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**North Road Chapel (Evangelical)
BIDEFORD**

THE LAW OF GOD

The Third Commandment

"Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain; for the Lord will not hold him guiltless that taketh His name in vain" (Exodus 20:7).

This commandment is in two parts; firstly the command that God's name must not be taken in vain, meaning that there must be no reflection or dishonour cast on His name. Secondly, the consequence of disobeying this command in that the Lord will not hold guiltless any who do disobey, strongly implying that all men should ever be careful to reverence and honour God's name. The whole content of the third commandment is summed up by the words of Moses, *"That thou mayest fear this glorious and fearful name THE LORD THY GOD"* (Deuteronomy 28:58).

When dealing with the Law of God, it must always be borne in mind that it is the Trinity which is involved. It is the one eternal God in focus, no one person within the Trinity is to be isolated, therefore the name in this third commandment comprehends the Godhead, Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

The Scriptures abound with examples of the manner in which great men of faith revered, extolled and feared the name of Almighty God. The Book of Psalms contains a proliferation of terms of veneration to the God of heaven. *"Great is the Lord, and greatly to be praised"* (Psalm 48:1), *"Let God be magnified"* (Psalm 70:4), *"Who is so great a God as our God?"* (Psalm 77:13), *"O Lord of hosts, my King, and my God"*

(Psalm 84:3), "*God is greatly to be feared*" (Psalm 89:7), "*The Lord reigneth, He is clothed with majesty*" (Psalm 93:1), "*Give unto the Lord the glory due unto His name*" (Psalm 96:8), "*Be Thou exalted, O God*" (Psalm 108:5). To lightly speak in a casual manner of the Most High or of the wonders of His works, in creation, providence or grace, is to show disregard and a lack of appreciation of "*His eternal power and Godhead*" (Romans 1:20). This is a form of taking His name "*in vain*".

It is a common belief that the third commandment means using God's name as an oath or in swearing. Quite obviously this is one meaning, for to use the name of the most holy God as an oath or a curse is a sin of the vilest nature, but the importance of the third commandment is far broader in its scope than that of oaths and swearing and must not be so restricted.

When addressing men of high rank, due consideration is to be taken in giving them the title which their position demands. For example, the Sovereign is addressed as 'Your Majesty', a Chief Justice 'My Lord', a knight 'Sir', a magistrate 'Your Worship'. To be in a High Court and address the Lord Chief Justice by his christian name would be the height of indignity. If presented to court and upon meeting the Queen, one casually spoke and called her Elizabeth, this would not only be insulting, it would be conduct of the most contemptuous nature. Yet today the Mighty Creator God is addressed by some in the most casual and irreverent manner, even as 'Dad' by some so-called ministers. Where such extremes as this would never be countenanced, yet the purity of the second person singular 'Thou' has long since been dropped for the loose, indefinite term 'You'; this also is to be deplored.

In other circles it is prevalent for the eternal Son of God to be spoken of as Jesus and this is the only name by which they address Him. This is very wrong and is indicative of a shallow grasp of who is being

addressed. The name of Jesus is the earthly, human name which the Son of God bore when here below, but He never ceased to be God, even when in the depths of humiliation and shame.

When the incarnate Son of God left earth and ascended into heaven, God the Father made it clear that He had made that same Jesus whom man had crucified, both Lord and **Christ** (cf Acts 2:36). "*He is **Lord** of all*" (Acts 10:36); God hath "*given **Him** a name which is above every name*" (Philippians 2:9). The name which the resurrected, now glorified, incarnate Son of God bears is the **highest name in heaven**. Dare mortals of earth address Him simply by His lowly, earthly name. He is the Lord God omnipotent who reigneth supreme; all authority, power and judgment is committed unto Him and never should the Christian now speak of the exalted Christ of God as just Jesus. After His return to heaven, the apostles always spoke of Him as the Lord Jesus, the Lord Jesus Christ or Christ the Lord. In this way they acknowledged and gave recognition to His Lordship and exaltation; we are to do likewise. Let none ever think that it is just the blasphemer who takes the name of the Lord "*in vain*"; the child of God must always fear that glorious and awesome name of God contained in the three persons of the Godhead. He requires, yea demands, that the majesty of His holy name be held sacred and revered by us. It is important to register that the very first petition in the prayer which Christ gave as a pattern to us His people was "*Hallowed be Thy name*".

