

Paths We Take

I have often warned readers not to be fooled by clever talk or specious arguments. The warning is not just about others, for, as a mere sinful man, albeit called by God to teach, I am just as prone to sin as anyone else. I am no better than a David, Solomon, Paul or Peter! Indeed, against such great men I am only a shadow, of no significance.

We all walk, and sometimes run, paths of life. Some paths are foolish; some are good; some are bad; some are holy. I have walked many of them myself. This is why, when I judge (as all Christians should, by God's command), I must be careful not to raise my status higher than that of my fellows. As the popular saying goes, *"There, but for the grace of God, go I"*.

No-one knows for sure but it was supposedly attributed to 16th century preacher and martyr, John Bradford, when he sadly saw criminals being led to the scaffold, and said *"There but for the grace of God, goes John Bradford"*. The Bradford link, though, is questioned. Even so, it is a good reason to think of our own sinfulness before we react judgmentally towards others.

For myself I do not need others to judge me (though they do, and should, of course), for I am already sadly acquainted with my own failings and sins.

My path through life has been widely varied and I often wonder how many of the variations are caused by my sin and how many are caused by my true appraisal of life, or by God. Mostly, I don't know what path I'm on until it has ended.

Which Path?

There are times when I am fearful on my path, as was Job when he said (19:8): *"He hath fenced up my way that I cannot pass, and he hath set darkness in my paths."*

The Christian should not assume all is lost because his path is dark or blocked; God gives us our paths for a reason. This is why Job adds later (24:13):

"They are of those that rebel against the light; they know not the ways thereof, nor abide in the paths thereof."

Rather, whatever path we are on at this moment, echo the words of the Psalmist (17:5): *“Hold up my goings in thy paths, that my footsteps slip not.”*

Frankly, my path has often been a mystery to me! I know that until I am shown something different, I must accept the path as being from God, and ask Him to keep me safe, so long as I am faithful... because

“All the paths of the LORD are mercy and truth unto such as keep his covenant and his testimonies.”

This is repeated in Proverbs 2:8,

“He keepeth the paths of judgment, and preserveth the way of his saints.”

(To find my way back to my car in a strange town – as I walk towards a place, I regularly look back to the way I have come, so that I can remember what it looks like on my return. It is a fact that most of our/my paths in life have only been known and recognised retrospectively, thus I look back and often discover what the path was all about!).

Those who fight the path from God and do not have faith *“... leave the paths of uprightness, to walk in the ways of darkness”* (v 13), thinking that their own choice is better! God does not always give us a clear choice, so we must accept our path and wait for Him to enlighten us. We must wait patiently and not try to rail-road our way through our problems and doubts. God will show us whatever is needed in His own good time... which might well be after the event.

When we try to choose our own paths, Satan will happily oblige by placing a big sign over them. And so we begin to walk a path not intended for us... a clear sign and open door do not always signify that a path is from God! Better to have faith when we have no answers than to make our own choices that mislead us: *“In all thy ways acknowledge him, and he shall direct thy paths.”* Proverbs 3:6). Note that the text does not say He will tell us what our path is all about? Rather, it simply tells us to follow the path before us and to allow God to take us by the hand in faith.

Too many times we fight tooth and nail to discover where our path is leading us; we are alarmed when we have no answers and frantically try to find ways to save ourselves (money, goods, job, home, and so on), because we don't *really* believe that all our ways are known to God and guided by Him. Is this not so? In the end, our self-chosen paths tend to lead us over a cliff, or to a dead-end, and so we must begin all over again, wasting spiritual guidance!

Today, many circumstances lead to Christians feeling dejected and spiritually dry. The cause,

however, is not the path nor God, but our own failure to follow the path at all. If we see no path we invent one of our own, we search constantly for 'something better', when, all along, we are ALREADY on God's path. The mere fact that we breathe and live is enough to prove the point! This is because God always places the feet of His servants on a sure path, even when He does not tell us why, or where the path is headed. And, while we might not see a path at all, it is always there, under our feet.

But, some might plead, "I seem to be heading for disaster!" So, they try to alter the path or take a new one. The thing is this, friends – if we obey God and are faithful, He ALWAYS places us on the right path, even if it appears to take us into an inferno, or into human oblivion. (Remember Daniel's friends in the middle of the furnace? It did not destroy them – it was used of God to subdue a king and God's enemies, giving greater faith to those who endured).

