

CHRISTIAN WATCH

A PROTESTANT BIBLICAL WITNESS

"And what I say unto you

I say unto all, Watch"

Mark 13:37

NEWSLETTER

December 2011

To all Christian Watch Members

Dear Friends,

Another year of our short lives will shortly be at an end, reminding us of the brevity of life and the inevitable prospect of our entering eternity. How vitally important it is for us to be in possession of the grace of God when we come to the end of our lives here. The opening verse of a hymn by the late A. Toplady and G. Elliott expresses it:

Prepare me gracious God,
To stand before Thy face,
Thy Spirit must the work perform,
For it is all of grace.

We are living in increasingly solemn times and many of the national and international events which are taking place clearly indicate we are fast approaching a period of time when biblical prophecy concerning the last times will be fulfilled. For example, we are presently undermining some of those foundation blessings the Lord bestowed upon the human race when He first placed man upon the earth. It is very clear from Scripture (*Genesis 2 v 18-24*) that the Lord's order is for one man and one woman to become a husband and wife to live together and to be fruitful and multiply, thereby producing offspring and a family. The consequences of our departing from God's order by multitudes of children being born out of wedlock and the promotion and acceptability of homosexuality and lesbianism completely undermines the Lord's all-wise structure - which He determined for the benefit of the human race. The British Government are presently planning to implement a law that would grant the same civil rights to same-sex couples as it does presently to those of opposite-sex couples. We include an article which gives details of this proposal under the title, **Coalition Government Plans to Change the Definition of Marriage.**

To provide confirmation of the origin and objective of the previous article, we include one from "Pink News" entitled **Gay Civil Partnerships allowed in Churches.** In addition, when we consider that the Home Secretary, together with a number of MPs, recently joined the Speaker of the House of Commons to help launch a new charity aimed at tackling homophobic bullying in schools, this clearly identifies the British Government's position with regard to their approval and support for that which the Bible condemns as being evil and for which Sodom and Gomorrah were destroyed. Why should we consider the Lord will not deal likewise with our nation?

Another example of the dominance of the devilish practices carried on obviously to the Word and Commandments of our God is the mass murder, under the banner of abortion, of thousands of unborn babies every week. We include an extract from a letter by Miriam Nixon, the founder of Pro-Life Care, under the title, **STOP THE SLAUGHTERPlease!**

How we need to prayerfully consider the Word of God which warns us of events that will precede the return of the Lord Jesus Christ to this world, such as the '*falling away*' from that which was ordained by God. (*2 Thessalonians 2:3*).

Another of our nationally important laws is **The Act of Settlement** of 1701. We include an article under this title (*Copyright of The Royal Household*). This explains the background to the Act, its implications and how it was designed to protect and secure a Protestant succession to the throne. The Australian Prime Minister has said he wants to end discrimination within the British Monarchy against Roman Catholics and has indicated his Government will endeavour to revoke the Act of Settlement. However, his proposed changes would necessitate all the British Commonwealth Member Countries agreeing to the Act being revoked, which it is considered unlikely to be achieved.

We are extremely concerned for our Christian Watch Members in Nigeria, including the dear children who attend the CW School, because of the problems being caused by Muslim extremists. Thankfully, we understand all have been preserved from harm at present, but the situation is serious. We include a report by Release International entitled **NIGERIA – At least 65 killed as extremists target northern churches**. Please remember our Members and the dear children in your prayers, that they may be preserved from harm in these dangerous times.

There is a visible difference in the outward life of those who are truly born again by the Spirit of God and those who just have a form of religion. If we are blessed with having a real God-given religion, it will manifest itself to others by our conduct and conversation. We include a searching article by the late Charles Spurgeon entitled “**So walk ye in Him**” which terminates with the prayerful request, “*O Holy Spirit, enable us to obey this heavenly precept*”.

As part of our national campaign, **WHO IS ON THE LORD’S SIDE?**, the first public meeting was held on 21st November and we include a report by our National Co-ordinator, Michael Hobbis, under the title, **PUBLIC MEETING** (Chichester). There was an encouraging number present and the response by way of questions and general conversation afterwards indicated the time was well spent.

We include a further article by Andy Clarke under the title **Christian Responsibilities** which deals particularly with the local Church. It explains the importance of the Redeemed Church having a place of worship to attend where they can join with others who are born again believers, both in worship and communion. It is a wonderful and blessed favour when we can unite with the Lord’s people and feel a spiritual love to them. The Word of God says, “We know that we have passed from death unto life, because we love the brethren.” *1 John 3:14*.

