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**North Road Chapel (Evangelical)
BIDEFORD**

THE LAW OF GOD

Having established from Scripture the abiding authority of the Decalogue, or the Ten Commandments, known theologically as the moral Law of God, we now turn our attention to that Law and deal specifically with each section. In this article, the first and second commandments will be examined.

The First Commandment

The first commandment reads, *"Thou shalt have no other gods before me"*. The importance of the opening word **"Thou"** must first be explained as words, grammar and layout are precise in Holy Writ and everything to the minutest detail is Divinely ordered and inspired. Each commandment in the Decalogue is given in the second person singular **"Thou"**. God does not say **'You** shall have no other gods before me'. The reason for this is that **'You'** is not singular in purity, it can mean one single person, it can also quite correctly mean a company of people, *"The kingdom of God is come upon you"* (Luke 11:20); it can mean a local church, *"I am jealous over you with Godly jealousy"* (2 Corinthians 11:2); it can also mean a nation, *"You only have I known of all the families of the earth"* (Amos 3:2).

Because of ambiguity we should never address the eternal God as **'You'**. When engaging in prayer and worship, it is fundamental that the Almighty is addressed in the second person singular, *"Thou art worthy, O Lord"* (Revelation 4:11). It is God and God alone. He is not to be mixed or confused with any other, *"By Thee only will we make mention*

of Thy name" (Isaiah 26:13). Words and grammar are all important in spiritual matters.

Many Christians will argue that these words are not in common use today, but this argument is neither valid nor spiritually intelligent. 'Common use' is of no consequence in holy matters, but correct terminology is. If a person goes into the legal profession then he must become acquainted with legal phraseology and the same applies to the medical world, one must learn medical terms; it is sheer folly to suggest anything other. So it is in the spiritual, the Christian should be as meticulous in his terminology as would be a barrister in law, or a medical practitioner in his profession. In each instance every word and term used must be correct, so that nothing dubious or vague can be read into what is said.

One readily admits that there are words and expressions in the spiritual realm which men and women of the world do not use, neither would they understand, but when a person is regenerated by the Holy Spirit and brought into the kingdom of God, that person has to learn and make himself, or herself, acquainted with spiritual expressions and correct Scriptural terminology.

One of the greatest tragedies of the Church in our age is the lowering of her standards, bringing 'everyday' language and loose terminology into her vocabulary. For many years Christians have descended to depraved man's level instead of elevating depraved man to the Christian's level.

Let the question be asked, 'How many words are there in the English Dictionary which many of us do not understand, and which we never use, simply because we have no occasion to use them? A good fifty per cent would probably be a reasonable estimate. However if we were in certain businesses or professions, we would have to use many of these words which we now think are strange. Thus it is with such words as

'Thou', 'Thee', 'Thine' and many others. These words found in the Authorized Version of the Bible are current words in the English Dictionary and if a Christian does not know them, then he or she must learn them, not change to terminology which is spiritually, grammatically unsound and which conflicts or weakens the carefully chosen words of the Spirit of God Himself.

This is one of the reasons why the church which meets at North Road, Bideford, will not have any modern versions of the Bible, because all others, without exception, tamper with the grammar and terms, to say nothing of other most serious matters.

In these 'modern' Bibles, God's Law is given as, "You shall have no other gods before me", "You shall not murder", "You shall not steal" and so on. Many argue that this in no way differs from the Authorized Version as to its meaning. This is not so. 'You' being both singular and plural, loses its directness. 'You' is defined as 'indefinite', meaning 'anyone', whereas 'Thou' is singular, it denotes one person. In applying this grammatical correctness to the moral Law of God, we see that every one of Adam's race is treated in isolation, none can be lost in the crowd, the Divine Lawgiver Himself says to every man, woman, boy and girl, "**Thou**".

The subject of correct terminology is of paramount importance and this must be realized before we go any further with the subject. Whilst God is addressing all men as His moral Law is universal, yet He is not addressing the race 'en masse', rather He singles out each child of Adam and speaks to them as individuals.

