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North Road Chapel (Evangelical)
BIDEFORD

FESTAL DAYS

AND THE LAW OF GOD

IS THE CELEBRATION OF FESTAL DAYS SUCH AS CHRISTMAS AND
EASTER A VIOLATION OF THE LAW OF GOD?

SUMMARY

For two years the subject of "**FESTAL DAYS**" has been a leading feature in this magazine. Historical facts and supporting Scriptures have presented a most sobering picture, and this article will summarize the evidence.

At the commencement of this series it was said that many true believers have a suspicion that these festivals are not basically Christian, yet they argue from a pragmatic point of view. They speak of advantages to be gained, for example - it affords a special opportunity to get outsiders into Churches, it is greatly beneficial to family life and it brings out a spirit of goodwill in people. Such viewpoints have not been considered, for within the context of the subtitle they are not valid, for these festal days have been put ON TRIAL, the Law of God being the Statute Book; the basis of the examination being the Regulative Principle, that is, a practice which is alien to the Holy Scriptures is to have no place in our Church or home life.

There are Churches who would claim to adhere to the Regulative Principle yet their publications and adverts reveal Special Carol Services, Christmas Day Services, Church Parties, Good Friday and Easter Day Celebrations which makes a nonsense of their claim. Other assemblies

would not go as far as this and would give no recognition to festal days in the Church building, or the gathering for corporate worship, yet as members they would claim to be at liberty to do as they liked in their homes and families; so is found all the trappings and paraphernalia of pagan festivals in their dwellings. In this case the question must be asked "Who and what is the Church - the building or the members?" How can any corporate company of the Lord's people claim to be governed by the Regulative Principle if the members are indifferent to it in private life? THEY ARE the Church. The corporate body of a local Church can only be seen to be governed by the Word of God to the extent that each member conforms to it. Those who fail, mar the testimony; the witness is no longer a CORPORATE one and that is a most serious matter.

To be a member of a Church which is truly governed by the Word of God is going to be ever more demanding in this age of compromise, carnal living and loose Church practice. It will bring increasing isolation, division and reproach. It requires that the cost be counted, and the heart challenged as to whether or not we are prepared to endure the REPROACH OF CHRIST. Moses chose rather to suffer affliction with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season. He esteemed the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures in Egypt: for he had respect unto the recompence of the reward (cf Hebrews 11:25-26). "If ye be reproached for the name of Christ, happy are ye; for the spirit of glory and of God resteth upon you" (1 Peter 4:14). "Blessed are ye, when men shall hate you, and when they shall separate you from their company, and shall reproach you, and cast out your name as evil, for the Son of man's sake. Rejoice ye in that day, and leap for joy: for, behold, your reward is great in heaven: for in the like manner did their fathers unto the prophets" (Luke 6:22-23).

In examining the Law of God earlier in these articles, it was seen that the Ten Commandments had broad and far reaching principles which were expanded upon throughout

Scripture. In the main, the section of the law most concerned by these festal days is the first and second commandments, although not exclusively so, for the fourth commandment which concerns the Sabbath is also affected.

Regarding the first commandment "Thou shalt have no other gods before me" (Exodus 20:3), the principle is GOD ONLY. His will is to be supreme, His law authoritative to the exclusion of all else. Anything which intrudes, which conflicts, or is not found in the Divine mandate, if accepted by us, in the eyes of the Almighty constitutes another god, and our God will not be the CHIEF God among others, He is the ONLY GOD.

By referring to Eden and our first parents, we have a prime example of another god being introduced. Adam and Eve knew God's law, but when tempted with the thought of being "as gods" and so knowing the difference between good and evil (cf Genesis 3:5), thus being in a position to make their own laws, this made them think; it appeared a good proposal, and at that point they chose another course other than God's law. Self took precedence over the Creator; a breaking of the first commandment, "Thou shalt have no other gods before me." If ever Christians are heard to say "BUT I THINK" or "IT IS A GOOD IDEA" pertaining to matters spiritual, or our minds begin to thus reason, and no Scriptural authority can be found for that thought or idea, then it should be banished immediately, for it is getting dangerously near to violating the first commandment and to having another god. It must ever be borne in mind that man's thoughts or ideas taking precedence over God's law is but a form of idolatry. This leads right into the second commandment "Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image, or any likeness of any thing...." (Exodus 20:4). The first commandment binds men to the worship of the TRUE God, the second commandment binds men to the worship of the true God in a TRUE manner.