I know from bitter experience what these terrifying paths are like. I have sometimes limped to their end, or even crawled, because I lacked strength, but I always know that my worst action would be to avoid the path altogether.

As my closest friends know, most of my paths have been new, or amended mid-way, or completely unknown to me. I have not had a single clue at the start, as to WHY God put me there. But, unless I wished to suffer extreme anxiety, I had to just follow the path, expecting God to lead me into all righteousness. I have, at times, failed miserably. But, so did David, who was, nevertheless, the apple of the Lord's eye!

ALL Christians, if they are faithful, are ALREADY on a path chosen by God, for His own purposes and for our betterment and good. Can you accept it? When we accept in faith the path of God, even if it seems rough to us, we can repeat what the psalmist said (16:11): *"Thou wilt shew me the path of life: in thy presence is fulness of joy; at thy right hand there are pleasures for evermore."*

To us, our path might be unknown and even humanly disastrous, but to God the path is His way for our life to go. It is only when we relax in Him that we can start to see a very different perspective. ***"In the way of righteousness is life; and in the pathway thereof there is no death."*** (Proverbs 12:28).

Notes on Calvin

Did you know?... His name in French was Jean Calvin. He did not set out to be a theologian, but qualified as the modern equivalent of a lawyer, working as a lawyer for a while. Having studied law I know how its analytical type of thinking can help Christians to understand biblical arguments.

Though he served a church he did not want to do the job. Even in Geneva it was his intention to just stay the night, but the reformer, Farel, cajoled him into staying and taking church responsibility. Even then he was a reluctant pastor, wanting nothing more than to be a lonesome theologian-academic.

As I repeat many times (for those who have no idea what they are talking about), whilst I concur with Calvin on many points, I am not thereby a 'Calvinist'. Rather, I am a Bible-believer who agrees with Calvin's biblical assertions (much as I can agree with a Labour MP who defends morality, though I loathe Labour's communistic foundation). Calvin began as a Catholic member of the Medieval Roman 'church'; his initial intention was to reform rather than to destroy Rome.

As a man of his time, he had the right idea, but the prevailing Catholicism of his day prevented a greater move towards reformation. Thus, he was a reformer but, like most other reformers, was still influenced to some degree by Rome. Yet, with every step, he moved closer to what was Protestantism.

In many ways he is of weightier import than most Protestant theologians we have today, who are merely Romanists in disguise! Calvin saw the errors and did not hesitate to try to put them right. If he had lived longer we would have seen even mightier reforms coming from his pen, probably with many personal amendments to his life as he drifted farther away from Rome.

Many want to dismiss or castigate Calvin, but in doing so they point to their own deficits and lack of knowledge. We must therefore protect his good name and his biblical theology, as we should with any brother-in-Christ. To my mind, as a man living in the turbulent days of European politics and Catholic dogma, his progress was remarkable. And, when I consider our modern day, when few Christians do anything at all, let alone live for Christ with genuine faith, we should be ashamed when we try to put down a man like Calvin when, in his day, opposing Rome could lead to a gory death at the stake. Sadly, most Christians today are 'armchair' critics who have nothing to show for their supposed salvation, not even gentle witness to those around

them who are unbelievers.

Note: I have often said that scripture has only ONE interpretation, and that those who say “Yes, but I believe this...” are wrong. Calvin, too, said what I say. To quote from a recent book by THL Parker on Calvin, where he paraphrases Calvin : ***“If scripture is taken alone, as Luther insisted against Erasmus, its central message is clear and unambiguous.***

Another opponent, Latomus, objected that scripture was a ‘wax nose’ which can be twisted in any direction (Ed. Such as is done by charismatics and many other specious ‘Christians’) . In fact scripture will only yield different results to different readers when its authority is relativized and therefore when it is interpreted by other than its own criteria. Scripture interpreted by scripture will yield a clear and unambiguous central message.”

Only those infected by the views of unbelievers will think scripture can mean whatever you wish it to mean. It is NOT the task of ANY Christian or theologian to discover new things, but to interpret according to what scripture actually says. This is what Calvin did, and it is certainly what we do at BTM. Disbelieve it at your peril.

