

"I ask you to join me in my prayer for the victims of this calamity and urge all of you to ask the Lord fervently to grant the thirsty Earth the coolness of rain".²

There is no hint here of repentance. Just as the followers of the beast and false prophet "repented not", despite the effects of the fourth vial, so they will continue to refuse to repent of their evil ways.

At the heart of the Kingdom in Jerusalem "there shall be a tabernacle for a shadow in the daytime from the heat, and for a place of refuge, and for a covert from storm and from rain" (Isa. 4:6). In the Kingdom the faithful followers of

Christ "shall not hunger nor thirst; neither shall the heat nor sun smite them: for He That hath mercy on them shall lead them, even by the springs of water shall He guide them" (49:10).

As we see the effect of extreme heat in the earth, we know this is just a precursor of the judgements to come that will overthrow the Gentile political heavens. Let us heed the warning of Peter and consider "what manner of persons" we ought to be "in all holy conversation and godliness" (2 Pet. 3:11).

2. <http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/world/europe/3139549.stm>

The three frog spirits and humanism (3)

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IN THE PREVIOUS two articles the historical link between the three frog spirits and humanism has been demonstrated. In this final article we will consider the warnings for the ecclesia and the lessons that we can draw from these considerations.

Note firstly the conjunction of three verses in Revelation 16:

"And I saw three unclean spirits like frogs come out of the mouth of the dragon, and out of the mouth of the beast, and out of the mouth of the false prophet. For they are the spirits of devils, working miracles, which go forth unto the kings of the earth and of the whole world, to gather them to the battle of that great day of God Almighty. Behold, I come as a thief. Blessed is he that watcheth, and keepeth his garments, lest he walk naked, and they see his shame" (vv. 13-15).

The ecclesia is warned to watch in the context of the spirits performing their unclean work to gather the nations to Armageddon. The clear implication is that the work of those spirits can affect the ecclesia. In other words, humanism is likely to be an evil influence on the ecclesial world of the last days. It is therefore an urgent lesson that we recognise humanism for what it is, and resist its influences in our ecclesias.

In this concluding article we would like to highlight briefly some of the false teachings and practices in the modern ecclesia which have all the characteristics of humanism, and then examine the Scriptural antidote to humanism.

The spirit of liberty

The spirit of liberty certainly seems to be abroad, manifesting worldly thinking and freedoms in the ecclesia. Three examples will suffice.

Divorce, and remarriage after divorce, display both freedom of thought and freedom of action. It is not the place here to expound details of Scriptural teaching in these matters, on which there will be differing views between brethren. But just two quotations illustrate how we really should eschew these practices as completely as possible in the ecclesia. The prophet wrote: "For the LORD, the God of Israel, saith that He hateth putting away" (Mal. 2:16). Furthermore, the principle of the ecclesia as a chaste virgin bride espoused to one husband is a principle that conflicts with any practice of divorce and remarriage, and sets the standard that we must seek to support and uphold: "For I am jealous over you with godly jealousy: for I have espoused you to one husband, that I may present you as a chaste virgin to Christ" (2 Cor. 11:2).

The second example is that of evolution. It is disturbing that in some of the Brotherhood's writings recently there seems to be an attempt to make theistic evolution Scripturally respectable. This represents an unacceptable degree of freedom of thought when applied to Scriptural matters. God spoke and it was done, according to His Word, and in six days. That is surely the plain, unambiguous teaching of the inspired Word. To go beyond that is to take a liberty with that Word.

The third example concerns futurist interpretations of Revelation. Brethren may differ over, and sometimes be uncertain over details of, Apocalyptic interpretation, but there should be no difference or uncertainty over the basic method of interpretation. That is Scripturally established. Revelation is closely linked to Daniel. The beasts of Revelation expand Daniel's fourth beast. That beast has the same identity as the iron legs of Nebuchadnezzar's image. The interpretations given within Daniel show that the method to be used is what we normally term 'continuous historic'.

The metals of Daniel 2 and the beasts of Daniel 7 represent successive world empires. It follows, therefore, that Revelation should be interpreted by the same principle. To use any other principle is to use non-Scriptural principles, which is in effect to deny the Word of God; this, in Scriptural language, is "devilish"; it is precisely what the serpent did in Eden. In effect it is to call God a liar, falsely. That is devilish, for the 'diabolos' is a false accuser. This is strong language, but we believe it is true, and it constitutes a solemn warning to the ecclesias.

These are examples of the application of unwarranted freedom of thought and action to Scripture. This is a false illusion of freedom which in fact is no freedom at all. It merely perpetuates the bondage to sin and death into which we are all born in Adam. True freedom comes through obedience to Christ:

"Know ye not, that to whom ye yield yourselves servants to obey, his servants ye are to whom ye obey; whether of sin unto death, or of obedience unto righteousness? But God be thanked, that ye were the servants of sin, but ye have obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine which was delivered you. Being then made free from sin, ye became the servants of righteousness" (Rom. 6:16-18).

In this situation we become "the Lord's freeman" (1 Cor. 7:22).