In an earlier section it was explained what a graven image was. It goes far beyond a statue or a crucifix; it can of course be that, but it is a broad principle; it is any device, innovation, gimmick, or idea which man has carved out of his own mind, which HE THINKS will be an aid or in some way a help in worship. The Romanists have their images and idol statues, but they would not claim to worship these. In their use of the crucifix and other symbols, they would say that they were assisted in their worship, such means help to channel their thoughts.

This principle of aids in worship is not confined to Rome, it is widespread even in Evangelicalism, albeit in a different form. This common practice of leaning to one's own thoughts and notions is nothing less than making oneself his god. This is the most popular religion of the day - HUMANISM - a looking to one's own self, one's own reasoning, the putting of confidence in the wisdom of man and making this the ruling. This constitutes a man-centred worship, it is a most prevalent form of idolatry in our part of the world in this day and age, and it is to be found in Churches and Chapels where one would never expect it to exist. To suggest to such a fellowship that idolatry was in their midst, would bring forth words of indignation, yet it is so; they have aids, extras, devices and programmes which they have thought to be a good idea, but their innovations are outside of the Divine mandate. It is vain imagination carved out of men's minds. In consequence it is not worshipping the true God in a TRUE manner. "This people draweth nigh unto 'me with their mouth, and honoureth me with their lips; but their heart is far from me. But in vain they do worship me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men" (Matthew 15:8-9).

The God of heaven is a "jealous God" says the second commandment (Exodus 20:5). The gravity of this statement JEALOUS GOD was seen in a previous article when reference was made to the marriage union. Jealousy is an inbuilt protection for that relationship, God ordained this. The word means "Requiring exclusive devotion" or "Anxiously

watchful of one's rights". God has given His law, His name and honour is at stake; of this, He is jealous, He requires exclusive devotion, and anxiously watches over His rights. He will not be chief among others, He is the ONLY GOD. "Prepare you hearts unto the Lord and serve HIM ONLY" (1 Samuel 7:3). This is what God's law requires; it involves broad and all embracing principles as to WHO is to be worshipped, and HOW God is to be worshipped, and it is against this background that festal days are to be set.

Not a mention is made in the whole of Scripture of a festival to celebrate the birth of Christ, neither is there any Biblical warrant for the annual celebration of Easter. The incorporating of these days into the worship of the Church is an ADDING to the Word of God. Men have thought it to be a GOOD IDEA, for it is an advantageous means of interesting people and getting them to understand certain aspects of the Christian religion; but God's Word forbids this. To the religious leaders of His day, our Lord said "For laying aside the commandment of God, ye hold the tradition of men.... making the word of God of none effect through your tradition (Mark 7:8 & 13). The apostle Paul writing under Divine inspiration to the Church at Galatia said "Ye observe days, and months, and times and years. I am afraid of you, lest I have bestowed upon you labour in vain" (Galatians 4:10-11).

Not only are the first and second commandments grossly transgressed by these festal days, but as already mentioned the fourth commandment is also involved, which states "Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy" (Exodus 20:8).

In the celebration of Christmas almost every man, woman and child is involved in some way or another, but in no way does this bring the masses into a closer alignment with God's requirements to keep holy the Sabbath, yet this is the ONLY day which He has sanctified to be observed. In the punctilious observance of Christmas and Easter, with an almost total disregard for the Lord's Day, society

has shown that they "lay aside the commandment of God.... making the Word of God of none effect", and hold a tradition by observing days which are outside of the mandate of Holy Writ. The tragedy is that by far the majority of Christians participate in this with the world.

By standing entirely apart from such festivities, the Christian would be demonstrating that he goes not the way of the heathen, rather does he seek to honour God in the appointed way by observing the Sabbath and that day ONLY as being set apart, not identifying in any way with pagan festivals.

This Babylonish worship founded by Nimrod has in many and varied forms gone into every part of the world. All nations have drunk of her fornication (cf Revelation 18:3). Differing countries speaking different languages have different names and terms, but Babylonish worship in some form or other is found everywhere. The Romanist Church with it's mass, veneration of Mary, etc., is the most closely resembling form of Babylonish idolatry in the world today. Rome incorporated the practices of Babylon into the Church in the fourth century A.D. The mysteries of Baal, Ashtaroth, Astarte and Osiris, although not named as such, all find their place of link up in the Romish system, and the festivals of Christmas and Easter with their respective dates in December and the Spring, all stem from ancient Babylon; accepted first by Rome, then infiltrating over the years into almost every section of Christendom. It is true that it was withstood by many of the Puritans, but their stand soon faded with future generations.