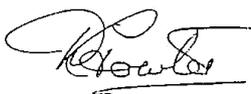
Our final item is by the late J. C. Philpot and based upon the scriptural text “**The entrance of thy words giveth light.**” *Psalms 119:130*. We trust it will be spiritual food and made a blessing to all our Members.

We remind our Members that it is now time to renew Membership for another year and whilst we leave the annual subscription at £10, we are particularly grateful for any additional donations. The postage costs for our Newsletter mailing has substantially increased, as have our other operating costs. We plan to be increasingly active in furthering our campaign, “**Who is on the Lord’s side**”, which involves travelling and advertising expense, but we believe you will share our opinion that, as the moral decline rapidly increases in our nation, those of us who possess the fear of the Lord in our hearts will feel honoured to do all we can to defend and support the Lord’s side.

We continue, trusting in the Lord who has supplied our every need to date, and we value your prayerful support.

May the Lord bless you with all you need for this present life and that which is to come.

Yours, in the Lord’s service,



David Crowter

Management Committee

Mr D Boyd; Mr M Brockes (Hon Treasurer/Co Secretary); Mr D Crowter (Chairman);
Mr I Henderson; Mr M Hobbis; Mr D Lawson; Mr M De Semlyen; Mrs J Cummins (Secretary).

Coalition Government Plans to Change the Definition of Marriage

In a speech delivered at the Liberal Democrat Conference in September, the Minister for Equalities, Lynne Featherstone, announced that the Government will begin a formal consultation in March, 2012 on ‘how to implement equal civil marriage for same-sex couples’. She added that this would allow the Government to make the necessary legislative changes before the next General Election.

Speaking as a Liberal Democrat, she continued:

*Civil partnerships were a welcome first step – but as our Constitution states, this Party rejects prejudice and discrimination in all its forms. And I believe that to deny one group of people the same opportunities offered to another is not only discrimination, but is not fair.*¹

A little over two weeks later, the Prime Minister, David Cameron, added his personal support for changing the definition of marriage. He stated:

I once stood before a Conservative Conference and said it shouldn’t matter whether commitment was between a man and a woman, a woman and a woman, or a man and another man. You applauded me for that. Five years on, we’re consulting on legalising gay marriage.

*And to anyone who has reservations, I say: Yes, it’s about equality, but it’s also about something else: commitment. Conservatives believe in the ties that bind us; that society is stronger when we make vows to each other and support each other. So I don’t support gay marriage despite being a Conservative. I support gay marriage because I’m a Conservative.*²

The announcement that the Government will be consulting on ‘how’ (not ‘whether’) to introduce same sex-marriages was made despite the fact that no such proposal featured in the election manifesto of either of the coalition parties. Responding to the proposal, Conservative MEP, Roger Helmer, remarked:

It is not the business of Government to legislate to change the meaning of a common and well-established word, and least of all a word that describes such a key institution in society... Yes, marriage is a right, but marriage is a relationship between a man and a woman. Everyone should have the right to marry, and no-one seeks to deny that right to anyone else... The question is whether a vocal lobby group can change the meaning of a word to suit an entirely different relationship.

Mr. Helmer went on to argue that same-sex relationships should not be treated in the same way as marriage because they did not offer the same broad benefits to society in terms of promoting stability in society, replenishing the population, and providing the ideal circumstances in which children can be raised and socialised. He concluded:

*Any attempt to broaden the definition of marriage to include other relationships can only be seen as a deliberate device to dilute, demean and diminish the institution of marriage as it is generally understood. If marriage becomes broader, it becomes shallower and the vital importance of marriage in our society will be further eroded.*³

Public Opinion

According to figures published by the Office for National Statistics, the majority of the British public does not support same-sex marriage. Only a third (35 per cent) of men aged 30-49 agreed that same-sex couples should be allowed to marry. Although a higher proportion of women in the same age bracket registered their support for same-sex marriage, they were still in a minority.⁴

Family Education Trust has written to both Lynne Featherstone and David Cameron and pointed out that it is not possible to change the definition of marriage without at the same time changing the meaning that a society attached to it. The legal definition of marriage as '*the voluntary union for life of one man and one woman, to the exclusion of all others*' contains three key elements: (i) it is heterosexual (between a man and a woman); (ii) it is exclusive (a union of one man and one woman); (iii) it is lifelong (for life). We have reasoned that:

To broaden the definition of marriage, whether it be to permit the marriage of homosexual couples, to permit an individual to marry more than one person, or to vary the duration for which those marrying signify their commitment would inevitably change the character and public perception of the institution and pose a serious threat to the public benefits associated with it.

