

EXCERPTS FROM

JULY - SEPT 1989

THE LINK

North Road Chapel (Evangelical)

BIDEFORD

Internet Edition

AFTER THIS MANNER ... PRAY YE

(A Study in the Lord's Prayer)

Part 7

As previously pointed out, this pattern prayer given to us by our Lord, has seven petitions. The first three have a Godward aspect: these having been dealt with, we come to the first petition in the manward part: "GIVE US THIS DAY OUR DAILY BREAD." (Matt.6:11).

Attention has also been drawn to the fact, that as with the Ten Commandments, the first part of that Holy Law pertains to God Himself and His glory, and the second to man. So it is with the Lord's prayer: the pattern set is, that the glory of God always comes first.

Even the Lord Jesus Christ who is very God of very God, Co-equal, Co-eternal, and Co-glorious with the Father, yet when upon earth as a man amongst men said: "I honour my Father....I seek not mine own glory." (John 8:49-50).

It is the inclination of the natural man to seek his own interest and honour, for he is of the earth - earthy: it is only the spiritual man whose prime concern is the glory of God; and this is the MANNER in which Christ is instructing His people to pray. Both in the formulating of our prayers and in that for which we pray, the GLORY OF GOD is to be the aim and object.

Although the ensuing petitions are "manward," nevertheless, God's glory must still be the aim and purpose of the one praying. This will be seen more clearly as we proceed to examine the matter.

"GIVE US THIS DAY OUR DAILY BREAD."

Whilst this quite obviously has reference to our regular requirement of food, it should also be looked upon in a wider sense as embracing all material necessities.

On the surface, this petition appears very mundane, and scarcely can God be seen to be glorified by it.

There is a man, the author of but one chapter in the Bible, - Agur the son of Jakeh - and he has shed much light on this matter as to how God can be glorified in our praying.

He writes: "Two things have I required of thee; deny me them not before I die: Remove far from me vanity and lies: give me neither poverty nor riches; feed me with food convenient for me: Lest I be full, and deny thee, and say, Who is the Lord? or lest I be poor, and steal, and take the name of my God in vain." (Prov.30:7-9).

In no way did this man want to be so dealt with concerning material things that he should ever feel independent of God.

"Remove vanity from me:" says Agur. In other words: "Save me from pride." The natural man in his vanity and pride is always projecting his own image, being concerned with himself and his personal standing; whereas the spiritual man will ever put God first, recognizing His eternal power and Godhead, careful always that HE shall have the pre-eminence. This was Agur's prime concern, even though the petitions, which immediately follow are of a material nature: nevertheless, God must be honoured by them. "Give me neither poverty nor riches; Feed me with food convenient for me." Nothing other did this man want as long as he was upon earth. What a depth of spirituality is seen in this! Are there not many of us who can earnestly pray the first part: "Lord give me not poverty," but how few can utter from the heart: "Give me not riches!" "Feed me with food convenient:" "That which Thou seest best for me," was all Agur's desire. This is in absolute harmony with the pattern set forth by our Lord in the third petition: "THY WILL BE DONE," and it is only when GOD'S WILL is done that He is glorified.

"Give us this day our daily bread." The very first word infers that our food is A GIFT.

Ever should we remember those words recorded by James: "Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of lights, with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning." (James 1:17).

Many are the good and perfect GIFTS mentioned in Scripture. Each of the following is said to be the gift of God:

Faith	Ephesians 2:8
Wisdom	James 1:5
Instruction	Isaiah 28:26
Peace	Psalms 147:14
Health	Jeremiah 30:17
Riches	2 Chronicles 1:12
Sunshine	Jeremiah 31:35
Rain	Job 5:10
Sleep	Psalms 127:2
Food	Psalms 145:16

We need to be constantly pulled up in this matter, for we are so prone to take all these things for granted. We go to the tap to draw water, and it is there: thanks to the Water Board! But is it? All they have done is to make the reservoir and lay the pipes. God has provided the water; that is A GIFT. What if He withheld it? Would the Water Board's reservoir be of any value? Would the kitchen tap satisfy one's thirst? We go to bed tired, perhaps literally worn out on times; we settle down; ere long we are fast asleep, mind and body completely unconscious, in absolute rest for seven or eight solid hours maybe; then we arise renewed and refreshed, able to go on for another sixteen hours as a result of that which we tend to take for granted. From whence do we derive the benefit of natural sleep? It is God who brings that state upon us, and it is He who brings us out of it again. It is A GIFT from above.

