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**North Road Chapel (Evangelical)  
BIDEFORD**

# REDEMPTION

In the last issue of this magazine, several aspects of the vital term REDEMPTION were examined and that which is now to be deliberated upon is the intricacies of THE LAW pertaining to this subject.

Over the years many essential Scriptural terms have been oversimplified, thus losing their full definition. This certainly is the case with REDEMPTION for that which is propounded by many of today's preachers and writers bears very little resemblance to the redemption set out in the Word of God. When in the Holy Scriptures we read of being redeemed in or by Christ, invariably there is an allusion to the laws of redemption as laid down in the Old Testament. This is to be expected for the Old Covenant is but a setting forth and prefiguration of that which was to come in the New Covenant age.

Much legal detail is set out in Leviticus chapter 25, pertaining to the redemption of persons and property; here it is obvious that no stranger could embark upon this transaction. No one had a legal right to redeem, other than the person himself who had caused the alienation or someone who was near of kin to him. Within the spiritual context, as sinners we cannot redeem ourselves; all are hopelessly in debt to the extent that the law has already committed us to prison, where Satan as jailor holds us. Said Christ, "Verily I say unto thee, Thou shalt by no means come out thence, till thou hast paid the uttermost farthing" (Matthew 5:26). Even our kin are in a like position, ALL are in debt, bankrupt and held in the same prison. "None of them can by any means redeem his brother, nor give to God a ransom for him" (Psalm 49:7). Thus we learn that apart from sovereign intervention there is no hope whatsoever, but in wondrous grace and mercy, the eternal God has interposed. In this however, as in reconciliation and remission, He did not break His holy law,

neither was any point of that law jeopardized; Almighty God in infinite wisdom provided a Redeemer who was fitted and LEGALLY qualified to redeem. An example of this legality is given in the Old Testament, "Naomi said unto her daughter-in-law, Blessed be he of the Lord, who hath not left off His kindness to the living and to the dead. And Naomi said unto her, The man is near of kin unto us, one of our next kinsman" or one that hath the RIGHT to redeem (Ruth 2:20 Marginal Ref.).

This opens up a vast subject, in that the sinner's redemption must be traced back to a past eternity and to that foundation deed - the Everlasting Covenant when God chose a people and gave them to Christ. These people were to be His bride, He the Head, they the members. In the purposes of God these have always been seen as legally united, Head and members one; theologically termed Federal Union or Covenant Oneness. This underlies the whole truth of REDEMPTION, "For both He that sanctifieth and they who are sanctified are all of one" (Hebrews 2:11). Christ did not become our kinsman redeemer when we were converted; it was because of our federal union with Him from a past eternity, that He was legally qualified to step in and so act. Further to this the Redeemer must not only be federally united, He must also be of the same nature, so as to enter into the exact circumstance. "Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, He also Himself likewise took part of the same; that through death He might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil; and DELIVER them who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage" (Hebrews 2:14,15). "When the fulness of the time was come, God sent forth His Son, made of a woman, made under the law, to REDEEM them that were under the law" (Galatians 4:4). From these Scriptures it is clearly seen that the eternal Son of God became a partaker of flesh and blood in order to DELIVER; He was made of a woman to REDEEM. This had to be, for according to the law only a kinsman, one of legal relationship could enter into this transaction. "For verily He took not on Him the

nature of angels; but He took on Him the seed of Abraham. Wherefore in all things it behoved Him to be made like unto His brethren, that He might be a merciful and faithful high priest in things pertaining to God, to make reconciliation for the sins of the people" (Hebrews 2:16,17).

Yet another slant is put upon the term kinsman and redeemer in the Book of Numbers, where the ramifications of the law pertaining to the avenger of blood are set out, "The revenger of blood himself shall slay the murderer; when he meeteth him, he shall slay him" (Numbers 35:19). The word 'revenger' in this verse is the same in its original Hebrew as kinsman or redeemer. This again is legal. The Mosaic law was so worded by God that if any person was murdered, then the next of kin was to prosecute and bring the murderer to justice; as kinsman, he himself was to slay the murderer. In this capacity he was designated 'THE REVENGER' (Redeemer).

