

# EXCERPTS FROM

APRIL - JUNE 1987

# THE LINK

North Road Chapel (Evangelical)

BIDEFORD

## Internet Edition

## THE WORK OF THE MINISTRY

(continued)

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In concluding this series of articles on THE WORK OF THE MINISTRY there is one further aspect to which reference should be made. The Lord in His Sermon on the Mount changes the imagery from salt to light: "Ye are the light of the world. A city that is set on an hill cannot be hid." (Matt.5:14). As in the previous metaphor so it is here; every individual Christian is a light in the world. Nevertheless, this has a very special significance to the minister, and through this added figure of speech there is another facet - yet another angle from which the minister is to be viewed. He is now likened unto LIGHT.

"Ye (my chosen ministers) are the light of the world."

At creation God set luminaries in the heavens - the sun and the moon - to give corporal, material light to the world. In the spiritual sense God has placed His regenerate people, "The sons of God, without rebuke, in the midst of a crooked and perverse nation, among whom ye shine as lights in the world." (Phil.2:15).

Amongst His regenerate people, God has chosen and ordained preachers, and they are commissioned to go into all the world diffusing the light of the gospel. The message of salvation and Divine truth was to go far beyond Judaea and the confines of Jewry. It was to ALL NATIONS, in accordance with the word spoken by the GREAT HEAD. Paul speaks of having been sent to the Gentiles: "To open their eyes and to turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins, and inheritance among them which are sanctified by faith that is in me." (Acts 26:18). We now proceed to look at the work of the ministry from this angle.

The God ordained preacher is first, light in himself - it is seen. Secondly, he dispenses light by his ministry, for he carries THE LAMP OF TRUTH. Our Lord describes this world as sitting in darkness, (cf.Matt.4:16). His ministers are entrusted with "a sure word of prophecy," and being thus equipped they are as lights shining in a dark place, (cf. 2 Pet.1:19).

As afore said, light is something which is manifest. The sun is light in itself; it is an impossibility for the sun to be other than light. It might be clouded, even obscured from view, but that does not in any way alter the actual character of the sun; it is in itself light.

Into this world came the Son of God: "God is light and in Him there is no darkness at all." (1 John 1:5). At His birth it was declared that He came, "as a light to lighten the Gentiles (or nations)." (Luke 2:32). During His public ministry the Lord substantiated that statement by saying: "I am the light of the world," (John 8:12) but as His life upon earth was drawing to its close, He said to His disciples, it is but a little while that ye shall have ME AS LIGHT in the world, (cf. John 12:35). When Christ had completed the work which He had come to do upon earth, He returned to heaven. He was no longer in the world. As long as He was in the world, He was the light of the world, (cf. John 9:5) but now the light of witness was set in the Church, and in a very special sense, the ministers or messengers of the Church. These are termed in the Book of the Revelation "stars" and "angels." (Cf. Rev. 1:1 and 2 and Rev.2:1). Stars are luminaries: angels are light bearers. Further to this, within the context of the seven church epistles, as contained in Revelation chapters 2 and 3: the angel is the minister or messenger within each local church (A. V. margin) We see, therefore, by these analogies that there is a perfect dovetailing into ONE TRUTH, and that is, that the God ordained minister is a luminary or light in the world: a star in a scene of spiritual darkness.

Having given to His disciples this charge, and clearly informed them of the tremendous fact that they are to be lights in this world, the Lord immediately adds: "A city that is set on a hill cannot be hid." (Matt.5:14).

As is often the case with Holy Scripture there is more than one meaning: it is so here, and each aspect is very solemn. Firstly, a city which is upon a hill is ALWAYS in view. So it is with the minister of the Word of God. You are in an elevated position, says the Great Head of the Church, all eyes are upon you, you are placed in a position of prominence, both in the church and in the world. THIS DEMANDS GREAT CARE. It calls for uprightness

of life, a walk which is circumspect and conduct which is exemplary.

However, more must he said, for this office is not given to men to puff them up; a minister is not told that he is set on a hill that he form the opinion that he is a person of renown amongst God's people; indeed not! Neither is it a position in the church of a professional nature which necessitates a special title, or which calls for distinguishing garb. This kind of thing is abhorrent and completely foreign to the God ordained office of the minister.

