

CHRISTIAN WATCH

A PROTESTANT BIBLICAL WITNESS

“And what I say unto you

I say unto all, Watch”

Mark 13:37

NEWSLETTER

JANUARY 2011

January 2011

CHRISTIAN WATCH

To all Christian Watch Members

Dear Friends,

Another year has now passed and our merciful Lord God has spared our unworthy lives, thus enabling us, we trust, to continue in our endeavours to promote His Word and cause by earnestly contending for the faith once delivered. The devil and his agents are increasingly active in promoting their cause and often shame those of us who profess to be the followers of the Lord - by our silence. We are increasingly conscious of the need for the Lord to bestow upon us wisdom, guidance and above all, His grace, that we may do and say that which will be to His honour and glory and to the benefit of our Members and also ultimately to the nations in which they reside.

There are various signs that we are living in what the Scriptures describe as the 'last days'. Irreligion and false religion are gaining ground and how many of us have cause to bemoan that we do not feel as close to the Lord as once we did. Where is the godly conversation that then was the delight of our hearts and minds? We prove incapable for the most part of meditating upon the Word of God, without some worldly thought or other concern, entering into our minds.

We feel particularly concerned for those faithful servants of our Lord, who labour in the ministry of the Word of God, often travelling many miles to do so. There is in our day little evident fruit to encourage them, however we must always remember the Lord has promised, "*So shall my word be that goeth forth out of my mouth: it shall not return unto me void, but it shall accomplish that which I please, and it shall prosper in the thing whereto I sent it.*" Isaiah 55:11. How vitally important it is for us to pray to the Lord to reveal to us His will concerning our commitments and undertakings, otherwise we labour in vain and spend our strength for naught.

The first article in this Newsletter is entitled, **FIRST THINGS FIRST** by A. W. Pink in which he deals with the importance of putting 'first things first', that the Lord may have the rightful place in our lives. He emphasises that this is more than we by our nature can undertake and therefore how we need the grace of God in our hearts to do it. What wisdom, grace and assistance we constantly need from the Lord to enable us to live as a light that shines forth in this dark and evil world to His honour and glory.

The importance of us living and conducting all our affairs in accordance with the Word and Commandments of our God cannot be over emphasised, if we are to be favoured with His blessings. The Scriptures most clearly tell us that one of the warning signs that the end of the world is drawing near is when there is a spiritual falling away. And, are we not witnessing this in a number of religious denominations who have maintained a scriptural position over many centuries? Our Established Church of England is a prime example of this, causing many to have troubled consciences over its various departures from the laws of God. One such person is the Rt. Revd. Dr. J. Barry Shucksmith, Royal Navy (Rtd), who is a valued Member of Christian Watch. He has kindly prepared an article for us, which we include under the title, **CHRISTIAN MINISTRY IN THE 21st CENTURY** with the sub-heading "**Should women hold office as Pastors, Teachers or Bishops?**" This article clearly contends for the scriptural position that was established and confirmed by the Lord himself when He called only males to discipleship. This does not belittle our sisters in Christ, who are given particular areas of responsibility, as defined in the Word of God.

One of the main causes of our country's decline is our failure to maintain a scriptural standard in virtually every aspect of our national life. More importantly, our personal spiritual health depends to a substantial degree upon our knowledge and understanding of the Holy Word of God. We are exhorted to search the scriptures. In John 5:39 we read, '*Search the scriptures; for in them ye think ye have eternal life: and these are they which testify of me*'. One of our supporters, Dr. Peter Trumper, who is a retired Minister of the

Gospel, has devoted countless hours of his time to produce six beautifully bound volumes, elaborating all the books of the Bible in such a way as to assist and encourage both younger and older friends to search and more readily understand their Bibles. Each section is followed by a series of questions to assist in applying the mind and memory to the portions of scripture read. In his desire to further promote God's Holy Word, Dr Trumper is willing to send one or more of the volumes detailed upon receipt of a donation.

We include a review of a book entitled, **Son of Hamas** by Mosab Hassan Yousef, who is the eldest son of Sheikh Hassan Yousef, the founding leader of Hamas, which is internationally recognised as a terrorist organisation and responsible for countless suicide bombings and other deadly attacks against Israel. Ron Brackin, who is an investigative journalist, has also contributed to the text, having travelled extensively in the Middle East.

The book gives a most remarkable account of how the Lord worked in the heart of Mosab, during the most frightening circumstances, to bring him to know the evil of the organisation to which he was attached and to illuminate his heart and mind with the precious truths of a real gospel religion. It was the message of the Lord Jesus Christ, '*Love your enemies*' which the Lord used to set him free from the bondage of a false religion. He tells how his new relationship with the Lord was the source of his freedom and the key to the new life he now lives in America.

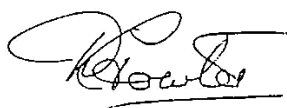
We are pleased and thankful for the many events and references that have, and are, taking place to celebrate the 400th anniversary of the King James AV Bible. A survey conducted in the UK by the King James Bible Trust, and reported in the Daily Mail, exposed the current level of ignorance that exists concerning the AV. It revealed that over half of our young people had not heard of the King James Bible. Fifty-one percent of people under 35 years did not know what the Authorised Version was, compared with twenty-eight percent of people over 55. We hope and pray the Lord will use the publicity which is taking place during this year to give many people throughout the world an interest which may constrain them to read and search the Scriptures.

