

' BEWARE THAT THOU FORGET NOT '

By the Rev. Dr. D. MARTYN LLOYD-JONES, M.D., M.R.C.P.

*A message given at the Dedication Service of the I.V.F. New Office Building,
29 September 1961*

MR. Chairman and friends of the I.V.F., I regard it as a privilege to be allowed to say just a few words on this most interesting occasion.

We have been reminded, and very rightly, that it is also a significant and very important occasion. It is a point of transition in many ways and not merely in the matter of building. The possibilities of the future with this tremendous expansion in the student world indicate to us that we are at a very important juncture in the history of the I.V.F. My thoughts have, therefore, been turning in that direction. The portion of Scripture to which I have been directed is to be found in the book of Deuteronomy, chapter 8 beginning at verse 11. The message I wish to emphasize is found from verse 11 to the end of the chapter.

Here we find the children of Israel, who have spent forty years in the wilderness, about to cross over Jordan into the promised land of Canaan; and God gives a message to Moses to pass on to them. There are certain things which they must bear in mind at this important juncture in their history.

'Beware that thou forget not the Lord thy God, in not keeping his commandments, and his judgments, and his statutes, which I command thee this day: Lest when thou hast eaten and art full, and has built goodly houses, and dwelt therein; and when thy herds and thy flocks multiply, and thy silver and thy gold is multiplied, and all that thou hast is multiplied; Then thine heart be lifted up, and thou forget the Lord thy God, which brought thee forth out of the land of Egypt, from the house of bondage; Who led thee through that great and terrible wilderness, wherein were fiery serpents, and scorpions, and drought, where there was no water; who brought thee forth water out of the rock of flint; Who fed thee in the wilderness with manna, which thy fathers knew not, that he might humble thee, and that he might prove thee, to do thee good at thy latter end; And thou say in thine heart, My power and the might of mine hand hath gotten me this wealth. But thou shalt remember the Lord thy God: for it is he that giveth thee power to get wealth, that he may establish his covenant which he swore unto thy fathers, as it is this day. And it shall be, if thou do at all forget the Lord thy God, and walk after other gods, and serve them, and worship them, I testify against you this day that ye shall surely perish. As the nations which the Lord destroyeth before your face, so shall ye perish; because ye would not be obedient unto the voice of the Lord your God.'

Some of you may think that this is a rather strange passage of Scripture to read at such a time, and that it is quite unnecessary to be reminded of this particular message in these present circumstances. But anybody who knows the merest elements of Church history will know that we need continually to be reminded of these things. The children of Israel were indeed God's own people, but they are warned in this most solemn manner. As I say, Church history shows very plainly that movements in the Church of God which have started on a purely spiritual basis, and were initially so right, so true and so orthodox, have subsequently turned into something

which is very different. We are still in the flesh and in these respects we are no different from our forefathers. We need, even on such an interesting occasion as this, to keep in mind this great warning.

THE NEED TO LOOK BACK

There are, therefore, certain things which we have to do this morning. The first is obviously to look back. Moses looked back into Israel's past and reminded them of what had happened. Thank God we, too, are able to do this. Other speakers here have already done so, and thanksgiving has been offered to God for all that He has done for us during these past years. It is a story of which we can be legitimately proud. It is also a story concerning which we are deeply convinced that it is to the glory of God.

I could legitimately apply a number of the statements made by Moses to our own history. God had fed Israel. Well, we have already been reminded that the I.V.F. started with nothing, and with no finances. It was kept going with practically none of the usual resources for such ventures. The thing is almost ridiculous, yet it was a venture of faith and, at the right moment, the money and the help that were needed came along. Let us also think of the Lord's provision in other respects; in the way He has chosen His men, for example. I could say a great deal about this, but I should require much more time than I have at my disposal to talk of various individuals who have been associated with the work of the I.V.F. However, I think we should all agree that nothing has been more remarkable about this story than the way in which God has chosen the right men, and has sustained them throughout these years. We can but give grateful thanks to God for this.

