

EXCERPTS FROM

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THE LINK

North Road Chapel (Evangelical)

BIDEFORD

Internet Edition

AFTER THIS MANNER....PRAY YE
(A Study in the Lord's Prayer)
PART 10

In this study we now arrive at the first half of verse 13 of Matthew 6: "AND LEAD US NOT INTO TEMPTATION, BUT DELIVER US FROM EVIL." Many treat this as one petition. It is true there are similarities in the two phrases, yet there is a great difference as will be shown later. Thus the first part of verse 13 will be treated as containing two petitions. In the same way as the fourth and fifth petitions were linked with the word "AND", yet are they separate, so here we have the word "BUT" keeping the two petitions separate. These two phrases must not be merged into one. The first phrase will be examined as the sixth petition. "LEAD US NOT INTO TEMPTATION."

The need for these five words to be used in prayer has baffled many. Why ask God to lead us not into temptation? Surely He never leads people into temptation! The Scripture immediately comes to mind: "Let no man say when he is tempted, I am tempted of God: for God cannot be tempted with evil, neither tempteth He any man."(James 1:13). This statement must be right we say, our God leads men into HOLINESS not into TEMPTATION. In contrast is the Scripture: "And it came to pass after these things, that God did tempt Abraham, and said unto him, Abraham: and he said, Behold, here I am. And He said, Take now thy son, thine only son Isaac, whom thou lovest, and get thee into the land of Moriah; and offer him there for a burnt offering upon one of the mountains which I will tell thee of."(Gen.22:1-2). The word "tempt" here means TO TRY or TO TEST - God was TRYING Abraham's faith, (cf. Heb.11:17). In the sixth petition however, the emphasis of the word "temptation" is upon ENTICEMENT TO SIN of such power that we might be overcome. There is a great depth of meaning in that which is now before us.

We need to be fully conversant as to WHAT temptation is, WHENCE it comes, from WHOM it comes, HOW it comes, and

WHY it comes. Not until we know these things shall we be able to understand why we are to "PRAY AFTER THIS MANNER."

Temptation can come from WITHIN, for our own heart can be the breeding ground of much evil. "Every man is tempted, when he is drawn away of his own lust, and enticed. Then when lust hath conceived, it bringeth forth sin."(James 1:14,15). Augustine said: "A saint's whole life is temptation. Elijah could shut heaven by prayer but he could not shut his heart from temptation." How true this is, our own hearts are still very deceptive, we all have this INNER PROBLEM which is ever with us.

Temptation can also come from WITHOUT. The allurements of the world, the glitter, the so-called entertainments, - the things from which the worldling gets pleasure and enjoyment, can alas! attract the Christian. How careful the believer needs to be in his involvement with these things. This applies particularly to parents in THEIR EXAMPLE to their children. What places do they visit, what do they watch, how do they channel and mould their children? If great vigilance is not exercised, then even the PARENTS can be the VERY MEANS of LEADING their little ones into AREAS OF TEMPTATION. The Holy Scriptures command us to keep ourselves unspotted from the world. Pure religion is to be undefiled by any worldly activity or contamination (cf. James 1:27).

However, whether the temptation comes from within or without, it originates with SATAN. He is "THE TEMPTER" (cf. Matt.4:3). He operates and is the prime cause in either case. He ever lies in ambush to ensnare the believer.

At Calvary he was a defeated foe. Referring to the cross our Lord said: "Now is the judgment of this world: now shall the prince of this world be cast out."(John 12:31) This was true, but Satan is not yet cast into prison. Thomas Watson describes him as "A PRISONER ON BAIL." He is still at large, but can only operate under restriction. John Calvin says he is on a chain, and can only move

within limits, and he drags his chain wherever he goes. This is all true, but let us all be warned, he has a great length of chain. This mighty being is A HELLISH DEMON; indeed is THE PRINCE OF DEMONS. He heads a great army of FALLEN SPIRIT BEINGS. We have no conception of the strength of this SATANIC FORCE. The very fact that he is chained only fills him the more with malice. He knows that he has but a short time, therefore he is as one having great wrath, (cf. Rev.12:12). His infernal desire is to drag souls into the same condemnation as himself.

This MALICIOUS ASPECT of Satan needs further expansion. The word MALICE means A DISPOSITION TO INJURE OTHERS - A PREMEDITATED DESIGN TO DO EVIL. Although the Devil knows that he was defeated at Calvary, and that he now has but a little time ere he is eternally incarcerated, yet he NEVER LETS UP in seeking to bring others down with him into eternal ruin. His fallen personality is a disposition to injure. HE THINKS NO OTHER WAY. He has a premeditated design to do evil, and EVERY MAN AND WOMAN IS HIS TARGET be they sinner or saint. Even though he knows his chances to be slim, he will still persevere in temptation; none are immune.

