

REFORM- ATION TODAY'85



- 1 EDITORIAL
- 3 A BASIS FOR CHRISTIAN UNITY
- 8 SAVE OUR SUNDAY — A MATTER OF URGENCY
- 15 CAREY FAMILY CONFERENCE REPORT *Mark Znidericz*
- 17 SPIRITUAL DISCERNMENT *Jim van Zyl*
- 20 THE SONSHIP OF CHRIST *Gary Phillips and Gwynne Williams*
- 23 THE CAREY MINISTERS CONFERENCE
- 24 EXHORTATION Part 2 *Baruch Maoz*
- 27 WHY DID JESUS TEACH WITH PARABLES? *Editor*
- 31 DANIEL ROWLAND *A review by John Beattie*
- 32 ENOCH AND HIS WALK WITH God *Editor*



The front cover picture and the photos on this page were taken at the Carey Family Conference at Leeds by David Harrison. See the report by Mark Znidericz. Above on the extreme right is Andrew Symonds and next to him David Kingdon, then Russell Williams and his wife Glenys, then Iris Symonds. We record our gratitude to Andrew and Iris for all the work they have put into the conference for several years. They are retiring temporarily due to pressure of work. Peter Parkinson, pastor of the Leeds Reformed Baptist Church is taking over as conference secretary. He is able to do this because of the excellent support provided by his members. The unity and edification experienced at the conference over the years has been the cause of profound gratitude. Only some are mentioned here but many contribute in practical ways towards this annual event. Prayerfully we look to the future in dependence on the Lord transcendent.



Editorial

Photographs in the last issue vividly reminded us of the nature and progress of the Ecumenical Movement as it has taken shape along Merseyside. In assessing the main lesson we observed our urgent need to take unity seriously. It is not enough to expose false claims. It is quite inadequate to be complacent in a separatism that simply ignores others. Do we display genuine concern and love for all those who belong to our Lord and form his redeemed body? What is there about our testimony that will cause the world to believe (John 17:21)?

The article, 'A basis for Christian Unity' is a constructive contribution which was published in 1983 by the Bedford Evangelical Church. (This booklet can be obtained by writing to P.O. Box 69, Bedford, cost 70p incl. postage.)

In the meantime we continue to discover by way of correspondence that the Freechurchmen in the Ecumenical Movement are mostly liberals whose source of authority is their own human reason. They are humanistic, moralistic and universalistic. The strongest in terms of belief is the Roman Catholic archbishop Worlock. He is not allowed to participate in the C. of E. communion but it is noteworthy that Anglican bishop Sheppard does participate in the Roman mass. How consistent this is with his vows is revealed by the statement cited below from the Prayer book.

From the 39 articles of the Church of England

Part of Article 28 –

Of the Lord's Supper – reads

Transubstantiation (or the change of the substance of Bread and Wine) in the Supper of the Lord, cannot be proved by holy Writ; but is repugnant to the plain words of Scripture, overthroweth the nature of a Sacrament, and hath given occasion to many superstitions.

The Body of Christ, is given, taken, and eaten, in the Supper, only after an heavenly and spiritual manner. And the mean whereby the Body of Christ is received and eaten in the Supper is Faith.

The Sacrament of the Lord's Supper was not by Christ's ordinance reserved, carried about, lifted up, or worshipped.

Article 31 – Of the one Oblation of Christ finished upon the Cross

The Offering of Christ once made is

that perfect redemption, propitiation, and satisfaction, for all the sins of the whole world, both original and actual; and there is none other satisfaction for sin, but that alone. Wherefore the sacrifices of Masses, in the which it was commonly said, that the Priest did offer Christ for the quick and the dead, to have remission of pain or guilt, were blasphemous fables, and dangerous deceits.

From the Prayer Book

The Consecration of Bishops

The Archbishop.

Be you ready, with all faithful diligence, to banish and drive away all erroneous and strange doctrine contrary to God's Word; and both privately and openly to call upon and encourage others to the same?

Answer. I am ready, the Lord being my helper.

David Samuel was quoted in *The Daily Telegraph* recently as spelling out three alternatives for the Church of England: absorption by Rome, taking the Jenkins road (for our overseas readers Jenkins is the bishop of Durham who openly rejects the physical resurrection of Christ), or a reaffirmation of the Bible and of grace. If the Church takes the Jenkins road Samuel correctly points out that it will soon dwindle into a unitarian sect. My observation of the scene here is that if Sheppard's example is taken the Romeward way will predominate.

Save our Sunday — a matter of urgency

The article with this title is provided by the Jubilee Centre, 114 Barton Road, Cambridge CB3 9LH (telephone 0223 311596). The centre is led by a Christian economist Dr. Michael Shluter, assisted by Christopher Townsend. We urge readers in Britain to write to their MPs. Freely use the materials provided abridging and citing relevant parts and remembering that about one A4 sheet is the limit for a busy MP. The bill is to be debated at any time after Parliament reconvenes after the summer recess. If you can write before the end of September it will be helpful. The Conservative Party Conference is due October 8th-11th. The issue may be very much alive at that stage. As pointed out in the article it is especially important to win the sympathy of the Conservative MPs.

A basis for Christian Unity

This article is not intended to be an exhaustive exposition of the subject of Church unity. Rather it is an attempt to stimulate Christians to think Biblically about this issue and then for them to make some practical contribution at a local level towards a more visible unity of evangelical churches. John Owen, the great puritan preacher and pastor, expressed himself most clearly on the matter of Church unity nearly 300 years ago. Making every allowance for a style of writing that has long passed into disuse his words are worth recording. 'And that particular church which extends not its duty beyond its own assemblies and members is fallen off from the principal end of its motivation; and every principle, opinion, or persuasion, that inclines any church to confine its care and duty unto its own edification only, yea, or of those only which agree with it in some peculiar practice, making it neglectful of all due means of the edification of the Church catholic, is schismatical.'

A basis for Christian Unity

The Bible teaches the spiritual unity of all God's people. Born again believers are united by faith to Christ their head (1 Cor. 12:13), and thus united to each other in the membership of his body (Rom. 12:5). This unity is a present reality despite the obvious differences that exist among Christians everywhere (Eph. 4:4,5). A fundamental principle of Christian unity is that spiritual unity cannot be made, far less destroyed, by Christians themselves. Such unity is created by God the Holy Spirit as he gives new life to believing men and women. The duty therefore of all Christians is to 'make every effort to keep the unity of the Spirit' (Eph. 4:3).

The Scripture points the direction in which this obligation is to be fulfilled by turning our attention from the unity of Christians as individuals to the unity of Christians as they congregate in the local assembly of believers. All this is simply to assert that Christian unity is no more or less than a concern for the unity of all local churches of Jesus Christ (1 Cor. 16:19, 20; 1:2). Since the local church is the only spiritual institution required by the Scriptures, and as all Christians are under obligation to identify with such a congregation of believers, then it is impossible to segregate Christian unity from church unity.

Furthermore, our concern for the unity of local churches must be the concern for their visible unity. It is not sufficient to content ourselves with the idea that since spiritual unity exists among Christians and Christian churches then nothing more needs to be done. Such a viewpoint implies that spiritual and visible are quite distinct concepts whereas, of course, they are inseparable. Spiritual life manifests itself visibly just as physical life does. If spiritual unity exists then it must manifest itself visibly (Acts 2:41-47).

Spiritual unity in the local church comes to visible expression in united acts of worship and service — however imperfect. And our duty is to make that unity as perfectly visible as we can (1 Thess. 4:1). If this is our duty within a local church it must be among different local churches (1 Thess. 4:9,10). True, our duty must first be discharged within the confines of the fellowship to which we belong. Indeed, failure here will mean little success elsewhere. But our task does not end with the local church. Schism — an unnecessary division among Christians — is not only the sin of individuals within a local congregation of believers, it is also the sin of those churches that fail to relate Biblically to each other. Spiritual unity does exist among true churches of Jesus Christ and

therefore there is already some visible unity, however slight it may be in many instances. Our duty is therefore all the more pressing — to make the unity of local churches more visible than it is.

If this task of maintaining unity is difficult within the local church then it will be more difficult still between congregations. When one considers the diversity of genuinely held beliefs and practices among churches today, success seems very remote. Only in heaven will the task be brought to a perfect end. Meanwhile it is our responsibility to do all within our powers to work for the fulfilment of our Saviour's prayer 'that they may be one as we are' (John 17:22). One glorious consequence which in turn provides us with a great incentive to duty is 'that the world may believe . . .' (John 17:21). Our Lord teaches by implication that visible church unity serves to further the triumphs of the Gospel in the earth.

SOME BASIC PRINCIPLES . . .

What are the principles by which visible church unity could be encouraged and developed? There are four questions to be answered:

1. What is an evangelical?

Not all churches are true churches of Christ. The distinguishing mark of a church is whether the church is true to the Christian Gospel. Certain perversions of the Gospel make the Gospel a 'different Gospel' (Gal. 1:6). An evangelical is one who is faithful to the content of the good news of the Christian faith. We must begin then by defining the nature of the Christian Gospel. The evangel or Gospel is in principle concerned with those truths that are essential to salvation (1 Cor. 15:3-5). An excellent summary of evangelicalism is found in the doctrinal basis of the British Evangelical Council. There are, of course, other such similar summaries.

2. What is an evangelical church?

Our definition of the Church must recognise that all who trust in Christ alone for salvation are members of the body of Christ (Acts 20:28), and that the local church is the visible expression of that body (1 Cor. 12:27). This descrip-

tion would embrace paedobaptist and baptist positions. Historically, both viewpoints recognise the Church in essence as consisting of believers. The paedobaptist would differ from the baptist in regarding the local church as consisting of believers and their children, rather than believers only. But our view of the Church must be more than simply a congregation of believing men and women. For not every heap of bricks is a wall, nor every regiment of soldiers an army. In our confused situation it is difficult to improve on those three marks of the Church which have comprised the ingredients of a popular definition since Reformation times. Those marks are the preaching of the Scriptures, the administration of the sacraments — namely baptism and the Lord's Supper, and the exercise of discipline.