End Notes:

1. Lynne Featherstone, Speech at Liberal Democrat Party Conference, 17 September 2011.
2. David Cameron, Speech at Conservative Party Conference, 5 October 2011.
3. Roger Helmer, 'Why the Government is wrong on same-sex marriage', Conservative Home, 17 September 2011.
4. ONS, Civil partnerships five years on, *Population Trends 145*, Autumn 2011.

Scotland consults on same sex marriage

Six months before the Westminster Government is due to publish its consultation on same-sex marriage for England and Wales, the Scottish Government launched its own consultation paper on the possible introduction of same-sex marriage and the possibility of allowing religious ceremonies for civil partnerships.

Although the document insists that 'no final views have been reached and no decisions have been taken', the Scottish Government has revealed that it tends towards the view that 'religious ceremonies for civil partnerships should no longer be prohibited and that same-sex marriage should be introduced, so that same-sex couples have the option of getting married if that is how they wish to demonstrate their commitment to each other'. The consultation paper states:

The Government's initial view is that marriage should be open to both same-sex couples and opposite-sex couples. This view is grounded in our commitment to equality and our support for stable and committed relationships. Same-sex couples, like opposite-sex couples, can and do establish loving relationships which they wish to formalise in a manner recognised by the State, and in some cases by the religious body to which they belong.

While civil partnerships are available for same-sex couples, and provide similar responsibilities, rights and status to marriage, the two are not identical. It is clear that some same-sex couples would prefer marriage to a civil partnership, as the appropriate way to declare and formalise their commitment to each other.

The Scottish Government, *The Registration of Civil Partnerships Same Sex Marriage: A Consultation*, <http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Resource/Doc/357255/0120684.pdf>

Gay Civil Partnerships Allowed in Churches

Pink News 2nd November 2011

Following the Government's announcement yesterday that Churches will be able to apply to hold civil partnerships in their premises, rights groups have had a mixed reaction to the news.

Equalities Minister, Lynne Featherstone, confirmed on Wednesday that regulations should be in place by the end of 2011 that would put into effect the "Alli Amendment".

The Equality Act amendment will allow the celebration of civil partnerships in religious buildings for the first time. It won support in the House of Lords last year by a majority of 74 and should come into effect on 5 December.

Stonewall's Chief Executive, Ben Summerskill, said: "Since the first civil partnerships took place in 2005, religious groups and lesbian and gay people of faith have expressed the importance of being able to celebrate their commitment to one another in their place of worship.

"It is a clear signal of how far we've come that, for the first time, the many lesbian and gay couples of faith in Britain today will be able to do so.

These changes follow extensive Stonewall lobbying and represent not only hard-won cross party support but the wishes of a number of religious denominations.

It is an important issue of religious freedom in the 21st century that both individuals and consenting religious groups are able to celebrate civil partnerships in their places of worship."

But a spokesman for the Church of England, who has said they will refuse to opt in, said: "We will study the draft regulations as a matter of urgency to check that they deliver the firm assurances that have been given to us and others that the new arrangements will operate by way of denominational opt-in.

"If Ministers have delivered what they said they would in terms of genuine religious freedom, we would have no reason to oppose the regulations."

Peter Tatchell, who co-ordinates the Equal Love campaign to remove gender barriers on civil partnerships and marriages, warned not to lose sight of the goal of full marriage equality, saying a situation which allows religious civil partnerships but not religious same-sex marriages is inconsistent.

He said: "It is ironic that while the Government is allowing civil partnerships in religious premises, it recently announced that it will maintain the ban on religious gay marriages, even if a faith organisation wants to conduct them.

We believe religious organisations should be permitted by law to perform both same-sex religious marriages and same-sex civil partnerships, if they wish to do so. The current blanket bans must go.

It is an infringement of religious freedom to prohibit faith organisations from conducting these ceremonies when some of them – such as Quakers, Unitarians and Liberal Jews – would like to perform them.

The Equality Minister is supporting discrimination and attacking religious liberty."

Daily Mail 3rd November 2011

Churches will be allowed to stage civil partnership ceremonies for same-sex couples, the Equalities Minister said yesterday.