None must ever forget that this Law is the standard by which all men will be judged at the great day of judgment. The human race will not be judged in one great mass, but as individuals we shall each stand before

God, hence the personal aspect of this Law. With pure terminology such as 'Thou', there can be no mistake, no confusion with any other person, it cannot be misconstrued, it is totally personal. In this way is the first commandment addressed to each one specifically, *"Thou shalt have no other gods before me"* (Exodus 20:3). To this is added a further word, *"Make no mention of the name of other gods, neither let it be heard out of thy mouth"* (Exodus 23:13).

Multi-faith is the aim of present day ecumenists, the incorporation of all religions; this is specifically forbidden by the God of heaven. The name of other gods must never be heard amongst His people, *"Thou shalt worship no other god: for the Lord, whose name is Jealous, is a jealous God"* (Exodus 34:14). The great downfall of the ten northern tribes of Israel was, *"They feared the Lord, and served their own gods, after the manner of the nations whom they carried away from thence"* (2 Kings 17:33). The first commandment forbids multi-faith, a mixture of religions.

The reader may well say this does not apply to me, I know nothing of other religions neither am I going to enquire into them. This may be so, but one has not to become involved in other faiths in order to have another god. To become interested in any other thing more than the true God is to make it a god. To love anything or anybody more than God is to set up another god in one's life. Thomas Watson, the Puritan said, "That which has the supreme place in our lives is our god". This is very searching when we think of our husbands, our wives, our children, our home, our estate; inestimable blessings which we should highly prize and be thankful for, but if our absorbing interests lie in home, family or business and the eternal God comes second, then we break the first commandment. *"Thou"* - that is me - personal. *"Thou shalt have no other gods before me"*.

The Second Commandment

The second commandment reads, *"Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image, or any likeness of any thing that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth: thou shalt not bow down thyself to them, nor serve them: for I the Lord thy God am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth generation of them that hate me; and shewing mercy unto thousands of them that love me, and keep my commandments"*. The first commandment forbids us to worship a false god. The second commandment forbids us to worship the true God in a false manner.

No *"graven image"*; *"Ye shall make you no idols nor graven image, neither rear you up a standing image, neither shall ye set up any image of stone in your land, to bow down unto it: for I am the Lord your God"* (Leviticus 26:1). To set up images, crucifixes, crosses or any thing of this nature is expressly forbidden of God. This matter is taken still further, *"or any likeness"*. Artist's ideas, portraits, pictures, sculptor's models are not to be used in worship. *"Take ye therefore good heed lest ye corrupt yourselves and make the similitude of any figure"* (Deuteronomy 4:15,16). Many so-called places of worship have an abundance of these very things and true Christians visit these buildings to admire such architecture and works. Quoting Watson again from his book 'The Ten Commandments' he writes, "Go not into churches or chapels to see crucifixes and stained glass windows. Is it pleasing to God to be doing that which is contrary to His mind, and that which He has expressly forbidden?"

Some people maintain that it is quite impossible to portray God the Father, because He is eternal Spirit, but God the Son became man, therefore He can be portrayed because He was truly human. Christ was

verily God as well as man, Deity and humanity in one Person, two natures yet one personality; it is this which makes Him the Christ. Therefore to endeavour to portray His manhood when it is impossible to portray His Godhead, is a sin of the greatest magnitude for it is separating that which God has joined; it is leaving out the very thing which constitutes Him the Christ of God. Never should anyone countenance attempts made to portray the Lord Jesus Christ. In any case, who has the slightest idea as to the physique or features of the Man, Christ Jesus? There is not a hint given in Holy Scripture concerning this upon which any artist can work.