There are various events taking place in the world, which only the mighty hand of God can bring about, such as the terrible floods and earthquakes. We include detailed information about these under the title, **No 'Coincidence' With God**, by Robert McCurry. It is extremely important for us to familiarize ourselves from the Word of God concerning the events which we are told will take place prior to the Lord's return. The Gospel of Mark chapter 13 details many of them and warns us to take heed to ourselves and to be watchful concerning the unfolding of the signs given.

We wish to thank all those who have renewed their Membership with us for another year and also acknowledge with grateful appreciation the many who have included a donation in support of our witness. This is particularly helpful in consideration of the increase in postage costs. May we remind those of our Members who as yet have not returned their Membership Renewal Form that payment is now overdue.

May the rich blessings of our kind and gracious Lord God be experienced by us each as we proceed into another year and whilst the future often appears perplexing, may we ever remember, our God omnipotent reigneth.

Yours, in the Lord's service,



David Crowter

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FIRST THINGS FIRST

A.W. Pink – 1886-1952

The dawning of a new year is a fresh call unto each of us to put first things first, and it is only by heeding this call that we are prepared to start it aright. The greatest tragedy of life is that the vast majority of our fellows are dissipating their energies on secondary things, spending their strength for that which satisfies not. Alas, how much time have we wasted in the past! But a new year affords us another opportunity to mend our ways: how much of it, then, are we going to improve and conserve for eternity? The answer to that question will be determined by how far we put first things first.

It is one thing to recognise and realise that it is both our duty and wisdom to put first things first, and quite another to actually do so. It is much to be thankful for when light from above makes plain the path wherein we should walk—yet something more than illumination is required in order for us to traverse the same. Strength, power, enablement, is indispensable—and that we have not by nature. Have we not already been made painfully aware of this fact? Then have we humbly acknowledged it to God, and sought from Him fresh supplies of grace? Let us say with Jehoshaphat, when the enemies of Israel assembled against them, “O our God, wilt Thou not judge them? for we have no might against this great company that cometh against us: neither know we what to do: but our eyes are upon Thee” (2 Chron. 20:12).

What is it to put first things first? **First** and supremely to give God Himself His rightful place in our lives and render to Him that which is His due. “Thus saith the LORD the King of Israel, and his Redeemer the LORD of hosts: I am the first, and I am the last” (Isa. 44:6). The great “I am” is self-existent and self-sufficient. Because He is the First, He should be first served. The world had its beginning from Him; we had ours, and therefore at the beginning of the year, and of each day, it deeply concerns us to take Him along with us. God is the sum of all excellence, being inexpressibly blessed in Himself. How He should attract us! God is possessed of infinite benevolence, which is guided by unerring wisdom, and He has all-mighty power at His disposal. What an Object for our most fervent affections! Shall, then, every glittering toy become a rival to this transcendently glorious Being and rob Him of our hearts?

Let us form the habit (if we have not already done so) of directing our first conscious thoughts unto Him who has preserved us through the night. Begin the day by definitely bringing the Lord God before your heart, contemplate His wondrous attributes, prostrate your soul before Him in worship, adore Him for His glorious perfections. Say with holy David, “My voice shalt Thou hear in the morning, O LORD; in the morning will I direct my prayer unto Thee” (Psa. 5:3). Nor will this be either difficult or irksome if we turn the eyes of our souls unto Him: it is beholding the beauty of the Lord which puts in tune the strings of our harps, and enables us to make melody in our hearts unto Him. Nor is this all: by doing obeisance we promote obedience. By solemnly paying homage to God and rendering to Him the honour which is due His great name, we strengthen the obligations that we lie under to observe His statutes and keep His commandments. By our humble and frequent adoration of His perfections, conformity to His will, will be easier, for His authority over us will be more strongly felt.

“Seek ye first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added unto you” (Matt. 6:33). God is to be given the preference above all others. Let not any business prevent our seeking communion with Him nor hinder the maintenance of it. There are many things we would like to do, but other things deter us. We wish to visit a dear friend, but the pressure of other concerns thwarts us. But this must never be

the case with our seeking unto God: that is the “one thing needful” to which everything else must be made to give way. It is not at all necessary to our highest good that we be great in the world or advance our estate in it to such and such a pitch—but it is absolutely essential that we obtain God’s favour and keep ourselves in His love. No worldly business whatsoever can serve to excuse our attendance upon God; nay, the more important our worldly business be, the more need have we to apply ourselves to God by prayer for His help in and blessing upon it. The closer we keep to God in prayer, the more likely are our affairs to prosper.

Second, to yield ourselves up unreservedly to God. Of the Corinthian saints we read that they “first gave their own selves to the Lord” (2 Cor. 8:5), which should be done by us at the beginning of each day. This means that they (1) gave their hearts to Him, being won by His loveliness; that they (2) surrendered their wills to Him, to be governed by Him; that they (3) devoted their lives to Him, seeking His honour and glory. “In the way of Thy judgments, O LORD, have we waited for Thee; the desire of our soul is to Thy name, and to the remembrance of Thee. With my soul have I desired Thee in the night; yea, with my spirit within me will I seek Thee early” (Isa. 26:8, 9). Our desire must be not only towards the good things that He gives, but towards God Himself—His favour and love, the manifestation of His name to us, and the influences of His grace upon us. Our wills are to be surrendered to God, as the servant is yielded to his master’s pleasure, in everything consulting his desires and interests. God’s will is to be our sole rule, His precepts the regulator of all we engage in. Our lives are to be devoted to His glory: acknowledging Him in all our ways, following Him fully as Caleb did.

