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**North Road Chapel (Evangelical)  
BIDEFORD**

# RECONCILIATION THROUGH PROPITIATION

The study of Biblical terminology is an exercise which is highly necessary, if we are to come to a right understanding of Christian doctrine. In the last article which commenced to examine the meaning of reconciliation, it was pointed out from the Scriptures that spiritual alienation is mutual. God's hatred and wrath is upon the sinner, and man is at enmity with God; therefore because the alienation is mutual, so also must be the reconciliation. By looking into the offerings and sacrifices of the Levitical system of worship which are all so highly typical of Christ, one soon discovers that primarily their purpose was not to divert man's enmity from God, rather that God should be propitiated, and His wrath diverted from man.

The word PROPITIATION is another vital theological term, it defines a very important aspect of doctrine without which there could be no RECONCILIATION. Modern versions of the Scripture have eliminated this word under the premise that such terms are archaic and no longer understood; this is a serious misrepresentation. These strong, definitive, fundamental, theological terms are never to be removed or yet replaced by weaker and less precise expressions. The word 'propitiation' is certainly not obsolete; it will be found in modern English Dictionaries and it has a deep and profound meaning which must not be minimised, for it is a key factor in the presentation of the gospel. To explain and to convey the exact meaning of these basic doctrinal terms, is the work of the preacher and in this he is to be diligent and faithful. He is to give the sense (cf Nehemiah 8:8).

Propitiation has to do with the wrath of God, hence it is vitally linked with reconciliation. **To propitiate means to placate, or to appease offended justice.**

The same Greek word which underlies the term 'propitiation' is translated in Hebrews 9:5, 'mercy seat'. This is not without significance, for the mercy seat of the Old Testament was sprinkled with blood and this sprinkling was an integral part of the great offering of Atonement. The details of this sprinkling are so carefully set out in Holy Writ "And he (that is Aaron) shall take of the blood of the bullock, and sprinkle it with his finger upon the mercy seat eastward; and before the mercy seat shall he sprinkle of the blood with his finger seven times. Then shall he kill the goat of the sin offering, that is for the people, and bring his blood within the vail, and do with that blood as he did with the blood of the bullock, and sprinkle it upon the mercy seat, and before the mercy seat: and he shall make atonement for the holy place, because of the uncleanness of the children of Israel, and because of their transgressions in all their sins: and so shall he do for the tabernacle of the congregation, that remaineth among them in the midst of their uncleanness" (Leviticus 16:14-16). All this pertains to sin and to the holiness of God. The mercy seat was the place where the High Priest applied the blood of the atoning sacrifice for the satisfaction of God's justice and the placating of His wrath against the sins of His offending people - Propitiation.

Another very important point in this connection is that the Old Testament Hebrew word for 'mercy seat' was 'a covering'. The spiritual truth set forth in this definition is profound. Underneath that mercy seat were the tables of stone - THE LAW OF GOD; that which condemns the sinner, but the blood sprinkled mercy seat **covered that law**. All this is so highly typical of Christ, indeed this was the whole purpose of the old economy; it was to point forward and to illustrate varying aspects of the work of the Redeemer, for in due time God would send Him forth to be **a propitiation** (cf Romans 3:25).

The propitiatory work of Christ covered every aspect of the Law of God, both preceptive and penal. Christ fulfilled

every detail of the law in His life, and He endured the curse of the broken law with the consequent wrath of God upon Him in His death. By this dual aspect, the claims of Divine justice are fully met. The minutest precept of the holy Law of God had been adhered to, and the fierce vengeance of Divine wrath meted out without mitigation or mercy. By this means of substitution and interposition, that of Christ taking the sinner's place, the wrath of God was propitiated.