Only once in Holy Scripture is the word 'reverend' found, "*Holy and reverend is His name*" (Psalm 111:9). God's name and His alone is reverend. It is blasphemous and profane for a mortal man to assume this title. This is a matter which cannot be too forcefully denounced, as vast numbers of ministers have taken to themselves this title of Deity, yet many address the eternal Son of God simply by His earthly name, Jesus. Is it not ironic that they are the reverends, whereas the exalted Christ is

but Jesus? If this is not a breaking of the third commandment then surely words have little if any meaning. God's name **alone** is to be revered and hallowed, man has **no** place whatsoever in this category. It is a shameful fact that many men of God have done and still do use this title, an appellation used also by apostates, which makes the practice more detestable. **Vainly** do religious professionals take this title which is peculiar unto the most high God. His holy Law clearly states, "*Thou shalt not*". This and many other aspects are covered by the third section of the Decalogue.

It is written of the inconsistent Christian, "*They profess that they know God; but in works they deny Him*" (Titus 1:16). To freely talk of God when the life does not correspond to that profession is also to break the third commandment and brings God into disrepute. "*The name of God is blasphemed among the Gentiles through you*" (Romans 2:24). By this clear statement we know that it is not only swearing which is blasphemy but the name of God is blasphemed by inconsistent living. How tragic it is when the name of the Lord is besmirched by the lax and carnal conduct of those who profess His name! Such take His name "*in vain*".

Worship is an important aspect of this commandment and is not a matter of the lips, it is a heart exercise. "*Wherefore the Lord said, Forasmuch as this people draw near me with their mouth, and with their lips do honour me, but have removed their heart far from me, and their fear toward me is taught by the precept of men*" (Isaiah 29:13). If a person speaks of worshipping the Lord when their heart is not right, then they break the third commandment and take His name in vain. The whole thing is empty and hypocritical giving the **appearance** of love and devotion to God. Of Judah it was written, "*They come unto thee as the people cometh, and they sit before thee as my people, and they hear thy words, but they will not do them: for with their mouth they shew much love, but their heart goeth after their covetousness*" (Ezekiel 33:31).

How vain it is to attach the name of the Lord to empty worship! This too is to take His name "*in vain*".

It may not be realized, but prayer comes within the scope of this section of God's Law. The name of the Lord our God is very definitely affected by the manner in which we pray. Not just in the way in which we address Him, but also in our approach. Is it in faith? When we pray, do we believe? Have we confidence in His great name? Faith is a grace which greatly honours God, it glorifies Him. Of Abraham it is recorded, he "*was strong in faith, giving glory to God*" (Romans 4:20). If when we pray we are faithless, having no confidence in God, then we are taking His name upon our lips "*in vain*". It is a failure to appreciate His ability, it is a denial of His power, "*Without faith it is impossible to please Him; for he that cometh to God must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of them that diligently seek Him*" (Hebrews 11:6). "*How then shall they call on Him in whom they have not believed?*" (Romans 10:14). The glorious name of the Lord our God is beyond all doubt affected by the manner of our praying. To call upon His name in an unbelieving, faithless spirit is taking His name "*in vain*".

The Scriptures of truth are to be seen and handled as being totally interwoven in this matter of taking God's name "*in vain*". "*Thou hast magnified Thy word above all Thy name*" (Psalm 138:2). This is an amazing statement. Here we are told how God views the Holy Scriptures - they stand supreme. What are we to understand by such explicit words? Just this, if the Word of God failed, if it could be proved wrong, then what of God's name? That name would be forever discredited. The Word of God and the name of God are eternally linked, the one can never be divorced from the other. To meddle in any way with God's inspired Word is to dishonour God's name. The Holy Scriptures are sacred, they are to be held in reverence just as is God's holy name. No part of God's Word is to be dismissed, no part of it is to

