

Prayer of the Month • February 2018

Lord Jesus Christ,
alive and at large in the world,
help me to follow and find you there today,
in the places where I work,
 meet people,
 spend money,
 and make plans.

Take me as a disciple of your kingdom,
to see through your eyes,
and hear the questions you are asking,
to welcome all others with your trust and truth,
and to change the things that contradict God's love,
by the power of the cross
and the freedom of your Spirit.

A Matter of Life and Death / J. V. Taylor, 1914–2001

This is a very practical prayer, not high-flown but down-to-earth, thinking about the places where I work'. John Taylor prays for the ability to see through God's eyes and to hear what God is asking, a challenging thought, and likely to knock us out of complacency. The prayer acknowledges that what can be achieved can only be achieved by the power of the cross and in the freedom of the Spirit.

John Vernon Taylor was born on 11 September 1914, and educated at St Lawrence College, Trinity College, Cambridge, St Catherine's Society and Wycliffe Hall at Oxford, and the Institute of Education. His father had been bishop of Sodor and Man from 1943 to 1954. John Taylor was ordained in 1938, and became a curate in Liverpool Diocese, before moving to Mukono, Uganda, where he worked as a missionary in theological education. He returned to England in 1954 and worked for the International Missionary Council. Then in 1959 he became Africa Secretary of the Church Missionary Society, and in 1963 he became General Secretary of the Society. He served as Bishop of Winchester from 1974 to 1984. Coming from a low church background, when first consecrated he refused to wear a mitre, asking that it be carried in front of him on a cushion, which caused some amusement. Thereafter he reverted to custom and wore it. He campaigned vigorously against the *Book of Common Prayer* and in favour of the *Alternative Service Book*. He caused a stir by suggesting that a service to be said after abortion should be added to it. His best-known books are *The Go-between God* (1972) and *The Christlike God* (1992). He died on 30 January 2001.

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