Third, to keep our hearts with all diligence (Prov. 4:23). It is not enough that our outward conduct be proper—the springs from which it issues must be right. “Cleanse first that which is within the cup and platter, that the outside of them may be clean also” (Matt. 23:26). The stream itself cannot be sweet if the fountain-head be foul. A corrupt tree will not bear wholesome fruit. Alas, how widely neglected is this inward cleansing! How generally is external reformation substituted for internal mortification. And why is this? - because we are far more concerned about the approval of our fellow-creatures than we are to obtain the approbation of our Creator. Our actions come beneath the gaze of man, but the springs from which they proceed are under the scrutiny of God. He who “weigheth the spirits” (Prov. 16:2) demands purity of heart. We are required to judge the motives which actuate us, to make conscience of evil lustings and vain imaginations, to take ourselves to task for wandering thoughts when engaged in Divine worship.

Fourth, to manifest godliness in the family circle: “let them learn first to show piety at home” (1 Tim. 5:4). Here is another God-appointed “first” which is most necessary for us all to heed - but we would specially press it upon the attention of those who are so anxious to engage in what they term “service for the Lord.” The “service” which God requires from all of His people is not a running about here and there, asking impertinent questions of total strangers and prattling to them about Divine things, but to be in subjection to Himself, to walk obediently to His Law. To talk to people about Christ is far easier than the task He has assigned—to deny self, take up our cross, and follow Him. Actions speak louder than words: it is by our conduct we are to make manifest whose we are. Christians are to “show forth” by their lives (rather than tell forth with their lips) “the praises of Him who has called them” (1 Peter 2:9). And they are “first to show piety at home,” then in the Church, and then in the world, for if there be no piety in our home life, then all our seeming piety in the Church and before the world is only hypocrisy.

CHRISTIAN MINISTRY IN THE 21st CENTURY SHOULD WOMEN HOLD OFFICE AS PASTORS, TEACHERS, OR BISHOPS?

A fresh appreciation in the light of contemporary church disorder

Rt Revd Dr J Barry Shucksmith Royal Navy (Rtd)

Can women be ordained to Christian ministry? Should they be bishops or hold office as pastor/teachers in the 21st century? These and many other related questions, are being asked and acted upon in an increasingly fluid, controversial, and divisive atmosphere within the professing Christian Church. The practice of ordaining women for Christian ministry has occurred at the same time as a growing concern to ensure equality and rights in today's liberal and so-called progressive society. Are we to follow the politically-correct agenda of the 21st century, or the clear teachings of the entirely trustworthy and final authoritative Word of the Living God? Today, too many decisions are taken, not on the basis of Revealed Truth, but in respect of expediency, function, and worldly approval. This is not the way to obtain God's blessing. 2 Timothy 3:12-17 must remain the Christian's fundamental charter. It must also be the unshakeable ground upon which the Christian Church, seeking first almighty God's approval, takes its stand and builds its edifice, to His glory alone (Ephesians 4:1-16; and 5:20-27).

The influence of the Church of England - not a model for faithful Christian Churches

Without doubt, the change from a male-only ordained ministry has been driven forward by the Established Church of England. Due to the support of many evangelicals within the National Church, some evangelical nonconformists are confused and could be in real danger of adopting a politically-correct agenda. Without evangelical support in the Established Church, the contemporary innovations would not have been possible. The Synod of the Church of England voted to allow women's ordination in November 1992. In 1966, An Archbishop's Commission published WOMEN AND HOLY ORDERS. A narrow majority of the Anglican Consultative Commission gave support for the Bishop of Hong Kong to ordain two women deacons as presbyters in April 1977. When eventually consulted, 30 of the 43 dioceses of the Church of England passed 'no fundamental objections in all three Houses' (laity, clergy, bishops) for the ordination of women, although there was significant opposition from Anglo-Catholics and a few conservative evangelicals. The legislation for General Approval came in July 1983. But things grind slowly in the Church of England. Over the next decade the debate continued.

The final approval to ordain women to the presbyterate

When the General Synod met for the Final Approval in York, July 1992, any house could still by simple majority have stopped the legislation. By the time of the next Synod, 11 November, 1992, proponents and opponents alike expected it to go down. Such were the figures, if only two of the House of Laity had voted against, there would have been no Final Approval. However, the Church of England, under the enthusiastic leadership of Archbishop Carey, (a strong supporter of the ordination of women), became a different institution through that cliffhanging decision of 11 November 1992 to proceed. Strangely, George Carey, a professing evangelical, had actually argued that there is a parallel between the call and admission of the Gentiles, and the call and admission of women presbyters. He seemed to seriously overlook that the first was given by special revelation to Apostles, the latter by authority of General Synod – for whom apostolic authority appears often to be a negotiable matter! Sadly, "Royal Assent was given on 5th November 1993 and the Synod met for one day, on 22nd February 1994, to promulgate the Canon and let

the ordinations begin. Which they did." (Bishop Colin Buchanan; Taking the long view – Three and a half decades of General Synod; Church House Publishing; 2006).