Think upon the temptation of Christ in the wilderness. The Devil knew full well that Jesus of Nazareth was the Son of God. He knew that Christ was God Himself manifest in the flesh, yet such knowledge did not restrain him. His disposition is such that HE CANNOT REFRAIN. Let no Christian ever feel secure, for if Satan had no compunction at attacking the Son of God with Whom he had NO HOPE of success, he will NEVER HESITATE at assailing any believer. This is his bent and make-up; though he knows that in tempting others to sin he is but increasing the fires of his own eternal torment, yet he will not cease. He is a MIGHTY REVENGEFUL MALICIOUS spirit being, set upon evil, and let it be repeated - EVERY ONE OF US IS HIS TARGET.

The Holy Spirit informs us that "HE WALKETH ABOUT" (1 Pet.5:8). He is always around and we never know WHEN we

are going to meet him, or WHERE he might appear. If we repulse him, he will not go away for long. Soon he will be lurking in our vicinity again. He is as an animal stalking his prey, and catching us unawares he will pounce! he is termed "THE PRINCE OF THIS WORLD." (John 14:30). This is one reason why the Christian is to AVOID the world and its attractions, for by indulging in any of its pursuits he or she puts themselves right in the DEVIL'S TERRITORY.

Another most forceful description is given to us in Rev.12:3,4 where he is set forth as THE GREAT RED DRAGON who with his tail, cast down the third part of the stars. This is metaphorical language, of course, but used by the Holy Spirit to convey to us something of his person and potential. He is an ANGEL and as such we cannot conceive his power. Although he has lost his holiness, let none ever think that he has lost anything of his strength. Created a mighty spirit, those great powers and skills with which he was originally invested, are now turned perpetually to do evil.

Satan as a spirit can gain access into THE MIND. Oust as the Holy Spirit can shed PURITY and HOLINESS within, so also can the Devil diffuse impurity and evil in the heart. Thus it was with Judas. "And supper being ended, the Devil having now PUT INTO THE HEART of Judas Iscariot, Simon's son, to betray Him."(John 13:2). This is a most frightening thought, that it is this FOUL SPIRIT BEING who enters the very mind and heart, and GENERATES EVIL TEMPTATIONS.

Satan cannot compel the actions, yet he can entice, he can seduce. He entered into the mind of David upon the roof top and so inflamed him, that David succumbed. If not dismissed the Devil will linger in the mind until he has fanned a spark into a flame; for in his disposition to injure HE IS DILIGENT AND PERSISTENT.

Not all are caught in the same trap as David; but Satan has MANY PLOTS, indeed his schemes are legion. He cares not so long as some kind of sin can be accomplished. If

one temptation fails then will he soon try out another, for this cunning monster has great knowledge and intuition; he is adept in fitting the temptation to the person.

Some are susceptible to LUST, others to PRIDE; what does this matter to Satan, for both are abominable to God? Some Christians are tempted to DESPAIR, others to PRESUMPTION. Vast multitudes PROFANE the God of heaven, others would never fall on this, but they are tempted to FORMALITY, a form of Godliness but denying the power thereof. What of it? The Devil cares not in the least which temptation is successful as long as he can cause a person to sin.

His activities are not confined to individuals. One of his prime objectives is the Church. He is not only an UNCLEAN spirit, he is a LYING spirit. As an unclean spirit he labours to defile the soul with LUST, PROFANITY, PRIDE and SHAMELESSNESS. As a lying spirit he labours particularly within the Church, "that they should believe a lie." (2 Thess.2:11). One of Satan's most effective temptations is to BEGUILE SOULS and draw them away from THE TRUTH, getting them to embrace error. In this he is seen in one of his most subtle forms, for here he appears not in his TRUE colours - as a FALLEN SPIRIT rather does he come as an ANGEL OF LIGHT, masquerading to work as THE TRUE SPIRIT. Professing to be sowing wheat, he is sowing tares. It is no exaggeration to say that the Devil can appear EXTREMELY SPIRITUAL on times. He can dress wolves up so as to look EXACTLY like sheep, and they will BLEAT just like true sheep as he speaks through them. He will also so enter the minds and hearts of those who listen, as to cause them to believe that what they are hearing are the wondrous truths of Holy Scripture. He will persuade them that it is all of the Holy Spirit. It was for this very reason that the Apostle wrote: "Beloved, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God: because many false prophets are gone out into the world." (1 John 4:1).