C. H. Spurgeon said: "It is at any rate a suspicious circumstance, that among mankind no class of persons should so commonly describe themselves by a pretentious title as the professed ministers of the lowly Jesus: Peter and Paul were 'right reverend' men, but they would have been the last to call themselves so. A lad fresh from college who has just been placed in the pulpit is called the 'Reverend Smith,' whilst his eminently Godly father who has for fifty years walked with God has no claim for such reverence. We wonder where men first sought out this invention, and from whose mind did the original sin emanate. We suspect he lived in the Roman Row in 'Vanity Fair,' though John Bunyan does not mention him. One thing is pretty certain, he did not flourish in the days of the 'Reverend Paul,' or 'Reverend Peter' or 'Reverend Apollos'."

The great apostle Paul, a minister so mightily used of God, said: "I was made a minister according to the gift of the grace of God given unto me by the effectual working of His power. Unto me, WHO AM LESS THAN THE LEAST OF ALL SAINTS, is this grace given." (Eph.3:7-8).

When the Head of the Church said of His ministers: "Ye are as a city set on a hill," it certainly was not to exalt them, rather was it to warn them, to humble them and to put them on their guard, because they would always be subject to scrutiny, and any infidelity or sham would be noticed immediately.

You are ALWAYS in public view, says Christ: you CANNOT BE BE HID; so "watch and be sober." This then is one meaning, but there is another.

As previously stated, the minister bears the lamp of truth, and as the bearer or dispenser of light he is elevated as a city on a hill, or, as a lighthouse on a prominent headland. Of itself, a city or a lighthouse is but bricks and mortar. The function of a lighthouse is to beam out THE LIGHT. Thus, the minister of the Word of God, having been elevated to the headland of such a high calling, although only an earthen vessel himself, is to beam out THE TRUTH OF THE HOLT SCRIPTURES with all its doctrine and teaching. He is to shun not to declare all the counsel of God. (cf. Acts 20:27).

It is for this reason that the minister is said to be set on a hill. "We are made a spectacle unto the world, and to angels, and men" says Paul. (1 Cor.4\*9). The thought behind this verse has reference to the "public theatre" or "arena" where what is talking place is seen and heard by the world, by angels and by men. How many ministers realize that they are observed by angels as well as men, and that sinless spirit beings listen to their preaching? It is not the privilege of those creatures, neither is it their responsibility, to shine as lights in this dark fallen planet; but they ARE witnesses. (One can but wonder at what they think as they observe the pathetic preaching from some of today's pulpits.)

Angels are not just passive listeners and observers of earthly ministers only, No! These angels are ministers and light bearers themselves in another realm to that of the "angels" or "ministers" of the churches as referred to in Revelation chapters 2 and 3: but both are in the service of the SAME GOD. Both are working to the same goal and for the glory of the God of heaven. Just as it is required of those heavenly Spirits never to fail in beaming their light in the regions assigned them - and they never do - so is it required of the "stars" whom God has called to minister His Word and diffuse the light of His truth on earth.

This thought brings us to the next verse which must never be overlooked: "Neither do men light a candle, and put it under a bushel, but on a candlestick; and it giveth light unto all that are in the house." (Matt. 5:15). The minister, being the custodian in a SPECIAL sense, is the PUBLIC EXPOUNDER of the Word of God which the Psalmist says is both a lamp and a light, (cf. Ps.119:105).

In order that this lamp might shine in all its brilliance and shed light in every area of life: moral, domestic, political, social, as well as spiritual, the truth of Holy Scripture must be ministered entire. The preacher must not evade teaching which might be unpopular or that deals with matters of a sensitive nature. How often is this done! Much of God's sacred truth cuts right across today's behaviour in society. The doctrine of the church and the mandate laid down for church order and practice is not acceptable to present day carnally minded Christians, and so ministers tone down the message; certain sections of Holy Writ are never referred to, or, if so, misinterpreted and quickly passed over. Elders in the church (if there are any in the Biblical sense) are more than happy that this shall be done, lest controversy should arise, which many so called elders would be totally unable to deal with. Also, how little is heard from the pulpits of Great Britain in this 20th century of the moral teaching of God's Word, together with temperance, the grave responsibilities of rulers and all in authority, plus the duties of Christians relative to the State. Is it to be wondered at that one marriage in three breaks down, and ends in divorce? and that sexual promiscuity, homosexuality and lesbianism are now tolerated in today's society.

