

## CONTENTS

BE ZEALOUS <i>Samuel Ward</i>	2
NEWS OF THE FELLOWSHIP	7
MISSIONARY SUPPORT	8
UNDERSTANDING THE TIMES	11
DIARY	19
HYMNBOOK UPDATE	20
THE DRIFT OF THE TIMES <i>C. H. Spurgeon</i>	22
THE EPILOGUE	27

## BE ZEALOUS

*Sermon preached by Samuel Ward (1577-1639), minister in Ipswich. A review of his sermons appeared Gospel Standard 1997, page 359*

Text: "Be Zealous" (Rev.3.19)

**B**e zealous." This watchword of Christ, if it be not now a word in season, I know not whenever it was, or will be. If God should now send through the earth such surveying angels as Zechariah mentions, chapter 1, could they return any other observation of their travels than this, "The whole world lies in luke warmness"? Zeal hath been little practised, less studied. Zeal is everywhere spoken against; it hath many enemies and few friends. The world can no more abide it than beasts can the elementary fire. O that I had so much zeal as to set forth in its colours, that I might regain the decayed credit of it with the sons of men!

**H**e is earnest, or a zealot, whose affections are passionately disposed; his love is ever fervent, his desires eager, his delights ravishing, his hatred deadly, and his grief deep. This being the nature of zeal in general, Christian zeal differs from carnal and worldly chiefly in its causes and objects. It is a spiritual heat wrought in the heart of man by the Holy Ghost, improving the good affections of love, joy, etc., for the furtherance of God's glory, His Word, His house, His saints, and salvation of souls; directing the contrary of hatred, anger, grief, etc., towards God's enemies, the devil, his angels, sin, the world, with

the lusts thereof. A zealot, like David (Psa. 119), has zeal in every affection. *Love* – "O how I love thy law." *Hatred* – "I hate them with perfect hatred: I count them mine enemies." *Joy* – "Thy testimonies also are my delight." *Grief* – Rivers of waters run down my eyes, because they keep not Thy law." The fervency of the true zealot is in the spirit, not in show; for God, not himself; guided by the word, not by his humours; such a man's worth cannot be set forth with the tongues of men and of angels.

**I**t is good to be zealous in good things, and is it not best in the best? Is there any better than God, or in the kingdom of heaven? Is it fitting whatever we do, to do it with all our might (Eccles. 9. 10)? Only not fitting when we serve God? Is mediocrity in all excellent arts excluded, and only to be admitted in religion? And were it not better to be of no religion than to be cold or lukewarm in any? Is it good to be earnest for a friend, and cold for the Lord of hosts? What aileth the world? Is it afraid, think we, that God can have too much love? Ought not all the springs and brooks of our affection to run into the sea? Who or what can be sufficient for Him, our Maker and Saviour? In other objects fear excess; here no ecstasy is high enough.

**W**hat makes one Christian differ from another in grace, as stars do in glory, but zeal? All believers have a like precious faith; all true Christians have all graces in their seed; but the degrees of them are no way better discerned than by zeal. All Christians are the excellent of the earth; but the zealot surmounteth them all. One of these is worth a thousand others, one doth the work of many; these are the agents for

doing God good service. There is no standing for any of God's enemies before them; they make havoc of their own and others' corruptions, all difficulties are but whetstones of their fortitude. The sluggard saith, "There is a lion in the way." Tell Samson and David so; they will the rather go out to meet them. Tell Nehemiah of Sanballat; he answereth, "Shall such a man as I fear?!" Tell Caleb there are Anakims, and he will say, "Let us go up at once," etc. Let Paul be told that in every city bonds await him; he is not ready for bonds, but for death. Tell Luther of enemies in Worms; he will go. If all tiles of the houses were devils. They that mean to take the kingdom of God by violence provide themselves to go through fire and water and carry their lives in their hands; they say to father and mother, "I know you not," to carnal counsellors, "Get you behind me, Satan." Zeal is as strong as death, hot as the coals of juniper; floods of many waters cannot quench it.

**I**f zeal were not some admirable good, the devil and world would not so hate it. Let Festus be the speaker for the rest, for he speaks what all the rest think; you know his mad objection, and Paul's sober answer in that place, Acts 26.24 and the like, 2Cor.5.13; whether we be mad or sober, it is for God and you. A Christian indeed is never right till he seems to the world to be beside himself; Christ's own kindred were afraid of Him. The apostles are said to be full of new wine, Acts 2; besides, with these the world is mad, they run at Stephen like mad men, Acts 7; Nicodemus, and such as he, never offends them.

**Y**ou know what Ahab laid to the charge of Elijah, with the apology

he made for himself. This is the stale imputation in ages. The apostles are said to be troublers of the whole earth. In the primitive church all contentions were laid to the martyrs. True it is, where zeal is there is opposition, and so consequently troubles. Christ sets this fire on earth, not as an author, but by accident (i.e. sovereignly permitting it). The thief is the author of the fray, though the true man strikes never so many blows; the Ahabs of the world trouble Israel, then complain of Elijah.

**O**, say they, but some discretion would do well. It is true, but take withal Calvin's warning to Melancthon, that he affect not so the name of a moderate man, and listen to such sirens' songs till he lose his zeal. I have observed that which the world miscalls discretion to eat up zeal, as that which they call policy doth wisdom. The fear of overdoing makes most come too short. Of the extremities we should most fear lukewarmness. Rather let your milk boil over than be raw... As this objection will not do, they fall to right down railing. "These Puritans, these singular fellows, unfit for all honest company!" With that which most call Puritanism I deserve to worship God. For singularity, Christ calls for it, and presseth and urgeth it. What singular thing do you? Or what odd thing do you? Shall God's peculiar people do nothing peculiar? I believe none shall ever please Christ till they appear odd, strange and precise men to common sort. Let him that hath a right ear hear what Christ saith to the churches; "*Be zealous*"

**Y**ea, but by what means shall a Christian attain this fire, and maintain it when he hath gotten it? Thou mayest fetch it from heaven by thine own

prayer, as did Elias and the apostles, men of infirmities as well as thyself. Pray constantly and instantly. Sermons are bellows ordained for this purpose. Let the Word dwell richly in thine heart.

**E**xcite thy dullness by spiritual hymns. Read or sing 116<sup>th</sup> Psalm; and if thou be not zealous, every verse will stick in thy throat. Meditation is another help. Behold the Lord God, especially thy Lord Christ, in His glorious titles and majesty. Consider and reason thus with thyself (O man), canst thou tolerate a sluggard in thy work, if thou be of any spirit thyself? And shall He that is in all spirit (for whom the angels are slow and cold enough) take pleasure in thy drowsy and heavy service? Evan to Judas He saith, "That thou doest, do quickly"; so odious is dullness unto Him.

**B**ehold Him as one that seeth thee and knoweth thy works. Behold Him as the beginning of creatures, especially of the new creature. O what love hath He showed thee in redemption! Out of what misery into what happiness, by what price, to what end, but that thou shouldst be zealous of good works. Behold Him as a speedy and royal rewarder of His followers. Take thyself into paradise, represent to thyself thy crown, thy throne, thy white robes. Look upon these, and faint if thou canst.

**B**ehold, also, He is a consuming fire, a jealous God, hating lukewarmness, not only destroying Sodom with fire and brimstone, and providing Tophet for His enemies, but awakening also His drowsy servants by judgments (as Absalom Joab, by firing his corn,) His Israelites by fiery serpents. Whom he loveth He chasteneth, and

keepeth them in the furnace of fiery trials, till they come to their right temper. He standeth and knocketh. If nothing will arouse us, a time will come when Heaven and earth shall burn with fire, unquenchable. We, therefore, that know the terror of that day, what manner of persons ought we to be?