ENEMIES IN THE WAY

Let me also emphasize something else. We are told in the Deuteronomy passage about the various enemies with whom the children of Israel were confronted during their journey. There were scorpions and dangerous animals which attacked them, in addition to their human enemies. Yet they were preserved in spite of subtle, powerful and evil attacks! Surely this is not an inappropriate occasion to remind ourselves of those times when the I.V.F. has been preserved from very subtle attacks which, at certain points, might well have ruined the entire work and brought about its cessation. I do not at all apologize for mentioning a few of them. The very origin of the work was, of course, a protest against the destructive and devastating liberalism which had been ruining the life of the Christian Church. The I.V.F. in its early days — as, indeed, also subsequently — had a very fierce battle against that particular manifestation of the wiles of the devil. It was enabled to resist in quite a remarkable manner. Subtle suggestions were often insinuated and efforts made to put an end to this fight. The favourite was to seek to persuade the leaders that certain changes had now taken place in the Church situation and that there was therefore no need for a further stand. At such times, however, God gave wisdom and preserved the witness.

Then the time came when a particularly subtle attack confronted the I.V.F. in the form and guise of what is now called M.R.A. It was not then called by that name. In those days it did not advertise itself as it does now. It was almost a secret movement insinuating itself into the life of the colleges particularly under the name of First Century Churches Fellowship or that of Oxford. It deserves the description of subtle because it appeared at first to be the genuine first-century Christianity of the New Testament. It also seemed out to do the very thing that the I.V.F. itself was concerned to do. It is, surely, now perfectly clear to all that it was something very

different. The I.V.F. might well have been wrecked at that point, if it had lacked the insight given by the Spirit of God through His Word to diagnose the essential difference and to adhere to the Bible's instructions. This episode is probably one of the most remarkable things in the whole history of the I.V.F. I doubt whether this is known as it should be.

There were other attacks to come. It would not be right to mention individuals. But there have been individuals, once very prominent within the Fellowship, men of forceful personality, who would have liked the I.V.F. to follow them into the paths which by now are far removed from the truly evangelical position on which the Fellowship started, and in which we still rejoice. That, again, was an extremely difficult matter to overcome. When you have been working with men, and when they have been with you in the early days and are full of zeal and enthusiasm, it is very difficult graciously to withstand them when they take a wrong path. The devil frequently uses personalities in this way. Great courage, as well as wisdom, was called for from the leaders of the I.V.F. at such times to resist steadfastly and not to mind the loss of any — however endowed with natural gifts — who, because they had compromised their own beliefs, would have liked the I.V.F. to follow their example. There were some remarkable deliverances.

Coming to more recent history, I will end this review, though I think it is all very important and instructive, with one further very subtle attack which came in the form of what has been known as 'Barthianism'. Here, again, was something that looked at first sight as though it stood basically in our own position. Here was a movement in theology which claimed that it was going back to the Bible and to true biblical theology. It seemed to be reasserting the great message of the Reformation and Reformed theology. It presented itself to the churches and to all of us, including the I.V.F., in an acceptable form which promised a return to all that we held dear. There were friends of this Fellowship in prominent positions (and I am now speaking within my own experience) who at first entirely failed to see the true character of the 'Dialectical Theology' later commonly termed 'Barthianism'. They thought that it was a return to evangelical Christianity. They genuinely began to praise it in speech and in writing. Again, a subtle attack presented itself, and people prominent in I.V.F. circles under its influence, would have turned the whole of the I.V.F. in that direction. I do not hesitate to say that the years, roughly speaking, from 1938 to 1940 were some of the most critical years through which the I.V.F. has ever passed, for that particular reason.

LOOKING AHEAD

As we look back, those are the things that we can see. We take note of God's wonderful fatherly protection. We have looked back, as Moses looked back. Now, as he did, we must look to the future. You will notice in the passage before us that he brings in a word of warning. He makes no apology for doing that. The children of Israel are about to enter the land of promise. A new era is opening before them. There are, however, certain new dangers confronting them. For forty years these people have been in the wilderness, and now a wonderful future lies before them. Yes, but they are forty years older. There are also new enemies which they will have to face which they have not hitherto met. Of course, fundamentally, the foe is always the devil himself, but he varies his tactics and methods. That is the kind of thing to which Moses directs their attention at this point.