Much could be said upon this subject of GIFTS, but sufficient has been said to make the point that we are an indigent people, dependent upon another, and that other is the Almighty God. The natural man does not acknowledge this: in his vanity he says: "who is the Lord?" But the Christian recognises (or should) that ALL THINGS are from above. The truly spiritual person, whatever his or her position may be, will ever be in humble dependence, turning daily to their God for the supply of ALL MATERIAL NEEDS.

The Puritans used to say: "The tree of mercy will drop its fruit in love if it is shaken by the hand of prayer." When we thus approach our

Heavenly Father for our daily material needs, we are shaking the tree of God's providential mercy, and in love He causes the fruit to fall at our feet.

However, some may retort: "Do not all men receive of God's bounty, whether they pray or not?" Yes indeed! for there is the COMMON MERCY of God. "The Lord is good to all: and His tender mercies are over all His works." (Psa. 145:9). "He maketh His sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and the unjust." (Matt.5:45). The dew falls upon the thistle as well as upon the rose; but with the unregenerate, or the unjust, there is no recognition of God, no faith or dependence upon Him; they accept it as the course of NATURE, and not as from God.. Although God feeds the basest of men, yet they rebel against Him: He gives them bread, they give Him affronts. "How shall I pardon thee for this? thy children have forsaken Me, and sworn by them that are no gods: when I had fed them to the full, they then committed adultery, and assembled themselves by troops in the harlots' houses." (Jer.5:7). "When I fed them, what happened?" ADULTERY - NO REGARD - UNFAITHFULNESS. "Jeshurun waxed fat, and kicked." (Deut.32:15). Worldlings prosper and lack nothing in material things, yet do they kick against the God who has given it to them. Nevertheless, daily are they supplied.

The Christian is not to live after this manner; he is to pray: "Give us THIS DAY." It is DAILY petition for the needs of ONE DAY. Tomorrow we are to come back again. We cannot make one overall petition for life. Just as God requires us to regularly come into His presence in worship, to HALLOW HIS NAME; with the same regularity are we to seek Him for daily provision.

Seeing that the unregenerate are supplied, yet show no appreciation and take all for granted, giving nothing in return, how is the Christian to respond who comes to God daily for his needs? Can he in some way REIMBURSE his Heavenly Father? The answer may seem strange, but strictly speaking it is NO. But, our reaction is, surely there is something we can give in return; we are not paupers bereft of all independence! We must have something to call our own: does not the Bible speak of offerings and giving unto the Lord? Thus the

Psalmist asked the question: "What shall I render unto the Lord for all His benefits toward me?" It was a problem to him as to how he could in some way repay the Lord. Then he said: "I will take the cup of salvation, and call upon the name of the Lord." (Psa. 116:12-13).

Nothing could be more fitting and appropriate than this, but the relevant question now is, where did he get the "cup of salvation" in the first place? David more fully explains in 1 Chron.29:13-14. "Now therefore, our God, we thank Thee, and praise Thy glorious name. But who am I, and what is my people, that we should be able to offer so willingly after this sort? For all things come of Thee, and of Thine own have we given Thee."

It is so easy for us to accumulate things and think that we have something of our own which we can give unto the Lord; but in this we are mistaken.

A Christian may have received a substantial legacy and decide to give half to the Lord. But again, where did it come from? who first gave it to the benefactor? And who caused that benefactor to leave it as he did? A man may say, "I am now retired; I am free from all encumbrances, and henceforth I will give all my time to the Lord; my life is now totally for Him." That man may think he is giving time and his whole life to God, but he has neither, for it is God who gives time and life to man. There is a very wonderful and explanatory word given to us in the Scriptures: "All the rivers run into the sea; yet the sea is not full; unto the place from whence the rivers come, thither they return again." (Ecc.1:7). Thus it is with mortals of earth. Everything comes to us from the ocean of God's bounty. Apart from the mercy and providence of God this planet would immediately shrivel into nothingness, and we with it. Nothing created has life or existence apart from the Creator. Neither can the life given be sustained for a single moment without Him. The darkened mind of the sinner does not see this, and in his pride he rebels against such a thought, but the true believer does not. He knows that he is relying upon God for every breath he draws. Then ACKNOWLEDGE this, saith the Lord, be seen to live by faith and in absolute dependence upon God by praying after THIS manner, looking to Him DAILY for the supply of ALL your needs.

