

COVER STORY

The big issue?

This issue of 'Faith Matters' has been written by a number of individuals who are Bible-believing Christians and would like to bring to your attention some really important issues.

Most of us would agree that our society and world is grappling with major issues many of which seem quite insurmountable. Financially, most of the world's major economies are fighting to maintain stability. In terms of morality, while many may feel that they have won the liberty to live as they choose, we are facing many social and emotional problems as a result of this. Medically, the world is stretched as it attempts to maintain healthy communities and to find answers to remedy major diseases. The problems are limitless and yet the human race with all its cleverness and ingenuity continues to look for and provide answers.

As you read through this issue you will see that we are addressing the greatest problem that the human race faces, i.e., sin and death. Life experience matches the statement of the Bible when it says, 'For all have sinned and come short of the glory of God', Rom. 3. 23. 'No one's perfect', I hear you say, and you are right, but have you ever considered why? As you read these articles (if you can access a Bible it would be useful to



ask what it says for yourself) you will not only see answers to why we are imperfect but you will be asked to consider what God has done to rectify the problem of our guilt and sin. The solution is stated in simple words, 'Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners', 1. Tim. 1. 15.

Some of the articles might be a little strange to you. For instance we have a piece on 'loving your enemies'. This was something that Jesus taught that is most unnatural and yet as you read it I hope that you will see that He (Jesus) is the prime example of how to do this as He loved us and died for us when we had no time for Him, indeed we could be described effectively as His enemies. We also have an interesting story of how a man became a Christian; I think you will find his story makes for compelling reading.

There are a couple of other articles but I'll leave you to explore them for yourself. If you find this booklet a help to you or if you have any questions please contact me at stepcar61@me.com. If I can help I would be happy to do so.

Stephen G. Baker Liverpool

A TRAGIC ACCIDENT!



Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends

By Jeremy Holifield, Deri, Wales

I was out walking the other day when I discovered a commemorative stone I hadn't noticed before. It stands on the edge of the village of Deri in South Wales, near the site of the old Darren Colliery pit. On the 29th October 1909, the inscription records, twenty-seven men lost their lives in an explosion there.

As I scanned the plaque I felt honour bound to read each of the names without missing any, as if this would in some strange way be disrespectful to the dead. I read names that I know as being family names in the village to this day. Were these men their ancestors? One surname occurred three times. Were they related in some way; maybe father and sons? When I came to the bottom of the list, my eye fell upon something that I was not expecting to see. There, at the foot of the memorial stone, I read a

quotation from the Bible, it read: 'Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends, John 15. 13.

As I stood and pondered the statement I thought how inappropriate these words of the Lord Jesus Christ were to this particularly tragic incident. When the Lord Jesus was speaking about the lessons that can be learned from His great sacrifice he said to His disciples that they were to love each other 'as I have loved you'. He was predicting the events that would shortly take place at Calvary. There He would lay 'down his life for us', 1 John 3. 16. We know that His act of sacrificial love was premeditated as the Bible states, 'In this was manifested the love of God toward us, because that God sent his only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through him', 1 John 4. 9.

The twenty-seven miners had not descended the 114-yard shaft with any thought of laying down their lives.

Miners waiting anxiously for news of their colleagues.





The blood of Jesus Christ, his Son, cleanseth us from all sin



Not one of them would have made the journey to the coal face had they known what a w a i t e d them there that day.

The wonder of of God's Son coming into this world is that He 'came . . . to give his life', Mark 10. 45. He descended from heaven for this very purpose. His motivation was love. The men were underground to eke out an existence, to earn enough to pay their way and to provide for their own families. They were not working in such dreadful circumstances for the love of it. Their death could not be thought of as a sacrifice. It was a regrettable, and in some sense, preventable accident. The Lord Jesus, on the other hand, out of love for us, came to 'taste death for every man', Heb. 2. 9. It was so 'that through death he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil, and deliver them who through

fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage', Heb. 2. 14-15.

The lives of the miners were lost in vain. Not so with The Lord Jesus. By being raised from the dead, He has given hope to those who place their faith in Him. He is the only one who shed His blood to remove our sins and rose from the dead to prove that He has conquered death. The Bible says, 'The blood of Jesus Christ, his (God's) Son, cleanseth us from all sin', 1 John 1. 7. If our sin is removed, then the judgement for our sin has been removed as well. The Bible teaches that 'the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord', Rom. 6. 23.