Propitiation is an essential element to spiritual reconciliation and from it there can be no deviation. The Word of God states "For if, when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of His Son, much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by His life" (Romans 5:10). A clear statement is here made, "we were enemies", **God's enemies**, the objects of His displeasure, and subject to the hostility of His Law. However, this verse further states "we were reconciled" - restored to favour. This was not due to any action on our part, and primarily it was not even the work of the Holy Spirit, for in the plainest of language it is said that we were reconciled to God by **the death of His Son**. It is the substitutionary propitiatory work of the Saviour which alone effects reconciliation, and initially it is God being reconciled to the sinner, for the immediate context of this statement in verse 10 is "God commendeth His love towards us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us. Much more then, being now justified by His blood, we shall be saved from wrath through Him" (Romans 5:8,9). The Holy Spirit is commending the amazing love of God, and the reconciliation of verse 10 is the highest proof and manifestation of that love. It must be emphasized that the reconciliation in view here is not us laying down our enmity to God; if so, this would be the manifestation of our love to Him rather than His love to us. **Justification** is also brought in at this point. Again is this the Godward aspect "It is God that justifieth" (Romans 8:33); but justification is the direct result of the work of

Christ. Justified by His blood and saved from wrath through Him (cf Romans 5:9).

"All things are of God, who hath reconciled us to Himself by Jesus Christ" (2 Corinthians 5:18). "Who **hath** reconciled us". When and how did this take place? At the cross when Christ was made sin. "For He hath made Him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him" (2 Corinthians 5:21). The sins of all God's elect were imputed to the Saviour, He endured the wrath of God because of this, and in consequence Divine justice is placated. Primarily the work of Christ was to propitiate God in order to effect reconciliation.

Some say that we get no precise expression in Scripture of God being reconciled to man, rather is it man being reconciled to God. This however is not strictly correct, for statements of equivalent import and meaning are numerous; for instance "I will praise Thee: though Thou wast angry with me, Thine anger is turned away" (Isaiah 12:1); "I will not cause mine anger to fall upon you: for I am merciful, saith the Lord, and I will not keep anger for ever" (Jeremiah 3:12); "I will establish my covenant with thee; and thou shalt know that I am the Lord: that thou mayest remember, and be confounded, and never open thy mouth any more because of thy shame, when I am pacified toward thee for all that thou hast done, saith the Lord God" (Ezekiel 16:62,63).

The terminology found in these verses is very meaningful - God's anger turned away, God pacified (that is, appeased or placated), I will not keep anger. The New Testament speaks of enmity having been slain (cf Ephesians 2:16). That was effected at the cross, there the anger of God against sin and the sinner burnt out upon His Son, the enmity against us is utterly and eternally slain. This is the wonder of the work of Christ the Mediator. He removed all our sins from before God's face and carried them as far as the east is from the west (cf Psalm 103:12),

casting them in the depths of the sea (cf Micah 7:19); never will they be resurrected. It is because of this, that God can come out to sinners in reconciling grace and mercy.

There is however, another aspect of reconciliation; the sinner must be brought to turn away from his sin and rebellion to God. He has to come to a voluntary, joyful, yielding obedience and until this is effected, reconciliation is not vitally and personally accomplished.

The former - the Godward aspect - is effected by Christ. The latter - the manward aspect - is effected by the Holy Spirit. Nevertheless the latter is absolutely dependent upon the former, for the Holy Spirit could never bring about man's reconciliation to God, if God had not been propitiated by Christ.

So it is that, Christ having first made propitiation, the Holy Spirit regenerates, producing in man's depraved being a desire to be restored unto holiness. As a rebel sinner man hears that inward call of God, he lays down his enmity and ceases to strive against his Maker, he comes to Christ the Saviour, he believes to the saving of the soul (cf Hebrews 10:39). Then it is that the Spirit of God says Ye have now received the Atonement (cf Romans 5:11). Reconciliation has taken place, it is actually and vitally accomplished in the life and person of the believing sinner.

### **THE SCOPE OF RECONCILIATION**

There is one further point concerning reconciliation which is sadly misunderstood, and in consequence the Holy Scriptures have been wrongly interpreted. It is not until one has grasped the detail and implications of the first part of this article, that this matter of 'scope' will be understood.

