

# EXCERPTS FROM

JULY - SEPTEMBER 1984

# THE LINK

THE QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER OF

**North Road Chapel** (Evangelical)

**BIDEFORD**

## Internet Edition

## MARRIAGE

The Book of Genesis is the book of beginnings. Here we not only have the origin of all things, we have also certain foundation principles and fundamental institutions laid down by God at creation which are binding upon all men for all time. To violate these principles and to blatantly set aside the laws of the Creator will incur both judgment in the world to come and disastrous consequences within the societies of those who permit or condone them.

In past generations, Great Britain (in measure at least) recognised these great issues and there was a degree of acknowledgment and worship of the True and Living God. His Holy Sabbath was observed: The sanctity of marriage was recognized and preserved. Alas.' today this is no longer so. Vast numbers of the population are completely Godless; heathen religions are on the increase at an alarming rate within the nation, and the small churchgoing minority have become so weak and compromising that today they will stand for anything and condemn nothing. The observance of the Divine institution of the Sabbath is well nigh extinct and similarly the holy ordinance of Marriage is increasingly being violated. The awful tragedy of this can already be seen, but within a further generation or two the effects will be disastrous; for to completely set aside the institutions laid down by the Creator at the first, is to knock out the very keystone of the foundations, and this will inevitably bring about the ruin of society. Both Biblical and Secular history bear abundant evidence to this fact. "If the foundations be destroyed what can the righteous do?" (Psalm 11:3).

The question should be asked, does the average person realise the seriousness of the situation? The answer is no, and the reason for this ignorance is one and one only - the silence of the true people of God for many a year on these fundamental matters. They have not preached the Truth positively, and when faced with the results of such neglect, have become accommodating.

What then is the Biblical concept of marriage? The heart of this subject lies deep in the Doctrine of Creation. A vast creation of beast, bird, fish, yea every living creature had "been brought into existence by the word of

Almighty power: "And God made the beast of the earth after his kind, and cattle after their kind, and every thing that creepeth upon the earth after his kind: and God saw that it was good." Following immediately upon this, "God said, let us make man in our image, after our likeness; and let them have dominion ... So God created man in his own image". (Genesis 1:25-27). At this point, the devil-invented theory of evolution must be emphatically contradicted - MAN IS NOT ADVANCED ANIMAL. "All flesh is not the same flesh: but there is one kind of flesh of man, another flesh of beasts, another of fishes, and another of birds." (1 Cor.15:39).

Adam, the first man, surveyed the whole of the great creation; what is more he named every specie - Cf. Genesis 2:19. But of all the creatures there were none with whom he could fellowship or share his life. Of course not! For he was of a nobler level, a higher order: "But for Adam there was not found an help meet for him" (Genesis 2:20). As yet there was no fit companion for a being made in the image of God. "And the Lord God said, It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him an help meet for him" (Genesis 2:18).

It was at this juncture that God brought into existence, WOMAN. How did the Creator do this? For in this there is deep significance. Did He repeat the procedure as with Adam and form her out of the dust of the ground? NO. Did He speak her into existence out of nothing as with other forms of life? NO. "The Lord God caused a deep sleep to fall upon Adam, and he slept: and He took one of his ribs, and closed up the flesh instead thereof; and the rib, which the Lord God had taken from man made He a woman and brought her to the man" (Genesis 2:21-22). Here are two cardinal points, and they are the key to a right understanding of marriage. 1. Adam came FIRST. He was the original creation of this order of flesh. He was HEAD. 2. Woman being taken from Adam, was virtually A PART OF HIM. "And Adam said, this is now bone of my bones, and flesh of my flesh; she shall be called Woman, because she was taken out of Man. (Genesis 2:23).

Adam was under no illusion in this matter. When the Lord God brought her unto him, he (Adam) knew that this person was a very part of himself. He could no more isolate or

divide from this woman than he could isolate his head from his shoulders, or divide his heart from his lungs; NO! SHE WAS FOREVER A PART OF HIM. Created such. Here then lies the heart of our subject. Marriage was not something invented later in early civilisation, neither was it a natural sequence following on after the creation of male and female. Marriage does not follow creation IT IS A PART OF IT, as is the acknowledging and worship of the True God, and the observance of the Sabbath. They are institutions binding upon all men for all time. "Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife; and they shall be one flesh" (Genesis 2:24).

THIS IS MARRIAGE; it is not man's invention; it is a CREATION ORDINANCE; laid down by Almighty God. A man leaves his father and his mother; he cleaves to his wife and they shall be ONE FLESH. Any adjustments or alterations which man may have made regarding the union of male and female, from the creation principle is a violation of the Divine order.

