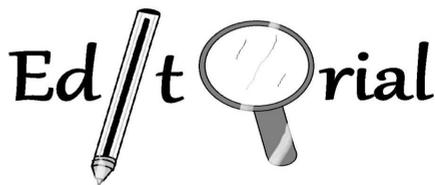


A few months ago a menu card was circulating in work for a staff member's leaving lunch. I'd been pondering one very tempting option when a colleague told me: 'Go on, Ian, you know it makes sense!' Often a little voice of our own will rationalise in just the same way, at times encouraging us to face our fears and take a courageous,

beneficial step, but at other

times endeavouring to lead us down a less wise or moral pathway. In times past, professing faith in Christ or even having an outer semblance of religion was more widely viewed as wise. Sadly, though, holding and adhering to Christian principles is increasingly derided and marginalized – 'a crutch for the feeble-minded' is how I have heard Biblical Christianity dismissed. Perhaps you are reading this article right now because a Christian friend passed this magazine to you. And you may be wondering, *are* the sceptics the sensible ones? In this editorial I want to consider 6 simple reasons why it *does* make sense to trust Christ, and to live for Him.



## *It Makes Sense*

**1. It makes sense to have debts dealt with.** Tackling the UK's budget deficit was a key issue in the last general election campaign. In our private lives, too, we understand that living beyond our means has consequences that eventually must be faced. Spiritually speaking every one of us is in a deficit situation, through our sins and the wrong choices we make, and we can do nothing to put things right for ourselves. But our loving Heavenly Father was 'not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance' (2 Peter 3:9) and so put in place a rescue plan that would cost the blood of His only Son on Calvary's hill. 'He paid a debt He did not owe / I owed a debt I could not pay / I needed Someone to wash my sins away.' Dying in our place on the cross, Jesus bore our punishment, that we might be free. Is your sin debt cleared? Or are you yet facing the consequences of your sins?

**2. It makes sense to flee from danger.** Growing up I can well remember my mother telling me to stay well away from hot pans, open fires and cliff edges, and generally to keep out of harm's way wherever danger was present. In the early 18<sup>th</sup> century Jonathan Edwards preached what is probably his most famous sermon, entitled 'Sinners in the Hands of an Angry God.' It was on a subject largely avoided nowadays – that of God's wrath against sin. 'Because there is wrath, beware lest he take thee away with his stroke: then a great ransom cannot deliver thee.' (Job 36:18) John the Baptist, the one sent in advance to bear witness of Christ, similarly warned of the need to 'flee from the wrath to come.' (Matt 3:7) And, in the final book of the Bible we read of those who cried on the mountains and rocks to fall on them, to hide them from the face of Him who sat upon the throne, in the 'great day of His wrath' (Rev 6:15-17). God will never turn a blind eye to unconfessed and unforgiven sin, but in love He now calls us to flee to Christ, in Whom we will surely find pardon, acceptance, mercy and favour. 'Seek ye the Lord while he may be found, call ye upon Him while He is near.' (Is 55:6)

**3. It makes sense to have an unfailing Friend and Guide.** How blessed is that man or woman who has a true, trusted friend – someone who, knowing the best and worst about them, stands by them through both thick and thin – challenging them when they are talking nonsense or behaving foolishly, yet comforting and encouraging them in their valley experiences. Yet the best of men are but men at best, and even our dearest and closest friends may disappoint or let us down. How different is the One of whom the hymn writer wrote: ‘Jesus knows all about our struggles / He will guide till the day is done / There’s not a Friend like the lowly Jesus / No, not one! No, not one!’ When you trust this Friend as Saviour, as a Christian you may be ridiculed, misunderstood or face persecution (2 Tim 3:12). Yet, whatever we may face, we will not face it alone, for in Jesus Christ we have a friend that sticks closer than a brother (Prov 18:24), who is the same yesterday, today and forever (Heb 13:8), and who will never leave nor forsake us (Heb 13:5). Negotiating the maze of modern life through studies, career, relationships, finance, setting up home and planning for the future, whilst at the same time avoiding the many inherent pitfalls, is no small ask. Why walk alone when Christ longs to walk alongside, and to guide us? As a modern songwriter has put it so succinctly: ‘I know that You will guide me through the maze / When I acknowledge You in all my ways’ (see Proverbs 3:6).