be lightly esteemed, no part of it is to be regarded as optional. To do so is to treat the imperishable, authoritative Word of God *"in vain"* and by so doing we have taken God's name *"in vain"*. This point needs to be further stressed for to wrest the Scriptures, to adulterate or to put upon them an incorrect interpretation is equally serious and this can be done in a variety of ways. There are those who insist on taking parts of God's Word in a simplistic, literal manner, when by careful study and *"comparing spiritual things with spiritual"* (1 Corinthians 2:13), it becomes apparent that such verses are figurative with a deep underlying spiritual truth. It is for this reason that we are exhorted to *"Search the Scriptures"* (John 5:39).

The Pharisees were great literalists, perverting God's sacred truth. Concerning the Law of God which is the subject of these articles, we are told, *"Thou shalt bind them for a sign upon thine hand, and they shall be as frontlets between thine eyes"* (Deuteronomy 6:8). This is plainly figurative language, yet did the Pharisees insist upon literal interpretation having the Law embroidered on their garments. This was nothing short of making a mockery of the spiritual teaching God intended in His Law. By their interpretation they made vain that Law, and in so doing took *"in vain"* the very nature of the great Lawgiver.

The Romanists do the same at their mass as they expound the words, *"This is my body"*, they make a wafer to be the actual and literal body of Christ, whereas the bread (not wafer) is but **figurative** and **symbolic** of Christ's body. Dispensationalists are also crass literalists in certain matters of Biblical prophecy. It is a serious thing for men to so handle the Word of God in order to bolster a man-made tradition, or take verses out of context to make a point in an endeavour to substantiate a theory, yet how many have, and still do this! Men strain their wits as they wrest the Scriptures to fit a particular view which they hold and in so doing they profane God's Word and take His name *"in vain"*. It is to the

Scriptures of truth we must come to ascertain the validity of any matter and yet how often men and women, claiming to be led by the Holy Spirit, act in a strange or outrageous manner, attaching to it the Lord's name. There are those who claim to be **led** into prominent Christian work and are inaugurated into office with much publicity and ceremony, only for it to be later proved that they were not fitted for the work. Pious talk and the use of the Lord's name is all too common today and brings the name of Christ into disrepute. Therefore before attaching the Lord's name to anything, it is essential that the matter in question must stand up to a full Scriptural investigation, lest that name be taken "*in vain*".

What of God's providence? Perhaps we have never thought that the providence of God has anything to do with the third commandment; this is not so. Do we ever murmur at our circumstances? Do we ever secretly complain at the way in which our life has been ordered? If so, then other questions must be asked. Who has ordered our life? Who has brought us into our present position? If in the privacy of our own hearts there are questions or degrees of resentment, then this is of the old nature; it springs from a bitter root and it is a reproaching of the God who worketh all things after the counsel of His own will (cf Ephesians 1:11). It is dishonouring to God's name. To say on the one hand that the Lord is my strong tower (cf Proverbs 18:10) and on the other hand to harbour secret thoughts of resentment for His providence (though it be strange) is to take His name "*in vain*".

How comprehensive and all embracing is this third commandment! It ends "*The Lord will not hold him guiltless that taketh His name in vain*". This should surely put a great rein upon our lives and permanently seal our lips lest at any time, by any means we dishonour Him by taking His name "*in vain*", for by so doing none will be held guiltless.

To be continued

W.H.Molland

Amusement and Entertainment in the Church

How Godly men of the past viewed this

Providing recreation for the people is now looked upon as a necessary part of Christian work and as binding upon the Church of God as though it were a Divine command. Amusement has become a recognized weapon of the Christian's warfare and developed into a mission. There has been a steady 'down grade' in this respect. From 'speaking out' as the Puritans did, the Church has gradually toned down her testimony; then winked at and excused the frivolities of the day. Then she has tolerated them in her borders, and now she has adopted them and provided a home for them under the plea of "reaching the masses and getting the ear of the people". The Devil has seldom done a cleverer thing than hinting to the Church of Christ that part of her mission is to provide entertainment for the people with a view to winning them into her ranks.