**F**rom God turn thine eyes unto man; set before thee the pillar and cloud of fiery examples, that have led us the way into Canaan. The stories of the Scriptures, the lives of the fathers, the acts and monuments of the church, have special virtue for this effect. If thou canst meet with any living examples, follow them, as they follow Christ, and frequent their company. If thou findest none, let the coldness of the times heat thee, as frosts do fire. Let every indignation make thee zealous, as the ignorance of the monks made Erasmus studious. One way to be rich in times of dearth is to engross a rare commodity, such as zeal is. Now, if ever "they have destroyed Thy law," it is now high time to be zealous.... Consider and emulate the children of this generation, to see how eager every Demas is for worldly promotion. It angered Demosthenes to see a smith earlier at his anvil than he was at his desk.

**B**ut here methinks I hear the lukewarm worldling of our times fume and chafe, and ask what needs all this ado for zeal, as if all God's people were not zealous enough. Such as think they are, or can be zealous enough, need no other conviction to be poor, blind, naked, wretched and pitiful Laodiceans. Fire is ever climbing and aspiring higher; zeal is ever aiming at that which is before; carried toward perfection;

thinking meanly of that which is past, and already attained, condemning his unprofitable service, as Calvin in his last will; this rules tries full conceited Christians.

“**W**hat would you have us to do? We profess, attend church, hear sermons, as Christians ought to do.” To such God may well say, let us have some of this zeal at home and in private. God respects the devotions of those whose families, closets, fields, beds, walks to testify of their worship, as well as churches.

“**W**e would have you know that we are such as have prayers said or read in our families and household; or else we say some to ourselves at our lying down and uprising; and what more than that is needed?” First, know that zeal knows no such unmannerly courses to slubber over a few prayers, while you are dressing or undressing yourselves; as most do, half asleep half awake. Know further, that such as hold only a certain course of daily duties, as mill-horses their round, out of custom or form, are far from that mettle which is ever going forward, growing from strength to strength, and instant in duties, in season, out of season; and this says hard to lazy Christians.

“**M**ay not we go far on the right hand?” It is true; but liberality fears covetousness and niggardness more a great deal than prodigality; so does zeal, lukewarmness, and coldness more than too much heat and forwardness; the defect is more opposite and dangerous to some virtues than the excess.

“**T**here are but few such, no, not of the better sort you speak of.” Grant there be any, and zealous

emulation seeks the highest examples. He that hath true zeal, will strive to purge himself, as Christ is pure.

“**W**ill you have us run before our neighbours, or live without company?” Cowards stand and look who goes first; soldiers of courage will cast lots for the onset and fore-rank, for desperate services and single combats.

“**S**ome indeed care not whom they offend, they are so harsh and fiery.” Will true Christianity allow us to bear with any sin? Can hot iron choose but hiss if cold water be cast on it? Can a righteous soul choose but vex itself at evil? Such persons as can listen to profane and filthy speeches show what mettle they have for the Lord of hosts.

“**A**ll are not by nature of so hot disposition or so fiery-spirited as others.” If there be such a dull, phlegmatic creature as hath no life or spirit in anything he goes about, or whom nothing will move; he may plead temperament; and yet grace is above nature. But the best way is, see every man compare his devotion in matters of God with his spirits and mettle in other affairs, wherein his element or delight lies. If the one equal not the other, the fault is not in nature: the oldest man hath memory enough for his money, and the coldest constitution heat enough where it likes.

“**W**ell, our hearts may be good as the best, though we cannot show it.” Fire cannot be long smothered, it will either find a vent or go out; zeal will either find word or deed to express itself withal.

“**A**ll have not so much leisure to spend so much time and study about matters of religion; they have

somewhat else to do.” There are indeed many vanities which distract and divide the mind of worldlings; but zeal counts one thing needful, to which it makes all other stand by. Is there any so good a husband of his time that will not steal some hour for his pleasure, that cannot spare his God and his soul half an hour, morning and evening? If thou beest not a vain and willing deceiver of thyself and others, deal honestly and plainly with thy soul, try thyself by these few rules; and if thou judgest thyself to come short of them, amend and “*be zealous.*”

**T**he Spirit, knowing that which is spoken to all to be in effect as spoken to none, directs that this message be addressed particularly to the angels, that is ministers, of the churches.... As in the time of the Old Testament, the custody of the fire and light was the charge of the priest, so here I observe Christ to lay it upon His ministers, interpreting His rule by His practice: “Tell the church, tell the angel of the church.” Implying that they should exceed as far the people as angels do men, and that He will reckon with them for the religion of the people, because cold ministers make bold sinners.

**W**e therefore, brethren, upon whom it lies to keep life and heat in the devotion of the world, to consume the dross of heresies that have fallen into the sink of our times; we that are to make ready our people for the second coming of Christ, is the spirit of Eli, think we, sufficient for us? What manner of person ought we to be, burning in spirit, fervent in prayer, thundering in preaching, shining in life and conversation? Why is it then, my brethren, that some of us pray so rarely and so coldly in private (the

evils of our time will not out by frequent fasting and fervent prayer), in public so briefly, so perfunctorily and feebly that we scarce have any witnesses of what we say? Do we love Christ more than ordinary? Would we give proof of our treble love to Him? Let us, then, feed His flock with a treble zeal, expressed in prayer, preaching and living. Let us make it appear to the consciences of all that the top of our ambition is God’s glory, and that we prefer the winning of souls to the winning of the world.

**C**hiefly mine affections burn within me for the good of mine own nation. For I must bear it record, it hath knowledge, I would I could say according to zeal. Where is it in divers places of the land to be seen? I had almost said, in my haste and heat, there is none that hath zeal, no, not one, there is no courage for the truth; but that I remember that Elijah was checked for overshooting himself in his too short and quick computation. I hope the Lord hath His fifties amongst us, though but thin sown in comparison of the swarms of church-papists, of profane atheists, key-cold worldlings and lukewarm professors.

**D**o we think He will ever tolerate us, in the temper we are in? What is it but a state of neutrality, indifferency, or such mediocrity as will just serve the time, or stand with reputation of neighbours? But behold, He stands at the door and knocks, by plagues, by the hammer of dearths, discontents, fires, inundations, especially by the Word; His locks are wet with waiting. He hath indeed brooked and borne us a long time. O, before He shakes off the dust of His feet against us, and turn to some other

nation more worthy, let us open the door, that He may come in and sup with us.

The Lord gives us not only understanding, but zeal in all things; He baptizes us with fire; He breathes on us, and inspires into us the Spirit of life and power. So shall we run the ways of His commandments.

### News of the Fellowship

The funeral service of Mrs Shirley Williams, sister of Mrs Margaret Protheroe, took place at Peniel Green on Friday 2nd March. Many friends assembled in the chapel to “pay their respects” and to hear the words of Gospel consolation for a sinful world. During her illness the church prayed bringing her often to the Throne of Grace. Mr Pfeiffer was also able to read the scriptures with her and pray.

It was a joy to receive Mr Graham and Mrs Peggy Nicholas into Church Membership. They had been worshipping regularly with us for some time and we are thankful that they have taken this important step to formally commit themselves to the work. May we receive many more “new recruits” for King Jesus.