It was a sad day when Rome accepted this Babylonish idolatry and cunningly slid it into her so-called worship in the early centuries A.D. It was even sadder when the Anglican Church, supposedly Protestant, and coming into greater light at the Reformation, yet still maintained so much of the trappings of Rome and of Babylon. But most tragic of all is to see places of worship, once truly

nonconformist, established at great cost by godly men and women who dissented from the state Church with its ritual and unbiblical set up, yet now such bodies are dissenting no longer but acting in full conformity, not only with a state Church but in so many respects with Romanism - yea, with Babylon the great. The situation is now so desperate that we should cease contending for so-called Historical Protestantism, which seems to be the great aim of some societies, and strive in defence of true Biblical Christianity and Bible based Churches which dissent from everything which is not based upon the Word of God.

CONCLUSION

The question now to be asked and faced is - Is the law of God REALLY authoritative to us? Is it actually in VERY TRUTH our rule of life? As these matters have been thoroughly investigated and examined in the light of the Divine mandate, has it not been proved conclusively that these festivals are heathen to the core? They are the vain imaginations of fallen man, carved out originally from his own corrupt reasoning; now incorporated into Christianity; an absolute disregard for the second commandment. Are we still going to follow the multitude to do evil? (cf Exodus 23:2). What is now going to govern us? Will it still be "I THINK", "WHAT OTHERS THINK" or will it be "THUS SAITH THE LORD". The dissenting Puritans in their "Directory for the Public Worship of God" stated - "There is no day commanded in Scripture to be kept holy under the Gospel but the Lord's Day - The Christian Sabbath. Festival Days vulgarly called Holy Days having no warrant in the Word of God, are NOT TO BE CONTINUED".

"Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter: Fear God, and keep His commandments: for this is the whole duty of man. For God shall bring every work into judgment, with every secret thing, whether it be good or whether it be evil" (Ecclesiastes 12:13,14).

W.H.MOLLAND.

THE LAST WITNESS

Truly God is able to do the impossible, but whether this means we have a right to expect that God will act in the way many suppose when they speak of revival, is a totally different question. If our age is an age rapidly running down to judgment: if ours is an age which exhibits all the features of those historic times which immediately preceded the pouring out of the wrath of God - the age of Noah, the age of Lot, the age of Jeremiah - we have every reason to believe that the next event which lies before us is JUDGMENT, not REVIVAL.

Those who think they see by their prophetic interpretations a greatly lengthened future still for this world, no doubt will be complacent, but that is their responsibility. For ourselves we think all the signs are present of a complete and worldwide revolt against everything which is called God, leading directly to the consummation of all things in judgment.

There are religious signs, as Protestantism abdicates its role, accepts the lie of rationalism and denies its Creator, and liquidates itself on the doorstep of Mother Rome.

The world and the church face a new thing which has never been known before, no, not since the foundation of the earth.

It is the enthronement of unbelief in the very centre and heart of the Church Visible; the setting up of the last great Baal of Rationalism in the House of the Almighty God.

Satan is waxing bold. Not since the Garden of Eden has he been in such a paradise. He has the ear of humanity, and

no lie, deceit or daring blasphemy is now withheld from a generation which in other fields beside that of religion exhibits the most alarming symptoms that humanity has lost its soul. The Age of Faith had its triumphs in every field of human culture, but for over a century the Western world has been departing from the ground of faith. What Rationalism has done for Protestantism, Materialism has done for science and culture. We have a Creation without a Creator and a universe without meaning, purpose or plan. Atheistic evolution reigns, and there is no iniquity, blasphemy or vice which is not now brazenly uttered and publicly defended.

What then? If revival after the traditional pattern may no longer be feasible, but only the expectation of judgment, what is the believer to do? Is there to be no light in the prevailing darkness?

The answer should thrill every true believer who is jealous for the glory of the Redeemer. Ours is a privilege in a failing age of bearing the last witness against the devil and all his works. In the hour of his unloosing, he is to be resisted and fought with all the weapons in the armoury of God. We will lift up our voice for Christ and truth whether the people hear or whether they forbear. Like Noah in the ancient world, like Lot in Sodom's last night, like Jeremiah in Israel's last apostasy before the judgment of the captivity, it is our privilege to bear witness against the unbelief of the present age. We are destined to be the Camp of Saints compassed about by the heathen and the atheistic multitudes of Gog and Magog, until fire falls from heaven to consume the transgressor.