The New Testament gives the spiritual meaning to the Mosaic law concerning the revenger. When upon earth, speaking of Satan, the Lord Jesus said, "He was a murderer from the beginning" (John 8:44). It was he, the Devil, who inflicted that mortal wound to both our body and our soul which resulted in certain death and eternal woe, but because of the kinsman relationship of Christ to us by virtue of federal union, He could redeem, yea He could REVENGE. This He did at Calvary; through His mighty work of atonement, Christ the KINSMAN REDEEMER destroyed him who had the power of death, that is the Devil (cf Hebrews 2:14), openly triumphing over principalities and powers (cf Colossians 2:15).

Another vital aspect of REDEMPTION was that the law demanded a full ransom price. A ransom is the price paid in order to redeem. The life and death of the Lord Jesus was the price paid for the Redemption of God's chosen people. "The Son of man came....to give His life a ransom for many" (Matthew 20:28). He became a legal surety, "By so much was Jesus made a surety" (Hebrews 7:22). He accepted all liability for God's

elect, becoming the great Paymaster of His people's debts. "By means of death, for the redemption of the transgressions that were under the first testament, they which are called might receive the promise of eternal inheritance" (Hebrews 9:15). "Being justified freely by His grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus" (Romans 3:24). Justification is attributed to the free grace of God, nevertheless it is through purchase, or the putting down of the ransom price by Christ by means of death. "Ye are bought with a price" (1 Corinthians 6:20).

This putting down of a ransom has led to much doctrinal controversy. From early centuries A.D., varying views have been held as to whom the ransom was paid. It is not the purpose of this article to go into great theological arguments, only to give clarification on one or two major issues.

A subtle line of teaching which developed in the third century A.D. was that Christ paid the ransom to Satan. It was contended that sinners were never in bondage to God, rather were they captives of the Devil and that a ransom had to be paid to Satan in order to secure their release. This can be made to sound very feasible and some clever arguments have been put forward over the generations, resulting in many being confused and led astray. This paying of a ransom to Satan is not the doctrine of Holy Scripture.

In a previous article it was stated that because of man's guilt in Adam and personal rebellion, the eternal thrice holy God, as supreme Judge and Governor, delivered mankind unto Satan; such are under the power of sin and death, Satan as jailor holds them. In this we are to see that there is a vast difference between sinners being captives of the Devil and his having legitimate rights over them; this the Devil has not. It is true that man is a slave to Satan, but that is the SECONDARY result of his sin and bondage, not the PRIMARY cause. The question must be asked, 'Who delivered man over

to Satan on account of sin?' To this there is only one answer - God Himself. It is by DIVINE justice that the sinner is held bound for punishment, not SATANIC justice. The penalty is demanded by God not Satan; it is to heaven that the sinners debt is owed, not hell.

In this complex legal matter it must be seen that the Devil is but acting as the executioner of God's righteous sentence. It is God alone who has the right to detain the sinner in prison. The authority which detains a sinner in captivity is the unbending DIVINE LAW; if it were not for that law, Satan could not hold a soul captive for a moment. Therefore it was to God and to His bar of intrinsic holiness that the ransom was due; Christ put down in the courts of heaven, that ransom which was His own blood. It was into heaven that Christ entered to plead the merits of His blood, not hell. Man had not sinned against Satan, it was against God. This work of Christ is sometimes referred to in Scripture as an offering, a sacrifice, a price or a ransom, but it is always one and the same. Just as the sacrifice was made to God, so was the price paid to God. As a ransom it was handed over at the bar of Divine justice to Almighty God as supreme Judge; this He accepted, for it met every requirement of His law. This being the case the Devil has now no power over the ones that are redeemed. Biblical redemption positively delivers the believing sinner from the power of darkness and translates him into the kingdom of God's dear Son. In whom we have redemption through His blood, even the forgiveness of sins (cf Colossians 1:13,14).