The commemorative stone was erected in 2009 to mark the centenary of the accident. I'm not aware of it being remembered neither before nor after. Every Sunday morning, Christians reflect upon the sacrifice made by their Saviour by taking a morsel of bread and a sip of wine, to remember 'greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends, John 15. 13.

My Testimony

How I became a believer in Jesus Christ, by Lin Duncan, Bristol

I was brought up in Jamaica, my mother, a Christian, faithfully attended the Wesleyan Methodist Church. All her children attended Sunday school and each evening she read the Bible and prayed together with them. My father, who was indifferent to the need of salvation, was rarely at church. Whenever money was available he would buy the white rum he loved which would intoxicate him. Papa saw no harm in his children taking strong drink. At ten years old he gave me a glass of rum. My mother remonstrated and he said, 'It will do the child no harm, it is only an appetiser'.

From this 'appetiser' many of his children, myself included, turned to drink. From such an environment, when I left school I turned my back on the church and chose the world. My parents sent me to learn the carpentry trade. At twenty-three years of age I could drink my fortnight's wage in one weekend and would have to get credit to pay for my food.

About this time most of my

friends left Jamaica to find employment abroad. As I was unable to obtain a visa to America, where my brother lived, I was soon making preparations to go to England. My mother's practice whenever any of her children were going abroad was to gather her prayer group and family together to pray for the departing one. I had not been near a church since leaving school, but out of respect to my mother I went to



the prayer meeting. While there the thought struck me that I would never meet my mother again in this life and that if I continued as I was, I would never meet her in life beyond the grave either. There and then I resolved that on reaching England I would live a Christian life.

With this conviction, I took with me a Methodist hymnbook with Psalms and prayers included. On the voyage I read the Psalms and prayers but found no peace. I landed in England and ended up living in Birmingham where I attended a Methodist church. However, before long I had contacted many of my old school-friends and was soon to be found at the public houses in the area and was often seen staggering drunkenly down the street. In time, I came to my senses, telling myself that this was not what I had bargained with God to do. I decided

headway in the Christian life I began to pray that God would give me a Christian to work with. My work contract ended and I had to seek fresh work. I obtained a carpenter's job at Innsworth Aerodrome. I again prayed that I would find a Christian to work with so that I would be better able to live the Christian life. Ramsey, with whom I was put to work, was wearing his old Royal Air Force cap, having recently been de-mobbed and I thought that God had not answered my prayer. However, at our break he bowed his head and thanked God for his food. This caused me to realize that I had never thanked God for anything in my whole life. Soon after he asked me, 'Are you a Christian?' 'Yes', I replied. 'Praise the Lord', he said, 'I was even praying to work with a Christian'. As we talked he soon realized that I was not really a true believer and he began quoting

At twenty- three years of age I could drink my fortnight's wage in one weekend and would have to get credit to pay for my food.

to leave Birmingham for Gloucester, where the only person I knew was a nurse. I hoped that there I would be able to live the Christian life. Obtaining work there I attended the Methodist church more often than ever. Despite my good resolutions I soon made my own friends and was again found in the pubs and in a drunken condition.

Realizing that I was not making any

scripture to me. 'For God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son that whosoever believeth in him, should not perish but have everlasting life'. 'Aren't you rejoicing in that?' he asked. I must confess that the scripture did not reach my soul and I could not even understand it.

Throughout the day Ramsey quoted scripture to me, and feeling that my prayer was answered, I listened

eagerly to him. Finally, the young man quoted this scripture, 'He that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death unto life', John 5. 24. Joy filled my soul and I thought, 'This is what I have been looking for, to know that eternal life is mine and that I will one day be in heaven and see my mother again'. I thought also that this must have been why Christ died upon the cross.

