

# EXCERPTS FROM

JULY/SEPT 1980

# THE LINK

**North Road Chapel (Evangelical)**

**BIDEFORD**

## Internet Edition

"O LORD, RIGHTEOUSNESS BELONGETH  
UNTO THEE, BUT UNTO US CONFUSION OF  
FACES, AS AT THIS DAY." (Daniel 9:7)

"BLOW YE THE TRUMPET IN ZION, AND  
SOUND AN ALARM IN MY HOLY MOUNTAIN:  
LET ALL THE INHABITANTS OF THE LAND  
TREMBLE."  

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The great deterioration in all aspects of society over recent decades is apparent to every thinking man and woman.

For the purpose of this article, it is not necessary to engage in a lurid description of the decadence and degradation of this present age; suffice it to remind the reader of its almost total godlessness, disregard for the Sabbath day, devaluation of marriage, promiscuous attitudes, the devastating effects of drugs and alcohol - particularly with respect to young men and women - greed, unrest, lawlessness, cruelty and the disregard of human life and liberty. Also, the infidelity of those in positions of authority and their constant change of opinions and principles.

Tragically the press and media highlight these things and the arts major on them. All this and much more is bringing the nation to moral ruin and her people to the very brink of hell. We might well ask, indeed we should ask the question, how did such a state come about? Is there a reason and if so, is there not an antidote? To each of these questions there is a positive answer.

Lying at the root of all society's problems and tragedies is a moral and spiritual cause. The truth of God and spiritual verities are the charge of the Church, and consequently such major breakdown as we see to-day can invariably be traced back to the departure from God's standard by His people and a failure on their part to both declare His Truth and to obey His law, and by so doing, fail to function as God intended them to function and to be as a light in the darkness and salt amidst corruption.  
(Cf. Matt. 5:13-14).

When we speak of the Church, one is not referring to organised religion, but to that company of people who own

Christ as Lord and who through grace are truly "elect of God", "redeemed by the blood of Christ" and "regenerated by the Holy Spirit" (Cf. 1 Peter 1.2): such are "ambassadors for Christ" (2 Cor.5.20), His representatives on earth, who should "be blameless and harmless, the sons of God, without rebuke, in the midst of a crooked and perverse nation, among whom ye shine as lights in the world; holding forth the word of life." (Phil.2.15-16).

God's people are to "hold fast the faithful word" (Titus 1.9), "Preach the word" (2 Tim.4.2), to be examples in the word - Cf. 1 Tim.4.12. When the people of God fail in their responsibility and disregard their solemn charge, then evil can flourish without restraint. It has been said, and rightly so, that the barometer of the nation is the Church. So often the state of the church determines to a large extent the state of the country.

Having said this, let no one assume that there is a direct relationship between the church and the state, for this is not so; (John 18.36 - John 17.16 - Phil.3.20 Marg.) rather is the relationship indirect, and the church's influence upon the nation is also indirect. She is not to become a part of the establishment, neither is her mission a negative protest movement or a movement for social reform. Her charge is to preach the Word - all of it - "the whole counsel of God", to "shun not to declare" it all. (Acts 20.27). To Herald - to Proclaim - to Declare. This is what should be characteristic of the people of God. but here lies the failure - a guilty silence upon many a sacred truth, a setting aside of certain vital doctrines, a watering down of teaching and a compromise in life and practice. hence "truth is fallen in the street" (Isaiah 59.14).

So, turning from the world in its sad plight and predicament to the church - the true people of God - what do we see? "CONFUSION OF FACES". Daniel assesses the position in his day and in prayer he confesses - identifying himself with the departure of God's people - "We have sinned, and have committed iniquity, and have done wickedly, and have rebelled, EVEN BY DEPARTING FROM THY PRECEPTS AND FROM THY JUDGMENTS." (Dan.9.5), hence, "CONFUSION" (Dan.9.7).