The rest is history, as is the growing aggressive secularism of our Nation. So is Pope Benedict's lifeline to Anglo-Catholics, the secession of hundreds of clergy, the departure of numerous lay people to other communions, and the subsequent relaxation of attitudes towards practising homosexuality. Now, pressure is building for the recognition of ordained "gay" clergy, for gay bishops in the Church of England, and for full recognition of civil partnerships (the Bishops of the Church of England did not oppose the Government on the introduction of civil partnerships). It seems now, one politically-correct decision taken to ordain women, has given credibility to a supposed biblical support for practising homosexuals as well. Both are dealt with in the First Corinthian Epistle. If Paul is "culturally-conditioned" on women-preachers, he must be on homosexual relationships? So the argument goes. Of course, God rejects all forms of immorality – practising homosexuality is just one deviation from God's plan for sex within marriage (1 Corinthians 6:9-20). Any professing Christian church rejecting this - not only the Church of England and the Worldwide Anglican Communion - will find itself in disarray and meltdown. The wisdom of God's command is absolute and should be obeyed.

"...that I write unto you are the commandments of the Lord" (1 Corinthians 14:37)

The introduction of unbiblical practices appears to have brought the Lord's hand of judgment upon the State Church and, despite protests to the contrary; the future does not fare well for Establishment Christianity. The move towards women bishops, which slices through to the very heart of the biblical Headship principle, will promote further serious fracture, decisive secessions of laity and clergy, and an alien atmosphere for Christian mission and church growth. To achieve their liberal and innovative agenda, the revisionists will need to re-write the whole Bible, a substantial part of which they are already on the way to accomplishing, particularly in the USA. At least, they should have the integrity to concede, this is not original biblical Christianity.

There are also increasing financial problems looming for the dioceses, and amalgamation of parishes, even some dioceses, are under serious discussion. However, the words of James Hudson Taylor, founder of the China Inland Mission, come to mind... "God's work, done in God's way, never lacks God's supply." The Apostle Paul is unequivocal. In his debate on the place of women in public ordained ministry, "**I write unto you...the commandments of the Lord.**" (1Corinthians 14:33-40). Continuing disobedience to the Word of the Lord, brings it own notable retribution.

The biblical background – some issues considered

It is difficult to write on these issues. Those who oppose any change to the biblical teaching, as it has been for two thousand years, are accused of being misogynists or dinosaurs. We are often presented as harsh and difficult people, with a hatred of women. We are accused of undermining the worth and importance of women, even denying their legal rights. Such arguments carry little weight. Not everyone can be or should be ordained. It is not only women. There are also men who have no call in this matter. Are they denied their rights, their worth, or their abilities? But women are good at pastoral and preaching/teaching ministry, exclaims another! If women can do the job equal to (or perhaps even better than) men, why deny the church their unique contributions? Why indeed?

Few doubt the ability of women to do the work of an ordained minister. However, if ability is the sole criteria, the church will be plunged into an even deeper confusion. There are thousands in all walks of life, who have the ability to make valued contributions, but who are denied doing so because it is neither lawful nor appropriate. What about Bank Managers offering work to gifted criminals, wives employing successful prostitutes for their husbands, or mothers engaging skilled paedophiles to care for their children? The thought is ridiculous, if not offensive.

Live not by bread alone, but by every word which proceeds from the mouth of God

For the Christian, ability and rights can never be the ultimate test of anything. The faithful child of God will always ask, "What does the Word of God say?" Samuel, a devoted servant of the Lord, sets the standard. He said, to the compromised and disobedient King Saul, "Hath the Lord as great delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices, as in obeying the voice of the Lord? Behold, **to obey is better than sacrifice**, and to hearken than the fat of rams." (1 Samuel 15:22). Regrettably, obedience to Holy Scripture is often the last thing considered today. And, yet, Jesus Himself said... "**Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God**" (Matthew 4:4).

The devil did not like the answer given then, and he has not stopped opposing the Lordship of Jesus Christ today. Those women who claim to have 'been led by the Lord to be ordained,' or called 'to be pastors and teachers,' should test their experiences by the authority of God's Written Word. How we "feel" or "think," is not paramount in matters of doctrine. Indeed, where it is, it becomes fanaticism. The articles of the Church of England warn against this, in respect of salvation (Art.18). What almighty God says must be the final word, even if it clashes with 21st century culture. The apostle Peter wrote, indicating he would rather affirm the authority of God's Word, than his own unique personal experience of the Transfiguration. "This voice which came from heaven we heard, when we were with him (Jesus) in the holy mount. We have also **a more sure word of prophecy**; where unto ye do well that ye take heed." (2 Peter 1:18-19). Can anything further be said about these thorny matters?

Women and prophecy in the New Testament

In 1 Corinthians, there is mention of women being involved in a ministry of prophecy. We should not allow this to cloud the issue of headship, or ruling/teaching in the Christian Church today. The canon of scripture is complete. The giving of final Revelation has taken place. If we do not maintain this, we will have to recognise Mormonism, Islam, and other extra-biblical religions, as authentic and on a par with Christianity. It leaves us free to create any new religion, suitable for the times in which we live!