It has been encouraging to have the Rev. Dafydd Morris with us at our prayer meetings and regular updates of his work. In the Protestant Truth Magazine he writes:

*“Terminating the pastorate at Carmarthen on January 31st and beginning P.T.S. Work on February 1st, I have already received many encouragements in the form of requests*

*to speak. My diary is slowly filling with Lord’s Days and mid-week bookings.*

*During February, I took the mid-week meetings in Narberth Baptist Church for my colleague the Rev. Chris Rees. This was in order to relieve him of his heavy work-load sustained over the last 13 years of his pastorate. Chris is involved with the reformation of the church and with evangelism in the area surrounding Narberth including Whitland. Both the Rev. Gareth Edwards of Haverfordwest and I co-operate with Chris in holding weekly evangelistic services in Whitland where there is no other gospel witness at all.*

*Apart from Lord’s Days bookings, in the near future I shall (DV) be speaking on subjects such as the 1859 revival in Wales, and Seth Joshua and bold evangelism. Doing my share of the preaching at Whitland, the intention is to speak on the seven words of our Lord from the cross, leading up to Easter. We very much need the unction of the Spirit on this venture.”*

On the Lord’s Day 4th March, Mr. Pfeiffer preached at Dudley Baptist Church in the West Midlands and we were served by our former pastor Rev. R. B. Higham. On Good Friday evening the minister of Heath Evangelical Church, Cardiff, the Rev. Wyn Hughes preached for us. He expounded the text “For this purpose the son of God was manifested, that he might destroy the works of the devil”. On the Lord’s Day 15th April Mr. Pfeiffer preached at the Strict Baptist Church in Wattisham, Suffolk and the Rev. Steven Holland of West Houghton preached for us. We are thankful that our pulpit is ably supplied by faithful men.

It was good to hear again about the work of the Trinitarian Bible Society at our Prayer Meeting on Wednesday 16th May. Mr Jammie Norman, who was converted at Coedpoeth, is the Welsh T. B. S. Representative.

It is with thankfulness that we record the progress of those who have had major surgery. Mr Don Ham returned home six days after heart surgery. Mrs Jane Hughes has had the "all clear" and returned to worship services at the beginning of May. We are also thankful for the way the Lord has undertaken for Mrs Glenys Jones. We continue to remember Mr Jim Cumming who has ongoing health issues. We also remember our friend Mr Andrew Boorman who has to face further surgery in Basingstoke.

Mr Lyn and Mrs Pam Hopkins wish to acknowledge the Lord's goodness in the recovery of their daughter's health with the following message:

*Dear Rev. Pfeiffer, Brothers and Sisters,*

*My husband and I would like to thank you all for your prayers and concern shown recently for Alyson. I am sure that I can pass on her thanks, though she is not aware as yet that I am writing to you.*

*Her illness was rather sudden and worrying and her condition should not have deteriorated that far. I believe the Devil had a grip on her life but he underestimated the power of our Lord and saviour!*

*Although Alyson's church membership has lapsed, I am happy to say that her faith is still strong. During her stay in hospital she felt the presence of her Lord.*

*We are all aware of God's promise that He will never leave us or forsake us. We need to trust at all times and BELIEVE in*

*Him. Thankfully, Alyson is well on the way to a full recovery both in spirit and body. It has taken this illness to prove the power of God. 'He works in mysterious ways his wonders to perform'.*

*Yours in Christ*

*Pam and Lyn.*

When we pray in His name,

"Thy will be done"

The burdens that seemed too

Heavy to bear

Are lifted away on

The wings of prayer.

## MISSIONARY SUPPORT

One tenth of the church income has been earmarked for missionary work at home and overseas; this is projected to be about £3,500 for the coming year. With this we will seek to support the following individuals: Antonio De Noia (Italy), Andrew Birch (Spain), Dawid Koziol (Poland) and destitute believers in Eastern Europe via Mrs Marjorie Norris. Our support for organisations will include: The Trinitarian Bible Society, Children For Jesus (Sri Lanka ), The Protestant Alliance and The Protestant Truth Society. We will also seek to be open to missionary needs when they arise.

## Letter from Tony & Barbara Hynes

Dear friends,

Last Sunday we felt rebuked for our slowness to keep you informed when a Welsh couple who were at the service informed us that their church has been praying for us for sixteen years and they

wanted to see the work for themselves! They are not the only ones who persevere and we are deeply grateful for all such intercessors. Many apologies for our long silence.

We are grateful for the number of unconverted who come to the Sunday service but long to see them show more spiritual interest. Last Sunday twenty stayed for the church meal of whom only seven were church members. Happily several of the visitors were mature Christians who could witness to the unconverted in French and English! Our lack of numbers and dispersal over the county has so far prevented us from beginning the Tuesday evening outreach. We waited for longer days but already some retired members are away on holiday and others will be away in June. Michel Rico is also in the north visiting churches for his support.

It was encouraging to see Massako, the Japanese lady, bring her family to one service and then last Sunday a Brit who lives 100 yards from our meeting-place. English friends who live at Mazamet have regular correspondence with Massako by email.

Another encouragement was when Yelena announced that the Belarus embassy had at last sent the paper which she had requested many months ago. The church had been praying all this time. This answer will encourage us to persevere for the many other as yet unanswered prayers which express our desire that God should be glorified in the families of those connected with the church.

We were very concerned when Danièle, who seemed to be making steady spiritual progress towards joining

the church, became depressed through the sexual harassment of a neighbour who had been a good friend over many years. She was deeply troubled and spent a month in a home where members were able to visit her. We praise God that she has remained faithful and renewed her links with the church. We plan to meet in Alzonne, her village, regularly and invite others for a Bible study.

We may be able to take Jean Calls with us as we go through his village to get to Alzonne. Jean is over 80 and has only been to one service a few years ago but he has been reading a Good Seed calendar and his Bible for several years, and our monthly church bulletin. Recently his prostate cancer problems have returned so he wrote to me from hospital. He spends most of his time reading Scripture and his true faith shines increasingly brightly through the useless hotchpotch of Romanism which he is progressively casting off.

We have had less contact with Joel, the gypsy pastor, because of the changes in their church programme. But, in a wonderful answer to prayer, they will soon have the use of a meeting-place (instead of their lounge) in a building which a Christian is converting in the centre of Lézignan. We look forward to joining them soon for the opening service.

Some time ago we mentioned a soldier, Jean-Mathieu, who came to several Bible studies deeply distressed by life in the army. We saw nothing of him for several weeks as he was in Kosovo then Peter & Rebecca met him walking around the medieval cité. He was much better and had his Bible with him. He explained that his duties prevent him coming to our

Bible study and he will soon be off on a mission in Africa. He has arranged to receive the monthly bulletin by email and when he has a postal address we will be able to send more literature. We have recently discovered two French evangelical websites which are not pentecostal and seem 100% recommendable which may help people in similar situations as Jean-Mathieu.

Other people who come regularly seem to make no spiritual progress; Jean-Louis is still pursuing abstruse themes; Patricia is too occupied with her dogs to read the Scriptures; Katia is ageing and her health is deteriorating; Ralph comes when there is a church meal...

Our two students, Max from Africa, and Alison, from Cheltenham, seem to grow 'in fits and starts'. It is not easy for older Christians to be in a small isolated church as ours and it's even more difficult for these young Christians. Max has a place in Teesside University for September and Alison will be leaving us in July to continue her studies at Oxford in autumn.

