

Free Church **Witness**



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Lord, Where's the Blessing? *Conrad Pomeroy*



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Natural or Spiritual?

All the people in the world can be divided into two groups – the natural and the spiritual. There are only the two kinds. By far the majority are natural and all are born that way. Something enormous has to happen to change a person from being natural into being spiritual. The great change is brought about by the new birth. Jesus said, 'Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God' (Jn.3:3). He draws a contrast: 'That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit' (v6). All of us are born natural men or 'flesh' but the new birth, or being 'born of the Spirit' makes those who experience it 'spiritual'. Those who are 'natural' can neither see nor enter the kingdom of God. Only the 'spiritual' enter heaven when they die. This raises an important question: What are the distinguishing marks of the 'spiritual' man or woman? Paul sums up the distinction: 'The natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned. But he that is spiritual judgeth all things, yet he himself is judged of no man' (1 Cor.2:14-15).

The Natural Man

No understanding

The natural man does not understand the basic message of the Bible. He may read the history of the Bible with some passing interest but such concepts as faith, justification, the new birth and the preciousness of the blood of Christ are mysterious. The moral teaching of Jesus holds some appeal but the doctrines in the Epistles are seen as tedious hair-splitting. Have your eyes been opened to appreciate the Scriptures and the central message of the Gospel?

Foolishness

For the natural man there is folly in the gospel. If God is almighty surely He can simply forgive sins? Why did God have to become man? Why did He have to die? For the Jew, the idea of the blessed Son of God hanging on a tree and so being made a curse was an obnoxious stumbling-block. For the Greek philosopher the resurrection was foolishness. Once a person dies they do not rise again. Do you find these things incredible?

Love for the natural

The unconverted love this world and look for their paradise here. Eating and drinking, money and material wealth, success and popularity, recreation and pleasure are their greatest ambitions. If sickness, poverty and death could be removed they would be happy to live forever in this world. Their minds are set on earthly things. They wish there was no God and no Judgment Day.

Apathy

The unregenerate feel little unease at their state before God.

Their days and years pass giving them little thought of eternity. Even the deaths of friends and their own illnesses cause little concern. They feel content to look around themselves at others. The great majority do not bother about spiritual things so why should they. Everyone can't be wrong, they argue.

Natural Religion

All of us have a conscience and sometimes it troubles us. Most know we do things we should not. But the natural man does good works and these ease his conscience. Perhaps you give generously to a charity, or you give time and effort to voluntary organisations that help the needy, and this makes you feel good. 'I try my best, I do what I can and I am sure that at the end of the day God will take that into account. I am sure that I am better than many. I haven't done anything really bad. I have a good heart'. This is the natural man's religion. It is the religion of Buddhists, Muslims, Roman Catholics, Liberal Protestants, Jehovah's Witnesses and secularists. Is this your religion?

Dead in Sins

The Bible describes us as by nature dead in trespasses and sins (Eph.2:1). We have no free will. Sin is easy. We cannot choose to repent and believe. We turn over a new leaf but cannot keep it up. Satan is our master. The flesh, indwelling corruption, rules. Worldly standards and fashions are our great guide. Are you still like that?

Dead to God

We have ears but we do not hear God's call, we have eyes but we do not see God and the danger we are in, we have a heart but it is as dead as a stone to God. The natural man has no love for Christ or the things of Christ. We may perform certain religious services but it is out of a sense of duty, not pleasure. We may observe the Sabbath because we are commanded to but it is certainly not because we find the Lord's Day the best day of the week. What about you?

The Spiritual Man

The change which takes place when someone becomes a spiritual man or woman is so dramatic that it is compared in Scripture to birth – the new birth. Another term used is resurrection, dying to the old life and coming alive to a new life. It involves a radical change which should be clearly felt by ourselves as such and also observable to others. It involves the Holy Spirit, who is the third person of the Holy Trinity coming to reside in our hearts and applying to us the benefits of Christ's death on our behalf. In what follows we will note the distinguishing features of the spiritual man.

Enlightenment

Sometimes this change is spoken of as seeing the light. The whole Bible is seen in a new light. It makes sense. Faith which seemed so difficult before now appears so simple



'The spiritual man longs for heaven – to be with the Christ whom he loves. He yearns for that perfect state when he will stop sinning and be able to serve God with his whole heart giving full glory to Him.'

that we wonder why we did not see it before. We think we can now explain it to anybody but forget the darkness of the understanding of the natural man. God opened Lydia's heart so that she gave heed to and understood the things spoken by Paul (Acts 16:14). Have you come to see and appreciate the holiness of God, your own sinfulness and the Cross of Christ as the only answer?

Delight in the things of God

The spiritual man loves the Bible, prayer, church services, prayer meetings, Christian fellowship and books which explain the Scriptures. Following Pentecost the disciples 'continued stedfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers' (Acts 2:42). Do we desire God?

Assesses earthly things as trivial

The things which once used to be our idols are now seen as of little worth. Earthly riches, promotion, popularity and pleasures are seen as empty bubbles. 'Vanity of vanities' is written over them all. Sometimes we feel heartily sick of the world. We hate sin and long for holiness.

Discern other Christians

John states: 'We know that we have passed from death unto life, because we love the brethren' (1Jn.3:14). Christians are members of the family of God. They quickly recognize one another and are at home together. There is no company in which they are happier. What about you?

Joy in sinners converted

The Bible states that there is joy in heaven over one sinner converted (Lk.15:7). Nothing gives greater joy to the true Christian than hearing of or seeing a man or woman turning from sin unto God. The spiritual man has a burden for the lost. He has a heart full of compassion and hates to see men or women running on in sin down the road to hell. Do you have a burden to pray for the unconverted and to witness to them?

Prayer is vital

The cry of the new birth is prayer. It immediately becomes a way of life. For the spiritual man prayer is like breathing. There is a constant relating to God, seeking direction and help, thanking God for blessings already received, pleading for blessing on others, confessing sin and glorifying God. The Spirit who has come to live in us 'helpeth our infirmities: for we know not what we should pray for as we ought: but the Spirit itself maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered' (Rom.8:26).

Heaven is the goal

The spiritual man longs for heaven – to be with the Christ whom he loves. He yearns for that perfect state when he will stop sinning and be able to serve God with his whole heart giving full glory to Him. Muslims and nominal Christians, when they think of heaven, think of sensual pleasures. It's an earthly heaven for carnal minds. But the spiritual person desires spiritual delights – seeing God, growing in knowledge of Him, enjoying His love and worshipping Him.

Has this change taken place in your life? Do you have the marks of God's children?

Burial or Cremation?

Pastor Malcolm H Watts (Salisbury)



Although cremation, or the disposal of the dead by burning, was practised in ancient times, it was not re-introduced into England until the end of the nineteenth century. Sir Henry Thompson, an agnostic who became professor of Surgery at the Royal College of Surgeons, publicly urged the case for cremation and due to his influence it became widely accepted in this country. In 1874 he played a major part in the forming of The Cremation Society, which was specially founded 'to advocate this rational and hygienic method of disposal of the dead'. This new method met with strong opposition at first but it gradually gained favour. According to the *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, 'Freemasons, materialists, and Marxists... joined the movement'. Klaas Runia, in the *Encyclopaedia of Christianity*, draws attention to the fact that in these early days, support chiefly came from 'humanitarians and liberal theologians'. When in 1884 Justice Stephen declared cremation to be a legal procedure, the necessary impetus was given to the movement. It quickly became an established practice. By 1960 about one third of all who died in England, Scotland and Wales were cremated and the proportion was then increasing by two per cent per annum. Today cremation is often the preferred alternative, as evidenced by the Obituary columns in national newspapers.

Ministers have tended to assume a position of neutrality on this matter. One well-known evangelical was asked which method he thought ought to be chosen by the Christian. His reply, given in the column of a denominational newspaper, was fairly typical. 'Neither', he wrote, 'has any marked advantage over the other, providing the ceremony is carried out with the dignity that is to be accorded to the human body'. Neither Scripture nor conscience will allow us to agree with him.