The misunderstanding of the 'scope' or 'extent' of reconciliation is due to a wrong interpretation of such words as, "God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto Himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them; and hath committed unto us the word of reconciliation" (2 Corinthians 5:19). The person who holds the belief of universal atonement will say 'Here it is, the Scripture says that God was in Christ reconciling the **world**, and so is the doctrine distorted by a wrong interpretation of one word.

Reconciliation is not a truth in isolation, it is consequent upon propitiation, and propitiation is an absolute appeasement of God's wrath, hence by its very nature it is quite obvious that it is not universal in its scope. If it was universal then all men everywhere would have been automatically saved as soon as it was accomplished, hell would have been immediately abolished and the Holy Spirit would never have inspired any reference to future judgment to have been included in the New Testament.

The propitiatory work of Christ is universal in one sense and one sense only; that is, that it was an absolute satisfaction to God for all the election of grace, and these are an innumerable company redeemed by blood out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation (cf Revelation 5:9). Therefore because of the unbreakable link between propitiation and reconciliation, it can never be said that by the work of Christ the world is to be reconciled to God; it is a people out of the world, those Who are redeemed by the blood of the Mediator.

With regard to the proclamation of the gospel, this word 'world' seems to be a great difficulty to many. If those who simply cite John 3:16 as being the answer to the whole question really knew the doctrine of Scripture, they would not make such trite statements. By sitting down for an hour with a Bible and concordance and looking up the word 'world', one discovers over two hundred references. It

becomes immediately apparent that the word 'world' does not always carry the same meaning; for example "The earth is the Lord's, and the fulness thereof; the world, and they that dwell therein" (Psalm 24:1) - this is the planet and all the inhabitants; "The Lord reigneth, He is clothed with majesty; the Lord is clothed with strength, wherewith He hath girded Himself: the world also is stablished, that it cannot be moved" (Psalm 93:1) - this is the planet only, not the creatures on it; "Come near, ye nations, to hear; and hearken, ye people: let the earth hear, and all that is therein; the world, and all things that come forth of it" (Isaiah 34:1) - this is man, not the planet, but those who inhabit it.

Often in the Bible the word 'world' is used to refer only to a small section of its inhabitants. Instances of this are to be seen in the gospels; "For there is no man that doeth anything in secret, and he himself seeketh to be known openly. If Thou do these things, shew Thyself to the world" (John 7:4); "The Pharisees therefore said among themselves, Perceive ye how ye prevail nothing? behold, the world is gone after Him" (John 12:19). That which is referred to in these verses is only a tiny section of Judea, yet it is termed the world.

It is comparatively rare to find the word 'world' in the Scriptures as having reference to the whole of earth's inhabitants, therefore it is most important that we always interpret this word within the context, or within the SCOPE of the doctrine which is being set forth. Some words from Peter's epistle will help to further clarify; God "spared not the old world, but saved Noah the eighth person, a preacher of righteousness, bringing in the flood upon the world of the ungodly" (2 Peter 2:5); this does not mean **all** the inhabitants of this planet in every generation; it was not so sweeping in its universality as that, but it did include **all** the inhabitants of the planet at that particular period, with the exception of eight souls whom God had set apart to be saved. In this instance it was the world of the ungodly.



The citing of these many sections of Holy Scripture demonstrate that the SCOPE is determined by the setting or context. This is the case with the words referred to earlier "God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto Himself" (2 Corinthians 5:19); the word 'world' is there set within the context of reconciliation. Reconciliation is the result of propitiation, and Christ's propitiatory work is for the elect of God; it therefore follows, this "reconciling the world" can mean nothing other than the world of the elect, in the same manner in which Peter makes the distinction of speaking of the world of the ungodly.