Lynne Featherstone promised that by the end of the year vicars will be able to apply to have their Churches approved for partnership ceremonies, which are currently only allowed to be secular.

But the Church of England said it had no intention of opening its own Churches for same-sex couples to register or bless their partnerships.

Christian critics, however, said reluctant Churches would be pressured or driven by the courts to offer civil partnerships despite assurances from Ministers that no Church will be forced to accept them. Miss Featherstone said the reforms to civil partnership law were part of the Coalition's drive for gay equality and to guarantee freedom of religion for everyone.

In a written statement, she said: 'The Government is committed to removing the legal barrier to civil partnerships being registered on the religious premises of those faith groups who choose to allow this to happen'.

STOP THE SLAUGHTER..... *Please!*

Spare a thought for all those babies who departed this life due to abortion – devoid of love or respect before they saw the light of day.

Their small, broken bodies were discarded as human waste, thrown into cold, steel receptacles. Their young lives were brutally and callously snuffed out – sacrificed to man's inhumanity and selfishness.

Please pray for the conversion of all involved in this iniquitous industry. The scale of the carnage is just so daunting that we really need our Lord to intervene. Until He does, we must carry on the fight to restore the dignity and sanctity of human life.

The situation in the UK and Ireland is very bad but we must stand fast and challenge the encroaching permissive, perverted society head on.

Our society is so warped that we see babies being killed in one ward ('abortion'); in another ward the elderly are being killed ('euthanasia') and then, in yet another one, women are undergoing IVF in a desperate attempt to conceive a baby. THIS IS MADNESS!

We must sacrifice material blessings to help mothers and their babies escape from abortion – it's our Christian duty to support this cause.

**An extract from a letter by Miriam (Marion) Nixon, Founder, Pro-Life Care
www.prolifecare.com**

The Act of Settlement

The Act of Settlement of 1701 was designed to secure the Protestant succession to the throne, and to strengthen the guarantees for ensuring Parliamentary system of government.

The Act also strengthened the Bill of Rights (1689), which had previously established the order of succession for Mary II's heirs.

Mary's father, James II, had fled England in 1688 during events described as the 'Glorious Revolution'. James's Roman Catholic sympathies and belief in the divine right of the Crown resulted in disgruntled Parliamentarians offering the throne to his eldest Protestant daughter, Mary. She accepted it on condition that she could reign jointly with her Dutch husband, who became William III.

From this time onwards the Bill of Rights proved to be of fundamental importance for the evolution of constitutional monarchy. The Act of Settlement re-inforced the Bill of Rights in that it strengthened the principle that government was undertaken by the Sovereign and his or her constitutional advisers whom he or she happened to choose.

Although the Bill of Rights has established the order of succession with the heirs of Mary II, Anne and William III, neither of James II's daughters had surviving heirs, casting uncertainty on the future of succession. Mary had died of smallpox in 1694, aged 32, and by 1700 William was dying. Anne's only surviving child (out of 17 children), the Duke of Gloucester, had died that same year at the age of 11. Without a confirmed heir, the decision was made by Parliament to ensure that succession of future Sovereigns remained with the Protestant faith.

According to the 1701 Act, succession to the throne went to Princess Sophia, Electress of Hanover (James I's granddaughter) and her Protestant heirs. However, Sophia died before Queen Anne, therefore the succession passed to her son, George, Elector of Hanover, who in 1714 became King George I. The Act was later extended to Scotland as a result of the Treaty of Union enacted in the Acts of Union of 1707.

The Act also laid down the conditions under which alone the Crown could be held. No Roman Catholic, nor anyone married to a Roman Catholic, could hold the English Crown. The Sovereign now had to swear to maintain the Church of England (and after 1707, the Church of Scotland).

Two examples of members of the current Royal family being removed from the line of succession are that of the Earl of St. Andrews and HRH Prince Michael of Kent, who both lost the right of succession to the throne through marriage to Roman Catholics. Any children of these marriages remain in the succession provided that they are in communion with the Church of England.

In 2008, it was announced that Peter Philips, son of the Princess Royal, would marry Autumn Kelly. She had been baptised as a Catholic but had been accepted into the Church of England before her marriage. Therefore Peter Philips retained his place in the line of succession.

The Act of Settlement not only addressed the dynastic and religious aspects of succession, it also further restricted the powers and prerogatives of the Crown.

