

413 “Thou art worthy O Lord”

Unusually this week’s Reflection starts with some words copied from last week’s Reflection, which read like this – “We can foresee that the overcoming of Covid, assuming this happens, will be held up as a triumph of human ingenuity and endeavour, with not a mention of our dependence on Almighty God our Creator and Judge”.

“Lo and behold”, on Wednesday 2nd December Boris Johnson fell “kerflop” straight into this folly. He praised to the proverbial rafters “the scientists” for their splendid work in developing these anti-Covid vaccines, yet gave not a whisper of a mention of Almighty God our gracious Creator.

By complete contrast for example is the Holy Spirit-inspired, wonderful words of King David’s prayer, as he “blessed the LORD before all the congregation” (after the funding for Solomon’s future building of “the house of the LORD” was now in place (I Chronicles 29.1-9, then vss.10ff)). David’s prayer reads in part - “Blessed [be] thou, LORD God of Israel our father, for ever and ever. Thine, O Lord, [is] the greatness, and the power, and the glory, and the victory, and the majesty: for all [that is] in the heaven and in the earth [is thine] ... Now therefore, our God, we thank thee, and praise thy glorious name ... for all things [come] of thee, and of thine own have we given thee” (from vss.10-14, KJV).

What a marvel it would have been to hear such sentiments from the Prime Minister! But why does all this matter? It matters because uniquely this country has a full-blooded Protestant Christian constitution, epitomised in the words of the Queen’s Coronation Oath in 1953. This country has thus been “given much” by the Lord since the Reformation, and hence from this country “much shall be required” (from Luke 12.48, KJV).

But what we are seeing is a clash between this solid Christian constitution on the one hand, and unbridled “democracy” on the other. Almighty God is virtually ignored in political decision-making, anti-Christian laws are passed with a flourish, and any places of power that have been above and beyond democracy for centuries, such as the judiciary, the House of Lords and the monarchy itself, are increasingly vulnerable to the rising, fickle, democratic tide. This tide is in the hands of transient politicians, well-organised lobbyists and the “mainstream media” – hardly a recipe for the settled Christian government to which we are constitutionally committed.

Sadly therefore, again from last week concerning Covid-19 and the non-acknowledgement of Almighty God - "The reality will thus be only a human-wrought sticking plaster covering the wound of human sinfulness ... The divine warning (of this pandemic) will have been ignored, and the gross sins of people and nations will remain unaddressed".

King David was clearly well aware of the utter glory of God, as that prayer of blessing and his many psalms demonstrate. His prayer brings to mind the wonderful heavenly scenes described for us in Revelation Chapter 4, a few features of which we can pick out here, though it is of course well worth reading through in full. John, in exile on the island of Patmos "looked, and, behold a door having been opened in heaven". At once he "became in spirit" (from 4.1-2a, Literal), and was then shown wonderful sights.

He saw a throne set in heaven beneath an emerald-type rainbow, with an awesome Figure seated upon it who was "like a jasper and a sardius" (vv. 2-3). Surrounding the throne were 24 further thrones for 24 elders clad in white and wearing crowns of gold (v.4). Lightnings and thunders and voices came forth from the great throne; seven lamps of fire burned before it, "which are the seven Spirits of God" (v.5, and 5.6). There was a "sea of glass, like unto crystal", and four beasts "full of eyes before and behind", like a lion, a lamb, a man and a flying eagle (vv. 6-7). Each beast had six wings, with a second mention of their being "full of eyes within". These beasts never rest, leading the constant worship of Almighty God, and joined by the 24 elders casting their crowns before the throne: "Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty ... Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory and honour and power, for thou hast created all things, and for thy pleasure they are and were created" (vv.8-11).

Our only response is surely to join in spirit in this glorious heavenly scene ourselves! For, praise God indeed, this is still the constant scene in the heavenlies, with the Lamb, who we will hope to come on to next time, at the very heart of all the dramas (Chapter 5.6ff). This is not just an exciting vision for John from long ago; this is an exciting reality for us all right now!

So, Yes, we praise the scientists for their work; but Yes, we reserve 99.9% of the praise for the One sitting on that glorious heavenly throne above us, at this, and at every, moment.