In addition the term 'world' is sometimes used to distinguish between Jew and Gentile. This was the case in John's Gospel ch 3; the Lord was speaking to Nicodemus who was a master in Israel, a ruler of the Jews. This man would not in any way be interested in Gentiles, and so Christ informs him that the scope of God's love was to all the world, not only Jewry (cf John 3:16). The same writer in his epistles states, "And He is the propitiation for our sins; and not for ours only (that is Jews), but also for the sins of the whole world" (1 John 2:2) - Gentiles also; again this is not universal in that it embraces all mankind. It is the elect from all parts of the world who are redeemed unto God by Christ's blood **out of** every nation (cf Revelation 5:9).

Propitiation and reconciliation, as set forth in Scripture, are **not** universal, they apply to the elect. To interpret isolated statements, not holding them within the context of the overall doctrine of Scripture, is to cause confusion and propagate unsound teaching.

W.H. MOLLAND

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## **HOLD FAST THE FORM OF SOUND WORDS (2 TIMOTHY 1:13)**

# *CHRIST* THE GREAT DIVIDER

In the Bible there is tremendous detail given concerning the crucifixion and death of Christ; this is to be expected, for His death on the cross is central to the great plan and purpose of God in redemption. Every detail of the crucifixion is of great importance and has its relevant meaning and spiritual significance. One matter is of particular consequence in that the death of Christ, the Son of God on Calvary's hill, eternally divides the human race into two categories. This then is a subject which not only requires thorough investigation, it also demands our serious attention, for there is not a single descendant of Adam who is not affected by this issue.

In their reporting of the crucifixion of the Saviour, the writers of the four Gospels each make different points. John states, "He bearing His cross went forth into a place called the place of a skull, which is called in the Hebrew Golgotha: where they crucified Him, and two other with Him, on either side one, and Jesus in the midst" (John 19:17,18). Luke's account is slightly varied, he writes, "And there were also two other, malefactors, led with Him to be put to death. And when they were come to the place, which is called Calvary, there they crucified Him, and the malefactors, one on the right hand and the other on the left" (Luke 23:32,33). "On either side one, and Jesus in the midst". "One on the right hand, and the other on the left".

The right and left hands of Christ are of great significance in Scripture as is evidenced by what Matthew writes, "When the Son of man shall come in His glory, and

all the holy angels with Him, then shall He sit upon the throne of His glory: and before Him shall be gathered all nations: and He shall separate them one from another, as a shepherd divideth his sheep from the goats: and He shall set the sheep on His **right** hand, but the goats on the **left**. Then shall the King say unto them on His **right** hand, Come, ye blessed of My Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world... .Then shall He say also unto them on the **left** hand, Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels" (Matthew 25:31-34, & 41).

This refers to the great day of future and final judgment at the second advent; but the important point is that the sheep and the goats are on 'either side' and the same blessed Person is 'in the midst', as was the case on Calvary at His first advent. In order to come to a better understanding of the matter we need to go further into Luke's narrative where he writes, "And one of the malefactors which were hanged railed on Him, saying, If thou be Christ, save Thyself and us. But the other answering rebuked him, saying, Dost not thou fear God, seeing thou art in the same condemnation? And we indeed justly; for we receive the due reward of our deeds: but this man hath done nothing amiss. And he said unto Jesus, Lord, remember me when Thou comest into Thy kingdom. And Jesus said unto him, Verily I say unto thee, Today shalt thou be with Me in paradise" (Luke 23:39-43).

Here are two malefactors, they were **both** sinners deserving hell, yet according to that other analogy used in Scripture, one was a sheep and the other was a goat. Between them was the crucified Saviour, Jesus was 'in the midst', He came between them, indeed He DIVIDED them.