However in considering this second commandment, one has to go beyond images and pictures, and examine the broader principle which is involved; the worship of the true God in a false manner. Anything which intrudes or has been introduced into the worship of God which is extra-Biblical, that is, not found in Holy Scripture, is covered by this commandment. The God of heaven is to be worshipped in spirit and in truth (cf John 4:23). This can only be true when all that is in the Scriptures is adhered to; anything which is not according to the truth, is false.

The man or woman who truly loves God will love and obey His truth. *"If a man love me, he will keep my words"* (John 14:23). The second commandment clearly tells us that the true and living God is *"a jealous God"*. This means He permits no rivals and views anything not true to His Word as adultery, meaning other love is involved. This was Israel's trouble in Hosea's day. She went after other lovers in that she brought 'extras' into the worship of Jehovah - spiritual adultery, and consequently Israel was cut off. God will have His spouse keep close to Him and not go after other lovers (cf Hosea 2:10-13); our God is a **jealous God**.

"Visiting the iniquities of the fathers upon the children" (Exodus 20:5). This is a most solemn statement which is embodied in the second commandment. False worshippers are not only enemies to their own souls, but also to their own children. If one generation drifts away from the truth, invariably the next will be a generation of backsliders and the next apostates. How careful should every man and woman be in their generation to uphold the truth and maintain the faith, for succeeding generations will suffer if we fail.

"Them that hate me" (Exodus 20:5), is a statement which again is incorporated in this second commandment. Bearing in mind that the context is images, likenesses, false worship of any kind, then a further word from the Pentateuch will help in our understanding of this; *"Neither shalt thou set thee up any image; which the Lord thy God hateth"* (Deuteronomy 16:22). Anything *"set up"* which is hated by God is to be viewed in the light of the second commandment as an indication that a person cares nothing for God's Law. They ignore His truth, if not all, parts of it which are not palatable or socially acceptable to them. Therefore does the Almighty say, *"they hate me"*. Those who hate or refuse to submit to parts of God's truth, He regards as hatred to Him; love to Him and obedience to His Word are inseparable (cf John 14:23).

The end of the verses pertaining to the second commandment give the contrast to those who refuse to obey this mandate, *"Shewing mercy unto thousands of them that love me and keep my commandments"* (Exodus 20:6). Unto those that love the truth and the Law of God and order their worship accordingly (for worship is the context of this section of the Decalogue), will God show mercy. The Psalmist confirms this wondrous yet sobering truth, *"The mercy of the Lord is from everlasting to everlasting upon them that fear Him, and His righteousness unto children's children; to such as keep His covenant, and to those that remember His commandments to do them"* (Psalm 103: 17,18).

Conclusion

"Thou (personal) *shalt have no other gods*". **Thou** shalt have no extras or innovations of man in worship, not even the likeness of such. Let us then remember His commandments to **do them**.

To be continued.

W.H.Molland

"There are few matters about which the Puritans differ more from present-day Christians than in their assessment of the importance of the Ten Commandments. The commandments, they held, are the first thing in Christianity which the natural man needs to be taught and they should be the daily concern of the Christian to the last.

It will be found that the periods in which the Church has enjoyed the greatest measures of spiritual life have been times when a prominent position was given to the preaching of the Law: the gravity, danger and power of sin is then seen in its true light and consequently the need of redemption and sanctification profoundly felt.

A re-discovery of the serious importance of this subject would do much to introduce a new conviction, authority and power into the witness of the Church today".

Taken from: Watson's Work on the Ten Commandments

"The Law of the Lord is perfect, converting the soul: the testimony of the Lord is sure, making wise the simple. The statutes of the Lord are right, rejoicing the heart: the commandment of the Lord is pure, enlightening the eyes. Moreover by them is thy servant warned: and in keeping of them there is great reward". (Psalm 19:7,8,11)

Extracts from:

Interpretation of the Scriptures

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. He professes to be a servant of the Lord Jesus Christ, a messenger sent forth by the Most High. To misrepresent his Master, to preach any other Gospel than His, to falsify the message which God has committed to his trust, is the sin of sins, which brings down upon him the anathema of heaven (cf Galatians 1:8), and will be visited with the sorest punishment awaiting any creature. Scripture is plain that the heaviest measure of Divine wrath is reserved for unfaithful preachers (cf Matthew 23:14; Jude v13). Therefore the warning is given "*Be not many masters, knowing that we shall receive the greater condemnation*" (James 3:1) if unfaithful to our trust. Every minister of the gospel will yet have to render a full account of his stewardship unto the One whom he claims called him to feed His sheep (cf Hebrews 13:17), to answer for the souls who were committed to his charge. If he fails to diligently warn the wicked, and he dies in his iniquity, God declares "*his blood will I require at thine hand*" (Ezekiel 3:18).

The chief and constant duty of the preacher is to conform unto that injunction, "*Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the Word of Truth*" (2 Timothy 2:15). "*A workman that needeth not to be ashamed*". Be conscientious, diligent, faithful in the use you make of your time and the talents God has entrusted to you.. Give unremitting heed to that precept, "*Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy might*" (Ecclesiastes

9:10) - put your very best into it. Be industrious and assiduous, not careless and slovenly. See how well you can do each thing and not how quickly. The ministry is no place for triflers or idlers, but for those who are prepared to spend and be spent in the cause of Christ. The preacher ought to work harder than the miner, and to spend more hours per week in his study than does the man of business in his office. A workman is the very opposite of a shirker. If the preacher is to show himself approved unto God and be a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, then he will have to labour and do so until he mentally sweats.

.... No man can be constantly giving out that which is fresh and savoury unless he be continually taking in. That which he is to declare to others is what his own ears have first heard, his own eyes have seen, his own hands have handled (cf 1 John 1:1,2).

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 are so much needed, "*And Paul, as his manner was reasoned with them out of the Scriptures, opening and alleging, that Christ must needs have suffered, and risen again from the dead*" (Acts 17:2,3). But to 'open' the Scriptures helpfully to the saints requires something more than a few months training in a Bible institute, or a year or two in a seminary. None but those who have been personally taught of God in the hard school of experience are qualified so to 'open' the Word that Divine light is cast upon the spiritual problems of the believer, for while Scripture interprets experience, experience is often the best interpreter of the Scripture. "*The heart of the wise teacheth his mouth, and addeth learning to his lips*" (Proverbs 16:23), and that "*learning*" cannot be acquired in any of man's schools.

While the preacher is to ponder the Word devotionally, he is also to read it **studiously**. If he is to become able to feed his flock with "*the finest of the wheat*" (Psalm 81:16), then he must needs study it diligently and daily, and that to the end of his life. Alas, that so many preachers abandon their habit of study as soon as they are ordained! The Bible is an inexhaustible mine of spiritual treasure, and the more its riches are opened to us (by hard digging), the more we realize how much there is yet unpossessed, and how little we really understand what has been received. "*If any man think that he knoweth any thing, he knoweth nothing yet as he ought to know*" (1 Corinthians 8:2).

The Word of God cannot be understood without a constant and laborious study, without a careful and prayerful scrutiny of its contents. This is not to say that it is recondite and obscure. No, it is as plain and intelligible as in the nature of things it can be, adopted in the best possible manner to give instruction in the holy and profound things of which it treats. But none can be instructed by the best possible means of instruction who will not take pains with the same. Promise of understanding is made not to the dilatory and indolent, but to the diligent and earnest, to those who seek for spiritual treasure (cf Proverbs 2:3,5). The Scriptures have to be searched, searched daily, persistently and perseveringly, if the minister is to become thoroughly familiar with the **whole** of what God has revealed, and if he is to set before his hearers "*a feast of fat things*". Of the wise preacher it is said, "*He still taught the people knowledge, yea, he gave good heed, and sought out*", even "*sought to find out acceptable words*" (Ecclesiastes 12:9,10), as if his whole soul was engaged in the discovery of the best mode as well as the best substance of instruction.

