

January – March 1996

**T
H
E

L
I
N
K**

**North Road Chapel (Evangelical)
BIDEFORD**

THE LAW OF GOD

The Fourth Commandment

"Remember the sabbath day, to keep it holy. Six days shalt thou labour, and do all thy work: but the seventh day is the sabbath of the Lord thy God: in it thou shalt not do any work, thou, nor thy son, nor thy daughter, thy manservant, nor thy maidservant, nor thy cattle, nor thy stranger that is within thy gates: For in six days the Lord made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that in them is, and rested the seventh day: wherefore the Lord blessed the sabbath day, and hallowed it" (Exodus 20:8-11).

This fourth commandment is the last in the Godward section of the Decalogue and together with the second commandment, they are the longest. The second pertains to the worship of God in a true manner and the fourth is concerned with a day set apart for that purpose.

The subject of the sabbath is most comprehensive, yet sad to say in our day it is not only neglected and disputed by the world, but also by many professing Christians. A few years ago a prominent church worker, when asked about the relevance of sabbath observance to the present day, stated that as there is no direct mention of the fourth commandment in the New Testament, it now has no religious significance but that it is a social and commercial matter where large scale enterprises would proliferate to the detriment of small businesses and the family. Such foolish remarks coming from a professed Christian worker displays appalling ignorance.

The sabbath can be traced throughout Scripture from Genesis to Revelation.

The meaning of the word 'sabbath' is 'one in seven'. Under the Jewish ceremonial law there were differing sabbaths. For example, The Feast of Trumpets was held in the seventh month on the first day of the month (cf Numbers 29:1). A Sabbatical Year of Jubilee was also held; it was the seventh year, it was a sabbath year of rest (cf Leviticus 25:4). These ordinances, because they pertained to the ceremonial law, were unknown before Sinai and they ceased with the bringing in of the New Covenant at the first advent of Christ. What is more, during the period of their validity (Moses to Christ) they were applicable specifically to the Jews.

The setting apart of one day in seven as a holy day is not part of that ceremonial law, therefore it did not cease with the coming of Christ. The observance of a weekly sabbath is part of the Moral Law which is binding upon all men for all time. The origin of this Law was not Sinai, it was Eden. It was written upon the heart of Adam at creation. The Decalogue given at Sinai was a reminder of those rulings, God writing them upon imperishable tablets of stone, to endure for all time. It is the one **day** in seven which is the subject of this article.

The latter part of the fourth commandment goes back to the beginning of time; there is set out the Divine procedure, "*In six days the Lord made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that in them is, and rested the seventh day: wherefore the Lord blessed the sabbath day, and hallowed it*" (Exodus 20:11). God created for six days, then rested; that is Divine order, **a principle** established by God at the very commencement of time. Six days of creative activity were followed by one day of rest. In this way, time was established in cycles of seven, but within each cycle of seven days, one was set apart, blessed and hallowed by the Creator. Because of the sanctity of this special day within the cycle of seven, man is to remember its Divine origin and purpose, keeping it holy and uncontaminated. The Puritan, Thomas Watson said, "It is a day enclosed by God and it must not be alienated to common uses".

"The seventh day is the sabbath of the Lord thy God" (Exodus 20:10). This day is God's, no other has a claim to it; God hallowed it and set it apart as soon as He had brought the world into existence. Mortal man is commanded to keep this day holy. It is not a day for secular things, it is a day for holy exercises.

Not only did the Creator hallow this day that it might be set apart and kept for His honour, He blessed it. This was to the intent that it should be a blessing to man. Herein lies the meaning of our Lord's words *"The sabbath was made for man, and not man for the sabbath"* (Mark 2:27). The sabbath is both a day 'hallowed' - set apart for God wherein we worship Him; it is also a day 'blessed' of God wherein as men attend upon this holy ordinance and observe it, so does He shower His blessing upon them. This will apply to a nation in a moral sense as well as to the Christian in a spiritual sense.