The question of "revival" is irrelevant to that testimony, as it may be irrelevant to the hour in which we live. What we look for is that our God should pluck His hand out from His bosom and vindicate the testimony of His people, so that the nations may know there is a people in the midst of the earth whose God is the Lord. That

vindication is more likely to take the form of judgment than revival.

Are we ready for such a testimony? Are there enough men who know their God and their Bibles well enough to arouse by their preaching the enmity of Satan's multitude? We doubt it. There is an appalling evangelical sickness which prevents a robust and convincing testimony to the glory of Christ. If some of the energies expended in the vain search for "experiences" were devoted to the creation of a company of preachers adequate under God to the task, the evangelical position would be changed overnight. It might not - in our opinion it would not - spell revival in the sense in which that almost discredited word is now used, but it would mean TESTIMONY, and testimony would mean the opposition of Satan, suffering, persecution, loss and shame. But why should WE escape the penalty which our fathers were called upon to pay for their devotion to Christ's crown and covenant?

C.D.ALEXANDER.

We're warring till He comes
Lest Satan us defeat;
The Christ our armour is,
In Him we stand complete.
We're severed from the world,
This scene of darkest night,
But when our Lord returns,
We'll reign in glorious light.

We'll witness till He comes;
Tell out with life and voice,
Our hope in Christ the Lord,
In Him we will rejoice!
The Christ, the coming King,
We'll boldly Him confess;
His truth we will hold fast,
And onward, upward press.

F.E.MARSH.

THE VIRGIN BIRTH OF JESUS CHRIST

How much is comprehended in the Scripture which declares "AND THE WORD WAS MADE FLESH" (John 1:14). The manhood of Christ was derived from the common stock of humanity, yet never begotten by man. Original sin is propagated by ordinary generation, but the Mediator was by extraordinary generation. By the act of a father a child is begotten in the likeness of fallen man, but Christ although truly man, was not begotten in this way. Through the supernatural agency of the Holy Spirit the humanity of Christ was conceived in A VIRGIN who had never known a man. This is not a subject to be politely masked, it is a vital tenet of the Christian faith which must be given great prominence. The Bible makes very much of this in both the Old and New Testaments that Christ's birth was of a virgin.

After giving the genealogies in the first seventeen verses of his gospel, Matthew commences the New Testament with these words "NOW THE BIRTH OF JESUS CHRIST WAS ON THIS WISE" (Matthew 1:10). He then describes the manner of it. Mary was with child of the Holy Ghost, and it was during the espousal period, she was STILL A VIRGIN. This is the immediate emphasis as the New Testament commences; - VIRGIN BIRTH.

In the very early stage of human history man fell. Whether it was within hours, days, weeks, months or even years, we are not told and there has been much idle speculation on this to no profit. What we do know, is that Adam and Eve fell into sin prior to the conception of their first child. In Eden's garden our first parents

yielded to the great Satanic Being and at that very moment MAN DIED. He did not become spiritually unconscious; from such a condition he might well make a measure of recovery. Neither was it a question of having drifted away from his Creator, to whom he might later return if he so desired. Nor was it a condition of spiritual stupor from which eloquent, persuasive, evangelistic preaching might well arouse him. No, man died! And in Adam ALL the race died. At that juncture God came into Eden and immediately made an announcement to Satan. "And the Lord God said unto the serpent...I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel" (Genesis 3:14-15).

This was not a promise made to Adam as is so often said. It was a clear statement made by Almighty God to the Devil, that one would come who would be truly human in that He was to be the seed of the woman, but HE would not be a FAILING creature such as the one whom he had just deceived and brought down; for the One here announced would destroy Satan's power, He would strike a lethal blow to the very head of the great adversary. This was a Divine declaration made to that mighty fallen spirit. The Almighty knew that man's plight was now hopeless, he was sold under sin and under the POWER OF SATAN. None would ever arise from the ranks of man who could himself get back to God, let alone bring others. Adam was already dead spiritually, and the entire race which would issue from him would be born in the same condition. To wield the fatal stroke over the head of the great adversary was the work of Omnipotence. It was at this point, having delivered this statement to Satan, that God began to reveal His great eternal plan.