We are encouraged to see the perseverance of Pascal after Valerie divorced him. Their two daughters, Lena & Caulyn, seem much happier when they come to the Sunday service and stay for the meal. Pascal is preparing the house for the new owners who move in next week and has begun to find some pleasure in preparing a council flat for when he has the girls with him. Pray that God would still be glorified in that family and that Pascal shall obtain regular employment.

We would also appreciate prayer for our 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary services on June 3<sup>rd</sup> when Samuel Boada, pastor of a

baptist church at Toulouse, will preach for us in the morning and afternoon. We make a special effort to invite folk for these meetings and to the midday meal. Pray for Samuel and all the other preparations.

For a week in August (21-28) we plan to welcome a Missions Vacances team who will not operate on Carcassonne plage (total length 100 yards) but in Place Carnot – the central square with several cafés near the fountains 100m from our church. Pray for us as we seek wisdom concerning the programme of activities. Praise God that the Gypsy church has agreed to let us use the flat above their church for the male members of the MV team. Pray for God's blessing upon the various evangelistic efforts made in these summer months.

We would also ask for prayer for the future of the work here. Our son, Peter, contributes a lot to the work at the market and occasionally preaching, but he is often away because of his work. Edouard & Géraldine hope to move nearer to Carcassonne – at present they are 80 km away – but they have health problems. We are grateful for the good health we enjoy and hope to be able to continue in active service for some time to come but there is much more that could be done.

We do thank you for your prayers and pray that you may know God's rich blessing in your families and respective churches so that we shall live 'to the praise of the glory of his grace'.

Warm greetings in our risen Saviour,  
Tony & Barbara

# UNDERSTANDING THE TIMES

**And of the children of Issachar, which were men that had understanding of the times, to know what Israel ought to do (2 Chronicles 12:32).**

*J.P. Thackway*

*The substance of the first message preached at the Bible League meetings in March 2003.*

This verse comes in a chapter that chronicles a crucial period in the life of David. It lists the groups of Israelites who joined him at different times, before and after the death of Saul. These “men of Issachar” were among them, and they helped to make David king over all the tribes of Israel.

The Issacharites were noted for their wisdom. They had “understanding of the times,” that is, they were astute and perceptive. They could see how things were going, that it was now the right time to join David. Moreover, their discernment was practical: “to know what Israel ought *to do*.” It should be so with Christian people also: we need to understand the times in which *we* live, that we might know how best to serve our Lord - of whom David is a type - and our own generation.

If we would understand our times, we need to appreciate present conditions. Let us, then, consider our modern society, and the church in it, and how things came to be as they are. Understanding this can help us know how we should live for Christ and serve Him in our day.

What are these times in which we live and witness? And what is our special responsibility re them? These are times in which two revolutions have happened,

## **1. Times in which a *moral* revolution has taken place.**

This has happened throughout the last fifty years of our nation’s history. During the Queen’s Golden Jubilee celebrations, much was made of the difference between conditions in 1953 compared with 2003. Such moral considerations are vital if we are to understand what has happened during the reign of just one queen.

It has to do with national righteousness. Being fallen, society needs laws to restrain wickedness and define right conduct. However, such laws must come from outside, because fallen man is biased toward self and sin. He cannot be trusted to legislate for himself. But where is this to come from? The basis of “the law of the land” must be biblical law - the Ten Commandments. It is God’s will that these underlie the statute books of nations.

This is related to the God-given role of civil rulers. In Romans 13:1-4 they are “ordained of God” and each is called “a minister of God ... for good, and ... a revenger to execute wrath upon him that doeth evil.” 1 Peter 2:14 says their charge is “for the punishment of evildoers, and for the praise of them that do well.” They are called “gods” in Psalm 82:6 because they do God’s work, making good laws and punishing men for disobedience. However, this can only be if society’s laws are derived from the Moral Law. That must be the source of human law for society.

Scripture shows this is so, because God judged even heathen nations for what were breaches of His Law. He indicts Nineveh, the capital of Assyria, like this in Nahum 3:1-4. Notice here, their sins are defined from the Ten Commandments: the 6th (“bloody city”), the 9th (“lies”), and the 8th (“robbery”) are in verse 1; and verse 4 highlights the 7th, 1st and 5th. Conversely, nations are blessed when their societies are ordered according to God’s Law, for Prov.14:34 says, “Righteousness exalteth a nation: (not *the* nation, Israel, but *a* nation - any nation) but sin is a reproach to any people.” When the state fears the God of heaven and heeds His laws like this, it will be blessed. When it does not, it degenerates and sinks into shame.

Our own United Kingdom is a landmark example of this.

1] Historically, God’s Law has shaped our statute book.

In Anglo-Saxon times, King Alfred the Great laid an important foundation. He appended to his laws a free translation of the Ten Commandments and an abridgment of the enactments of Exodus chapters 21-23. Alfred took his responsibilities as a Christian ruler seriously, and the spiritual welfare of his subjects was as important to him as their protection from Scandinavian pagans. Similar developments took place under Henry II.

The later history of Britain is chequered, yet by Victorian times we were an avowedly Christian nation. Material prosperity followed the Protestant work ethic. By 1856 Great Britain was the richest country in the world, with no rivals in commerce or industry. Through colonial expansion, it had an empire that covered 1/3 of the globe and 1/4 of mankind. On the back of this rode the great missionary movement of the 19th century, bringing Gospel light and civilization to millions. Although there was a darker side to Victorian society at home, *officially* black was called black, and white was called white. Victorian Britain was characterised by reverence for God, Sunday observance, hard work, thrift, honesty, moral decency, respect for others and their property, and the sanctity of life. So that it could have been said, “Surely this great nation is a wise and understanding people” (Deuteronomy 4:6).

2] The last forty or fifty years have seen the near-abandonment of this.

Until around the middle of the 20th century, the general belief was that our laws and values stem from our Christian history. It was not always liked; various movements had tried to change it. Nevertheless, this biblical heritage was acknowledged and largely accepted. However, by the 1960s the ethos was violently challenged. Britain experienced a widespread mood of change. Much of this centred on younger people, who had begun to develop their own tastes in fashion, music and moral lifestyle. A separate identity, the rebellious “youth culture,” led to the weakening of parental authority. This generation, with its own agenda, did not bode well for the future.

The driving force behind the change, however, was the activity of adults. Playwrights, authors, designers, celebrities and the media attacked the conventions of the past. Every moral standard and social convention was ridiculed. On the surface, it seemed that the “angry young men” voiced a post-war disillusionment with conventional society. In reality, behind this revolt lay a militantly secular view of things, the logical conclusion of the evolutionary worldview.

The 1960s saw a historic shift of belief. No longer did men see our country’s laws as being of divine appointment, based on God’s law, and therefore fixed. Rather, they were merely of human appointment, based upon “the will of the people.” Therefore, they could - and needed to be - changed. British society went from absolute to relative, and throughout those heady days we were to hear phrases like “The Permissive Society” and “The New Morality.” It was a systematic repudiation of one biblical law after another.

Tragically, Parliament caught the new mood, and “the powers that be” re-legislated the nation’s moral standards. Here is the tally, together with the relevant divine commandments they abandoned.

1960 legalising of high street betting shops (10th Commandment).

1965 abolition of capital punishment for murder (6th Commandment).

1967 abortion legalised (6th Commandment).

1967 sodomy de-criminalised for consenting adults 21 and over. 1994 down to 18, now down to 16 (7th Commandment, also 6th).