Under the Act, Parliamentary consent had to be given for the Sovereign to engage in war or leave the country, and judges were to hold office on good conduct and not at royal pleasure – thus establishing judicial independence. (*The Royal Household* © Copyright 20/10/11)

NIGERIA – At Least 65 Killed as Extremists Target Northern Churches

Scores of people have died in a series of co-ordinated gun and bomb attacks by Islamist militants in northern Nigeria.

Boko Haram extremists have already claimed responsibility for attacks in Yobe and Borno states, which targeted churches in particular. The violence is thought to have claimed at least 65 lives, with some sources suggesting figures as high as 150. The death toll is expected to rise as hospitals update casualty numbers, according to the Nigerian Red Cross.

Many people are said to be fleeing Yobe state capital Damatura after multiple attacks reduced police stations and Churches to rubble, according to Reuters news agency. A strike on a neighbouring village, Potiskum, left two dead. *Boko Haram* is committed to extending strict Islamic law or *Sharia* across Nigeria and its targets include Churches as well as state security forces.

The BBC reports that nine Churches were burnt in Damatura. Nigerian newspaper, *The Nation*, reported that several congregations in the city held open-air services in the burnt-out ruins of their churches. Reuters reports suggest that mosques too may have been damaged in the violence.

Commentators, including the BBC, report that *Boko Haram* attacks are becoming increasingly sophisticated and daring, prompting widespread calls for President Goodluck Jonathan's Government to take tougher action on the group.

Meanwhile, Release partner, Stefanos Foundation, reports that three people were killed and 15 injured when unidentified gunmen raided a church in Zonkwa in Kaduna state. In riots that followed the attack, youths from Christian communities blocked roads with burning tyres and attacked a partially built mosque, according to the BBC.

(Sources: BBC, Reuters, Stefanos Foundation, *The Nation* – Nigeria)

- Pray for all those injured, traumatised and bereaved in the latest violence to hit northern Nigeria. Pray that Christians in affected communities will look to God for His peace, protection and justice – and not be tempted to retaliate, despite extreme provocation.
- Pray for wisdom for Government officials, including President Jonathan, in knowing how to deal with this extremist threat.

Release International, PO Box 54, Orpington, BR5 9RT
Website address: www.releaseinternational.org

“So walk ye in Him” Colossians 2:6

by Charles Spurgeon

If we have received Christ Himself in our inmost hearts, our new life will manifest its intimate acquaintance with Him by a walk of faith in Him. Walking implies action. Our religion is not to be confined to our closet; we must carry out into practical effect that which we believe. If a man walks in Christ, then he so acts as Christ would act; for Christ being in him, his hope, his love, his joy, his life, he is the reflex of the image of Jesus; and men say of that man, “He is like his Master; he lives like Jesus Christ.” Walking signifies progress. “So walk ye in Him”; proceed from grace to grace, run forward until you reach the uttermost degree of knowledge that a man can attain concerning our Beloved. Walking implies continuance. There must be a perpetual abiding in Christ. How many Christians think that in the morning and evening they ought to come into the company of Jesus, and may then give their hearts to the world all the day: but this is poor living; we should always be with Him, treading in His steps and doing His will. Walking also implies habit. When we speak of man’s walk and conversation, we mean his habits, the constant tenor of his life. Now, if we sometimes enjoy Christ, and then forget Him; sometimes call Him ours, and anon lose our hold, that is not a habit; we do not walk in Him. We must keep to Him, cling to Him, never let Him go, but live and have our being in Him. “As ye have received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk ye in Him”; persevere in the same way in which ye have begun, and, as at the first, Christ Jesus was the trust of your faith, the source of your life, the principle of your action, and the joy of your spirit, so let Him be the same ‘til life’s end; the same when you walk through the valley of the shadow of death, and enter into the joy and the rest which remain for the people of God. O Holy Spirit, enable us to obey this heavenly precept.

Christian Watch Letter to Tesco Concerning Their Sponsorship of ‘Gay Pride’ March

Our purpose in communicating with you is to express our concern, and that of many of our Members throughout the United Kingdom, with regard to the support you are planning to give to ‘Gay Pride’. As a Christian organisation, we endeavour to maintain a God-given Biblical standard which condemns the practices of those involved with Gay Pride.

Your support for this organisation will undoubtedly result in many of those who have been your customers withdrawing their trade from Tesco. We trust that not only for the benefit of your organisation, but also for the benefit of those who have loyally used your facilities, you will reconsider your decision in this regard.