Where are the preachers who will, in plain explicit language, spell out these vile sins of Sodom with the consequent judgment which God places upon them?

The breakdown of law and order is at an unprecedented level, yet, how many pulpits are thundering out the truth of corporal and capital punishment? Drugs and drink are sore evils in our day. Whilst many preachers have had quite a lot to say about drugs, why the silence on alcohol? - equally as dangerous, and far more prevalent.

Alas, many a blanket has been thrown over the lamp of God's Truth by those called upon to beam it forth. Is it any wonder that society and the church are in such darkness concerning vast areas of truth? Sadder still, how many have fallen and made shipwreck who should have had their treacherous path illuminated by the lamp of Holy Scripture focussed upon them from the pulpit.

It is a tragedy of the greatest magnitude when ministers of the Word of God put light UNDER A BUSHEL and much truth is hidden - never aired - never disclosed. Yea, it is a GRIEVOUS SIN. This is the very thing, which when persisted, in, leads eventually to APOSTACY.

Christ the Head has set His ministers as CANDIES upon a candlestick. He has, by His Holy Spirit, endowed men with gifts fitting them for the work, and called them to the ministry in order that they may give light "UNTO ALL THAT ARE IN THE HOUSE." A gathered company is in view here; it is the assembled saints with a God ordained minister diffusing the light of the truth of God's Word. What saith the Spirit of God through the apostle Paul? "For the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ: till we all come to the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ: that we henceforth be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive; but speaking the truth in love, may grow up into Him in all things, which is the Head even Christ." (Eph. 4:12-15).

The teacher or minister is A GIFT to the local Body of Christ, he is there for THE WORK OF THE MINISTRY, to edify and build up the saints; to instruct them in ALL TRUTH for their development and perfecting. This does not mean that they will reach spiritual perfection, rather that, through sound and thorough teaching, no truth being WITHHELD, they will grow and develop perfectly and not suffer from spiritual "rickets" through malnutrition; neither nervy and hysterical by virtue of spiritual excitement, nor flabby and immature resulting from a "milk and sugar" diet. NO! The Word of God must be expounded in all its fulness - A COMPLETE AND BALANCED MENU - in order that all may come to a position of UNITY IN THE FAITH; all believing, speaking and practicing the SAME THINGS, not tossed about or carried away with novelties and extra-Biblical frills and fancies.

Let the question be asked: How can a church come to such a happy position of ALL speaking the same things if ALL THINGS have never been taught? How can there be a unity of the faith if parts of THE FAITH once delivered, have been

hidden from the members by the teacher? It must be emphasized that there will never be clear light in the house if there is not light in the candlestick. In the main, light in the pew comes from the light beamed out from the pulpit.

In concluding this section of instruction to His disciples on the mountain side, Christ adds: "Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven." (Matt.5:16). "LET YOUR LIGHT SHINE." In other words the Head is spying, you know these things to be true yourself, then do not cover them up in any circumstances or situation. Light is not given to a minister for his private edification, it is for the good of all that are "IN THE HOUSE," that is the gathered company of the Lord's people in a local church, and in consequence, the world around. The minister is to hold it forth in a most conspicuous manner. LET IT SHINE BEFORE MEN. But that is not all: "let it SO shine that they may see YOUR good works." By this is signified, SOUND TEACHING AND FAITHEUL EXPOSITION: all the truth fully set out in every situation, backed by a godly life and example. His preaching of sound doctrine and his deportment must correspond if he is to shine in the true sense, as indicated by the Great Head.

When sincerity, love, fidelity, zeal, faithfulness, self-sacrifice and perseverance is seen in a teaching elder, THEN is God glorified.

In these four articles on THE WORK OF THE MINISTRY, focus has been entirely on the pulpit, but in order to maintain a balance, a word should be addressed in conclusion to the pew.