The spirit of equality

Next we consider equality, and the dangers of this unclean spirit for the ecclesia. As the Humanist Manifesto II tells us, one of the great cries of our age is for equality between the sexes. Before God, in certain senses, there is no question that men and women are equal. We can all obtain salvation on the same basis of faith and grace, regardless of sex, for in Christ there is neither male nor female. But it is also clear from

the New Testament that there are distinctions between the sexes in certain respects:

"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. Every man praying or prophesying, having his head covered, dishonoureth his head. But every woman that prayeth or prophesieth with her head uncovered dishonoureth her head: for that is even all one as if she were shaven . . . For a man indeed ought not to cover his head, forasmuch as he is the image and glory of God: but the woman is the glory of the man. For the man is not of the woman; but the woman of the man" (1 Cor. 11:3-8).

This is one example. Women are to pray with a head-covering in the ecclesia; men are to pray with head uncovered. So, in this respect, as an example, the sexes do not have equality. Another example is that the women are to keep silence in the ecclesia. Again, there is not equality. However, many in the churches today, and sadly even some in the ecclesias, would challenge this, arguing for equality in the modern world. This, of course, fails to recognise vital principles. It is not that women are demeaned or men exalted. But the principle to be recognised is that in the ecclesia the man represents Christ, and thus prays uncovered, to honour Christ. The woman represents the whole ecclesia, and therefore is to be covered, illustrating that the flesh should be covered. To strive for equality against this teaching is to deny these beautiful principles.

Lack of morality, and in particular homosexuality, also fits into this category. In essence it denies the differences between and the proper role of the sexes. Such behaviour is abomination to God. It may not be politically correct to say so, but God cares not for human political correctness. He has declared that "abusers of themselves with mankind" (6:9) will not inherit the Kingdom of God. There is no room for compromise here, and, in a humanist world, where such behaviour is seen as an alternative norm, we do well to ensure that the ecclesia is not corrupted by such a philosophy.

The unclean spirit behind equality also advocates democracy, with all having an equal say and right to their opinion in society and its governance. In the Western world we are conditioned to think of democracy as a 'good thing'. It is a principle that nations will go to war to

defend; it is a principle that has been introduced into ecclesial affairs—sometimes at the expense of Scriptural principles—in favour of the will of the majority. Whilst it is true that democracy has allowed us freedom of worship as a community, it is also well to remember that the Kingdom will not be a democracy:

“Thou shalt break them with a rod of iron; thou shalt dash them in pieces like a potter’s vessel. Be wise now therefore, O ye kings: be instructed, ye judges of the earth. Serve the LORD with fear, and rejoice with trembling. Kiss the Son, lest he be angry, and ye perish from the way, when his wrath is kindled but a little. Blessed are all they that put their trust in Him” (Ps. 2:9-12).

We do well now to heed the way of wisdom and ensure that we are not conditioned so much to democracy that we would be in danger of being uncomfortable if invited into the Kingdom!

The spirit of fraternity

The last of the three unclean spirits is fraternity. We should have brotherly love one towards another, but we should not have fraternity with the world; yet that is the spirit of humanism—that all men are brothers. As Christ’s brethren we should be utterly separate from the world we have been called out of:

“Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers: for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? and what communion hath light with darkness? And what concord hath Christ with Belial? or what part hath he that believeth with an infidel? And what agreement hath the temple of God with idols? for ye are the temple of the living God; as God hath said, I will dwell in them, and walk in them; and I will be their God, and they shall be My people. Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you, and will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be My sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty” (2 Cor. 6:14-18).

Yet these principles can so easily be compromised in the ecclesial world. We know of ecclesias who speak of having an “open fellowship”. This may engender a nice, warm, fraternal spirit, but it is not consistent with the Scriptural principles of fellowship. We hear of our young people talking of drinking and clubbing. This is the way of friendship and fraternity with the world, not

the way of separation that true believers should follow.

The dangers are obvious, yet sadly these unclean spirits are having their effect on the ecclesial world. We should not be surprised. The fact that immediately after foretelling the frog spirits the Lord exhorts us to watch tells us that he knew that they would affect the ecclesia immediately before the return of the Master.

Conclusion: the antidote

The answer to these problems is very simple. Instead of putting man at the centre of our lives we should seek first the Kingdom of God and His righteousness. We should put His Word at the forefront of our lives and meditate on it day and night, and we should do our utmost to teach our children about the principles and promises of the Word. This was the advice given to Israel of old, and we shall allow the same words to conclude our study. Here is the antidote to humanism and the unclean froglike spirits at work in the world and the ecclesia:

“Now these are the commandments, the statutes, and the judgments, which the LORD your God commanded to teach you, that ye might do them in the land whither ye go to possess it: that thou mightest fear the LORD thy God, to keep all His statutes and His commandments, which I command thee, thou, and thy son, and thy son’s son, all the days of thy life; and that thy days may be prolonged. Hear therefore, O Israel, and observe to do it; that it may be well with thee, and that ye may increase mightily, as the LORD God of thy fathers hath promised thee, in the land that floweth with milk and honey. Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God is one LORD: and thou shalt love the LORD thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy might. And these words, which I command thee this day, shall be in thine heart: and thou shalt teach them diligently unto thy children, and shalt talk of them when thou sittest in thine house, and when thou walkest by the way, and when thou liest down, and when thou risest up. And thou shalt bind them for a sign upon thine hand, and they shall be as frontlets between thine eyes. And thou shalt write them upon the posts of thy house, and on thy gates” (Deut. 6:1-9).

If we take heed to these things we shall do well.

(Concluded)