It may be that some are amazed at what is taught and believed in many Churches today, but Satan has always deceived in this way. Even in the days of the Apostles he succeeded in getting men to preach that circumcision was essential to salvation. "Certain men which came down from Judea taught the brethren, and said, Except ye be circumcised after the manner of Moses, ye cannot be saved."(Acts 15:1), and people believed it. In another place he attempted to beguile in the WORSHIP OF ANGELS (cf Col. 2:18). This had an appeal with some. Yet another of his inventions was to deny the ACTUAL INCARNATION of the Son of God. "Every spirit that confesseth not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is not of God: and this is that spirit of antichrist, whereof ye have heard that it should come; and even now already is it in the world." (1 John 4:3). Even such a temptation as this met with success with a few. The Devil does not mind in the least HOW the Church is ensnared, as long as it is ensnared. Not all will follow the dogmas of ROME, yet will they get caught on the hook of HUMANISM. Others will hold up their hands in horror at RITUALISM yet take the bait of the CHARISMATIC. It is ANY thing and EVERY thing which will draw folk away from the TRUTH as it is in Holy Scripture which Satan will employ, for he is a LYING SPIRIT.

Another of the Devil's successful traps is RICHES. "They that will be rich fall into temptation and a snare."(1 Tim.6:9). POSITION, WEALTH, LUXURY, is just that which the natural man finds attractive, and Satan will tickle men with such delights; but alas, how many have drowned as they have swum in the warm waters of ease and pleasure! The person with riches is PARTICULARLY VULNERABLE and has great need to pray that he is not led into temptation.

POVERTY also can equally be used by Satan. When men are in dire straits, he is quick to take advantage of their situation. His common approach is - what has the Lord done for you? Why does He allow you to be in this position? Why does the Lord not intervene to get you out of this trouble?

When men are in such a situation Satan will often suggest that, in a case of sheer necessity, it is excusable to do that which otherwise would not be justifiable. Led on in this way Christians have gone into devious employment which has been dishonouring to God. It matters not whether in riches or poverty the adversary is EXTREMELY DEXTEROUS, His arts are DELICATE, CUNNINGLY ADAPTED to each individual situation.

In addition to this Satan will make use of persons who will be useful in promoting his designs. He works out the scheme of the temptation and then brings in others to IMPLEMENT it. There is a FINE ART in his strategy. Even influential men in the Church can help him tremendously. Korah the Levite is a classic example. This man was used to draw many aside. "And they rose up before Moses, with certain of the children of Israel, two hundred and fifty princes of the assembly, FAMOUS IN THE CONGREGATION, MEN OF RENOWN: and they gathered themselves together AGAINST MOSES AND AGAINST AARON, and said unto them, Ye take too much upon you, seeing all the congregation are holy, every one of them, and the Lord is among them: wherefore then lift ye up yourselves above the congregation of the Lord?" (Num.16:2,3).

Incredible! we say, 250 high ranking men of Israel setting themselves against God's chosen servants. What hostility of the Devil! Yes, but he used A LEVITE - one of the priestly tribe to bring it about. Extreme astuteness on Satan's part, - VERY CUNNING! If he can make use of a Levite, then what of other men? This thought alone should put every Christian ON ALERT WARNING. Let none be "ignorant of his devices." (2 Cor.2:11).

The Scriptures show us that the focal point of the Devil's attack upon the Christian is HIS FAITH. He lays his powder at the very foundation in an endeavour to blow it up. Let us refresh our memories as to what faith is. It is absolute trust and total reliance upon what God has said. GOD HAS SAID IT - I BELIEVE IT AND ACT UPON IT. Keeping this firmly fixed in our minds let us look yet again at the

very first temptation put to man. "And he said unto the woman, Yea, hath God said, Ye shall not eat of every tree of the garden?"(Gen.3:1). The Devil here was striking at faith. He would persuade Eve that she need not take the Word of God too seriously. He drew her to a position to think the Word of God did not necessarily mean what it said. What was the result? SHE FELL.

It cannot be stressed too forcefully: implicit trust in the Word of God is ALL IMPORTANT. "The just shall live by faith."(Rom.1:17). The Christian cannot live any way other than by accepting what God has said and acting upon it. Faith is the FUNDAMENTAL GRACE. It is basic in the matter of our defence. "Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the Devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour: whom resist STEADFAST IN THE FAITH."(1 Pet.5:8,9). No Christian will RESIST the Devil if he is not steadfast in the faith.

