

## A MONUMENT TO LIBERALISM

*Jack Baker, Bexleyheath*

There was a very sad report (to say the least) in my local paper just before the end of the year 2008; it took about one third of a page, it had a large banner headline and a photograph. Allow me to quote a few paragraphs:

A former Methodist Church is to become ....'s first Mosque.

There are now around 10,000 Muslims living across the two areas and, up until now, they have made do with an office in ..., which only had planning permission for use by 50 people.

As well as local Muslim leaders representatives of other churches and community leaders, police and fire chiefs and [local] councillors also attended [the opening] and were welcomed by the president of the [Muslim] association, ... [He] told them Muslims were a peaceful people ...

Borough police commander Chief Superintendent ....., a practising Christian, promised to 'protect the mosque as if it were my own church.'

There was a warm welcome from community leaders ....., who said they hoped the mosque would become an integral part of the town's future.

Methodist minister the Rev. .... said the Methodist church was happy religious worship would continue in the building rather than the site be redeveloped.

The Muslim association also appealed to the council to help it find parking for worshippers attending Friday prayers.

What, we may ask, has occasioned this in what one might call a "leafy suburb" of England? Is it that the Methodists have failed the gospel so enthusiastically preached by the Wesleys? Is it because most early Methodists were Arminian and have continued in that error? Both are questions that demand an affirmative. But on the other hand, Churches with the Savoy Declaration, or The Westminster Confession, or the XXXIX Articles of Religion have departed from "the faith once delivered unto the saints." Even Brethren Assemblies, with no written confession other than the Word of God, have not been immune from compromise and closure. Is it that Churches have tried imitating the "world" in its music, dress, and language? - another "yes." Make no mistake, unless God comes down in mighty power, convincing men of sin, righteousness and judgement to come, true biblical Christianity will be a rarer phenomenon in our shores.

One wonders why the police, community leaders, fire chiefs, and religious leaders needed to attend such an alien event. Would they have attended the opening of a new Gospel Church where the Bible would be the basis of all that was to take place? To ask the question is to answer it.

However, what has happened to the Church in our land, that a building constructed and set aside for Christian worship is now given over to an alien religion? And the people love to have it so. What has happened is plain to see, but the question must be "Why has it happened?" It has happened because error has come into the Church; another gospel is being preached which is not a gospel at all.

Observe, that in the main, error has not come from the pew but from the pulpit. Persuasive men have preached another gospel, which is not a gospel, and its result has been a burgeoning of compromise, false doctrine, and now pagan religion in our land. The very smallest suspicion of error will take root and grow until it infects the whole. That is unless our very blood is bibline - as was John Bunyan's.

We must lay the entire blame for why it has happened at the door of what is known as "Higher Criticism." This pernicious and evil doctrine had its beginning in the middle of nineteenth century Germany and its roots in the very pit. Higher Criticism is the cause of what has happened to this Methodist Church.

Higher Criticism had its beginning in about 1860 in Germany. For a readable and helpful discussion of this baneful system read the Bible League booklet *Words if Truth* containing essays by Maurice Roberts and John Thackway. Mr. Roberts explains what Higher Criticism is and Mr. Thackway outlines what it has achieved. Our brethren's appraisal is most helpful and readable. For this doctrine is like a jelly, the more one tries to grasp it the more it slips away.

If I might be allowed, the Higher Criticism puts man *above* Holy Scripture. For those of us who try to live our lives and wait on God as the Bible directs, then we are *under* Holy Scripture. We believe, and try to live out, all the Bible says in doctrine, history, science, family life and anything else you might like to name. Higher Criticism puts man first. The Bible is no longer the Word of God; it simply *contains* the Word of God. So then, at a stroke they dispense with eternal hell fire, the wrath of God, the resurrection, the virgin birth and any other beliefs that may offend their humanistic sensibilities.

To return to the local Methodist Church, it is probable that the gospel of saving grace has not been preached there for decades, if ever. Those few poor folk who attended might now go to their local Anglican or Baptist Churches, each only minutes walk away, they will not hear anything different, the externals might not be the same but the message will be "God loves you, God is love" - to the exclusion of all else.

The poor deluded and misguided Methodist minister, who was glad worship is to continue, does not understand although worship might continue it will not be worship towards God; it will be the worship of another. God and Allah are not synonyms. The Bible declares, "God is love" and so He is, on the other hand the Koran gives ninety-nine names for Allah and not one of them is love. Thus the one who has but one string to his ministerial bow - God is love, has missed the fact that whatever Allah might be it is not love.

The point that we are now at is that what is popularly called Christianity is not Christian at all. It has blasphemously exalted man above God. When you hear a Church

dignitary making some pronouncement on the latest TV filth, film or theatrical; when you hear him - or her - pronounce on some moral matter - divorce, homosexuality, women's rights, the death penalty, or on a religious subject - Islam, Hinduism, the Bible (and in particular the Authorised Version), or Christian worship - by all means be shocked, but do not be surprised. These people are steeped in the Higher Criticism that is how they think, that is how they have been trained in their colleges, and unless God arrests them and does a saving work in their poor misguided hearts, that is how they will remain to the everlasting destruction of their guilty souls. They all love one another, or at least seem to, but they do not love us. Their doctrine tells them that God loves everybody, but they cannot bring themselves to believe that He loves us.

What then can we do? First, recognise Higher Criticism wherever it rears its ugly head. Then take a very firm hold on your Bible, believe its precepts and act out its commands. Finally preach the gospel in season and out of season, and may the Lord give us grace for these challenging times.