Upon the point of this fourth petition covering in a GENERAL SENSE all material needs, there are other aspects of truth perhaps rarely touched upon, yet are they tremendous gifts of God. Some men have great business ability; they are prudent, farsighted, alert, quick to spot the right move, and do not hesitate to seize upon it. Many are gifted in this way. From whence is such a gift? "But thou shalt remember the Lord thy God: for it is He that giveth thee power to get wealth." (Deut.8:18). This could well be an aspect of Providence which many have never considered. Let all stop and think. What would a nation be like if there were no business men in it: every farm shut up because no one was CAPABLE of farming them: all factories closed down because there were none with the KNOW-HOW to manage them: no industry, no transport, no one having any INITIATIVE or DRIVE to run such concerns. There would be no banks, no finance houses, because of a lack of ABILITY necessary to conduct such business. In consequence of all this, there would be ABSOLUTE and ENTIRE lack of employment with not even a subsistence allowance. We do well to contemplate this, for if all BUSINESS ABILITY was completely removed from society then man would have to exist almost as the animal creation.

There are in this country, sad to say, those who through no fault of their own have been put out of business, and as a result, many others have lost their employment. This is to be deplored. Unemployment is a national tragedy, but there are those who could not care less about it, and who just while away their time with no intention whatsoever of seeking honest employment, and what ability they have is used in scheming as to how much they can claim from the Government, never giving a thought for those who sweat and toil, oftentimes carrying almost unbearable burdens as they head the nation's industry, and who by their acumen and prowess earn the money to pay the taxes in order that these indolent people shall have a roof over their heads, food for their tables, and a school at which their children can be educated, and so on.

True it is that the good hand of Providence supplies, and we are to receive our blessings as from God, but the Scriptures also make it abundantly clear that there is a DIVINELY APPOINTED MEANS for man's material needs. Manna from heaven and quails in the

wilderness were not the norm; that was an extraordinary measure. The appointed MEANS laid down at the first for man's subsistence was not miracle but work. That principle forever remains, and God GIVES unto men ability and power to fulfil their duty; indeed He blesses and prospers men in a wonderful way and thus GIVES wealth to a nation in which all share. BUT, saith the Spirit of God: "Remember the Lord thy God; for it is HE that giveth thee power to get wealth."

It is not wrong; indeed, it is right that we should pray for honest business prosperity within the nation, for this is the very means in God's hand of providing our DAILY BREAD. However, we do not look to the SECONDARY CAUSE - the business; neither do we ascribe the praise to the heads of such concerns. We accept ALL as from the Great Father of Lights. HE is the PRIME CAUSE. Nevertheless, we must keep the balance and not forget the ordained means and expect to be "fed by ravens" when we pray for our daily bread. Further to this, every time we sit to partake of a meal, never should we fail to return thanks, and pray God's blessing upon His provision.

In consideration of this petition for material needs, it must also be clearly understood that we cannot be specific or categorical. Agur prayed: "Feed me with food convenient for me." He did not demand that God give him PLENTRY OF THE BEST. It was to be that which God deemed the most SUITABLE for him. To pray in a demanding manner for temporal things is a very, indeed, a dangerous thing to do; for in these matters we know not what is best for us, or what to pray for as we ought.

How many Christian men have sought great prosperity. It has been their consuming desire, nothing else really mattering, and God has given it to them; but was it in love for their good? Nay, rather was it to their spiritual loss. Israel lusted after this manner, and God "gave them their request; but sent leanness into their soul." (Psa. 106:15). "They that will be rich fall into temptation and a snare, and into many foolish and hurtful lusts." (1 Tim.6:9).

What dangers there are for the Christian in worldly prosperity,! Let NONE EVER PRAY FOR IT. If God in His sovereignty should order it

so (and He does to some), then, let such be very humble and guarded lest it prove to be a snare. Thomas Watson said: "The ferry-man can keep taking passengers on board in order to increase the amount of fares collected, but it can be to the sinking of his boat." Many a Christian has sunk into the murky waters of backsliding with the heavy weight of business and finance! Let all be warned in this, for far more Christians are ruined by prosperity than by adversity.

When we are in prayer to God concerning material and temporal matters we must always have SPIRITUAL ends in view. Of the brute creation it is said: "He giveth to the beast his food, and to the young ravens which cry." (Psa. 147:9). "The young lions roar....and seek their meat from God." (Psa. 104:21). These creatures desire food just to satisfy their animal instincts of hunger. If the motive for praying is no higher than this, then it is no different from the cry of the raven or the bellowing of the ox.

James, in his epistle speaks of those who ask, "[h]at they may consume it upon their lusts." (cf. James 4:3). They want material things for no other reason than that they might have an easy and comfortable existence. This kind of praying is very far removed from the MANNER in which our Lord is giving instruction in Matthew chapter 6.