The apostle Paul, in his letter to the church at Ephesus says: "Praying ... for me, that utterance may be given unto me, that I may open my mouth boldly, to make known the mystery of the gospel." (Eph.6:I8-I9). Similarly, to the church at Corinth: "Ye also helping together by prayer for us, that for the gift bestowed upon us by the means of many persons thanks may be given by many on our behalf." (2 Cor. 1:11). Again, to the Roman Christians: "Now I beseech you brethren, for the Lord Jesus Christ's sake, and for the love of the Spirit, that ye strive together with me in your prayers to God for us."



(Rom. 15:30). Just as a minister is to STRIVE in the exposition of the Word, diffusing its wondrous light, so should the church STRIVE in prayer on his behalf; and as through the regular faithful preaching of the Truth all are blessed, so should thanks be given to God for it. Not for the man but for the GIFT given to the church by THE HEAD.

W. H. Molland

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TO MINISTERS - (William Cowper)

When Nations are to perish in their sins,  
'Tis in the church the leprosy begins:  
The minister, whose office is, with zeal sincere,  
To watch the foundation and preserve it clear,  
Carelessly nods and sleeps upon the brink,  
While others poison what "the flock" must drink;  
Or, waking at the call of lust alone,  
Infuses lies and errors of his own:  
His unsuspecting sheep believe it pure,  
And, tainted by the very means of cure,  
Catch from each other a contagious spot,  
The foul forerunner of a general rot,  
Then Truth is hushed, that Heresy may preach,  
And all is trash that Reason cannot reach;  
Then God's own image on the soul impressed  
Becomes a mockery and a standing jest;  
And Faith, the root whence only can arise  
The graces of a life that wins the skies,  
Loses at once all value and esteem,  
Pronounced by greybeards a pernicious dream;  
Then Ceremony leads her bigots forth,  
Prepared to fight for shadows of no worth;  
While Truths, on which Eternal Things depend,  
Find not, or hardly find, a single friend:  
As soldiers watch the signal of command,  
They learn to bow, to kneel, to sit, to stand;  
Happy to fill Religion's vacant place  
With hollow form, and gesture, and grimace.

## THE WOMAN'S HEAD COVERING

Douglas D. Jones

(Nailsea)

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The appropriate passage for us to turn to is the eleventh chapter of Paul's first epistle to the Corinthians, the second verse of which begins a new section in the epistle. Here the apostle commends the church that in general it remains obedient to the precepts which he handed down to them. He goes on to deal with matters which relate to the mode of conducting gatherings of the church. (See 1 Cor. 11:17,18,20,33,34 & 14:23,26). The first of these concerns the practice which had begun among some of the women of not wearing a head covering at such gatherings. The context would seem to indicate that he is dealing with an irregularity which might be attributed to ignorance and which requires enlightenment. A similar need often exists today.

The manner in which the apostle dealt with this question should be carefully noted. He did not do so by resorting to mere pragmatism - estimating an assertion solely by its practical bearing on human interests. Such is an unhappy feature of much of the reasoning of many twentieth century Christians. Rather did Paul apply Scriptural principles and so must we if we are to honour God. This is seen immediately as we come to verse 3 - "But I would have you know, that the head of every man is Christ; and the head of the woman is the man; and the head of Christ is God." It has been pointed out that Paul wishes the Corinthians to know that though all men are not members of the body of which Christ is the head, every man whether he knows it or not is nevertheless subject to the headship or government of Christ - "the head of every man is Christ." Moreover, "the head of the woman is the man."

Such a statement is met with fierce opposition from supporters of "Women's Lib." While we might expect this reaction from people who do not believe the Scriptures, it is true that the very idea of the headship of the man over the woman is also contested by some Christians. They view such relationship as involving a most degrading position of inferiority for the woman which they will not accept. They will refer you to Galatians 3:28, insisting that Paul

