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**North Road Chapel (Evangelical)
BIDEFORD**

REMISSION

In the study of Biblical terminology which is current in this magazine, consideration has been given to RECONCILIATION and PROPITIATION. Another vital term to a right understanding of fundamental doctrine is that of REMISSION. These terms are inseparable, for together they form 'the faith' once delivered to the saints (cf Jude v 3), nevertheless each of these words find their place in Holy Scripture, inspired of the Holy Spirit to convey a particular and distinctive aspect of that 'faith'.

Remission is defined as 'The discharge of a debt or a penalty', 'Forgiveness', 'Deliverance'. These definitions show how intimately related remission is to propitiation and also to reconciliation. When Christ the Mediator made propitiation, Divine justice was fully and completely satisfied; the debt of the believer's sin was discharged. God, the Divine Creditor, having received full payment from Christ the Surety, becomes reconciled to the sinner and the sinner to God. No longer are the sins of repentant, believing sinners imputed to them (cf 2 Corinthians 5:19). This is a legal matter and pertains to the unsullied righteousness and absolute veracity of Almighty God, who always acts in perfect equity.

Remission is God declining to deal with His people according to their sins, because total satisfaction has been received from the Substitute; in consequence there is an absolute removal of all obligation to suffer Divine wrath. "There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus" (Romans 8:1). The verdict of the Divine Law Giver upon a child of Adam, who in repentance and faith comes to Christ for salvation, is NOT GUILTY. The full Biblical meaning of REMISSION is 'deliverance', therefore the offender can be held in custody no longer; there is no further charge to answer. "Who shall lay anything to the charge of God's elect?"

(Romans 8:33). "Blessed are they whose iniquities are forgiven, and whose sins are covered. Blessed is the man to whom the Lord will not impute sin" (Romans 4:7,8). The eternal God who is righteous and just in all His ways will never charge the believing sinner because He imputed those sins to Christ the Surety.

"Complete atonement Thou hast made,
And to the utmost Thou hast paid
Whate'er Thy people owed;
How then can wrath on me take place,
If sheltered in Thy righteousness,
And sprinkled with Thy blood?

If Thou hast my discharge procured,
And freely in my room endured
The whole of wrath divine;
Payment God cannot twice demand,
First at my bleeding Surety's hand
And then again at mine."

This glorious truth of 'NO CONDEMNATION' must be more fully explained. Condemnation means 'to pass sentence on', 'to pronounce guilty'. Shamefully, the British nation has abandoned capital punishment, a God ordained principle; "the murderer shall surely be put to death" (Numbers 35:17). When the sentence of CONDEMNED TO DEATH was pronounced, there was a peculiar air of solemnity in the court and it fell with a devastating knell upon the ear of the offender. The Courts of Justice were marked by tenseness and a sense of horror as the prisoner was led away to the cell of the CONDEMNED. Such is now the sentence on the unbelieving sinner.

The atmosphere of the courts of Divine justice are infinitely more solemn and awe-inspiring than anything earth has ever known; good would it be if something of the meaning and horror of SPIRITUAL CONDEMNATION could be impressed upon men and women of our day and generation. These Divine courts are charged with the air of intrinsic

purity and unsullied holiness; at this bar, every member of Adam's fallen race is cited BORN IN SIN AND SHAPEN IN INIQUITY (cf Psalm 51:5), "There is no difference, for ALL HAVE SINNED" (Romans 3:22,23). The prosecution of everlasting righteousness reiterates the unbending and inflexible demands of God's Holy Law "THE SOUL THAT SINNETH, IT SHALL DIE" (Ezekiel 18:20). In this realm, it is not just physical death which is in prospect, it is eternal death.