When we pray for daily bread, earthly necessities, health, and strength, it must be to the end that we be thus blessed and provided for, not for our pleasure, or enjoyment, but for GOD'S GLORY, and that we be able to use whatever ability and resources given to us in HIS SERVICE. Should we receive a measure of material gain, then, let us remember that we are but stewards of that which God has caused to come our way, and as such we are to be faithful. So, when praying for material things, which is the substance of this fourth petition, we do well to add: "and grant me Thy sanctifying grace, that when I receive of Thy bountiful providence I may use it aright for Thy glory."

W. H. Molland

A GREAT HYMN AND ITS MESSAGE

"From Whence this Fear and Unbelief"
(Augustus Toplady)

The hymn appears to have been written following a time of trial in Augustus Toplady's life. Strong Calvinist as our author was, he nevertheless, like every true saint of God, experienced those times in his life when his knees grew feeble and his arms weak. When Pilgrim had been shown around the House of Interpreter and had been asked what he thought of the wonders and mysteries of the Christian life that had been shown him, his reply was that they both filled him "with hope and fear." And the words of this great hymn reflect one such time in the life of its author, when he was filled with fear. But, and this is the glory of it all, the words also expound the source of "hope" that is eternally set forth to rescue the believer from all his time of "fear and unbelief."

"From whence this fear and unbelief,
Since God my Father, put to grief His
spotless Son for me?
Can He, the righteous judge of men,
Condemn me for that debt of sin,
Which, Lord was charged on Thee?"

Note how our author rides out to challenge that great two-headed dragon - "Fear and Unbelief" - that has come out and partly robbed him of his spiritual well-being. He lifts up the blood-stained cross of his Saviour before its glowing eyes so that it is forced to shrink back and retire into its lair again. "Who is he that condemneth?" Toplady is shouting out in this first verse, "it is Christ that died." And this is the source of victory over all our anxious thoughts and unbelieving hearts, that "God spared not His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all."

See how Toplady places himself within the Courts of God's Justice. The sentence has been written clearly above his head: "The soul that sinneth, it shall die." But a "Surety" steps into that place of condemnation - even God's own Son - and He takes the full brunt of that sentence for him. Why should he then fear or be unbelieving?

The "Judge" who sits upon the seat of judgment in that Courtroom is "the Righteous Judge" and if He has accepted the payment of the "debt" by that Surety on the condemned's behalf, then the condemned will never be condemned for that "debt of sin, which, Lord, was charged on Thee."

Not even a little? the old dragon of fear and unbelief may often suggest as a parting shot; will you not be condemned even a little? But Toplady lifts the Cross to its fullest height as he starts in upon his second verse to show, indeed, that "there is, therefore, now no condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus."

"Complete atonement Thou hast made,
And to the utmost farthing paid,
Whate'er Thy people owed;
How, then, can wrath on me take place,
If sheltered in Thy righteousness,
And sprinkled with Thy blood."

Some would call this "HIGH" doctrine, and, indeed it is - high as heaven itself - for it's Christ's atonement for the sins of His people that we are called to sing about here. One of the accusations that fell at the feet of the disciples after our Lord had expounded the nature of His sufferings and death to them was that "they understood none of these things." And it is still an indictment writ large across the Church's charter today that she has still, to a great extent, failed to appreciate and preach the true nature of Christ's wondrous atonement. "Jesus Christ who loved **the Church**," says Paul, "and gave Himself for it." "Thou shalt call His name Jesus," says the evangelist, "for he shall save **His people** from their sins." "The Son of Man is to come to give His life a ransom **for many**," it says in another place. The old Calvinist, Toplady, might have called this "Limited Atonement" - that Christ's atonement was on behalf of His Church, His Bride, His People, His Sheep, His Elect, **and for none else**. And yet, here is the great and glorious paradox: that this so-called **Limited** atonement is the only "**Complete** atonement" that there is. Jesus has REALLY paid the debt of His people's sins - "to the utmost farthing," says our author. "Charge it to mine account," says our blessed Saviour to His Father in heaven who is seated upon His throne of judgment, "I will repay it." And He did - He REALLY did!

But, believer, do you REALLY believe that Christ cancelled the debt of sin when He poured out His life an offering on the Cross? Whose debt, then? The debt of all the world, indiscriminately, say some. Ah then, my evangelical friend, if you believe that you are really a Universalist after all, for you believe that all men have had their sins accounted for and the debt atoned for. But, it was "whate'er **Thy people** owed," says Toplady aright. And it was because Jesus paid every "farthing" of His people's debt when He made atonement for them on the Cross that that "Limited" atonement is, indeed, and in truth the only "**Complete** atonement" that there is.

Let the glorious weight of our next verse anchor this mighty truth in your heart, believer:

"If Thou hast my discharge procured,
And freely in my place endured The
whole of wrath divine,
Payment God will not **twice** demand,
First at my bleeding Surety's hand,
And then **again** at mine."