**4. It makes sense to prepare for a journey.** How many people hope to or desire to go to heaven one day, yet they never carefully read the Bible to ascertain what the entrance qualifications actually are. Would any wise traveller ever seek to enter another country without having first checked what the entry requirements are, lest they be turned back at the border post? Similarly, if we wish to enter the kingdom of heaven, we cannot dictate the terms and conditions, we either come by God’s appointed way, or we don’t come at all. The prophet of old clearly said ‘... *Prepare to meet thy God*’ (Amos 4:12). Do you have the right passport? Are you clothed in the spotless robe of Christ’s righteousness, received by faith when you come as a sinner to Him (Matt 22:11-13)? ‘I will greatly rejoice in the LORD, my soul shall be joyful in my God; for he hath clothed me with the garments of salvation, he hath covered me with the robe of righteousness, as a bridegroom decketh himself with ornaments, and as a bride adorneth herself with her jewels.’ (Is 61:10)

**5. It makes sense to have certainty amidst uncertain times.** The true story is told of a young man who once asked his pastor in exasperation: ‘What does God want from me?’ The pastor gave him this wise response: ‘God wants you to believe what He says – about the consequences of your sin, and about the availability of salvation in Christ.’ Teaching that Jesus is the only way to heaven and to God may not always be viewed as palatable in today’s world, but I am still glad that the Bible is a book of clarity, not ambiguity, and that it is able to bring certainty amidst uncertain times. “These things have I written unto you that believe on the name of the Son of God; that you *may know* that you have eternal life, and that you may believe on the name of the Son of God.” (1 John 5:13) The Bible’s message isn’t just a ‘hope so gospel’ – it is a ‘know so’ one!

Titus 1:2 assures us that “... God ... cannot lie” – so we can safely trust in every promise of His Word.

## **6. It makes sense to heed the one opinion which ultimately matters most.**

I recently heard how a lady who was concerned about her soul was dissuaded from coming to Christ by a comment from her own minister: 'Sure you're as good as anyone else – just forget about all that 'getting saved' nonsense.' How sad that a 'man of the cloth' should so dismiss Christ's words as 'nonsense.' A 'blind guide' (Matt 23:16) to whom Christ's words sadly apply: '... ye shut up the kingdom of heaven against men: for ye neither go in yourselves, neither suffer ye them that are entering to go in.' (Matt 23:13) Many turn back from coming to Christ because they fear the reactions of others. Do not let other people take you to hell. Sometimes we need to listen to our nearest and dearest, but in the matter of our soul's salvation we need to listen to Jesus. In His love for us He warns us. In His love He went to the cross for us. In His love He calls us to trust ourselves to Him. A day is coming when the opinions of mortal men will mean and matter nothing. On that great day when we stand before God and give an account of our lives to Him, He will not ask us what church or denomination we attended. He will ask us what we did with His Son – the Lord Jesus Christ – whether we accepted or rejected Him. On that choice hangs your eternal destiny, be it the delights of heaven, or the desolation of hell. Is your name written in the Lamb's book of life (Rev 21:27), that you may rest assured it is well with your soul?

In this editorial we have considered some things that make perfect sense in our day-to-day lives – yet which have even greater validity and importance in the realm of spiritual matters. Have you had your sin debt cleared, and fled from danger into the loving, open arms of the One Who will prove an unfailing Friend and Guide, not only through the ups and downs of life, but eventually through the very gates of heaven? Are you resting in the eternal certainty and security to be found in Christ, having heeded that voice which urges souls to come? If not, will you do so today? You have no sure guarantee of tomorrow. '*... Behold, now is the accepted time, now is the day of salvation.*' (2 Cor 6:2)