Without exception every member of the human race enters this world a sinner in bondage to Satan, by nature (in Adam) condemned; "By the offence of one (Adam) judgment came upon all men to condemnation" (Romans 5:18); spiritually cut off and alienated from God, subject to Divine judgment, condemned by God. Oh that this word was being heralded forth throughout the land today and that it was falling upon men's ears with Holy Ghost authority and devastating power - **CONDEMNED!**

How then is it possible for anyone to escape the execution of this dread sentence? There is only one way and that is the removal of our sin. The sentence itself cannot be altered, but if the cause is removed from the sinner, then the sentence is not valid. Surely to make such a suggestion as this is not reasonable, indeed not possible! If a man has committed murder, he cannot retrieve his actions. The cause of his sentence is irrevocable. In such a situation this is true and at a human level so is man's sin; he is guilty. However the Word of God states "But God, who is rich in mercy, for His great love wherewith He loved us, even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ, by grace are ye saved" (Ephesians 2:4,5); "BUT GOD" - here we enter another realm, one infinitely higher than the human. "O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are His judgments, and His ways past finding out!" (Romans 11:33). This is a subject of great importance bearing in mind that it is Divine justice which lies at the very heart of this matter, a justice

which is equitable to the finest degree, therefore perfect in its application to both parties.

All the children of Adam are condemned righteously and justly, because through sin all are guilty. If this guilt could be removed, then there would be no condemnation. How could guilt be removed? Only by the guilt being legally transferred to another who was fitted and competent to take it all.

Divine holiness cannot ignore our guilt, but Divine grace can, indeed did, transfer it to another. The believer's sin and resultant guilt was laid upon Christ, the believer's legal surety and substitute. "The Lord (Jehovah) hath laid on Him the iniquity of us all" (Isaiah 53:6). God imputed to Christ the Mediator, the sins of all His people and having done this He, as supreme judge, charged the Surety with the GUILT, then proceeded against Him. Christ was dealt with in Divine wrath as though He had been personally the transgressor. In this way were the claims of God's Holy Law met, as His only begotten Son vicariously lived and died on behalf of others. Upon Him the awful curse of that law which man had broken fell; there was no mercy, no mitigation; the wrath of God in all it's fury was poured out upon the Saviour. By this was the Divine anger of a Holy God propitiated; Christ had been set forth to be a propitiation (cf Romans 3:25). In consequence, "There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus" (Romans 8:1). There is NO CONDEMNATION to the believing sinner because Christ was delivered (to Divine justice) for our offences and raised for our justification (cf Romans 4:25).

Further light is shed upon this matter in the Roman Epistle. "For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh (Romans 8:3). By means of the incarnation, the eternal Son of God took flesh and blood, fitting Him for His mediatorial office, being capacitated for suretyship

in order to act on behalf of sinful man. In consequence sin was imputed to Him and He was legally charged, although He was personally innocent; yet now as federal Head and Surety for the elect of God and having the sins of all that company upon Him, He became officially guilty, therefore CONDEMNED. Because of our sins there was guilt, judgment and wrath; the Mediator, having undertaken the office of Suretyship, taking the likeness of sinful flesh in order to act vicariously, God condemned sin in His flesh and inflicted the punishment in total upon Him. Therefore, there is now NO CONDEMNATION to the repentant believing sinner. "Who shall lay anything to the charge of God's elect? It is God that justifieth. Who is he that condemned!? It is Christ that died, yea rather, that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us" (Romans 8:33,34).

No power on earth or in hell can lay anything to the charge of God's elect; it cannot be done because of the perfection and finality of the work of Christ. The believing sinner is not just forgiven, it is much more than that. All guilt is remitted; that person is justified, he is pronounced NOT GUILTY. Through Christ's work of propitiation, he is exonerated and completely delivered from wrath to come.

"Who shall the Lord's elect condemn?
'Tis God that justifies their souls,
And mercy like a mighty stream
O'er all their sins Divinely rolls.

Who shall adjudge the saints to hell?
'Tis Christ who suffered in their stead;
And their salvation to fulfil,
Behold Him rising from the dead".