By its very character the ministry of prophecy, being one of the initial gifts of the Holy Spirit (charismata) was of an intermittent nature. 1 Corinthians precedes the more settled and later revelation of the Pastoral Epistles. The exercise of prophecy did not give authority to lead, or teach as an ordained minister, in the congregation. It certainly did not bestow the office of eldership. The term prophet was descriptive of function not office. Indeed, prophecy and teaching are consistently distinguished in the New Testament. One commentator has written, "*In the pastoral epistles, teaching appears to be an authoritative function concerned with the faithful transmission of apostolic doctrine or tradition and committed to men specifically chosen.*" (2 Timothy 1:13-14; 2:1-2; 1 Timothy 3:2; 5:17; Titus 1:9). It is within this context that the specific prohibition of 1 Timothy 2:12 must be understood. (Church Society; The Ordination of Women to the Priesthood: does it Accord with Scripture; 1990).

The ordination of women undermines the sufficiency of scripture

According to the teaching of the Bible, only men can be admitted into the office of a presbyter/bishop, which includes not only authority to teach, but also to rule. In the Patriarchal period, men acted as the fathers of the heads of their families. This involved the responsibility of functioning as priests to other men and women. During the Mosaic period, the posterity of Levi, acted as priests, leaders, and representatives in all cultic affairs. Our Lord Jesus Christ did not appoint female apostles. While showing deep respect and love for women, and willingness to receive their unquestioning devotion, he gave no position of prominence to a woman. Even Mary his mother was committed, from the cross, to the care and oversight of a man – the Apostle John.

New Testament practice is entirely consistent with the Old Testament revelation. In the Pastoral Epistles (1 and 2 Timothy, and Titus) clear rules are laid down for the qualifications

of a pastor/elder. Being male is one very important aspect of several other necessary qualifications. In 1 Corinthians 14, Paul speaks of serious disorder and confusion in the Corinthian Church. The disorder is this – women are speaking in the congregation and overriding the headship principle. Please take note, the verses about “women keeping silent in the churches” is not a blueprint by Paul’s hand to be silent in every situation. It is the important recognition of the creation order of headship, both for the gathered church and within the family. Many ministries are open to women, the ordained pastor/teacher is not one of them, if the Bible is to be taken seriously.

This is re-stated more fully in 1 Timothy 2:8-15. To those who say, “Paul is prejudiced. This is his personal opinion which can be ignored,” 1 Corinthians 14:37, is vitally significant. ***“If any man think himself to be a prophet, or spiritual, let him acknowledge that the things that I write unto you are the commandments of the Lord”***. To ignore the words of an Apostle, commissioned by the Lord Jesus Christ to be the vehicle of an infallible revelation, is to set about constructing a new religion.

The roles of men and women in Home and Church are permanent

Sometimes women, and their supporters, bring forward Galatians 3:28 as closure to the argument. *“There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female: for ye are all one in Christ Jesus.”* Those who wish to be faithful to the teaching of Scripture on male leadership, do not deny the equality of women. In matters of salvation we are entirely equal. We are also created as different. We are not called to be competitive but to engage in complementary roles. There is a headship role which is God-given. The female is formed after the male to be “an help meet for him” (Genesis 2:18). An ordered relationship is indicated. The man names his wife, implying a special responsibility for her. It is also essential to notice this is recorded before the fall narrative of Genesis 3. The Old Testament nowhere teaches the inferiority of women. Neither does Galatians 3:28 teach that the distinctions of race, social rank, or sex are obliterated in Christ.

Fundamentally, there is a headship principle to be upheld in the home and in the church. This is dealt with in 1 Corinthians 11:2-16, and 1 Timothy 2:9-15, as already noted. In both cases, authority is the real issue. Paul teaches a divine order of creation. If we ignore this, confusion and disorder will result. However, it is clear from Titus 2:3 that women are expected to teach one another. Also, to some extent all believers share the task of teaching and admonishing one another (Colossians 3:16 and 1 Thessalonians 4:18; 5:11-14). This is not in an official capacity, within the public worship meetings of the Church.

1 Timothy 2:12 definitely says “women must not exercise authority over men.” Authority (authentein) means not having authority. It cannot mean, as some suggest, a reference to women not being “domineering” over men. Having authority and domineering are completely different things. A military commander has considerable authority, but he does not domineer his troops, otherwise he would not achieve the desired end. An army functions by recognising equality and the value of all its personnel. While some take a recognised lead, in order to achieve success, others submit to obedience of the leadership shown, to reach the desired objective. Such is Paul’s argument in 1 Corinthians, chapters 12-14, with respect to the whole body of Christ – the Christian Church. We are all equal but we have many different roles and functions.

Subjection, an indispensable blessing to the Christian Church

It is the same within the context of the family. Not just Paul but Peter brings forward the same principle (1 Peter 3:1). The principle stands even where a Christian woman is married to an unbelieving man. “Likewise, ye wives, be in subjection to your own husbands.” The problem for modern woman is her failure to understand “subjection.” “Subjection” is perceived to be something oppressive, undesirable, and not in keeping with our understanding of “the rights and freedoms of women”. But all Christians are called to a spirit of humble subjection, for the good of the family, and for the greater benefit of the

church (Ephesians 5:21-24). Where the issue is one between husband and wife, the command is for the man to love his wife, not to oppress her (Ephesians 5:28). Yet, willing submission is a visible expression of Christ's love for the church and it is intended to be a mark of our love for Him.