It is good for us today to remind ourselves of these very same things. There is no inherent guarantee that the I.V.F. will never go wrong or be

side-tracked. Eternal vigilance is the price of liberty, and eternal vigilance is the only guarantee of the safety of the I.V.F. as, indeed, it is of the whole Christian Church. You cannot live on the past. You may thank God for it, and you must also learn lessons from it. The most important of these is the vital necessity of continued and continuing vigilance lest we become something which is a denial of what we were at the beginning and of what, by the grace of God, we have been throughout the years.

DANGERS OF MIDDLE AGE

The very age of the I.V.F. in itself brings in new difficulties and new dangers. All of us are familiar with what we are so often being told about 'middle age' these days. I have no doubt that the various sub-sections of the Graduates' Fellowship deal with these matters occasionally! Those interested in psychology, I am sure, investigate the dangers of middle-age. I have no doubt that the members of the Christian Medical Fellowship know something about what is called 'middle-age spread'. Well, I just want to remind you that there is such a thing as a middle-age spread in an intellectual sense and also in a spiritual sense. The middle period of life is a very dangerous one in all its phases and departments and here again the history of the Church has a great deal to tell us about this particular danger.

The very fact that a society, a movement, or a church, has reached a certain age, brings in certain dangerous tendencies; and Moses warns the children of Israel against just these very things. There is always a tendency to a kind of respectability. You are no longer a raw adolescent, a beginner, you have developed and you have grown. The things that you did when you were very young — taking risks, venturing forth, seeing things clearly as black or white — you are no longer ready to do. You have got to an age now when you have become respectable. You think of your position. You must be careful and judicious. We all know something about this kind of thing. We have all known so many younger men who were wonderful as students, but who have become utterly useless in middle-age or later. The temptations of office and the lure of other things beguiled them. That is what I mean by the middle-age spread in a spiritual sense. Such people have lost the 'edge', their zeal has become blunted and they have lost something.

Again, there is always a danger that you may look back and say, 'Well, we've arrived at this point. It is remarkable how we have done it.' You begin to think of how you organized it. Moses reminds the Israelites of the danger of such self-confidence and self-congratulation. The danger is that we may begin to say that it is *our own* power that has done this, or that our ability has had its reward. It is a terrible temptation. The point is that you conveniently forget your moments of utter desperation when, feeling your complete helplessness, you just fell on your face before the Lord and pleaded with Him to help. You are actually saying, 'Well, really, I handled that situation very well, didn't I? I got over that difficulty rather astutely!' A modicum of complacency has crept in and you have developed a self-confidence. With that, of course, goes an element of self-satisfaction and pride. I am simply putting before you certain principles taught in the Bible. We have to remember them continually. At such a juncture it is easy to begin to think like this — the departments are growing, look at the statistics, things seem to be going well! The terrible danger is that it is so easy to begin to lose the spiritual point of view and to think more of mounting book sales and of the expansion in the numbers of the various unions. You begin to become a slave to this whole tyranny of numbers and bigness. It is often the way to lose your soul and to lose the vital spirit.

But, perhaps, and with this I close, the most subtle of all the dangers is to feel that you are no longer confronted by dangers, that you are no longer in the wilderness. You are about to cross into Canaan, the land of promise, the land flowing with milk and honey. There will be no dangers and nothing to worry about there! It is no longer the wilderness. Here is the most dangerous temptation of all because, of course, there is never a place of utter safety for the Christian. We are always in the midst of foes. In one important sense, we are always travelling through a wilderness. There are subtle enemies still surrounding the I.V.F. today, as they have done throughout the journey hitherto. To me the most tragic thing of all would be that we should begin to feel safe and begin to say: 'Well, we've arrived! There's no longer any danger. We have established our position. All is well.' Such is not the case. We must remember the principles which I have outlined, even when we enter the land of promise.

PRESENT DANGER

Certain very subtle foes lurk around us at this moment. One of them is pride of learning. In the early days the I.V.F. was purely and practically an evangelistic society. It was not interested in the intellectual formulation of doctrine, and not interested in truth from such angles. It was very simple and devoted itself to its particular work. Later, it very rightly came to see that that in itself was not enough. It was, after all, a students' organization. There was an intellectual element in religion and that should surely be clear in a students' society of all societies. The members came to see that they must not just spend their time as if they were an association of washerwomen or farm labourers; they could not be content with just singing choruses and saying simple little things to one another! Very rightly, they say that there must be advance and development. That has happened and we must thank God for it. The I.V.F. has provided literature which has proved a buttress to the faith of many. It has been a champion for the cause of God, and we must rejoice for what it has done in these ways. But there comes the danger, I think, at this moment, that we may develop a kind of intellectual pride and satisfaction, that we may become too intellectual.