In this great transaction, the Almighty God did not in any way jeopardize or endanger, His holiness. Neither was the Divine Law put at risk. Every claim was met in and by Christ, and the judicial sentence fully meted out, even to the Substitute dying the sinner's death. In this God

was true to Himself and to His law, yet able to deal in grace with sinful men and women.

How profoundly does the Word of God summarize this! "Being justified freely by His grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus: whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in His blood, to declare His righteousness for the REMISSION of sins that are past through the forbearance of God; to declare, I say, at this time His righteousness: that He might be just, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus" (Romans 3:24-26).

This then is the wondrous truth of REMISSION as set out in Holy Scripture. The blessed Lord Jesus Christ discharged the debt and penalty for all His chosen people; no further claim can be made against them, such are justified by faith, and pronounced NOT GUILTY at the bar of Divine justice, therefore saved from wrath through Him (cf Romans 5:9).

This has been the message which has been revealed to the human race throughout all generations through the sovereign grace of God. "To Him (Christ) give all the prophets witness, that through His name, whosoever believeth in Him shall receive REMISSION of sins" (Acts 10:43).

W.H.MOLLAND

In Christ we have a righteousness,
By God Himself approved,
Our rock, our sure foundation this,
Which never can be moved.
Our ransom by His death He paid,
For all His people given,
The law He perfectly obeyed,
That they might enter heaven.

EVANGELISTIC PREACHING

The question which is before us for consideration really concerns the preachers efforts to win souls (Proverbs 11:30), and as to how far the Word of God warrants him going towards the realization of his longings to see sinners converted under his ministry. Here there are two extremes to be guarded against. On the one hand there are preachers who come short of discharging their duty by being content to simply set forth in an abstract and impersonal way what is termed ' THE DOCTRINES OF GRACE'. For the preacher to say "I have faithfully declared all the counsel of God, and now I must leave the results to Him" may sound very pious but it leaves the way open for several serious questions. It is perfectly true that 'results' rest entirely with God, for He alone "giveth the increase" (1 Corinthians 3:7). But **have we** declared **all** the counsel of God when we have fully expounded the five points?

It is a part of the counsel of God to call upon men to repent (cf Luke 24:47), Acts 17:30, Acts 20:21). If the ungodly are not pointedly and authoritatively called unto repentance of their sins and unbelief of the gospel, and if on the contrary they are only told that they are unable so to do, then they are encouraged in their impenitency and unbelief. If the gospel gives such a disproportionate presentation of the truth that the unconverted are made to feel they are more to be pitied than blamed for their spiritual impotency, then their responsibility is undermined and their conscience is lulled to sleep.

A. W. PINK

To preach the gospel is to proclaim with trumpet, tongue and flaming zeal, the unsearchable riches of Christ Jesus, so that men may hear, and understanding, may **turn** to God with full purpose of heart. This is to preach the gospel.

C. H. SPURGEON

EXTRACTS FROM

THE PILGRIM CHURCH

by E H BROADBENT

"Among the doctrines carried over from the Church of Rome, was that of baptismal regeneration, and with this, the general practice of baptizing infants. While reviving the teaching of Scripture as to individual salvation by faith in Christ Jesus and His perfect work, Luther did not accept the New Testament teaching as to the Churches being separate from the world he adopted the Roman Catholic system of parishes, with their clerical administration of a world considered as Christianized. Having a number of rulers on his side, he maintained the principle of the union of Church and State, and accepted the sword of the State as the proper means of converting or punishing those who dissented from the new ecclesiastical authority" (pl45). "Instead of continuing in the way of the Word, Luther built up a Church, in which some abuses were reformed, but which in many respects was a reproduction of the old system" (pl47). "Luther had brought to light the Scripture truths as to the individual salvation of the sinner by faith, but failed when he might have shown the way to a return to Scripture in all things, including its teaching as to the Church" (pl48).