In Ephesians 6 we have set out for us the whole armour of God, every article is defined and described, then in verse 16 we read: "Above all, taking the shield of faith." - ABOVE ALL. A shield is something which we get behind, it protects us, it screens us. The Christian is to stand behind that which GOD HAS SAID.

Every time the Devil approached Christ he was resisted with the words: "IT IS WRITTEN", "IT IS WRITTEN", "IT IS WRITTEN" (Matt.4:4,7,10). Thus did He reply to Satan every time. Absolute reliance upon what God had said. THIS IS FAITH. God's Word is TRUTH. The Devil can never stand against truth, for he is the FATHER OF LIES, the author of ALL DECEPTION. We must ever face him up with what GOD HAS SAID. Hide behind this shield. Hurl the promises of God at him; they will be like the stones in the shepherd boy's bag. When he comes to tempt, or to attack in any way, let us dip into the bag of Holy Scripture, load our sling and throw it at him. Pull out Heb.13:5 - "I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee." If he should molest us by pointing out the feebleness of our trust, cast Isa.42:3 at him - "A bruised reed shall He not break, and

the smoking flax shall he not quench." Give him a further shot, John 10:29 - "No man is able to pluck them out of My Father's hand." If he still comes back for more, have Rom.16:20 ready, - "And the God of peace shall bruise Satan under your feet shortly." Aim that straight at his head. He will not come back to be reminded of THAT too many times. So may we ever guard and protect the grace of FAITH, for if Satan can undermine that, we have lost OUR SHIELD.

Another of his wiles is to encourage teachings which are pleasing to the flesh. In the day in which we live this strategy is seen to be most successful. The Scriptures say, "that we must through much tribulation enter into the kingdom of God."(Acts 14:22). We are to CRUCIFY the flesh (cf.Gal.5:24). But it is a tactic of Satan to persuade Christians to believe that they have been brought into a PLEASURE PARK rather than marshalled on to a BATTLEFIELD. He is ever seeking to weaken the Scriptures, to tone down strictness and discipline. The teaching of Antinomianism is of his invention, - Why be so rigid in your obedience? Be a little more flexible! Do not appear legalistic. Has not Christ done all for you? You are now justified, make THE MOST of the LIBERTY into which you have been brought. Do not live as if you are still in bondage to the law. Many have been caught in this SNARE OF THE DEVIL. This is an easy-going CHEAP Christianity.

In the commercial world it is the cheap bargain shops which always attract the most customers. So in the religious field, it is the pedlars of the cheap, tawdry, novelty religion of the easy-going Christianity which attracts the people and fills the pews. In contrast the true Church will only deal in the merchandise of TRUTH; bringing forth PEARLS of great price, and TREASURE both old and new (cf.Matt.13:52).

Christian duty and responsibility is another favourite area of attack. In this Satan tempts in at least three ways: he HINDERS, he DISCOURAGES, he incites to OVERLABOUR.

He will endeavour to hinder the Christian in PRAYER. If he cannot stop prayer he will pull out every STOP to make it cold and FORMAL - lacking in importunity (cf.Lk.11:5-10).

He also resolutely strives to bring the Christian to neglect MEDITATION. Listen to preaching if you must, but do not meditate upon it. Meditation may be likened to a sheep chewing the cud; this is a VITAL part of the digestion of a sheep; it turns the grass taken in into nourishment. So are the sheep of God's pasture required to chew the cud, and meditate upon the Word when it is heard; only in this way are we nourished by it. SELF EXAMINATION. "Examine yourselves" wrote Paul to the Corinthians. This is necessary for us all, lest there be sin, formality, insincerity. But Satan will do all he can to HINDER such exercises.

Secondly, he DISCOURAGES. Why carry on? What are you accomplishing? What signs are there that all these Christian duties are getting you anywhere? Then, if discouragement does not work, thirdly, he INCITES TO OVER LABOUR. Cause him to take on more responsibility. Push him deeper into duty, pressurize, overwhelm with work and activity - 'zeal not according to knowledge' - and bring him down that way. Satan cares not how his ends are brought about as long as they ARE ACHIEVED.

The great adversary is also adept in causing the believer to become warped or unseasonable. For example, the Scriptures state: "The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit."(Psa.51:17). This is of course right, but for a Christian ever to be in such an attitude is unseasonable. To every thing there is a SEASON, a time to weep and a time to laugh (cf.Eccles.3:1-4). Some Christians are marked by lightness and levity, others are morose and given to brooding. Neither is right or balanced for the child of God.