Providing amusement for the people is nowhere spoken of in Holy Scripture as one of the functions of the Church. If our Lord had intended His Church to be the caterer of entertainment, and so counteract the god of this world, He would hardly have left so important a branch of service unmentioned. If it is a Christian work, why did not Christ at least hint it? "*Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature*", is clear enough. So would it have been if he had added, 'and provide amusement for those who do not relish the gospel'. No such addendum however is to be found, nor even an equivalent for such in any one of our Lord's utterances. The ascended Lord gave gifts to His Church, men specially qualified for the carrying on of His work. "*He gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers; for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ*". Where do the

'public entertainers' come in? The Holy Spirit is silent concerning them, and His silence is eloquence. If 'providing recreation' be a part of the Church's work, surely we may look for some promise to encourage her in the toilsome task. Where is it? There is a promise for *"My Word"*, that *".... shall not return unto me void"*. There is a heart-rejoicing declaration concerning the Gospel *"It is the power of God"*. There is the sweet assurance for the preacher of Christ that, whether he be successful or not (as the world judges success), he is a *"sweet savour unto God"*. There is the glorious benediction for those whose testimony, far from amusing the world, rouses its wrath: *"Blessed are ye, when men shall revile you, and persecute you, and shall say all manner of evil against you falsely, for my sake. Rejoice, and be exceeding glad: for great is your reward in heaven: for so persecuted they the prophets which were before you"*. Were the prophets persecuted because they amused the people or because they refused to? The gospel of amusement has no martyrology. In vain does one look for a promise from God for providing recreation for a godless world. That which has no authority from Christ, no provision made for it by the Holy Spirit and no promise attached to it by the Father, can only be a lying hypocrite when it claims to be a 'branch of the work of the Lord'.

Providing amusement for the people is in direct antagonism to the teaching and life of Christ and His apostles. What is to be the attitude of the Church towards the world according to His teaching? Strict separation and uncompromising hostility. No hint ever passed His lips of ever winning the world by pleasing it, or accommodating methods to its taste. Our Lord's demand for unworldliness was constant and emphatic. He sets forth in one short sentence what He would have His disciples to be; *"Ye are the salt of the earth"*. The salt, not the sugar candy. Something the world would be more inclined to spit out than swallow with a smile. Something more calculated to bring water to the eye than laughter to the lip.

How did the Lord act? What were the methods of the only, perfectly "*faithful witness*" the Father has ever had? He is to be the worker's model. Very significant is the introductory account given by Mark, "*Now after that John was put in prison, Jesus came into Galilee, preaching the gospel of the kingdom of God, and saying, The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand: repent ye, and believe the gospel*". Matthew tells us, "*And it came to pass, when Jesus had made an end of commanding His twelve disciples, He departed thence to teach and preach in their cities*". Never shall we find words of this sort, 'And the careless are amused, and the perishing are provided with innocent recreation'. We are not left in doubt as to the matter of His preaching, for "*when many were gathered together, insomuch that there was no room to receive them, no, not so much as about the door: and He preached the Word unto them*". There was no change of method adopted by the Lord during His course of ministry; no learning by experience of a better plan, His first word of command to His evangelists was, "*as ye go, preach*"; His last, "*Preach the gospel to every creature*". Not an evangelist suggests that at any time during his ministry, he turned aside from preaching to entertain and so attract the people. He was in awful earnestness, and His ministry was like Himself. Had He been less uncompromising, and introduced more of the 'bright and pleasant' element into His mission, He would have been more popular.

Because of the searching nature of Christ's preaching, many of His disciples went back (cf John 6:66), but there was no attempt to increase a diminishing following by resorting to something more pleasant to the flesh. The Lord was not heard to say, 'We must keep up our numbers, so run after those friends, Peter, and tell them we will have a different style of service tomorrow; something very short and attractive, with little if any preaching. Today has been a service for God, but tomorrow we will have a pleasant evening for the people. Tell them they will be sure to enjoy it and have a happy hour. Be quick, Peter; we must get the people

somehow; if not by gospel, then by nonsense'. Christ never reasoned after this manner.