Before proceeding any further, we must make one point absolutely clear. It does not make any difference at all so far as the resurrection is concerned. At the second coming of Christ, there will be a resurrection of all men (Jn.5:28-29; Acts 24:15). Divine omnipotence will then be displayed in the raising of human bodies and whatever process those bodies may have been subjected to after death, every single one of them will be reconstructed and transformed to suit a different sphere of existence (Acts 26:8; Rev 20:13). There is nothing any man can do to his body to prevent that from happening. *The Westminster Confession of Faith* (1647) well expresses the teaching of Scripture in its 32nd chapter: 'At the last day, such as are found alive shall not die, but be changed: and all the dead shall be raised up with the selfsame bodies, and none other, although with different qualities, which shall be united again to their souls for ever'.

Arguments of Cremationists

Advocates for cremation often present their case quite skilfully. In a booklet issued many years ago by *The Cremation Society*, the following points were made in favour of the practice:

1. *It safeguards health.* The booklet argued that in already overcrowded towns and cities, burying the dead could become a real health hazard. This was considered 'a problem of the first importance'. But although burial has been practised for centuries, there is no evidence that this has ever been a threat to people's health; and today, with the present legal requirements respecting burial, there is even less possibility of that ever happening. In fact, if biblical precautions were taken, there would be no risk at all. Public burial places used to be outside towns and cities (2Kgs.23:6; Mt.27:52-53; Lk.7:12; Jn.11:30-31): 'two thousand cubits from the Levitical cities; for all other cities a great space, if not the same' (John Lightfoot). Josephus, the Jewish historian, supplies the additional information that 'through that place [ie of burial] was no current of waters to be made; through it was to be no public way; cattle were not to feed there, nor was wood to be gathered from thence'.

2. *It leaves the land for the living.* The system of burial is wasteful, it was claimed, 'preventing the economic use of valuable land for housing and recreation'. A sentence from the quaint biblical commentator, John Trapp, deserves consideration here. 'It is remarkable', he says, 'that the first purchase of possession mentioned in Scripture, was a place to bury in, not to build on' (see Gen 23). The patriarch, taught by nature as well as grace, had learned the importance of caring for the bodies of the dead and of making provision for decent interment. Only heartless materialism would dare to challenge that loving concern.

3. *It preserves the countryside.* Attention was drawn to 'the sprawling wastes of neglected graveyards and cemeteries' which could only be described as 'an eyesore'. That such places do exist, no-one will deny, but it does not have to be so. In Bible times, sepulchres were generally situated in attractive places; under the shade of trees (Gen.23:8-9,17; 35:8), in groves or in gardens (2Kgs.21:18,26; Jn 19:41) and, in the case of public burial-grounds particularly, every effort was made to preserve natural beauty. It was the observation of George Douglas that 'burial-places in the East are still kept with great neatness'. As to the tombs themselves, when looked after, they can appear quite 'beautiful' (Mt.23:27). Our Lord, though rebuking the 'hypocrisy' of the scribes and Pharisees who professed to honour the prophets while manifesting the spirit of their murderers, mentions the fact that at least they showed care for their tombs. 'Ye build the tombs of the prophets', He said, 'and garnish (or adorn) the sepulchres of the righteous'

(Mt.23:29). In a day when money and time are freely spent, it is to the nation's shame that so little is done to improve the state of our cemeteries.

4. *It prevents crime.* This claim is made because 'the law respecting cremation demands two certificates signed by independent medical practitioners, and the approval of a medical referee'. This means, they say, that 'the cause of death' is 'definitely established'. However, it must surely be apparent to all that a situation could arise when, after the funeral, a further examination of the body could prove to be of immense value. With cremation, of course, it would not be possible, whereas with burial, exhumation could take place (cf Jer.8:1). This being so, burial would tend to discourage crime far more than cremation.

5. *It makes for a more rational outlook.* Here the emphasis is laid upon 'the heartbreak of the yawning grave' and 'the clammy clay'. It is true that whatever provision be made for the disposal of the body, death's bitterness cannot be altogether removed. Yet, that agreed, given the choice between placing the bodies of those we love in an incinerator heated to over 2,000°F and laying those bodies gently in the ground that they might, as it were, 'sleep in the dust' until the grand awakening of the resurrection morning (Dan.12:2), we, for our part, unhesitatingly choose this latter course as every way more conducive to our comfort and consolation.

6. *It is an economic method.* The point made is that not only is 'the process itself inexpensive' but also that there is 'no grave to buy and no tombstone to provide and preserve'. Is economy, however, the all-important factor? Evidently Abraham did not think so when, out of love and respect for

'his dead', he paid the high price of 'four hundred shekels of silver' for a plot of ground (Gen.23:13-16). We even read that the chief priests devoted the betrayal money to this purpose so that they might appear devout, so generally was it considered to be an act of mercy and kindness (Mt.27:7; cf 2Sam.2:5). Neither ought tombstones to be reckoned items of unnecessary expense. What lessons they are able to teach the living about mortality and eternity! Yet their main service, surely, is to those who have died. To use the words of James Hervey, it is as if those stones have received 'a charge to preserve their names' and are 'the remaining trustees of their memory'. (Gen.35:20; 2Kgs.23:17; cf Ezek.39:15). So long as these engraven records are before the public, the dead will be kept in remembrance and, according to God's Word, that is a blessing not to be lightly esteemed (see Job 18:17; Ps.112:6; Prov.10:7).

To be continued

'Neither ought tombstones to be reckoned items of unnecessary expense. What lessons they are able to teach the living about mortality and eternity! '



'Lord, where's the blessing?'

Conrad Pomeroy, Pastor of Trinity Baptist Church, Dundee

So, brothers, which of you can speak of conversions in your church in the last year?' Silence.

An older brother speaks of how, when he was a young Christian, there was great concern if the church went more than a couple of weeks without seeing someone saved. He describes weekly gospel meetings in his city where long queues formed as young people crowded to attend. But now....

Drought

In countless tiny churches up and down the land the 'drought' is beginning to bite, and the cry is going up, 'How long, O Lord?' Every week they gather; a dozen here, two dozen there; they love the Word of God, and the God of the Word. They lift their voices in praise and prayer; they muster their meagre resources to reach out with the gospel as best they can – they are not strong, but they may be the only gospel voice in that community. They plead with God for conversions, but it seems the heavens are brass and the earth iron. Occasionally an outsider will come in; they come once or twice, but the preaching appears to make no impact on them and they drift away again.

The ageing stalwarts battle on. They try not to miss a meeting because there are so few of them, but then weakness overtakes that no amount of will-power can defy, and soon the little band gathers to bid farewell to yet another of their number. The candle flickers yet lower, and seems destined to be snuffed out. All it would take to change the situation would be for a few souls to be saved and added to the church; just a few of the countless people that have been contacted over the years – but it isn't happening. The gospel seems to be going out in 'word only' and NOT 'in power, and in the Holy Spirit, and in much assurance'.

Advice

What are we to make of this? Eliphaz knows the answer: 'You should look to yourself – church/preacher/Christian. You must be at fault, else God would bless'. It is true; sin can be a barrier to blessing, but what if, after humble and sincere heart

searching, we find no glaring sin? Honesty compels us to say with Job, 'Till I die, I will not put away my integrity from me'. Bildad will suggest, 'It's simple, you have not prayed enough', and conscience joins her voice, 'It's true, we have not prayed enough'. Who has? Yet, the record of heaven shall one day be summoned to testify that we have prayed; and the wear on heaven's door will show where it bore the brunt of our anguished cries.

Zophar in desperation pronounces, 'You must have failed to preach the true gospel, for it is the "power of God unto salvation"! But to this we confidently reply, 'We have not shunned to declare the whole counsel of God; we played the flute, but they did not dance, we mourned, but they did not lament'.