A copy of this letter will be included in our next Newsletter to all our Members throughout the UK, as well as in a number of other countries.

Yours faithfully,
David Crowter
Chairman

PUBLIC MEETING

Chichester National Campaign

“Who is on the Lord’s Side?”

The first public meeting of the campaign was held on 21st November at the Assembly Rooms, North Street, Chichester. (As the campaign develops, new locations will be selected, in the will of God, for subsequent meetings.)

An encouraging number of people attended the meeting from various churches and chapels in the area, including several pastors. A greater part of the attendees were non-members, a number of which expressed a desire to join with us in membership.

The meeting was opened by Mr. Reg Jupp, a previous Committee Member, who read from Isaiah 58, followed by prayer. The hymn ‘*O Lord my God, when I in awesome wonder consider all the works thy hand hath made...*’ was then sung - it is hoped in spirit and in truth.

Main Address by Michael Hobbis

A summary of this was the similarity between the Old Testament Scripture – where the voice of God in Isaiah 58 cries out against a false outward form of religion – and that described by Paul’s second letter to Timothy, chapter 3, in the New Testament, warning of perilous times to come. Such times would be marked, he said, by those who have a form of godliness but deny the power of it: it was further alleged that these perilous times are most definitely with us now.

He then showed the religious hypocrisy of those in the days of the prophet. Their lives were plainly wrong, yet they appeared to take delight in an outward form of worship. Today, he added, avid sermon-hearing was still evident: thus confirming the Scriptural truth that the heart of man is still deceived and as desperately wicked as ever.

Furthermore, it was stated that this effete form of godliness, in many of today’s ‘evangelical’ churches, had been brought about by false brethren entering into the flock and bringing their own forms of false religion. These had all the outward signs of life but were devoid of the Holy Spirit’s power in true godliness. He added that the ‘Charismatic’ movement largely seeks to substitute outward signs and wonders as a replacement for the vital power of true godliness.

The Word of God, he said, is no longer held in awe in the hearts of many, and had been basely dealt with in the production of numerous versions which had corrupted the Voice of God. The Word of God has, therefore, lost its authority in the world. The result of this drift was that it was treated by the majority as being on a par with ordinary literature – to be altered at will.

He also said that since the church, as the ‘salt of the earth’, had lost much of its savour, then, as our Lord implied in Matthew 5:13 – it cannot preserve society from spiritual putrefaction. This was the direct reason for the sad decline to be seen in the churches and in society’s life and morals today.

In a positive conclusion, it was then shown from Isaiah 58:12 that the situation, though grave, offers hope of the fulfilment of a promise; and that promise is made by God

today through the prophet Isaiah to all those individual Christians who seek to live separated, holy and godly lives in these times: viz. that they may be privileged to be used to be repairers of this breach in society and religion.

Secondly, they shall be the ones who find their way back to God and eternal life by the power of the Holy Ghost and through the Lord Jesus Christ, who is the Way, the Truth and the Life.

An Account of the Work of Christian Watch

David Crowter, the National Chairman, then gave an outline of the present work of Christian Watch and its ambitions for the future, which is to pursue the current CW campaign 'Who is on the Lord's side?' nationally and to further promote the Word of God.

He then pointed out the responsibility of all believers to oppose evil in society and make representation to the appropriate official bodies as necessary. He said that Christian Watch was active in a number of countries and that in Nigeria a school for orphans had been established. He also commented that the developing situation in Israel remained a concern.

He also referred to the awful statistics of pregnancies; and that in 2008 there were 41,325 girls under 18 years who became pregnant; and, of that group, 49% had abortions. He mentioned that the media was filled with sexually-explicit material, which no doubt encouraged an immoral lifestyle, and that CW's desire was to visit schools in an effort to encourage young people in the way of chastity before marriage.

The meeting was closed with prayer.

- We thank God for the opportunity to be able to speak out in such a time as this; and witness in the name of Jesus our Saviour and Redeemer of His message of repentance towards God and faith in His love and mercy in the forgiveness of sins.

“Who is on the Lord's side?” – come and join with us!

We plan to have meetings at various locations throughout the United Kingdom. The support of our Members is important in planning and promoting these events and if you are able and willing to assist us please call me on 07702 431 584.