Marriage too, is monogamous - a one man, one woman relationship. We are well aware that polygamy has been, and still is practiced, but this is NOT according to the mind of God, and is a profaning of the pattern and a desecration of the Holy ordinance. Man dare not treat marriage in a haphazard way; it is a God ordained kinship - a unique relationship. There is an involvement and a depth in this union which can only be likened, according to Holy Scripture, to that of Christ and His Church. "For we are members of His body, of His flesh, and of His bones. For this cause shall a man leave his father and his mother and shall be joined unto his wife and they two shall be one flesh. This is a great mystery: but I speak concerning Christ and the Church". (Ephesians 5s30-32).

This immediately brings out the tremendous SANCTITY of our subject. It is a relationship of such high and holy significance that a wall of defence must be built around it. Marriage is an institution to be guarded and protected by bulwarks and fortresses. Alas! Alas! speaking generally, the church has let down her bridges, put blind guards in her towers and allowed the walls to be broken down. May God by His grace strengthen the hands of the

faithful in these tragic days of gross ignorance, that they may, "CRY ALOUD AND SPARE NOT."

Marriage has been so degraded by many today that it is viewed as a purely physical relationship which works if the parties are compatible, but if not, then partners must be changed. This reduces the high dignity of humans to the animal level. They become little more than things to be used, or perhaps more often - TO BE PLAYED WITH.

When the Biblical structure of this creation institution is thus abandoned, what tragedy and sorrow follows: what problems are created: but if adhered to, what blessing and joy it brings.

To return to that initial cardinal point, Adam was first created; he was head. The Bible has much to say regarding both the role of the husband and the wife. Let us first consider the wife: this is the order in which it is dealt with in Ephesians Chapter 5. "Wives submit yourselves unto your own husbands, as unto the Lord. For the husband is the head of the wife, even as Christ is the head of the Church: and He is the saviour of the body. Therefore, as the Church is subject unto Christ, so let the wives be to their own husbands in every thing" (Ephesians 5:22-24). We link with this "Wives submit yourselves unto your own husbands, as it is fit in the Lord" (Col.3:18). This is to be done "IN THE FEAR OF GOD" - Cf. Eph.5:21. The motivating factor in married life is to be "The fear of God". The relationship into which those married have entered, is of Divine origin; it carries with it the authoritative commands of Almighty God. Marriage is to be embarked upon and continued in with Godly fear. Not only is it a sacred relationship but it has also a significance of the deepest spiritual order - CHRIST AND HIS CHURCH.

"Wives submit yourselves unto your own husbands in the Lord" - not popular preaching today. There can be little doubt that the influence of militant women with their liberation and equal rights movements, has invaded the church. The sex discrimination bill too, has had its repercussions amongst the people of God.

How 'back to front' things are in this age. Instead of the salt of the church permeating society, the spirit of the

world invades the church. We should make known to them the truth, not allow them to influence us. 'Women's Lib' as we see it today is not of God. It is sad to see that in some situations the women have to take the lead, in business, in politics, and the church, but it is a sign of appalling weakness and departure from the truth.

To this the spiritually unenlightened will ask the obvious question - but why? Are women inferior? The answer is an emphatic NO! Woman was PART OF MAN. How can she be inferior, being of his very substance? But her role is not the same. Submission in this context in no way means inferiority. There are very real reasons for this submission, and they are not of man, rather are they of God.

Let both Old and New Testaments bring forth the evidence. "For Adam was first formed, then Eve. And Adam was not deceived, but the woman being deceived was in the transgression" (1 Timothy 2: 13-14). This statement must be put within its true framework: "Unto the woman He said, I will greatly multiply thy sorrow and thy conception; in sorrow thou shalt bring forth children; and thy desire shall be to thy husband, and he shall rule over thee." (Gen.3:16). In Eden God gave to Adam instruction regarding the tree - cf. Gen.2:15-17: Eve was not created at that point. However, after her creation and the conversation between her and the serpent, as set out in the early verses of Genesis Chapter 3, it is perfectly clear that Adam (her husband) had given to her, ALL the detail of that express commandment, therefore her act of disobedience was two-fold: 1. It was against God. 2. It was against her husband. Because of this, saith the Almighty, HE SHALL RULE OVER THEE. Adam was HEAD prior to the fall, but it was accentuated after; God emphasized and laid even greater stress upon it. Eve had usurped Adam's position of HEADSHIP; she took the lead, not even conferring with her husband, and what disaster followed.