says that in Christ Jesus there is neither male nor female. Well, of course, we agree with the apostle, but what some fail to understand is that at this point he is making reference to the redemptive relationship of one to another as a result of the work of Christ. The woman is as fully a partaker of the benefits of redemption as the man. In the eleventh chapter of 1 Corinthians, however, the whole context of the passage shows that Paul is referring to the divine order in Creation so that the head of the woman is the man, a truth which is developed as he proceeds, but there is not the slightest suggestion that the woman is degraded by this order. Indeed, Christianity gives a dignity to womanhood not found elsewhere. Moreover, as verse 3 reveals, the great pattern of headship and subjection is exhibited in the relation of the Son of God to the Father - "and the head of Christ is God." On this, Matthew Poole helpfully comments, "God is the Head of Christ, not in respect of his essence and divine nature, but in respect of his office as Mediator, as the man is the head of the woman, not in respect of a different and more excellent essence and nature (for they are both of the same nature), but in respect of office and place, as God hath set him over the woman." Here, then in this verse is the divine order - GOD, CHRIST, MAN, WOMAN. The Father is head over the Son, the Son over the Man, the Man over the Woman. Consequently, both man and woman are in subjection to Christ and God.

As the Apostle proceeds, we see that he is showing that this divine order is to be recognised in the gatherings of the Lord's people.

"Every man praying or prophesying, having his head covered, dishonoureth his head." (v.4). By "prophesying" we understand speaking forth under divine inspiration. Sometimes this will involve prediction, but by no means always. In the text, the term "having his head covered" more literally means "having something down on the head." It is interesting to note that while the Greeks did not do so, the Jews prayed with the head covered. Even today the Jewish man worships in the Orthodox or Conservative synagogue wearing a hat or skullcap. Besides this there is a second article which he puts on at every morning service whether at home or in the synagogue. It is called a "tallit" or "prayer shawl" and is worn by adult males, although younger boys may often also wear it at services.

The "tallit" resembles the style of an outer garment worn in ancient Palestine. In the later time of dispersion when Jews adopted other garments for dress, the "tallit" was reserved for ritual purposes alone. It has "tzitzit" or fringes at each of its four comers, each knotted five times, to remind the worshipper of the commandments of God, the idea coming from what the law of Moses prescribed in regard to the fringe in the borders of the garment (Numbers 15:38-40 and Deut.22.12). The "tallit" is worn over the head. In a most informative book entitled, "To understand Jews," a Senior Rabbi, Stuart E. Rosenberg, observes that a single, simple reason cannot very easily be ascribed as being responsible for this custom of head covering which has become a hallowed tradition among the Jews, but suggests that the idea might originate from the fact that the High Priest of old officiated in the temple at Jerusalem with a mitre upon his head with a golden diadem with a purple cord bearing the inscription, "Holiness unto the Lord." Undoubtedly to the Jew, the head covering is a sign of reverence for God and a sense of unworthiness. The writings of the Rabbis confirm this.

Paul was, of course, himself a Jew, but, in the light of the divine order, he sets forth something quite different for the Christian gathering, saying that every man who prays or prophesies with his head covered dishonours his head. We must try to determine what he means by "his head." Some have asserted that Paul means a man's own physical head. However, this surely will not do in the context of verse 3. Who is the head of man? Undoubtedly Christ.' "The head of every man is Christ." When a man prays or prophesies with his head covered, he is dishonouring Christ. In what way? In a gathering of the church, there is no one VISIBLY over him. Since a head covering is a symbol of subjection, then he is dishonouring his INVISIBLE head, Christ, if he wears one, and indeed God the Father.

Now, what of the woman in a gathering of the church? "But every woman that prayeth or prophesieth with her head uncovered dishonoureth her head." Again, we have to go to verse 3 to understand what Paul means by "her head." - "The head of the woman is the man." Thus, the woman who gathers with the Lord's people for worship with head uncovered is dishonouring the man who, in the divine order, is head over her. She is failing to wear the symbol

of that headship although the man is there VISIBLY in her presence. She is, in effect, throwing off the token of her subjection not only to man, but indirectly to Christ and God. Paul continues, "for that is even all one as if she were shaven. For if the woman be not covered, let her also be shorn: but if it be a shame for a woman to be shorn or shaven, let her be covered." (ws.5-6). To understand this, it has to be appreciated that Corinth, where this church to which Paul wrote gathered, was noted for its moral perversity. Immoral women who were numerous, were distinguished in public by the fact that, unlike other women, they went about without a head covering, that is, unveiled. It was the token of a degraded woman.