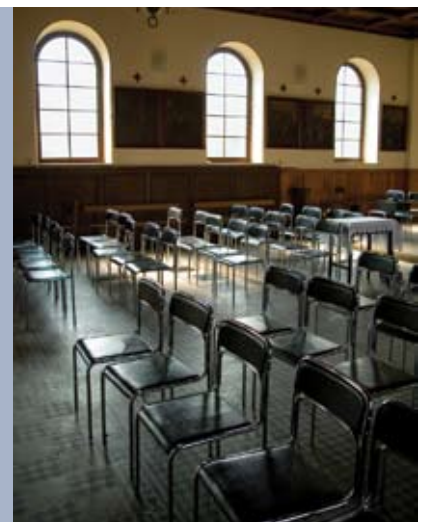
Shame

There is not only the inner anguish of this apparent failure, but the sense of shame and reproach in the face of our enemies. A neighbour asks, 'So, how is it going in your church?' What are we to say? The paradox of our situation is embarrassing – we believe in a God of might and power, whose name we praise and whose cause we serve, but who seems to have forgotten His people and is unconcerned for the honour of His name. We try to put a brave face on it, but they give us the visual equivalent of a pat-on-the-shoulder and mutter something about 'society these days'. As if our God, who has 'turned the world upside-down' in the past, isn't quite up to the task of saving souls in twenty-first century Western society! A sense of holy indignation cries out, 'Why should they say, Where is their God?' Oh, that instead they were forced to say, 'The Lord has done great things for them!'

Complacency

Those who belong to larger churches may not feel the urgency of the situation in quite the same way – there is comfort in numbers, and the list of weekly activities conveys a sense of 'business as usual'. Through the broad spectrum of contacts that a larger congregation has, there is a regular flow of

In countless tiny churches up and down the land the 'drought' is beginning to bite, and the cry is going up, 'How long, O Lord?'



unsaved souls visiting the church, and from time to time someone is touched and saved. However, unless we are greatly mistaken, even this is but a tiny trickle, insufficient to replenish the reservoir of the faithful, let alone make mighty inroads into the godlessness of our land!

Analysis

We try to practise the Issacharian art of 'understanding the times' (1Chron.12:32). Clearly we live in a land under the wrath of God; it cannot be otherwise for a nation that has despised its privileges and rejected the truth. For centuries we have had the Word of God; our history cannot be told without recognising the blessings Christianity has brought; our laws and institutions have been moulded by the Christian faith. However, it is now a land trying to divest itself of that influence as fast as possible; it has despised its mercies, and has trampled under-foot the Son of God. We live in a nation that boasts of the sins that destroyed Sodom and Gomorrah, parades an unbelief comparable to Bethsaida and Chorazin, and despises privileges that had raised it to the heights of Capernaum; a land that resembles the pre-diluvian world where 'every intent of the thoughts of their heart was only evil continually'.

There can be no doubt – we live in a land under judgement. There is a famine of the Word of God; vast swathes of the country have little or no gospel witness. Moral and social meltdown shows us to be a nation whom God has 'given up to uncleanness'. Some Christians say, 'These are "Jeremiah

Days"; we live in a land bound over for destruction'. This may be so, but the men of Issachar 'knew what Israel ought to do' in their day – do we?

Response

Some have been tempted to resort to methods and tactics – 'Transform your style of worship, bring in more music, cut back on the preaching, soften the lighting (and the message), and shelve church discipline'. The result may give the appearance of improvement, but the 'heart' is not healthy. We hear of large congregations that struggle to find young people willing to serve sacrificially; we hear of 'mature Christians' who do not understand or even believe cardinal doctrines such as the Trinity; we find Christians who can talk endlessly about football, computers or décor, but never open their mouths in a prayer meeting! The 'grey hairs' of spiritual decay are breaking out upon the churches, but we do not seem to recognise it.

We write, not because we have the answer, but because we have a burden; a burden carried with perplexity. Where we hold to human depravity and divine sovereignty we will not be taken in by superficial solutions, but if we are jealous for the honour of our God and passionate about our Saviour we cannot be complacent in the current barrenness. The situation calls for deep concern, but we fear that even the 'wise virgins' are asleep. It is time to seek our God in earnest.

With kind permission from The Banner of Truth, July, 2011

Saviour and Lord

Rev Allan Murray

We hear much about receiving Jesus Christ as Saviour; not so much about receiving Him as Lord. Is this something worth examining? Most certainly it is. It profoundly affects our view of salvation and of the Christian life. In fact, as we shall see, it affects our view of Christ Himself. What has become known as 'The Lordship Controversy' has arisen out of a difference of opinion as to whether or not it is necessary to receive Christ as Lord when we receive Him as Saviour. However, the aim of this article is not to expound the Lordship Controversy. It is to deal with a simple question: Is it possible to receive Jesus Christ as Saviour without, at the same time, receiving Him as Lord?

Melchisedec

We will go straight to the centre of this matter by focussing on that tantalisingly mysterious, yet winsome, person that appears on the pages of Scripture, Melchisedec (so spelt in the New Testament, but 'Melchizedek' in the Old Testament). We usually look on him as a type of Christ, and this fits well with what we read of him in Genesis, Psalms and Hebrews. His name means, 'King of righteousness'. However I want to concentrate on one aspect of his person particularly. He was unique among human

beings in holding the two offices of priest and king together. In Genesis 14 we read that he met Abraham when the latter was returning victorious from the 'Battle of the kings'. In verse 18 we read, 'Melchizedek king of Salem brought forth bread and wine: and he was the priest of the most high God'. Here the one person is described as 'priest' and 'king'; this is most unusual, but of great importance. Why so? Because God the Son was encouraged in eternity by God the Father, in the task appointed to Him by God the Father, with the words, 'The Lord hath sworn, and will not repent, Thou art a priest for ever after the order of Melchizedek' (Ps. 110:4). Again, we have in the New Testament in Hebrews 5:6 the words of Psalm 110:4 quoted, 'Thou art a priest for ever after the order of Melchisedec', in reference to God the Son, who was to take flesh that He might save His people from their sins (Mt. 1:21). Indeed there are seven references in the book of Hebrews to the phrase, 'after the order of Melchisedec', in relation to the priesthood of Christ. There is surely only one possible conclusion: the Lord Jesus Christ *must* have these two offices combined, that were held by Melchisedec, in His one person. (Of course Christ is also Prophet, but that is not so important for the present study.)

Priest and King

Now, what does this have to say regarding the terms 'Saviour' and 'Lord'? Simply this:

that Christ was 'Priest' *and* 'King', that is, 'Saviour' *and* 'Lord' in His *one* person. Christ, in His office as Priest, offered Himself without spot to God (Heb.9:14) as a final sacrifice and atonement for the sins of His people. His priestly work was that by which He saved us. So what happens when we receive Christ? Surely we receive His person: 'But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God' (Jn.1:12); and that, surely, not in part, but in whole. And if we receive Him in whole, then surely as the one who is a Priest for ever after the order of Melchisedec, that is as King as well as Priest: as Lord as well as Saviour. If we say, 'I will receive Him as Saviour, but not as Lord, at least not straight away', are we not saying, 'I will have Him as Saviour, but I will not have Him to rule over me? I will take the benefit, but not the yoke. I will live my own life as I please for the moment. When I am ready, I will surrender to His rule over me'. Is this a serious matter? Yes, most certainly it is, because it is dividing Christ. It is dividing what Scripture has joined together in the repeated phrase, 'after the order of Melchisedec'.

Lord

It is more than interesting that in the Book of Acts, our manual for evangelism, the word 'Saviour' only occurs twice, but 'Lord' occurs 92 times. Further, the phrase, 'Lord Jesus Christ' occurs 6 times and the phrase 'Lord Jesus' occurs 13 times. The emphasis is heavily on, 'Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved'. Furthermore, who is going to guide and keep me during that period when He is my Saviour, and not my

Lord? Can I say, 'I am my Beloved's and He is mine', when I will not have Him to rule over me? If so, I cannot see it. Is it not indeed more serious than all these things? Is it not an insult to God the Father, if we divide 'His unspeakable gift' (2Cor.9:15) into two parts? Imagine the hurt even on a human level, if we gave a gift, and the receiver divided it in two and sent one half back! 'The Father loveth the Son' (Jn.5:20). This love is fundamental to the gospel and to the Melchisedec passages. Does not that love burn with jealousy when His beloved Son is received with reservations?

Changed Lives?