It must be seen that the headship of man and the subjection of women goes right back to the beginning; it is as old as time itself; it is a principle carried through to the New Testament and is binding upon ALL men for ALL time. If this principle is not heeded and demonstrated, then, the favour of God must inevitably be

forfeited, for not only is a creation ordinance violated but so also is the analogy of Christ and His Church completely shattered.

These are the reasons for the order within the sexes in the corporate gatherings of the church and physical demonstration of headship as explained in "The Practice of Prayer" in the last edition of the Link.

So far, one has only dealt with the question of Headship and Subjection. It must now be stated that marriage is altogether a union of love. Wives are not slaves. The Biblical status of the wife is a HELP-MEET for her husband. Eve was a very part of Adam, and was brought into being for the express purpose of companionship and intimate relationship. To procreate? Yes.' but this was not the prime reason. Deep fellowship and sharing, a hallowed union of a PERMANENT nature, between a man and a woman which God would bless with offspring to their mutual joy. This is the object and origin of marriage. The key-note to Headship is the HUSBAND'S LOVE: "Husbands love your wives even as Christ also loved the Church and gave Himself for it" (Eph.5:25).

The woman was NOT given to man that he should treat her as a servant to do his work, or that he should rule over her as a despot, neither is he to use her as a tool or an implement of the flesh, to be picked up or thrown down according to the whim or inclination of the moment - indeed not.' How dare any man degrade such a hallowed relationship. To Adam, Eve was a PART OF HIMSELF: as such he took and embraced her. "So ought men to love their wives as their own bodies. He that loveth his wife loveth himself. For no man ever yet hated his own flesh; but nourisheth it and cherisheth it" (Eph.5:28-29). This, of course, is to be followed by the love of the wife in reciprocation. "The young women are to be sober, to love their husbands" (Titus 2:4).

No husband has a right to talk of HEADSHIP unless he really and deeply loves his wife. Neither should a wife speak of love if she is not in subjection to her husband.

God did not bring this institution into being for domestic convenience or for gratification of lust. It is a union

which is deep, which is holy, and which is permeated with love. That there is a physical aspect to marriage, the Scriptures make abundantly clear. THIS TOO IS OF GOD. This natural instinct did not follow the fall, it preceded it, and it is part of the intimate and sacred relationship of marriage, and NEVER TO BE EXERCISED OUTSIDE OF MARRIAGE. This is an exercise of the deepest and most sacred nature WITHIN the secrecy and intimacy of the marriage bond. The absolute abandonment to each other in filial love.

These are holy things of which we now speak, there is a sanctity which envelopes all the creation ordinances - that is, not for common use. The worship of God is a holy exercise: The Sabbath is a holy days Marriage is a sacred ordinance and must be approached IN THE FEAR OF GOD. How correct, how Biblical, is the 'Book of Common Prayer' which states: "Holy matrimony is an honourable estate instituted of God in the time of man's innocency, signifying unto us, the mystical union that is betwixt Christ and His church, which holy estate Christ sanctioned and honoured with His presence and first miracle in Cana of Galilee, and is commended of the apostle Paul to be honourable among all men. Therefore, is not to be by any taken in hand unadvisedly, lightly or wantonly to satisfy men's carnal lusts and appetites like brute beasts that have no understanding."

The Bible tells us how husbands are to love their wives: "Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself for it" (Eph.5:25). "EVEN AS CHRIST LOVED THE CHURCH". What was the manner of His love?

1. The love of Christ is PARTICULAR. He loved the Church His bride. She is unique, she has no equal, unmatched, unparalleled. The Church is set apart from ALL the rest of creation. She was elected before the foundation of the world: The Church was PERSONALLY and PARTICULARLY redeemed at Calvary: "Christ gave Himself for it". The Church, His Bride, He loves as NOTHING ELSE. In the whole of the vast universe she stands incomparable. To His people he has given a new life, a new identity, a new name; no longer are they isolated; they are linked with Him; "I will write upon them the name of my God" - cf. Rev.3:12. They share His exalted rank and glory: "And the glory which thou gavest me I have given them; that they may be one, even as



we are one" (John 17:22). We are to love our wives as nothing else on earth, no one must intrude at this level of affection. Our wives are unmatched, they have no equal, they share our lives, they bear our name, they are a part of us.

2. The love of Christ is unchanging: "I have loved thee with an everlasting love" (Jer.31:3). Christ loved his own even in their lost estate in Adam, with all the stench and corruption of sin upon them. He, too, had perfect knowledge of all their failings following regeneration, yet, HIS LOVE NEVER ALTERNATES. Husbands love your wives as Christ - no IFs or BUTs. It is upon this solemn teaching that the Marriage Service is based. We are to, "love her, comfort her, honour her, keep her, in sickness and in health and forsaking ALL other keep thee only unto her so long as ye both shall live, whether this shall prove to be for better or for worse, for richer or for poorer, in sickness and in health to LOVE and to CHERISH TILL DEATH US DO PART, ACCORDING to God's HOLY ORDINANCE and thereto do I plight my troth." AN UNCHANGING LOVE.