There is another aspect to being seasonable. To read the Word of God is a duty, but if a person chooses to stay at

home and read privately, when the Word is being preached, or the Lord's Supper being observed, then that is unseasonable - (OUT OF SEASON). "Let the children of Israel also keep the passover at his APPOINTED SEASON."(Num.9:2). "And when the HOUR WAS COME He sat down, and the twelve Apostles with Him."(Lk.22:14). Our God is a God of order, and He has ordained A TIME and A PLACE for everything. The Devil will ever try to disrupt that order by tempting God's children to be unseasonable, that is, not keeping to the Divine schedule. If we depart from the Divine Mandate and create our own priorities these will ALWAYS prove to be UNBALANCED - OUT OF TRUE.

The peace of the saints is also another of Satan's great targets. One of his great delights is to be a disturber of the soul. He cannot destroy the believer's salvation, but he can greatly mar their peace. He will bring all manner of things into the heart to perplex. He will absorb the mind with troubles, anxieties, doubts, fears, and if we do not ward him off with the shield of faith, we can soon become MELANCHOLY. This in turn will make us UNTHANKFUL and will completely stifle the VOICE OF PRAISE. This is a most sad state of soul in which to sink.

History records a Dew who planned to poison Martin Luther. A friend of Luther's knew of it, and secured a picture of this Dew. He sent it to the great Reformer, warning him to TAKE HEED of this man. By such means Luther was alerted, and ever watchful for him, and in consequence of such vigilance escaped being murdered. So it is with us. In the Holy Scriptures we are furnished with such a picture of the great adversary that we may be FOREWARNED, and being thus forewarned, be FOREARMED. Let us ever remember the words of Christ to Peter, James and John: "WATCH AND PRAY THAT YE ENTER NOT INTO TEMPTATION."(Matt.26:41).

To be continued.

W.H.Molland.

WISE SAYINGS OF WILLIAM TIPTAFT: Make us more dead to the world, and separate in spirit from it.
Lord, teach us what is right and give us power to do it.

FESTAL DAYS AND THE LAW OF GOD

PART 1

The sum and substance of these articles, which will appear in this magazine over the coming months, will be: "Is the celebration of Festal Days, such as Christmas and Easter, a violation of the law of God?"

There are many Christians who have a suspicion that there is a PAGAN ELEMENT in these festivals, yet they argue from a pragmatic point of view, drawing attention to the apparent commercial, domestic, as well as spiritual advantages of observing these days. There is a boost to business in the dead time of the year. The family is brought together. The unregenerate attend a place of worship, which normally they would never do. Carols are played in the shops, on the streets, they even sound out from the public houses. What is wrong with all this? Surely, it is good!

This line of reasoning will not be embarked upon in these articles. It is the declared practice of the Church meeting at North Road Chapel to be governed by the REGULATIVE PRINCIPLE. What does this mean? It is this: if a doctrine or practice is not found in Holy Scripture, then it is not to be the teaching or the practice of the Church. The appeal throughout, therefore, will be: "TO THE LAW AND TO THE TESTIMONY" (Isa.8:20).

Mention of the Regulative Principle immediately causes some to say, that Christian liberty must not be infringed. There are many things, they say, which confront us in life which are not mentioned in the Bible. In these matters, if an individual sees no wrong in it, and is at ease in doing it, then it is concluded the person has liberty of conscience to proceed. But is this really valid?

These articles will go to the foundations of this subject. When fair examination of the facts has established whether or not Christmas and Easter violate the law of God, then,

and only then, will it be possible to determine the relevance of Christian liberty.

Christmas and Easter are to be put ON TRIAL using the Bible as our STATUTE BOOK.

It is a great snare of the Adversary to divert the attention of the reader from what is being said, to who is saying it. Those in such a snare might therefore say, that although the writer feels strongly about this subject, others do not, and so they feel able to continue to celebrate these days. The snare is designed, as all snares are, to bring us to disregard the authority of the Word of God. Let us consider an example.

The new North Devon Link Road has a speed limit of 60 mph. This restriction is rigidly enforced, and many have discovered to their sorrow that the law means what it says. However, if a motorist is driving along this road in the early hours of the morning, in all probability the road will be empty. There is not another vehicle in sight so he increases speed to 85-90 mph. What is wrong with it? He is endangering no-one. He is making good headway and it is greatly to his advantage to put his foot down. The question is, does any of this alter the law? Of course not! The point being made is, does this so-called 'Christian liberty' allow one to break the law of God? Indeed not! Where there is a ruling upon a matter there is NO LIBERTY. The EXTRA BIBLICAL innovations of man, however harmless or advantageous they may appear to be, do not alter the EVERLASTING LAW of the ETERNAL GOD.