Christ and His work has ever been a dividing factor amongst men; this was the case throughout His earthly ministry. John so often records instances of divided opinions concerning His teaching, His miracles and His manner of life. "So there was a division among the people

because of Him" (John 7:43). "There was a division among them" (John 9:16). "There was a division therefore again among the Jews for these sayings" (John 10:19). Every time it was a division 'because of Him'. Thus it was on Calvary's hill; not only did Christ divide these two men physically by being crucified between them, but there was a division which was infinitely greater, a division which was spiritual. In the course of His ministry when upon earth, the Lord had made it abundantly clear that He had come to seek and save that which was lost (cf Luke 19:10). Here on one side of the Saviour was a poor lost sheep, one who according to Isaiah's words had gone astray, one who had turned to his own way (cf Isaiah 53:6). To what lengths had this man strayed, and how fearful were the consequences of him having turned to his own way; this fellow was now on the very brink of hell! Yes, lost sheep can wander and stray to the threshold of the abyss, but sovereign electing grace will rescue them. This poor wretch in repentance, cried for mercy and he received it; this is ever the case, for the Lord will always respond to such a cry from the heart of any person. Here is an example of a man, who humanly speaking was ALMOST LOST - BUT SAVED BY SOVEREIGN GRACE.

These two sinful men hung on their respective crosses that day and died; one went to heaven and the other went to hell; so they were ETERNALLY divided. What made this great and decisive difference? Who divided them? It was Christ on the centre cross. Right down through history men and women, boys and girls are divided into two classes, and only two; they are either on the **right** hand of Christ or they are on His **left**.

The world has many divisions such as national and political; men also make social distinctions, but the Bible states that God "hath made of one blood all nations of men for to dwell on all the face of the earth" (Acts 17:26). With respect to any segregation of nations or grading of society which man may make, these are of no consequence when it comes to spiritual and eternal issues,

for every descendant of Adam has fallen into sin and depravity; in this "There is no difference: for all have sinned" (Romans 3:22,23).

However the glad tidings of the gospel are that "Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners" (1 Timothy 1:15). He came to die for the ungodly (cf Romans 5:6). The death of Christ was a substitutionary death, He was the sinless, spotless Lamb of God, "holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners" (Hebrews 7:26), acting in the capacity of A SURETY, paying the penalty on behalf of sinful men and women. Because of the full and complete satisfaction which He, the Surety, made to Divine Justice, every man or woman, boy or girl who comes to the Saviour pleading for forgiveness and seeking salvation will receive it, just as did the thief on the cross. The infallible Word of God categorically states, "Whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved" (Acts 2:21).

It is upon the grounds of the substitutionary death of Christ that untold numbers of dear souls of all age groups have, like the repentant malefactor, called for salvation and been eternally saved. In this way is humanity divided into two categories, SAVED or LOST, and this is the great issue which affects every member of the human race, be it the monarch upon the throne or the tramp on the road, that person is either saved or lost, there is no other category.

To use another Biblical analogy, there are but TWO ROADS. Concerning this, the Lord's words are very conclusive as He says, "Enter ye in at the strait gate: for wide is the gate, and broad is the way, that leadeth to destruction, and many there be which go in thereat: because strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it" (Matthew 7:13,14). On the one hand the Broad Way, on the other the Narrow Way; there is no alternate route, it is the one or the other. The Broad Road ends in death, that is eternal death which is

not annihilation, it is an everlasting existence in a state of separation from God in a place of eternal torment, which is the just end and recompence for sin and sinners.

Let no person think this hard or unfair; for it was to save sinners from hell and deliver them from the wrath to come that Christ hung on that middle cross, bearing our sins in His own body on the tree (cf 1 Peter 2:24); suffering for sins, the Just for the unjust that He might bring us to God (cf 1 Peter 3:18). How then shall we escape if we neglect so great salvation (cf Hebrews 2:3)? No sinner **can** or **will** escape judgment if they neglect or reject this great salvation which God has wrought, in and by His Son Jesus Christ. It is only through this wondrous salvation, that we enter the strait gate and so get on to the narrow road which leads to life everlasting.

God's salvation is the deciding factor of life or death, saved or lost, heaven or hell, and it is through a crucified Saviour, the One who took the sinners place in death and judgment. It is the cross, yea rather He that hung thereon who makes this division. The whole world is thus divided and families are divided in the same manner: children have come to the Saviour, the parents have not; sometimes it is a wife who has been wondrously saved but the husband is not interested, or it could be the husband but not the wife; the parents but not the children. Thus it is today as it was in the days of our Lord, there is a 'division because of Him'.

