

February 2017

Dear neighbours,

Cryonics is enough to make you weep. When a 14-year old terminally sick child appeals to the High Court for the right to allow her body to be frozen at death in the forlorn hope of being unfrozen to life again, and be made entirely better, it is such a sad, sad thing. Having lived so little, and longing for so much, how poignant that nobody could have told her that the truth lies so much nearer to hand. Indeed, the Lord has planted in the heart of everyone a desire to live for ever where everything is perfect, because there is a reality which answers to that hope. As with most things there is a counterfeit, or many substitutes, which have no basis in the reality of truth.

Counterfeit money makes your supply worthless if detected. Nowhere does acceptance of the counterfeit have such repercussions as when the issue is our personal, eternal destiny. If our core beliefs do indeed prove counterfeit it will most certainly be discovered. We have, of course, to weigh up whether the Lord Jesus Christ is to be believed, together with the Bible which reveals Him. The Bible describes Him as bringing God's purposes to mankind. The alternatives are the philosophies of perhaps the best of men, who are but men at best.

The reality is so simple. It delivers so much even if we have lived but little, for children may be saved. Jesus Himself said, "Suffer the little children to come unto me, and forbid them not, for of such is the kingdom of God. Verily, I say unto you, whosoever shall not receive the kingdom of God as a little child (that is, as trustingly as a child trusts) he shall not enter therein" (Mark 10.14-15).

Jesus expresses this straightforward reality, "This is the will of him that sent me, that of all which he hath given me I should lose nothing, **but should raise it up again at the last day**" (John 6.39). So emphatic is the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ, that He reaffirms it three more times in His teaching recorded in that chapter.

The Saviour also declared, as He prepared to raise Lazarus from the dead (evidence surely that resurrection is vested in Him), "I am the resurrection, and the life: he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live: and whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall never die. Believest thou this?" (John 11.25-26)

Of our heavenly Father He taught, "He is not a God of the dead, but of the living: for all live unto him" (Luke 20.38). In other words, life in the Father's kingdom, after our preparation in this world, is more alert and alive than in this, for it is unfettered by sin and mortality.

"Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved" (Acts 16.31) is certain and true. Trust in cryonics to achieve the same end and, I fear, it will prove but an illusion.

The Bible teaches throughout that at death our souls, our spirits if you like, return alive immediately to God. "Then (at dying) shall the dust return to the earth as it was: and the spirit shall return unto God who gave it" (Ecclesiastes 12.7). The soul does not die but live. When the Lord Jesus Christ returns to take His kingdom, then shall the souls of believers be wonderfully joined to their resurrected bodies again, without sin, to live triumphantly with Him for ever. There is no ceasing to exist.

Surely this is better than being kept on hold in ice.

The reality is, indeed, so simple but it is also demanding. Just as it was a mighty miracle for the Saviour to have been born of a virgin and unite in His mortal frame perfect Godhead and perfect manhood (the Saviour is described as, "the fullness of the Godhead bodily" in Colossians 2.9) so the Lord is prepared to perform another miracle at the His return to match up our souls with their dust and recreate our bodies in the power of resurrection. He is prepared to go so far as to raise all to face a final judgment on their lives, of which one example is "every idle word that men shall speak, they shall give account thereof in the day of judgment" (Matthew 12.36).

So the truth, should we be willing to receive it as truth, is demanding. To die the death of the righteous we need to be personally saved. We are happy as a church to talk about salvation and being saved,

for the message of Christmas, you recall, was “thou shalt call his name JESUS: for he shall save His people from their sins” (Matthew 1.21).

There are terrible words in the scriptures about Satan, the Father of lies and his counterfeits, of which 2 Thessalonians 2.10-11 may serve as an example. It is because the issues are so serious and the finality of the outcome irreversible that the language is so stern and unbending. The Bible exhorts us “let every man be fully persuaded in his own mind” (Romans 14.5), whatever the issue under consideration, for we shall stand as individuals without fellow human support at the bar of the Judge.

“Then shall that Wicked be revealed, whom the Lord shall consume with the spirit of his mouth, and shall destroy with the brightness of his coming: even him, whose coming is after the working of Satan with all power and signs and lying wonders, and with all deceivableness of unrighteousness in them that perish; because they received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved.” Thus 2 Thessalonians 2. 8-10.

But how reassuring to be grounded in the truth! When we take on board Bible truth, “the Spirit beareth witness with our spirit”, and when we put our trust in the Saviour the Spirit further “beareth witness with our spirit that we are the children of God” (Romans 8.16). Uncertainty of our eternal destiny surrounds the best of human ideas. This objective witness of the Holy Spirit, proceeding from the Father, through faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, gives an internal assurance, the genuineness of which the heart knows there is no need to deny.

It goes without saying, but I think I should say it, that you are very welcome to our Sunday services at 10.45am and 2pm. In the morning, passages from the Bible are explained. We are currently going through the Gospel according to Mark. In the afternoon the gospel of our Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ is always preached, and would be especially suitable for a seeker or someone setting out to renew their faith, perhaps after a number of years.

Yours affectionately,