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We are painfully aware that Britain is passing through times of tremendous political tension over the issue of “Brexit”. All of us, be we Christians or not, and be we “leavers” or “remainers”, will have our own opinions over what is going on and why, and what should be done to solve this unprecedented crisis. Meanwhile anger, contempt, hatred, mistrust, craftiness and wild language, plus frustration, weariness and apathy, are now commonplace, in parliament and in the country at large. Not surprisingly those of us bearing the name of Christ have a particular contribution to make in this crisis, rather as Paul found for himself during that amazing voyage recorded for us in Acts 27.

With our spiritual eyes open, we remember that we have identified in these Weekly Reflections over the months (now years!) that there are three main strands involved in “Brexit”. The first is the economic strand: this is emphasised by the Remainers, is currently given far the most prominence, and is clearly important, particularly in the short term as the country adjusts to the new economic challenges and opportunities that will presumably exist after Brexit.

The second is the constitutional strand (summed up in the “getting our country back” argument): this is emphasised by the Leavers and tends to be less “headline-grabbing” than the first strand, though in the longer term is obviously the more important of the two. There is no denying that the various governments of this nation over the past fifty years or so have given away great swathes of our nationhood to what is now the European Union, a giving-away that they had no right to do and should never have happened. The country is now having to wrestle with the consequences of that prolonged political folly.

Then we have the third, spiritual, strand, the least noticed but surely by far the most important. Britain, uniquely, still has an avowedly Protestant constitution. For many reasons, some no doubt related to our membership of the EU, this Protestant identity has been wilfully flouted for decades, from the House of Commons downwards. Numerous God-denying laws have been passed to which the Queen has granted the Royal Assent, (the justification for this being that constitutionally she was obliged to do so), thus repeatedly breaking her Coronation Oath (the text of which can be easily found via a search engine).

But that Coronation Oath matters, as a vital bulwark against sinful parliamentary conduct. Politicians, in their desire for popularity and

power, have repeatedly ignored it, thus obliging Her Majesty the Queen either to break her Coronation Oath by granting the Royal Assent to sinful laws, or to keep to her Oath, withhold the Royal Assent and then presumably watch the constitutional monarchy being brought to a swift end.

Is it any wonder that the result of such behaviour is the current widespread shambles? And is it any wonder that Almighty God, (who is rather keen that when such oaths are taken they are actually adhered to), regards this nation as being severely under His judgment? This may well explain in part why the nation is in such a bad state as at present: we are reaping what has been so assiduously sown over the decades and are now under divine judgment. Seen in these terms, the opportunity for Britain to leave the EU is a most gracious, though wholly undeserved, divine mercy.

We can assume therefore that there is a fierce spiritual battle going on “in the heavenlies” over the very spiritual heart of this nation (eg., Ephesians 6.12). Are we, or are we not, going to repent and return to “the God of our fathers” (as in Acts 7.32), as an unashamedly Christian, Protestant nation? – thereby leaving the Rome-inspired, humanist, EU super-state. Humanly speaking such a return is highly unlikely, but God is rich in mercy (Ephesians 2.4), with Him nothing is impossible (Matthew 19.26), and in view of our God-honouring constitution, we Christians can still surely lay a humble claim to God’s beautiful promise in II Chronicles 7.14.

So, keeping on “the whole armour of God” of Ephesians 6, we are to be “praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit” (6.18a), for God’s mercy on this nation in these dangerous days, as He graciously sees fit.

The issues are great and the struggles are fierce, but by God’s providence we are assured that our prayers do make a difference, and perhaps even a crucial difference (egs., Matthew 6.5-7 / Philippians 4.6-7 / I Thessalonians 5.17 / James 5.16).

God has richly blessed this nation, and other nations through this nation, over the centuries since the Reformation. Such divine blessings may well be granted again, but first, like that sinful son in Luke 15, our nation, led by our Queen and the religious and political leaders under her, must arise and go to God our Father and say unto Him, “Father, we have sinned against heaven and before thee ...”.