The Lord Jesus pitied sinners, pleaded with them, sighed over them, warned them and wept over them, but never did He seek to amuse them. When the evening shadows of His consecrated life were deepening into the night of death, He reviewed His holy ministry and found comfort and sweet solace in this thought; *"I have given them Thy Word"*. As with the Master, so with His apostles; their teaching is the echo of His. In vain will the epistles be searched to discover any trace of gospel amusement. The call to separation from the world rings in every one.

The early evangelicals had boundless confidence in the power of the gospel, they employed no other means. Anything approaching the worldly fooling of today was conspicuous by its absence. The charge brought against the apostle by the members of the Council was, *"Ye have filled Jerusalem with your doctrine"*. Not much chance of this charge being brought against the church today. The description of their work is *"and daily in the temple, and in every house, they ceased not to teach and to preach Jesus Christ"*. If they ceased not from this, they had no time for arranging entertainment. They gave themselves continually to the 'ministry of the Word'. Scattered by persecution, the early disciples *"went every where preaching the Word"*. Never did they organize some 'pleasant evening' for people who did not believe.

Congregations in those days did not expect anything but the Word of the Lord, as Cornelius said to Peter, *"We all are here present before God, to hear all things that are commanded thee of God"* What more does the Church of Jesus Christ require today?

How the true pattern contrasts to all the nonsense now being perpetrated in the holy name of Christ! May the Lord clear the Church of all the

rubbish that the Devil has imposed upon her and bring her back again to apostolic methods.

The mission of amusement in the Church is the Devil's half-way house to the world. This thing is working rottenness in the Church of God and blasting her service for the King. In the guise of Christianity it is accomplishing Satan's own design. Under the pretence of setting out to reach the world, it is carrying our sons and daughters into the world. Professing to win the world, it is turning the garden of the Lord into a public recreation ground. Cease to amuse, seek to arouse. Shun the clap of the audience, listen for the sobs of the convicted.

Archibald G Brown

If it be said that some are drawn or held in the Church only in these ways, the reply is, that such bring no spiritual good and rarely receive any.

Dr John Hall (New York)

There is nothing so degrading to the Church, and so destructive to its godliness, as this attempt to vie with the world in popular amusements. Churches that sink their spirituality by apparent outward success, bowing down to the world's level, receive the contempt of even the world which they try to please.

Dr Howard Crosby

The providing of amusements for the people is not one of the functions of the Church. As a matter of fact, it may be safely laid down as an unassailable proposition that the Churches which put any form of entertainment on their programme, pay the penalty in a lower spiritual temperature, if not indeed the loss of spiritual power. It can never be

otherwise. The Church's clear duty - as it is also the reason of her existence - is to proclaim the gospel of her Lord and Master Jesus Christ, and to *"teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost"*. From that standard she can never depart without proving unfaithful to her Founder.

The Church of God cannot be tolerant without betraying her trust. To pander to the world is to deny her Lord, and put Him once again to open shame. The Church is a community of believers bonded together on the ground of a common love and loyalty to Jesus Christ, with the desire and purpose to preach His gospel and extend His kingdom. To do that calls for unswerving devotion to His Person and Word; anything that dims the heavenly vision or hinders the onward march of His conquering army must have no place among His loyal subjects.

J.Kennedy Maclean
(Editor of The Life of Faith)

It is the marks of a baby to be everlastingly crying for amusements.
Theodore L.Cuyler

Oh for a faith to abandon utterly these devices of naturalism, and to throw the Church without reserve upon the power of the supernatural! This is a generation bent, as few have been, on reconciling the claims of religion with those of pleasure, and thus solving the problem of having the best of both worlds. Would that our eyes were really open to what is passing! To dissuade Christians from going to the theatre would be very tame advice in these days, when the theatre with rapid strides is pushing itself into the Church. To tell the Christian to *"love not the world, neither the things that are in the world"* would seem a very mild dissuasion, and almost unkind when the world has come to such friendly terms with the

Church that it willingly lends all its machinery and entertainment, art and amusement, to make the gospel more attractive. Our power is in our separateness from the world, not in our affiliation with it

A.J.Gordon.