Gradually throughout the Old Testament by prophesy, type and symbol, was unfolded THE ONE who should come to destroy the work of Satan. This was the basic reason why God sent His Son into this world. "For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that He might destroy the works of the

Devil" (1 John 3:8). But the MANNER in which the Son was manifested is of vital importance.

The prophet Isaiah wrote "Behold, a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel" (Isaiah 7:14). This is in full accord with the wording of that statement issued to Satan in Eden - the seed of the WOMAN. Adam was never mentioned in that announcement to the Devil.

There are three distinct and fundamental matters pertaining to the "Word being made flesh," which means, the union of the human and the Divine natures in ONE PERSON.

1. THE PRODUCTION OF THE HUMANITY

"And the angel answered and said unto her, The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the power of the Highest shall overshadow thee: therefore also that holy thing which shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God" (Luke 1:35). These words spoken to Mary in no way imply that the Holy Spirit was the father of the Saviour. A right understanding of this is very important, for quite surprising interpretations have been put upon this and other verses which are quite erroneous. The Lord's body was not prepared in heaven, neither was it a heavenly humanity as some have alleged. It was a true humanity, but it was fashioned by the Holy Spirit out of the seed of the woman apart from any act of man. It certainly was a miraculous conception, nevertheless it was a REAL conception, and a REAL birth, just as if it had been by ordinary generation; Jesus Christ was really and truly born of Mary, He was of her substance and of her blood. However a distinction must be made between nature and person. That which was conceived by Mary was not a human person, it was a divine person, now with a human nature. A child was born, a son was given (cf Isaiah 9:6). This is the thought conveyed in Luke 1:35 "That holy thing which shall be born of thee shall be called THE SON OF

GOD" - that is His parson - the Son given. The eternal Son of God did not take a human person into union with Himself, rather was it a human nature, and so was HE found IN FASHION as a man (cf Philippians 2:8). But as to His person, He was still God the Son. He was not a dual personality, He was ONE personality yet by virtue of the incarnation, now possessed of two natures - human and Divine.

2. THE SANCTIFYING OF THE SEED OF THE WOMAN.

To "sanctify" has a number of meanings in Holy Scripture: "To set apart for God", "To cleanse from pollution", "To render fit for Divine service". Pertaining to our Lord's humanity there must be no defilement, no trace of pollution, He must be as set forth by the Old Testament types, the Lamb without blemish and without spot. Original sin was never transmitted, the Holy Ghost interposed and all possibility of that taint being conducted through Mary was removed. That HOLY THING was never in Adam, nor begotten of man. It was of the Holy Spirit; so was begotten in our Lord's humanity the perfect image which man lost in Eden. This is the second man, the last Adam, the one announced to the Devil in the garden. The first Adam failed, this One would not; He was the Son given, the Lord from heaven (cf 1 Corinthians 15:47). "In Him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead BODILY" (Colossians 2:9). Man in God's image in very truth, but also God in man's image.

"He whom God hath sent speaketh the words of God: for God giveth not the Spirit by measure unto him" (John 3:34). The One whom God sent - His Son given, did not have the Holy Spirit in measure, but in all His fulness. This of course must be so for all are of one equality within the Godhead. He also speaketh the words of God; indeed, for He could speak none other. His body and mind, although in fashion as a man, was holy; He was the very essence of purity. His heart was filled with the love of God, His thoughts perfectly harmonized with the Father's. His will

synchronized with the Almighty. He did no sin, He knew no sin, says the Scripture, the reason being - in Him there WAS no sin. Original sin was never transmitted. There was no pollution of THAT SEED. It was sanctified, it was free from contamination, it was a HOLY THING; totally fitted for the Divine service for which He was sent.

3. THE ACTUAL ASSUMPTION OF THE HUMAN NATURE IN THE WOMB OF MARY BY THE ETERNAL SON.

Christ actually assumed His human nature WITHIN the womb of a virgin, this was the commencement. Here He took human flesh. It is correctly stated in the ancient hymn:

"God of God, Light of Light,
Lo He abhors not a virgin's womb
Very God, begotten not created."