1968 Theatres Act, stage censorship abolished (many commandments).

1969 Divorce Reform Act (7th Commandment).

1969 Curbs on Sunday sports, theatres, and dancing lifted (4th Commandment).

In the three decades since, we have see a further rash of legislation, including,

1993 Partial deregulation of Sunday trading (4th Commandment).

1994 Introduction of the National Lottery (10th Commandment).

In all, since the last war, more than 60 pieces of Bible-based legislation have gone, touching about 400 places in Scripture. The restraints are off, in open defiance of heaven. “No absolutes!” is the cry, together with “morality is what you make it.” The true significance of this is well summed up by David Samuel: “When a law is passed by Parliament and put upon the statute book it can still be lawlessness when it is judged by that higher law - the Law of God. Yet we have witnessed this kind of thing repeatedly in recent years ... Iniquity, lawlessness, in our society today is no longer merely the aberration of the individual, but it is the structured, codified and deliberate lawlessness of society itself.”

Roy Jenkins, the 1960s Labour Home Secretary, said, “The permissive society is a civilized society.” I wonder if before his death at 82 this year, he reflected upon those words! We would have like to have asked Lord Jenkins if he thought that gun crime, child criminals, live-in boyfriend child abuse, child pornography, murder and body parts in bin bags, soaring rape statistics, teenage pregnancies, gambling debt, drunkenness, VD and AIDS, 1.7 billion pounds lost to shops by shoplifting each year amount to “a civilized society”? We only break *ourselves* when we break God’s Commandments.

3] In this climate we have to live and witness as Christians.

No longer is our society leavened by God-fearing respect for His commandments, a clear sense of right and wrong, and just views of crime and punishment. Now, every man does that which is right in his own eyes. “Therefore the law is slacked, and judgment doth never go forth: for the wicked doth compass about the righteous; therefore wrong judgment proceedeth” (Habakkuk 1:4).

All this has consequences for what we believe, and try to do in the spread of the Gospel. Concepts like a holy God, conviction of sin, judgment, salvation, divine grace, upright living, and absolute standards are affected by the absence of a biblical worldview. Each new generation, increasingly ignorant of these matters, leaves society more secular, hedonistic, amoral and apathetic. It makes a hearing for the Gospel that much harder. And it makes us sympathise with Samuel Rutherford’s words, “I find it hard to be a Christian.” The recent series on Worldliness showed how easily we could be cowed and rendered ineffectual by these conditions.

## **2. Times in which a *spiritual* revolution has taken place**

Logically, this should have come first, because the state of the church usually determines what society will be like. However, I put it in this order because we are seeing today *the world affecting the church* – and to an alarming degree.

We can sum it up by a loss of the fear of God. It belongs to the previous point: “Fear God and keep his commandments” (Ecclesiastes 12:13). This fear is a healthy, restraining quality. It is a sense of God, a tender conscience, a recognition of

accountability. It morally sensitises people. In unbelievers, it is “Common Grace,” and has historically made our nation distinguished for so much that is good and great. In believers, it is a covenant blessing, “I will make an everlasting covenant with them, that I will not turn away from them, to do them good; but I will put my fear in their hearts, that they shall not depart from me” (Jeremiah.32:40). Godly fear has been defined as the believer reckoning “the smile of God his greatest delight, and the frown of God his greatest dread.”

Now, where would we expect to witness the fear of God most? Surely, in the place where we are most conscious of God’s holy presence: the Christian assembly. Back in 1950s and early ‘60s, this largely characterised the worship and demeanour of Christian churches. Perhaps this was not always biblically worked-out. Yet, Christians never thought of being casual and irreverent in church, far less of worshipping God in any other way than seemed according to the Bible. This was due to a healthy sense of what is pleasing to God: godly fear.

Tragically, this ethos has all but disappeared in our day. And we have to go back to the same decade, the 1960s, to see why. It was then that the Charismatic Movement hit the church scene, with its breaking free of God-fearing, biblically-disciplined worship. Multiple musical instruments, catchy songs, emphasis on emotions, man-centred and experience-centred praise were declared evidences of “the Spirit.” Anything else needed “liberating.”

What really happened was this: the *moral* revolution of the 1960s was paralleled by a *spiritual* revolution. “The Swinging Sixties” in the land entered the house of God. What the permissive society did for lifestyle *outside* the church, the Charismatic Movement did for worship and life *inside* the church. Far from being the Holy Spirit, it was simply the spirit of the age.

It is interesting to look back at what evangelicalism made of this phenomenon.

a) For a time, traditional evangelicals and charismatics remained separate. After all, there was a parallel movement in Romanism, with Roman Catholics “speaking in tongues.” Anglo-catholic churches also received the “gifts.” Ecumenism had a fillip from the Charismatic Movement because “the baptism in the Spirit” became the uniting experience for those in the apostate denominations.

b) As time went by, however, the movement began to spread beyond its borders. Anglican churches and house groups tended to be the confines at first. However, when Brethren assemblies, FIEC-type churches and other respectable bodies succumbed, this gave more credibility to the charismatic position.

c) Churches of Reformed persuasion, however, still gave it a wide berth.

Their Reformation heritage ensured they evaluated this movement according to the Scriptures. Doing so, they found it wanting (Isaiah 8:20). Cessationist convictions safeguarded many assemblies at that time.

d] Then, in the 1980s, even Reformed churches began to move.

We began to hear of strange things happening in church services, such as the introduction of the new worship songs and multiple musical instruments. Those once known for their adherence to the Reformed faith were openly uniting their heritage with elements from the charismatic movement. Before long the label “Reformed Charismatic” was coined.

e] Now, in our day, we witness a capitulation.

While many reformed churches still reject charismatic teaching, they nonetheless are affected by its mindset. Not scripture but other factors control their thinking. A defining issue is the need of the times. “If we are to bring people from outside under the Gospel,” so runs the reasoning, “we must adjust our services to try to accommodate them. We must be more relaxed, informal and less off-putting. We should include the kinds of things to which the world can relate: musical instruments, modern worship songs, interaction, fun, easy-to-understand-Bible translations.”

Now, what is this philosophy? Nothing but *charismatic assumptions*. Not its teaching, admittedly, but its approach to worship and evangelism. This is the shift that has taken place in our times. Churches exist where reformed (even cessationist) preaching is heard from the pulpit, and yet charismatic-influenced worship goes on in the pew. This is implicit in the *Praise!* hymn book, where 34 songs are by Graham Kendrick, an ecumenist and charismatic, and many others are of the same ilk. A revision of *Christian Hymns* is under way, and, according to a press release, material by Graham Kendrick will be included in that. This movement, or its mindset, has travelled further than we are prepared to acknowledge.

Yet, either the charismatic movement is erroneous delusion (at best of the flesh, at worst of the devil) – or it is biblically sound. It cannot be both. If it is erroneous delusion, we should have none of it (“have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove them” Ephesians 5:11) – if it is biblically sound, we should have all of it (“Prove all things; hold fast that which is good” 1 Thessalonians 5:21). Mixing and matching is leading to confusion, and concessions to the world in the church.

We need to say this loudly and clearly: judged by biblical and historic standards, charismatic worship is worldly worship. It has the hallmarks of the way the world behaves: sensual and undisciplined, feelings and fun, mind-neutralised and satisfaction-centred. If the average worldling could choose how he would like to worship, charismatic style worship would be it. What kind of witness to outsiders is

it then, when they find worship styles redolent of their own degenerate culture? How does this point them to divine and heavenly things? In the 19th century, Rabbi Duncan once said, “Conformity to the world is one of the most besetting sins of the professing church at the present day.” One can only imagine how aghast he would be in the 21st Century.