No preacher should be content with being anything less than a man mighty in the Scriptures (cf Acts 18:24). 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.

Great care needs ever to be taken that we do not expound our own minds instead of God's. Nothing can be more blameworthy than for a man to profess to be uttering a "*Thus saith the Lord*" when he is merely expressing his own thoughts. Yet who is there who has not, unwittingly, done so?

If the druggist is required by law to follow exactly the doctor's prescription, if military officers must transmit the orders of their commanders verbatim or suffer severe penalties, how much more incumbent is it for one dealing with Divine and eternal things to adhere strictly to his text book! The interpreter's task is to emulate those described in Nehemiah 8:8, of whom it is said "*they read in the book in the Law of God distinctly, and gave the sense, and caused them to understand the reading*". The reference is to those who had returned to Palestine from Babylon. While in captivity they had gradually ceased to use Hebrew as their spoken language, Aramaic displacing it. Hence there was a real need to explain the Hebrew words in which the Law was written (cf Nehemiah 13:23,24). Yet the recording of this incident intimates that it is of permanent importance, and has a message for us. In the good providence of God there is little need today for the preacher to explain the Hebrew and the Greek, since we already possess a reliable translation of them into our own mother tongue - though occasionally, yet very sparingly, he may do so. But his principal business is to "*give the sense*" of the English Bible and cause his hearers to "*understand*" its contents. His responsibility is to adhere strictly to that injunction, "*Let him speak my Word faithfully. What is the chaff to the wheat? saith the Lord*" (Jeremiah 23:28).

A.W.Pink

Vigilance

The title of this article speaks of being alert, keeping wide awake and having one's wits about them and the Christian is commanded to so live his life; *"Be sober, be vigilant"* (1 Peter 5:8); *"Wherefore gird up the loins of your mind, be sober, and hope to the end for the grace that is to be brought unto you at the revelation of Jesus Christ"* (1 Peter 1:13).

With the passage of time there are certain parts of God's Word which take on a greater relevance and 1 Peter 1:13 is such a verse; it commences, *"Gird up the loins of your mind"*. The age in which we live is one of great spiritual laxity where we see on every hand lamentable shallowness of doctrine and gross carelessness in church practice. Many of those who profess to be Christians live just as worldlings, and the vast majority of churches and chapels engage in activities which would cause great sadness to their founders.

The apostle Paul speaks of a 'falling away'; people who have a form of godliness but deny the power thereof (cf 2 Timothy 3:5). These people are *"Ever learning, and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth"* (2 Timothy 3:7); they have no firm conviction. The apostle continues *"For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears; and they shall turn away their ears from the truth, and shall be turned unto fables"* (2 Timothy 4:3,4). *"Evil men and seducers shall wax worse and worse, deceiving, and being deceived. But continue thou in the things which thou hast learned"* (2 Timothy 3:13,14). Peter emphasizes the same truth, when he speaks of the 'end time', *"the revelation of Jesus Christ"*; in such a day when evil is rampant in the world and truth is disparaged in the church, he says, *"Gird up the loins of your mind"*.

The outlook for the human race in the late twentieth century is bleak with the storm clouds of God's wrath hanging low over this world. Will God remain silent much longer? The truth of Scripture is clear, *"This know also, that in the last days perilous times shall come. For men shall be lovers of their own selves, covetous, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, without natural affection, trucebreakers, false accusers, incontinent, fierce, despisers of those that are good, traitors, heady, highminded, lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God"* (2 Timothy 3:1-4). What a fearful, comprehensive list!

COVETOUS - A passionate desire to possess. What causes such queues at the National Lottery desks?

BOASTERS, PROUD - Full of vain glory and self-aggrandizement.

BLASPHEMERS - Irreverent, taking the name of Deity in vain, speaking profane language.

DISOBEDIENT TO PARENTS - The flouting of parental wishes, rebelling against their control and guidance.

UNTHANKFUL - Taking everything for granted.