We now stand upon holy ground. How this act of assumption really took place we do not know. Even the Scriptures themselves seem to draw a veil over this stupendous mystery. Luke briefly states "The power of the Highest shall overshadow thee" (Luke 1:35). Curious unholy enquirers are to be silent; even Mary herself was overshadowed. A covering, a veil was thrown over this amazing happening. But behind that overshadowing, the overwhelming wonder was performed - the Maker of all things took on Him the "seed of Abraham". The sovereign Lord of the universe took the "form of a servant".

John Owen, the great Puritan theologian said "The depth of this mystery belongs only to the infinite. No created understanding can comprehend". John Calvin makes most profound comments - "The Word became flesh, not by Deity being converted into matter, nor simply by His appearing in the outward semblance of man, but by actually ASSUMING that Holy Thing which was framed by the Spirit and conceived by a virgin". Charles Wesley writes "He wrapped Him in our clay"; again, "Veiled in flesh the Godhead see, Hail incarnate Deity". This is precisely what it was, Deity clothed in humanity, concealed in a virgin's womb. "And so it was, that, while they were there, (in

Bethlehem) the days were accomplished that she should be delivered. And she brought forth her firstborn son, and wrapped Him in swaddling clothes, and laid Him in a manger" (Luke 2:6-7). A perfectly natural birth following a miraculous conception, yet going the normal period of time. So came into this world the Saviour, the "Mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus" (1 Timothy 2:5). Come to save His people from their sins (cf Matthew 1:21), come to destroy the works of the Devil (cf 1 John 3:8), come to bruise the Serpent's head (cf Genesis 3:15).

WHY THE NECESSITY OF THE VIRGIN BIRTH OF JESUS CHRIST?

This is a question asked by many, indeed it is a line of Biblical truth which many quibble over, and some repudiate. Even well known preachers have been heard to say "Why bother with this aspect of doctrine if it is a problem to people? It is not important, for men and women can be saved apart from a belief in the virgin birth". To thus argue is a most serious matter, for if Christ be not virgin born, then there is no such thing as TRUE CHRISTIANITY. If the Saviour was conceived by human relationship, then He was but man - a human PERSONALITY. Then what of Atonement? Can the death of A MAN make propitiation for sin? "None of them can by any means redeem his brother, nor give to God a ransom for him" (Psalm 49:7). Deny the virgin birth and sinners have NO SAVIOUR, they are doomed. If Jesus of Nazareth came into the world by natural generation then He was born under the BROKEN covenant of works - IN ADAM. How then could He be the Surety and the Mediator of the NEW COVENANT?

There is only one Saviour revealed in the Word of God and that Saviour was VIRGIN BORN. There is no other. Virgin birth was the SIGN by which He was to be identified (cf Isaiah 7:14) and it still is today. We must totally reject the teaching of any who present a saviour apart from virgin birth, for it is ANOTHER GOSPEL.

W.H.MOLLAND.

THERE AROSE A MIGHTY FAMINE IN THE LAND

A widespread famine is one of the worst calamities which can come upon men. Its ravages can be seen in the emaciated listless men and women, the skeleton-like children with their staring eyes and swollen stomachs, the corpses and the miserable animals crawling away to die. There is no food. The crops have failed because of drought or have been destroyed by war or plague. Relief from famine is not effected by cooking demonstrations on the T.V. or films or by fancy food catalogues or by the distribution of appetisers, but by giving to the starving - food.

Great Britain is in the throes of a long and vast SPIRITUAL FAMINE. Had we true discernment we would be appalled. "The hungry sheep look up and are not fed". Ecclesiastical reorganisations, ecumenical unions, evangelistic gimmicks and the modern Gospel are not saving dying souls or Churches. Thousands of buildings (in the midst of dense populations) once used for the worship of the Creator and the preaching of the gospel of Christ stand gaunt and empty or are being used for secular purposes. Throughout the West Country, once the throbbing centre of the Evangelical Awakening, chapel after chapel is now abandoned; some are used as warehouses, dance and bingo halls, fish and chip shops and even as pig-sties. This is symptomatic of the general spiritual destitution of Churches and people. Against the great upsurge of iniquity the religious bodies are powerless. Their feeble protests are ignored. In fact, by their actions in Parliament and public statements, some of the Church leaders are in collusion with the enemies of Christ and

the majority of Church members in their public and private lives and relationships are conniving in the Decline and Fall of Great Britain.