Here, surely, is the bottom line for all biblical worship: “God is greatly to be feared in the assembly of the saints, and to be had in reverence of all them that are about him” (Psalm 89:7) And also for the effect our worship should have upon unconverted visitors: “And thus are the secrets of his heart made manifest; and so falling down on his face he will worship God, and report that God is in you of a truth” (1 Corinthians 14:25 cf Isaiah 45:14).

Our times, then, are those of a revolution in the moral and spiritual realm. “Revolution” implies upheaval and change, and this is certainly what has happened. We live and serve as Christians in a climate where biblical norms have almost disappeared from society and the church. The spirit of pragmatism and willingness to go with the times is everywhere. So few with convictions and prepared to make a stand and give unflinching leadership.

“Understanding the times” in which we live, we must now consider what we should “do.”

a] Let us remember God’s sovereignty in this.

It is no accident that we find ourselves here in our day. This is what He has appointed for us. We could have been favoured to live in Reformation times, Puritan times, during the 18th Century awakening, in the Victorian era or in better times more recently. However, the Lord has chosen us for now. We must accept this calling, for are we not “come to the kingdom for such a time as this?” (Esther 4:14).

b] Let us not be guilty of an unhealthy relationship with the past.

We can learn from the centuries gone by, but we must not live in them. The danger is of making depressing comparisons. This is what the returned exiles did when the foundation for the second temple was laid. Ezra.3:12,13 tells us that, while the younger generation rejoiced at this new beginning, the older ones could just remember Solomon’s temple, and wept to see the difference. That put a damper on the occasion, and was not to God’s glory. Haggai 2:1-5 addresses the same problem.

Older Christians, who can look back to better days, must be careful not to discourage those who seek to be believably optimistic. Ecclesiastes 7:10 warns us, “Say not thou, What is the cause that the former days were better than these? for thou dost not enquire wisely concerning this.” We are not so much to bemoan the changes, but remember that the past represents what God *did* - and can do again.

c] Let us remember that Scripture is sufficient.

When God inspired it, He had all the features of our times in mind: “For whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning, that we through patience and comfort of the scriptures might have hope” (Romans 15:4). There is no modern issue or problem that eludes the wisdom of God in His word.

d] Let us remember that times have been very bad before.

Church history tends to go in peaks and troughs. It is a graph of highs and lows. Some periods in the Old Testament have been dark, long and very depressing: for instance the Judges, the Kings, the time prior to the coming of our Lord, the Middle Ages, the early 18th century, etc. Throughout those times the church has suffered obscurity, persecution, discouragement - yet the Lord appeared and revived His work. Though a remnant, the Lord preserved His church and fulfilled His work in and through her.

e] Let us not despise what the Lord *is* doing today.

God through the prophet says, “For who hath despised the day of small things?” (Zechariah 4:10). This is in the form of a question to challenge our attitude, which is more of a problem than the smallness of God’s work. Even though it is advancing by small steps these days, it *is* advancing. Let us give ourselves to it with all our hearts. Better to have what is small and *real*, than what seems greater but is not of God.

f] Let us remember that *quality*, not quantity, will count in the Day of Christ.

Paul in 1 Corinthians 3:11-15 likens our works to either “gold, silver, precious stones” or “wood, hay, stubble.” The fiery scrutiny (Revelation 1:14) of God’s Son will manifest the nature of these when we stand before Him. Faithfulness is what counts and will pass the test, securing a gracious reward. Compromise and disobedience will be burned up, and will lose believers the full reward they might have had (2 John 8). In the light of this, what can matter more than doing God’s work in God’s way? Let our zeal for truth and the furtherance of the gospel only run in biblical channels.

g] Let us keep the Faith.

It is not only our generation that needs the faith kept entire, but also the generations to come. What is lost now cannot easily be recovered; but what is maintained can be built upon in the future. If the time comes when the Lord is pleased to revive His work, our contribution will count.

May the Lord thus help us to understand our times, like Issachar did, that we might do the will of God, serve our generation, and leave behind us a blessing forever.

## Diary

### Lord's Days:

#### June

3rd	–	Pastor	–	Communion - p.m
10th	–	Pastor		
17th	–	Pastor	–	Communion -a.m
24th	–	Pastor		

#### July

1st	–	Pastor	–	Communion - p.m
8th	–	Pastor		
15th	–	Pastor	–	Communion - a.m
22nd	–	Pastor		
29th	–	Pastor		

#### August

5th	–	Rev. H. Clement	–	Communion - p.m
12th	–	Rev. D. P. Morris		
20th	–	Rev. R. B. Higham	–	Communion - a.m
27th	–	Pastor		

### Pastor's Arrangements for Summer:

Holiday, Sicily, Monday 30th July - Thursday 9th August

Heath Children's Camp, Saturday 11th August - Saturday 18th August

Arrives home Thursday 23rd August

### Dates to note:

Friday 29th June 6.30pm	Church Fellowship Barbeque at Manse Preacher Rev. D. P. Morris
Friday 6th July	Young Explorers and Youth visit to Beach
Friday 31st August	Church Fellowship Outing to Bristol Sites connected with George Müller and William Wilberforce (see Mr. Edward Williams for details)

### Forthcoming:

Saturday 8th September	Preaching Service, Rev. Maurice Roberts Inverness
Saturday 24th November	Church Fellowship Lunch, Glyn Clydach Hotel (see Mr. Edward Williams for details)

**Christian Worship - A New Hymnbook  
upholding traditional values of reverent praise**

**Why another new hymnbook?**

For many years evangelicals agreed that the worship of God is a unique spiritual exercise, unlike any other human activity. They believed that the essential seriousness of the gospel required every part of worship to be quite distinct from the frivolity of a worldly entertainment culture.

More recently this traditional aversion to combining the sacred and the profane has been largely set aside. As a result, the sung praise of God has changed. The main emphasis is no longer on hymns that reinforce solid doctrinal truth. Many new worship songs are sentimental and repetitive, often cultivating charismatic experience. In addition, much of the music to which these new songs are set clearly borrows from popular entertainment.

Even hymnbooks compiled recently by both respected and serious-minded brethren have yielded to these trends. A number of ministers and churches have been deeply saddened by what they see as a sad departure from good practice. As a result it has been decided to compile a new collection of hymns together

with a complete metrical psalter, to meet the needs of a wide range of evangelical churches which cannot in good conscience accept these other new hymnbooks.

**How is the work being done?**

Starting with the selection published in the original version of Christian Hymns, a number of less popular hymns have been deleted. Others up to a total of approximately one thousand are being collated from various sources – some of recent production, but all in the style of conventional hymnology. As a principle, so-called "archaisms" (i.e. Thee/Thou/Thine etc.) will not be edited away.

The classic metrical psalter is undergoing a very restrained revision to remove the most awkward constructions, where this can be done without compromising faithfulness to the original scriptural meaning.

A separate tune book is being prepared to enlarge the range of tunes, but keeping to a traditional style.

