

A Different Gospel

A Different Gospel

By Leonard Ashby

Posted January 28, 2017

A DIFFERENT GOSPEL
An Examination of the of The Teaching
of
The Cooneyites
BY
LEONARD ASHBY, M.A.
Late Vicar of Holme Eden, Cumberland.
Author of "Keswick and its Message."

PICKERING & INGLIS, LTD
14 Paternoster Row, London, E.. 4.
229 Bothwell Street, Glasgow, C-2
135 Deansgate, 3 Manchester
29 George IV Bridge, 1 Edinburgh
4 Clayton Street, Newcastle-On-Tyne
5 Hope Way, 9 Liverpool
Loizeaux Bros., 19 West 21 St, New York
Home Evangel, 418 Church St., 2, Toronto
5 for 1/post free. TWOPENCE
Made and Printed in Great Britain, 1939, 14 pages.

*"It was needful for me to write unto you,
and exhort you that ye should earnestly
contend for the faith which was once
delivered unto the saints" (Jude 3).*

FOREWARD

EVERY clergyman of the Church of England at his Ordination is asked the question: "Will you be ready with all faithful diligence to banish and drive away all erroneous and strange doctrines contrary to God's Word; and to use both public and private monitions and exhortations, as well to the sick as to the whole, within your cures as need shall require, and occasion shall be given?" And the answer he gives is the Lord being my Helper."

It is in fulfilment of that promise that this pamphlet is written and sent forth. I know that Mr. Ashby has witnessed the ill effects of the teaching of the "Cooneyites," and that he has been at great pains to examine the tenets of this sect and to discover errors.

I commend the pamphlet to the study of any who have been beset with the attention of these preachers.

R. D. ELLWOOD,
Rural Dean of Carlisle.

PREFACE

As the Cooneyites, or "Go-Preachers," on principle, avoid publishing books and tracts, it is difficult to find anything that gives a true and full account of their teaching, I am greatly indebted to Mr. Robert Snaith, Evangelist, of Carlisle, for the loan of an American tract entitled, "The Cooneyites, or Go-Preachers: A Warning," issued Loizeaux Brothers, Bible Truth Depot, East 13th Street, New York. 5 cents. (2-1/2d) Partly on account of the difficulty of obtaining this excellent tract, and partly in order to write very plainly and simply about these false teachers this tract is published.

LEONARD ASHBY.

A DIFFERENT GOSPEL

More than thirty years ago, Mr. William Weir Irvine (or Erwin) and Mr. Edward Cooney began preaching their interpretation of the Gospel message in Ireland. Their followers call their message "The Jesus Way." Owing to the emphasis they place on the words "Go Tell," they are sometimes called "Go-Preachers," but they are generally spoken of as Cooneyites. Like other very small sects, they claim that theirs is the only true way. All other ministers and preachers are denounced as hypocrites and imposters. Their position is based on a misunderstanding of the significance of two incidents during our Lord's ministry, due to their failure to perceive the gradual revelation and unfolding of God's purposes of mercy and grace.

The "Go Preachers" who profess to walk in the "Jesus Way," base their position on a misunderstanding of the first sending of the twelve Apostles, two and two, on a special mission (Luke 9. 1 to 5 and Matt. to. 5 to 42), and of the sending of the other seventy also whither the Lord Himself would come (Luke 10:1 to 9). The twelve Apostles were not to go into any of the Gentiles, but to go rather to the lost sheep of the house of Israel. Do the Cooneyites obey this command? I am not aware that they restrict themselves to Jews, or that they go with their message to Jews at all.

Again, the twelve were told to heal the sick, cleanse the leper, raise the dead, cast out demons. Do the Cooneyites do any of these things? Again, the seventy were sent out two and two into every city and place that the Lord was intending to visit. After the Lord had visited these places this temporary mission came to an end. The seventy were also commissioned to heal the sick. I have not heard that the Cooneyites have the divine gifts of healing. The fact is, that they carry out neither the first commission to the twelve nor the second commission to the seventy. These two missions were special temporary missions in Galilee, given to the twelve and the seventy only, and to no others. And yet the Cooneyites, with no Bible authority whatever, designate these two temporary missions as "the Jesus Way," the only way of salvation.

After His Resurrection, on three separate occasions at least, the Lord commissioned the eleven Apostles, and all His disciples, to go as His witnesses, after being endued with the power of the Holy Spirit, to every nation under Heaven. This Pentecostal preaching, in its beginning, is recorded in the Acts of the Apostles. But this world-wide preaching to Jews and heathen does not interest the Cooneyites. Their method of working is to go two and two, seeking a "worthy" house into which to insinuate themselves and their distortion the Gospel message. Poor timid souls have been greatly frightened when they have not invited these visitors into their houses, whereupon they have shaken off the dust of their feet as a testimony against them. To such timid people my advice would be, do not be afraid of charlatans who are power less to do you any harm, but tell them not to make themselves ridiculous, and not to trouble to call again.