I said nothing to Ramsey but journeying home I seemed to be cycling on air! Entering my home I told my friend, 'I am saved, I was saved today'. He became hysterical with laughter and said, 'What! You, Duncan boy! I'll give you two weeks before you'll be staggering drunkenly on the streets again!' This did not bother me because I knew that if I was saved then Christ would be able to keep me. Soon I met another friend whom I considered religious. On hearing my news he said, 'Isn't it presumptuous to say that you are saved while here on earth? You could sin today, tomorrow and the next day and then what would become of your salvation? You have to wait until you get to the great white judgment throne, and then God alone can say whether you are saved or lost'. Because I had such little knowledge of scripture this seemed reasonable, for my good works would then be weighed against my sins. This plunged me into despair as I had before proved to myself that I could not live a good

life and so would be lost forever. For a few weeks I was ashamed to tell my workmate that I did not know whether or not I was saved.

Unable to bear my despair any longer, I said to him, 'Ramsey, how can you say that you are saved while here on earth, when you could sin and sin again?' He turned once more to John chapter 5 verse 24, reading it over and over to me. 'Can you understand this?' he said, 'He that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life. "Hath" simply means to have. Eternal life is yours. You have it through faith in our Lord Jesus Christ and in Him alone'. Through every chapter of John's Gospel Ramsey showed me the truth of this, ending with John chapter 20 verse 31, 'But these are written, that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing ye might have life through his name'.

**I now also understood,
'For God so loved the world,
that he gave his only
begotten Son, that
whosoever believeth on him
should not perish, but have
(as a present possession)
everlasting life'.**

He needed to say no more. The joy that I had experienced that first day returned to my soul with the knowledge that eternal life was mine forever. In this confidence I am going on my way to heaven.



ANXIETY

**A Biblical Perspective, by
Andy Mullan, Birmingham**

Every year, it seems, a report comes out highlighting an increase in anxiety, stress, depression, or some other related condition. Whether these problems are on the increase, I cannot say, but I do know the reality and effect of anxiety upon daily life.

I also know that contrary to popular opinion, the Bible is a very relevant book. In this short article I aim to show that the message of the Bible - the gospel of Jesus Christ - is not only relevant but also essential in an individual's life. It, uniquely, gives a full and complete answer to life's problems. It does so because God, as our Maker, knows us better than we know ourselves, and always gets to the very root of our problems.

The therapies and treatments offered by professionals treat the physical and mental aspects of anxiety. When we turn to the Bible, and read what Jesus Christ said on

the matter in Luke chapter 12, we find He goes deeper and addresses a spiritual problem. He talks about the soul. That is the real you, the part that relates to God. In doing this He gives us a true perspective on life, death and the relationship that needs the most attention i.e., our relationship with God. When this relationship is wrong we are incapable of living as God intended. When we are forgiven and cleansed we enjoy salvation and the experience of peace and

Just at the moment of perceived fulfillment, he found out how futile and flimsy life was. God's verdict was, 'Thou fool! This night thy soul shall be required of thee. Then whose shall these things be?', Luke 12. 20.

We must learn that this life, and everything associated with it is transient. When we attach so much importance to this life, and expend so much energy in pursuit of fleeting dreams, it is no wonder we

'Thou fool! This night thy soul shall be required of thee. Then whose shall these things be?'

contentment. In the story in Luke chapter 12 we learn three lessons from the life of a rich farmer. This man had his own view of what life should be. He thought that working hard and saving hard to make life easier in the future was the only reality. I have no doubt that through all those years of hard work there were many moments of anxiety and stress. Why? Because the things of this life are fragile! Drought, political unrest, market volatility, and illness could bring all of his plans and dreams to a sudden end. However, we meet him when all the times of worry and stress are over. The moment has come when he can enjoy the fruits of his labour, but tragically that very night, he dies!

are anxious, for we know it could all vanish in a moment. We are no better than the rich farmer. The mistake the rich farmer made was to value this life more than his soul. Yet, when our bodies lie breathless, our souls go on into eternity to meet our Maker.

If God required your soul tonight, where would you be? Have you been saved or are you still a sinner? Ezekiel chapter 18 verse 4 clearly states God's righteous standard, 'The soul that sinneth it shall die'. If we were honest, we would agree this is what we deserve, and it should cause us concern.

WW1



LOVE YOUR ENEMIES

By Leslie Craig, Northern Ireland

When Jesus Christ taught His disciples to love their enemies it seemed so radical. The truth is that He was the only one who could live up to that principle perfectly!