Is this article being read by one who has never cried to God for mercy and called upon the Lord for salvation? If so, do you not realize dear one, that should death come suddenly upon you as it does to so many, young people as well as older ones, that you would be eternally cut off from God, awaiting the judgment of the last great day when all the dead, small and great will stand before God (cf Revelation 20:12). The sheep will be on the right hand and the goats on the left. Then will those devastating words

be addressed to all on the left, "Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels" (Matthew 25:41). An eternal separation, a division which can never be bridged.

Let none be so foolish as to trifle with such a vital matter as their soul's eternal welfare. "Today if ye will hear His voice, harden not your hearts" (Hebrews 3:15).

"To die without hope, hast thou counted the cost?  
To die without Christ and thy soul to be LOST!"

"Behold, now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation" (2 Corinthians 6:2).

The earnest prayer of the writer is that the Lord will graciously bless and save all who have read these lines.

W.H. MOLLAND

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If Jesus should call you today, dear friend,  
To stand at His judgment seat,  
And you knew that this hour your life would end,  
Would the summons be sad or sweet?

If Jesus should call you today, TODAY,  
Oh what would your answer be?  
Could you with rejoicing His voice obey,  
And be glad His dear face to see?

Be ready, be ready! you know not when  
The summons to you may come,  
When you shall be missed from the haunts of men  
And enter the eternal realm.

# EDITORIAL

Down through the ages, certain Churches and denominations have been identified by their particular theological stance, and terms have been coined to mark or describe such belief and practice. There is no doubt that those responsible for these designations at the time were well aware of what they were meant to denote, but over the generations these terms have become blurred and their original meaning has lost its significance. Consequently, many now use these descriptive definitions without knowing their full implication. The article in this magazine entitled 'Reconciliation through Propitiation', deals with two Biblical terms and explains the vital doctrine conveyed by them. Likewise it is necessary to define man-made designations.

A typical example of such a term is EVANGELICAL. The true definition of this word is 'one who stands for, and seeks to maintain the truth of Holy Scripture'. Alas today, the term is so misunderstood and misused that even the pope of Rome is said by some to be evangelical. Nevertheless this descriptive word is still held by a few who know it's true meaning; such are not contending for a system, creed or confession, but rather the upholding of "all the counsel of God" (Acts 20:27). Evangelicalism rightly understood is a principle.

The terms REFORMED and CALVINISTIC have, over the past generation, come into great prominence. Constantly are we being confronted with news and information of the Reformed Movement, Reformed Churches, Reformed Witnesses, Reformed Fellowships. These terms are still used in all honesty by many, and it identifies them in the strictest manner with their meaning; however there are a number, who style themselves REFORMED, who either do not know all that is



implied, or who conveniently disregard certain aspects of belief which are fundamental to that which the term implies, yet still use the designation.

A Reformed Church is defined as 'a Protestant Church which has adopted Calvinistic doctrines and practice'. Many who have been influenced by today's Reformed Movement would say that they were returning to the great truths of the Protestant Reformation.

At the Reformation, under the Holy Spirit's invincible power, certain fundamental aspects of Biblical doctrine were rediscovered and in consequence a great revival ensued throughout Europe. However, never must this be looked upon as a complete purifying of the Church. The Puritans, who dug deeply into the Word of God, continued this reforming process and their legacy to the Church is some of the finest writings ever to come from the pens of uninspired men. Nevertheless, there was not a complete reformation and never will be on earth. Many things were retained in those bygone days which have never been eradicated, therefore before we adopt such a designation as REFORMED, we need to know **all** that is implied by this term.