Does this have any practical relevance to the state of the church today? I believe it does. Why is it that we see people professing to be converted, but with little or no change in their lives? Is it not because they have supposedly received Christ as Saviour, but not as Lord? They still live as they please; they are still their own, rather than those bought with a price (1Cor.6:19, 20). Further they do not have the joy of Zion's children who are joyful in their King (Ps.149:2). There can be no 'shout of a King' (Numb.23:21) among them, because they have no King. They have not surrendered the rule of every area and corner of their lives to Jesus Christ, the King of kings, and Lord of lords. Christian happiness and contentment lie in being wholly Christ's, not in holding back. We must not be afraid to surrender all to Him, for, He says, 'My yoke is easy, and my burden is light'. Let us make sure we have surrendered all to Him who is 'a Priest for ever after the order of Melchisedec', and let us who have known His saving grace, rejoice, exult and glory in our glorious King.

'Why is it that we see people professing to be converted, but with little or no change in their lives? Is it not because they have supposedly received Christ as Saviour, but not as Lord? They still live as they please; they are still their own, rather than those bought with a price.'





News



Left to Right: (Rear) Revs Maurice Roberts, John Morrison, Harry Woods, Gavin Beers; (Middle) Matthew Fraser, James MacInnes, Rev William Macleod, Joachim Parker, Rev John Keddie, Alasdair Macleod; (Front) Partheepan, Dr Robert Rodgers, Calum Smith, Davide Ratti, Donald Robertson.

Seminary Graduation

The Seminary Graduation took place on Friday 17th June. Dr Robert Rodgers, Principal of Cranmer College, Northern Ireland, gave an excellent lecture to a full gathering in Westhill Church on 'Jonathan Edwards: Man of God, Theologian, Philosopher and Metaphysician'. Several spoke

appreciatively afterwards of what they had heard. Three students graduated, Partheepan Shanmugam with the Diploma in Theology, and James MacInnes and Matthew Fraser with a Diploma with Credit. It is hoped that Davide Ratti will graduate in September.

Seminary Opening

The opening lecture for the Seminary for the Session 2011-2012 will take place on Tuesday 13th September, at 7.30 pm in Westhill Church, Inverness. The lecturer will be Rev John Keddie and his subject: 'The Historical Roots of the Decline in the Scottish Presbyterian Church in Contemporary History'. All are welcome to attend.

Desk



Ban on word 'Homosexual'

Christian Institute

Civil servants in Scotland can no longer use the word 'homosexual' because it is deemed offensive to gay men, according to new guidance from the Scottish Government. The guidance states: 'It is not acceptable to use the word "homosexual"; this term is offensive to many people as it is the term that was used in law to make same-sex relationships illegal'. It advises those working on councils, health boards and quangos that they should use the word 'gay' instead. But John Midgley, founder of the Campaign Against Political Correctness, said: 'The word homosexual to most people would be as inoffensive as heterosexual. It is silly to claim they are loaded terms – they are neutral and simply describe sexual orientation. This sort of mumbo-jumbo is completely counterproductive to good community relations'.

Why should those whose lifestyles are in direct contradiction to God's revealed will in Scripture have the monopoly of such an innocent word as 'gay' to describe their immoral behaviour? Call a spade a spade!

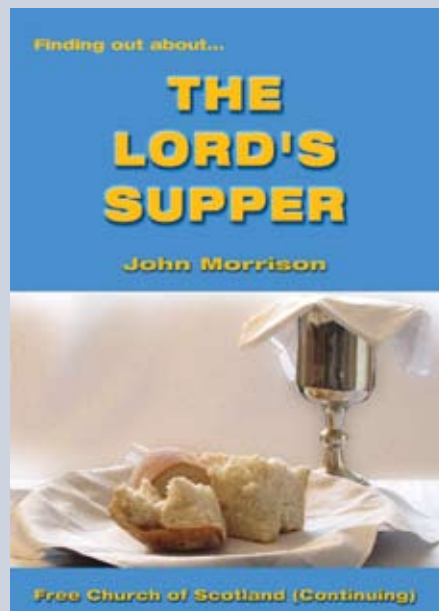
New Euthanasia Bill

Christian Institute

People born with disabilities who 'lose the will to live' would be eligible to end their lives under controversial new legislation proposed for the Scottish Parliament. This is the second attempt by Margo MacDonald MSP to legalise assisted suicide. Her first bill was roundly rejected by the Scottish Parliament. But the Independent MSP now intends to table a new bill which critics have branded 'utterly irresponsible'. Mrs MacDonald has also suggested that people suffering from chronic conditions, but who do not have a terminal illness, should be able to get medical help to end their lives. And

she suggested that people who become disabled should also be able to opt for an assisted suicide.

God who gives us life is the only one who has a right to end our lives. He gives value to every life and every life should be lived fully to His glory.



New Publication

A new title in the 'Finding out about...' series is available from the Publications Committee. The Lord's Supper by John Morrison is a 16-page booklet and costs £2.00 per copy including postage and packing (£1.50 for ten copies or more). To order please contact: Mr Glenn Fraser, 7 Clephanton Cottages, Ardersier, Inverness IV2 7QS. Tel. 01667 493453. E-mail: glennwfraser@btinternet.com.

New Subscriptions Secretary

Subscribers should note that a new Subscriptions Secretary has been appointed, Mrs Isobel McQueer, whose contact details may be found on the inside

front cover. The Publications Committee wish to express the appreciation of the Church to Mrs Sandra Judge for her work as Subscriptions Secretary over the last few years.



Rev Kenneth Stewart and Rev Andrew Quigley

New RP Church in Stornoway

A new Presbyterian fellowship has been set up in Stornoway. A number of disaffected Free Church members have invited the Reformed Presbyterian Church of Scotland (RPCS) to commence regular Sunday services on Lewis. Rev David Karoon conducted the first of these services on the 10th of July in the Culregrein meeting house with some twenty to thirty attending. The members have broken away from the Free Church in favour of the RPCS. If the interest grows sufficiently a permanent RPCS church may be constituted and a permanent minister would then be sought. This development follows the Free Church's decision to move away from unaccompanied Psalms and accept hymns and instrumental music in public



Culregrein Meeting House, Stornoway

worship. Mr Karoon, who comes from Singapore, resigned at the end of June as pastor of Arran Free Church because he was opposed to the abandoning of purity of worship in the Free Church. He then applied and was accepted as a minister with the Reformed Presbyterians.

A Reformed Presbyterian spokesman confirmed: 'Presbytery met on Saturday the 2nd July and accepted Rev David Karoon's application to become a minister in the RPCS'. Rev Andrew Quigley, who is minister of the Airdrie RP Church, said the Scottish RP Church's decision to plant a church in Stornoway was taken 'because a number of Christians asked them to do so'. It is believed that several elders and deacons have resigned from Stornoway Free Church with a view to joining the rival denomination. The tiny Reformed Presbyterian Church of Scotland (RPCS) is now on its way to double its number of churches as a result of the unhappiness within the Free Church over its rejection of exclusive Psalm-singing with no musical instruments. The RPCS had declined to just two small constituted churches in Scotland prior to this controversy – Airdrie and Stranraer. Rev Kenneth Stewart, formerly of Downvale Free Church, is minister of the new Glasgow congregation of the RPCS which has been meeting in the Thornwood Primary School. It was formalised as a congregation on 22nd May.

The town of Stornoway in which I grew up had three Presbyterian denominations. Now it has six. There are more ministers than ever ministering, yet less people attend church and the fear of God within the community is decreasing daily. The unconverted see the divisions in the church as a great excuse for not going to any church. The Westminster Confession of Faith was drawn up as a unifying document to try to get all Christians in Scotland, England, Ireland and Wales to unite in one denomination. Unlike the modern ecumenical movement it sought unity on the basis of the full truth revealed in God's Word rather than on limiting of the truth and watering it down so that no one could disagree with what was asserted. Why can we not again seek one Presbyterian church in Scotland which adheres wholeheartedly to the whole Westminster Confession with its Reformed doctrine, worship, discipline and government? Rather than being divided by our traditions and our historical grievances let us unite in the truth.

Sectarian Bill – Delayed

Christian Institute

A court case against the Scottish Government has been halted, following news that the sectarianism Bill will be

delayed by six months. The legal action was taken by The Christian Institute and CARE for Scotland, amid concern that the Bill was being rushed without proper public consultation. The two groups are concerned that civil liberty and free speech could be inadvertently caught by the Bill. The Court of Session was due to hear the case on Friday 24 June, but that will no longer be necessary.