3. What should our attitude be towards evangelical churches which are linked to the World Council of Churches or local expressions of that body?

Any formal fellowship of evangelical churches must get to grips with this contemporary issue. Many evangelicals want to deal with this controversial

problem directly and would argue that churches should either be outside this movement of spurious unity or engage in practical severance of any ties they may have. A better way would be to deal with issues indirectly and give emphasis to the principle underlying a church's attitude to, and involvement in, a movement of false unity. And that principle is simply a spirit which is tireless in constantly reforming the church by the Word of God. If a church is prepared to positively reform by the Scriptures then we must associate with her in any way possible. If a church is not prepared to lift up her voice in protest against error and lay her hand to measures of reform then we are entitled to walk a separate path from that church. And this assessment is not to be made only of churches involved in the ecumenical movement, but also those outside the movement. An evangelical church may oppose involvement in the ecumenical arena, yet not desire or work at positive reformation. Anti-ecumenism can just be the reflex action of an unthinking evangelicalism which does not want to be bothered or disturbed — an expression of evangelical complacency. This approach to the modern ecumenical movement would clearly allow formal links with churches which still have contact with the ecumenical movement.

4. What should be the boundaries of the formal links between evangelical churches?

Our answer to this question must take into account two extremes. There are those evangelicals who would insist on a maximum confession of faith as the basis of association and all the churches who wanted to belong would have to conform to it. This excludes some evangelical churches. Other evangelicals would insist on a minimum confession of faith in order to emphasise the verities of the faith, and then directly or

indirectly discourage churches from expressing their distinctive beliefs. This also excludes some evangelical churches.

Formal links are necessary which will draw together evangelical churches by making the basis of association a minimal confession — the sum and substance of evangelicalism — and yet encourage each local church to confess all the truth she wholeheartedly embraces. It is important that each church should be uninhibited in maintaining distinctives. Nothing is gained in the interests of evangelical unity by encouraging a church to compromise the truth she confesses. On the other hand we are not to exclude churches because of differences on matters not essential to salvation. If we do we are saying that the things on which we differ are more important than the things on which we agree.

The differences within such a fellowship of churches should not be regarded as too serious since even in a fairly narrow association of churches there are still genuine differences, and it is generally found that one church will work more closely with some churches rather than others. Indeed, differences within a broad evangelical framework encourage evangelical churches to avoid a party spirit and a narrowness in attitude to fellow-believers, which inevitably leads to a despising of others who have genuinely held convictions. Although this wide basis for evangelical church fellowship does create some limitations in certain areas of active fellowship, there is still much that can be done. Clearly the elders of the churches will meet for mutual fellowship and, on occasion, church members too. The New Testament Scriptures encourage the sharing of information so that churches can pray for one another (2 Thess. 3:1). They also provide warrant for churches to meet to confer on

matters of common concern (Acts 15). Above all the Church of the first century practised inter-dependence because certain tasks could be better performed together than alone (2 Cor. 8:1-7).

This approach to a formal linking of

evangelical churches would of course allow a church to retain any existing links with other evangelical churches. However, over a period of time some, if not all, of these links of fellowship might disappear or be absorbed as a more catholic unity is appreciated.

An example

One way in which these principles could be applied in order to create some formal links of fellowship between all evangelical churches is as follows:

A FEDERATION OF EVANGELICAL CHURCHES

1. *Preamble*

- (i) This federation of evangelical churches will be limited to a defined geographical area (insert the name) so as to preserve practical fellowship among the churches.
- (ii) It is expected that some churches in this federation will have formal links with an association or denomination of churches, which are either exclusively evangelical or of a mixed character.
- (iii) The execution of some of the aims of this federation will not be easy and it is therefore expected that a particular church may better act in concert with some churches rather than with others.

2. *Membership*

All churches who belong to this federation will be bound by the following conditions:

- (i) The wholehearted acceptance of evangelical beliefs as summarised in the doctrinal basis of the British Evangelical Council.
- (ii) The recognition of all who trust in Christ alone for salvation as members of the body of Christ and that the local church is the visible expression of that body. Furthermore that such evangelical churches possess three essential marks, namely the preaching of the

Scriptures, the administration of the sacraments — baptism and the Lord's Supper — and the exercise of discipline.

- (iii) The intention in principle and practice to seek a Scriptural expression of visible unity, among all evangelical churches, which implies a process of continuous reformation of the church by the Word of God.
- (iv) The approval of a formal federation of all evangelical churches as a means to achieve this unity, so far as such a federation encourages each church to confess without wavering all God's truth known to her and therefore involves no sacrifice of principle or testimony.

3. *Aims*

- (i) To share information so that the churches can pray for each other.
- (ii) To confer on matters of common concern:
 - (a) The definition of doctrine.
 - (b) The exercise of discipline.
 - (c) The fulfilment of our Saviour's great evangelistic commission.
 - (d) The training of elders.
- (iii) To meet for mutual fellowship, especially for the elders of churches.

Continued at bottom of next page.

THE DOCTRINAL BASIS OF THE BRITISH EVANGELICAL COUNCIL

1. The inerrancy of the Holy Scriptures as originally given, their verbal inspiration by God and their supreme authority as the only rule of faith and practice.
 2. The trinity of the Godhead: Father, Son and Holy Spirit, Who are the same in substance, equal in power and glory.
 3. The essential, absolute and eternal Deity of the Lord Jesus Christ; His conception by the Holy Ghost; His birth of the Virgin Mary, His real but sinless humanity; His voluntary humiliation in life as Man of Sorrows culminating in His substitutionary and atoning death as a sacrifice for sin; His resurrection from the dead on the third day in that very body that had lain in the tomb; His ascension into heaven as the only Mediator between God and man and His coming again in power and glory.
 4. The personality and Deity of the Holy Spirit through Whom the soul is born again to saving repentance and faith and by Whom the saints are sanctified through the truth.
 5. Man's utter ruin through the fall and his salvation solely by grace through faith in Jesus Christ, Whose righteousness imputed to him is the only ground of acceptance before God.
 6. The resurrection of the body, the judgement of the world by our Lord Jesus Christ; the everlasting blessedness of the saved and the everlasting punishment of the lost.
 7. The spiritual unity of all who truly believe in the Lord Jesus Christ and their duty to maintain in themselves and in the Church a standard of life and doctrine that is in conformity with the teaching of God's Holy Word.
-

Continued from page 6

4. *Business*

- (i) The nature, time, and place of meetings which shall be held under the auspices of this federation shall be determined by consultation between the elders of each church.
- (ii) In order to facilitate the activities of this federation a chairman and secretary shall be appointed by the elders of the churches from among their own number and by mutual agreement. The appointment shall be for a fixed period of time.
- (iii) Churches shall join the federation by the mutual consent of the member churches, and can be excluded from its fellowship, if the member churches mutually agree that a church has failed to fulfil any of the four conditions for membership.

Save our Sunday – a matter of urgency!

In May 1985 Parliament voted with a majority of 127 that the recommendations made by the Auld committee that all shops could open on Sundays should be implemented. This means that the government intend introducing a Bill to that effect in the next session of Parliament. The pressure for such a change arises out of the anomalies that exist in present legislation and also pressure from DIY stores and Garden Centres who would welcome such a lucrative provision for Sunday Trading.

Opposition to the proposed legislation is coming from many quarters, including the shopworkers, through their union, USDAW, the majority of small and medium sized retailers as well as some of the larger chain stores, inner city residents and Christians of all denominations. The best way of registering a protest is to write to your local M.P. especially so if he is a Conservative because the government will look for support among its own ranks. The most effective type of letter would include the fact that you are a constituent, briefly giving reasons for your concern and asking for a reply. If you do not know your M.P.'s name, check at your local library or council offices. The address to write to is: M.P., The House of Commons, Westminster, London SW1A 0AA.

As an alternative to writing a letter go and see your M.P. Go individually or as a group. See him at his 'surgery hour'. Go especially if you are directly concerned in any way, e.g. live near shops; may have to work on Sundays; run an affected business; or because you believe God calls us to enjoy a day of rest. Face to face contact can make all the difference.

Some Christians may still be apathetic to this latest threat to our society from those few who would bow the knee to the idol of greed – but it is still not too late for our voice to be heard and for victory to be won.

Other Christians may still not see what all the fuss is about, and others may find it difficult to answer objections that are put to them in conversation, so for their help we publish below the content of a document produced by the Jubilee Centre (114 Barton Road, Cambridge CB3 9LH).

Ten Objections Answered

1. SUNDAY IS NOT THE SAME AS THE SABBATH

We agree that Sunday differs fundamentally from the Old Testament sabbath. The sabbath was specifically instituted by God. The Old Testament repeatedly emphasises that it was a 'sign of the covenant' (Ex. 31:12-18), although it also brought important social benefits. In the New Testament, Jesus institutes with great solemnity the Lord's Supper as the sign of a new covenant, but He nowhere institutes Sunday in a special way, nor do the apostles command it should be observed.

However, there is New Testament evidence that the apostles kept Sunday special in commemoration of the Resurrection. Paul met with the elders of the Ephesian church on the first day of the week (Acts 20:7). Paul tells the Corinthian church to set aside money to help the poor in the Jerusalem church 'on the first day of the week', as was being done in all the Galatian churches (1 Cor. 16:2). John, in Revelation, speaks of being 'in the spirit on the Lord's day' (Rev. 1:10). In the context of John writing about the Resurrection, this probably refers to a Sunday. The only other place the Greek adjective translated 'the Lord's' is used in the New Testament, it refers to 'the Lord's supper' (1 Cor. 11:20). If the apostles tried to keep Sunday special, surely we should consider doing so ourselves.

2. MAKING SUNDAY SPECIAL IS LEGALISM. Paul said that the 'days' issue should be a matter of individual conscience (Rom. 14:5). Surely we are free to do as we like?