As soon as Christ had offered Himself and presented His own blood in heaven, Divine justice was satisfied. The deliverance of the sinner from the power of darkness was then effected, the utmost farthing had been paid, no longer did Satan as jailor have authority to hold such in the debtor's cell; therefore when the day of effectual calling by the Holy Spirit comes, he HAS to release each one who has been ransomed.

On this matter of deliverance from the prison house of darkness, it must be emphasized that it is not a deliverance because of compassion. The debtor is not set free because the Creditor shows leniency; the debtor's discharge is A REDEMPTION. The full ransom price has been handed over by One legally qualified to do it, therefore the law demands the release of the person thus redeemed; Satan who is but the jailor, has to free that person as soon as the signal is given to him. The outcome of the ransom paid by Christ is the ACTUAL and CERTAIN redemption of His people. There is no such thing as unavailing redemption in Holy Scripture. If land was redeemed it had to be handed over and restored to its original owner; if persons were redeemed they had to be liberated, the law demanded it. So it is in the spiritual; Almighty God says, "Deliver him from going down to the pit: I have found a ransom" (Job 33:24); this is the authoritative command of the Divine Lawgiver.

"Payment God cannot twice demand  
First at my bleeding Surety's hand  
And then again at mine". (Augustus Toplady)

Divine justice DEMANDS and COMMANDS liberation. So from the bondage of sin and guilt, sinners are REDEEMED, set free, restored to their rightful owner. "The ransomed of the Lord shall return, and come to Zion with songs and everlasting joy upon their heads: they shall obtain joy and gladness, and sorrow and sighing shall flee away" (Isaiah 35:10).

It may appear from what has been written in this article so far, that the conversion of the sinner is automatic, or that some have been redeemed who perhaps will not be aware of it until the hereafter. This certainly is not the case, for as in all other aspects of this mighty transaction, there is the application. Christ did not die to purchase a general salvation, it was specific. "Blessed be the Lord God of Israel; for He hath visited and redeemed HIS PEOPLE" (Luke

1:68). "THE CHURCH OF GOD, which He hath purchased with His own blood" (Acts 20:28). It was His people, His church, His flock that Christ died to redeem. "The Lord's portion is His people; Jacob is the lot of His inheritance" (Deuteronomy 32:9). It is the elect who are Christ's inheritance, God gave them to Him; they are also His purchased possession (cf Ephesians 1:14). However by nature each one is born in sin, consequently in bondage, held captive, but because of REDEMPTION God says, "As for thee also, by the blood of thy covenant I have sent forth thy prisoners out of the pit wherein is no water" (Zechariah 9:11). Christ has a legal right to all whom He ransomed, the blood of the covenant DEMANDS their release; therefore does God make bare His mighty arm (in His appointed time), then are the bars of the prison of our sin and bondage in Adam broken, Satan stands powerless and we walk into liberty, "the glorious liberty of the children of God" (Romans 8:21). The Psalmist wrote, "He sent redemption to His people; He hath commanded His covenant forever" (Psalm 111:9). Redemption is sent, it is consciously applied to His people, this must be, for it is a command, a clause written in the covenant. Payment has been made and accepted, therefore release MUST be granted.

REDEMPTION is also set out in Holy Writ as being unto an inheritance. This again is a legal matter; just as an earthly father reserves unto himself the right to state in his will, at what age his heir shall enter upon his estate, so God has appointed the time when each of His chosen ones shall enter into the good of His redemption and be freed from the bondage of sin. Not one elect soul in any generation will be missed: of all those given to Christ, He lost none (cf John 17:12). The work of the Redeemer is un failing in its end, all must come into the inheritance.

"From Jesus neither fire nor flood  
Shall rend the purchase of His blood;  
Whom He redeemed with Him shall rise  
To fill the mansions in the skies.



Triumphant grace, though man oppose,  
Shall save the remnant God hath chose;  
Salvation's free, and shall be given  
To all the blood bought heirs of heaven."

(John Kent)

It is now obvious that there are two stages in REDEMPTION, or more correctly put, two aspects; first its purchase, then its application. One is by price, the other by power, and both are effected by God Himself.