One particularly disgraceful phase of the general inconsistency of the Christian life which is so harmful to the progress of Christ's cause may be noted - the growing disposition to administer churches as if it was a part of their mission to provide entertainment for the people. Fairs, concerts, comical lectures, oyster suppers, turning the dedicated house of worship into a place of hilarious amusement are fearfully demoralizing to the religious life. They de-spiritualize the people, merge the high sense of obligation into pleasure searching, blotting out that line of demarcation between the Church and the world; this cannot be destroyed without debasing the one and affording scant comfort to the other in its sins. The piety of congregations which tolerate such things has lost the high old Puritan type. They are full of weaklings with itching ears and sensual stomachs, who measure a church by its amusement producing capacity.

R.M.Patterson (Philadelphia)

Preachers could not be expected to run shows and small theatres and succeed in preaching the gospel. There is not a command, allowance or example in all the Holy Scriptures, that makes the Church a merchant, or tells it to pay its way by holding a fair.

The New York Herald

These were voices heard at the beginning of this century. What of conditions in the churches as this twentieth century draws to its close!

Editor

"PREACH THE GOSPEL"

(Mark 10:15)

What is preaching and what is the gospel?

For though I preach the gospel, I have nothing to glory of: for necessity is laid upon me; yea, woe is unto me, if I preach not the gospel" (1 Corinthians 9:16).

This verse of Holy Scripture can pose a number of questions and it is perfectly reasonable to enquire, why preach, what is the gospel and why is it necessary?

When the question 'Why preach?' is asked, then it is necessary firstly to correctly define the word 'preach'. It means 'to publicly declare', 'to expound in a persistent manner', 'to thrust', 'to authoritatively set forward', 'to earnestly proclaim'. However, before examining this issue, the simple answer to the question 'Why preach?' must be given; it is because God has appointed this means to save them that believe (cf Mark 16:15, 1 Corinthians 1:21).

Contrary to this, we live in an age when this approach is not appreciated, indeed it is resented by many. It is argued that to discuss, to dialogue, to debate, to act out and do, is far more effective for by this means many points of view are brought out, horizons are broadened, people are given the opportunity to exercise reason and to work a thing out. To have something thrust upon them is not acceptable in this age of so-called intellectual enlightenment. Others appeal to the arts saying that one of the most effective means of getting into a person's mind is by drama.

Bring together a good cast, artists who can with skill and fervour impersonate another, and act out in a life-like manner past events, or the experiences of other people; and a far greater impression is made on the mind than by preaching.

Music is also thought to be a most vital element in communication, especially if one wants to 'get through' to young people, then it has to be through this means, because they live in a world of 'Beat' and 'Rock'. Large sections of the professing church believe that the only way in which the ear of the young can be gained, is by intermingling snippets of the Bible with beat and heavy metal music, hence so-called 'Christian' discotheques, rock concerts and festivals have come into being. The Church has no Biblical authority to try and communicate Divine truth in this way; it is at variance with that which God has commanded.

The message of the gospel is committed to preachers, not artists, and even in preaching it is not any and every man; it is men specifically gifted and endowed by the Holy Spirit; they are gifts to the Church, they are called of God to authoritatively declare the truth, to thrust forth and earnestly proclaim the gospel.

These man-invented methods so prevalent today are not to be found in Holy Scripture, therefore they are not right. The glorious gospel of the grace of God is not to be communicated in such a bizarre manner. What authority would the Old Testament prophets and heralds have carried if they had gone forth and sung their messages to the people? What if Peter, on the great day of Pentecost, had delivered a few snatches from the Bible to the accompaniment of blaring drums and beat? Or if Paul had leaned against a lamp post in Athens and crooned away some so-called gospel song? Is not the thought almost blasphemous? Yet it is not an unfair comparison.

The servants of Christ were commissioned by the Great Head of the Church to preach. "*Go ye into all the world, and **preach***" (Mark 16:15). That command stands for all time and, states the Holy Spirit through Paul the apostle, it pleases God through the foolishness of **preaching** to save them that believe (cf 1 Corinthians 1:21).