Confusion will inevitably follow when the people of God depart from Divine precepts, and when this happens it will

most surely have its repercussions in the world and in society. The woolly thinking and lack of teaching and direction by the church has a direct bearing on the godlessness of this age with its almost total disregard of the Sabbath.

How often is the preacher to be found nowadays who "blows this trumpet in Zion" and charges the people before Almighty God to "remember the Sabbath day to keep it Holy" (Exodus 20:8). Alas, the fourth commandment finds no place in many a pulpit, or at best, is regarded as Old Testament, or Jewish, having no relevance in this age. Dispensationalists speak of it as Kingdom truth, not pertaining to the church but to be restored at a later date, and so, through either a careless disregard, or a faulty view of Scripture, there is "CONFUSION" within the church. Consequently, the true significance of "Lord's Day" observance on the part of believers is obscured and so often becomes just a formal attendance at a service, followed by social visiting, pleasuring or even concern with business matters. "DEPARTING FROM THY PRECEPTS".

The Truth is entrusted to the people of Gods if they fail in their proclamation and obedience, where is the yardstick, where the influence for good? It is as it was in Hosea's day "like people, like priest" (Hosea 4:9).

Again, on the question of marital infidelity and breakdown of the family unit, is the church declaring the WHOLE truth? Is there not a lowering of standards amongst Christians? - adultery, divorce, re-marriage and loose living - yet how few are the pulpits who faithfully set forth scriptural teaching on these issues, and fewer still are the churches who discipline according to Holy Writ. God holds His people responsible to declare "THE TRUTH" regarding marriage, adultery, promiscuous behaviour, homosexuality and the like. So often there is a silence or worse still, a condoning of behaviour which is plainly contrary to the Word of God and a situation arises in which God has to say "my people are destroyed through lack of knowledge". (Hosea 4:6).

We live in an age when drug addiction and alcoholism is causing untold misery and havoc in the realm of mankind on a scale such as has never been known before. The drugs problem

is horrifying, but alcoholism is more insidious and a major blight on society: statistics are frightening. Its toll of human life directly and indirectly is appalling, the cost to the Country (Health service, Police, Courts, Prisons etc.) is astronomical, its grip on children and young people is a tragedy of tragedies: to quote one whose vocation is to work amongst such, "ALCOHOL IS A DEMON".

Again, where does the church stand in the midst of this devastating onslaught of the adversary. Are the people of God being "examples" unto all men in this connection? Are they acting as "salt" amidst this foul corruption? Alas they are not! Whilst many would not darken the doors of the public house, yet their bottles are a regular feature of their shopping list, and social drinking is the accepted thing in many Christian families today. The cocktail cabinet is also to be found on Sunday evenings, even in the homes of some so-called elders, and children born of Christian parents are brought up in this environment and influenced accordingly. Let those whose example and influence be such, heed the Word of the Lord, "...because thou hast rejected knowledge, I will also reject thee, that thou shalt be no priest to me: seeing thou hast forgotten the law of thy God, I will also forget thy children". (Hosea 4.6).

I know many will retort by quoting Paul's words to Timothy in 1 Timothy 5.23, but let such forget Timothy's stomach trouble, and in the presence of God, against the background of today's "DRINK AGE" ponder 1 Corinthians 6:12 and 1 Corinthians 10:23. "All things might be lawful but all things are not expedient". (Expedient - that which is conducive to or which promotes the right end). The clear command of the Head to His people on questionable things is "Abstain from all appearance of evil" (1 Thess. 5.22).

How sad it was to read in the North Devon Press recently the statement of a very prominent Christian figure "...isn't it fun to go from morning service to the pub for a glass of beer, as the dear old ex-bishop of Crediton said to me, isn't it nice to be a hard drinking Christian...!"