Christian Institute spokesman Mike Judge said: 'We welcome news of the delay. It is in everybody's interests that this important issue is not rushed. We very much hope there will now be proper public consultation and scrutiny so that the free speech and civil liberty problems can be addressed'. Dr Gordon Macdonald of CARE for Scotland said: 'We welcome the Scottish Government's decision to listen to the concerns that were being expressed regarding the Bill. We look forward to working with the Scottish Parliament to ensure this legislation is improved significantly in order to protect freedom of speech and religious liberty whilst dealing effectively with the problem of sectarianism'.

We are thankful for success in delaying the Bill. We hope the time gained will be used to protect loving free speech.

Senegal – Churches Torched

Barnabas Fund

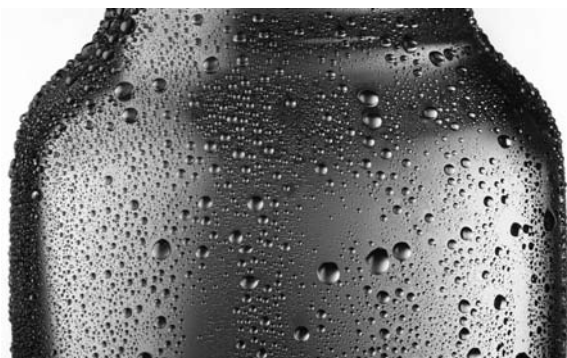
Churches have been looted and torched and Christians attacked in Senegal as aggressors took advantage of the political unrest in the country to vent their hostility. Eight churches in the capital, Dakar, were targeted in June following a declaration of war by Muslims against 'new churches'. A church leader said this was because of the visible growth of these churches in Dakar. The anti-Christian violence came as rioters took to the streets to protest against President Abdoulaye Wade's controversial plans to change the country's constitution. Dakar city centre was cut off as demonstrators set fire to vehicles and threw stones at riot police, while other violent protests were staged elsewhere in the city and in other Senegalese towns. With tensions already high in the city, one neighbourhood erupted, and the crowd took out their anger on the Christians. One church was set upon by a group of men and young people during the morning service on Sunday 26 June. The worshippers were driven out and pelted with stones as they escaped before the steel-structured building was fire-bombed. The following day, the mayor ordered that the building be 'cleaned up'; the steel and scrap iron, valuable commodities in Senegal, were taken away by truck, leaving nothing but a raised concrete platform where the pulpit had been. The building had seated around 400 people.

That same night, at 10pm, another church was attacked by a mob who charged the door and broke in. They started a fire inside the building and, in the early hours of the morning when the heat and smoke had died down, looted and destroyed what remained. This included administrative offices and living quarters for young men who reside at the church. Riot police stood guard in front of this church after it had been torched; they fired tear gas at youths who were throwing rocks at them.

Such anti-Christian violence is almost unheard of in Senegal, which is a secular state with religious freedom. It is however a predominantly Muslim country (91%), and aggressive Islamist groups funded by [Saudi Arabia](#) and [Libya](#) are making inroads, threatening the tolerant status quo. Christians comprise around six per cent of the population.

Eat, Drink and Be Merry!

Paul Horwood



When you next go shopping take a look in trolleys and see what the average person purchases. Alcohol in its many forms has become the staple diet of the world. Food has become secondary. Walk the streets, even in the daytime, and you will hear one man challenging another to consume his day away in a drink-fuelled manner.

‘Give strong drink unto him that is ready to perish’ (Prov.31:6).

We have to ask ourselves what has gone wrong? Why do we see men and women standing around smoking and drinking outside public houses at all hours? Why do we see drunken men, women and even young people staggering along our streets having lost all their ability to be rational? The night-time hours witness the public houses and clubs filled with those who drink to excess and encourage one another along this very slippery pathway. Consider the violence and immoral behaviour that stems from uncontrolled drinking.

‘Woe unto them that rise up early in the morning, that they may follow strong drink; that continue until night, till wine inflame them’ (Is.5:11).

We are in a time when alcohol, immodest dress, drugs and sex are all that life seems to be about! Are you part of this? You must answer the question in your own heart and conscience. If we are sowing these destructive seeds what will the next generation be like? Do we care what happens to our children? Are we all so blinded with our own self-gratification? I think this is an extremely important matter.

‘Wine is a mocker, strong drink is raging; and whosoever is deceived thereby is not wise’ (Prov.20:1).

We have each been given a conscience by God which is like an alarm bell ringing in our hearts. We can switch off the house alarm or the car alarm but the conscience cannot be totally disengaged. When alcohol has taken away all our sense and even our conscience is drowned by drink, the morning will not only bring a thumping hangover, but a convicting conscience bringing back to our memories what we did and said. How sad and empty this all really is! How many times have you, as I once did, regretted the night before? What in the world has gone wrong? It is a big question with a short answer. When God is given up, drink, drugs and immorality take over. Even our rubbish that leaves our homes in a refuse lorry shows the tell-tale signs of our lifestyle.

‘But they also have erred through wine, and through strong drink are out of the way ... they err in vision, they stumble in judgment’ (Is.28:7).

The next time you walk through the town, look at the way people are dressing. What type of clothes are they wearing and more so what colours are they wearing? It is generally grey and black or other very dull colours. Goths are frequently seen in the streets looking like death. They portray the colours of the night and of darkness. The way we dress, the way we live, the way we speak, show what we really are. The Bible says, ‘Out of the abundance of the **heart** the **mouth speaketh**’ (Lk.6:45). How true! Yet it only becomes obvious to us that our hearts are polluted and corrupt when God opens the ‘inner eyes’ to our heart. It is only then that we see the black stains of our own sins.

‘Come ye, say they, I will fetch wine, and we will fill ourselves with strong drink; and tomorrow shall be as this day, and much more abundant’ (Is.56:12).

We, as a nation, have given up God. Atheism, immorality and drunkenness have become our gods. We seem no longer to care about who we are. We also seem to have little concern for the lives and future of our children. As moral behaviour deteriorates, it gets progressively worse until we wonder when the end must come. Ask yourself, are things getting better or worse? There are two matters to consider – our own soul and that of the next generation. What we sow today, we will reap tomorrow. The Bible says ‘For he that soweth to his flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption’ (Gal.6:8).

Death is but a breath away. Hell is not fiction. It is not to be mocked and laughed at. Richard Dawkins may say ‘there is probably no God’ but probably is not a word that you want to base your eternity upon. There most certainly is a God to whom we must all answer at the end of our lives. Hell is not this world in another name, but an eternal place of torment and burning fires.

‘So teach us to number our days that we may apply our hearts unto wisdom’ (Ps.90:12).

There seems to be very little wisdom in the world today. How long will you continue along the path you are taking? How many days will God give you? Will you continue to be wise in your own eyes and not see your life through the ‘eyes’ of God? How we live is how we die. If we live by the bottle, we will die by the bottle. Remember, ‘The wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord’ (Rom.6:23). ‘Seek ye the Lord while he may be found, call ye upon him while he is near: let the wicked forsake his way and the unrighteous man his thoughts: and let him return unto the Lord, and he will have mercy upon him; and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon’ (Is.55:6, 7).



Books

A Way to Pray

A Biblical Method for Enriching Your Prayer Life and Language by Shaping Your Words with Scripture

Matthew Henry,

Edited and revised by O Palmer Robertson

Banner of Truth Trust,

hbk, 440pp, £14.50

Here we have an unusual but very edifying book. Matthew Henry left offworking on his great commentary to write this work. Basically it is one long prayer broken into short sections in which the language of Scripture is used to enrich praise, to express confession of sin, to form words of petition, to give thanks joyfully and to intercede earnestly. Scripture promises are powerfully pleaded. Matthew Henry has an amazing knowledge of the Bible and is able to draw from all parts of it. Great insight is given to the meaning of certain verses. Each paragraph ends with a list of the chapters and verses quoted. This is a book which, since it contains so much Scripture, could be read over and over again. Robertson advises just reading a couple of sentences at a time and then spending time meditating over them. It will greatly enrich your prayers.