To His ancient people Israel, who were in slavery in Egypt, God said, "I will bring you out from under the burdens of the Egyptians, and I will rid you out of their bondage, and I will redeem you with a stretched out arm, and with great judgments" (Exodus 6:6). This was the promise of personal deliverance, REDEMPTION to be applied and to be experienced. Later in God's time it was effected, "Thou in Thy mercy hast led forth the people which Thou hast redeemed" (Exodus 15:13). These people who were led out of Egypt by the mighty power of God were the people who had been previously covered by the blood of the Passover Lamb. Thus it is with the true spiritual Israel; sinners are released from the power of darkness, because their sins and iniquities are fully covered and cancelled by the blood of the Lamb of God. The price having been paid, God's power is put forth in application. The rod of His strength is sent forth out of Zion and His people are made willing in the day of His power (cf Psalm 110:2,3).

The conclusion of this matter is, that when speaking of REDEMPTION we are treating of a strictly legal matter, it is no loose term. It pertains to DIVINE JUSTICE, therefore it is a subject to be handled with the utmost gravity, not in the careless indefinite manner so prevalent today.

W.H.MOLLAND

**A W PINK on**

# PREACHING

The preacher's task is both the most honourable and the most solemn of any calling, the most privileged and at the same time the most responsible one. The chief and constant duty of the preacher is to conform unto that injunction, "Study to show thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth" .... The mere quoting of Scripture in the pulpit is not sufficient - people can become familiar with the letter of the Word by reading it at home; it is the EXPOUNDING and APPLICATION of it which is so much needed. The Word of God cannot be understood without a constant and laborious study .... No preacher should be content with being anything less than "a man mighty in the Scriptures" (cf Acts 18:24). To attain thereunto, he must subordinate all other interests. An old writer quaintly said "The preacher should be with his time as the miser is with his gold - saving it with care and spending it with caution". He must also remind himself constantly whose Book it is he is about to take up so that he ever handles it with the utmost reverence. The task before him is to unfold with clearness and accuracy the Word of God. His business is entirely exegetical - to bring out the true meaning of each passage he deals with, whether it accords with his own preconceptions or no. As the renowned Bengel so well expressed it, "An expositor should be like the maker of a well, who puts no water into it, but makes it his object to let the water flow, without diversion, stoppage or defilement". In other words, he must not take the slightest liberty with the sacred text nor give it a meaning which it will not legitimately bear, neither modifying its force nor superimposing upon it anything of his own, but seeking to give out its true import, .... Nothing can be more blameworthy than for a man to profess to be uttering a "Thus saith the Lord" who is merely expressing his own thoughts.

# THE TRUE GOD AND THE TRUE GOSPEL

The religious world seems almost totally deceived concerning the true God and the true gospel. Let us see what the inspired Scriptures have to say about the character of Almighty God (and if you reject inspiration you have no gospel at all). "Holy, holy, holy, is the Lord of hosts: the whole earth is full of His glory" (Isaiah 6:3). "The high and lofty One that inhabiteth eternity, whose name is Holy" (Isaiah 57:15). "Who shall not fear thee, O Lord, and glorify thy name? for thou only art holy" (Revelation 15:4).

Thus, the true and living God calls Himself 'Holy' or 'The Holy One'. Holiness means far more than just purity (although that is involved). The holiness of God means that He is transcendent, meaning that our Creator is above and beyond us, and the world has no power whatever over Him. God is supreme, sovereign, infinitely majestic. He is "the high and lofty One". He only "inhabiteth eternity" (what an awesome thought).

But sinful, humanistic man has no appreciation of the Almighty God, and thinks of Jesus Christ as just another religious leader and teacher. How far different is the testimony of God's Word on this subject: "For thou, Lord, art high above all the earth: thou art exalted far above all gods" (Psalm 97:9). "For by Him (Christ) were all things created.... And He is before all things, and by Him all things consist" (Colossians 1:16,17).