"The wages of sin is death," thunders the Word of God; "The wicked shall be turned into hell," it says. Now, visualise this sight, my friend: here is a sinner in hell, AND YET, some would tell us, Christ really paid the debt for his sin! "Aha," says the devil, "what a prize I have here; Christ suffered hell for this sinner, but now this sinner must suffer hell all over again for himself." "Aha," he says again, "Christ paid the price of this one's sin to ransom him from this dark abyss, but Christ hasn't received what He purchased with His blood." "Aha," he cries a third time, "the Father - the Judge of all the earth who is always supposed to do right - laid this sinner's iniquity upon His Son and his Son "bore his grief and carried his sorrow," but now the sinner will have to bear it all over again - I have robbed heaven of its purchase!"

My friends, if your gospel of redemption leaves room for such a possibility - that the ransomed and redeemed for whom Jesus shed His blood might indeed be lost at the last, then you have much room for "Fear and unbelief." But banish the thought with this blest truth...

"Payment God will not twice demand,
First at my bleeding Surety's hand,
And then **again** at mine."

Now may we sing the last verse with Augustus Toplady, and sing of
"The merits of our great High Priest" really believing that those
merits have purchased all needed grace to reconcile the banished
from God back into His favour again, for those Christ has died for can
never be lost, but must be saved, and cannot run the hazard of ever
suffering what He once and for all suffered for them:

"Turn, then, my soul, unto thy rest!
The merits of thy Great High Priest
Speak peace and liberty;
Trust in His efficacious blood,
Nor fear thy banishment from God,
SINCE JESUS DIED FOR THEE."

This is the gospel: "Jesus who loved me, and gave himself for me."
Amen.

W. J. Seaton (Inverness)

GRACE REIGNING IN ELECTION

"Vain man would be wise, though he be born like a wild ass's colt."
Accordingly, he finds fault with election, as a mere system of
arbitrary partiality and favouritism; and tells us that if there be such
a thing as total helplessness in man, and sovereign election in God,
then man is not to blame if he be lost. Man's entire apostasy and
death in sin, so that he cannot save himself, and God's entire
supremacy, so that He saves whom He will, are doctrines
exceedingly distasteful to human pride. But they are Scriptural.

Why was one thief saved and the other lost? "Even so, Father, for so
it seemed good in Thy sight." God was not bound to save the one, and
He had power enough to have saved the other, and neither could
save himself. What made the difference? The sovereign grace of God.

Why was Paul saved and Judas lost? Was it because the former
deserved to be saved and the latter to be lost? No, neither deserved

to be saved. Was it because the one was a fitting object for the grace of God and the other not? No, the one was no more a fitting object than the other. Was it because Paul chose Christ, and Judas rejected Him? Well, but how was it that Paul chose Christ? Was' it not because Christ chose him?

Why was it that Judea was made a land of light and Egypt remained a region of darkness? Who made the difference? Man, or God? Was God unjust in leaving Egypt in the shadow of death when He made light to arise on Israel? What had Israel done to deserve a privilege like this?

None have deserved salvation. No man is more fit for it than another. God was not bound to save any. God might have saved all. Yet He has only saved some. Is He, then, unjust in only saving some when He could have saved all? Objectors say, Oh, those who are lost, are lost because they rejected Christ. But did not all equally reject Him at first? What made the unbelief of some give way? Was it because they willed it, or because God put forth His power in them? Surely the latter. Might He not, then, have put forth His power in all, and prevented any from rejecting the Saviour? Yet He did not. Why? Because so it seemed good in His sight.

Is it unjust in God to save only a few when all are equally doomed to die? If not, is there any injustice in His determining beforehand to save those few, and leave the rest unsaved? They could not save themselves, and was it unjust in Him to resolve, in His infinite wisdom, to save them? Or, was it unjust in Him not to resolve to save all? Had all perished there would have been no injustice with Him. How is it possible that there can be injustice in His resolving to save some?

There can be no grace when there is no sovereignty. Deny God's right to choose whom He will and you deny His right to save whom He will. Deny His right to save whom He will, and you deny that salvation is of grace. If salvation is made to hinge upon any desert or fitness in man, seen or foreseen, grace is at an end.

One of the controversies of the present day is respecting the will of God - as to whether His will or man's is the regulating power in the universe, and the procuring cause of salvation to souls. The supremacy of God's will over individual persons and events is questioned. Things are made to turn upon man's will, not on God's. Conversion is made to turn on man's will, not on God's. Man's will, not God's is to decide what individuals are to enter heaven. Man's pen, and not God's, is to write the names of the saved ones in the Lamb's Book of Life! Much zeal is shown for the freedom of man's will, little jealousy seems to be left for the freedom of God's will. Men insist that it is unjust and tyrannical in God to control their wills, yet see nothing unjust, nothing proud, nothing Satanic in attempting to fetter and direct the will of God. Man, it seems, cannot have his own foolish will gratified, unless the all-wise God will consent to relinquish His!