Jesus leads the way and He models humble submission

For those who see subjection as something to be vigorously removed from the Marriage Service (Book of Common Prayer) or from the pages of Holy Scripture, because it is antiquated, oppressive, and not in keeping with our contemporary society – something below the dignity and worth of a human being – long and prayerful reflection needs to be given to Luke 2:51. In order to achieve perfectly the will of His Father, to increase in wisdom and stature, and in favour with God and man, and to accomplish our salvation, Jesus subjected Himself to sinful human beings, to Mary and Joseph.

The danger of rejecting a headship principle in home or Church

Some Christians are willing to accept the principle of male headship within the family but not within the Christian Church. This breeds even more confusion. Seriously, it introduces irrationality into the debate. We can imagine a home where a man is married to a woman who is also an ordained minister. There are cases where this is already the situation. In the home they practise the headship principle. When the husband attends church, he submits himself to his minister, who happens also to be his wife. So his views on headship must change as he enters and leave his front door. The practice is without logic or consistency, particularly for the children who, presumably, are being brought up "In the fear and admonition of the Lord" (Ephesians 6:1-4).

There is a much bigger question altogether. Christ is still subject to an order of precedence, as is the Holy Spirit, within the Glorious Trinity. In our Lord's case, he is second in order, in the Divine Godhead. Now, adherence to the Biblical doctrine of the Trinity has been the historic test for orthodox Christianity. Not one of the persons in the Godhead tries to usurp the role of either of the other two. The denial of the headship principle will not only bring down family and church, it will impinge upon our understanding of a God who is One and Three-In-One. This is now a reality. God is already being called and treated as "mother." Yet, Jesus taught us to pray, "Our **Father** which art in Heaven." New Age religion has invaded orthodoxy via female priesthood, and the deviation will become much more severe. It would be tragic indeed, if evangelical nonconformity takes the same path.

To sum up, some words of a liberal Bultmannian scholar, turned biblical evangelical, are worth quoting:

"Let us reverse course, if we are headed in the wrong direction. Let us ask God to show us our error. The error can at first be minor indeed but it gradually comes to light that we have struck out in the wrong direction – here a couple of statements, now a reservation, the acceptance of a few critical thoughts which suggest themselves as answers to problems which we have, or we have been talked into having. Suddenly the Bible is for us no longer entirely the sacred word of the living God" (E.Linnemann, Historical Criticism of the Bible; Baker; London; 1990).

"To the canonical Scriptures alone I owe agreement without dissent," says Augustine. "My conscience is captive to the Word of God," cries Martin Luther. Martin Anstey writes, "the primary qualification demanded in the reader of the Bible is not scholarship but surrender, not expert knowledge but willingness to be led by the Spirit of God." Perhaps, the old puritan John Trapp is the shortest and most reliable of all commentators. "Where the Scripture hath no tongue, we must have no ears."

Note: God willing, in our February Newsletter, we shall include a scriptural reflection, by the Rt. Rev. Shucksmith, on the place and responsibility of women in the Church.

BOOK REVIEWS:

'Search the Scriptures' John 5:39

An Opportunity to study God's Word in depth

The importance of a gracious familiarity with the Holy Word of God cannot be over emphasised, if we desire to live our lives in accordance with the revealed will of God. It is alone by so doing, with the aid of the Holy Spirit, that we shall 'bear the image of the heavenly' (1Cor.15:49) by our conduct and conversation.

In order to assist those who desire to gain a more detailed knowledge and understanding of the Scriptures, the retired pastor and minister of the Gospel, Dr. Peter Trumper, has continued doing the Lord's work in his senior and infirmed years, by writing a detailed elaboration on all the books of the Bible from Genesis to Revelation. It is done in a way of explanation that both young and older people will be able to follow. Each section is followed by a series of questions (6,250 in all) to enable the reader to assess the benefits acquired from the studies undertaken.

The complete set consists of six volumes, each beautifully bound in laminated hard covers and with maps, charts, illustrations and photographs to assist people in their studies.

Volumes cover Bible books as follows:

- THE GOD OF TRUTH** - Genesis to Deuteronomy (368 pages)
- THE VIEW FROM NEBO** - Joshua to Esther (288 pages)
- A CASKET OF JEWELS** - Job to Song of Solomon (176 pages)
- GOD'S GIANTS** - Isaiah to Malachi (288 pages)
- SON OF THE HIGHEST** - Matthew to John (304 pages)
- CHRIST TRIUMPHANT** - The Acts of the Apostles to Revelation (560 pages)

An additional book is available entitled '**ETERNAL MAJESTY PENETRATING TIME**'
(An unfolding of the mysteries of the Tabernacle)

In order to obtain one or more of the above volumes contact should be made with

Dr. P. Trumper, 'Wyclif', 42 The Pistyll, Holywell, Flintshire, CH8 7SH

(The books will be sent upon receipt of a donation, as the Lord directs.)