"Let us beware lest we in our pride accept the erroneous notion that idolatry consists only in kneeling before visible objects of adoration, and that civilised peoples are therefore free from it. The essence of idolatry is the entertainment of thoughts about God that are unworthy of Him.

It begins in the mind and may be present where no overt act of worship has taken place" (A.W.Tozer).

What is your concept of the Eternal? Or do you view God as did the wicked man in Psalm 50:21? "Thou thoughtest", said the Lord, "that I was altogether such an one as thyself". We are living in a rotting society, spiritually and morally, because our generation has such low, false concepts of the Supreme Being. This concept needs purifying and elevating. The burden and obligation for this lies directly upon the modern church.

The true gospel declares that God is absolutely sovereign. He is under no control of man or creation. How could He be? He is the Creator, everything else is created! Thus, if men ever come to know who God really is, the gospel of God's sovereignty must again be proclaimed loudly and fully. "Thy God reigneth!" (Isaiah 52:7).

The true gospel declares Christ is a mighty Saviour. He is not waiting for the sinner to 'make the first move'. He is not standing at the hearts of sinners begging an entrance. He is not hoping people will 'let Him' save them. This is the false gospel being broadcast in our day. But, it is "another gospel" (Galatians 1:6) and "another Jesus" (2 Corinthians 11:4).

The true gospel proclaims man is totally depraved. Man is not just sick and dying, he is "dead in trespasses and sins" (Ephesians 2:1). Man is not going to await the day of judgment to find out if his good deeds have outweighed his bad, thus assuring him of salvation. He is lost now. His heart is wicked, his thoughts are defiled, his mouth speaks perverse things (Jeremiah 17:9; Isaiah 59:3). There is none righteous, no, not one" (Romans 3:10). The gospel lays man low in the dust.

The true gospel magnifies Christ and His work. "Christ crucified" is the heart of the glorious gospel. Substitution and redemption, justification and imputation, are the words

which describe the work of our Mediator for the elect of God. "For the preaching of the cross is to them that perish foolishness; but unto us which are saved it is the power of God" (1 Corinthians 1:18). "And by Him (Christ) all that believe are justified from all things, from which ye could not be justified by the law of Moses" (Acts 13:39). "God imputeth righteousness without works .... Blessed is the man to whom the Lord will not impute sin" (Romans 4:6,8).

The one, true gospel declares "Salvation is of the Lord" (Jonah 2:9). Whether you speak of salvation objectively or subjectively, it is all of the Lord God alone. God purposed to save us (cf Romans 9:11-24), He purchased our redemption in Christ's death (cf Ephesians 1:7), and He powerfully regenerates dead sinners, giving them repentance and faith (cf Titus 3:5). What God begins He always finishes! The very same number He started out with in His divine foreknowledge He winds up with in their glorification - He does not lose a single one! "For whom He did foreknow.... them He also glorified" (Romans 8 29,30). Hallelujah!

The gospel of grace always humbles man and produces holiness in his life. Never believe for one moment that grace is ineffectual. It always effects great changes in the lives of true believers. We come to love God for who He is; we seek to please God in daily life; we love to frequent the prayer closet; we humbly and adoringly study His precious, written Word; we love His people, wherever they are found; we desire all men everywhere to know Christ and the gospel. In a word the grace of God makes us saints, 'holy ones' who are holy in Christ, not in ourselves. Our true happiness is found in our holiness, our being conformed to the very image of the Lord Jesus Christ. "But we all, with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord" (2 Corinthians 3:18).

W.F.BELL

# BUBBLE AND FROTH

There are twelve little books in the Bible which undoubtedly are the most neglected part of Holy Scripture, yet in their application they are the most relevant part of the Word of God to our day and age. These are the minor prophets, Hosea to Malachi, but speaking generally, apart from an occasional quote, they are scarcely ever mentioned. Some regard these books as all historic, others would say much of it is in the future and applies to an earthly Israel. Others contend that these Scriptures are not for the Church, whilst many dismiss this section of Holy Writ altogether as being too doleful to contemplate. In this way the Devil has successfully deflected the attention of the people of God from the minor prophets, thereby robbing them of vital instruction and warning which God has given for the end time. Consequently, Christians are ill informed and equipped for these perilous days.