UNHOLY - Impious, Godless, wicked.

WITHOUT NATURAL AFFECTION - Homosexuals, lesbians, parents who desert homes and families, children who neglect parents.

TRUCE BREAKERS - Breakers of agreements, not only in national and international affairs but also in business and marriage.

FALSE ACCUSERS - Liars, spreading unfounded gossip.

INCONTINENT - Unchaste, not restraining the passions.

FIERCE - Violent, hostile, dangerous.

DESPISERS OF THEM THAT ARE GOOD - To belittle and undervalue those that fear God.

TRAITORS - Disloyal, those who violate allegiance.

HEADY, HIGH MINDED - Having too high an opinion of themselves.

LOVERS OF PLEASURES MORE THAN LOVERS OF GOD.

This, without doubt sums up the age in which we live. The tragic situation of our day with its appalling moral breakdown should be registered by every true Christian; the voice of God is unmistakably heard in all this, *"When ye see a cloud rise out of the west, straightway ye say, There cometh a shower; and so it is. And when ye see the south wind blow, ye say, There will be heat; and it cometh to pass. Ye hypocrites, ye can discern the face of the sky and of the earth; but how is it that ye do not discern this time?"* (Luke 12:54-56).

"Gird up the loins of your mind" is the word to every true believer today. In this perilous age, Christians must be vigilant and keep their wits about them, thinking these matters through for themselves, not being confused by current events, or accepting them as the norm through not being spiritually alert.

The word *"gird"* as used by Peter needs to be put into its eastern setting in order to get the full meaning. It has reference to the dressing gown like attire worn at that period in the east. A man, as he commenced work, would pull up his long garment and tighten his girdle. It is equivalent to a person taking off his jacket and rolling up his sleeves; an attitude of earnestness and diligent application to the task.

We are in a world where wickedness abounds, perilous times are upon us and the church is much as it was in Eli's day. *"Eli was laid down in his place, and his eyes began to wax dim, that he could not see; and ere the lamp of God went out in the temple of the Lord, where the ark of God was"* (1 Samuel 3:2,3). The old priest had lost his vision. He might have been in his place but he was lying down and the lamp of testimony was burning very low. This is analogous to the situation in which we find ourselves today. The light of a clear and faithful witness to all the counsel of God is very dim; *"Wherefore gird up the loins of your **mind**"*. We are not to be spiritually slovenly, but roll up our sleeves, for the

position is to be faced with diligence, applying ourselves in an industrious manner to meet the need of the hour. The Word of God is not calling us to frenzied, fleshly activity in an endeavour to counteract the situation; no, it is the **mind** which is addressed. It is a call to a balanced, intelligent assessment of the lamp of true testimony.

As Christians, we are not to lend an ear to fables but think things through, carefully pondering Biblical doctrine till we arrive at a point of firm conviction; having proved all things, hold fast to that which is good (cf 1 Thessalonians 5:2). We should never deviate from truth, but continue in the things which we have learned and have been assured of, knowing of whom we have learned them (cf 2 Timothy 3:14). We are to remain level headed amidst all the cunningly devised fables, keeping our wits about us, not being swept off our feet by popular trends. *"If any man shall say unto you, Lo, here is Christ, or there; believe it not. For there shall arise false Christs, and false prophets, and shall shew great signs and wonders; insomuch that, if it were possible, they shall deceive the very elect. Behold I have told you before. Wherefore if they shall say unto you, Behold, he is in the desert; go not forth: behold, he is in the secret chambers; believe it not"* (Matthew 24:23-26).