"Six days shalt thou labour, and do all thy work: but the seventh is the sabbath of the Lord thy God: in it thou shalt not do any work" (Exodus 20:9,10). Two aspects are set out in the fourth commandment, work and sabbath observance; each equally binding, one is not more important than the other. Together they form one commandment. Work is as much a Divine institution as sabbath observance. Work was ordained by God before the fall of man. Work is God honouring; our daily occupation, whatever that might be (provided it is legitimate) should always be discharged and carried out to the glory of God. Whatever we are doing, even to eating or drinking, *"Do all to the glory of God"* (1 Corinthians 10:31).

The fall of man never destroyed the first institutions, however it did make things very much harder. With regard to work, Adam's occupation with the soil became a toil, something which he had not known previously, hence God's words to him, *"In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread"*

(Genesis 3:19). Adam had not known sweat in early paradise, but following his fall the earth was cursed; thorns and thistles abounded, making life laborious and difficult, but it was through his disobedience, and in consequence he experienced physical and mental fatigue. God ordained from the first that man should work. That Law given in Eden will never be repealed; nor is this fatigue peculiar to those who work on the land. Problems, difficulties and frustrations are common to all occupations.

Laziness and sloth is rebuked in the Word of God, particularly in the Book of Proverbs, "*He also that is slothful in his work is brother to him that is a great waster*" (Proverbs 18:9); "*How long wilt thou sleep, O sluggard? So shall thy poverty come as one that travelleth*" (Proverbs 6:9,11). The New Testament also enforces the same truth, "*Study to be quiet, and to do your own business, and to work with your own hands, as we commanded you*" (1 Thessalonians 4:11); "*For even when we were with you, this we commanded you, that if any would not work, neither should he eat*" (2 Thessalonians 3:10). Work is right, it is good, it is of God; laziness is of the Devil.

Having stressed the vital aspect of work as contained in the fourth commandment, it must now be equally emphasized that work is appointed for six days only within the cycle of seven; that is secular work, with the exception of certain essential duties in caring for the sick, missions of mercy, attending to livestock, etc. These matters our Lord set out clearly when here upon earth as the following Scriptures will show, "*The ruler of the synagogue answered with indignation, because that Jesus had healed on the sabbath day, and said unto the people, There are six days in which men ought to work: in them therefore come and be healed, and not on the sabbath day. The Lord then answered him, and said Thou hypocrite, doth not each one of you on the sabbath loose his ox or his ass from the stall, and lead him away to watering? And ought*

not this woman, being a daughter of Abraham, whom Satan hath bound, lo, these eighteen years, be loosed from this bond on the sabbath day?" (Luke 13:14-16). *"Jesus said unto them Is it lawful on the sabbath day to do good, or to do evil? To save life, or to destroy it? And looking round about upon them all, He said unto the man, Stretch forth thy hand. And he did so: and his hand was restored whole as the other"* (Luke 6:9,10). *"And He said unto them, What man shall there be among you, that shall have one sheep, and if it fall into a pit on the sabbath day, will he not lay hold on it, and lift it out?"* (Matthew 12:11). Only such vital work and legitimate duties are authorized by God for the sabbath. Work **is** honouring to God on six days but such work **is not** honouring to Him on the seventh except such as is set out in these Scriptures.

To engage in normal work or to conduct secular business or any commercial enterprise on the sabbath day is a most serious matter, it is a direct flouting of the Law of God. The Holy Spirit through Nehemiah shows the gravity of this matter. *"In those days saw I in Judah, some treading wine presses on the sabbath, and bringing in sheaves, and lading asses; as also wine, grapes, and figs, and all manner of burdens, which they brought into Jerusalem on the sabbath day: and I testified against them in the day wherein they sold victuals. There dwelt men of Tyre also therein, which brought fish and all manner of ware, and sold on the sabbath unto the children of Judah, and in Jerusalem. Then I contended with the nobles of Judah, and said unto them, What evil thing is this that ye do, and profane the sabbath day? Did not your fathers thus, and did not our God bring all this evil upon us, and upon this city? Yet ye bring more wrath upon Israel by profaning the sabbath"* (Nehemiah 13:15-18).