"About 1524 in Germany, many of the Churches of brethren, such as had existed from the earliest times, declared their independence as congregations of believers and their determination to observe and to carry out as Churches, the teachings of Scripture those present who had not yet as believers received baptism by immersion, were baptized. This gave rise to a new name, a name which they themselves repudiated, for it was attached to them as an offensive epithet in order to convey the impression that they had founded a new sect; the name was ANABAPTIST (baptized again)" (pi53). It is a fact that for more than twelve centuries, baptism in the way taught and described in the

New Testament had been made an offence against the law, punishable by death. Many believers emerged too, from the Swiss valleys; they called each other brethren and sisters, and were well aware that they were not founding anything new, but were continuing the testimony of those who for centuries had been persecuted as 'heretics', as the records of their martyrs showed" (p154).

"It is often thought that when the Reformation was established, Europe was divided into Protestants (whether Lutherans or Swiss) on the one hand, and Roman Catholics on the other. The large numbers of Christians are overlooked who did not belong to either party, but who, most of them, met as independent Churches, not relying as the others did, on the support of the civil power, but endeavouring to carry out the principles of Scripture as in New Testament times. They were so numerous that both the State Church parties feared they might come to threaten their own power and even existence. The reason that so important a movement occupies so small a place in the history of those times is, that by the relentless use of the power of the State, the great Churches Roman Catholic and Protestant, were able almost to destroy it, the adherents who were left, being driven abroad or remaining only as weakened and comparatively unimportant companies. The victorious party was also able to destroy much of the literature of the brethren and, writing their history, to represent them as holding doctrines which they repudiated, and to give them names to which an odious significance was attached" (p164).

"Zwingli wrought his great Reformation work chiefly in German Switzerland. In the city and Canton of Zurich, he came to exercise a predominant authority. In 1523 he introduced the State Church system into Zurich, and the Great Council received the responsibility of giving decisions in cases affecting the Church and doctrine" (p167). "In his earlier days Zwingli had close relations with the brethren. He had seriously considered the

question of baptism and had stated that there was no Scripture for infant baptism. As he developed the movement of reform however, on the lines of a State Church, depending on the civil power to enforce its decisions, he necessarily drew away from the brethren. In Zurich there were frequent public baptisms, and the believers met regularly for the Lord's Supper, which they called the Breaking of Bread. They spoke of themselves as the assembly of the true children of God, and kept themselves separate from the world, in which they included both the Reformed and the Roman Catholic Churches. The Council forbade all these things and a public disputation was ordered, but as the Council had power to decide the result, it only ended in an order that all who had not done so should have their children baptized within eight days, and the baptism by the brethren was forbidden under heavy penalties three preachers and fifteen others including six women, were condemned to imprisonment, with water, bread and straw, there to die and rot, and any persons baptizing or being baptized were ordered to be punished by drowning" (pl67-169). "Though they were called Anabaptists, it was not the form of baptism that gave them courage to suffer as they did. They were aware of immediate communion with their Redeemer; no man and no religious form came between their souls and Him Their own description of the Christian Church is the assembly of all believers, who are gathered by the Holy Spirit, separated from the world by the pure teaching of Christ united by Divine love, bringing to the Lord from the heart, spiritual offerings" (pl71).

"Zwingli, though he had formally testified that infant baptism cannot be proved by any clear word of God from the Holy Scriptures, yet afterwards taught from the pulpit that the baptism of adults and believers is wrong and should not be endured; and how it was enacted that whoever in Zurich and the district should be baptized, should be drowned in water" (pl73).

THE ANABAPTISTS

Much has been written on 'The Reformation', highlighting the many blessings which in the providence of God, have resulted from that great movement. The records of that period tend to emphasise the particular truths for which those known as 'The Reformers' stood; whereas there were) others equally valiant for other aspects of the Faith, which the Reformers themselves either did not see, or deliberately turned from. The Reformers suffered persecution, and some were martyred at the hands of the Romanists because they dared to oppose certain Romish dogmas. Likewise these other Christians suffered intensely for their adherence to other aspects of Biblical truth, which even the Reformers denied; consequently they were not only harassed by the Romanists, but also by the Reformers themselves and put to death in their thousands. This is an aspect of the Reformation which has received scant attention, resulting in a great ignorance and distortion of the facts.