Palmer Robertson has thoroughly rewritten the book translating the Scripture verses used into modern English and somewhat reworking the whole in the light of Matthew Henry's aims. Being, as I am, thoroughly bound to the Authorised Version, I found myself, as I read, involuntarily translating back into the language of the King James Version. I think I will have to get an unrevised copy for myself!

A couple of paragraphs will give the flavour of the book. In confession he writes: 'We have leaned on our own understanding and trusted in our own hearts. We have sacrificed to our own net. We have sought our own glory more than the glory of him that sent us. We have been puffed up in pride for the very things for which we should have mourned. *Prov.3:5; 28:26; Hab.1:16; John 7:18;*

1Cor.5:2'

In the section on intercession in one paragraph he writes: 'Appoint as our judges people who are capable of handling their responsibilities well. Make them incorruptible men of truth, fearing God and despising bribery. Let justice roll on like a river, and righteousness as a mighty stream that never stops flowing. *Exod.18:25; 2Chron.19:7; Amos 5:24'*

Expanding the Lord's Prayer he writes: 'Make it clear that the kingdom is yours, and that you govern the nations. Make it so evident that people are compelled to testify among the nations, "The Covenant Lord reigns". Let all men fear you. Let them declare your works, saying: "Surely he is God who judges throughout the earth". Make all the kings of the earth know that the God of heaven rules among men. Lead them to acknowledge that the Most High exercises dominion over the empires of men, for he gives authority to anyone he desires. Let them praise, extol, and honour you as King of heaven. O Lord, all your works are truth and your ways are just. Humble those who walk in pride. *Ps.22:28; 146:10; 64:9; 58:11; Dan.4:25, 26, 37'*

Highly recommended.

William Macleod

Milk and Honey

A Devotional

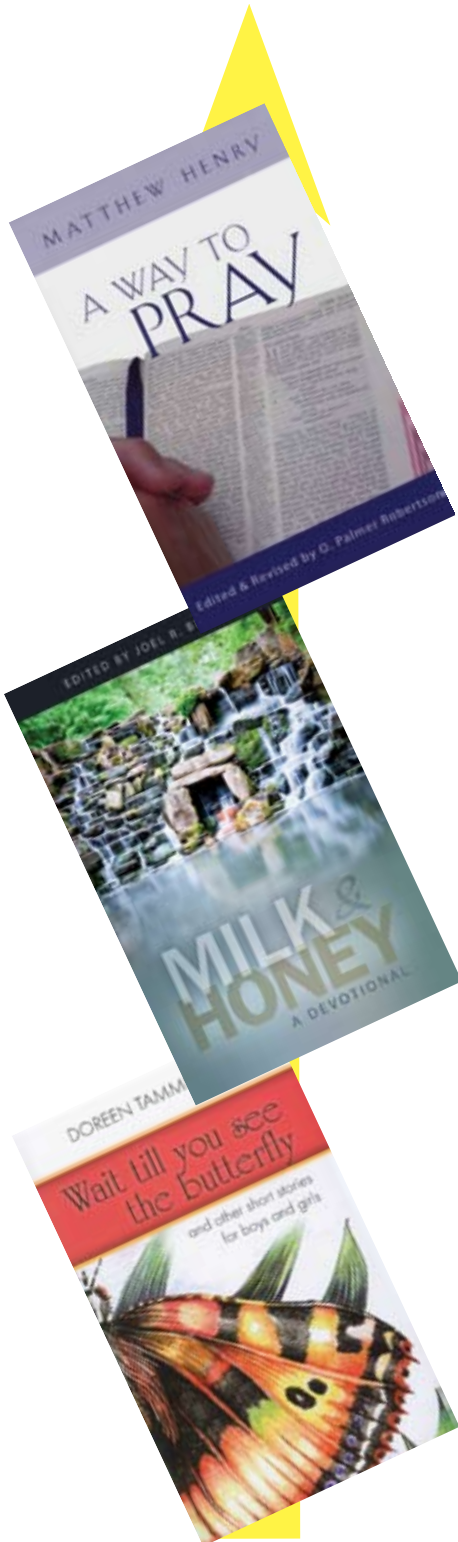
Edited by Joel Beeke

Reformation Heritage books

hbk, 397pp, \$28.00

Milk and Honey is a book of daily devotionals edited by Joel R Beeke and compiled by Susan and Connor Keuning of the Free Reformed Churches.

The list of the twelve contributors, each of whom has been given one calendar month of devotionals to contribute, makes interesting reading. Two of them are from the Heritage Reformed Congregations, two are from the Free Church (Continuing), two are from the Free Presbyterian Church of Scotland,



three are from the Free Reformed Churches of North America, one from the Presbyterian Reformed Church, one from the Reformed Presbyterian Church of Ireland and one from the Reformed Church of America.

All the contributors are respected ministers of their denominations and represent the best in the Reformed tradition. The articles are biblical in doctrine, experimental and discriminating, and evangelistic in the freeness by which Christ and his benefits are offered to sinners.

The book is a rich treasure trove of profound insights into the Word of God, an inspiring help to devotion and an uplifting source of deep Scriptural understanding. Here we benefit from the wisdom of those whom God has called into the ministry and whom He has wonderfully equipped with the ability to rightly divide the Word of Truth. There is an interesting blend of ages among the contributors and the contributions of the younger men are cause for thankfulness and gratitude to God.

Reading through the book one is amazed to ponder such memorable quotes as:

'God's fatherly hand mixes prosperity and adversity';

'It is best to keep our complaints for the secret place before the Lord';

'Beware the progression of sin – first we hide it, then we defend it, then we boast of it';

'What broke Christ's heart on the cross was the reproach of His Father';

'For the Christian very little is learned without affliction';

'There never was a soul who called upon God in affliction whose prayer was not answered';

'We will never experience more trouble than we will be given grace to bear';

'Some people forgive their own sins and go on to live in a false rest and a vain hope';

'In this life we only know our election by being sure of our calling';

Charles Calder Mackintosh, the Scottish Presbyterian preacher, is quoted as saying, 'It is plain that if any of us shall ever perish it is not through want of mercy in God or through want of merit in Christ to save us and it is not through want of the fullest, freest and most gratuitous tender of both to every soul that hears the gospel that we perish but it is through our own wilful and most

criminal contempt of the mercy of God and the Saviour of a lost world'.

This book is a true aid to meditation on and discussion of the Scriptures. It is highly recommended.

AM

Wait till you see the Butterfly, and other Short Stories for Boys and Girls

Doreen Tamminga

Banner of Truth Trust

pbk, 256pp £7.50

As a parent I have found this book of children's short stories very enjoyable to read to my children. Due to the stories being only a few pages long, it holds their attention and captures their imagination and, more importantly, all the while teaches them about Christ, His love and biblical moral issues.

Due to the book being targeted at different age groups these interesting stories can be enjoyed by all the children within the household. This is a book that is enjoyed by both adults and children alike. I particularly enjoyed how Christ and biblical teachings are portrayed within each story, to encourage children to seek Christ-likeness. The stories examine everyday life situations so the children can relate to the experiences of the characters within the book, helping to hold their attention on a level they can understand.

Overall we as a family of different ages thoroughly enjoyed the short stories of this book and found it thought-provoking and beneficial in enlightening us to Christian ways. A most enjoyable children's book.

Ashley Kitson

God is Always Good Cassidy's Story

J Cameron Fraser and Sonya M Taekema

Guardian Books

pbk, 125pp, £9.50

Cancer-type illnesses are the scourge of many in our present day. People are shocked when they hear the doctor or consultant utter the dreaded word in a diagnosis following tests. Surgery, radiotherapy but especially chemotherapy cause great anxiety. Some view the treatment as worse than the illness. In this book Cameron Fraser, a Scotsman ministering in Canada, tells of his own

sufferings and treatment. Prior to going to hospital in Calgary for a stem-cell transplant, when the prognosis was a 50% chance of recovery and if it had failed, there was nothing more that could be done, he preached in his church on the fact that God is always good. He wanted the congregation to know that God is always good regardless of whether or not he recovered. A thirteen-year-old girl, Cassidy, the daughter of Sonya, sang a solo. Little did she know that just over a year later she would undergo a stem cell transplant that would involve her in spending a year in hospital suffering extreme sickness and often at death's door. Mr Fraser gives excerpts of the diary that Cassidy's mother kept during her illness. Thankfully both seem to have fully recovered. Mr Fraser having been through a similar illness himself was able to be of great comfort to the family and to Cassidy. He could say that God was the one 'Who comforteth us in all our tribulation, that we may be able to comfort them which are in any trouble, by the comfort wherewith we ourselves are comforted of God' (2Cor.1:4). Scripture also says, 'God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it' (1Cor.10:13). His grace is sufficient and made perfect in weakness. This book will be an encouragement to others going through similar trials.