It was not only the men of Tyre who were selling wares, the children of Judah were buying them. Neither was that all, for the men of Judah were

harvesting, bringing in the sheaves, their asses were laden with figs, grapes and all manner of burdens. Nehemiah contended with the authorities for allowing this, reminding them how the judgment of God had previously come upon them for profaning the sabbath and it will do so again. Nehemiah made it clear that man will never escape the judgment of God if they ignore the fourth commandment.

This serious situation so concerned and affected Godly Nehemiah that he says, "*I testified against them, and said unto them, Why lodge ye about the wall? If ye do so again, I will lay hands on you. From that time forth came they no more on the sabbath*" (Nehemiah 13:21). Oh for men of Nehemiah's calibre in the day in which we live, who will fearlessly declare the anger of the Lord against those who desecrate and dishonour the sabbath day. Let none be deluded by those who teach that this Law of sabbath observance is now obsolete, for this Law of God extends from the creation of the earth until the day that it will be destroyed by fervent heat (cf 2 Peter 3:10). The fourth commandment is as applicable today as it was in the time of Nehemiah and any person or nation who disregard it will not escape the inevitable consequences.

There will be those who will take issue with the content of this article, pointing out that the Scriptures quoted relate to the Jews and they pertain to the Jewish sabbath which was Saturday. True! that was the day which the Jews observed, but the Moral Law of God, which is not Jewish, is not concerned with days; it is a **principle - sabbath**, one day in seven. The fourth commandment is not worded as to say 'Remember the seventh day', it is "*Remember the sabbath*", a day set apart long before the Jewish nation came into existence, therefore it is applicable to all men. The prime purpose of the institution was a memorial to God and to His creation, to be observed by the human race.

With the first advent of Christ and the New Covenant, the ceremonial and judicial law given to Israel finished, and the Old Covenant gave way to something infinitely better (cf Hebrews 7:22, 8:6, 9:23); but the Law laid down at the **first** implanted in the heart of Adam, later written by the finger of God upon tables of stone at Sinai, was **not** repealed; therefore the sabbath principle remains.

The advent of the New Covenant with the cessation of the old , brought in the first day of the week as a memorial to an even more glorious work than creation, namely redemption. This day is the Lord's Day, the day in which the resurrection of the Mediator of the New Covenant was manifested, thus effecting the work of a **new creation** not material, but spiritual. It is this spiritual aspect which is incorporated in the change of days, but the Law of the sabbath still stands; one day in seven.

Those who argue that by observing the first day of the week and not the seventh, the fourth commandment is contravened, have missed the whole point. One day in seven is to be set apart as the sabbath unto the Lord our God. Under the Old Covenant it was the day which saw the finalizing of a temporal creation. Under the New Covenant it is the day which saw the finalizing of a spiritual creation. Great was the work of the first, but far greater was the work of the second.

Great wisdom was shown in creating us, but even greater wisdom in re-creating us. Mighty power was seen in bringing man into existence out of nothing, yet far mightier power is manifested in bringing man out of the thralldom of sin and death. In creation it was by the speaking of a word. In redemption it was through the shedding of blood. By creation we had life in Adam; by redemption we have life in Christ. By creation we had a right to an earthly existence; by redemption a title to a heavenly inheritance. The former brings us into the kingdom of this world; the latter into the kingdom of heaven. Well might the sabbath be changed

from the Old Covenant seventh day to the New Covenant first day. Whilst we never forget the power and glory of God as set forth in creation, we now have added the wondrous redemptive work which is infinitely more glorious.