We agree that individual decisions on use of Sunday are a matter of personal conscience. In Paul's day, the situation was fundamentally different because individual Christians were living in a totally non-Christian environment so often it was a choice between their job and keeping Sunday special on a personal basis. Today, most Christians are choosing whether to campaign to maintain Sunday as a special day on a national basis, or whether to let it go without bothering. We believe there is still a strong case for keeping Sunday special on a national basis, not as an outward observance but as a means of obeying the principles underlying the law:

- (a) A weekly day of rest is a creation ordinance (Gen. 2:2-3).** This is like marriage – not a command which must be obeyed, but a statement of how the human machine has been designed to operate most effectively. Jesus did not say: 'The sabbath is just for the Jews'; He said: 'The sabbath is made for man' (Mk. 2:27; cf. Matt. 4:4). We ignore a weekly rest day at our own cost.
- (b) It seems the sabbath was designed to help people give priority in their use of time.** The fourth commandment lies between those concerned with honouring God and those to love one's neighbour. Sundays today are a help to Christians to give the best of their time to God, and not just its fag-ends.
- (c) The sabbath was a weekly family festival.** All members of the household had to take time off together (Ex. 20:8-11). Sundays today are vital for family life as they ensure there is at least one day of the week when all family members are all at home at the same time.
- (d) The sabbath seems to have provided legal protection to low income workers** who could otherwise be forced to work seven days a week under exploitative conditions (Ex. 20:8-11). Restrictions on Sunday trading today serve the same purpose of protecting low income workers. Other forms of legislation to achieve this have proved extremely difficult to design and enforce.

These objectives of rest, honouring God, family time and protection for low-paid workers **could** all be achieved by other means if Sundays are no longer kept

special. But in practice, are we likely to make the necessary alternative arrangements? If not, keeping Sunday special is worth campaigning for.

3. CHRISTIANS SHOULD NOT IMPOSE THEIR VIEWS ON OTHERS

The idea that everybody in society wants Sunday trading except Christians is misleading. USDAW, the shopworkers' union, with over 250,000 members, the co-operative movement with 6,000 shops, 83% of private retailers and many inner city residents are all opposed to Sunday trading. So who wants it? Mainly a small number of large shops who believe they can substantially increase sales by Sunday opening, notably the D.I.Y. chains and garden centres. They stand to increase profits by millions of pounds if Sunday trading is allowed.

In the 1978 NOP Survey, 41% of respondents were in favour of changes in the law to allow shops to open for longer hours (weekdays and Sundays). A 1983 MORI poll produced a corresponding figure of 73%. However, these results are not as conclusive as they appear at first sight. Responses to polls are snap judgments, when people have had little time to think through all the implications. People seem to want Sunday trading, to want to protect workers from being forced to work on Sundays, and to keep Sunday different as part of the 'British weekend'. Many have not yet realised that they cannot have their cake and eat it. In addition, when asked if they 'needed' Sunday opening in a 1981 poll, only 10% said they did. When asked what they would buy on Sundays, even occasionally, D.I.Y. and garden shop items were the only two kinds of goods for which even 25 per cent thought they would use Sunday opening. This is hardly a case for allowing a total free-for-all in Sunday trading.

While Christians should not 'impose their views', they have a responsibility and right as conscientious citizens to express them. More fundamentally, if Christians believe the Bible reveals what is best for man, they have a responsibility to argue their case out of love for neighbour. If a day of rest, set aside specially for worship, family and friends, is a part of God's design, they must try to persuade other people. Christians believe they have been entrusted with the truth. They must not be afraid to say so. If they cease to be like salt, society will trample on them and throw out their message (Matt. 5:13).

4. SUNDAY TRADING WILL HELP UNEMPLOYMENT and bring economic benefits

Sunday trading will almost certainly **reduce** employment in the long run. Unless turnover of shops increases, job losses in terms of full-time equivalent are estimated at between 20,000 (Institute for Fiscal Studies) and 200,000 (USDAW). A lower number than this would lose jobs altogether as there would be a shift from full-time to part-time work, much of which might well be moonlighting. Job losses arise because many small shops will probably be driven out of business by the higher costs of Sunday opening. Turnover is unlikely to increase much as six days' spending will be spread over seven. At best, turnover could increase by 2-3 per cent if consumers save less, and if there

is a large increase of spending by tourists. This might then lead to a small increase over the long term of, say, 5,000-10,000 jobs.

5. SUNDAY TRADING WILL STRENGTHEN CHURCH LIFE by bringing more people to town on a Sunday

The effects of Sunday trading on church life will be mixed. There will be a possible benefit when shoppers see crowds entering a large church in town on a Sunday morning. Some may even decide they have time to leave their shopping for an hour and attend a service. Making it more difficult to go to church may help to weed out the less committed from the congregation, and make those remaining more conscious of their Christian identity. However, the churches will also suffer in many ways. In future, going to church could become a major hassle with shoppers and church-goers all looking for parking. Noise of shoppers and traffic will disturb services in many town churches on main roads. The 'weaker brother' may well be discouraged from coming by the competing attraction of the shops, or just to avoid the hassle of coming into town.

Another implication for the church will be the large number who will not be able to come to services because they will be required to work. There seems to be no way to protect people who want to go to church from being forced to work on Sundays. If only a few shops open, some may be able to change job, but as larger numbers of shops open, and with high unemployment, many Christians are likely to have to choose between holding their job and coming to church. In a subtle and quiet way, perhaps this is the beginning of religious persecution in Britain. Surely it is worth fighting for **religious freedom** for people to worship God if they want to. Christianity is still by far the largest religion in Britain and large numbers of church-going shop workers and managers will be affected.

6. THE LAW IS WIDELY DISREGARDED AND FULL OF ANOMALIES. There is no reasonable legal alternative to unrestricted Sunday trading so we have to accept it.

The law is not 'widely disregarded' as many suppose. In a survey of over 7,000 shops in 24 areas of England and Wales, only 6 per cent of shops were open on Sundays, and only one per cent were open illegally. Doubtless, there are anomalies in present legislation. The fact that pornographic magazines can be bought on a Sunday but not Bibles is often cited. However, most anomalies have little operational significance and are just used for scoring points in the debate. They generally have a sensible rationale behind them, so that magazines and newspapers may be sold as they are highly perishable, and thus need to be made available at weekends, whereas purchase of books can easily wait until the next week. Many laws involve anomalies or injustice at the point where the line is drawn. At the edge of an enterprise zone, a factory on one side of the road pays no rates while an identical factory 50 yards away on the other side of the road may pay £20,000 a year in rates. But few argue that all enterprise zones should be abolished for this reason. The Institution of Environmental

Health Officers, the shopworkers' union (USDAW), the Association of Independent Retailers and other groups all believe it possible to find a workable legal alternative to avoid a 'free-for-all' on Sundays. The issue is not one of legal feasibility, but of political will.

7. SUNDAY SHOPPING WILL HELP FAMILY LIFE. It will encourage family life by enabling families to go on shopping expeditions together and will benefit lonely individuals who are bored on Sundays

Family shopping expeditions are seldom the happy, relaxing occasions shown in television advertisements. More often, it is a strenuous and tiring business during which mothers would prefer not to have children in tow. In fact, rather than encouraging family life, in several ways Sunday trading will help to destroy it. An important key to happy family life is that all family members have one day of the week together, when no one in the family has to go off to work. Men spend nearly twice as much time at home on a Sunday as on a weekday, while shift workers often complain that their unsocial working hours disrupt family life. They are not around for recreational activities at the same time as everybody else. If restrictions on Sunday trading are abolished, we estimate that close to a million married women in retailing and supporting services (such as transport, banks, traffic wardens) will often have to be out working instead of being at home with their families. Many teenagers will be sucked into the work force on Sundays as a source of cheap labour, as is already happening on Saturdays, and cause a further disruption to family life. For a growing number of families, there will be no single day in the week when all family members will be at home together. Although for some younger single people Sunday shopping may alleviate boredom or loneliness, for many of the elderly Sunday shopping is likely to increase loneliness as it will prevent relatives from finding time to pay them a visit. With the escalating divorce rate, and growing numbers of one-parent families, surely the Government should be designing new ways to support family values, rather than seriously undermining the one family day of the week.

8. PEOPLE SHOULD BE FREE TO DO WHAT THEY WANT ON SUNDAY

This is one of the main arguments being used by the Right wing of the Conservative party, which places a high premium on increasing individual freedom and removing Government intervention in the economy. However, one of the roles of the law is to restrict a person's actions if they will harm another person's freedom. For example, the individual's right to take property (steal) is restricted because somebody else's freedom will be hurt in the process. So who will gain and who will be hurt if Sunday trading is allowed without restraint? Those who gain will be certain shoppers who then will not have to plan to buy what they want on six days, but will have the 'freedom' to shop on seven days. Some sections of the retail trade, like DIYs, will also gain additional business from Sunday opening.

However, several groups will be hurt if unrestricted Sunday trading is legalised. Of 2.3 million shopworkers, many do not want to work on a Sunday, but are unlikely to keep their jobs if they refuse. 83 per cent of independent retailers are opposed to unrestricted Sunday trading as it will raise their costs but will not increase their sales; indeed, many may be driven bankrupt by the extra overheads of opening seven days. Churches will lose peace and quiet as well as parking amenities which they enjoy for their services on a Sunday, and many in their congregations will not be able to go to church owing to job obligations. Many inner city residents and those living along main roads will lose their one day in the week away from the noise and bustle of traffic and shoppers. Is the extra 'freedom' of Sunday opening worth it at this cost?

There is more to the issue than the fact that some will gain and some will lose. The **material wants** of some will be satisfied at the expense of the **human needs** of others to rest, to be with their family and to nurture their spiritual life. As a society, we need to decide what matters most: the pursuit of unrestricted economic freedom, or the broader range of priorities, which have been part of the British way of life for generations.

9. SUNDAY TRADING IN SCOTLAND HAS NOT MADE MUCH DIFFERENCE. Sunday trading is allowed in Scotland but few shops bother to open. So why not allow it in England and Wales?