The book is available in the UK through www.peterreynoldsbooks.com.

William Macleod

Job Vacancies

The Christian Institute is seeking to employ biblical Christians for the posts of Senior Media Officer, Research Assistant and Administrative Assistant. There is also an employment opportunity for someone with a track record of managing staff, administering a large organisation or running a personnel department. Each post will be based at the Institute's headquarters in Newcastle upon Tyne. The deadline for applications is 20 September 2011. For more information please telephone 0191 281 5664 or email judith.coulson@christian.org.uk.

Why Keep the Lord's Day?

Rev John W Keddie

Introduction

There was a day in this country when the Sabbath – or Lord's day – was carefully observed. There is a sense in which the Christian Sabbath is a 'test case'. For whom or what? It is a test case for a nation and a church and an individual – of the presence of a vital Christianity. Of course a perfectly quiet Sabbath does not mean that there is necessarily a vital spiritual Christianity. Yet a vital Christianity will surely be found when people do have positive attitudes to the Christian Sabbath and its observance. True, it will not do to be 'Christian' the first day of the week, and 'secular' the other days. Christian faith and life are to be reflected in every aspect and area of life. This much is implicit in the fourth commandment, which of course is not just about the Sabbath, but all our time. One well-known preacher of an earlier day said this about the Christian's day of rest and worship: 'It is an infallible sign of the state of true religion in a land, in a church, in a family, and in a man's own heart and life... it is the sign of a standing or falling church. There is perhaps no surer sign of a falling Christian than a growing neglect of Sabbath-day ordinances, and an indolent and profane abuse of its sacred and priceless hours' (Alexander Whyte). By this standard the state of true religion in our land is low. In that sense the Sabbath and its observance is an indicator and symptom of a malaise. It has clearly been a ploy of the evil one in his attack on Christianity to loosen regard for the Christian Sabbath and its proper observance, not least among professing Christians. In this no doubt Television has had a profound effect, as it has on all public and private morality. Firstly, let us notice two things in approaching the fourth commandment:

(1) *It is stated positively.* In the common mind the Sabbath or Lord's day observance has negative connotations. No doubt there are negative requirements to all the commandments: 'Thou shalt not...'. This is inevitable in a fallen world. But the Sabbath in essence is not just 'abstention' from this or that. Rather, for the believer it is a 'market day of the soul' as the Puritans used to put it. Rest is of course important, but the best use of the day is made in what you do for your soul on that day.

(2) *'Sabbath' does not mean 'seventh'.* It means, literally, 'rest'. In other words it is not a necessity of the nature of the Sabbath that it is the 'seventh day of the week'. It will be argued that the change of day to the first day of the week was necessary through the coming and the work of the Lord Jesus Christ and of the coming of the Holy Spirit which marked the birth of the distinctively Christian church. The Sabbath is not distinctly and only 'Jewish'. It is good for us to look at this commandment (Exodus 20:8-11) again and restate its meaning and application, not least in a New Testament context.

I. WHAT ARE THE OBLIGATIONS ATTACHED TO SABBATH OBSERVANCE?

As we look at the commandment the obligation is clear: *One whole day in seven is to be specially given over to the Lord in*

rest and in worship (albeit also in such works as may be works of necessity, mercy and piety). This is clear from the form of the commandment in Exodus 20:8-11. Its permanence and morality are established by the linking of the Sabbath with the pattern of the creation week. It is a 'creation ordinance'. Given its institution before the fall of man into sin, as well as its inclusion in the moral law, it is clear that this is an ordinance for man's good. It was not just 'Jewish', nor was it just 'ceremonial'. It is distinctly moral, and therefore of permanent application. Of course there were ceremonial aspects and no doubt such aspects are referred to, for example, in Colossians 2:16.

To summarise, it is clear that the law contained in this commandment is moral and permanent for these reasons:

(a) The day of rest was instituted at creation before man's fall into sin;

(b) The arguments in the 4th Commandment are moral and not ceremonial (both in Exodus 20 and Deuteronomy 5);

(c) The other commandments in the Decalogue are certainly moral and the 4th cannot be different;

(d) The Sabbath was to be kept by 'strangers' also (see Nehemiah 13) though they had no obligations under the ceremonial law; and finally,

(e) The commandment is not abrogated in the New Testament.

The encouragement to 'remember' the Sabbath indicates that it must have been established *before* the law, something that the pattern of manna gathering in Exodus 16 clearly indicates. The obligations are moral and spiritual.

2. WHAT DAY IS TO BE OBSERVED?

The Sabbath clearly demarcated man's weeks, something not astronomically fixed (unlike days and years). The principle of the Sabbath is that one day in seven is to be specially observed by all people in honour to God and in the interests of their souls. But what day of the week is to be the Sabbath? Some say, 'It should be the seventh day of the week. That is what it appears to be in the Old Testament'. How is it that we have a first-day Sabbath, and is that of any real importance? Let me summarise the arguments for our observing of the Christian Sabbath or Lord's day on the *first* day of the week.

(1) *There is the use of the term 'Lord's day' in Revelation 1:10.* This is at least highly suggestive, taken along with other arguments. It seems clear that this refers to the day of Christian worship. Why should that term 'Lord's day' be used? It is argued that this fits well with that greatest of days for the Christian, which to the New Testament believer is surely *the day of resurrection*. It is by the resurrection of the Lord after all that we know that our faith is not in vain (1 Corinthians 15:17-20)! And the resurrection was on the first day of the week (Matthew 28:1; Mark 16:1-2; Luke 24:1; John 20:1). It is little wonder that this became the new Sabbath for the Christian church; indeed in a real sense it became a necessity that it should be so. It is

'For the believer it is a 'market day of the soul' as the Puritans used to put it. Rest is of course important, but the best use of the day is made in what you do for your soul on that day.'

inevitable that the Christian's Sabbath would commemorate His triumphal rising from the dead.

(2) *There are numerous indicators that the first day of the week was specially observed in the church.* For example, there are the meetings of Jesus with the disciples after His resurrection, both on the first day of the week (John 20:19,26); there is the incident in Acts 20 when Paul 'breaks bread' and preaches (v7), and the taking up of collections specified in 1 Corinthians 16:2. The references to such 'first day' religious activities are at least strongly suggestive of a change of day.

(3) *There is the coming of the Spirit at Pentecost.* This was seven weeks to the day after the rising of Jesus from the dead and again therefore on the first day of the week. It is not surprising that that event which was in effect the birth-date of the Christian church should also be significant as the apostolic day of gathering and worship. It stands to reason, therefore, that the Christian's Sabbath would be the first day of the week, seeing Christ triumphed over death on that day, and the Spirit came to give special life to the church on that day.

SRS Annual Meeting

The Annual Meeting and Conference of the Scottish Reformation Society is to be held on Saturday 1 October 2011 in St Andrew's Hall, 29 Arthur Street, Edinburgh EH6 5DA. The AGM is at 10.30 am and will be followed by two sessions open to the public: 11.30 am Rev Maurice Roberts, Inverness 'The Influence of the Word in the Scottish Reformation'; 2.00 pm: Rev Trevor Kirkland, Templepatrick, N I, 'The Development of the Authorised Version'. All are welcome. No booking is necessary but further information can be had from the organising secretary, John J Murray Tel. 0141 620 3983, email murray.johnjames@googlemail.com or website www.scottishreformationsociety.org.uk.