What does Paul say here, then, about a woman in a Christian gathering who does not cover her head in order to show a divinely appointed subjection? She might as well make her reproach complete by having her head shaved. But it is an unseemly thing to have her head cropped short or completely shaved. In what way? Well, according to the law of Moses, a foreign woman taken captive had her hair shorn. (Deut.21:12). Moreover, among the Jews, a woman convicted of adultery had her hair shorn with the formula, "because thou hast departed from the manner of the daughters of Israel, who go with their head covered, therefore that hast befallen thee which thou hast chosen." Some of you will remember that after the defeat of the Nazis in the second world war, women in occupied countries who had prostituted themselves to the enemy soldiers had their heads shaved as a sign of their fornications and adulteries. So, in verse 6 here, since it is shameful for a woman to be shorn or shaven, let her not put herself on a level with a common courtesan, but rather wear the proper token of her subjection when she gathers with the church.

It might be argued, as some do, that in our present day society the bare head is no longer a mark of insubordination or of doubtful morals. Fashions have changed! That is true, but such people fail to appreciate that Paul's objections were on a spiritual level, rather than merely to do with social custom. In fact, in verses 7 to 9 he goes right back to Creation to enforce his argument. "For a man ought not to cover his head, forasmuch as he is the image and glory of God."

The reference is undoubtedly to Genesis 1:26-27: "And God said, let us make man in our image, after our likeness: and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth. So God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him; male and female created he them." In that particular instance, of course, there is no distinction made between male and female, but Paul sees the wider issue as applying to the man, which is in accord with other Scriptures that show Adam, the man, to be the representative head of the human race. It was through him, as such, that sin with its consequences entered into the world, although it was the woman who first partook of the forbidden fruit in Eden. Man is the image of God in that he is a visible representative of God. He is the highest of all living beings on earth. Thus, even though the image has been marred by sin, Man has no visible head in creation. Since man is the summit of God's creation, then he shows forth God's glory as does nothing else. That being so, there should be no token of subordination on his head when he worships.

Now notice in verse 7, while the man is described as the image and glory of God it is said that "the woman is the glory of the man." The woman has a place of her own, but it is not man's place. She stands to the man in such a relation as does nothing else, and so she is called the glory of the man. As someone has put it: "The expression at one and the same time assures her of a high place in the scheme of things and ensures that it is not man's place." Therefore, man as created in God's image should not have his head covered when worshipping, but it is fitting that the woman should be thus covered in that by God's ordinance she is subject to man. Paul reinforces his argument - "For the man is not of the woman; but the woman of the man. Neither was the man created for the woman, but the woman for the man. (verses 8 and 9). Neither in her origin, nor the purpose for which she was created can the woman claim priority or even equality with the man.

From Genesis 2:22 we learn that the LORD God made woman from the rib or part of Adam's side. He did not originate from her, but she from him. Moreover, he was not created for her, but she for him. In Genesis 2:18 we read how the LORD God said: "It is not good that man should he alone; I

will make an help meet for him" - that is, "a helper fit for him" or "a suitable helper completing him." This was no afterthought on the part of the Creator, but rather in the working out of His eternal purposes. It was not good that man should remain alone in that as created he had potential emotions which could only be called forth in their fullness by the companionship of the woman. In this, then, we see the subordinate place and yet the dignified position of the woman in the economy of God.

Having thoroughly set out the divine order, Paul now proceeds to apply his argument concerning the woman having her head covered in the gatherings of the church. "For this cause ought the woman to have power on her head because of the angels." (verse 10). The word rendered "power" here is Greek "exousian." As used here, it refers to a sign or symbol of authority. The head covering is a visible symbol of the place assigned to her in the divine order and because she wears it, it becomes the sign of her authority to approach God. But Paul has a further point. He says that she ought to have this sign of authority on her head "because of the angels." (verse 10). It is evident that both the Jews and early Christians regarded the angels as being present in gatherings for worship.

It may be remembered that in his sufferings, Paul thought of himself and other apostles as a spectacle to angels as well as to men (1 Cor.4:9). He tells the Ephesians that it is through the church that the manifold wisdom of God is being made known to the principalities and powers in the heavenlies. (Eph.3:10). The Lord Jesus said that there is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner who repents. (Luke 15:7 and 10). Angels earnestly desire to fathom the mysteries associated with the gospel. (1 Peter 1:12). Yes, angels are vitally interested spectators of what happens in the church here on earth. The insubordination of women in refusing to acknowledge the authority of the man in a Christian gathering offends the angels of God who themselves know no insubordination to Him. Since they are present when the church gathers, great care should be taken not to offend them by any impropriety. Let us remember, then, it is not only a matter of what the people in the congregation see and think, the angels observe what is happening.