It is a danger which I believe is confronting evangelical people throughout the whole world. In America, where these things generally start, they are already talking about a 'New Evangelicalism'. What they mean by this is that Evangelicals have now become 'intellectually respectable'. Twenty years ago and more they were not so, but now they have become accepted. So now we can make inroads into the ranks of the liberals and others. We are now going to show them how we have arrived intellectually, and to meet them as equals. This, to me, is one of the most subtle dangers which is confronting the Church today. We must bear it in mind. In a desire to please and to placate intellectuals on the other side, there is a horrible danger of compromise. I believe that we are already seeing evidences of a very subtle and dangerous compromise of Evangelical truth. God forbid that this should happen to the I.V.F., but she has no absolute guarantee that it will not. We must all take stock and remember the warnings of the Bible. We must not forget our origins. We must continue to realize that we can do nothing apart from God.

I trust that what I am saying will not be taken as criticism of scholarship. I have just thanked God for it. We must go on to encourage it. But if we begin to rely upon our scholarship we are finished. We must rely upon nothing other than the Spirit of the living God. If we put our confidence in anything else, or in anybody else, we shall begin to walk down the road that leads to disaster.

Let me direct your attention to the solemn manner in which Moses ends this warning — 'And it shall be,' he says to the people of God, 'if thou do at all forget the Lord thy God, and walk after other gods, and serve them, and worship them, I testify against you this day that ye shall surely perish.' Such a possibility confronts even the I.V.F. It may go wrong and, if so, God may have to raise up something else to contend for the truth, to live by it and to practise it. 'As the nations which the Lord destroyeth before your face, so shall ye perish; because ye would not be obedient unto the voice of the Lord your God.'

Let us, then, learn this great lesson from the book of Deuteronomy and from the history of the Church throughout the centuries. Oh, the tragedy of the way in which whole denominations and groups in the Church, which started in a true revival and on a purely spiritual note, failed to go on adhering to the truth! Today some of them have gone hopelessly astray and have become the instruments of the devil. They are even to be considered now as the enemies of the truth of God.

Very well, you have come into this new building; but do not forget the old one! Keep that Committee room, especially, where the real work of planning has been done through the years. Keep it there as a solemn reminder. Remember how the children of Israel were told to do certain things just to remind themselves of this past. Therefore keep that room, not as a museum, but as a living witness and as a memorial to the God who brought you into being, who has kept you through the difficult years and has brought you to this hour. Let us never forget the facts, for whilst we do not forget, we shall be safe both now and in the future. May God continue to bless all those who work here day by day and all members and supporters of the I.V.F. everywhere.

IS THE PAPACY CHRISTIAN ?

By the Rev. F. S. LEAHY

Minister of Cregagh Reformed Presbyterian Church, Belfast

TO many people today this is an unnecessary question. They do not doubt the basic Christianity of the Roman Catholic Church. Yet the prevalent attitude to Roman Catholicism represents a radical departure from the original Reformed and Lutheran attitudes. We shall, however, confine ourselves to a consideration of trends within Reformed circles. At the outset it is essential to establish historical perspective.

THE REFORMERS' VIEWS

The writings of the Reformers show that they regarded the Papacy as an antichristian organization. Their abhorrence of schism was great, and withdrawal from the Papacy was based on the most radical criticism of that system. Calvin and Knox repeatedly refer to the Papacy as 'the Roman Antichrist', and the antichristianity of papal doctrine and practice is stressed in their writings. This was typical of the Reformation; it was an indictment and repudiation of the Papacy *per se* in the strongest possible terms. Attempts to deny or minimize this are futile; Rome herself knows it.

Calvin saw Antichrist manifested in the Papacy as centred in and represented by the Pope. 'To some we seem slanderous and petulant, when we call the Roman Pontiff Antichrist. But those who think so perceive not they are bringing a charge of intemperance against Paul, after whom we speak, nay, in whose very words we speak.' He then proceeds to apply