There have been from earliest days A.D. small groups of Christians who have met in New Testament simplicity, separate from the world and having no affiliation with the State. Constantine (287-337 A.D.) brought about a drastic change, linking the Church with the State; it was not long before the civil powers were at the disposal of the Church in order to enforce their beliefs and decisions. There can be no doubt that "this era paved the way for the ecclesiastical corruption of the Dark Ages to follow. Instead of separation from paganism, the imperial church adapted itself to it" (Merill F Unger, ThD, PhD).

A mark of the link between Church and State was the mandatory baptism of all citizens. To refuse baptism meant death» and as new territory was seized, so was baptism enforced on the people. The linking of Church and State also finds a place in the thinking of the Reformers as we shall see later.

The sixteenth century saw an amazing rediscovery of certain aspects of Biblical doctrine. Examples of this are Luther's preaching on the 'Bondage of man's will' and Calvin's expositions on 'The Sovereignty of God'. The dominant theme of that period was 'justification by faith through the grace of God alone'. Sadly however this did not liberate the Church from State control. Much as we embrace their Biblical teaching on salvation by grace alone, we have to reject the Reformer's views regarding Church and State as not being the teaching of the New Testament.

The fourth century A.D. saw the beginning of the practice of infant baptism. At the first this was by immersion, but later took the form of sprinkling (which is not baptism). Thus sprinkling became the popular method during the sixteenth century (see Paedo-Baptism - Is it valid? The Link, April/June 1988). In fairness it must be said that both Zwingli and Luther expressed doubt as to the practice of infant baptism, but over the centuries it had become firmly entrenched as a badge of the State religion. Despite their misgivings they said, "One must practise infant baptism so as not to offend our fellowmen". Martin Luther even went as far as to justify his actions by tradition, he said, "There is not sufficient evidence from Scripture that one might justify the introduction of infant baptism at the time of the early Christians after the apostolic period.But so much is evident, that none may venture with a good conscience to reject or abandon infant baptism, which has so long time been practised" (Reformation Today '86). It is a sad fact and it is to their lasting shame, that not only did the Reformers uphold infant baptism, they persecuted and even endorsed the death penalty for those who practised believer's baptism, or refused to baptize infants. Martin Luther himself assented to the death penalty of such people in 1530 AD. Zwingli said "Let him who talks about 'going under' go under". By this he meant, let those who talk about going under the waters of baptism be drowned; this was considered the most appropriate form

of capital punishment for one who practised believer's baptism.

It was these independent companies of Christians, who were so numerous in many countries in Europe, who posed a threat to the Reformers and their State religion. The Reformers drew a parallel between the Abrahamic covenant and the circumcision of the Old Testament, which was the sign of the nation and their religion being one. These men, spiritual as they were in many respects, held that for a society to remain stable, it must be bound by a common faith, therefore all infants must be baptized into the Church which was the State religion, signifying that both nationally and spiritually they were one. The sprinkling of the infant became the sign and seal of this, just as circumcision was to Israel. By this tragic muddling of Scripture and deception of the great Adversary, countless thousands have been led to believe that, having been born either of Christian parents, or into a Christian community which has been sealed by a so-called baptism, they are therefore Christians and heirs of the covenant, forming part of a Christian society; this is a great delusion.

The independent Christians differed in many ways to the State religious system; they had no affiliation to the Church, State» or infant baptism. They believed that following repentance and faith, a person must be immersed in water, thus signifying a burial with Christ into death of the old nature and a rising with Him to walk in newness of life. Therefore only persons of responsible age who have come to salvation qualify. They rightly viewed infant baptism and the amalgamation of Church and State to be but a continuation of Romanism. This enraged the Reformers who named them 'Anabaptists', 'Ana' meaning to re-baptize or to baptize again, which is what these Christians did, ignoring their infant sprinkling to which they attached no validity whatsoever.