It is clear from what follows in verses 11 and 12 that Paul was careful not to give any excuse for anyone demanding an undue subordination of the woman.

"Nevertheless" he says, "neither is the man without the woman (i.e. independent of her), neither the woman without the man, in the Lord. For as the woman is of the man, so is the man also by the woman, but all things of God." He states this in order to balance what has preceded and to prevent a totally insufficient value being placed upon the woman in the divine relationship as if she were to be looked down upon as someone quite inferior. "In the Lord" that is, under the rule of Christ where the dignity of the woman is duly recognized, the man and the woman are seen as vitally necessary for each other. They were made to be of mutual comfort and blessing, not for one to be a tyrant and the other a slave. Neither is independent of the other. While in original creation the woman is "of the man" (Greek - 'ek,' 'out of') nevertheless in the continued procedure, the man is "by the woman" (Greek 'dia' - 'by means of'), but all things, including men and women are "of God" (Greek - 'ek,' 'out of'). All derive their being from the Creator of all things. It is all of His counsels, His ordinance, His act. This is a great truth that pervades the whole volume of Scripture.

From verse 13, Paul passes from the divine authority and headship betokened by the head covering of the woman to appeal to his readers' own sense of the fitness of things. "Judge in yourselves: is it comely (is it becoming) that a woman pray unto God uncovered?" i.e. without a covering for her head. "Does not even nature itself teach you, that, if a man have long hair, it is a shame unto him? But if a woman have long hair, it is a glory to her: for her hair is given her for a covering." (verses 14 and 15). Charles Hodge points out that the word "phusis" translated "nature" here sometimes means "essence" or "substance", sometimes "the laws of nature" or "of our natural constitution," sometimes the instinctive feelings or judgments which are the effects of these laws. He observes that it is the last sense - what we might term "natural sentiment reflected by universal custom" - that it is commonly supposed Paul means when he speaks about men having long hair and women having long hair. He points out, however, that the apostle may well mean the laws or course of nature; I quote, "Nature gives the man short hair and the woman long hair; and therefore nature itself



teaches that long hair is a disgrace to the one and an ornament to the other; for it is disgraceful in a man to be like a woman, and in a woman to be like a man. Wearing long hair was contrary to the customs both of the Hebrews and Greeks. The Nazarites, as a distinction, allowed their hair to grow (Numbers 6:8). It was considered so much a mark of effeminacy for men to wear long hair, that it was ridiculed by Juvenal (who incidentally was a Roman satirist and poet), but in after times seriously censured by church councils.

To a woman, however, in all ages and countries, long hair has been considered an ornament. The length to which the hair of some of the male sex grows in our own day might cause some to question as to whether nature itself does teach us anything in this respect, yet the fact remains that there is an inclination for men to go bald far more than women. But then again, one has often been faced with the question: "What IS long hair with a man?" Appeal will be made to changing styles and so on. My reply to this is - "When it comes to a stage where you cannot easily tell whether a person is a man or not because of the length of his hair, then surely it is the time to think seriously about what the Bible describes as being "a shame unto him." There was a cartoon in the local paper recently depicting a clergyman officiating at a wedding ceremony. He looks bewildered as he regards the couple in front of him. "which of you" he asks "is the bridegroom?"

Of course, we must take care that we do not read into Scripture what is not there. Paul is not saying that a woman must have long hair, but if she does, it is a glory to her. From what we learn of those days, however, it is evident that women took great care as to how they kept their long hair. Not for them the present fashion of draping it over nearly the whole face, so that the woman has to keep tossing her head to keep it out of her eyes, and more often than not, is only able to see out of one of them - but then that is regarded as the very height of attractiveness. The silly things may well end up with symptoms of St. Vitus' Dance if they persist in it. And as for putting a head covering on top of that, well it would spoil everything. Why wear one when she has such nice hair anyway?