The Auld Committee concluded that 'economic, social and historical traditions vary so much (between England and other countries) that none could provide a reliable guide for us'. There are several reasons why experience in Scotland specifically cannot provide 'a reliable guide'. Many of the big chains have head offices in England. As long as their branches are not open in England and Wales, they have shown little interest in opening in Scotland. In Scotland, 37 per cent of the population are church members, but in England only 13 per cent (*Social Trends*, 1985, p. 163) so there is greater resistance to Sunday opening. A lower population density in Scotland, and a lower proportion owning cars, also makes shop opening less attractive than in England. In addition, local authorities in Scotland have the power to enact bye-laws to prevent shop opening in Scotland, so if ever shops start to open on a large scale, it can be prevented at the local level if public opinion is against it. This would not be an option under the Government's proposals.

10. THE ISSUE IS DECIDED ALREADY. Parliament has already voted with a majority of 120 to implement the recommendations of the Auld Committee. So there is no further point in fighting the issue.

Two years ago, a private member's Bill proposed what is now proposed by the Auld Committee. The Bill was encouraged by the Government and given extra time, but when a free vote was reluctantly conceded, it was heavily defeated. On 20 May, when the Government proposed a motion that the Auld Committee's

Continued on page 14

FROM INGLETON TO TEXARKANA

The Texarkana Reformed Baptist Church began in 1976 with 15 people. This year the handsome building shown below was dedicated. The church now has 45 members including three elders and two deacons. The assembly supports missionary work in a practical way. There is also interest in promoting Reformation. The church pay for 20 *R.T.* subscriptions to go to Nigeria. This kind of interest is unusual, and an example to us of a deep concern to promote the work.



SAVE OUR SUNDAY *(continued from page 13)*

recommendation for unrestricted Sunday trading be implemented, the Conservative party put on a three-line Whip, so Conservative MPs were under strong pressure to vote for the motion. However, 26 still voted against the Government. Next time an even larger number may vote against the Government if they feel enough pressure from their constituents. In addition, any Bill has to pass through a committee stage, where amendments and alterations can be introduced, and voting on each amendment depends heavily on the views of those on the committee. Again, the degree to which each committee member feels pressure from his own constituents is bound to influence his decisions.

So Christians must make their views known to their MP. A letter does not take long to write. There is strong evidence that letters do make a difference. If an MP receives even 50 letters on an issue, he will often think the matter over carefully. If he receives 500 he will probably vote with his constituents even if he favours another view as he is their representative. Issues like taking away student grants and putting VAT on books were changed largely by grassroots pressure from constituents. So do not give up hope. Write your letter and encourage friends to write too. For further information, or more detailed papers on these issues, write to us at the address given at the beginning of this article.



Wesley McNabb's turn to strike in rounders

The Carey Family Conference

The 1985 Carey Family conference took place in Beckett Park, Leeds, between July 29th and August 3rd. This is the second year in succession that this well-situated venue has been used. There were 135 people present from 35 churches (plus day-visitors). To share fellowship with like-minded Christians from so many places was very enjoyable and encouraging for all. The figures are a significant increase on those of previous years and must be a hopeful sign to all who are concerned to see the Reformed cause advance.

There were four speakers: David Kingdon of Leicester, who brought us some very valuable teaching on the subject, 'The Providence of God in the life of Joseph'. This was a change from the advertised programme, but I am sure I

speak for everyone when I say that the change was indeed a blessing from our wise and loving Father, as we were challenged not merely to talk about the sovereignty of God in our lives, but also to believe this doctrine wholeheartedly and to submit in every situation to him who does all things well. Erroll Hulse gave four addresses on varying themes: Guidance; studies of the life and theology of Jonathan Edwards, with particular reference to what Edwards believed were and were not signs of true revival; and a most helpful exposition of Revelation 6:1-8 showing us how to view disasters such as the present famine in Ethiopia. Peter Parkinson ably defended the doctrines of the bodily resurrection and the virgin birth of Christ, showing the utter deceitfulness and perniciousness of modern 'theological' liberalism, and informing us that the denials of these truths have gained widespread acceptance in the historic Protestant denominations of this country. This was certainly an eye-opener to those of us who were unaware of just how tragic the situation is. The speakers also emphasised in various ways the unscriptural and dangerous nature of today's neo-pentecostal movement.

We were not allowed to return home however without being strongly exhorted by Russell Williams, who led the last two sessions, to avoid treating the week of conference as simply an interlude in our Christian lives, but rather as something that would energise us to make greater efforts for the cause of the Gospel wherever we are placed. His stress that soulwinning is not in conflict with Calvinism was a call to us with our high view of the Lord, to expect great things from him and to attempt great things for him.

The daily prayer meetings were stirring times when the true God of Scripture was exalted. It was not simply a week of preaching and praying though, for there were many other activities to enjoy: sporting events such as the drawn North-South soccer match, swimming every afternoon, athletics, a tug of war, tennis and table-tennis competitions. There were outings to places of interest (Bolton Abbey, and Haworth, the home of the Brontës) and there was enough free time to spend browsing through the well-stocked bookstall or just to chat to Christian friends old and new. Mealtimes were also enjoyable in this respect.

Children up to the age of fourteen had their own programme in the mornings — indeed this was one of the burdens of the prayer-meetings — that God in his sovereign grace and mercy would save those children and young people who were as yet far from him.

More than anything else however, what was most marked during the week was the desire that our God would pour out his Holy Spirit in revival even in our generation, to the glory of the Lord Jesus Christ. As someone new to the Carey Family Conference, this was what made the greatest impression upon me.

Mark Znidericz.

For cassettes write to Carey Recordings, 361 Aigburth Road, LIVERPOOL L17.

In his first article in the last issue Jim van Zyl emphasised spiritual discernment as a Christian duty. The implications of 1 Corinthians 2:15 ('He that is spiritual judgeth all things') were examined in several ways. Discernment was shown to be necessary because of the remains of the old nature in the believer; because of the activity of Satan; because of confusion in the modern church — often stemming from failure to learn the lessons of church history. This second article stresses practical matters.

Spiritual Discernment – the Practical Procedure

by Jim van Zyl

Do you remember Christopher Robin? And do you recall him as the 'Knight-in-Armour' in one of A. A. Milne's famous poems? It runs as follows:

Whenever I'm a shining Knight,
I buckle on my armour tight;
And then I look about for things,
Like Rushings-out, and Rescuings,
And Savings from the Dragon's Lair,
And fighting all the Dragons there.
And sometimes when our fights begin,
I think I'll let the Dragons win . . .
And then I think perhaps I won't,
Because they're Dragons, and I don't.

Like most children Christopher Robin did not fear the dragons. Why? Simply because he did not know enough to make him afraid. He just did not know any better. As a child he lacked discernment!

Many Christians are like Christopher Robin. Basic 'childishness' or spiritual immaturity often prohibits them from discerning between genuine and false movements in Christianity. Like Christopher Robin they just do not know any better. He may be pardoned. Undiscerning Christians *could and should* know better.

Previously we emphasised the duty of every Christian to discern. Now we look at the method of discernment. How can this ability be developed? There is no easy way, but a firm grasp of the following suggestions, put in question form, will go some way in remedying this chronic disease. Next time, before

simply endorsing some new 'religious' idea, scheme, programme, book or method first ask questions like these:

1. Is it scripturally and doctrinally correct?

Isaiah 8:20 says clearly: 'To the law and to the testimony! Whoever will not speak according to this word, there shall surely be no dawn for him' (Berkeley Version). In all Christian activity the Bible must be our final authority — not tradition, sincerity or expediency. Take a concrete example, namely, the increasing co-operation between evangelicals and non-evangelicals in interdenominational evangelism. Co-operation between avowed evangelicals is understandable, indeed a wonderful witness. But what of co-operation between evangelicals and those who believe in baptismal regeneration, a purely social Christ, sacramental grace, or deny Christ's substitutionary atonement, or hold a Barthian view of Scripture? How can two men holding such differing views engage in *meaningful* evangelism? Why does John warn against such collaboration in 2 John 10-11?

2. Will it glorify God?

Christian activity must always reflect God's character, his profound love, majesty and holiness. Certainly it should never detract from it. Some years ago the writer attended a youth rally. Amongst other items there was a secular skit about some drunks in a bar who end up in a brawl. It caused great amusement. Indeed the leader even

thanked God for the fun we as Christian young people were having! But let us be honest. Does this kind of thing reflect God's character? Is this Paul's intention when he speaks of our 'joy in the Holy Ghost'? (Rom. 14:17). The very thought is blasphemous and evil. And yet how often in men's meetings, social evenings, home entertainment or Christian 'parties', while not going to the above extreme, do we blandly accept that which is unedifying, carnal, or even suggestive? Let us always ask: Will God be recognised by the world for what he is, by what I am now engaged in?

3. Is our sense of priorities balanced?

God's priorities are, broadly speaking, his own and Christ's glorification, the edifying of his people and the evangelisation of the unconverted. Lack of discernment here always leads to spiritual lopsidedness. Thus a Christian who supports the men's meetings, or a local missionary prayer meeting, or sings in the choir, but fails to attend the church prayer meeting and Bible study has got his priorities hopelessly confused, for it is undoubtedly here where God's people are edified. Not that the former are wrong; it is only a question of balanced priorities. Again any church spending months preparing a cantata (even robbing valuable Sunday School time!), and boasting an impressive number of other activities, but which fails to indulge in constant, dynamic evangelism as a permanent feature of church life is confusing its priorities. Do we wonder that the hungry sheep look up and are not fed?

4. Is it honest?

A strange thing to say to Christians? Not really. Dishonesty is so subtle that we need a double portion of discernment to detect it. Mock-humility, exaggeration in speech, artificial breeziness, self-pity, self-advertisement, self-assertiveness, and touchiness are all forms of it. So is slyness, gossip, sexual suggestiveness or lame excuses to avoid responsibility. In

all this we are not being true to our Christian calling. Returning for a moment to evangelistic co-operation (see I), it is sometimes said that one of the ways to reach Liberals with the gospel is to include them in such crusades. But how honest is this? You invite a Liberal to co-operate in such a venture, but secretly you hope you will also catch him in the evangelistic crossfire! It is also contradictory: you do not evangelise with a man who himself needs evangelisation! Far better to enter into frank and open dialogue with non-evangelicals; in so doing, both sides will know exactly where they stand. Paul was never afraid to argue from a basis of Christian truth. 'Finally brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honourable, whatsoever things are just . . .' (Phil. 4:8).