This then is the basis upon which this subject will be approached. It will be dealt with in the light of God's law. This necessitates that we first become conversant with the law itself.

There is a sense, and a very real sense, in which the whole Bible is to be regarded as the law of God. In the sacred volume of Holy Scripture there are GUIDING PRINCIPLES given which apply to all problems which cross one's pathway. However to go through from Genesis to

Revelation to discover the answer to any particular question could be a very laborious task.

God has SUMMARISED His requirements in just Ten Commandments. Whatever the problem, if it is brought to the first 17 verses of Exodus 20, it will be proved to be either lawful, or unlawful.

There are Christians and ministers who teach that the law is done away in the New Testament age, and that it now has no place in the life of a believer. This is a most serious matter. It is true that, through the grace of God, the CURSE of that law has been taken away from all His redeemed people, but NOT its HOLY PRECEPTS. This law was upon Adam at the first. It is the law of God therefore it is perfect - IMMUTABLE and UNCHANGING. ALL Scripture centres around this law. "Hear \emptyset Israel; The Lord our God is one Lord: and thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, and with all thy strength: this is the first commandment. And the second is like, namely this, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. There is none other commandment greater than these." (Mark12:29). "On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets." (Matt.22:40). There is nothing greater said Christ, everything hangs upon it and revolves around it. The whole of Scripture is but an expansion of the truth of this law.

The ceremonial law given to Israel was but an enlargement upon the first four commandments - the GODWARD aspect of the Decalogue. In the ceremonial law, Israel was told and shown HOW to worship God. They were told WHAT to do, and what they were NOT to do. The judicial law was given to govern Israel socially: this was a clear exposition of the six MANWARD aspects of the Decalogue.

One is in full agreement that the ceremonial and judicial law given to Israel, as to the letter, has been done away in the New Testament age. We do not now sacrifice lambs and bullocks, or stone men and women. Nevertheless there are PRINCIPLES even in that section of Holy Writ which

are ongoing. Whilst the actual pattern be not the same, yet we still have principles of Divine order, and regulation for worship in the New Testament. There is also a mandate for governments and powers that be in society. Upon what are they based? Precisely the same as of old time, the moral law of God - the TEN COMMANDMENTS. "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy strength, and with all thy mind; and thy neighbour as thyself."(Lk.10:27). If carefully analysed ALL regulation is condensed into those few words. Our Lord EXPANDED upon these commandments in His great sermon on the mount.

The same principles are found throughout the New Testament Epistles. If Almighty God abrogated His moral law then the whole universe would be plunged into anarchy. There would be NO ULTIMATE STANDARD. All laws, rules, regulations, and precepts throughout Scripture are but detailed expositions and applications of the TEN COMMANDMENTS. This being so, in order to examine the SPIRITUAL VALIDITY of festal days they must be brought to the law of God, to the first commandment: "THOU SHALT HAVE NO OTHER GODS BEFORE ME."(Ex.20:3). It has been pointed out already the law of God is not to be understood just in the letter, but is to be understood in the light that each commandment is but a summary of far broader principles.

In the first commandment we are to learn that our worship is limited to the God of Holy Scripture and HIM ONLY. "No other gods 'BEFORE Me." No other god in His presence. We are to respect or countenance NO OTHER GOD. Quite obvious we say! But wait a moment! How do we worship? According to the Word of God it is to be "in spirit and in truth."(John 4:23)." In truth," that is IN OBEDIENCE TO HIS WORD. There is no other way to worship in the spirit. Whatever our sacrifices, be it by our lips, or by gifts, all is worthless apart from obedience to the Word of God. King Saul in his rebellion to God's commandments discovered this to his condemnation as is set out so clearly in 1 Samuel 15:22,23.

When we DISOBEY God who do we OBEY? We obey our own inclinations and ideas. Immediately we do this we have put self BEFORE God. We have broken the first commandment and have become our OWN god. We have rebelled against the TRUE GOD.

When God has spoken clearly and we say:" NO! - we are not going to concern ourselves with that particular precept," then automatically we are taking instructions from ANOTHER SOURCE. This is nothing less than stubborn rebellion to the law of God. God is no respecter of persons, or THEIR ideas. It matters not whether we get our ideas from tradition, liberal evangelicalism or our own vain imaginations, if it is not from the Scriptures of Truth then it is rebellion. Rebellion means to 'resist established law.'

The law of which we are treating is ESTABLISHED FOREVER. It is the law of God. If we resist this law, or turn aside from it, then we turn AWAY from God Himself. The judgment of God in Scripture is: you have ANOTHER GOD BEFORE ME. This is IDOLATRY. Our reluctance to obey God is the same as worshipping a FALSE GOD. No other conclusion can be drawn.