Encyclopaedia Britannica 1969 Vol 1, p838/9 states "The Anabaptists themselves, of course, denied that they were re-baptizers, for they repudiated their own baptism in infancy as blasphemous formality. They refused to consider the baptism of children, practised by classical Protestants in continuation of Catholic usage, as containing any of the essential elements of the true ordinance such as repentance, experimental faith and a responsible pledge to lead a Christian life. The Anabaptist held that the Protestant equation of circumcision under the Old Covenant and infant baptism under the New, was a monstrous distortion of the gospel. In keeping with their distinction between circumcision and baptism, between the Old Testament and the New, the Anabaptists also on principle, separated the Church, which to them was the community of the redeemed, from the State, which for them was ordained solely for the punishment of sinners. This principle they defended with their lives in thousands of fiery, bloody or watery martyrdoms, thereby testifying to their conviction that no magistrate, whether a reforming Protestant or a defender of the Catholic order, had competence in the sphere of Christian regeneration nor any right to use coercion in the mysterious realm of faith and conscience. Unlike the classical or magisterial Protestants, who on principle made use of the magistrate to implement their Reformation, the Anabaptists were not aiming at reform of the medieval church. They were determined instead to restore the institutions and the spirit of the primitive church in their utter confidence that they were living at the end of all ages. Anabaptism assimilated also and carried through unambiguously or undialectically, such central Protestant affirmations as salvation by faith alone and the pre-eminence of the Bible over tradition, creed or common law".

Although these believers were called Anabaptists, it was a nickname; they commonly called themselves Brethren or Christian Brethren, and in no way were they an organised denomination. In all the main aspects of the faith, these

brethren were orthodox and stood firm on the authority of Holy Scripture, separating from the world and organised Christendom to form themselves into independent Churches.

"The major achievement of these people was that they were quite unshaken by an overwhelming weight of arguments based on 'common sense' and 'expediency'. They were unafraid to look to Scripture and then to challenge the very structure of their contemporary society. In asserting the gathered Church principle, they were more faithful to the 'sola Scriptura' principle than the Reformers. It seemed to the Reformers that civilization itself would crumble if religious coercion were abandoned and toleration allowed. Even in that case, 'God's Word remains', said the Anabaptists. In other respects too, the Anabaptists were unafraid of being thought absurd. Defying all contemporary assumptions, they looked to Scripture and insisted that the Great Commission still applied". (Reformation Today '87).

It is sad to relate that there were a few of these companies in different countries, who developed extreme views on certain subjects such as the taking of oaths and pacifism; also in matters of prophecy there were those who held strange interpretations. In addition to this there were some individuals who developed teachings which were quite fanatical, indeed erroneous. The Reformers seized upon these peculiarities, highlighting them out of all proportion and branding all the Brethren as guilty of these extravagant beliefs and practices, which in actual fact only applied to a very small minority of believers. These peculiarities provided fuel for the fire of persecution for the Reformers to vent their fury upon these innocent and faithful believers, by using the State and civil powers, which was a very vital part of the New Protestant order, as it was with the Romanists. This resulted in imprisoning, burning and more often drowning them in a wave of mass oppression. Melancthon, in a letter to Mycorious, 31 October 1531, wrote, "As touching the Anabaptist, we have pronounced the following sentence:

Because they form a devilish sect, they are not to be suffered, for they disrupt the Churches, and yet themselves have no certain doctrine. This sect is therefore nothing else than a distraction to the Churches, especially because they openly reject the clerical office. We have therefore decided that in various places the death sentence shall be pronounced". Melancthon also delivered to the Elector of Saxony an opinion regarding the Anabaptist in which he described them as "blasphemers and seditious, who reject the public clerical office, and teach that one shall otherwise become holy without sermon or ecclesiastical function". To this opinion Luther put an appendage saying "It pleases me well" (Johannes Warns). Thus were these brethren maliciously scandalized, their leaders put to death and any records which they may have possessed were destroyed; what is worse, false records were written which purport that all the independent Churches in every land were guilty of the same beliefs and practices as the small number of fanatics who happened to assemble in the same manner.