There is a great danger in contending for historical Protestantism and Reformed theology, for if a person is not very careful, he can be seen to be contending for that which is **not** Biblical; an example of this is the state Church. No Church ordered and established on Scriptural principles, can take on a national status with the monarch acting as supreme governor on earth. Before a Bible-believing Christian can be identified with the state Church, he must carefully scrutinize the historic Anglican Articles of Religion. A number of statements contained within the Articles might be considered to be Reformed and Calvinistic in nature, but is that sufficient? Article 27 of the Anglican Book of Prayer states, "The baptism of young children is in any wise to be retained in the Church, as most agreeable with the institution of Christ".

But Christ never instituted infant baptism! How then can it be in agreement with the institution given by Him? **The font**, which is evidenced in every Anglican Church, indicates the retention of this 'institution'; but retained from whom? - from ROME.

In the state Church at the unbiblical ceremony of infant baptism, the one officiating says, "We receive this child into the congregation of Christ's flock, and do sign him/her with the sign of the cross, in token that hereafter he/she shall not be ashamed to confess the faith of Christ crucified, and manfully to fight under His banner, against sin, the world and the devil; and to continue Christ's faithful soldier and servant unto life's end. Seeing...that this child is regenerate, and grafted into the body of Christ's Church, let us give thanks to Almighty God for these benefits". Later follows a prayer where it is said "We yield thee hearty thanks, most merciful Father, that it hath pleased thee to regenerate this infant with Thy Holy Spirit, to receive him/her for Thine own child by adoption, and to incorporate him/her into Thy holy Church". Nothing of this can be substantiated from Holy Scripture. It is nothing other than the heretical teachings of Romanism, **retained** by a Protestant Church **after** the Reformation. How can the word 'evangelical' ever be attached to those who perform such ceremonies? It is a contradiction to do so, knowing that the true meaning of the term 'evangelical' is 'One who stands for, and seeks to maintain the truth of Holy Scripture'. Any person who fully appreciates true evangelicalism will be much more concerned with contending for "the faith which was once delivered unto the saints" (Jude v 3), than with returning to the Protestant Reformation, which never eradicated these practices.

Some may argue that what has been written is not fair comment, and that it does not give a correct picture of REFORMED THEOLOGY. Generally speaking in the United Kingdom today, those who claim to be Reformed take the Westminster Confession of Faith as being the basis of

their belief and practice. In much of its content, this is a most excellent handbook of Christian doctrine; nevertheless on certain points, it is sadly adrift from the truth of the inspired Word of God. Over recent years, many have rallied under this banner in order to escape liberal, modern Churchianity and have taken on the title of REFORMED, not knowing all that the term implies. This is particularly pertinent to those of Baptist belief, for believer's baptism is a fundamental Divine ordinance which must not be compromised. When one knows all that is implied by the term REFORMED, to link such a word with evangelicals who faithfully baptise those who profess faith, is to employ contradictory terminology.

Those who adhere to the Westminster Confession are Paedo baptists, like the Anglicans, ('Paedo' meaning infants). Whilst their teaching and formula is quite different to the state Church, they do however sprinkle, or pour water over infants. They vary from Anglicans in that the child must be born of one or both believing parents. Chapter 28 of the Westminster Confession, section 3 reads "Dipping of the person into water is not necessary; but baptism is rightly administered by pouring or sprinkling water upon the person". Hebrews 9:10 & 19-22 are used to substantiate their position but none of these verses are set within the context of baptism. Section 4 continues - Not only those that do actually profess faith in, and obedience unto Christ, but also infants of one or of both believing parents, are to be baptised. This section is based upon the covenant made with Abraham; great emphasis being placed upon the words "And thy seed after thee" (Genesis 17:7). Adherents to the Westminster Confession teach that just as circumcision was a sign and seal of the earthly covenant, so is baptism of the new covenant.