Another of the frightening aspects of society today is its growing disregard for law and order. Lawlessness and anarchy raises its ugly head and the powers that be appear lamentably weak in dealing with it. "Ah sinful nation, a

people laden with iniquity, a seed of evildoers, children that are corrupters: they have forsaken, the Lord, they have provoked the Holy One of Israel unto anger, they have gone away backward." (Isaiah 1:4).

Powers and authorities are "ordained of God": rulers are to be a "terror to the evil": they are "not to bear the sword in vain" but wield it authoritatively. cf. Romans 13:1-4. Governors are for the "punishment of the evildoer" (1 Peter 2:14). Yet, in large measure the significance of punishment has been lost sight of due to modern trends. Rulers have a charge under God "Take heed what ye do: for ye judge not for man, but for the Lord, who is with you in the judgment, wherefore now let the fear of the Lord be upon you; take heed and do it; for there is no iniquity with the Lord our God, nor respect of persons, nor taking of gifts" (2 Chron.19:6-7).

Whilst reform has its place, God demands punishment for law breaking and as regards murder the Divine directive is perfectly clear: "Whoso sheddeth man's blood, by man shall his blood be shed, for in the image of God made he man." (Gen.9.6). "Moreover ye shall, take no satisfaction for the life of a murderer, which is guilty of death; but he shall surely be put to death. And ye shall, take no satisfaction for him that is fled to the city of his refuge, that he should come again to dwell in the land, until the death of the priest. So ye shall not pollute the land wherein ye are; for blood it defileth the land: and the land cannot be cleansed of the blood that is sled therein, but by the blood of him that shed it". (Numbers 35.31-33).

It is evident that the departure from the commandments of Almighty God, has, in recent years reached landslide proportions and this is not unconnected with the failure of the church to faithfully adhere to those standards clearly set out in the Word of God. Whilst the church is not responsible for the maintenance of law and order, she is responsible for proclaiming God's law, for right law and justice is to be found ONLY in the. eternal law of the eternal God, and the declaration of that law is the charge of the people of God. Thus the church, as she exercises her God given responsibility, indirectly influences the nation, and, as salt, will have that cleansing and purifying effect.

Alas, the alarm is not being sounded, in God's "Holy mountain", hence the inhabitants of the land cease to tremble - Cf. Joel 2:1. Another reason is that discipline is to a large extent no longer exercised within the church which has consequently become lawless or at best democratic - doing what is right in her own eyes. The church is as responsible to her Head to exercise discipline within her membership, as she is to preach the Word and to observe the sacraments but expediency has robbed the church of both biblical integrity and power.

One other mark of this generation is the rapid change of principles and positions on the part of those in authority: this is very marked in politicians as they alternate from government to opposition. This shatters confidence and undermines the government of a people.

Similar trends are apparent amongst the people of God. "ancient landmarks are uprooted, dubious practices are embraced, spurious teachings entertained and double standards are seen in ever increasing measure. Men once looked upon as spiritual leaders now face both ways, or at best are inconclusive. There is a dearth of true men in church leadership, who know black and white when they see it, men who will call LIGHT, LIGHT and DABKNSSS, DARKNESS. "For if the trumpet give an uncertain sound, who shall prepare himself to the battle?" (1 Cor.14:8).

As in the secular world, so in the church, the media is often misleading. Confusion reigns even amongst those who would claim to be conservative evangelicals. Some few years ago The New International Commentary on the Old Testament appeared. Although heralded by some, it was carefully reviewed and criticised by others. Rightly did the Editor of "Reformation Today" July-August 1978 expose some of the liberalism of Leslie C. Allen and F. F. Bruce concerning that work. The New International Commentary on the New Testament now appears, F. F. Bruce being the general Editor. This is "RECOMMENDED WITHOUT RESERVE" on page 20 of the Evangelical Times April 1980, yet, in that same April edition Page 17, Evangelical Times print a review on Harold Lindsell's book "The Bible in the balance" in which are listed a number of scholars who have either left, or modified their belief in inerrancy, and among them Leslie C. Allen of the London Bible College and F. F. Bruce. What does all this add up to?