Preaching is the God ordained medium for the communication of His truth. To this some might say that among preachers there is no uniformity; some say this, some say that and some are propounding a host of other things. They all read from the Bible and they all claim that they are right. Why such confusion? **What is the truth?**

It is possible to find a verse of Scripture to support almost anything. Even the Devil quotes Scripture, he did to Christ Himself more than once (cf Matthew 4:4-6). The fact that Satan quoted Scripture in no way makes him a true preacher. A true preacher will not extract a few isolated statements from the Bible and make them absolute, neither will he take a verse out of its context, for by so doing he might completely destroy its correct meaning. A God-sent, Holy Spirit endowed preacher will hold the Word of God entire. He will view it as one faith and one doctrine and declare "*all the counsel of God*" (Acts 20:27). When this is done there **is** no confusion.

What is the gospel? The gospel is the doctrine of the Holy Scriptures and the preacher is to give every aspect of truth due prominence. It is not possible to tell out all the wonders and mysteries of Divine truth in one sermon for it is too vast. Though just one verse may be used as a basis for a discourse, all that is said will perfectly harmonize with all other parts of Holy Writ if correctly dealt with.

It is sad that there are those who claim to be preachers who do not handle the Word of God in this way. Some are not fitted for the work,

others conveniently or deliberately mishandle it by neglecting certain aspects of truth which they purposely avoid, contrary to the example of the apostle Paul when he states, "*For I have not shunned to declare unto you **all** the counsel of God*" (Acts 20:27). The fear of becoming unpopular or upsetting their congregations governs these preachers. Therefore they leave out certain parts of Holy Scripture, throwing out of balance God's infallible truth and consequently what **is** preached can soon become **another gospel** (cf Galatians 1:6), not the true gospel at all. If a man is a faithful preacher, he will preach the true gospel, he will not withhold unpalatable truths, even if he knows this is going to smite the conscience of his hearers. Taking to himself the language of Holy Writ, he will say, "*Woe is unto me if I preach not the gospel*" (1 Corinthians 9:16), I must declare it all and "*Contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints*" (Jude v 3).

When Paul took the gospel to Ephesus he said, "*I kept back nothing that was profitable unto you*" (Acts 20:20); at Corinth he said, "*Necessity is laid upon me*" (1 Corinthians 9:16). He could preach in no other manner than to declare all the truth. To him it was absolutely necessary, it was essential, there was no other way. To preach in any other manner was to engage in rhetoric. It might be highly polished, it might be eloquent, but it would not be true preaching. Writing to Timothy, this faithful preacher says, "*I am ordained a preacher, and an apostle, (I speak the truth in Christ, and lie not;) a teacher of the Gentiles in faith and verity*" (1 Timothy 2:7).

Paul was a man ordained of God (not man); he dare not toy with Divine truth, but sadly such words cannot be used concerning many who claim to be preachers today. Neither is this only applicable to the twentieth century, for it has always been the case, even in apostolic days. John wrote, "*Beloved, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God: because many false prophets are gone out into the world*" (1

John 4:1). False prophets, not true, they did not preach in verity. A man who is burdened for the truth will hold nothing back for he knows the issues which are at stake and like the apostle he inwardly cries, "*Woe is unto me, if I preach not the gospel*" (1 Corinthians 9:16). Here lies the hallmark of a true preacher, one who proclaims the true gospel in the true manner.

Why is such straight preaching necessary? The terse answer is because of man's great need and this accounts for the true preacher's concern, his zeal and his faithfulness; so he addresses himself to his God appointed task to authoritatively set forward the facts as contained in the Word of God.