So much is made of miracles, speaking in tongues, signs, wonders, being slain in the spirit, by so-called churches encouraging and advertising that this is where Christ is to be found. But Christ's own words are *"Go not forth"*, *"Believe it not"*. Do not believe any who do not teach *"all the counsel of God"* according to the Scriptures. *"Behold I have told you"* says the great Head of the Church, therefore you are to be discerning. We have been created with a brain which we are to use, therefore gird it up; holy determination is necessary, no questioning, no hesitancy. Having been set on the straight and narrow way, possessing a sure word of prophecy to which we are to take heed (cf 2 Peter 1:19), we are to press on and not to be moved from the *"old paths"* (Jeremiah 6:16), nor

"carried about with every wind of doctrine" (Ephesians 4:14). A steadfast, unmovable Christian will be termed old fashioned and narrow minded, but what does this matter, for such are in good company taking their stand with Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezra, Nehemiah, Paul, John and with thousands more of whom the world was not worthy (cf Hebrews 11:38).

Added to this exhortation to *"Gird up the loins of your mind"* is *"Be sober"*. If a man ceases to be sober, he makes a fool of himself, his mind is befuddled, he rambles and he becomes unsteady on his feet. *"Be sober"* says the Spirit of God, keep your head clear, act intelligently, have your wits about you, set your mind upon the truth, or you will stagger like a drunken man, losing your sense of direction.

There are some today who would claim to be Christians yet they fill their minds with the filth of this world, its entertainment and supposed pleasure. The child of God is not to do this as the mind of the Christian is a most vital part of his personality and needs to be both guarded and fed. *"Whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on **these things**"* (Philippians 4:8). Sex, violence and bad language dominate the world's entertainment and therefore no Christian should find pleasure in visiting theatres or drama shows, nor in watching them on television or video. Radio and literature are also contaminated in the same way, for they too are channels fitted for the same purpose. The child of God must carefully guard eye gate and ear gate, not allowing his mind to fasten on things so base.

Vast numbers of professed believers are eager to follow all kinds of church entertainment; mime, drama, musicals, for all kinds of carnival and Punch and Judy-like activities have invaded churches. Those who

are attracted by this kind of practice have never examined this subject in the light of Holy Scripture and churches which engage in such unbiblical nonsense are making fools of themselves, not having girded up their minds nor acted in a spiritually sober manner.

The phenomenon called the Toronto Blessing, better defined as the Toronto Curse, is a fearful example of how far people who profess the name of Christ can go if they are not punctilious in girding up their minds by checking the doctrine and assessing such bizarre and irregular practices. No Christian who has his wits about him and is spiritually alert and intelligent, would ever become involved to any degree with such a thing, which can only be described as demonic. The child of God is to keep his head and not be moved from the true Biblical faith.

Although the professing church is in such a shocking state and the iniquity of this evil world ripe for judgment, we are exhorted by Peter to "*hope to the end*" (1 Peter 1:13). Never must the believer doubt or despair, for we have a sure and certain hope even if things look hopeless. Those who love and hold fast the truth will not despair, for ultimate success is certain though all desert; victory and triumph is assured to them who are steadfast and unmovable. We are to "*hope to the end for the grace that is to be brought unto you at the revelation of Jesus Christ*". Wonderful was the grace bestowed on us at the **first** advent of Jesus Christ, which brought us salvation, reconciliation, justification, sanctification and much more, but there is more grace to be lavished upon us yet. There is "*an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for you, who are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation ready to be revealed in the last time*" (1 Peter 1:4,5). The end of our salvation, the ultimate of God's grace is glorification which will be revealed in the last time, at Christ's **second** advent. "*Hope to the end*" is the word to the faithful remnant.

Does not the sovereign, unmerited grace of God to us in election, redemption, regeneration and ultimate glorification demand holy living? It does, therefore we are gird up the loins of our mind, be vigilant and keep our wits about us in such an evil age. The world may look upon us as fools, the professing church dub us as Puritanical but strict adherents to the Word of God will be proved right in the end. The theories of men and innovations of christendom will all vanish as a vapour. There is One coming, before whom **all** will stand and He will vindicate His truth. Furthermore He will honour the faith of the faithful and reward His loyal followers, those who keep His Word.