3. The love of Christ was sacrificial: "Christ also hath loved us and hath given Himself for us an offering and a sacrifice to God" (Eph.5:2). Nothing was held back, no reserve; He sacrificed ALL for His bride. "Love seeketh not her own" (1 Cor.13:5). "The Son of God, who loved me, and gave Himself for me" (Gal.2:20). Husbands, this is the standard, a love which gives and gives without reserve. Independence, private interests and pleasure sacrificed for the benefit and good of our wives; to want the very best for them. As head, the husband should lead and guide his wife in all things, spiritual as well as material and in it she is to acquiesce.

W.H.Molland.

This subject is to be continued in the next edition of The Link.

## THE POISONING OF THE POT.

An address given at the 89th Annual Meeting of the Bible Spreading Union by Stephen Scott-Pearson. (Maulden)

---

I want to bring what I trust you will consider to be a timely message from the precious Word of God. the message of the poisoning of the pot (2 Kings 4:38-41). I want to make just four observations from these verses and apply them to our own situation today.

### THERE WAS A DREADFUL FAMINE

The first thing that we notice as we look at these verses of Scripture is that there was a dreadful famine. "There was a dearth in the land".

Elisha the servant of God, had returned to Gilgal. He was in his element, with the sons of the prophets sitting before him at the college of the prophets. Because of the wickedness of the people in general, they were going through a seven-year famine, effected by drought. Everything was dry, barren, and desolate. All stood in need of refreshment. Is that not a picture of the spiritual situation in our land today? It seems to me that we stand in a great need at this hour of the fertilising power of God the Holy Ghost to move in the midst of His people, and to move throughout this land. Multitudes of those who profess to be among the Lord's people have abandoned the old paths of bible religion, and today they are in the quagmires of falsehood, being satanically deceived, turning aside into byways, letting their ardour grow cold; many are leaving the highway trodden by their fathers of old. Where there is not unsoundness of doctrine (and there is plenty of that) there is often dead orthodoxy and cold formalism, which is nearly as bad.

Instead of our pulpits being filled with fiery prophets of God, who care nothing about the favour of men and fear only the disfavour of God - men who feed the flock of God sixteen ounces to the pound of the Bread of Life - we have a plague of hirelings in the pulpits of our churches and chapels, who prophesy 'peace, peace', when this is not a

day for peace, but a day for war against Satan and against his strongholds. All of the major religious denominations in this country are already apostate, and some of the smaller ones are well on the road to apostatising. There is a dearth in the land, a dearth of God's Word, a dearth of eternal truth!

If we are the children of God, and if this is a day of dearth and apostasy, what is to be our attitude? What are we to do? We find the answer to that in the little epistle of Jude. Here we see the believer's responsibilities in the day of dearth, in a time of spiritual apostasy. I have only time to outline these. The responsibilities of a believer in the day of dearth, in the hour of apostasy is threefold.

#### 1. THE BELIEVER'S FIRST RESPONSIBILITY IS TO THE FAITH.

You find this in verse 3: "Beloved, when I gave all diligence to write unto you of the common salvation, (that I believe encompasses the fundamentals of our faith) it was needful for me to write unto you, and exhort you that ye should earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered to the saints." We are to "contend for the faith". That is our first responsibility in the day of dearth and apostasy, and this whole book of Jude is about the day of apostasy. To contend is to struggle in opposition. We are to earnestly assert the tenets of the common salvation, the fundamentals of the faith. They are to be thundered out from the pulpits of our land by we who preach the Word of God, without apology, without compromise, without dilution. We are to earnestly assert the tenets of the common salvation, our immovable allegiance to the inerrant, infallible, verbally inspired bible, its supremacy and its sufficiency; the doctrine of the Trinity - Father, Son and Holy Spirit - co-equal and co-eternal; the incarnation, virgin birth, substitutionary atonement, bodily resurrection, ascension into glory, and second coming of Jesus Christ, the eternal Son of God; Christ's deity, true sinless humanity and utter impeccability; the necessity of the new birth effected in the sinner by the unmerited free grace of a sovereign God; the redemption of the sinner by the redeeming blood of Christ shed once and for all as an offering for the redemption of the elect upon Calvary's cross; the imputed

righteousness of Jesus Christ to the sinner, being the sinner's only righteousness before Almighty God. Oh my friends, they and so much more are the things pertaining to the common salvation that we are to contend for! We are to earnestly contend for all that God is for, and we are to be against all that God is against, to the pulling down of the strongholds of Satan.