All men must be made aware of their depravity and fallen nature. In Adam, every member of the human race died spiritually. Every mortal born on earth is born in sin and shapen in iniquity (cf Psalm 51:5). In consequence, all sin and fall short of the glory of God (cf Romans 3:23). Every descendant of Adam is on the broad road which leads to eternal destruction, for all by nature are from the cradle, bound for hell. The true preacher is fully aware of this and necessity is laid upon him to preach it, for it is a vital part of the gospel. He also knows of God's eternal plan, how that God chose unto Himself out of Adam's race an innumerable company of people from every nation under heaven. These were to be redeemed and reconciled unto God. How can this be if all are on the broad road heading for eternal destruction? This is quite a reasonable question for the unbeliever to ask. The answer is to be found in the true gospel and the true servant of God will cover all this in his preaching. The coming of the Redeemer will be explained, the incarnation of the Son of God, how He was born of a virgin and **why** His birth had to be "*on this wise*". The true preacher will tell of the sinless life of Christ, how that He perfectly fulfilled the Law in a vicarious manner in order that His spotless righteousness might be imputed to

every believing sinner. He will speak at length upon the Saviour's death, a death which was substitutionary, that on the cross He was taking the sinner's place, dying for their sins. There the wrath of a holy God fell upon the substitute on account of man's sin, instead of the sinner himself. The glorious resurrection and triumphant ascension will also be boldly proclaimed, for He who went into death and judgment on the sinner's behalf, came out victorious over sin and death and hell and went back to heaven in the power of an endless life, having the keys of hell and of death and is now able to save to the uttermost all that come unto God by Him (cf Hebrews 7:25). Neither will the second advent of Christ and the fearful last great judgment be missing from the preaching of the faithful preacher, for this too is a part of the true gospel.

Having in unmistakable language preached the truth, withholding nothing, the faithful preacher will **apply it**. Having presented the facts, with Divine authority will he address his hearers with such words as, "*Except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish*" (Luke 13:3). He will urge men and women to "*Flee from the wrath to come*" (Matthew 3:7) and prepare to meet their God (cf Amos 4:12). With absolute confidence will he call upon men and women to "*Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ*" (Acts 16:31), telling them that "*Whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord shall be saved*" (Acts 2:21).

The gospel is the greatest subject ever to be introduced to this fallen world, it is the revelation of God to sinful man and the issues are spiritual and eternal. God requires that this most vital, all important truth be communicated to men by the means which He has ordained; public declaration, truth authoritatively set forward and earnestly proclaimed. Hence the Divine command to the Church "***Preach the gospel***".

W.H.Molland

EDITORIAL

Humanism is invariably associated with those who have no inclination toward Christianity, those who in their thinking are materialistic or even atheistic. This is an incorrect assumption. It may startle the reader but nevertheless it is true, that Humanism is to be found in all sections of the church in differing degrees. It is evident in the pulpit by that which is taught, and in the pew by that which is practised. Humanism is man centred, "The attitude of mind which attaches primary importance to man and to his faculties, affairs, temporal aspirations and well being" (Encyclopaedia Britannica 1969, Vol. 11, p.825). Humanism is not absolute, it is open to cultural change, it is an intellectual system which regards man's observations and considered reasoning in a given situation as being the authority. It is a turning from the Holy Commandment delivered (cf 2 Peter 2:21). *"Thus saith the Lord"* is superseded by the maxim of 'I think'. Speaking generally, this is the philosophy of the present day, but the thoughts and reasoning of mortal man, however plausible and convincing, if they are not in accord with Holy Scripture constitute Humanism. Is it then an exaggeration to say that Humanism is found in the present day church? Not only is this the case in christendom at large, but also amongst those who profess to be conservative and orthodox.

The effects and extent of Humanism can be seen in the articles of this current magazine alone, as also in the deep seated traditions which carry no Biblical warrant whatsoever, yet are common place in so many churches. This is to say nothing of other serious moral and spiritual issues which are now so prevalent amongst the professed people of God, consequent upon the breakdown in society. All this is gnawing at the very vitals of true Christianity, yet explained away by the misinterpretation of God's authoritative mandate. We should be greatly concerned that much basic Scriptural teaching and many essential Biblical principles are being sacrificed today on the altar of **'I THINK'**.

"To the Law and to the testimony: if they speak not according to this word it is because there is no light in them" (Isaiah 8:20). A most solemn word for those who would in any way mix this Humanism with their professed faith!