'Son of Hamas' - By Mosab Hassan Yousef with Ron Brackin

Authentic Media Ltd. Milton Keynes, 263pp - £6.99 plus postage
ISBN: -13:978-1-85078-878-2

This is an incredible book to read, including 'gripping accounts of terror, betrayal, political intrigue and unthinkable choices'. Do not read if you are upset by cruelty and violence. Yet to be realistic this is a world of violence – read the Holy Bible – yet also there are amazing conversions and hateful sinners are still being changed from the inside by the grace of God (Titus 3:3).

Mosab Hassan Yousef is the eldest of 8 children and dearly loves his parents and siblings. His father groomed him in the ways of Hamas intending for him to take over the leadership one day, but God in His mercy had other plans. Unexpectedly, a stranger invited him to a Christian Bible study. He went and Mosab was introduced to the Lord Jesus Christ and His message: 'love your enemies'. Gradually he became more and more influenced into a different mindset from that of Hamas, eventually he accepted that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and later he was baptised. He renounced Islam and the Koran, which resulted in him being cut off from his beloved family and sadly bringing shame upon them and many others. Yet there was no alternative if he was to have inner peace.

Earlier he suffered at the hands of the Israeli secret police, Shin Bet, a number of times, and this was traumatic, beginning at the age of 18 and just before taking his exams. Later he became a double agent, and for 10 years worked with his father/Hamas and with Shin Bet, preventing many killings from taking place.

If you want some encouragement in these evil days then I urge you to read this book. You will see today what God can do, and still does, as He gathers in the elect and works out His purposes. Pray for this man, now living in America, as he asks humbly for our prayers. Personally I would love to meet him and 'glorify God in him' (Galatians 2:24). May God grant him a normal, safe and happy life, despite the past and the evil intentions of many towards him.

You could visit: www.sonofhamas.com

Joseph Hewitt (retired Grace Baptist Pastor)

'I have yet to speak on God's behalf' Job 36:2

by Charles Haddon Spurgeon

We ought not to court publicity for our personal virtue, or notoriety for our zeal; but at the same time, it is a sin to be always seeking to hide that which God has in mercy, bestowed upon us, but we should endeavour to use it for the benefit of others. A Christian is not to be like a village in a valley, but as a city set upon a hill; he is not to be a candle under a bushel, but a candle on a candlestick, giving light to all. Retirement may be lovely in its season, and to hide one's self is doubtless modest, but the hidings of Christ by us can never be justified, and the keeping back of truth, which is precious to ourselves, is a sin against others and an offence unto God. If you are of a nervous temperament and of a retiring disposition, take care that you do not too much indulge this trembling propensity, lest you should be useless to others and to the church of Christ. Seek in His name to tell others what Christ has done for you. If thou canst not speak with a trumpet tongue, use the still small voice. If the pulpit is not thy tribune, if the press may not carry thy words, yet say with Peter and John, 'Silver and gold have I none; but such as I have give I thee.' By Sychar's well talk to the Samaritan woman, if thou canst not on the mountain preach a sermon in the field or in the temple, utter the praises of Jesus in the house. From the hidden springs within let sweet flowing rivulets of testimony spring forth, giving drink to those who pass by. Hide not thy talent; trade with it; and thou shalt bring in good interest to thy Lord and Master. To speak for God will be refreshing to ourselves, cheering to the saints, useful to sinners and honouring to the Saviour. Dumb children are an affliction to their parents. Lord, unloose thy children's tongues.

No 'Coincidence' With God

By Robert McCurry, Editor & Publisher of 'The Wake Up Herald' - January 2011 (USA)

And that, knowing the time, that now it is high time to awake out of sleep: for now is our salvation nearer than when we believed. The night is far spent, the day is at hand: let us therefore cast off the works of darkness, and let us put on the armour of light. Let us walk honestly, as in the day; not in rioting and drunkenness, not in chambering and wantonness, not in strife and envying. But put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make not provision for the flesh, to fulfill the lusts thereof. Romans 13:11-14

From January 1, 2011 to January 7th, there was an abundance of fish and bird deaths throughout the world. The dead birds and dead fish reports came in from all over the world, 15 events were documented in less than a week.

For instance, hundreds of birds fell from the sky in Texas, Louisiana, and Kentucky in the United States and Sweden, and thousands in Arkansas in the United States, a town in Italy was littered with 8000 turtle doves, and in Manitoba, Canada tens of thousands of dead birds fell to the ground.

In addition, 2 million fish washed ashore in Maryland's Chesapeake Bay, 100 tons off the waters off Argentina, 100,000 from the Arkansas River (99% of which were of the Drum Fish species.) There were also 40,000 crabs that washed ashore in the United Kingdom. In New Zealand, hundreds of dead snapper fish washed up on Coromandel Peninsula beaches, many found with their eyes missing; 100 tons of dead fish in the waters off of Parana, Argentina. 15 Tons of dead fish wash ashore In Brazil. In the last week of December 150 tons of Talapia fish died on 41 different river farms in Vietnam.

Strangely, many of these birds and fish that died belonged to only one species while other kinds of bird and fish in the same areas were unaffected. This has led to the theory that the traumatizing event such as lightning happened while the birds were in flocks. Yet it seems strange that power lines or toxins should be so selective.

The dead birds and dead fish events around the world still have no definitive scientific explanation attached to them. With many waiting for science to come up with the answers, others believe that the dead birds and the dead fish are a warning sign from God.