‘Reformed’ Christians love to rely on Calvin’s example, yet they do not seem to know that he drew much anger and frustration from others. Not for being particularly wrong, but for simply speaking truth, sometimes in a manner they did not like. So, to be ‘reformed’ Christians have to put up with anger from all sides, and times of distress. Most of the anger against Calvin came from fellow believers!

Israel Belongs to Israel!

Any sane and intellectually honest person MUST accept that Israel belongs to Israel! International law declared it, as does scripture. Archaeology proves it, time and again – the state of Israel has existed for thousands of years, whereas the Arab and Muslim states have only existed for a few hundred years... Arabs moved in to Israel and what is called ‘Palestine’, NOT to stake claim to the land (most of which was sold to Jews anyway for ten times the going rate), but to benefit from Jewish progress, better birth and longevity rates, health benefits, food and other things that incompetent Islam does not provide, such as making fertile land out of deserts and scrub land. Don’t be fooled by the claims made by violent ‘Palestinians’, who, along with so many Islamic states, lie constantly about claims and accusations.

New Advertisement

Have you seen the new advertisement for a small Peugeot car? A flying serpent is shown and the words 'release something powerful' are added. My suspicion is that the serpent is modelled on that of an occult chakra snake, an Hindu concept that is very dangerous and ungodly.

Relativism Tries to Change God

We have seen that Calvin spoke against the relativism of his day – and that was in the Medieval period! The same relativism still infects modern society. It is a way of nullifying what God says and replacing it with whatever humans want His word to say. Today, these godless people have gone beyond even this sin, by saying God does not exist. The result is the most destructive kind of relativism, which sees everyone and everything as an object that must conform to one's own personal beliefs, which are really no beliefs at all.

Literally, everyone 'does their own thing', whether or not it is true or false, wicked or good. Because there is no God to contend with (at least so they think), everyone is a free agent, doing anything they want to do. But, rather than bring in an era of wondrous delights, it brings in death and evil, genocide and sexual wickedness, disease and hunger, with plenty of violence.

The reason why homosexuals want to eradicate God from any public discussion is NOT because they think He does not exist, but because His existence interferes with their radical, feverish, godless agenda. They want 'anything goes' to be the motto of every man, woman and child. And they are doing it by gross, harmful, illegal legislation, not by winning arguments.

Draconian legislation is always how evil people get their own way, and the 'change' so necessary for such an evil regime (this is the 'change' promised by Obama and which he satanically imposes on the USA) to exist and continue. Only the wicked survive in this kind of regime, because they love sin.

In the UK Cameron is following the failed ideas of Blair, saying that if people won't accept homosexuality, then they must be forced to do so by law!! He does not realise that pushing people of principle into a corner only stiffens their resolve! It builds resentment in the general population until they finally crack and fight back. Intellectually, Relativism is a non-starter and has no credibility. Indeed, those who push Relativism do so with absolutism in mind... do this or

else!! Hm.

Why Our Services?

Most services in most churches are similar. But, where do they come from? Many think they are given by scripture – but they are not. They mainly came to us from the city-Council laws developed in Geneva, based on ideas by Calvin. There is nothing wrong with these formats, but Christians must bear in mind that this is all they are – humanly-devised formats. And even these can be argued over by rival churches!

Singing songs at services is based not on scriptural law but on Calvin's assumption that Christians are happy, and happiness causes us to sing! Sadly, this is an over simplification. I remember my 'churchy' days... we all dutifully stood to sing as we read from the hymn book. By the time we sat down the words of what we just sang was forgotten... and how many of us actually read the words properly to see if they were consistent with scripture?

There are many forms of church government, but do not assume that they are all founded on scripture. And avoid formats that make us blasé and unthinking. That is, most of the time!

Immigrants

Is it wrong to say that migrants are 'swarming' into the UK? No, it isn't, because that is exactly what they are doing. Is it unchristian to say we must send them back home? Of course not. Even the Foreign Secretary has warned that the many thousands we are expected to accept will change our lives for the worse. In effect the standard of living that working people pay taxes for are being rapidly depleted by migrants, many of whom do not work but receive thousands each in benefits. Benefits are paid for by taxpayers, so the more migrants we have the lower our standard of living will be. Simple fact! Don't be fooled by the emotional nonsense from socialists.

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