In this matter of Christian liberty, which we hear so much about today, many Christians claim that they can follow their own conscience. This is not valid. Conscience CEASED TO BE A SURE GUIDE when our first parents fell into sin, which infiltrated the whole personality of all Adam's posterity. A conscience must first be enlightened before it will operate aright. There is only one source of enlightenment, and that is the Word of God. A truly enlightened conscience will always be in perfect harmony with the preceptive teaching of the Word of God which is summarised in the law of God. The conscience, therefore, needs to be thoroughly instructed in the law of God in order to distinguish between right and wrong - sin and obedience. The Word of God is ABSOLUTELY BINDING ON THE CONSCIENCE: there is NO LIBERTY to pick and choose. In the Person of our Lord Jesus Christ there was absolute

harmony between His conscience and the law of God. We have seen in the first article of this issue His unswerving allegiance to the Scriptures (cf. Matt. 4:1-11). The current widespread misguided teaching on the subject of Christian liberty is no more than another SNARE OF THE ADVERSARY to entice believers to LAWLESSNESS.

If a person chooses to depart from the Word of God, then they have chosen ANOTHER GOD. If they decide to please themselves then they have become their OWN GOD. They have determined their own RULE OF LIFE, and in so doing have usurped the throne of God. When any man or woman does that which they PREFER to do, then they are exercising GOD'S PREROGATIVE. The first commandment forbids totally OUR desires or OUR ideas. "Now therefore hearken, O Israel unto the statutes and unto the judgments, which I teach you ye shall not add unto the word which I command you, neither shall ye diminish ought from it, that ye may keep the commandments of the Lord your God which I command you." (Deut. 4:1,2). There is no leeway here. It is not for us to say, "BUT I BELIEVE SO AND SO," or, "I THINK," or, "MY FEELINGS ARE..." God says, NO! You do it My way, or you break My law: it is My way, or you sin. There is no place for man's inventions or ideas, and as for liberty, such does not exist.

These are PRINCIPLES, which are vital if we are to understand rightly the meaning of idolatry. This may be very shattering to us but the truth of it will become ever more apparent as the subject develops.

The first question always to be asked is: 'Where did our thoughts and ideas come from?' Did they in the first place come from the Word of God, or are they a TRADITION passed down; or are they perhaps a NEW IDEA of the present day? The AGE of the tradition or OF the idea is irrelevant, - if it be not founded upon the Word of God it is FALSE. There is no middle ground when it comes to the law of God. He has left no central, or neutral path. God evaluates ALL human activity, open and secret, by His law. (cf. Eccles. 12:13,14). It is either of God, or it is not.

This black and white situation was spelt out clearly in Eden, but Adam and Eve did not accept it. It was in that garden of perfection that we first read of false and idolatrous thinking. It might be said that there is no evidence that Adam and Eve had idols. Ah! but idolatry is a PRINCIPLE, this is what we MUST understand.

Adam and Eve, our first parents, in their primal state had full access to all creation with but one exception - one prohibition, the tree in the midst of the garden. In Genesis 3 it is recorded the Serpent approached with the words: "HATH GOD SAID?" Eve replied: "...God has said ye SHALL NOT eat of it." She KNEW God's law, she knew that law was binding. The Devil misrepresented God, and misled Eve: "...in the day ye eat thereof, ye shall be as gods, knowing good and evil." These lies brought Eve TO THINK the fruit of the tree was desirable. Thus her OWN THOUGHTS now became her rule of conduct. She rebelled against GOD'S LAW. SELF took precedence over THE CREATOR. The FIRST COMMANDMENT was broken: "Thou shalt have no other gods BEFORE Me." At that point - the very beginning of human history, idolatry entered.

In Cain, the very first man to be born of Adam, is idolatry perpetuated. In Genesis 4 we read he brought to the Lord an offering of the fruit of the ground. But Abel, his younger brother, BY FAITH (cf. Heb.11:4), offered to the Lord a firstling of his flock, A LAMB. The Lord accepted Abel's offering: He did not accept Cain's offering. The Lord told Cain his offering was sinful. Sin is a transgression of the law, (cf. 1 John 3:4). Hence the Lord charged Cain with breaking HIS LAW when he offered to the Lord the fruit of the ground. This sin was FALSE WORSHIP - IDOLATRY. In 1 John 3:12 this act is described as EVIL. Cain sought to worship the Almighty according to HIS OWN EVIL IDOLATROUS THOUGHTS.