"Wherefore gird up the loins of your mind, be sober, and hope to the end for the grace that is to be brought unto you at the revelation of Jesus Christ" .

W.H.Molland

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Annual Bible Convention

Saturday, 5 August 1995 D.V.
Afternoon 3.30 p.m. Tea 5.00 p.m. Evening 6.00 p.m.
Speaker: Mr W.J.Seaton (Inverness)

Visiting Preachers D.V.

Lord's Day	6 August 1995	Mr W.J.Seaton (Inverness)
Lord's Day	17 September 1995	Dr S.S.Short (Weston-S-Mare)
Thursday	6 July 1995	Mr F Stanbury (Bow)
Thursday	10 August 1995	Mr F Stanbury (Bow)
Thursday	7 September 1995	Mr F Stanbury (Bow)

Editorial

We live in a day when human depravity, sin and guilt are subjects which are not only unpopular, they are treated by many as taboo. Self-esteem, positive feelings, thinking good of oneself, are marks of contemporary culture and coupled with this is a lack of moral responsibility. In this area of psychology, the Church has to some degree become affected. Far too often are some Christians seen to embrace the fads of worldly opinion instead of standing foursquare on what the Bible says, with the consequent detrimental effect this has upon the life and witness of the Church not being fully realized.

Speaking generally, the people of God are less concerned with sin, appearing to develop an immunity to gross evil which is now prevalent. They reason that it is so widespread there is no remedy, it is the way of life today and has to be accepted; the conscience (which at one time may have been tender) is hardened to the current situation. When this happens, it becomes apparent that such Christians will explain the drift in a wholly unbiblical manner, unconsciously employing the psychology of this fallen world and in so doing, fail to be the salt which is their God-appointed role.

To abolish the doctrine of human depravity and underestimate the reality of sin will render the Divine plan of man's salvation unnecessary. Once the truth of personal guilt is eliminated from men's minds, then they will see no need of a Saviour. The Church in its tolerant, compromising approach to sin in this late twentieth century, facilitates this Satanic, psychological delusion of self-esteem and well-being.

The belief that Christians should be more committed to the task of reconstructing society is an historical view which still persists today in

certain sections of the Church. This is not approaching the matter from a spiritual standpoint. The trouble is not that the Church is insufficiently involved in this world's affairs, but that it has absorbed many of the world's false values, taking on board an unbiblical approach. Concerning the professing church of our day, one writer has aptly said, "The problem is not too little activism, but too much assimilation". Endeavouring to reclaim society other than by the Gospel is a futile exercise and such effort, when analysed, refers to the psychology of man rather than the Word of God. This whole world lieth in the wicked one (cf 1 John 5:19) he is the god of this world who blinds the minds of them that believe not (cf 2 Corinthians 4:4). Apart from God's elect people, all are doomed to eternal judgment and can never be reconstructed, therefore did our Lord, the great Head of the Church say, "*Let the dead bury their dead but go thou and preach the kingdom of God*" (Luke 9:60). This is the great commission and task of the Church.

It is through the foolishness of preaching and the declaration of all the counsel of God (cf 1 Corinthians 1:20,21; Acts 20:27), that sinners are saved and all the requirements for the Church and human governments are made known. This is the God ordained pattern for the dissemination of all spiritual and moral truth and the pulpits of local churches are the Divinely appointed platforms for the ambassadors of the kingdom of heaven. 'Get in it to win it' may be the theory of the worldling, but it certainly is not the mandate for the people of God and the Church of Jesus Christ is to stand out as being completely separated from the world. R.B.Kuiper wrote "The stronger the contrast of the Church and the world, the greater is the glory of the Church". Let the Church fearlessly preach God's Law according to the mandate of the Head, "*for by the Law is the knowledge of sin*" (Romans 3:20). Coupled with the preaching of the Law must come the challenge as given by Christ Himself, "*Repent ye and believe the gospel*" (Mark 1:15), then will be abolished the devilish deception of self-esteem.