5. Does it obscure the gospel?

In a young people's meeting, women's group, evangelistic drive or Sunday School Anniversary programme someone comes up with an idea. It may have a Wild West theme, be a gospel pop-group, a Moon Buffet, Teen Talent Tableau or be a kind of Religious Variety Concert. It sounds new, novel and bright. Later when it is over, it is stated that '... a good time was had by all'. Without wishing to be negative and quarrelsome we should realise that this kind of approach is in serious danger of obscuring the real gospel. Why? Let Dr. J. I. Packer answer in this analysis: 'Is it calculated to make them see and feel the greatness of God, and the greatness of their sin and need, and the greatness of the grace of Christ? Is it calculated to make them aware of the awful majesty and holiness of God? Will it help them to realise that it is a fearful thing to fall into his hands? Or is this way of presenting Christ so light and casual and cosy and jolly as to make it hard for the hearers to feel that the gospel is a matter of any consequence, save as a pick-me-up for life's misfits? It is a gross

insult to God, and a real dis-service to men, to cheapen and trivialise the gospel by one's presentation of it.' Not for a moment do we dispute the need for new forms of communication in our age, but such forms must never obscure God's grace by casting it into some bizarre novel format. That is only mangling God's truth, not communicating it meaningfully.

6. Does it underestimate the role of the local church?

Some months ago, at a ministers' fraternal, a well-known interdenominational evangelist was asked to state his doctrinal position. It was notable for a very significant omission. There was not a word about the church! This is remarkable, for a study of the Acts and Epistles of the New Testament reveal that the entire evangelistic and missionary enterprise sprang from within the local churches. Paul adds that Christ loved and died for the church; so important did our Lord consider it (Eph. 5:25). If therefore I find the church uninviting and uninteresting; if I constantly promote Christian work outside the church, but seldom within; if I think of evangelism as essentially coming from outside the church led by specialists, instead of the constant, dynamic outflow of Spirit-filled Christians from *within* the church, then I am underestimating the God-ordained role of the church.

7. Is preaching central?

Here we mean the actual, literal, verbal communication of God's Word in the power of the Spirit. Paul makes this emphatic emphasis in 1 Corinthians 1:21, '... it pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe'. Again in Romans 10:14 '... and how shall they believe in him of whom they have not heard? and how shall they hear without a preacher?' And then we only properly preach when we take pains over every word, phrase, text, passage, chapter and book that we in-

tend expounding. Thus if any Christian meeting is dominated by items — 'special' or otherwise — and not by the exposition of God's truth, then according to the Bible it has failed to adequately present God's revelation to either Christian or non-Christian. We must never forget that we are '... born again ... by the Word of God ...' (1 Pet. 1:23), not by special items.

The Bible's remedy for God's people who have fallen upon spiritually hard times (as today's church is experiencing) is three-fold; repentance, reformation and revival (2 Chr. 7:14; 2 Chr. 34; Ezra; Nehemiah; Rev. 2:3). And discernment is one of the pre-requisites for repentance and reformation. Let us then study God's Word and pray and think and analyse our condition; then let us, like John Bunyan's Mr. Valiant-for-Truth, go forth with spiritual discernment to do battle for God's truth.

Suggested bibliography for further reading on Spiritual Discernment:

- Christian Sanity*. A. T. Schofield: Oliphants. (Not the Schofield of the Bible by that name.)
- Some Light on Queer Christians*. David R. Smith: Rushworth Literature Enterprise.
- The Religious Affections*. Jonathan Edwards: Banner of Truth.
- Conversions, Psychological and Spiritual*. D. M. Lloyd-Jones: I.V.P.
- The Forgotten Spurgeon*. Iain Murray: Banner of Truth.
- Evangelism and The Sovereignty of God*. J. I. Packer: I.V.P.
- The Significance of Barth's Theology*. Fred H. Klooster: Baker.
- The Christian's Great Interest*. William Guthrie: Banner of Truth.
- The Burning Heart: John Wesley, Evangelist*. Skevington Wood: Paternoster Press.
- George Whitefield*. A. Dallimore: 2 vols. Banner of Truth. George Whitefield's Journal's Banner of Truth.

The subject of this article may at first sight seem abstract and unrelated to our salvation and our lives. However, this is far from the truth and we are thankful first to Gary Phillips who drew our attention to the neglect of this subject and who sent us his research materials, and second to Gwynne Williams who worked them into this format which we trust our readers will find edifying.

The Sonship and Eternal Generation of Christ

Gary Phillips and Gwynne Williams

Very little reliable material has been published on this practical, important subject. A fresh study of the doctrine is long overdue. The question before us is whether Christ *BECAME* the Son of God, or was he Son from all eternity? The answer will be found in a brief study of the biblical use of the term and the interpretations of this usage by writers whose theological pedigrees vary widely.

The biblical use of the term 'Son of God'

It is important to realise that 'Son of God' has a wide range of meanings in the Old Testament. The term is often applied to angels as in: 'Now there came a day when the sons of God came to present themselves before the Lord' (Job 1:6). It is used of the Israelite nation in Exodus 4:22: 'Thus saith the Lord, Israel is my son, even my firstborn'. The phrase is also used of the Jewish king: 'I will be his father, and he shall be my son' (2 Sam. 7:14).

On another occasion it applies in a very special way to the promised Messiah: 'I will declare this decree: the Lord hath said unto me: "Thou art my son; this day have I begotten thee"' (Ps. 2:7). In the New Testament Christians are called sons of God as a result of adoption: 'For ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus' (Gal. 3:26).

The question is, what significance are we to attach to the designation Son of God when used of Jesus? There have been three main suggestions.

Messianic Sonship

This is a widespread view among Liberal scholars. Their claim is that Jesus is not himself God. Don Cupitt has summarised this position in his assertion that the 'basic Christian affirmation about Jesus was from the first and still is, not that he is God but that he is the Christ'.¹ Anyone holding this view has to dismiss whole sections of the Bible as unbelievable. It is therefore not an option for those who hold that God's Word is totally reliable in all matters.

Temporal Sonship

A number of commentators, while accepting the eternal and divine person of Christ, believe that he became the Son at some particular point in history. Four different times have been suggested.

The first is the incarnation. This view has been held for many centuries and has enjoyed renewed interest during the last 150 years. It is the most widely held of the temporal sonship theories. In recent years it has been closely linked with some of the Exclusive Brethren.

Robert Shank, a former American Baptist minister, now with the South National Church of Christ in Missouri has argued in its favour. He has written: 'In the incarnation, the Word, becoming Son of Man, became also Son of God, a prospect realised in time in the incarnation. 'Thou art my son, this day have I begotten thee' (Heb. 1:5). In the incarnation the Word became the Son of God and Son of Man.'² Shank goes on

to declare that 'he became Son of God in the act of taking on him the seed of Abraham'.³

Some have supposed, quite mistakenly, that when the angel said to Mary, 'The holy thing which shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God' (Luke 1:35), he meant that Christ's sonship began at the incarnation. However, what the angel actually says is not that Jesus shall *become* Son of God, but that he shall be *called* Son of God.

A second view that Christ's sonship was inaugurated at the resurrection, is based on Paul's declaration of Christ 'Who as to his human nature was a descendant of David and who through the Spirit was declared with power to be the Son of God by his resurrection from the dead' (Rom. 1:4). What Paul is actually saying here is not that Jesus is Son of God because he rose from the dead. On the contrary, Paul says that he rose from the dead precisely because he was Son of God.

A third view claims that Christ became Son of God at his exaltation. As proof Hebrews 5:5 is quoted: 'So also Christ glorified not himself to be made a High Priest; but he that said unto him, Thou art my Son; today have I begotten thee'.

The major criticism of this view is that Christ is repeatedly and specifically called Son by the Father prior to his exaltation.

The fourth view connects Christ's sonship with his baptism. Immediately after Jesus was baptised, God declared 'This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased' (Matt. 3:17). A close examination of the verse shows that there is no suggestion of Christ entering into or embarking upon his sonship. The status of son already belonged to him. This verse makes sense only if the words 'in whom I am well pleased' are addressed to one who is already a son.

Three questions arise from this brief outline. Firstly, did Jesus historically become Son? If so, when? Was it from his birth, or on the occasion of his baptism, or resurrection, or at the point of exaltation? Secondly, is it as Professor W. Lohff of Munich has suggested that the divine sonship 'is something imparted to Jesus in stages' so that Jesus is understood as achieving full sonship through a series of events? Thirdly, may it not be that the texts argued above do not refer exclusively to historic events, but to events based on a previous eternal event? The weight of evidence is with this final possibility which will be outlined below.

A good illustration of this truth is provided by our present monarch. There was a considerable time lag between the accession of Queen Elizabeth II to the throne on the death of her father on February 6th, 1952 and her coronation on June 2nd 1953. Yet no one disputed that throughout the intermediary period she possessed the full office, status and authority belonging to a monarch. In a similar way, the incarnation, resurrection and ascension of Christ are but declarations of an eternal relationship within the Godhead.

The Eternal Sonship of Christ
Orthodox theologians through the centuries have held the view that Christ is the *eternal* Son of God. Much discussion has centred around the words 'Thou art my son, this day have I begotten thee' (Heb. 1:5). The problem is twofold. Firstly, does begetting refer to the Son in his eternal existence, or to the humanity of the incarnate Jesus? The answer to this question lies in the context of the verse. In the first four verses of the chapter the author has demonstrated that the Son is superior to the angels in all things. In order to underline what he has already said, he declares that Christ is the only begotten Son of God in verse 5. Thus the verse

must be taken as referring to the eternal state of Christ.

The second problem lies in the interpretation of the phrase 'this day'. In the Greek text, the verb is in the present tense, signifying a present state resulting from a past completed action. This means that at the precise moment that God decreed 'Thou art my son' Jesus was already the Son as a result of a previous act of begetting. The verse therefore cannot refer to any past or future begetting. The begetting is not an historical event, but an eternal fact.