Then again, that same paper has an article on Page 7, "Does the Bible contain errors?" and the writer correctly speaks of the awful drift by so-called evangelicals from a belief in absolute inerrancy; but how come all this?

With monotonous regularity over the years, we have had new versions of the Bible produced, reviewed and advertised as "the best so far" and introduced to the public with modern publicity back-up.

The latest attempt to up-date our English Bible is the New King James Version; admittedly, based on the RECEIVED TEXT, yet, with numerous word changes, many of which seem to be just change for change's sake. What is more serious, however, is the complete elimination of the words THOU, THEE, and THINE, thus causing a blurring of the singular and plural, a distinction which is found in both the Hebrew and the Greek; yet this is claimed to make the King James even better. This is strange indeed.

The Bible League Quarterly April-June 1980, in its review of the New KJV expresses "poignant regrets" that these words have been dropped and goes on to say that this "blurring of the distinction is loose rather than accurate, and that this becomes a serious matter when it has to do with words that the Holy Spirit gave in the first instance". Having said all this, the reviewer ends by saying "This apart, however, we welcome the New King James Version New Testament".

It would appear that in recent years there has been a sudden peculiar awareness amongst scholars (so called) of defects in the Authorised Version of the Bible and this has been the seed bed from which today's massive shift from inerrancy is the harvest. This is completely undermining the authority of the Word of God.

The church has given ground on the doctrine of "Holy Scripture" and now many are questioning whether or not we have "a sure word of prophecy" and well, they might, as they see the way in which the Word of God is bandied about in this twentieth century. It is an insult to the Eternal God who breathed it.



The writer is of the firm conviction that here lies the major source of the church's malaise. If only true evangelicals had stood firm in the last century on this issue and ousted Westcott and Hort (and others) together with their works! It is here the rot set in and we are now witnessing the outcome. "If the foundations be destroyed, what can the righteous do?" (Psalm 11.3).

This modern tower of Babel has been erected in the name of CLARITY but it has produced CONFUSION: a master stroke of the adversary. In Eden, Satan's "hath God said" deceived two people; today with the same phraseology and tactics he deceives millions.

To return is not easy, to repair the shattering effects of all this is beyond human ability: we can only do as did Daniel "I set my face unto the Lord God, to seek by prayer and supplications with fasting, and sackcloth and ashes: and I prayed unto the Lord my God, and made my confession ... We have sinned, and have committed iniquity, and have done wickedly and have rebelled, even by departing from thy precepts and from thy judgments: ... O Lord, righteousness belongeth unto thee, but unto us CONFUSION OF FACES, as at this day" (Daniel 9:3-7).

"The time is come that judgment must first begin in the house of God" (1 Peter 4:17).

"Blind watchmen" and "dumb dogs that cannot bark" are a menace in Zion - Cf. Isaiah 56:10-11.

If the inhabitants of the land are yet to tremble, then the confusion within the church must give way to clarity and direction. Let those of the remnant of grace who are faithful "blow the trumpet in Zion, and sound an alarm in my Holy mountain" (Joel 2:1).

W.H.M.

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"It is not a question of knowing what to do; we can easily learn that from the Scriptures. It is a question of whether or not we have the courage to do it."

Dr. Tozer

## CALVIN'S DOCTRINE & PRACTICE OF PREACHING

(Continued).

This doctrine of the nature of preaching does not rest solely on the word *kerux* (preacher), but is backed up by other words used in the New Testament for 'preacher'. The others are not used as frequently but they emphasise the same unique role and method. For example, 'ambassador' (2 Cor. 5.20 - "We are ambassadors ... as though God did beseech you by us"). The ambassador's task was to represent his king in a foreign court by delivering a message he had been given. He oversteps his charge if he adds anything of his own to the message or omits anything. He makes himself the equal of his king if he does, and far from being an ambassador, makes himself a traitor.