The Moral Law of God demands that **all** men keep the sabbath holy, which alas they refuse to do, but for their rebellion they will one day have to give account to the Creator and Redeemer. To us, His redeemed people, what a day this is! It is the day of days. The Puritans called it 'The Market Day of the Soul'; the day when normal business ceased and they did business with God, trading in things spiritual. This is how those Godly men of the past viewed the Lord's Day; what lovely thoughts!

Is it not so with us? If the sabbath is rightly observed and hallowed, it is the day when bread from heaven is rained upon us as we assemble together for worship. We drink afresh of the wells of salvation, consciously being brought by God into His banqueting house, to sit beneath His shadow with great delight, and His fruit is sweet to our taste whilst His banner over us is **love** (cf Song of Solomon 2:3,4). We hear His words to us His bride, "*I have loved thee with an everlasting love*" (Jeremiah 31:3). "*Behold thou art fair my love, behold thou art fair*" (Song of Solomon 4:1). In such hallowed moments set apart by and for God, how He blesses us, what holy intimacy is enjoyed, so graphically expressed in Holy Writ, "*I am come into my garden, my sister, my spouse: I have gathered my myrrh with my spice. I have eaten my honeycomb with my honey; I have drunk my wine with my milk: eat, O friends; drink, yea drink abundantly, O beloved*" (Song of Solomon 5:1).

It is on such occasions that we experience foretastes of glory, and drink with Christ, our glorious Bridegroom and Head, of the royal wine of heaven. Who then would not remember the sabbath day to keep it holy? Who would forego such wondrous experiences of transportation,

enabling us though here below, by faith to catch glimpses of God and glory, to breathe a little of the air of heaven.

Let us ever appreciate the inestimable blessing of the sabbath and press upon all men their obligation to observe it, for it is the day set apart by God for Himself to be hallowed.

W.H.Molland

The Witch of Endor

This article is the substance of a sermon recently preached at North Road Chapel by W.H.Molland, and is now printed as the result of several requests.

Reading: 1 Samuel 28:3-20.

This is a section of God's Word perhaps seldom referred to, but it has great relevance to our day and generation, therefore it needs to be carefully explained. The setting of this sermon is verses 3-5 of the reading, *"Now Samuel was dead, and all Israel had lamented him, and buried him in Ramah, even in his own city. And Saul had put away those that had familiar spirits, and the wizards, out of the land. And the Philistines gathered themselves together, and came and pitched in Shunem: and Saul gathered all Israel together, and they pitched in Gilboa. And when Saul saw the host of the Philistines, he was afraid, and his heart greatly trembled"*.

This was a horrifying spectacle, a great army arrayed against the people of God; Saul, their king, trembled at the sight of them. What was even more alarming, "*Samuel was dead*". There was no prophet in the land. "*And when Saul enquired of the Lord, the Lord answered him not*". Unspeakably solemn is this, a man abandoned by God. There is many a leader in the world today, and sadder still leaders in the professing church, who are in the same state, no true contact whatsoever with God.

Although the king of Israel so trembled and in his fear turned to the Almighty, this was no move of repentance on his part, it was just urgent terror. Saul had played fast and loose with the God of heaven; true he now inquires of Him, but it was too late. How poignant are the words of Holy Scripture, "*Seek ye the Lord while He may be found, call ye upon Him while He is near*" (Isaiah 55:6). Let no man trifle with the Almighty. Again does Scripture speak, "*Son of man, these men have set up their idols in their heart, and put the stumblingblock of their iniquity before their face: should I be inquired of at all by them?*" (Ezekiel 14:3). A silent heaven! Could anything be more tragic? Let none be under any illusion, "*God is not mocked*" (Galatians 6:7).

Saul was simply making a convenience of God, but "*the Lord answered him not*". "*Then said Saul unto his servants, Seek me a woman that hath a familiar spirit, that I may go to her, and inquire of her*" (v7). From verse three we learnt that at some point in his reign, Saul had put away from Israel those who practised witchcraft; this quite obviously was not done out of spiritual conviction or he would not be seeking such help now.