The great definition of Chalcedon sums this up in its great phrase 'Begotten of the Father before all ages as to his Godhead'. That language is echoed in many subsequent confessions of faith. Many modern authors argue that the words 'this day' indicate a specific time in which Christ became the Son of God. However this is to overlook the fact that that 'this day' is governed by the verb 'begotten'. If (as has been shown above), the begetting is eternal, then the same must be true of the expression 'this day'.

Augustine certainly took this point of view: "This day" is according to the saying "This day have I begotten thee" whereby the Catholic Faith proclaims the eternal generation . . . of the only begotten Son.' Louis Berkhof gives what is perhaps the best summary of the position: 'It is that eternal and necessary act of the first person in the Trinity, whereby He, within the divine Being, is the ground of a second personal subsistence like His own, and puts this second person in possession of the whole divine essence, without any division, alienation or change.'⁴

A further important consideration is the emphatic use of the personal pronoun in this text. In Greek, personal pronouns are only added when special emphasis is required. Therefore the

sense of the verse is 'I myself and no other have begotten you'. Thus the only conclusion available to us is that Christ is the *eternal* Son of God.

Some conclusions may now be drawn:

- (1) The sonship and eternal generation of Christ is not subject to any human analogies. It is a theological matter, not a philosophical or linguistic issue.
- (2) Christ's sonship is eternal, otherwise it loses its unique quality.
- (3) Any attempt to limit the sonship to a merely temporal relationship depersonalises the Trinity. As there are three Persons within the Trinity, so there must of necessity be relations entered into by those Persons, one with the other. As they are eternal Persons, so the relationships are themselves eternal.
- (4) Those who deny the eternal nature of the sonship of Christ cannot refer to him as Son of God. Such a phrase is robbed of its meaning if its eternal status is denied.
- (5) Some textual specialists, including the evangelical Tregelles, and Westcott and Hort, suggest that 'the only begotten God' is the best reading of John 1:18. If this is true, it adds further support to the doctrine of eternal generation.
- (6) A whole series of texts teach that Christ entered this world in the relationship of son to father, for example Galatians 4:4; John 3:16 and Romans 8:3.

Application

It is all too easy to lose sight of the fact that theology is above all a practical subject. In the midst of our textual study, assessment of scholarly opinion and linguistic argument, it is tempting to forget that the eternal sonship of Christ is an integral part of God's plan of salvation. This brief study may seem totally unconnected from real life. Such could not be further from the truth.

(continued opposite)



Victor Budgen's book, 'Charismatics and the Word of God', published by E.P. is due on September 20th.

Carey Conference for Ministers

High Leighs, Hoddesdon, Herts.

November 26th-28th, 1985

Speakers:

Donald MacLeod, Don Garlington, Bob Sheehan, Geoff Thomas, Victor Budgen, David Kingdon, Henry Mahan (USA).

Subjects

Adam and the effects of his sin — Bob Sheehan; The theology of Feminism — David Kingdon; The sense of God in worship — Victor Budgen; Valuable lessons from the lives of Lester Roloff and Rolfe Barnhard — Geoff Thomas; The Last Adam and the World to come — Don Garlington.

Suggestions were made about subjects in *RT84* (front inside cover) but to find those who have the time to research the materials is not easy. The subjects above are fairly certain.

For details write to John Rubens, 10 Glebe Road, WELWYN, Herts.

(Continued from previous page)

A major weakness of much contemporary evangelism lies in this very area. It has little or no doctrinal basis. If this article is to serve a worthwhile purpose, let it inspire God's people to preach Jesus Christ to a needy generation. We do those hovering on the brink of a lost eternity the ultimate disservice if we present them with a Christ who is no more than a theological abstraction. Their salvation hangs on whether or not they join the countless Thomases through the ages and confess Christ as 'My Lord and my God'.

If Christ was but an ordinary man who was somehow used of God in a special way, he can contribute nothing to my

salvation. If he became the Son of God at some point in his career, he is again of no great significance to me. Only the one who from eternity is the Son of God can offer full and free salvation to my soul. Liberal theology, emanating as it does from unbelief, is a theology of despair. Theology rooted in the Scriptures brings new life. Thanks be to God for his inestimable gift!

References

¹ Don Cupitt, *The Debate about Christ*. It is assumed that readers are familiar with the doctrine of the deity of Christ. The following works are recommended for those who are not familiar; Leon Morris, *The Lord from Heaven* (I.V.P.), and Stuart Olyott, *The Three are One* (E.P.).

² *Elect in the Son* p. 60.

³ *ibid* p. 68.

⁴ *Systematic Theology*, p. 94.

In his first discussion about exhortation, published in the last issue, Baruch Maoz showed that it is 'one instrument meant to help us avoid straying from God's way'. Calling attention to Hebrews 3:13 ('... exhort one another daily ... lest any of you be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin'), the author first of all described biblical exhortation, demonstrated that love is always the motive for its use and then gave practical advice on how to exhort. Exhortation was shown to be a duty, not just a privilege. The first article concluded with useful advice on how to respond to exhortation. The opening section of part two completes the subject of response to exhortation, after which the theme is further developed and helpfully illustrated from the epistle to Philemon.

Exhortation

PART TWO

by Baruch Maoz

'Now I rejoice, not that you were made sorrowful, but that you sorrow to repentance: for you were made sorrowful after a godly manner, not so that you might be hurt in any way. Godly sorrow works repentance which leads to a salvation which is not to be repented of; The sorrow of the world works death. See for yourselves how true this is: You sorrowed in a godly way and what carefulness it wrought in you! Yes, what cleaning of yourselves, what vehement desire, what zeal, what revenge! In all things you have proven yourselves to be clear in this matter' (2 Cor. 7:9-11).

This exhortation by Paul to the Corinthians was occasioned by sin in the congregation. It was not an easy thing for him to do; he loved them and did not want to cause them needless sorrow. Happily, while his letter did cause them to sorrow, it was 'sorrow after a godly manner', a sorrow which lead them to action and to corrective measures.

That is how we should respond to exhortation. As it is written, "Turn you at my reproof" (Prov. 1:2-3): Don't get angry or insulted. Examine the facts and your own heart. If there is substance to the exhortation, accept it, confess your sin and do your best to correct anything wrong. Remember, God forgives you by the grace of Jesus, not because of your action. It is Jesus who atones, but do not think you can go on sinning without punishment, especially if you've already been exhorted. If, on the other hand, the exhortation is not justified, try to indicate this to your exhorter, but do so in a humble spirit.

How to treat someone who accepts exhortation

Jesus said, 'Forgive, so that you will be forgiven'. We need to learn not only how to exhort, but also how to accept exhortation. Not only how to be exhorted, but also how to forgive. Once our exhortation has been sincerely accepted, we are to forgive. It is our duty to restore such a one unto full fellowship and not allow

him to be further burdened by the weight of his misdeed. Receive each other as Christ has received you unto the glory of God: freely, willingly, joyfully and with sincere love. The heavens rejoice when one person repents, and so should we.

How to treat someone who refuses exhortation

‘If he neglect to hear the church, consider him as an heathen and a publican.’ One who refuses to accept exhortation, to examine himself and correct his ways, proclaims himself to be a non-believer. He prefers sin to God’s truth and would rather defend his own pride than God’s glory. If all legitimate means have been exhausted and the person concerned still refuses to repent, we are duty bound neither to consider nor treat him as a brother until correction has borne its saving, sanctifying fruit.

We have seen, then, that to refrain from the duty to give and accept exhortation, is a terrible deed. By nursing evil and negative thoughts, bitterness will spread and fellowship will be damaged to the point threatening our fellowship with God. Instead of growing in God’s grace, our hearts will be ‘hardened through the deceitfulness of sin’. In consequence, we will stray from God in our hearts and finally depart from his ways altogether. Let us, therefore, never take sin lightly nor neglect to examine our hearts each time we are exhorted.

It is important that we overcome our uneasiness about exhortation and begin to follow God’s commands by both exhorting and accepting exhortation. This is a duty incumbent and necessary to all of us. The way of loving exhortation is the way of life and truth.

May God help us to give and to accept exhortation as is befitting those who wish to walk in his ways and do all his will.

The letter to Philemon

The letter to Philemon is one example among many in the scriptures on the subject of exhortation. It was written by Paul around AD 59/60, during his first imprisonment in Rome. Philemon was a wealthy Christian who lived in Colosse, and his home was used by the local congregation as a meeting place.

In the course of years, Philemon had become a debtor to Paul. It is not clear whether this was due to his having first heard the gospel from Paul or because Paul had saved his life at some time, or simply due to the benefits he had from the apostle’s service in the gospel.

Philemon had a servant named Onesimus who had betrayed his master’s trust, stolen his property and fled to Rome. In Rome he had somehow heard the gospel from Paul and repented. In the course of getting to know each other, Paul and Onesimus discovered they had a common acquaintance: Philemon. Paul learnt from Onesimus of his misdeeds and insisted Onesimus must accept the responsibility for his deeds, return to his master and carry out his duties, all of this by force of his new set of motives, the fruit of the gospel in his life.

Paul wishes to make sure that Onesimus will be accepted by both Philemon and the congregation at Colosse. He therefore sends Onesimus with Tychicus, who was to be in the neighbourhood anyhow, committing into their hands a letter addressed to Philemon. The letter is brief yet full of weighty lessons, a superb example of how to carry out the duty of exhortation.

Onesimus must face his sin and deal with it; Paul will not allow him to ignore it. He must face his master and correct what he has done wrong. But Paul makes it easier for Onesimus to do this by sending Tychicus with him and by writing this letter.

He addresses Philemon in the most gentle way possible in order to ensure that Philemon, too, will fulfil his Christian duty toward Onesimus.

Paul begins by setting the stage. He mentions the good reputation that Philemon has acquired as a generous, loving person who does not discriminate between believers but treats them all with sincere love: 'Hearing of your love and faith, which you have toward the Lord Jesus and toward all saints' (v. 5). In this way Paul subtly urges Philemon to remember his duty towards Onesimus. He reminds him too, of the Lord's grace and of the fact that the good we must do must be done 'in Christ', that is, because of him and from him. Here now is another opportunity for Philemon to do something 'in Christ'.

