The following day the crowd found him in another location and eagerly sought to be with him. He said to them 'You are looking for me because I fed you with bread and fish. Do not labour for the food which perishes but for the food which endures to everlasting life which the Son of Man (Messiah) will give you'. 'I am the bread of life. He who comes to me shall never hunger and he who believes in me shall never thirst'. 'This is the will of him who sent me that everyone who sees the Son and believes in him may have everlasting life and I will raise him up at the last day' John 6v27,35,40.

Economic/Material prosperity is a cardboard castle which gives no ultimate protection in

the storms of life. God warned his ancient people in the Promised Land after their deliverance from Egypt 'Beware lest you forget it is God who gives you power to get wealth' Deut.8v18. The Christian's future is in the hands of Jesus who said, 'I will build my church upon this rock (Peter's confession that Jesus is the Christ, Son of the living God), and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it' Matt.16v18. The Christian's future is built upon the words of Jesus who said 'Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth where moth and rust corrupt and thieves break through and steal, but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven where neither moth nor rust corrupt and thieves do not break through and steal for where your treasure is there will your heart be also' Matt.6v19-21. Jesus contrasted the wise man who builds the house of his life upon the teaching of Jesus and the foolish man who does not. It is the wise man only who has a secure future Matt.7v24-27.

The INSTITUTIONAL CHURCH will fail - 'Now the Spirit expressly says that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits and doctrines of devils' 1 Tim.4v1. God judged the failed church of the Jews for apostacy under Eli at Shiloh around 1100 BC 1 Sam.2v22-4v22 and at the Babylonian Captivity in 586 BC 2 Chron.36v15-21. God will judge the Church too for apostacy by ceasing to believe in Jesus only Rom.11v22. But individual Christians who continue to confess Jesus as Christ until death will have a future reward that will not be taken away from them.

The world places its hopes for the future in the here and now in drink and drugs, sex and power, money and possessions, but God will judge these things. Jesus said, 'Sky and earth will pass away but my words shall never pass away'. The Christian is part of the kingdom of heaven that will grow and supercede the kingdoms of men. 'For the earnest expectation of the creation eagerly waits for the revealing of the sons of God, because the creation was subjected to futility, not willingly, but because of him who subjected it in hope, because the creation itself also will be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God' Rom.8v18-21.

Isaiah prophesied of a new sky and earth Isa.65v17 & 66v22. This is taken up and echoed by the Apostle John in Revelation 21v1-8. All this is closely connected with 'Our Saviour Jesus Christ who has abolished death and brought immortality to light through the gospel'.

The Christian has a glorious and secure future because of the bodily resurrection of Christ.

Conclusion.

'Our Saviour Jesus Christ has destroyed death and brought life and immortality to light through the gospel'. The Gospel has an 'agenda' which contrasts starkly with the world's 'agenda'. The Apostle Paul wrote in Titus 2v11-14 says 'The grace of God that brings salvation has appeared to all men, teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, godly, and righteously in the present age, looking for the blessed hope and glorious appearing of our great God and Saviour Jesus Christ, who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from every evil work and purify unto himself his own special people zealous of good works'. Paul also wrote to the Philippians in 4v8 'Whatever is true, noble, just, pure, lovely, virtuous, and praiseworthy, think on these things'. This is life and this is immortality.