

EXCERPTS FROM

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Enthusiasm these days seems to be vested in the sports fan, the hippie and the political revolutionary, but is sadly lacking in the Christian,

Indeed, Christian work today, speaking generally, is characterised by indifference, apathy and lassitude.

There are sudden bursts of excitement when some new thing is introduced, some 'with-it' method adopted or some great 'Drive' is launched, but how often does this prove to be 'MAN-POWER' rather than 'SPIRIT-POWER'. Daniel ch 11 v 32 says "The people that do know their God shall be strong and do exploits", but alas, in this day it is so little in evidence.

There seems to be descending upon the Church, a creeping paralysis that is numbing her senses, dulling her vision and sapping her energy.

As individuals and as a local fellowship of believers at North Road, we need to be watchful and vigilant that these things do not overtake us. We live in an age of theological, as well as moral permissiveness and compromise. Men of alleged spiritual leadership have developed a sinister ability to speak out of both sides of their tongues at the same time, as they stand with one foot in evangelicalism and the other in modernism.

Some of the basic tenets are being denied or at least diluted.

Let our theological rule of thumb be simple and straight forward, that if it is a new or a partially surrendered doctrine, then it is wrong. We prefer the "Old Paths" JER.ch 6 v 16 to the modern short cuts. We favour "THE FAITH" once delivered to the saints, JUDE 4, to the faith so often diluted by the scholars. Let us reject liberalism in all its guises. If the Bible is not still absolute, then it is obsolete. This is not shutting our eyes to facts, it is not standing with our head in the sand, but with our feet upon the rock.

There is all around us, appalling doctrinal confusion and error (Brethren circles are by no means exempt). Hywell R. Jones, at a conference, recently protested against the departure of much professing evangelical scholarship from its traditional scriptural position.

Belief in Scripture as being the inspired infallible, and inerrant Word of God, - much had been whittled away, he contended, to make evangelicalism intellectually respectable. Only in matters of saving faith, do we need to positively declare the infallibility of scripture. The theory of evolution is not necessarily inconsistent with the Bible. The Mosaic authorship of Genesis need not be accepted.

The first eleven chapters of Genesis may well be mythical, The Book of Jonah just a parable. Two or even more authors of Isaiah.

These scholars, says Mr Jones, have opened the flood gates of compromise and accommodation. This kind of thing is infiltrating everywhere, books and commentaries have recently been published, which many would automatically assume to be thoroughly reliable because of their source, but upon close examination, they contain liberal and loose interpretation.

How we need to heed the apostles' warning: "Take heed to thyself and to the doctrine", we need to be like the children of Issachar, and be men who have understanding of the times, for we certainly are in the falling away stage. Not only in the field of doctrine, but also in evangelism. The Hon. Rowland Lamb speaking said "That much today betrayed a lack of conviction, that it pleases God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe" (1 COR ch 1 v 21). Instead of uncompromisingly proclaiming the attributes of God, the Holy Law of God, repentance, and a call to submit to the once crucified, but now-enthroned Christ, yes instead of declaring all the counsel of God (ACTS 20 v 27) and trusting Him the Lord of the harvest for the longed-for result, Christians are busy too often about a pseudo-evangelism in its varied forms. I find no example, says Mr Lamb, either in Scripture, or in the lives of outstanding Christians, or in the historic records of revivals, of Christians having compromised the faith in an effort to reach the lost. Too much of what is being done today is bringing into the Churches, a generation who have a longing to be entertained, but little, if any desire for the deep study of the Scriptures, and prayer.

How we should thank God for some of these men of influence who are endeavouring to stem the tide in the

Church today, and encompass them with our prayers. But we must not just project our attention and thinking upon such men as these alone, but to ourselves, that we as a company of believers might know our God, and be strong, strong in the Lord - strong in faith, that as we step into this new year, we may do so with steadfastness, ever keeping the emphasis on preaching and not programmes on declaration and not debate. Being watchful lest any man beguile us. Let the word of the Lord to Joshua, be our watchword as we enter 1974, "Be strong and of a good courage, be not afraid, neither be dismayed, (Josh 1 v 9).

Weakness, cowardice, fright, dismay, these are deadly weapons of the adversary, God help us to be victorious over these things, for it is not enough to just separate ourselves from evil and error, we must speak, exhort and rebuke these things, with all authority (TITUS ch 2 v 15)

May God by His grace and His power, keep us resolute and unwavering, that His great name may be glorified.

We send our love and assurance of constant prayer again to our sick friends. This message is not so much for you, many of you have borne the heat and burden of the day, and we have entered into the good of so much of your labour, but this message is for those of us who are younger, and upon whose shoulders, there falls the responsibility of continuing the witness and warfare, in a day which will rapidly now become darker and more difficult. How we need the WORD OF GOD abiding in us, that we might be strong. (1 JOHN 2 v 14).

W.H.M.

ANNOUNCEMENTS & INFORMATION

In view of the desperate days in which we live, and because of the subtle and sometimes savage attacks which the devil is making upon the Church, and more particularly still, as the adversary continually assails the local fellowship at North Road, the overseers are deeply concerned that the Church be called to prayer. We take our stand, and resolve at North Road, to adhere to the whole of Biblical Truth. We are very much aware that the devil will I withstand and seek to frustrate in many and divers ways, our witness.

Fellow believers, we cannot wage this battle in our own strength. We have arrayed against us, principalities, powers, rulers of darkness and spiritual wickedness, Eph.6 v 12.

Furthermore, the battle is the Lord's, and 'He must be brought into it, He must be presented with every detail, and He the Great Captain must be in absolute command'.

One medium has been designed by God Himself, for this purpose - PRAYER, COMMUNION, - when we acquaint Him with all the difficulties and dangers, and seek the strength which He alone can give.

We ask that every man and woman in our fellowship who is able, to take this matter to heart, and during this coming quarter, to be present whenever possible for prayer, for humiliation before God for our failures, and to seek His help and blessing upon us in future days.

So let us rally to the post of spiritual duty - for duty it is. Let every brother come and utter a brief prayer or if he feels he cannot, to say amen. Sisters, your ministry is equally important to be present to stand by and loyally support. For those who cannot be present, to set aside this time on Thursday at 7 p.m. and Sundays at 6 p.m. and in your rooms, mingle your prayers with ours.

We have lamentably failed as a Church in our prayer life, let us return: 'If my people, which axe called by my name, shall humble themselves, and pray, and seek my face, and turn from their wicked ways; then will I hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin, and will heal their land.' (11 Chron. 7 v 14).

As is usual for us during this quarter, we like to include in our Thursday night meetings, two or three missionary reports. This time we have coming, a member of the Open Air Mission, a worker from the London City Mission and Mr Roy Wood from Zaire. An offering will be taken for the work at the close of each of these meetings.

The weekend which Dr Tatford spent with us at North Road, was indeed a very happy occasion, and the ministry so informative. Support locally was a little disappointing but folk came from further afield, Tavistock, Holsworthy, Chulmleigh, Lapford, Beaworthy, Coppleshill and Yeoford. This was most encouraging and many spoke of having received real help and instruction. For this, we thank God, for is not this the object of the witness and testimony? That as we proclaim the truth, we ourselves, and those that join with us, whether believer or unbeliever, may be spiritually blessed.

The Word of God was ministered to us in great depth again by Mr Kenneth Dix, may the truth and exhortations brought to us, bear fruit in our lives. His report too, on the work of the T.B.S. was most encouraging.