The prophet Zephaniah was raised up by God to serve in Judah in the days of Josiah and he gives a very sad picture of the state of that people in his day; this is despite the fact that they professed the name of the Lord. Invariably does this servant of God attribute the appalling drift and apostasy of these sons of Jacob to the religious leaders of the day. Zephaniah, like all the minor prophets, spoke with great clarity and devastating authority, for these men spoke only the words of God Himself. Describing the so-called spiritual guides in Judah in his time, Zephaniah said, "Her prophets are light and treacherous persons: her priests have polluted the sanctuary, they have done violence to the law" (Zephaniah 3:4).

The religious leaders of that day were not spoken of as GOD'S prophets, but HER (Judah's) prophets; they were not heaven sent men. Elsewhere they are described as the prophets of

THIS people (cf Micah 2:11); they were either self-appointed or chosen and ordained by men. "They are LIGHT" says Almighty God through His servant Zephaniah, meaning in the Hebrew \* BUBBLE and FROTH<sup>1</sup> (Strong's Hebrew Dictionary). What a scathing description given by God of those who thought themselves to be, and indeed were looked upon by others as prophets. No! says the Almighty, they are BUBBLE and FROTH. It is interesting to follow this further, for the word 'bubble' is most comprehensive; it is defined as 'a vesicle of water or other liquid filled with air or gas', 'anything insubstantial or unreal', 'a fraud', 'fictitious', 'that which deludes and lacks reality'.

Have we not all seen children blowing bubbles? They dip the tube or pipe into the liquid and then blow, and up go the attractive sparkling bubbles, glistening all the colours of the rainbow. Childlike minds are fascinated by them, they run to grasp one, but as they do so, it bursts, there was nothing there; that which looked so attractive was unreal, they were deluded. Such were the prophets of Judah, they are LIGHT says the Scripture, literally BUBBLE BLOWERS, but by their bubbly, frothy talk Judah was attracted. How relevant is this illustration to Christendom today! The person who says there is nothing in the minor prophets for the Church of our day can never have really studied them for there is no truth in the whole of Scripture which is more pertinent to the late twentieth century than that which is found in the twelve books which close the Old Testament.

Consider the various Churches and Chapels in Britain today; generally speaking, we see the leaders whom THEY have elected,, the men whom THEY have called and appointed, THEIR prophets. Reasons given for such appointments are legion - he is a nice man, he's jovial, he's pleasant, he's easy to get on with, he is an excellent visitor, he is wonderful with the children, he has such a way with him that he attracts and can hold the young people, he is not stuffy, he always generates a happy atmosphere, he doesn't preach at people, he just talks, in fact at times he is quite humorous. What is more he has got away from the old traditional type of

service; he goes in for a lot of singing, especially anything with lively spirited tunes; he has got some from the congregation beating drums, blowing trumpets, strumming guitars, anything which may appeal to the people, he really is a great fellow, somehow he gets a service going, and everyone joins in heartily; in fact he encourages us to clap and wave our arms. Different people take part in the services, there is none of this stodgy discrimination between men and women, our gatherings are a free for all. There is no need to change your clothes, just come as you please; as for women covering their heads in the services, our pastor would never teach that section of Scripture and so embarrass people. Let the children bring their toys, in fact more than likely our minister will have them up to the front to say something; the mums love that. Yes our man is so adaptable, he will cope with any situation, no one will ever feel uncomfortable in our Church; the atmosphere and 'set up' is so free and easy; what is more, we have a lot of fun. The elected officers arrange all manner of activities, we have drama groups, bam dances and fun nights. In fact our minister and the various Church leaders will convene and support anything which will entice or appeal to the community at large.

Is this picture fictitious? The honest investigator will find that in Christendom today there is an abundance of these types; ministers and leaders who are LIGHT, they say and do that which pleases the people, but in withering language the God of heaven describes such leaders as BUBBLE and FROTH.