## 2. THE SECOND RESPONSIBILITY IS TO OURSELVES.

Notice here in verses 20 and 21: "But ye beloved, building up yourselves on your most holy faith, praying in the Holy Ghost. Keep yourselves in the love of God, looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life."

Although there was a dearth in the land, there seems to have been no dearth in the souls of the sons of the prophets. Only the individual sustained by the most real and flourishing inner life is going to come through the day of dearth triumphant. This "building" mentioned here - "but ye, beloved, building up yourselves on your most holy faith" - implies constantly seeking for an improvement of one's grasp of the doctrine of our faith. People in our churches and chapels today do not understand the doctrine of their faith. The need of fervent effectual prayer also that we find here, "praying in the Holy Ghost" cannot be over emphasised to the people of God in these days. The exhortation in these verses to the people of God in times of dearth and in times of national apostasy is simply 'Keep the fire burning in your soul'.

I might be excused here for quoting an Arminian, General William Booth, founder of the Salvation Army, who on one occasion was travelling in a train through the Swiss Alps with a number of his cadets. As he was in deep meditation, one of his cadets said, "General, look out of the window, look, look, the view is beautiful!" The old general never looked up, but he said, "Keep the fire burning in your soul, for the tendency of the fire is to go out." That is the exhortation of these verses here to those who seek to live for Christ in this day of falling away, in this day of fearful barrenness, in this day of dearth, in this day of apostasy.

### 3. THE THIRD RESPONSIBILITY IS TO OTHERS.

Verses 22 and 23 of Jude: "And of some have compassion, making a difference; And others save with fear, pulling them out of the fire; hating even the garment spotted by the flesh." These verses are saying to us that those who are simple or ignorant, who are misled but open to conviction, those who are sincere in their desire to please and glorify God and submissive in their attitude, we must seek to instruct and correct, some more tenderly than others. But others, who obstinately teach and preach soul-destroying doctrines are to be named. They are to be denounced in strong terms and warned of the consequences of their actions: "Some save with fear": Put the fear of God into them, preacher. In these days of spiritual corruption, we must cry out with the apostle to all who profess the Lord's Name, the call to separation recorded in 2 Corinthians 6:17. "Wherefore come out from among them" - Come out from the world, come out from the apostasy, - "and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you."

That then is the first thing we notice, that it was a day of dearth, and God's Word tells us what to do in a time of dearth.

#### THERE WAS A VALUABLE POSSESSION.

Secondly, returning to our passage in 2 Kings, there was a valuable possession. Elisha concluded a lecture to the student prophets and then he ordered his servant, "Set on the great pot, and seethe pottage for the sons of the prophets." As we consider this great pot, let us look at it as being illustrative of the faith once delivered to the saints. This great pot, like the faith once delivered to the saints, was the common property of the elect of God. God spoke of one of His prophets, Jeremiah, saying this, "Before I formed thee in the belly I knew thee, and before thou earnest forth out of the womb I sanctified thee, and I ordained thee a prophet unto the nations." God's prophets were the elect of God. My friends, if we are in His Kingdom we are of the elect of God too, and what is God's word to us? "Ye have not chosen me, but I have chosen you and ordained you that ye should go and bring forth fruit, and that your fruit should remain."

This great pot belonged to no particular individual. It was the property and responsibility of the whole school of the prophets. All were to care for it. Gospel truth and Gospel ministry have not been committed to any individual person, church, denomination, or sect. It is both the property and responsibility of the whole true Church of Christs each and all of the elect of God. After all, this pot was the centre of common interest to these sons of the prophets; they were all fed, they were all nourished from this one pot. In that time of famine there was no other source whereby their hunger could be appeased. What the great pot meant to their empty stomachs, the Word of God and the Gospel of Grace means to our hungry souls today. The Word of God and the Gospel of Grace should be the centre of interest to the sons of God in this day of dearth. So I say, let us jealously, let us earnestly, guard the purity of God's Word. The Psalmist David truly said, "Thy Word is very pure". All that my soul has to feed on is God's Book. I have no other place where I can get that which my soul needs. This is the Bread of life. It concerns me if that is being polluted or diluted.

It should concern every child of God very much indeed. Let us energetically expose and articulately denounce each and all of these modern translations and paraphrases for the perversions of the Word, of God that they are. Let us jealously guard the pulpits of God's house and let us cast out and totally reject the false shepherds who do not declare God's eternal truth and whole counsel, because we need to be very careful what we hear, and we need to be very careful what we eat. So let us take this lesson from the Scripture to heart, that the Word of God and the faith once delivered, (and they are inseparable) are very valuable possessions indeed. Let us esteem them so.