**Who is involved?**

The work is being co-ordinated by a group of eight ministers

R. Jeremy Brooks (Ramsey)

G. Roland Burrows (Cradley Heath)

Stephen J. Ford (Dawlish)

Dewi W. Higham (Cardiff)

W. Vernon Higham (Cardiff)

David W. Kay (Barnstaple)

Neil V. Pfeiffer (Swansea) – Chair

John P. Thackway (Holywell)

### **How is the project progressing?**

The target date for publication was originally announced as 2010, but the co-ordinating group now believe that it may be possible to bring this forward by at least one year.

The selection of hymns is almost complete. Work on the psalter revision is well advanced. Gathering of tunes, and the matching of psalms and hymns to suitable tunes is in progress.

Much remains to be done, including checking copyright, computer input of all text, physical production, and not least raising sufficient funds to facilitate the printing a viable production run.

### **Doctrinal Principles**

The Trustees have affirmed their wholehearted commitment to protestant evangelical reformed theology as summarized by that which is common to the historic confessions of faith (Westminster, Savoy and 1689 Baptist).

They have also agreed a number of specific articles of faith, including the following on the subject of worship principles: "The essential holiness and glory of God dictate that all worship addressed to Him should be reverent and thoughtful 'in spirit and truth'.

Practices derived from the entertainment industry, such as popular music, multiple instrument bands and repetitious singing are not suitable vehicles for the expression of worship to God."

## **THE CHRISTIAN WORSHIP PUBLISHING TRUST**

The Christian Worship Publishing Trust is a registered charity (Charity Commission reg. no. 1117057) established in 2006 to facilitate the production of the new hymnbook. The eight ministers of the co-ordinating group also constitute the Trustees of the charity. We welcome donations of any size to assist in this important project.

Gifts may be sent to our Administrator: Alternatively donations can be credited direct to our bank account:

Pastor S J Ford  
4 Elm Grove Drive  
DAWLISH  
Devon  
EX7 0EU  
(Tel. 01626 865230)

CAF Bank  
25 Kings Hill Ave  
Kings Hill  
WEST MALLING  
Kent

Please contact us if you wish to make a tax efficient donation under the government's Gift Aid scheme. We will be glad to supply a Gift Aid declaration form.

# Drift Of The Times - SOUND THE ALARM!

by Charles Haddon Spurgeon

*[This article was written in 1888. It is Spurgeon's statement as to why he separated from the compromising London Baptist Association.]*

## **Separation Not Alone Our Privilege But Our Duty**

Friends will have noticed with interest the repeated debates in the London Baptist Association, as to whether there should be "A credal basis" and what that basis should be, if it were decided to have one. There seems to be a current opinion that I have been at the bottom of all this controversy, and if I have not appeared in it, I have, at least, pulled the wires. But this is not true. I have taken a deep interest in the struggles of the orthodox brethren: but I have never advised those struggles, nor entertained the slightest hope of their success. My course has been of another kind. As soon as I saw, or thought I saw, that error had become firmly established. I did not deliberate, but quitted the body at once. Since then my one counsel has been, "Come ye out from among them." If I have rejoiced in the loyalty to Christ's truth which has been shown in other courses of action, yet I have felt that no protest could be equal to that of distinct separation from known evil.

I never offered to the Union, or to the Association the arrogant bribe of personal return if a creed should be adopted; but on the contrary. I told the deputation from the Union that I should not return until I had seen how matters went, and I declined to mix up my own personal action with the consideration of a question of vital importance to the community. I never sought from the Association the consideration of "A credal basis," but on the contrary, when offered that my resignation might stand over till such a consideration had taken place, I assured the brethren that what I had done was final, and did not depend upon their action in the matter of a creed. The attempt, therefore, to obtain a basis of union in the Association, whatever may be thought of it, should be viewed as a matter altogether apart from me, for so indeed it has been.

## **Should The Association Be Exclusive Or Inclusive?**

I may, however, venture to express the opinion that the evangelical brethren in the Association have acted with much kindness, and have shown a strong desire to abide in union with others, if such union could be compassed without the sacrifice of truth. They as good as said-We think there are some few great truths which are essential to the reception of the Christian religion, and we do not think we should be right to associate with those who repudiate those truths. Will you not agree that these truths should be stated, and that it should be known that persons who fail to accept these vital truths cannot join the Association? The points mentioned were certainly elementary enough, and we did not wonder that one of the brethren exclaimed,

"May God help those who do not believe these things. Where must they be?" Indeed, little objection was taken to the statements which were tabulated, but the objection was to a belief in these being made indispensable to membership. It was as though it had been said, "Yes, we believe in the Godhead of Jesus; but we would not keep a man out of our fellowship because he thought our Lord to be a mere man. We believe in the atonement: but if another man rejects it, he must not, therefore, be excluded from our number." Here was the point at issue: one party would gladly fellowship with every person who had been baptized, and the other party desired that at least the elements of the faith should be believed, and the first principles of the Gospel should be professed by those who were admitted into the fellowship of the Association. Since neither party could yield the point in dispute, what remained for them but to separate with as little friction as possible?

### **Why Should The New Religionists And Believers Wish To Be Together?**

To this hour, I must confess that I do not understand the action of either side in this dispute, if viewed in the white light of logic. Why should they wish to be together? Those who wish for the illimitable fellowship of men of every shade of belief or doubt would be all the freer for the absence of those stubborn evangelicals who have cost them so many battles. The brethren, on the other hand, who have a doctrinal faith, and prize it, must have learned by this time that whatever terms may be patched up, there is no spiritual oneness between themselves and the new religionists. They must also have felt that the very endeavor to make a contact which will tacitly be understood in two senses is far from being an ennobling and purifying exercise to either party.

### **The Brethren In The Middle**

The brethren in the middle are the source of this clinging together of discordant elements. These who are for peace at any price, who persuade themselves that there is very little wrong, who care chiefly to maintain existing institutions, these are the good people who induce the weary combatants to repeat the futile attempt at a coalition, which, in the nature of things, must break down. If both sides could be unfaithful to conscience, or if the glorious Gospel could be thrust altogether out of the question, there might be a league of amity established; but as neither of these things can be, there would seem to be no reason for persevering in the attempt to maintain a confederacy for which there is no justification in fact, and from which there can be no worthy result, seeing it does not embody a living truth. A desire for unity is commendable. Blessed are they who can promote it and preserve it! But there are other matters to be considered as well as unity, and sometimes these may even demand the first place. When union becomes a moral impossibility, it may almost drop out of calculation in arranging plans and methods of working. If it is clear as the sun at noonday that no real union can exist it is idle to strive after the impossible, and it is wise to go about other and more practicable business.

### **Separation A Duty**

Numbers of good brethren in different ways remain in fellowship with those who are undermining the Gospel; and they talk of their conduct as though it were a loving course which the Lord will approve of in the day of His appearing. We cannot understand them. The bounden duty of a true believer towards men who profess to be Christians, and yet deny the Word of the Lord, and reject the fundamentals of the Gospel, is to come out from among them. To stay in a community which fellowships all beliefs in the hope of setting matters right is as though Abraham had stayed at Ur. or at Haran, in the hope of converting the household out of which he was called.

Complicity with error will take from the best of men the power to enter any successful protest against it. If any body of believers had errorists among them, but were resolute to deal with them in the name of the Lord, all might come right; but confederacies founded upon the principle that all may enter, whatever views they hold, are based upon disloyalty to the truth of God. If truth is optional, error is justifiable.

### **The Army Of The Intermediates Should Cease Being Politic**

There are now two parties in the religious world, and a great mixed multitude who from various causes decline to be ranked with either of them. In this army of intermediates are many who have no right to be there; but we spare them. The day will, however, come when they will have to reckon with their consciences. When the light is taken out of its place, they may have to mourn that they were not willing to trim the lamp, nor even to notice that the flame grew dim.