The prophet Zephaniah continues in his God-given denunciation. These light, bubbly, man-appointed prophets are "TREACHEROUS persons". This word means to 'violate allegiance', to be 'disloyal'. The word is vitally linked with the word 'traitor'. This becomes even more serious; these light, 'bubble and froth' men are traitors; they are disloyal to Him whom they claim to serve. Instead of being champions of the truth, they become its enemies. By their words and actions they violate allegiance to the real truth of Holy Scripture. A clarion call must be issued today - Christians BEWARE! for light prophets are treacherous men, Almighty God



has said this and by it we must be warned; they may blow their bubbles; their theories, ideas and practices may appear attractive, but that which is not found in the Word of God is a BUBBLE, a FRAUD.

Zephaniah goes on to say, "Her priests have polluted the sanctuary". The duty of the priest is set out in the Pentateuch, "And that ye may put difference between holy and unholy, and between unclean and clean; and that ye may teach the children of Israel all the statutes which the Lord hath spoken unto them by the hand of Moses" (Leviticus 10:10,11). There is a great difference between merriment and holy worship. Both have their place and time as the first eight verses of the Book of Ecclesiastes, chapter three shows, but spiritual leaders are to put a difference between the holy and the unholy. They are to separate the clean from the unclean, not amalgamate.

The minister or any spiritual leader is to instruct his congregation in ALL the statutes which the Lord hath spoken, ever putting that vital difference between that which is holy and that which is not. Concerning Divine worship, it is to be in "the beauty of Holiness" (cf 1 Chronicles 16:29). The worship of the eternal God is to be in deep spiritual reality, not in an atmosphere of BUBBLE and FROTH which is carnal fantasy and just a passing thrill of fleshly enjoyment. Divine worship is a most profound exercise, it is primarily for the glory of Almighty God, not to provide people with a happy time; it must therefore be ordered and conducted in a manner prescribed by Him, not according to our finite thinking. "For I am the Lord your God: ye shall therefore sanctify yourselves, and ye shall be holy; for I am holy" (Leviticus 11:44). Holiness becometh God's house forever (cf Psalm 93:5). Reverence and holiness in corporate worship was not only a ruling for Israel and Judah, it is a Divine statute of permanent duration, it is FOREVER; it is as binding upon the people of God today, as it was in the days of Zephaniah.

The lack of a spirit of holiness was all too common except for a tiny remnant in the latter centuries of Old Testament

history; the great majority of the people were light. Further proof of this is provided by Ezekiel, "Her priests have violated my law, and have profaned mine holy things: they have put no difference between the holy and profane, neither have they shewed difference between the unclean and the clean, and have hid their eyes from my sabbaths, and I am profaned among them" (Ezekiel 22:26). Ezekiel, like Zephaniah, speaks of HER priests. These man-appointed leaders, by mixing the holy with the unholy and making no distinction between that which was acceptable to God and that which was not, far from the Lord being glorified, by it He was profaned; the meaning of 'profaned' being, 'not reverent', 'secular', 'common', 'heathenish', 'vulgar', 'blasphemous'. To fail to make this difference between the holy and the common is profanity. It was so in Zephaniah's day, it is so today.

What then of today's modern beat and rock music, which is most certainly heathen in origin yet so common in many Churches and Chapels? Are not the motions and gesticulations of the groups engaged in these performances, vulgar? What can be said of drama which is increasingly finding a place in Church activity? This is a return to mediaeval pageantry, those were dark days of heathenism and superstition. Alas, large sections of the professing Church like Israel of old are "Gone away BACKWARD" (Isaiah 1:4).

All this BUBBLE and FROTH "pollutes the sanctuary" says God's faithful prophet. This is a very strong expression; 'pollute' means to 'make foul', 'corrupt', 'contaminate'. How serious a matter this is, to FOUL the holy courts of the eternal God; to CORRUPT and CONTAMINATE the reverent worship of the Most High.