Such are some of the steps in the march of Atheism. Such are the preparations making in these last days by the wily usurper for dethroning the Eternal Jehovah.

Men may call these speculations. They may condemn them as unprofitable. To the law and to the testimony! Of such speculations the Bible is full. There man is a helpless worm, and salvation from first to last, is of the Lord. God's will, and not man's, is the law of the universe. If we are to maintain the gospel - if we are to hold fast grace - if we are to preserve Jehovah's honour - we must grasp these truths with no feeble hand. For if there be no such a Being as a Supreme pre-determining Jehovah, then the universe will soon be chaos; and if there be no such thing as free electing love, every minister of Christ may close his lips, and every sinner upon earth sit down in mute despair.

Horatius Bonar, D.D.

"Why so offensive in men's eyes does God's election seem?
Because they think themselves so wise that they have chosen Him.
Election, 'tis a word Divine, for Lord I plainly see,
Had not Thy choice preceded mine, I ne'er had chosen Thee."

ECUMENICAL EVANGELISM

By the time that this article appears in print, Christendom will be caught up in yet another spate of modern evangelistic fervour headed by Dr Graham, sponsored and supported by almost all denominations, including Romanists, Modernists, Liberals, Charismatics, and professed Evangelicals - a very hackneyed term today, which in most cases has become far removed from its original and true meaning.

Over the past 100-150 years there is much which has crept into evangelism which was never commanded by the Great Head of the Church, and is therefore not approved by Him.

The Will of God is only known through the Word of God, and unless TRUTH takes precedence over RESULTS, conversions will be seen to be the one and only goal, whilst the glory of God, and the honouring of His Word becomes of little, if any, consequence.

It is generally thought in this age that it is useless to embark upon preaching to unregenerate men and women unless all denominations unite and put on a big show headed by an imported SPECIALIST EVANGELIST.

It was the Moody era in the latter half of the last century which set this pattern, and it has gathered momentum to an alarming degree. It was at this period also that great emphasis began to be put upon music, with jazzed up tunes being set to many hymns, and new pieces written termed "Gospel Songs" which were calculated to be more effective in reaching sinners than the God ordained ministry of preaching.

As the Moody and Sankey frenzy began to take root, C. H. Spurgeon said this: "We know that souls are not won by music, if they were it would be time for preachers to give way to opera singers,... .The heaving of the masses under newly invented excitements, are too apt to be identified as being the power of God. This age of novelties would seem to have discovered spiritual power in brass bands and tambourines... .The tendency of the times is toward bigness, parade,

and show; as if these would accomplish what the regular agencies have failed to achieve. The Lord Jesus said PREACH the Gospel to every creature; but men are getting tired of the Divine plan, they are now going to be saved by music, singing, and theatricals, and who knows what! ... Nothing will come out of this whole thing but disappointment and confusion; God will be dishonoured, the Gospel travestied, hypocrites manufactured by the thousands, and the Church dragged down to the level of the world." Strong words, but what honest discerning Christian can but admit to their truth?

The Church today is so confused, and has become so involved in programmes of mass evangelism, with all its trimmings and associations, that the true Biblical pattern seems to be completely lost sight of.

That the message of salvation JS to be preached to sinners, is the command of God, but HOW it is to be done is ALSO the command of God, and is of equal importance.

There is no such thing as a SPECIALIZED MINISTRY for the settled New Testament Church. Those called of God to the ministry (His gifts to the Church) are to declare "ALL THE COUNSEL OF GOD." That there were in the early Apostolic period, specialist Evangelists, Prophets, Apostles and so on, the New Testament makes clear, but these were not continuing offices. However, EVANGELISM WAS TO CONTINUE, but this became the duty of the local minister or pastor; it was HIS charge, because the message of salvation is a part of "ALL THE COUNSEL."

There are three books in the New Testament which are especially addressed to ministers, the two epistles to Timothy, and the one to Titus. These are known as the "PASTORAL EPISTLES." Here in these Holy Spirit inspired writings it is clearly stated that the pastor or minister is to "DO THE WORK OF AN EVANGELIST." (2 Tim.4:5).

This does not mean that he travels from place to place just preaching the message of salvation; rather does it mean that in the local Church where God has placed him to declare "ALL TRUTH." the application to the sinner is to be made, as and when appropriate.

