


HALL GREEN HERALD





WAR AND FAITH

Almost one hundred and fifty years ago people began to think differently about God, the Bible and human nature. This shift led to the notion that the Bible, perhaps

after all, was fallible and that it did not give us the right view of God, the world or ourselves. In the minds of many including politicians and the members of the religious establishment the new age in which they were living required new thinking. Among other things this critical approach robbed the Bible of its claim to be the product of a divine source. It limited Jesus to being merely human exercising only human faculties and as a result demythologised the accounts of the miracles he had now allegedly performed. This new teaching also asserted that God took all Humanity into his divine favour making salvation open to all and within their power to claim. The belief

was that the Bible really emphasised salvation as a moral change in a person and that under this teaching the rule of God in the heart would in turn revolutionise society. God's kingdom on earth would be achieved through renewed relationships, social action, a healthier nation, community solidarity, better education, and a fairer distribution of wealth producing political and economic stability. What went wrong? The answer is the emergence of war!

For some forty years the nation had been at peace, and then the Boer War erupted in South Africa in 1899, followed by the First World War (1914-1918). The 'new gospel'

seemed to have no answers to offer a disillusioned nation demoralised by the effects of human nature, 'red in tooth and claw' using old and newly developed weapons of destruction.

Some people began to consider that after all the Bible might give a truer view of God, the world and human nature but many no longer knew what it had to say on these matters. A biblical gospel was once more revealed to a nation which resonated with their experience of life explaining events around them, the acts of unrestrained human nature and the struggles of life. An old word began to be used again. It was the forbidden word, Sin. Furthermore that sin was a personal problem inflicting us all.

The real truth about why there were wars began to dawn in some people's minds. Everyone is a sinner and being unable to do

anything to help themselves need someone else capable of dealing with it for them. This would also have to do more than promise a moral change but also answer the problems of the guilt and power people were beginning to discern within themselves. The apostle Paul speaking of Jesus, tells us in 2 Corinthians 5:21 that, 'He who knew no sin was made sin for us' and that the evidence of God's acceptance of Christ's work at Calvary on behalf of sinners was evidenced by Christ's resurrection from the dead. Death can be witnessed as the universal consequences of sin.

This makes faith a personal thing between a person and God. Faith in a social system does not save us. Faith is a personal trust, the vehicle by which God's salvation is appropriated to the individual. It also brings about reconciliation between God and the

person. Reconciliation is more than the removal of hostility between them it is the presence of a vibrant meaningful relationship. The renewing of Humankind spiritually and morally by true repentance towards God and faith in our Lord Jesus Christ, form the best and only foundation for a civilised society.