In addition, between Dec. 2 and Jan 5, more than 8 mega-earthquakes occurred.

- Dec. 2 - 6.9 earthquake in New Guinea
- Dec. 17 - 7.2 earthquake on the CA/Mexico border
- Dec. 20 - 5.6 earthquake in El Salvador
- Dec. 21 - 6.2 earthquake in Sumatra
- Dec. 21 - 7.4 earthquake in Japan
- Dec. 25 - 7.6 earthquake in Fiji
- Jan 5 - 6.6 earthquake in Vanuatu in the South Pacific. 10 minutes later, there was another quake that registered 5.5
- Jan 2 - 7.1 earthquake in Chile

Scientists across the world have been mystified and given various causes for these happenings. Their theories range from toxins, cold weather, disease, fireworks, hail, thunderstorms, and power lines. Among many Christians, there is also the belief that these are 'signs of the End Times.'

Throughout the Bible, there's a continuous connection between humans and animals, or between humans and natural events. Nature and humans are intertwined. Many verses in the Bible show this connection where human evil affects other earth species. One of them occurs in Hosea chapter 4:1-3, where God declares:

"Hear the word of the LORD, ye children of Israel, for the LORD hath a controversy with the inhabitants of the land: because there is no truth, nor mercy, nor knowledge of God in the land. By swearing and lying, and killing and stealing, and committing adultery, they break out, and blood toucheth blood. Therefore shall the land mourn; and everyone that dwelleth therein shall languish, with the beasts of the field and with the fowls of heaven; yea the fishes of the sea also shall be taken away."

These verses point out that the spiritual and the natural affect each other.

Natural Disasters – 2010 was a record year. 295,000 people were killed and \$130 billion in property damage. As a comparison in 2009 there were 11,000 deaths and \$60 billion in property damage. So the death toll went up by 284,000. There were forest fires, earthquakes, floods etc.

The 2011 year is starting with a massive flood in Australia displacing 200,000 people and causing billions in damages.

Summary – Is all of this coincidence? No. Is this a government weapon of some sort doing all of this as some suggest? Maybe. With dead birds and dead fish being found around the globe in masses, the theories for this phenomenon range from the mundane to the extraordinary. Dead fish and dead bird explanations range from the biblical to government conspiracy theories. Whatever the cause, it can be said with absolute certainty that God is showing His sovereign power. God had the first word and God will have the final word. We wait and see what's next on His agenda. While you wait, read Zephaniah 1:2-3

"I will utterly consume all things from off the land, saith the Lord. I will consume man and beast; I will consume the fowls of the heaven, and the fishes of the sea, and the stumblingblocks with the wicked; and I will cut off man from off the land, saith the LORD."

God's message to America? It is folly and fatal to ignore God. *"He, that being often reprov'd hardeneth his neck, shall suddenly be destroyed, and that without remedy"* (Prov 29:1).

"Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter: Fear God, and keep his commandments: for this is the whole duty of man. For God shall bring every work into judgment, with every secret thing, whether it be good, or whether it be evil" (Eccl 12:13-14).

Wake-up, Pastors! Wake-up, Christians!

Christian Responsibility

An Introduction

I am thankful for this opportunity to write on this subject as it appears few people (Christians included), seem willing to take *personal* responsibility for their actions anymore and inevitably any personal failure ends up being 'someone else's fault'! It is therefore, important as Christians we are reminded from the scriptures of our solemn duties to God Almighty.

Our increasingly secular and 'human rights' centred society is largely driven by self interest as it is based on a relativistic philosophy having no foundational or absolute truth, but rather, the *ever fluctuating* truth (so called), that there is no absolute truth, but the truth is that we each make our own truth.

This sense of self 'entitlement' and the corresponding lack of a sense of duty and accountability to God and our fellow men, seems to be spreading like an infectious disease into *all* levels of society including, sadly, the Church Christ has built.

**"When nations are to perish in their sins,
'Tis in the church the leprosy begins:**

William Cowper

The modern visible 'Church' seems little more than Ministers and Pastors providing a meeting place for a group of *passive* 'sermon hearers' ritualistically 'going to church' and seemingly little touched or affected by what they hear or see - enough to act (James 1:22). **Truly the blind leading the blind** with both ending up in a spiritual ditch as the Lord promised in Matthew chapter 15 verse 4.

Dear Christian, is this you?

Are you in a spiritual ditch, as it were? Has your walk with the Lord become distant, cold, mechanical and lifeless? Do you find that the affairs and concerns of this world seem to consume all your affections, time and money leaving you with little or no time left for *genuine* communion with God, the *diligent* study of His precious and eternal Word, *close and profitable* fellowship with His redeemed people or the 'proclaiming' (Mark 16:15), 'contending' (Jude 1:3) and 'witnessing' (Acts 1:8) to a lost and dying world, as the scriptures so clearly command?

Lord willing, I hope over the next few issues of the Christian Watch Newsletter, to present a *summary* of just what a Christians responsibilities and duties are, according to God's Word, and how, with the Lords help, we may be more zealous in our performing of them.

I trust therefore, that the Lord in His mercy will use these articles to reawaken us all to our duties and responsibilities to Him and give us the necessary zeal and fervour to faithfully 'redeem the time' in His service and honour.

Andy Clarke

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