Also, the word 'witness' is used (Acts 1.8 & 2.32. Cf. 1 John 1.1-4 where the actual word is not used but the idea is the same. "that which we have seen and heard declare we unto you"). A witness has no business to tell the court what he thinks, to suggest his own reconstruction or theory to explain the events, because that is the counsel's role. He is there to say what he saw, that and nothing else. He does not need to persuade people to win them over, because his testimony is based on what he saw and all he needs to do is to tell it simply and plainly.

Finally, the word 'steward' is used (1 Cor. 4.1-2 "let a man so account of us as the servants of Christ and stewards of the mysteries of God ... moreover it is required of a steward that he be found faithful"). The steward was the house-manager. He was given the necessities of the household and he had to use them according to the instruction of the head of the house, seeing to the smooth running of the household. He had to distribute to the household the things he had been given. Paul, in using this word, is pointing to the subject matter of preaching. The preacher is a "steward of the mysteries of God". Things which, in the wisdom of God, had been hidden, were now revealed and had been entrusted to his stewards and they had to be distributed faithfully. The preacher must be faithful to Scripture, not holding back anything he finds there but faithfully declaring it all. Nor must he add to it by embellishing it with his own opinions or the philosophies of others'. Barth has this further comment. "We are under orders to "make no image or likeness". Since God wills to

utter his own Truth, his Word, the preacher must not adulterate it by adding his own knowledge or art". (Prayer and Preaching pp. 67, 68).

This understanding of preaching harmonises with the Scriptural doctrines of total inability, salvation by grace and the object of faith. The natural man cannot understand the Faith and cannot be persuaded of its truth rationally, He can only come to receive it by the regenerating work of the Spirit of God, a work which is accomplished by the sovereign grace of God, and not by the subtlety or rational persuasion of the preacher.

Faith does not come by any means other than the sovereign gift of God. Where a preacher has been guilty of obtruding his art upon the Gospel, or by rational argument seeks to win his hearers, there is always the question as to whether the faith of the hearer is placed in God or in the cleverness of the preacher. Paul deliberately renounced "the persuasive words of man's wisdom" so that, as he goes on to say in 1 Cor. 2:5, "your faith may stand, not in the wisdom of awn, but in the power of God."

Thus preaching is seen to be very different from other forms of public speaking. This difference does not just lie in the message, but particularly in the method. A preacher may be despised and ridiculed as a speaker for his deliberate refusal to utilise persuasion techniques and his acceptance of the restrictions placed upon him by his being a herald, but he need not mind. He bears a great glory - not a glory of his own, but the glory of God in his owning and sealing the Word preached, for he is "pleased by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe" (1 Cor. 1:21). It has become customary to interpret this verse as being the foolishness of what is preached. There is no doubt that the Gospel is foolish in the eyes of the world, but so is preaching.

The preacher may feel that some of the matters he has to handle are irrelevant. He may be tempted to neglect others because they do not appeal to him subjectively or because he feels they will be despised by his hearers and his whole message rejected. He may be afraid, if he merely announces his message or makes no effort to logically prove his statements, or influence his hearers in some other way, that they will not respond, to his preaching. He need not

succumb to any of these subtle temptations if he remembers that it is God who has sent him, that it is God's message and it is God's method. God himself will see to its effectiveness.

The question arises at this point: did Calvin ever use teaching and exhortation in his sermons? The answer to that is "yes". We are not to understand his emphasis on proclamation as meaning that he shunned teaching and encouragement. His insistence on the need for the gift of teaching to be present in those who preach (dealt with more fully later in this paper; is an evidence of his recognition of this factor. His congregations in Geneva were mixed: there were unbelievers present who needed the Gospel to be proclaimed, that under the Spirit's work they might come to faith, but there were also believers there who needed to be grounded and established in their faith. But even Calvin's teaching took the form of announcement.