Our present sorrowful protest is not a matter of this man or that, this error or that; but of principle. There either is something essential to a true faith - some truth which is to be believed; or else everything is left to each man's taste. We believe in the first of these opinions, and hence we cannot dream of religious association with those who might on the second theory be acceptable. Those who are of our mind should, at all cost, act upon it. The Lord give them decision, and wean them from all policy and trimming!

### **The Sixteenth Century Gospel Now Derided**

The party everywhere apparent has a faith fashioned for the present century-perhaps we ought rather to say, for the present month. The sixteenth century Gospel it derides, and that, indeed, of every period except the present most enlightened era. It will have no creed because it can have none: it is continually on the move; it is not what it was yesterday, and it will not be tomorrow what it is today. Its shout is for "Liberty," its delight is invention. its element is change. On the other hand, there still survive. amid the blaze of nineteenth century light, a few whom these superior persons call "Fossils"; that is to say, there are believers in the Lord Jesus Christ who consider that the true Gospel is no new gospel, but is the same yesterday, today, and forever. These do not believe in 'Advanced views,' but judge that the view of truth

which saved a soul in the second century will save a soul now, and that a form of teaching which was unknown till the last few years is of very dubious value, and is, in all probability, '-Another gospel. which is not another.'

It is extremely difficult for these two parties to abide in union. The old fable of the collier who went home to dwell with the fuller is nothing to it. The fuller would by degrees know the habits of his coaly companion. and might thus save the white linen from his touch; but in this case there are no fixed quantities on the collier's side, and nothing like permanency even in the black of his coal. How can his friend deal with him. since he changes with the moon? If, after long balancing of words, the two parties could construct a basis of agreement, it would, in the nature of things, last only for a season, ;since the position of the advancing party would put he whole settlement out of order in a few weeks. the adjustment of difficulties would be a task forever beginning, and never coming to an end. If we agree, after a sort, today. a new settlement will be needed tomorrow. If I am to stay where I am. and you are to go traveling on, it is certain that we cannot long lodge in the same room. Why should we attempt it?

### **Difference Of Spirit Between New Religionists And Old Believers**

Nor is it merely doctrinal belief - there is an essential difference in spirit between the old believer and the man of new and advancing views. This is painfully perceived by the Christian man before very long. Even if he be fortunate enough to escape the sneers of the cultured, and the jests of the philosophical, he will find his deepest convictions questioned, and his brightest beliefs misrepresented by those who dub themselves "Thoughtful men." When a text from the Word has been peculiarly precious to his heart, he will hear its authenticity impugned, the translation disputed, or its Gospel reference denied. He will not travel far on the dark continent of modern thought before he will find the efficacy of prayer debated, the operation of divine Providence questioned, and the special love of God denied. He will find himself to be a stranger in a strange land when he begins to speak of his experience, and of the ways of God to men. In all probability, if he be faithful to his old faith, he will be an alien to his mother's children, and find that his soul is among lions. To what end. therefore. are these strainings after a hollow unity, when the spirit of fellowship is altogether gone?

The world is large enough, why not let us go our separate ways? Loud is the cry of our opponents for liberty; let them have it by all means. But let us have our liberty also. There is a right of association which we do not forego, and this involves a right of disassociation, which we retain with equal tenacity. Those who are so exceedingly liberal, large-hearted. and broad-minded might be so good as to allow us to forego the charms of their society without coming under the full violence of their wrath.

### **Separation The Only Complete Protest**

At any rate, cost what it may, to separate ourselves from those who separate themselves from the truth of God is not alone our liberty, but our duty. I have raised my protest in the only complete way by coming forth, and I shall be content to abide alone until the day when the Lord shall judge the secrets of all hearts; but it will not seem to me a strange thing if others are found faithful, and if others judge that for them also there is no path but that which is painfully apart from the beaten track.

*"Now I beseech you, brethren, mark them which cause divisions and offences contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned; and avoid them. For they that are such serve not our Lord Jesus Christ, but their own belly; and by good words and fair speeches deceive the hearts of the simple. For your obedience is come abroad unto all men. I am glad therefore on your behalf but yet I would have you wise unto that which is good, and simple concerning evil. And the God of peace shall bruise Satan under your feet shortly. The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you. Amen." (Romans 16:17-20).*

### **A Faithful Message From The Past And A Timely Word For The Present**

*"For there is some danger of falling into a soft and effeminate Christianity, under the plea of a lofty and ethereal theology. Christianity was born for endurance; not an exotic, but a hardy plant, braced by the keen wind; not languid, nor childish, nor cowardly. It walks with strong step and erect frame; it is kindly, but firm; it is gentle, but honest; it is calm, but not facile; obliging, but not imbecile; decided, but not churlish. It does not fear to speak the stern word of condemnation against error, nor to raise its voice against surrounding evils, under the pretext it is not of this world; it does not shrink from giving honest reproof, lest it come under the charge of displaying an unchristian spirit. It calls sin sin, on whomsoever it is found, and would rather risk the accusation of being actuated by a bad spirit than not discharge an explicit duty. Let us not misjudge strong words used in honest controversy. Out of the heat a viper may come forth; but we shake it off and feel no harm. The religion of both Old and New Testaments is marked by fervent outspoken testimonies against evil. To speak smooth things in such a case may be sentimentalism, but it is not Christianity. It is a betrayal of the cause of truth and righteousness. If anyone should be frank, manly, honest, cheerful (I do not say blunt or rude, for a Christian must be courteous and polite); it is he who has tasted that the Lord is gracious, and is looking for and hasting unto the coming of the day of God. I know that charity covereth a multitude of sins; but it does not call evil good, because a good man has done it; it does not excuse inconsistencies, because the inconsistent brother has a high name and a fervent spirit; crookedness and worldliness are still crookedness and worldliness, though exhibited in one who seems to have reached no common height of attainment."*

- Horatius Bonar

## The Anointing of Christ

In Mark 14: 1-9 we're not told specifically who it was who anointed our Lord but since it happened at Bethany it is likely that it was Mary, sister of Martha and Lazarus. In worship we may copy this beautiful action and anoint Jesus with our love, devotion and praise. The anointing was done with that which was

### 1 Precious

Precious spikenard kept in a precious alabaster jar was used because the woman had found Jesus precious because of his teaching, His love for her (John 11: 5) and because He'd done what no other could do in raising her brother and in what He was about to do in laying down his life for her. To us who believe Jesus is precious on all these counts and worthy of our love. The anointing was also

### 2 Plentiful

She lavished all the ointment on the Saviour because of His plenteousness. There are many indications in Scripture of the fullness out of which we receive and are blessed. 120 gallons of water changed into wine. With Him is "plenteous redemption" for He will "abundantly pardon" and lavish many kisses on returning prodigals. Our anointing of Him in worship therefore must be suitably unstinting. Let us be generous with our praises. As to its effects the anointing was

### 3 Pleasant

This was a pleasant act which pleased the Saviour. Again it reflected His pleasantness. "His name is as ointment poured forth." Newton reminds us of the pleasant effects of it

How sweet the name of Jesus sounds  
In a believer's ear  
It soothes his sorrows, heals his wounds  
And drives away his fear.

How often have we known the pleasant effects of that Name. Let us please Him by heaping compliments of praise upon His lovely head.

*Rev. Dafydd Morris*