Some will assert they've found a Scripture to demolish all that we've been saying, indeed it comes right here in verse 15. "But if a woman have long hair, it is a glory to her: for her hair is given her for a covering." Is a woman's hair the kind of covering for which the apostle has been contending all through this passage? Such an assertion can immediately be exposed as being utterly ludicrous as well as contrary to all that he has been saying. If a woman's hair is the covering to which he has been referring, then in verse 5 where he speaks of a woman praying or prophesying with her head uncovered, he is complaining about women with no hair.' But he goes on in the same verse to say that is just as if she were shaven. Do you not see how stupid such an argument is? The words in verse 15 "her hair is given her for a covering" do not mean that a woman's hair is the only token or symbol of subjection which is required in the gatherings of the church and that she needs no other. Rather, what has been given to the woman as a natural, covering ought to teach her the propriety of the temporary covering used on these occasions. What nature teaches is to be further visibly expressed with the wearing of a head covering by the woman.

As today, there were obviously those in Paul's time who loved to dispute over such matters. Therefore in verse 16 we find him saying: "But if any man seem to be contentious (this word means 'one who loves strife') we have no such custom, neither the churches of God.' Clearly the apostle does not mean 'we have no such custom of being contentious.' He means 'we have no such custom as women worshipping without a head covering.' What the apostle sets forth here as being of such great spiritual import is no matter for debate. Rather does he put the stamp of his apostolic authority upon what he has said and declares that he certainly does not teach it, nor do other churches practice it. That Paul carried his point is evident from early church history. There was no rapid spread of this unseemly irregularity which had arisen in Corinth, and one would assume that matters were put right there, too. However, what was carefully observed in former centuries in Christendom has, in the life time of some of us, been largely discarded. Justification for this is asserted on the grounds that what were long established customs have disappeared in the twentieth century. It isn't fashionable these days for women to wear hats anyway. It was something

our great grandmothers did and some grandmothers and mothers still do, but it is not for the younger generation. That being so, it looks odd to wear a head covering when you go to church. I hope that this present exposition will have shown that this is a far more serious matter than keeping up with fashion. It concerns the possibility of dishonouring God and His beloved Son to whom the believer belongs not only by creation, but redemption, too.

If we are truly regenerate, then we should recognise that we are under the authority of the Word of God in this matter.

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#### EDITORIAL

An old writer once stated: "No minister dare discard one iota of truth, for it is not his to discard." A timely word in the light of recent articles which have appeared in this magazine.

Only when ministers are prepared to declare the whole counsel of God without fear or favour, to both saint and sinner, coupled with a godly submission wrought by the Holy Spirit in the hearts of those in the pew, making them receptive to the authoritative Word of God, can we hope to see better things.

May it please God, even yet, in His mercy to grant it.

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"Turn ye from your evil ways, and keep my commandments and my statutes, according to all the law which I commanded your fathers, and which I sent to you by my servants the prophets." (2 Kings 17:13)

ANNOUNCEMENTS and INFORMATION

Visiting Preachers

<u>Sunday</u>	April	26th	Mr.J.Thackway	(Devizes)
	May	3rd	Mr.M.Watts	(Salisbury)
	May	24th	Mr.K.Matrunola	(Portsmouth)
	June	14th	Mr.D.D.Jones	(Nailsea)
<u>Thursday</u>	May	7th	Mr.F.Stanbury	(Bow)
	June	4th	" "	" "
	July	2nd	" "	" "

On Thursday 18th June Mr.J.C.Woodhouse of Chard, the Regional representative of The Trinitarian Bible Society will speak of the work, and minister, at 7.15 pm.

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Preliminary Notice

Saturday 18th July 1987

ANNUAL BIBLE CONVENTION

Speaker: Mr. John Roberts (Morden, Surrey).

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The Book: "SALVATION THE GIFT OF GOD OR THE CHOICE OF MAN?"  
By W. H. Molland.

2,000 copies were printed and became available in December last. One half have so far been sold in the U.K. and the U.S.A. We are most grateful to those who have reviewed and recommended this publication.

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It was a great joy to receive into the membership of the church on Lord's day February 15th our brother and sister in Christ Mr. and Mrs. David Wort. We thank God for them, and baby Samuel. We assure them of our prayers and love in the Lord.