#### THERE WAS A SUDDEN REALISATION.

Thirdly, there was a sudden realisation (v.40), "O thou man of God, there is death in the pot."

We read in verse 39 that one man gathered and brought in a lapful of gourds from a wild vine, which were shred into the pot of pottage, "which they knew not." In a sense I suppose it could be said that this poison was put in the great pot unintentionally. These gourds looked harmless

enough, and so their pernicious character was not initially discovered. Let me tell you my friends, because I believe the people of God need to be told this, that error is subtle in its working, error is deceptive in its appearance. The devil is an angel of light. The apostle Paul says, "Though ... an angel from heaven ... preach any other gospel ... let him be accursed". Now what would happen? If an angel from heaven came down to London and started preaching a different gospel from that of the Bible, people would believe it, perhaps some of you would be tempted to say, "We have to believe it, it's an angel from Heaven." God's Word says, "Do not!" Even if an angel from heaven comes and brings a different gospel, do not believe it, because Satan is an angel of light.

Error is subtle in its working, it is deceptive in its appearance and I will tell you something else about it, it is fatal in its effect. "A little leaven leaveneth the whole lump." Seeing that these were new things to them, and the nature of these gourds unknown to them, surely they ought to have been tested before they were passed as being wholesome food. Just because a man claims to be a child of God and a preacher of God's Word, that is no reason why we should accept him as being such necessarily. Jesus said "Not everyone that sayeth, Lord, Lord." Just because a man claims to be a child of God and a preacher of God's Word, that is no reason why he should be allowed to empty unsound doctrine and unscriptural views into the Gospel pot, though he may be sincere, and like this son of the prophets, acting with an honourable purpose. No matter how sincere the man that went and collected these gourds was, no matter how honourable his purpose was, they were still poison and if you ate them you would die. Let me point out that each and all of these sons of the prophets were alike responsible for what happened, for we read that "they knew them not". The man who put the poisonous gourds into the pot was not more blameworthy than those who consented to him doing so. Here was an ignorance that was inexcusable, it was an ignorance that was prevalent, and it was an ignorance that was fatal in its potential consequences.

Firstly, it was an ignorance that was inexcusable. You might reasonably suppose that a man would be somewhat concerned about that which was passed through his mouth

into his body. You would perhaps expect him not to eat food of such dubious and questionable nature. How much more might one reasonably expect that the children of God would vigilantly watch over that which they imbibe to nourish their never-dying souls. And then it was an ignorance that was prevalent. They each and all acquiesced to the acceptance of these unknown and untried wild gourds. There was not one dissenting voice raised! Just like today when our Protestant heritage is being destroyed, prevalent ignorance and naivety abound.

It was an ignorance that was not only inexcusable and prevalent, but it was fatal in its potential consequences. Without doubt there was much in that great pot that was good and wholesome, but when these pernicious gourds were introduced, everything in the pot was contaminated. The good things lost all of their virtue in the presence of the deadly things. It is no wonder to me the power of the truths of the Gospel are being neutralised in our day, when so many new, unproven and poisonous theories and views are being spread in the so-called ministry of the Gospel. The general effect of much modern preaching by men who use unsound and unreliable versions of the Scripture is the same as that of the wild gourds going into the great pots the whole is spoiled.' The sudden realisation that the pottage was unsound produced a loathing in the sons of the prophets and they immediately ceased from seeking nourishment from it. The hungry souls of men will never and can never be satisfied with a polluted version of God's Word or by a diluted or adulterated Gospel. As soon as men believe and discover that what they are being fed is untrustworthy, they will cease to take it in. And when the self-gathered and pernicious thoughts of men are mingled in and mixed with the God-given, soul-satisfying thoughts of God, the whole of the pottage is tainted with poison, and it is an unpalatable mixture: good for nothing.

#### THERE WAS A POTENT AND EFFECTUAL REMEDY.

Now fourthly, and finally, there was a potent and effectual remedy, thank God. This was a serious, business, and it was instantly dealt with. The sons of the prophets did not whisper to one another in comers, covering the matter up, supposing that all would come right in the end.



They cried out and said, "O thou man of God, there is death in the pot!"