The Cooneyites observe the sacraments of Baptism and the Lord's Supper. The only baptism that they regard as valid is "Believers' Baptism" by immersion, and this only when administered by one of themselves. Reading and study of the Bible are of no value unless interpreted by Cooneyites. All spiritual experience, at the Keswick Convention or anywhere else, is a delusion—for outside their fellowship there is no salvation. They may well say, as they do, that the number of the saved is not large.

It is difficult to believe that people who say that the saints of God, men and women, who helped us in the past and are now passed us, are in Hell, can find people so foolish as to believe them.

All history shows that any heretics or charlatans who have conceit, self-confidence, and impudence can gain followers, even from among the sheep and lambs of the flock for whom Christ died. The failure of the "Go Preachers" to recognise members of the family of God carries with it its own condemnation. St. John says: "Whosoever doeth not righteousness is not of God, neither he that loveth not his brother" (I John 3.10).

When the Apostle Paul met the elders of the Church of Ephesus at Miletus, he reminded them of his testimony to the Jews and others, of repentance toward God, and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ. In full accord with this teaching, those of us who are accustomed to the use of the Bible are often reminded that God pardons and absolves "all them that truly repent and unfeignedly believe His Holy Gospel."

In the Catechism the question is asked: "What is required of persons to be baptised?" The answer is: "Repentance whereby they forsake sin and faith whereby they steadfastly believe the promises of God made to them in that Sacrament." The familiar words of the hymn "Rock of Ages" convey the same great truth:

"Nothing in my hand I bring,
Simply to Thy Cross I cling."

Now from the earliest days of the preaching of the Gospel there have been those who have resented the teaching of man's helplessness to save himself and his utter dependence on God's grace. In Acts 15 we read of some who believed that the observance of Jewish ceremonial was necessary for salvation in addition to faith in Christ. The decision of the Council that met in Jerusalem was that these men were wrong.

The Apostle Paul was often obliged to contend for the Gospel of the grace of God. He writes to the fickle churches of Galatia: "I marvel that you are so suddenly removing from Him that called you in the grace of Christ unto a different Gospel; which is not another: only there are some that trouble you and would turn about the Gospel of Christ." Notice these people would "turn about" the Gospel of Christ; as we used to say, they would put the cart before the horse.

This is ever the way with the natural man who cannot believe that all his righteousness is filthy rags, and who comes to God, like the Pharisee, thankful that he is not as other men. On the other hand, the Publican had nothing to say but, "God be merciful to me the sinner." It is significant that the Epistle to the Galatians is the only one of St. Paul's Church Epistles that is not addressed to the saints.

In it the Apostle returns repeatedly to the Cross as the only way of saints and sinners: the Cross which the Galatians way would make of none effect

We want above all things to be sure of the Thomas said: "Lord, we know not whither Thou goest; and how can we know the way?" The Lord answered: "I am the Way." It has been well said, "Christianity is Christ."

Before we go any further, let us be quite sure that we understand the difference between what I will call *the Galatian way* and *the Christian way*. We read in Hebrews 12:14 that without holiness no man shall see the Lord. 'How should man be just with God ?' asks Job. The Galatian way and the Christian way both have the same goal in view, but the former never reaches that goal; whereas the latter does. The Galatian way is the way of legalism, the way of the Pharisees who come to God trusting in their own righteousness. Those who take the Christian way come, not trusting in their own righteousness, but in God's manifold and great mercies: not ashamed to confess the faith of Christ crucified. The Cooneyites do not preach this Gospel, but a different Gospel of works. The Christian says:

"Just as I am without one plea
But that Thy Blood was shed for me,
And that Thou bidst me come to Thee,
O Lamb of God I come."

Being justified freely by God's grace, from henceforth to him to live is Christ. And God works in him bringing forth the fruit of the Spirit—love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith (or faithfulness), meekness, self-control. Our Lord says "Ye shall know them by their fruits." The fruit of the Spirit is lacking sadly among these false prophets of a different Gospel.

While the Cooneyites lay great stress on the necessity of believers' baptism administered by one of their own number, they do not know the meaning of Christian baptism, which is closely associated with the faith of Christ crucified. **This Gospel they turn away from** and do not preach.

Recently some of them went to an Evangelical Church in which a well-known Missioner was holding a ten days' mission. Night after night the faith of Christ crucified was fully preached, but they rejected the message with scorn and dislike because it was not in tune with the different Gospel which they preach.

I have purposely avoided referring to some of the evils in the Cooneyite system. They are not new. Such small sects of ignorant fanatics have appeared from time to time during the Christian era, and have come to an end. The principle laid down by Gamaliel is a sound one: "If this counsel or this work be of men it will come to nought." Cooneyites teach a different Gospel, which is not the Gospel of Christ crucified, which is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believes; and they entirely ignore the work of the Holy Spirit.

"FROM SUCH TURN AWAY."