Paul further reminds Philemon of God's grace, of the duty of a Christian to be willing to suffer, of the duty to love and forgive. In verses 8-9 he beseeches, allows Philemon opportunity to think about the issue, and then decide and act out of his own volition rather than by force of some authoritative demand: 'For love's sake I would rather beseech you'. Paul's loving, graceful way is in fact more binding upon Philemon than if he were to command.

Paul now introduces Onesimus as his 'son' (v. 10) and as Philemon's 'brother' (v. 16). Philemon should love Onesimus because they are now brothers; the test of Philemon's love will be his readiness to forgive. The entire relationship between master and slave is now altered because of Christ, and Philemon is no longer free to hate or to reject Onesimus.

Paul invested every effort to make it easier for Philemon to deal with his slave — his brother — as Christians ought to deal with each other.

We do not know what Philemon did following receipt of this letter, but in light of his reputation, we suppose this lovely little letter indeed had its intended effect so that Onesimus and Philemon lived together in a way that glorified God. One would need a heart of stone in order to ignore such pleas and act contrary to them.

Let us, too, learn from Paul how to treat each other and our own sins. Let us forgive so that we will be forgiven. Let us confess our sins and accept exhortation so that we will have fellowship with each other and the blood of Jesus Christ will cleanse us from all our iniquities.

Why did Jesus teach with parables?

The early chapters of Mark's Gospel are devoted to our Lord's ministry in Galilee. The miracles drew large crowds to the point that it was difficult for Christ to have privacy for prayer (1:35), or to move without being hemmed in. What kind of teaching did he employ when he was surrounded by these crowds of people?

Mark 4:1-34 provides an answer and at the same time forms the largest unit in his Gospel devoted entirely to the teaching ministry of Christ. It is surprising to find the use of parables so prominent.

By any standard the parabolic form of teaching used by our Lord was arresting and daring. A parable is an earthly story with a spiritual meaning or message. In the three parables reported here the use of metaphor is dominant. Metaphor is the use of figurative language in a literal fashion. For instance Jesus said, 'I am the door', and 'I am the true vine'. He spoke too about his flesh being bread and his blood being wine. That is a strong way to assert a truth.

In the narrative before us we are confronted by the problem of why Jesus spoke almost exclusively in parables. Mark tells us 'He did not say anything to them without using a parable' (v. 34). This does not mean that he did not employ direct teaching at all, because such is recorded in many places. Rather we understand that the use of parables predominated.

We should note well that the three parables repeated here by Mark are examples only. Verse 33 says that with many similar parables Jesus spoke the word to them, as much as they could understand.

The account by Mark provokes the question, Why did he confine himself almost exclusively to using parables? And what are we to understand by this difficult quotation from Isaiah 6:9,19?

He said, 'Go and tell this people: Be ever hearing, but never understanding; be ever seeing, but never perceiving'. Make the heart of this people calloused; make their ears dull and close their eyes. Otherwise they might see with their eyes, hear with their ears, understand with their hearts and turn and be healed.

I will explain first why he used parables and then we will be in a better position to understand the citation from Isaiah and what it means.

Why Jesus Used Parables

Altogether 30 different parables are recorded in the Synoptic Gospels. The composition, beauty, colour, power and originality of these parables or stories highlight the marvellous wisdom of Christ. Rich wisdom is presented to us in the OT books of Proverbs and Ecclesiastes, but when we come to the parables of Jesus, a new form of wise teaching is opened to us. We could say of the parables that they are wisdom in action. While in most cases one central lesson lies at the

heart of the parable, we can never feel that we have exhausted the meaning. There is a vitality about these stories which captures the imagination. If properly used they are inexhaustible sources of spiritual vitality and refreshment.

But why did Jesus wrap the truth in these stories? Why does he speak indirectly? The answer is that if he had presented the truth in the most direct way the people would have been compelled to decide for him or against him immediately. When, for instance, he did speak directly and with a clarity as bright as the sun, not only the crowds but also his own disciples 'turned back and no longer followed him!' (Jn. 6:66). Likewise when he plainly told his own townsfolk and neighbours in their own synagogue who he was, and told them the truth about their own condition, they rose up in hatred and violence to destroy him! (Luke 4:28-30). Similarly when Jesus was in Jerusalem and the Pharisees challenged him, he told them plainly who he was. They then tried to stone him! (Jn. 8:58,59).

To have spoken clearly at this stage would have precipitated unbelief and rejection. Instead he employed parables which would settle in their minds, arouse their consciences, quicken their imaginations and invite them to further meditation and study. Especially are the parables designed to test sincerity. If a person is sincere he will accept the truth he knows and enquire after further truth. But if a person is not prepared to obey the truth but finds it unpleasant because it demands obedience, repentance or sacrifice, he will draw back from it, resist it, and put it away from himself. He will reject the truth.

This interpretation accords with the explanation provided by our Lord in verses 21-25. If a sincere man discovers light he will welcome it. He will set up that light in his own heart and by it begin to reform his life. He will not only set up that light in his own private life he will begin to live by it in his social and public life.

This accords too with the saying of Jesus, 'Whoever has will be given more, and whoever does not have, even what he has will be taken from him.' A man who hears the truth and embraces it will look for and search for more truth and find it. But he who loves darkness rather than light will quench the light that he has because it convicts him and is unpleasant to him. When he quenches the light and turns away from it he grieves the Holy Spirit; he grieves God. By rejecting the truth he brings God's judgment upon himself. God sends him the judgment of judicial blindness. That is, God no longer helps that person see the truth but gives him over to a reprobate mind (see Rom. 1:21). This brings us to that difficult quotation by our Lord of Isaiah 6:9,10.

What Does 'Be ever hearing, but never understanding' Mean?

How could God tell Isaiah the prophet to make the heart of the people calloused and stop their ears and close their eyes? (Is. 6:9,10). That in fact is what happened to them under his preaching, and that is what happened to many under the preaching of Christ.

To see and not see, hear and not hear, was a paradoxical Greek proverb, used by Demosthenes and Aeschylus to signify a mere external sensuous perception without intellectual or moral conviction. The Scribes and Pharisees prided themselves on their knowledge but when they were confronted by the moral demands of Christ and when the Scriptures required them to forsake their own self-righteousness and trust in God's true provision, they refused. They hardened their hearts. They closed their eyes. They shut their ears. They brought judgment upon themselves. This is confirmed by the words of our Lord as cited by Matthew 13:11-15. 'The knowledge of the secrets of the kingdom of heaven has been given to you, but not to them. Whoever has will be given more, and he will have an abundance. Whoever does not have, even what he has will be taken from him. This is why I speak to them in parables: 'Through seeing, they do not see; though hearing, they do not hear or understand! In them is fulfilled the prophecy of Isaiah.' Matthew then cites Isaiah 6:9,10.

The Three Parables Explained — The Sower, The Seed Growing Secretly, and The Mustard Seed

We should note the similarity of these three parables chosen by Mark for his report. They all have to do with plants and growing. They all illustrate spiritual life and vigour.

We do well to observe the prominence of the parable of the Sower. Of all parables this is the most fundamental because it tells us what the gospel is all about. Jesus expected his disciples to understand this parable. 'Don't you understand this parable,' he asked, 'How then will you understand any parable?'

The main points emerging from this parable are as follows: First, it highlights the great importance of sowing the Word of God throughout the world among all peoples, all language groups, all tribes, all ages, all kinds, rich and poor, simple and educated, men and women, Jews and Gentiles.

Second, the words of Scripture once sown produce different results. Some will be encouraging because at least they will listen, but very quickly the Word will be gone. They will forget it or allow Satan to remove it from them. Others will be much more encouraging. They will actually make a profession of faith in Christ, will progress in knowledge and may even be baptised and join the Church. Then, alas, they will fall away because of difficulty or persecution. Jesus says they will quickly fall away. Yet others make much progress but unhappily the weeds choke them. Worldly concerns, money, ambitions, the love of pleasure — these things strangle their spiritual lives and they fall away. One of the most prevalent mistakes in the evangelical world of Christians today is to pronounce conversion results in a wholly unwise and unwarranted way.

Third, the parable tells us of the dynamic power of true spiritual life. The seed that survives reproduces itself 30, 60 or even 100 times. The Christian life must

never be underestimated. We have many examples recorded in Scripture, in history and in our own generation of believers who have been exceedingly fruitful in bringing glory to God. The life of the Triune God in the souls of men is the life of omnipotence. In our weakness we must not forget God's strength!

This principle is illustrated by the parable of the Mustard Seed, so small that it can scarcely be seen by the human eye, yet it produces a tree, huge in proportion. In Scripture, trees are used to illustrate Kingdoms (Dan. 4:12, Ez. 17:23, 31:6). 'The day will come when the Kingdom of God will surpass in glory the mightiest kingdoms of the earth, for it is the consequence of God's sovereign action' (William Lane). The mustard seed is the word proclaimed by Christ. It is a word that will cause Christ's great Kingdom to expand. Of his rule and government there will be no end (Is. 9:6,7). His Kingdom will break in pieces and destroy all other kingdoms (Dan. 2:44). His Kingdom will become a huge mountain that will fill the whole earth (Dan. 2:35).

I have not forgotten the parable in the sequence which tells of the Seed Growing Secretly. Mark is the only one who reports this parable. In most parables we should look for a single main lesson. Here the point is the divine life inherent in spiritual growth. The Holy Spirit brings the seed to life and then to grow, increase and come to maturation. We can see the outward growth but all our worrying and fretting has no effect whatever on the inward growth and advance of God's work in souls. The parable is designed to strengthen our confidence in the work of the Spirit. He will convince the world of sin, righteousness and judgment to come (Jn. 16:8-11). He who begins a good work in us will complete it (Phil. 1:16). He is working day and night. He is working silently but effectively in all God's people.

Foremost Lessons

Reviewing the whole section and especially remembering the nature and purpose of parables, we should note the word of warning, 'Consider carefully what you hear' (v. 24). How many are lost because they refuse to listen! How carefully do you listen?

A principle lesson for those who are involved in teaching the gospel is the example of our Lord. 'He spoke the word to them, as much as they could understand' (v. 33). He calculated their ability and receptivity and taught accordingly. We should emulate his wisdom. Note he did not compromise about the depth of truth or its factual nature, but employed the parable method wisely. Perhaps we have neglected the parables especially in speaking to those who do not believe.