The late A.A.Hodge, professor of Systematic Theology, Princeton, U.S.A, a great champion of REFORMED teaching, states concerning the children of believing parents in his book Outlines of Theology chapter 42 section 32, "The truth is that faith is required, but it is the faith of

the parent acting for his child. The covenant of which baptism is the seal, is contracted with the parent on behalf of the child upon whom the seal is properly applied". If this be the case, then salvation is of the will of man; for would not every Christian parent thus act if they could actually contract for their child in the matter of faith? On this premise, a person becomes a Christian merely because his parents are Christians and accordingly is given a seal of so-called baptism at birth.

John Calvin in his Institutes, volume 4, chapter 16, section 20, also referring to infants born of believing parents states, "The seed of both repentance and faith lies hid in them by the secret operation of the spirit". Great theologian and Bible expositor as Calvin was, whose works in general are invaluable to those who study the Word of God. Nevertheless what Bible-believing Christian can identify with this statement!

Charles Hodge, of the same persuasion wrote, "Let the little ones have their names written in the Lamb's Book of Life, even if afterwards they choose to erase them". He also writes, "Those parents sin grievously against the souls of their children, who neglect to consecrate them to God in the ordinance of baptism" (Systematic Theology Vol 3 p388).

More recently, Professor Murray writes in his book on Christian Baptism, "Baptized infants are to be received as the children of God and treated accordingly".

Another pamphlet recently circulated by a Reformed Fellowship states, "Included in the Covenant of grace are the children of believers".

These are matters of utmost gravity and when using the term REFORMED or CALVINISTIC, let all be aware that in it's true and real meaning, all this teaching is included. It is not without reason that the Scriptures state "Cease ye from man" (Isaiah 2:22). We must only follow the

writings of men in so far as they follow the Word of God. The Christian **can** and **should** stand solidly for the doctrine of Divine sovereignty, salvation by grace alone, total depravity, election, predestination, particular redemption, effectual calling, eternal security; these are all fundamental articles of 'the faith once delivered', and for them a **true** evangelical will contend. Because a Christian stands for such truth in no way demands or suggests that he has to be styled 'REFORMED', for such a term has connotations with which many a true evangelical would not want to be linked.

Children born into a Christian home are indeed highly privileged. However it is totally at variance with the Word of God and preposterous to suggest, as Calvin did, that these children have the seed of both repentance and faith hidden in them, or as Hodge states, that the faith of the parent can act for the child, and that infant baptism is the sign and seal of this. There is no **physical** link in the New Covenant; all are born in Mam and there is "no difference" (Romans 3:22). Birth connection with a Christian parent cannot translate a child from union with Adam to union with Christ. Whether a child is born of a Christian or a pagan, all are shapen in iniquity and conceived in sin (cf Psalm 51:5). All are under the sentence of death from birth; it is not that death is passed upon some; "Death is passed upon all" (Romans 5:12). **All**, be they born of Christians or heathens "**must be born again**" if they are to enter the kingdom of God, because "that which is born of the flesh is flesh" (John 3:6).

Those who seek to maintain the truth of Holy Scripture will eschew the names of men, and such terms as 'REFORMED'\* and 'CALVINISTIC' if they rightly assess all that is implied by such designations. The highest of all appellations is to be known as **Bible-believing** and **practicing** Christians; this is the only necessary identification.

**ANNOUNCEMENTS AND INFORMATION**

**VISITING PREACHERS D.V.**

Lord's Day	4 April 1993	MR G THRUSSELL	Truro
Lord's Day	2 May 1993	DR S SHORT	Weston Super Mare
Thursday	13 May 1993	MR F STANBURY	Bow
Thursday	10 June 1993	MR F STANBURY	Bow
Thursday	8 July 1993	MR F STANBURY	Bow

**PRELIMINARY ANNOUNCEMENT**

ANNUAL BIBLE CONVENTION Saturday 7 August 1993

Speaker: MR J SEATON Inverness

**BECAUSE OF NEW BANKING LEGISLATION ALL CHEQUES  
FOR TAPES AND LITERATURE ETC. SHOULD BE MADE  
PAYABLE TO:-**

**NORTH ROAD CHAPEL BIDEFORD**