This aspect of the Reformation is scarcely, if ever mentioned. Nevertheless these humble, sincere folk, scornfully named 'Anabaptists' stood for truth which, for pragmatic reasons, the Reformers denied. It is little wonder that much of history has been written in such a biased manner, because at the Reformation, the Protestant Church continued with infant baptism and maintained the link with the State and civil powers, in the same manner as the Romanists.

It is sad that today the Baptist position is not championed in the manner in which it should be. The so-called 'Reformed' teaching is making great inroads, and not a few who practice the Biblical order of the baptism of believers, appear quite happy to fraternize with the infant sprinklers, and to be known as 'Reformed'. This would never have happened in the sixteenth century!

W.H.MOLLAND

EDITORIAL

In the preaching and writings of those who stand for the Sovereign Grace of God in salvation, as opposed to Arminian evangelism, there are two aspects of truth which are often neglected, indeed in some instances totally disregarded and they are:

1. A clear evangelistic appeal.
 2. The indispensable link of baptism with conversion.
- These are two of the main charges given to the Church by the Great Head Himself, and therefore of great importance.

A CLEAR EVANGELISTIC APPEAL

The man who has been called to the ministerial office is to "Preach the Word" (2 Timothy 4:2). This involves shunning not to declare all the counsel of God (cf Acts 20:27). He is also to, "Do the work of an evangelist" (2 Timothy 4:5). It is this latter aspect of the ministry which is so neglected and in many instances completely ignored. The God ordained preacher is not only to set forth and declare all the truth, he is also to make APPLICATION. To just state bald facts and not to apply them to his hearers, is to fail in the great vocation of preaching. A preacher is an ambassador and an advocate, pleading his Master's cause and refuting the objections of opposers - contending for the faith, but that is not the sum total of his work; he is also called to be a 'fisherman'. "I will make you to become fishers of men" (Mark 1:17). "From henceforth thou shalt catch men" (Luke 5:10). These are the words spoken by Christ to men whom He had called to assist in His ministry, and this is equally applicable in the Church today. The preacher is to seek to draw, woo and win men. How tragic it is that so many who stand for the doctrine of Sovereign Grace in the salvation of sinners, are reticent and in some cases opposed to the general call of the gospel, lest they should be seen to intrude upon the work of the Holy Spirit.

In the setting forth of the great work of Christ for sinners, there is to be a strong, appealing, evangelistic note. In no way is this to be confused with long drawn-out appeals for decisions at the end of the service, as some practise. Rather that, as the preacher is expounding the message of salvation, he is to do it in a very appealing, persuasive manner, pointing out that there is hearer responsibility; the sinner must REPENT and BELIEVE the gospel (cf Mark 1:15). "Come now, and let us reason together, saith the Lord" (Isaiah 1:18). The preacher is to show the reasonableness of the sinner calling upon Christ for salvation, urging him to "Turn ye, turn ye from your evil ways; for why will ye die?" (Ezekiel 33:11); "Knowing the terror of the Lord, we persuade men" (2 Corinthians 5:11). This was always the manner of preaching of the great apostle to the Gentiles. When discoursing with King Agrippa, that heathen monarch turned to Paul and said, "Almost thou persuadest me to be a Christian" (Acts 26:28). Paul was using such persuasive language that the King was almost won, yet he never came to the vital point of repentance and faith.

In the preaching of today, this matter of pleading with sinners is sadly lacking, but it is required of a minister to thus address his hearers. "Now then we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech you by us: we pray you in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled to God" (2 Corinthians 5:20). The ambassador for Christ is to 'beseech', which means to 'earnestly entreat', 'to implore'. Divine unction should be manifest in preaching; an earnest desire for the salvation of the lost should be detected in the preacher. If this is not so, then the whole exercise will be seen to be cold and formal.