Also foremost in this section is the fact that the struggle for spiritual life can be very intense. It is frightening to think of shallow soil or of the desperate struggle to escape the strangling coils of worldly influence. The battle is for eternal life. Have you eternal life? Are you sure of your foundation? Are you in weedy ground? Is the power of the Spirit in your life? Is there fruit? Are you thinking in terms of bearing much spiritual fruit?

Daniel Rowland

a review by John Beattie

Daniel Rowland and the Great Awakening in Wales, Eifion Evans, 390 pages, £9.95, Banner of Truth.

Daniel Rowland (1711-1790) was described by J. C. Ryle as one of the spiritual giants of the eighteenth century. Lady Huntingdon considered him to be second only to Whitefield. Howell Harris wrote of him, 'In his pulpit he is second to St. Paul'.

I confess that I had never heard of Daniel Rowland and knew nothing of the great evangelical awakening in Wales. I suspect that there are many for whom this is also new.

With my retirement in prospect at the end of this year I purchased this volume intending to use it to fill up golden hours of peaceful tranquillity, D.V. As I stretched up to place the volume in its allotted position I thought that I might as well glance through it. My interest increased. The story took hold of me. I could not put it down. Three days later I had read the lot! Now I am reading it through at a more leisurely pace.

Why is this book so enthralling? The supreme factor is the glory and power of God in the display of his free grace in the mighty work of awakening. It was this that both excited and humbled me. What we need today is an irresistible spiritual power to overcome the opposition and unbelief of men. In these pages there is unveiled that sweeping power moving thousands to attend the gospel and irresistibly transforming souls through the preaching of the Word.

Often we get discouraged when we see no visible return for our labour. Then questions arise in our minds. 'Will God ever work?' — 'Why doesn't he work?' — 'Indeed, is he able to work?' — 'Are conditions today too much for him?' These doubts are blown away by the descriptions in this volume. It is a massive encouragement to those who faithfully preach and expound the Scriptures week by week.

The author is to be commended for the thoroughness of his research and attention to detail. The reality of trial and human weakness and sinfulness is not glossed over. Mistakes and hindrances are faithfully recorded. However the leaders of that time impress the reader by their total commitment to hard work and their trust in the Lord to honour the ordinary means of grace, particularly preaching. They were not disappointed because there were times when whole congregations were melted down and overcome by the truth of the gospel.

The reader's appetite is increased to seek and pray for such times of awakening to be sent to our churches today. It makes me wonder whether we would be ready. Would our people be ready to cope with such a situation? Would they be equipped to counsel enquirers and teach them the basics of the Christian Faith?

Daniel Rowland was not only a man of exceptional spiritual power but also unusual physical stamina and energy. He walked to London for his ordination. He ran beside his native river Aeron when he was in his seventies. He travelled 3,000 miles a year, if not on foot then on horseback. However the lesson of his life, so well portrayed in these pages, is that the key to the awakening was not in men but in the sovereign will and purpose of God.

I am aware that I have not attempted in the usual way to give details of the chapters or provide a critical assessment. Rather I have concentrated on the effects that the facts have had on me personally, my purpose being to persuade you to procure a copy and benefit in a similar way. We need our hearts to be warmed and our faith increased. This volume is designed to do just that!

Enoch and his walk with God

Enoch was only the seventh in direct descent from Adam. He was the first man ever to be translated. 'Trans' means to cross over. Enoch's body was transposed over into a heavenly or spiritual state and he crossed over into the heavenly existence where God is. That realm is well described in Hebrews 12:22. With more detail we have the record of the translation of Elijah (2 Kings 2:11). Apart from the resurrection and ascension of Christ we have no other examples of believers being changed or translated like that. There are three ways in which we will gain help from Enoch.

1. *The character of Enoch's age compared with ours.*
2. *The nature of Enoch's holiness compared with ours.*
3. *The motivation of Enoch's holy life compared with ours.*

1. *The character of Enoch's age compared with ours*

The age of Enoch, like our own, was characterised by great intelligence and inventiveness of men (Gen. 4:20-22). In that age of heroes and men of renown (Gen. 6:4), there was also extreme ungodliness and blasphemy (Gen. 4:24) and prevalent wickedness (Gen. 6:5). Those men who did profess godliness appear to have been unprincipled in marriage preferring physical rather than spiritual factors, which is a sure way by which the church of God is broken down (2 Cor. 6:14-18).

What are the characteristics of our generation? David Kingdon suggests the following features as descriptive of our secular age: It is *autonomous* (man seeks to push God out of his own world). It is *antisupernaturalistic* (Science reigns: Only that which can be proved scientifically is accepted). It is *this-worldly* (the emphasis is on pleasure and worldly criteria, rather than on spiritual and eternal values). It is *antiauthoritarian* (self is exalted, which explains the hedonism and vandalism of our times). When you think of the ungodliness, lawlessness, arrogance and violence of our generation how closely it approximates to the early age of Enoch.

The challenge is to match an evil age with an outstanding witness of holiness and dedication to our Triune God.

2. *The nature of Enoch's holiness compared with ours*

We are informed that 'Enoch walked with God: Then he was no more, because God took him away'. 'By faith Enoch was taken from this life, so that he did not experience death; he could not be found, because God had taken him away. For before he was taken, he was commended as one who pleased God' (Heb. 11:5). The word used in Genesis is 'walk' and in Hebrews 11:5 the Greek word *euaresteo* means 'I give pleasure to'. We might say that Enoch's dedicated way of life gave pleasure to God.

The idea of walking conveys consistency, reliability and constancy. Enoch lived a life of constant devotion to, and communion with God. 'Walk before me and be blameless,' is what the Lord said to Abraham (Gen. 17:1).

It might be argued that Enoch had hundreds of years of leisure. Jude 14 however, suggests that he was involved in his society. At any rate Enoch's example suggests to us the need to build up a consistent life of devotion which is pleasing to the Lord. To do this it is required that we be robust in our habits of study, prayer and meditation.

3. *The motivation of Enoch's holy life compared with ours*

Enoch possessed an outstanding grasp of the details of the second coming of Christ. How he gained that knowledge we cannot tell. He viewed Christ's second coming as the ultimate event of the world, a consummation which would bring with it the strictest judgment. Every expression of ungodliness will meet with severe punishment (Jude 15). All ungodly speech will be judged. To think that the world will be judged in this way provides a strong motivation to be godly and to warn others of the dangers of ungodliness. Are we, who live much nearer to Christ's second advent, motivated to be godly as was Enoch? Do we warn the ungodly of the impending judgement? Christ's coming will be the day of supreme joy when all the redeemed will be glorified together. We should be strongly motivated by this to walk with God as Enoch did.



From left to right, John and Pat Mollitt, David Faulkner, Max Moodie, Gwen Hamilton, Eric Silverwood, Sylvia Taylor, Ken Battye, Agnes Moodie, Tom Brennard, Stephen Emmott, Rosali Battye, Adrian Hamilton, Ted Stanley, Elsie Silverwood, Robert Paley and Alice Brennard.

How they grow

FROM INGLETON TO TEXARKANA

Reformed churches have multiplied and are growing. The increase has not been spectacular. The work may be slow but it is sure. Ingleton is a village sometimes advertised as the gateway to the Lake District and the Yorkshire Dales. John Mollitt is pastor of the Ingleton Evangelical Church. An annual rally is organised with the title 'The Yorkshire Dales Bible Convention'. Believers, mostly those of Reformed conviction, come together from surrounding areas for two preaching services on a Saturday. It is surprising how many churches have come into being because of the need of an expository ministry which is uncompromising. For instance in the group above, representing a few from the congregation which gathered for the rally this year, are some from the South Craven Evangelical Church, a Reformed assembly which began four years ago when a group of seceders from Methodism came together.

For details of Texarkana see page 14.

Editor

ERROLL HULSE

*361 Aigburth Road, Liverpool L17 0BP.***Associate Editors**

JOHN DAVISON, Scotland

DAVID KINGDON, Leicester, U.K.

WAYNE MACK, U.S.A.

TOM NETTLES, U.S.A.

JIM VAN ZYL, South Africa

Agents

Agents to whom subscriptions should be sent.

BRITISH ISLES

361 Aigburth Road, Liverpool L17 0BP.

IRISH REPUBLIC

Alan Barker,*Bethany, Cartron Hill, SLIGO.*

AUSTRALIA

Ray Levick,*27 Coven Avenue, Bayswater North, Victoria 3153.*

NEW ZEALAND

Michael Drake,*P.O. Box 51075, Pakuranga, Auckland.*MALAYSIA AND
SINGAPORE**Good News Enterprise***Beg Berkunci 210, Pej. Pos UPM**Serdang, Selangor, Malaysia.*

U.S.A.

Puritan Reformed,*1319 Newport-Gap Pike, Wilmington, DE. 19804-2895.***Ron Edmonds,***2817 Dashwood Street, Lakewood, Calif. 90712.*

CANADA

Max Latchford,*1308 Griffith Place, Oakville, Ontario L6H 2V8.***Dale Cogswell,***R.R.3, Oromocto, N.B. E2V 2G3.*

SOUTH AFRICA

Martin Holdt,*Box 33226, Glenstantia 0010.*

NETHERLANDS

D. H. Gritter,*Koolzaadhof 144, 8256 AH Biddinghuizen***Subscriptions**

BRITISH ISLES

£4.50 — 2 years £8.00

IRISH REPUBLIC

£5.50 — 2 years £9.50

AUSTRALIA & N.Z.

\$9.00 — 2 years \$16.00

SOUTH AFRICA

R9.00 — 2 years R16.00

U.S.A. & CANADA

\$12.00 — 2 years \$20.00

NETHERLANDS

f20.00 — 2 years f35.00

MALAYSIA &

\$17.00 — 2 years \$33.00

SINGAPORE

Single copies one-sixth the above in each case which includes postage.

Gifts are welcomed and those who wish to support the Magazine should make out their cheques to "Reformation Today".