One final thing needs to be said under this heading. Calvin's sermons differ very much from his commentaries and his lectures. This is not to be found in the exegesis, of course, but in the fact that the commentaries are pure exegesis but the sermons are full of application. Badius, Calvin's publisher, said in a preface to the 1558 edition of Calvin's sermons on the Deity of Christ: Calvin's sermons "are not rolled off by the dozen as a form, but duly premeditated and well adapted to the capacity of his sheep" (Iain Murray, Introduction to Calvin's Sermons on Ephesians, p. 14; Banner of Truth No.124. January 1974 p.10). For Calvin "the explanation of the text served the purpose of driving home such application as will be of practical benefit of those who hear. Merely to convey sound doctrine or correct exegesis to the mind is not preaching".

(to be continued)

Since going to print our esteemed brother Mr. Charles Nethercott has been called into the presence of his Lord. Our love and prayers go out to our sister, Mrs. Nethercott and all the family. A more detailed report will appear in our next issue.

ANNOUNCEMENTS and INFORMATION

Please note the following special meetings which have been arranged:

ANNUAL BIBLE CONVENTION - Saturday July 26th

3.30 pm and 6.30 pm - Tea 5 pm.

SPEAKER - Mr.K.Matrunola (Portsmouth)

LORD'S DAY OBSERVANCE SOCIETY. - Thursday August 14th

7.30 pm.

SPEAKER - Mr.J.G.Roberts.

ANNUAL MEETING - TRINITARIAN BIBLE SOCIETY

Saturday August 23rd - 6.30 pm.

SPEAKER - Mr.K.Dix (Deputation Secretary).

"DRIVE-IN" CHURCH

Sunday September 14th - 8 pm.

SPEAKER - Mr.K.Davies.

"DRIVE-IN," CHURCH services will be held, D.V. on Sunday evenings at 8 pm on the river bank by the Kingsley Statue - July 20th - September 14th.

In addition to the above we are pleased to announce the following visiting Preachers:

Thursday	17 <sup>th</sup> July	Mr.F.Stanbury	(Bow)
Sunday	20 <sup>th</sup> July	Mr.Neil Richards	(Neath)
		Morning and Evening	
Sunday	27 <sup>th</sup> July	Mr.K.Matrunola	(Portsmouth)
		Morning and Evening	
Thursday	7 <sup>th</sup> August	Mr.F.Stanbury	(Bow)
Sunday	17 <sup>th</sup> August	Mr.Hywel Roberts	(Penzance)
		Morning and Evening	
Sunday	24 <sup>th</sup> August	Mr.K.Dix	(Bedford)
		Morning and Evening	

Sunday	31 <sup>st</sup> August	Mr.J.Thackway	(Devizes)
	Morning and Evening		
Sunday	7 <sup>th</sup> September	Mr.B.Werner	(Smeatharpe)
	Morning and Evening		
Sunday	14 <sup>th</sup> September	Mr.K.Davies	(Camborne)
Thursday	18 <sup>th</sup> September	Mr.F.Stanbury	(Bow)
Sunday	21 <sup>st</sup> September	Mr.M.Watts	(Salisbury)

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#### OBITUARY.

On Saturday 17th May the Lord called home to be with himself our beloved sister Mrs. Beatrice Poole. She had been seriously ill. for some time and the Lord has been gracious in sparing her further suffering; but how we miss yet another from our local fellowship. Our hearts and prayers continue to go out to our dear brother Mr Poole and to all the family, that they might know the abiding presence of our risen Lord and Saviour.

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#### BOOK ROOM

Cassettes are now available, either on sale at £1.25 each, or on loan. Each consists of two addresses by Mr. W. H. Molland and comprises a series of in-depth studies under the following headings:

1. The Attributes of God.
2. The Life of David.
3. The Atonement.

We have available a number of booklets under the heading "Roman Catholicism in the light of the Word of God" written by Mr. Malcolm Watts, Minister of Emmanuel Church, Salisbury. These may be had on request.