

### **332 The balancings of the clouds**

In the week before Easter this year, parts of central London were occupied by thousands of people protesting about climate change. This action was organised by a movement called Extinction Rebellion, which uses a logo of a symbolic hour-glass set within a circle representing the Earth; whether intentional or not by its designers, the logo can appear to be rather sinister from a Christian perspective.

Quoting some extracts from one of their leaflets about these protests, Extinction Rebellion calls for “International Rebellion against the criminal inaction on the climate and ecological crisis. We are facing an unprecedented global emergency. The Government has failed to protect us ... This is a total emergency. We demand a democracy fit to deal with this crisis”.

By means of their logo, publicity materials such as quoted above, and the widespread use of social media, large numbers of people duly turned out to block major road junctions and bridges in the middle of London for several days. They caused great inconvenience to the public, as they were keen to do; they severely overstretched police resources; they provoked politicians into “uttering many utterings” on the subject of climate change; and they gained constant exposure for their message on the television. From Extinction Rebellion’s point of view, the whole thing was a great success, and more such demonstrations are promised.

It is not our intention in this Reflection to weigh up the various rights-and-wrongs of what went on, though clearly this behaviour raises serious issues within contemporary society. These include the whole debate over climate change itself; the powerful role of social media in being able to rally large numbers of people, with “the authorities” lacking much control as events unfold; and the decision by Extinction Rebellion’s organisers to break the law by mass “sit-ins”, thus preventing other people from going about their lawful business.

As with any such issue over which people feel very strongly, in this case the concerns over climate change, some will support these protests and tactics, and others will not. But there is one feature of Extinction Rebellion’s approach which glaringly stands out from our Christian, biblical point of view: there is not the slightest whiff of a mention anywhere of Almighty God our Creator, nor of His Son Jesus Christ our Lord, the Agent of God’s creation. Here is Man up to his old tricks of totally ignoring Almighty God.

Yet what does the Lord tell us in His Word concerning Himself and His creation, which includes both this extraordinary planet Earth and all of us? “In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth ... And God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness: and let them have dominion ... over all the earth ... And God saw every thing that he had made, and behold, it was very good” (from Genesis 1.1,26,31, KJV). And again, regarding the Lord Jesus Christ, the Word – “All things were made by him; and without him was not any thing made that was made” (John 1.2; see also egs., I Corinthians 8.6 / Ephesians 3.9 / Colossians 1.16 / Hebrews 1.2).

In the Book of Job, we come across the same theme, as Elihu speaks powerfully to Job of all the glories of God’s sovereignty over His creation. There are dozens of such references, but we will refer to just one this time, due to its beautiful phrasing in the KJV - “Dost thou know the balancings of the clouds, the wondrous works of him which is perfect in knowledge?” (Job 37.16).

And of course the answer to that question, be it by Job, Elihu, the politicians, the Extinction Rebellion supporters or the rest of us, is a very simple, very humble “No”: despite our greater knowledge these days of some basic physical processes, Man in his unredeemed state has not a clue about “the balancing of the clouds” and all the other deep truths within God’s creation that that memorable phrase represents.

Whatever may be the issues confronting the human race, it is madness to blot out of the picture Almighty God Himself as our Creator, the promised, and surely imminent, return of Jesus Christ in power and glory, and our divinely-appointed stewardship of the planet under our Creator.

As we well know, the beginning of knowledge and wisdom is “the fear of the Lord” (Proverbs 1.8 / 9.10): an acknowledgement of our subservience to our Creator is just the start of human efforts to tackle contemporary problems. When it comes to climate change, let that subservience involve profound repentance for human abuse of the planet wherever this has occurred, with the seeking of God’s forgiveness through faith in Christ, and the following of His gracious guidance as we try to sort out the best ways forward.

Man can be as passionate as he likes about all sorts of causes, many of them worthy, but he remains a fool until he acknowledges our complete

dependence upon the One who created and upholds “the balancings of the clouds”.

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