To preach election and the absolute efficacy of the work of Christ for all for whom it was made, is essential, but to leave it there is to miserably fail. The preacher must tell men and women that God commands them to repent (cf Acts 17:30). His commandment is also that we should believe on the name of His Son Jesus Christ (cf 1 John 3:23). The

ground upon which the sinner is bidden to believe is not that of election or predestination, for that pertains to the secret will of God. The sinner is bidden to believe on the grounds of the infallible promises of a God who cannot lie, mock or deceive a person, and He says, "Whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord shall be saved" (Acts 2:21). Whosoever believeth in His Son (Jesus Christ) shall not perish but have everlasting life (cf John 3:16). "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved" (Mark 16:16). This immediately brings us to the second aspect of truth so sadly missing in many a pulpit.

THE INDISPENSIBLE LINK OF BAPTISM WITH CONVERSION

The risen Christ in His great commission to the Church said, "Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned" (Mark 16:15,16); "Teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you" (Matthew 28:19,20).

When a sinner has repented, believed the gospel and come to Christ for salvation, that person is to be baptized. THIS IS MANDATORY. Almighty God requires confession to be made by everyone who has come to Christ for salvation. It is the COMMAND of the Great Head that baptism shall follow faith.

The sprinkling of infants is a common practice throughout much of Christendom, and it is termed 'baptism'. This is confused terminology, for to baptize means 'to dip', or 'to immerse', but what is so serious is that this sprinkling is a ceremony which is completely outside of the teaching of Holy Scripture.

The first point in the great commission was to 'make disciples'. When this had taken place and a person had

come to Christ in repentance and faith, then that person was to be baptized. If this was the only instruction which we had, that one fact alone would make an absurdity of baptizing infants, even if they were immersed in water. The teaching of Christ is most clear and positive, that water baptism follows faith. What is more, this is not optional, every believer in the Lord Jesus Christ is to be baptized. As Peter the apostle preached, so was he obedient to the instruction given him; his words were, "Repent and be baptized EVERY ONE OF YOU" (Acts 2:38). There were no exceptions, all who repented and came to Christ for salvation, were to be baptized. This was the mandate for the New Testament Church which the Head taught and commanded His people to observe (cf Matthew 28:20).

Never did Christ say that if a man had been circumcised, then he need not be baptized, neither did He teach that sprinkling an infant would replace circumcision in the case of a child born of Christian parents, and that this would be a sign and seal of them being in the covenant of grace. How misleading and deceiving are these extra-Biblical teachings and how dishonouring to God and to Christ.

The baptism of the New Testament is the total immersion of a believer in water, thus signifying what has taken place in the heart. It is, that the person has died to the old nature and so goes under the water, typifying burial; then comes up out of the water, setting forth resurrection, from henceforth to walk in newness of life (cf Romans 6:3-5).

There is an urgent need in our day for a sound, appealing, evangelistic heralding forth of the glorious gospel, coupled with the constant reiteration that **ALL** who believe are to be baptized. It is most serious to neglect, or to ignore these vital aspects of doctrine and practice which are set out with such clarity in the Word of God.

ANNOUNCEMENTS AND INFORMATION

ANNUAL BIBLE CONVENTION

Saturday 7 August 1993

Afternoon 3.30pm Tea 5.00pm Evening 6.00pm

Speaker: Mr G. D. Hawkins Wattisham

VISITING PREACHERS D.V.

Thursday	8 July	Mr F Stanbury	Bow
Lord's Day	19 September	Mr D.D.Jones	Nailsea
Lord's Day	3 October	Mr G Thrussell	Truro

It is on account of the confused situation and the lack of Biblical teaching as well as the ignorance of historical facts, that coverage is being given to the subject of baptism in this magazine. To supplement this we recommend the booklet 'An Introduction to Christian Baptism' by W.J.Seaton. Although brief, it is a clear and understandable treatise and is obtainable from our bookroom, free of charge upon receipt of 18p stamp to cover postage.

IMPORTANT NOTICE

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