Evangelism is the responsibility of THE LOCAL CHURCH. Is not every member a living witness and testimony to the saving grace and power of God? Added to this LIVE BAND of witnesses, Christ bestows a gift, THE MINISTER, who is the voice, or the mouth-piece of the corporate body, and he is, in the course of his regular ministry to "do the work of an evangelist" within the area in which he ministers. This is the Biblical pattern and God ordained means, but how rarely is it seen to be outworked today!

If every local Church was made up of LIVING WITNESSES, and each company of such believers had a God sent faithful minister who shunned not to declare all the counsel of God, (cf. Acts 20:27) which as aforesaid, entails doing the work of an evangelist, what a coverage of TRUTH there would be! There would not be a single area in the British Isles but what would be saturated with the Gospel. Millions more would be touched THIS WAY than by the MOODY/ GRAHAM method. What is more, it would be done at no additional cost; whereas now, travelling evangelists, mass campaigns, auditoriums, advertising, satellite relays etc. run into colossal sums of money.

Further to this aspect, is the flagrant flouting of the Sacred Mandate, as true believers are seen to work together with those of heretical beliefs, and some who are open apostates.

The Word of God says: "Mark them which cause divisions and offences contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned; and avoid them." (Rom.16:17). "Withdraw yourselves from every brother that walketh disorderly, and not after the tradition which he received of us." (2 Thess.3:6). "A man that is an heretic ... reject." (Titus 3:10). "Whosoever transgresseth, and abideth not in the doctrine of Christ, hath not God ... If there come any unto you, and bring not this doctrine, receive him not into your house, neither bid him God speed: For he that biddeth him God speed is a partaker of his evil deeds." (2 John 9-11).

AVOID - WITHDRAW - REJECT - RECEIVE NOT. Could Almighty God have put it more plainly? And yet Christians in their thousands will cast on one side such AUTHENTIC STATEMENTS. They will stand and work alongside those whose words and practice mark them out

to be heretics and apostates. Such as do this, the Scripture states, are "PARTAKERS OF THEIR EVIL DEEDS." Let Dr Graham become linked if he will, but let not such an avalanche of true Bible believers be drawn into HIS NET as is seen today.

During Graham's last visit to Britain, the following report appeared in THE CATHOLIC HERALD 1st June 1987:

"One feature that made this mission so unique was that it gathered Christians from almost the whole spectrum of the Christian Church. The local Catholic Bishop, Mervyn Alexander of Clifton Diocese, some months before, had given his open support and encouragement to 'mission England - South West.' He appointed me, a Bristol parish priest, as Catholic Liaison with a brief to encourage and co-ordinate Catholic participation at all levels; and they did get involved, slowly at first, but as May approached, more and more Catholics committed their time, energy, and prayer. So Catholics were trained alongside with Pentecostals, Baptists, Anglicans, Brethren, and others ... Bishop Alexander celebrated Mass in Clifton Cathedral for the success of 'mission England' and drew an enthusiastic congregation of 500 or so."

In 1986, when in Amsterdam, Dr. Graham said: "Evangelism is about the only word we can unite on. If you have some other theological word there is great division. Our methods would be different, and there would be debates, even over the message." DEBATES EVEN OVER THE MESSAGE. What an admission! Yet everyone knows this to be true, for so many of those who join in ecumenical evangelism have the most erroneous views on such vital matters as THE FALL OF MAN, SIN, ATONEMENT, REGENERATION, and many other basic tenets of the Faith. What utter nonsense! Uniting in Evangelism when there is no agreement as to what the Evangel (Gospel) is!

It is not sufficient for this man of international fame to continually state: "THE BIBLE SAYS." He needs also to proclaim loudly that the Bible in ALL its teaching is to be "OBEYED." "Ah! but souls are saved," many will retort. "The end justifies the means" may be the maxim of the Jesuits, but it is NOT the guiding principle for the child of God. All God's elect will be reached and saved through the Gospel, not one will be lost. But what an indictment upon God's people that in the

proclamation of the glad tidings, they have cast aside the DIVINE PATTERN for the witness and testimony of the LOCAL BODY OF BELIEVERS and thrown in their lot with the "mixed multitude" of ECUMENICALS. For such grave departure from Truth every true Christian must one day give account.

Preach the gospel of God's saving grace, indeed we must! But it must be done in GOD'S WAY and NO OTHER. As for the results which our preaching will bring, that is the work of the Holy Spirit alone. However, let no faithful minister ever think that the Word of God will return void, it will always accomplish that which God pleases, and prosper in the thing whereto He sends it. (cf. Isa.55:11).