They never thought of attempting to minimise or cover up the mischief wrought by praising the good qualities of the man who had gathered and brought in the lapful of wild gourds. They did not say "Well now, let us not criticise him or he might be offended. Actually, he is a very nice and very sincere chap." They did not say that at all. It was a serious business so they cried out and they named the situation for what it was. "There is death in the pot". It does not matter how nice these men are that stop preaching the old-fashioned Gospel in the old-fashioned way and turn over to other books that we could not regard as being the Word of God at all. It does not matter how nice they are and how charming they are, there is death in the pot and they are putting it in.' They need to be named, and they need to be identified, and they need to be warned as God's Word says. The sooner deadly things pertaining to God's Word and truth are identified named, exposed, and removed, the better it is. The better it is for the people of God, and the better it is for the nation.

The prophet Elisha's answer to this grave crisis, this sad situation, was to call for meal and to cast it into the pot. As we have viewed this great pot as being emblematic of the faith once delivered to the saints, so now we should view this meal as being emblematic of the pure Gospel, and sound doctrine, and we learn much here concerning true Gospel ministry. It had to be meal. Meal speaks of that which is perfectly sound and wholesome. But notice, it had to be cast into the pot. That sound, wholesome meal would not save the pottage from contamination and serious pollution if it remained in the barrel. It had to be brought into contact with those evils which it was destined to heal. If our Gospel be hid, it is hid to them that are lost. And moreover that meal, wholesome and sound as it was, had to be accompanied by Divine Power to be effective. I do not believe that the meal had any ability in itself to counteract the destructive influence of the deadly gourds. And oh, how very much we need the gracious moving of the Holy Spirit upon the ministry of the Gospel in this land today.

We need to publish abroad the Gospel today as faithfully and fearlessly as ever we can by boldly preaching and asserting the doctrine of God's Word. But it is not enough. Unless our endeavours are accompanied by the life-transforming, sin-destroying power of the Holy Spirit, the death working power of error and sin will not be overcome. We need God to come down, that even the ungodly may say of us, "The Lord thy God in the midst of thee is mighty". Thank God, the remedy was potent and effectual. "There was no harm in the pot." The evil was overcome with the good, and the meal, like the incorruptible seed of God's eternal Word in the sinner's heart, put all right, and satisfied the hungering soul. Ultimately truth will triumph over error; I am glad of that, but these are days when there is a great dearth in our land. These are days when men are energetically attempting to shred wild poisonous gourds into the pot, seeking to contaminate the purity of God's Word and the faith once delivered. We, by God's grace, and it is only by that that we will be able to do it, must faithfully and jealously guard the great pot. We must keep to the Protestant and uncorrupted version of God's Word, and there is only one in our tongue, the Authorised Version of the Bible. We must keep to the good old doctrine of grace, which exalts God and debases man, however unpopular that might be. And may God ever give us grace and strength to remain faithful in His service in these days of dearth, and may He be pleased to graciously grant us the mighty effectual power of the Holy Spirit upon all of our labours for Him. Amen.

---

"The idea of a progressive gospel seems to have fascinated many. To us that notion is a sort of cross-breed between nonsense and blasphemy. After the gospel has been found effectual in the eternal salvation of untold multitudes, it seems rather late in the day to alter it; and, since it is the revelation of the all-wise and unchanging God, it appears somewhat audacious to attempt its improvement ... Do men really believe that there is a gospel for each century? Or a religion for each fifty years? Will there be in heaven saints saved according to a score sorts of gospel? ... will they enjoy eternal concord, or will heaven itself be only a new arena for disputation between varieties of faiths?"

C.H. Spurgeon.

## THE DE-FORMED MOVEMENT

Some few decades ago a number of ministers, pastors and elders became concerned at, both the condition and position of their churches. They saw a need for reform. In some instances, this was a re-discovery of "The Doctrines of Grace" which for many a long year had been lost in the mists of Arminianism. There was an awareness also of the need of greater vigilance upon the question of reception into church membership.

Old Confessions of Faith which had lain in the dust for generations were brought back into the light. Also, the necessity of expository preaching concerned many.

Others, for the first time, came to see the truth of the independency and autonomy of the local church. This caused a number of men, and sometimes whole bodies, to secede from their former situations and to re-commence on independent lines. All this was good, and it came to be known as "THE REFORMED MOVEMENT". Many hailed this as signs of an awakening and a return to TRUE RELIGION.

Today, however, not a few are saying that the term "REFORMED" needs re-defining. Some go further and say, that the definition is now meaningless. The question might well be asked - what has gone wrong? The answers are many and varied.

It is to be feared that some, having come to see the true Biblical doctrine of salvation, have thought that they have now attained. "WE ARE REFORMED". Such have never realised that whilst the five points set out at the Synod of Dort are fundamental (for this alone is the true gospel of Holy Scripture) yet, there is still much more involved in reformation if a church is really to be "REGULATED" by the Word of God.