As the world looks back over the hundred years that separate us from the horrors of the First World War, we are conscious that many nations who currently enjoy peace and friendship were once bitter enemies.

Stories are told of the bravery of soldiers during the long years of trench warfare. Battalions defended lines with their blood. Individuals ran the gauntlet of No Man's Land to bring back a fallen colleague. They considered no sacrifice too great to make for their own side.

In services of remembrance, the words of Jesus to His disciples are often quoted, 'Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay

down his life for his friends', John 15. 13. Yet, many fail to realize that Jesus did more than die for those who were at that time His friends, He also died for His enemies.

One can never imagine a soldier in wartime taking a bullet to protect an enemy. Imagine a soldier volunteering to cross the front line to die at the hands of the enemy so that the enemy might live. Yet, this is exactly what Jesus did.

The Bible makes it clear that all have sinned against God; this means we do wrong, break God's commandments and live for our own selfish aims. It also teaches that our sin puts us on the wrong side of the long war between Satan and God. Because of sin we are enemies of God. The power of Satan is a tyranny from which we cannot escape by our own strength. In fact it is a state that we don't always wish to leave since we naturally love our sin. Yet,

we know that sin is costly. Sin can cost us our friends, family, career, and even our health. But ultimately, sin will cost us our soul. There really is a place called Hell where souls who refuse the forgiveness of God will suffer forever.

God is so righteous that He cannot leave our sins unpunished. BUT God is so loving that He will not leave us without a way of escape. He makes an incredible display of love when He sends His Son, Jesus Christ, into the world to be the Saviour of sinners. He did this despite knowing how hostile the world would be to His Son.

With infinite love Jesus crossed the line into enemy territory. Offering Himself as their Saviour, He allowed them to beat and scourge Him. He was crucified by His enemies. Yet the Bible says He was also crucified for His enemies. He willingly accepted the wrath of God that should have fallen on a

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WHEN
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sinful world, so that through Him we might be saved.

When Christ died for our sins, He paid the ultimate price. When God raised Him from the dead He showed that Christ was sufficient to meet our need. The good news is that God offers everyone terms of peace and forgiveness.

We can be reconciled to God and brought into friendship with His Son. The terms are simple, yet many are reluctant to accept them. We must accept that we are guilty and powerless to save ourselves. We must surrender to God.



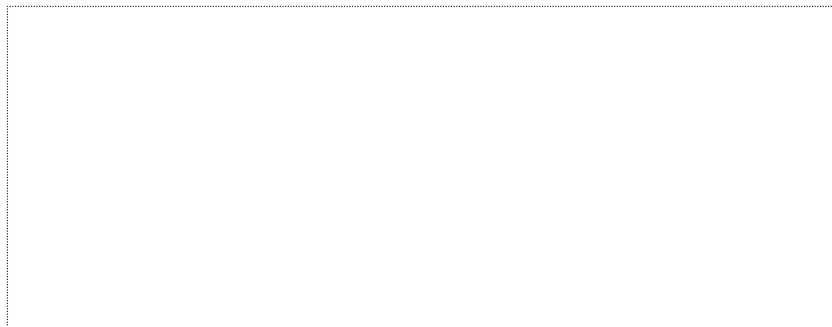
QUICK QUOTE

'He is no fool who gives what he cannot keep to gain that which he cannot lose.'

— Jim Elliot

What think ye of Christ?

This copy of *faithmatters* comes to you with the compliments of:



We hope you have enjoyed reading this pamphlet and that you will decide to read the Bible for yourself. We are not asking that you join a church, nor become 'religious' or turn over a new leaf, but that you find the Lord Jesus Christ as your personal Saviour and Friend. He can forgive your sins and assure you of peace in your life and a place in heaven.

If you do not have a Bible or New Testament of your own then do purchase one. They are available quite cheaply in most bookshops like Waterstones, or W. H. Smith, and in different versions to suit your reading taste.



Contact us through our website www.faithmatters.org.uk where you can access a digital version of this magazine, order a New Testament and other helpful booklets, read the Bible, and of course email us. Distributors can order the next issue there as well.

Look out for the next issue of *faithmatters* in late 2014, DV.