Therefore by God's grace, and in His strength, will the local Church at North Road stand firm on the Scriptures, shunning ecumenical evangelism which is so totally at variance with the mandate given to us.

W. H. Molland

WHY GOD PERMITS FALSE PROPHETS

Why does God permit false prophets which work such havoc in Christendom?

This is a very solemn question, and we must restrict ourselves to what the Scriptures say by way of reply. "Thou shalt not hearken unto the words of that prophet, or that dreamer of dreams: for the Lord your God proveth you, to know whether ye love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul." (Deut.13:3). From these words it is clear that God suffers teachers of error for the same reason as He does the persecutors of His people: to test their love, to try their fidelity, to show that their loyalty to Him is such that they will not give ear unto His enemies. Error has always been more popular than the Truth; for it lets down the bars and fosters fleshly indulgence, but for that very reason it is obnoxious to the godly. The one who by grace can say, "I have chosen the way of Truth" will be able to add, "I have stuck unto thy testimonies." (Ps. 119:30-31), none being able to move him therefrom.

"For there must be also heresies among you, that they which are approved may be made manifest among you." (1 Cor.11:19). Error serves as a flail, separating the chaff from the wheat. Let some plausible and popular preacher come forward with an old error decked out in new clothes and empty professors will at once flock to his standard; but not so with those who are established in the Faith. Thus, by means of the false prophets, God makes it appear who are the ones who hold the Truth in sincerity: they are faithful to Him despite all attempts to turn them away into a 'broad-minded' way. The genuine gold endures every test to which it is subjected. Thus, too, are the unregenerate 'converts' revealed: the counterfeit gold will not withstand the fire. Those who are attracted by a novelty do not wear, but are soon carried away by some newer innovation. "They went out from us, but they were not of us: for if they had been of us, they would no doubt have continued with us: but they went out, that they might be made manifest that they were not all of us" (1 John 2:19). Thus, they who turn away from orthodoxy to heterodoxy must not be regarded as real Christians.

The false prophets are also ordained of God for the punishment of those who receive not the love of the Truth. "For this cause God shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie: that they all might be damned who believed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness." (2 Thess.2:10-12). Ahab could not endure Elijah and Micaiah, the servants of God, therefore he was allowed to follow the priests of Baal to his destruction.

It is very clear from Matthew 24:5,11, that Israel's rejection of Christ was followed by the appearing of many false christs in their midst who fatally deceived large numbers of the Jews. It was not until primitive and genuine Christianity was jettisoned that the religious world was plagued with Roman Catholicism. A large proportion of those who are found in the false cults in our day were once members of, or regular attenders at, churches which were more or less sound in the Faith. Beware, my reader, if you despise God's Truth you will fall into love with Satan's lies.

A. W. Pink

EDITORIAL

There are vast numbers professing the name of Christ who seem to think that the doctrine of SOVEREIGN ELECTION inhibits the preaching of the gospel. This is entirely wrong. Any presentation of the message of salvation which does not spring out of God's sovereign election, is not according to Holy Scripture; it is another gospel.

Those disparagingly spoken of as "Calvinists" believe in bringing the gospel to all men in the Divinely ordained manner, using no other means than is sanctioned in the Word of God.

In its proclamation ALL MEN are addressed. This is the GENERAL CALL of the gospel. This is the Church's commission. That much of the seed will fall by the wayside, and on stony ground, our Lord has told us; but in no way must this deter a preacher from calling all men to repent. (cf. Acts 17:30): to believe the gospel (cf. (Mark 1:15). "Whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord shall be saved." (Acts 2:21). We are to "sow beside all waters," that is, amongst all classes and conditions of men, for in earth's masses are those "ordained unto eternal life." Through the preaching of the Word, the Holy Spirit will EFFECTUALLY CALL the elect unto eternal salvation. Who these are, God alone knows. No mortal dare presume to eliminate any, or be selective; that is the prerogative of Deity. One thing is certain - for the Scriptures assure us - not one will be lost. All God's sheep for whom Christ died, will be called by the Holy Spirit, and none will be overlooked.

The so-called "Calvinist" believes in the infallibility of THE COVENANT OF GRACE, and because of this he has a great concern for the making known of the glorious news of salvation. BUT, he preaches it according to how it is revealed in Holy Writ, and in its proclamation does not use methods or means other than is prescribed by God in His mandate for the Church. For these reasons he does not become involved with Arminian preaching which is deficient, and is not the true gospel: neither does he identify with ecumenical enterprises which would betray his high calling to be separated unto God. "Go ye out of the midst of her; be ye clean, that bear the vessels of the lord." (Isaiah 52:11).