Confessions of Faith, Church Constitutions and care in reception into church membership are all very important. Autonomy and Independency too, bring a local church into alignment with the New Testament pattern, whilst expository preaching is number one priority. Good as all these things are and absolutely Biblical, yet, of

themselves they do not make a church ONCE AND FOR ALL REFORMED

Reformation is a continuous and on-going process. It will only "be brought about and maintained by the Holy Spirit through the Word and prayer.

Biblical preaching must be thorough without by-passing any area of truth. Coupled with the declaration of truth, must be forceful application. In this both preacher and listener have to be careful to "receive with meekness the engrafted word" and diligent in the practice and outworking of "ALL THINGS WHATSOEVER I HAVE COMMANDED THEE". Only through the TRUTH are believers sanctified.

Where members are rebellious to sound teaching, then exhortation, rebuke, and discipline is to come into operation.

Is it not true that in many so-called Reformed churches the truth of Holy Scripture is not getting beyond the pulpit? Where this is so, what a misnomer to style a church "REFORMED" - they are not even "REFORMING". In such a situation, sooner or later, THE PEW WILL OVERTHROW THE PULPIT. Can we not already see questionable things nudging their way in again, as men and churches are giving credence to much, which only a few years ago, were issues upon which they were separating. In secession, their caption was: "UNITED WE FALL". Tragically it can be said of some "SECEDING THEY HAVE CRASHED". Invariably last errors are worse than the first.

There can be little doubt but that these are the main reasons why the term "REFORMED" needs re-defining. It is seen to be "DE-FORMED" - marred, disfigured. "Beloved seeing ye know these things before BEWARE LEST YE ALSO being led away with the error of the wicked fall from your own steadfastness" (2 Peter 3:17).

W.H.Molland.

A church which does not stand for all the Truth will soon be seen to accommodate error.

## EDITORIAL.

We have included in this edition an address entitled THE POISONING OF THE POT. Mr. Stephen Scott-Pearson, in addition to his ministry at Maulden, is the national organiser of THE BRITISH COUNCIL OF PROTESTANT CHRISTIAN CHURCHES. Our annual Convention affords the opportunity of hearing this 'VALIANT FOR THE TRUTH' preacher.

In the April Editorial, it was stated that it appeared that there were many who were perplexed over certain matters pertaining to prayer: The woman's role in public worship, head covering etc. This statement has been amply confirmed by the appreciation which we have received, and the requests for further copies of the April-June Link, which necessitated a reprint.

The leading article this time is on the subject of MARRIAGE. The appalling breakdown of this Divine institution, with its attendant heartbreaks and tragedy, is all too obvious; as is also the accommodating attitude of a compromising church to this, and many other matters.

As apostacy gains momentum, and the confusion amongst the true people of God sadly increases, may it yet please Almighty God to raise up prophets in the land: Men who will quit their holy huddles, sectarian fraternals, and empire building ministers' conferences, and come out into the open and stand for TRUTH. Daring to be Daniels, daring to stand alone maybe, in their particular areas of ministerial influence. Is it not such men whom, down through history, God has used to the turning of the tide?

---

Writing in November 1887, Mr. Spurgeon said, with reference to the 'Down-grade Controversy': "To pursue union at the expense of truth is treason to the Lord Jesus. If we are prepared to enter into solemn league and covenant for the defence of the crown-rights of King Jesus, we cannot give up the crown jewels of his gospel for the sake of a larger charity. He is our Master and Lord and we will keep his words: to tamper with his doctrine would be to be traitors to himself."

ANNOUNCEMENTS.

ANNUAL BIBLE CONVENTION - Saturday 21st July.

Guest Speaker: Mr. S. Scott-Pearson  
(Maulden, Beds.)

Afternoon 3.30pm. Tea 5pm. Evening 6pm.

VISITING PREACHERS:

Sunday 22 <sup>nd</sup> July	Mr. S. Scott-Pearson (Maulden)
Sunday 5 <sup>th</sup> August	Mr. J. Roberts (General Sec. (Lord's Day Observance Soc.)
Sunday 20 <sup>th</sup> August	Mr. K. Matrunola (Portsmouth)

THE 'DRIVE-IN' CHURCH.

From Sunday 15th July to Sunday 2nd September our evening services will be held on the river bank car park at 6.30pm.

THE BOOK ROOM.

We have available a selection of sound Protestant conservative evangelical literature, and for this there is a steady demand.

Interest in the 'Link' continues to grow, some 500 copies are now sent to varying parts of the British Isles. Enquiries in this connection should be sent to Mr. L. Gee.