For a hundred and fifty years the people have been progressively STARVED OF THE BREAD OF LIFE. A man is said to have, for economy's sake, reduced his donkey's daily feed very gradually saying, "He'll never notice it!" Eventually the creature died. Through generation after generation the mighty saving Doctrines of the Scriptures expounded by the Reformers and the Puritans have been filched away by preacher, professor and teacher. Divine Sovereignty, Electing Grace, Total Depravity, Propitiation, Imputed Righteousness, Justification by Faith alone, the Judgment, Eternal Salvation or Retribution, The Infallibility of the Bible, The Virgin Birth, the Resurrection, the Second Advent and now the objective Reality of a Living God and even the moral character of the Lord Jesus Christ - have gone one by one. In this period hordes of teachers and sects have risen to misinterpret and adulterate what little of the Truth is left in the minds of the people. Jesus said of the Prodigal in a famine stricken land "and he began to be in want". That is the condition of the British people today. In Scotland, the land of the covenanters, it is much the same story - Churches shut from Sabbath to Sabbath, congregations except for small handfuls of elderly women, fallen away weary of the platitudes and empty scholasticism of the preachers. Even the few Churchgoers are largely ignorant of the very elements of the Gospel, some pass the graves of the martyrs week by week and have no idea why they died. This terrible ignorance is also true of England and Wales. To galvanise men and Churches by temporary religious excitement and emotion is to offer pep drugs to breadless men.

The Boom

[A remarkable event occurring in the history of the British Isles] was the siege of Londonderry. For over three months the little city, swollen in population by

refugees, fiercely defended the crumbling walls and homes from a large opposing army. They were starving: reduced to eating rats and mice and dying in thousands. The English government had sent food ships but the enemy had constructed a great boom of chains and stakes across the Foyle and for six weeks the ships anchored at the mouth of the river, helpless. Then, at sunset, July 28 1689 the sails of two English vessels were seen coming up with the tide. Raked by a storm of shot they crashed through the boom and brought bread and deliverance to Londonderry. There is a great BOOM across the minds of men. It is made up of - Atheistic education, anti-christian T.V. propaganda, Papal tradition, sectarian delusions, evangelical misrepresentations, Pelagian teaching. It is the preachers of the great and glorious God and of His Christ bearing the saving Truth who must, by the power of the Spirt, break through the boom and bring the bread of Life to perishing men.

J.W WALKER

ANNOUNCEMENTS AND INFORMATION

ANNUAL BIBLE CONVENTION

For many years this has been held on the third weekend of July, but in future, the date will be the first weekend of August.

In response to a long standing request by the officers and members of the Church, Mr W.H. Molland has agreed to minister at the Annual Bible Convention on Saturday 1 August 1992 D.V.

VISITING PREACHERS

Thursday 7 May 1992	7.15 pm.	Mr F. Stanbury
Thursday 4 June 1992	7.15 pm.	Mr F. Stanbury
Thursday 2 July 1992	7.15 pm.	Mr F. Stanbury

EDITORIAL

Any discerning Christian must surely realize that the world is in a sorry state. The nations in general, the society in which we live, and the professing Church are all in a state of rapid decline. Concerning the nations, there is distress with perplexity, men's hearts failing them for fear (cf Luke 21:25,26). In society, evil men wax worse and worse (cf 2 Timothy 3:13). As for the Church, there is a great falling away (cf 2 Thessalonians 2:3). All this speaks with one voice that the world is fast ripening for judgment, and unless God sovereignly intervenes, the end cannot be far distant.

The world at large is not aware of its impending doom, and there is but scant indication that the professed people of God have any concern. Why is this? There can be but one answer - the Word of God has ceased to be authoritative. So much of Holy Scripture today is treated as being irrelevant and in consequence totally disregarded.

The faithful few who still strive to declare "all the counsel of God" (Acts 20:27) are generally scorned and despised, and their full orbbed preaching of Divine Truth goes unheeded; they are as a voice of one crying in a wilderness. Because of this God has sent, as in the days of Amos - A FAMINE, not of the Word of God as it is often misquoted, for there is no shortage of Bibles; the famine is of "HEARING the words of the Lord" (Amos 8:11). Of His Old Testament people God had to say "Ye would not hear" (Deuteronomy 1:43). When this is the case, judgment always follows.

It could well be that we in this generation are God's LAST WITNESSES on earth. What a responsibility! "Therefore let us not sleep as do others, but let us watch and be sober" (Thessalonians 5:6). "Holding forth the word of life that we may rejoice in the day of Christ" (Philippians 2:16).