This approach has NEVER dropped out of man's reasoning, and as time has rolled on MAN'S THOUGHTS have taken an increased precedence over the Word of God. The ideas of men have become more subtle. They are constantly designing

and inventing from their own imaginations to improve, as they think, upon the law of God. But does the God of heaven ever co-operate with man's proffered improvements or amendments? HE DOES NOT! His law is perfect. To add to, or to diminish from, the law of God is nothing less than the creation of ANOTHER RELIGION. Cain's offering was never even countenanced by the Almighty.

In the beginning there was nothing but a TRUE RELIGION. Cain, like his parents, rejected this and invented his own. Cain acknowledged God in his offering, and what is more he was seeking to worship Him, but IT WAS NOT IN GOD'S WAY. Cain's worship was A PRODUCT OF HIS OWN IMAGINATION. He had established another god before Jehovah, therefore was it TOTALLY rejected.

In this introductory section much reference is being made to early human history because certain PRINCIPLES must be established. It is vital that all understand the NATURE of idolatry, and the origin of false religion. It did not spring out of heathendom, ALL false religion sprang out of TRUE religion. It was born soon after creation, it was but a deviation at the first, nevertheless it was IDOLATRY.

Many academics today teach that the Christian religion is the refinement of the heathen religions of the world. This is untrue. ALL other religions are a corruption of the TRUE. This will be shown clearly in future articles.

All the religions of the world outside of Holy Scripture are the inventions of REBELS. It will always be found, when they are traced to their origins, that they are the product of someone saying "I THINK." In this way, God's Law has been subjected to man's thoughts. This is to put ANOTHER God before the TRUE God - IDOLATRY.

To be Continued.

W.H.Molland.

A.W.TOZER wrote: 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.

EDITORIAL

A series of nine sermons has been given at North Road Chapel during the mid-winter on the subject of "FESTAL DAYS AND THE LAW OF GOD." This has created much interest, as well as grave concern; not only locally, but further afield through the hearing of the tape ministry.

Because of the widespread ignorance of the subject, and the way in which many have been stirred, it is considered that a broader coverage should be given to this matter by producing these addresses in printed form in this magazine, in the current and future editions.

It is hoped that these articles will be read carefully and prayerfully in the light of Holy Scripture, for it will be shown to be a matter of the utmost seriousness.

"Every one that doeth evil hateth the light, neither cometh to the light, lest his deeds should be reproved. But he that doeth truth cometh to the light, that his deeds may be manifest, that they are wrought in God."(John 3:20,21).

In conjunction with these sermons, it would be helpful to read "The Two Babylons", by Alexander Hislop. First published in 1916, it has had many reprints since then. This is the classic work on heathen practices and false religions. It is a book which should be in every Christian home, for paganism is in the Churches and homes of God's people today, yet, many are completely unaware of it, sincerely believing that what they do is entirely consistent with true Christianity.

ANNOUNCEMENTS AND INFORMATION

On Lord's Day evening January 28 our friends from the Bideford Town Mission joined with us for a Baptismal service when Mr.B.Sparks and his daughter Geraldine of that fellowship were obedient to the Lord in baptism. Mr.

Evans (Pastor at the Mission) gave most helpful ministry on the subject of Believer's Baptism on that occasion.

With the holiday season again approaching we remind those who may be fellowshipping with us of the REST ROOM at the Chapel. This is available for any visitors who may wish to make use of it on the Lord's Day.

There are still a few on the mailing list of THE LINK whose Post Codes have not been advised to us on the form enclosed with a s.a.e. in the last issue. We would draw this matter to the attention of our friends to whom this applies in order that we may comply with the requirements of the Post Office.

If any reader has difficulty in obtaining a copy of the book "THE TWO BABYLONS" referred to in the Editorial, we carry a stock in the Chapel Bookroom.

The mailing list of "THE LINK" is now stored on a Word Processor. If any reader objects to this arrangement please notify us and we will remove your name and address from the disc.

VISITING PREACHERS D.V

LORD'S DAY	APRIL	29	MR.F.STANBURY	(BOW)
" "	MAY	13	MR.K.MATRUNOLA	(PORTSMOUTH)
" "	JUNE	10	MR.G.HAWKINS	(WATTISHAM)

Mr.F.Stanbury will also be ministering on three Thursday evenings. MAY 3, JUNE 7 and JULY 5.

PRELIMINARY NOTICE

ANNUAL BIBLE CONVENTION
SATURDAY 21 JULY 1990
SPEAKER: MR.N.PORTER (BELFAST)