Michael Hobbs,
National Co-ordinator

“Fear ye not, neither be afraid: have not I told thee from that time, and have declared it? ye are even my witnesses. Is there a God beside me? Yea, there is no God; I know not any.”

Isaiah 44:8

Christian Responsibilities

Part 6 – The Local Church.

As with previous articles, this part is more an appeal and exhortation than a doctrinal discourse.

The same church that the Lord will build (Matt.16:18) can be viewed from two different perspectives. First, the 'invisible' church, made up of all the redeemed of God of every age, dead or alive. 'Invisible' in the sense they cannot be perceived with the physical senses because not all who profess to be believers (Matt.7:21-23, Matt.13:24-43) are true believers - only God can read the heart.

The 'visible' church is that church which *can* be perceived with the physical senses, that is, a congregation of professing believers gathered together in one particular location. In this article we will be looking briefly at the 'visible' local church.

There can be little doubt from the Scriptures of the need to be an active member of a biblically-sound local congregation. The mere mention and provision of the church in the Scriptures implies (at least) a 'divine' purpose and corresponding responsibility for believers to avail themselves of it. There are over one hundred references to the church (visible and invisible) and the majority of the New Testament is either written directly to churches or churches are at least made mention of.

The church needs every believer and every believer needs a church

Dear reader, being an active member of a SOUND local church (if there is one available) is very important. It is:-

Your public profession

Going to church is a statement to the observing world that you are a Christian. That you are someone 'set apart' by God for God and you are no longer a slave to sin, self and the world, but rather to the Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.

Your new family

When you become a true Christian you are adopted into the family of heaven. You not only have a new heart but also a new family of fellow Christian pilgrims. It is marvellous how you can meet fellow believers that you have never met before and within minutes of meeting them feel a spiritual union to them. Such is the sweetness of fellowship with the Lord's people.

Like all families this family comes with privileges and duties and responsibilities. It is in the church that you must humbly submit to those ordained of God to 'rule over you', so you can be 'kept on track' by those with the responsibility to be your earthly shepherd. Likewise, as with any properly functioning family, you are to 'do your part'. Serving God is not a spectator event. It is something you have to be ACTIVELY involved in.

Your new home

With this new family also comes a new home where you go to be nourished and nurtured in your faith. It is to the church you attend to corporately worship God, to have fellowship with the Lord's people and pray together, to be baptised and partake of the Lord's Supper.

Your new example

It is in the church you can see 'faith in action' and learn what it really means to be a faithful Christian. It is here, too, where your own committed and active service can highlight 'hidden talents' and gifts that would otherwise remain hidden.

Oh, dear reader, none of these few considerations (few and very limited they are too) can be properly grasped and engaged in if you forsake the assembling of yourselves together with other believers in a local Church. Watching 'Christian' (so-called) TV, listening to sermons on the internet or even attending occasionally or as part of a 'round' of churches you attend is no substitute. You must be a *committed* and *active* member of a local church as it is *essential* to your spiritual well-being. In these dark days it is more important than

ever that you fulfil your responsibilities to a local church and fall under sound biblical leadership. So may I encourage you to ensure that you....

Find and belong to a sound local congregation

Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is; but exhorting one another: and so much the more, as ye see the day approaching (Heb.10:25).

Dear reader, do not mistake the visible church with the invisible church, expecting the visible church to be without spot or blemish (Eph.5:27) as is the true bride of Christ, because this can **never** be. This may come as a shock to some – but there is no PERFECT Church – even the one you may attend (or lead)!

I don't want to minimise the very real challenge in these apostate days of finding a sound local church for some people. There are, however, possible solutions if this is the case for you.

Travel to a sound church - there are few (in the UK at least) who can't find a sound church within 30 or so miles of their homes. With modern transport, this **should** prove little hindrance for a believer who has the health and ability to travel, and who wishes to worship, honour and serve their Lord and Saviour. Sadly, however, too often church is seen merely as a place to 'go to' and not a place to 'stay and do'. They either cease going to church altogether, watch/listen to Christian material at home, or go to a compromised church more convenient to attend. This is nothing but a recipe for disaster.

Move home to a sound church – to many this may seem drastic. But is it? Does God not know best where He would have you to serve Him? Are we not to put the Lord and his Kingdom first? This may mean forfeiting some earthly comforts and possibly even a lower paid job, but the rewards will be eternal as the Lord in His goodness will reward you richly '*For God is not unrighteous to forget your work and labour of love, which ye have shewed toward His name, in that ye have ministered to the saints, and do minister*' (Heb.6:10).