Preaching with a Hot Heart



A story is told of a Chinese convert, who once remarked in a conversation with a missionary: 'We want men with hot hearts to tell us of the love of Christ'. Here is a principle that might be more elegantly expressed, but the secret of successful work, especially in the presentation of Scripture truth, is here revealed. Most assuredly, the heart of the preacher should always be in sympathy with his message and should be kindled by it. If your theme, my brother, is the 'Coming of Christ', your heart will glow with it. It will be a hot heart. There will be a warmth of spiritual atmosphere surrounding you which others must feel and recognize. Your heart will burn with zeal that will lead you to beseech men 'earnestly with tears' to prepare for the solemn hour which is just before us.

Argument, method, rhetoric and gesture, all have their place, but it is the hot heart that makes these effective. Instruction in sound doctrine gives the fuel for your fire of truth, but the heart kindles it, turns it into words that burn. My dear brethren, let me beseech you to enter not upon the work of the gospel ministry as the men of the world make a choice of the various professions in this life. It is true that a large share of the preaching in the world today has degenerated into a mere profession, but if your heart burns hot with a message

of mercy to give to the world, you will soon recognise the fact that preaching cannot be picked up as a man chooses one of the professions in the world. Men who have met Jesus somewhere along the road in this life, and who have received from Him a message of truth, soon find that message sinking to the very depths of their soul, and creating there a real passion or travail for soul-winning.

If you, my brother, have no passion for souls, if your heart does not yearn greatly to see men everywhere brought to a saving knowledge of the Lord Jesus Christ, then don't assume the role of a preacher. A minister of the gospel whose heart is filled with the Holy Spirit, who is zealous for souls, who sets all else aside as vain and profitless, will always be found active in every good Christian work, and will labour continually with every art and skill and resource at his command to win souls into the kingdom of Christ. It is the travail for souls which Christ has in Isaiah 53:11. And nothing short of this zeal for souls will make our preaching a success from a heavenly viewpoint.

This article was written by a minister in New York in a newsletter to his Congregation in 1911. The spirit of a zealous minister, with a passion for soul-winning, is as Biblical, relevant and timely one hundred years later in 2011.

DJM

Congregational Remittances - February 2011

	2011 Jul	2011 Total	2010 Total to July				
Presbytery of Inverness				Outer Hebrides Presbytery			
Aberdeen	900	8,274	7,379	Cross	1,720	13,472	13,311
Duthil-Dores	1,448	12,816	12,646	Harris - Leverburgh	1,150	9,594	8,658
Inverness	2,000	16,000	18,000	Harris - Scalpay	1,800	14,948	14,100
Kilmorack & Strathglass	1,000	10,350	11,344	Knock & Point	1,125	9,490	8,773
Total Inverness	5,348	47,441	49,369	North Uist	1,000	8,501	8,278
Northern Presbytery				Stornoway	5,913	52,805	47,303
Assynt & Scourie	0	700	563	Total Outer Hebrides	12,708	108,810	100,423
Brora	2,200	12,644	13,192	Presbytery of Skye & Lochcarron			
Kiltearn	1,000	6,780	12,600	Bracadale	1,000	7,112	8,607
Tarbat	1,000	7,284	5,323	Duirinish (Waternish)	500	3,215	3,000
Total Northern	4,200	27,408	31,677	Kilmuir & Stenscholl	2,600	9,100	7,646
Southern Presbytery				Lochalsh	636	6,195	5,640
Arran	784	5,383	4,670	Poolewe & Aultbea	494	6,056	6,601
Ayr	200	1,559	1,548	Ullapool	0	48	400
Dumfries	0	0	0	Portree	1,200	8,400	8,400
Edinburgh	1,900	17,905	16,571	Snizort	1,200	11,487	10,843
Glasgow - Partick	2,500	19,500	18,500	Strath	200	548	2,037
Glasgow - Shettleston	2,000	14,975	11,443	Total Skye	7,830	52,161	53,175
Glasgow - Knightswood	1,550	13,874	15,924	Total Congregations			
Rothsay	0	0	147	Other Donations	608	18,801	8,597
Total Southern	8,934	73,196	68,803	Legacy	0	18,153	0
				TOTAL	39,628	345,969	312,044
				Including Gift Aid		46,890	43,408

Letter from Zambia

Dear Friends,

Greetings from Petauke!

Our first semester at the College seemed to go by very quickly. It was very much blessed by the Lord. We were able to settle in to our new life at the College quickly and easily. David taught a class on the Westminster Confession of Faith. It was a blessing for him to be able to give the students an overview of Reformed doctrine. His class was entirely taken up with proving that the doctrines taught in the Confession are the teachings of Scripture. Our first semester was also the Molenaar family's last. Having been at the College for five years, the Molenaars left in early June. We ask that you would remember them in your prayers as they seek to serve the Lord in a new field.

A Break

We thank the Lord that we had a productive and enjoyable break between semesters. The College had a break from mid-May until early July so that the students could go home

to harvest their crops. During the break our family moved house and went on holiday with our colleagues. Spending ten days together away from the College was rejuvenating for us and helpful for binding the team together. We travelled into North-Eastern Zambia and had the privilege of seeing some rare animals and stunning scenery. It was a blessing being able to enjoy God's creation together.

Conferences

The break in the term also allowed for several conferences. Heinrich and David held a week-long conference in Katete, a town about one hour's drive east of the College. The conference was titled 'Preaching the Word' and focused on how to interpret and preach the Scriptures. The ladies held a conference for students' and graduates' wives. The conference focused on the book of Ruth. It was eye-opening to learn that some of the women had never even heard of Ruth and that many knew nothing about the book. There was also a week-long conference for graduates. We had a guest lecturer from South Africa who taught on the Christian worldview. Each of these conferences showed us a bit more of the great need

that the churches here have for sound teaching.

New Term

The students have now returned to the College and on 12 July we started the semester on a positive note with a guest lecturer, Heinrich Zwemstra's brother Dinant who is a minister in South Africa, teaching on the Holy Spirit. This semester Heinrich and David are each teaching two courses. Heinrich is teaching New Testament Introduction and Evangelism. David is teaching Church History and Homiletics. David is also beginning to mentor the students and preach on a regular basis in their churches. We ask that you would pray for students and lecturers alike, that the Lord would get glory to Himself in everything that takes place here at the College this semester.

Expecting a baby

During the first semester we discovered that Katie is expecting our second child! We thank the Lord for this addition to our family and ask that you pray for a healthy pregnancy. We are thankful for access to good medical care during our occasional trips to Lusaka. We are thankful that the baby is due on 22 December, during the term break, which will allow Katie to travel back to the States to give birth.

Scotland

The term here ends at the beginning of October, when the students will return to their homes to plant their crops at the beginning of the rainy season. Our family plans to travel to Scotland on 17 October, D.V. It is our hope and desire to fellowship with as many of you as possible while we are in Scotland, but as yet our itinerary is unknown. Please pray for the Missions Committee as they decide how to best use the time we have in Scotland.

USA

Due to restrictions on how late in pregnancy one can fly, Katie will travel on to the States with Elijah at the beginning of November, while David will remain in Scotland for a few more weeks before joining her to await the baby's birth. We are grateful that we can stay with family in the States. This will offer an ideal support system for Katie as she cares for a toddler and a newborn child, allowing David to focus on preparing for the upcoming term and also to share about the College with churches in the States and to process the paperwork, passport, and travel details surrounding the birth of our second child. We anticipate being able to return to Scotland briefly at the beginning of February 2012 before continuing on to Zambia for the start of the term in mid-February. In all these details we ask your prayers for safety, smooth logistics and wisdom in all our decisions. We especially ask for prayer that we will have opportunities to share about the work at the College with our many contacts in various churches in the States.

We are grateful for your continued interest in and support of the labours and labourers here at Covenant College. Our family is happy and healthy and the Lord is continually providing for and sustaining us. We look forward to what He will do in the future. 'But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you' (Mt.6:33).

In Christ's Love,

David, Katie & Elijah Lachman



The recent graduates' conference. The man in the centre is guest speaker Johannes Aucamp from South Africa. Also in the row are Cees Molenaar, Heinrich Zwemstra and David Lachman.



New Church Building in Knock & Point Nears Completion

“Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name have cast out devils? and in thy name done many wonderful works? And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity.”

Matthew 7:22-23