In all this, there was one great contributory factor. All the departure, the declension, with the resultant profanity and blasphemy, was traced back to one source. There was but one cause of this whole appalling situation; Judah had violated the Law of God, replacing much of it with BUBBLE and FROTH. Let none ever say that there is no word for the New Testament Church in the minor prophets, for nothing is more relevant

in application to our day. Whether it is an individual or a local Church, to set at nought any part of the Law of God, will put such on the slippery path. Once on that road, that person or Church will slip and slide in all directions, for they have lost their foothold on the only sure and firm foundation, namely "ALL THY STATUTES"

W.H.MOLLAND

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"CEASE, MY SON, TO HEAR THE INSTRUCTION THAT CAUSETH TO ERR FROM THE WORDS OF KNOWLEDGE" (Proverbs 19:27).

"He who deliberately settles down under any ministry which is positively unsound is a very unwise man. ... To hear unscriptural teaching fifty two Sundays in every year is a serious thing. It is a continued dropping of slow poison into the mind".

J.C.RYLE

"TAKE HEED WHAT YE HEAR" (Mark 4:24)

"Separation from such as connive at fundamental error, or withhold the true 'Bread of Life' from perishing souls, is not schism, but only what truth, conscience and God requires of all who would be faithful".

C.H. SPURGEON

# EDITORIAL

Christendom today in the main is marked by EXPEDIENCY and PRAGMATISM. Expediency - the promotion of an object conducive to personal advantage, a shift from what is right to what is advantageous. Pragmatism - if a thing appears successful, then do it. To pragmatize is 'to represent an imaginary thing as real'. It is tragic that the professing Church should be characterized by such unsound principles.

Many argue that communication is the great barrier in reaching the unbelieving masses, particularly with regard to the young people. If only we could bridge this gap, get to know how they think, speak their language and enter somewhat into their way of life, then this problem would be solved. So the Church is being debased and degraded to the level of worldly standards, and those who profess the name of Christ compromise their high calling in order to appear in life and conversation at one with those whom the Scriptures declare are at "enmity against God" (Romans 8:7), enjoying the pleasures of sin (cf Hebrews 11:25).

In the promotion of this policy of being 'with-it', many so-called Churches have introduced the world's music and song books of trivial content, bedecked their places of assembling with tawdry banners, fishing nets and the like. Dim lighting has been installed, together with background pulsating rhythm, all with a view of producing an atmosphere which will appeal to the carnal mind. Added to this are the various dramatized performances, the barn dances and occasional trips to the theatre; all arranged and forming a part of normal Church activities. This is highly successful, we are told; by such means we get the people and when we come together, we have a good sing, we clap our hands and everyone enjoys it; then at the end, someone will give an epilogue - not too long, but squeezed in is some little bit of Scripture. This

method is advantageous, it works, that is why we do it -  
EXPEDIENCY! PRAGMATISM!

This modern approach in the worship of Almighty God and in the presentation of Spiritual Truth is more than a departure from that which is plainly laid down, it is in direct conflict with the Divine Mandate and therefore is most serious. This gimmickry which has invaded Churches and Chapels in recent times is nothing other than the vain imaginations of men's minds. Such methods never originated in the mind of God, if so they would have been included in the Holy Scriptures. To say that the end justifies the means, is to imply that the approach and supposition of modern man is superior to the pattern which the eternal God has given, the boasted success giving the proof.

The Holy Scriptures are the Christian's sole guide in DOCTRINE and PRACTICE, they are timeless; this must be so for they are the words of the eternal God, He is immutable, meaning unchanging; no variation whatsoever at any period, or in any circumstance. Doctrine and practice are unchanging for God's people in every age and place.

Fallen man is no different in the late twentieth century to what he has been at any other period of human history; he cannot be reached, influenced or saved by any means other than that clearly set forth in Holy Writ. Apart from the sovereign work of the Holy Spirit, no person will ever understand or be truly regenerated because, "The natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned" (1 Corinthians 2:14). For modern Church leaders to be influenced by pragmatism and expediency, not only displays a sad ignorance of the Word of God, it is grossly dishonouring to Him whom they claim to serve, as well as leading vast numbers into a false understanding of spiritual values.