Go to a less than perfect church – this also is not an easy matter and needs much prayer and consideration. However, I fear many in their desire to be faithful are seeking this non-existent perfect church rather than worshipping where they can and praying for the Lord to deal with any unscriptural issues.

Start a church – if there is genuinely no sound local congregation to attend and nowhere you can reasonably travel to, then you have to seriously consider being involved in starting a new witness. Again, anything but easy, but who said our walk with the Lord was an easy one?

Be an active church member

Throughout the Epistles we read of 'workers', 'labourers', 'strivers' etc. for the purposes of God. This is not instruction just for church leaders but ALL believers. 'Church' for many has become little more than sermon 'hearing' and little or no 'doing'. A cycle of attendance where it seems the merits of the preacher and his delivery are more important than meeting with the only true and living God. Such attendance is sad indeed.

Dear reader, I trust you see that the local Church is not a place just to attend and leave. Rather, just as the physical body needs a wide variety of parts to be able to function properly, so too does this body of believers – the local church. The church needs **both** God-ordained and spirit-empowered leadership **and** a *committed* and *active* gracious membership. We are surrounded by evil, apostasy and confusion and never has the need for bold and active service for the things of God been more needful than now. So, I encourage you to find a sound local church – and if in one already - get busy in your service of the Lord, His people and the community you live in.

Yours in Christ,

Andy Clarke.

"The entrance of thy words giveth light."

Psalm 119:130

The blessed Spirit is pleased sometimes to give some testimony concerning Jesus; to open up some passage of Scripture which speaks of Jesus; to cast a divine light before the astonished eyes; and to throw some of the blessed beams of gospel truth into our souls; whereby we see Jesus. We are brought sometimes in soul feeling to the desires of those Greeks who came up to worship at the feast, and went to Philip, saying, "Sir, we would see Jesus," and from some apprehension of His beauty and loveliness, we pour out our soul before God, and say, "We would see Jesus." We want to feel his love; to have our eyes anointed to behold His glory; to look upon Him as crucified for us and bearing our sins in His own body on the tree; that we may have a sweet and blessed fellowship with Him as our suffering Surety, and thus, by faith, enter into the length and breadth and depth and height of that love of His "that passeth knowledge." Wherever there is a work of grace upon the soul, there will be this pining after Christ.

The soul that is really taught of God can never rest satisfied short of Jesus. "There remaineth a rest to the people of God," and they can never be satisfied short of that rest, which consists in an experimental knowledge of the Son of God, as revealed by the Holy Ghost to their souls. But before the enjoyment of this spiritual rest, there is often long delay; clouds of darkness for months and years together often envelope the mercy-seat; the cross of Christ cannot be seen; the Holy Ghost does not fulfil His covenanted office in taking of the things of Christ and showing them to the soul; and in the absence of these heavenly manifestations, we cannot realise our interest in the things of salvation, nor can we feel our hearts sweetly composed and settled down in the blessed assurance, that when this life shall come to a close, we shall inhabit mansions prepared for us before the foundation of the world. When "with clouds he covereth the light, and commandeth it not to shine by the cloud that cometh betwixt," there are many doubts and fears, suspicions, surmises, and jealousies whether we are not deceived and deluded altogether.

At such seasons, everything seems to be against us, and to stamp us as being nothing but nominal professors. It is in such dark and gloomy seasons as these that "the entrance of God's words giveth light." For instance, some such promise as this is made sweet to the soul: "Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest." As that promise is brought home with power to the heart, and is shed abroad with some sweetness in the soul, it draws forth and strengthens faith, and the toiling pilgrim comes to the Lord, feeling himself "weary and heavy laden," and as he comes, he is indulged sometimes with a few sweet moments of rest. He is enabled to look out of fallen self, with all its miseries, and to look upon Jesus in His grace and beauty. He is favoured to cast himself simply, as he is, upon Jesus, and some sense of His atoning blood, dying love, and complete propitiation for sin is opened up to his heart. Faith springs up to lay hold of and embrace it, and he begins to taste the savour and sweetness and healing efficacy of a Saviour's blood and love. Thus "the entrance of God's words giveth light," and he feels by the Divine coming in of what God has externally revealed, that inward light is shed abroad in the recesses of his soul, and he can, in some measure, realise the power of the cross of Jesus in his heart.

J. C. Philpot (1802 – 1869)

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