Sore afraid and trembling at the sight of the Philistines encamped in Shunem, Saul wanted to know the future. What lay ahead was his great quest, but there was no prophet in the land, "*Samuel was dead*". There are very few true messengers of God today in the land in which we live,

religion yes, in abundance, but faithful preachers no, they are a rarity. With the Psalmist, true believers may well cry, "*Help, Lord; for the godly man ceaseth; for the faithful fail from among the children of men*" (Psalm 12:1). In his dilemma and fear with no prophet in the land and a silent heaven, the king of Israel turns to the spirit world. "*Seek me a woman that hath a familiar spirit And his servants said to him, Behold, there is a woman that hath a familiar spirit at Endor*" (v7). This was near to Mount Tabor, an area of caves, a very suitable place for such people who had been driven into hiding to practice their arts. Another point of interest, 'Endor' means 'The fountain of the circle'. Does not this find an echo in the twentieth century?

To this spiritist medium Saul goes, but of necessity he must disguise himself for he was the monarch who had endeavoured to purge the land of such people. "*And Saul disguised himself, and put on other raiment, and he went, and two men with him, and they came to the woman by night: and he said, I pray thee, divine unto me by the familiar spirit, and bring me him up, whom I shall name unto thee. And the woman said unto him, Behold, thou knowest what Saul hath done, how he hath cut off those that have familiar spirits, and the wizards, out of the land: wherefore then layest thou a snare for my life, to cause me to die? And Saul sware to her by the Lord, saying, As the Lord liveth, there shall no punishment happen to thee for this thing*" (v's 8-10). Having guaranteed to this woman that she would not be reported, she was willing to proceed. "*Then said the woman, Whom shall I bring up unto thee? And he said, Bring me up Samuel*" (v11). Samuel! the man whom the king of Israel had in days past neglected and despised; I want him, says this apostate. So the witch divines. Now see what happens!

"And when the woman saw Samuel, she cried with a loud voice: and the woman spake to Saul, saying, Why hast thou deceived me? for thou art Saul. And the king said unto her, Be not afraid: for what sawest thou?"

And the woman said unto Saul, I saw gods ascending out of the earth. And he said unto her, What form is he of? And she said, An old man cometh up; and he is covered with a mantle. And Saul perceived that it was Samuel, and he stooped with his face to the ground, and bowed himself" (v's 12-14). Much is published today even by so-called evangelicals concerning demonism, spiritism and Satanism; of such literature there is good reason for scepticism. A great deal of such material is highly sensational which appeals to the curious mind and is therefore a good seller. Whilst one may rightly have reservations over these publications, we can never be in any doubt at what we read in the Word of God. That Samuel appeared at Endor there can be no doubt whatever, for the inspired Scriptures of truth state it, as the next verses clearly show, but by whose power the prophet appeared is another matter entirely.

"And Samuel said to Saul, Why hast thou disquieted me, to bring me up? And Saul answered, I am sore distressed; for the Philistines make war against me, and God is departed from me, and answereth me no more, neither by prophets, nor by dreams: therefore I have called thee, that thou mayest make known unto me what I shall do. Then said Samuel, Wherefore then dost thou ask of me, seeing the Lord is departed from thee, and is become thine enemy? And the Lord hath done to him, as he spake by me: for the Lord hath rent the kingdom out of thine hand, and given it to thy neighbour, even to David: because thou obeyedst not the voice of the Lord, nor executedst His fierce wrath upon Amalek, therefore hath the Lord done this thing unto thee this day. Moreover the Lord will also deliver Israel with thee into the hand of the Philistines: and tomorrow shalt thou and thy sons be with me: the Lord also shall deliver the host of Israel into the hand of the Philistines" (v's 15-19). A similar incident to this is recorded elsewhere in Holy Writ.

"Then Moab rebelled against Israel after the death of Ahab. And Ahaziah fell down through a lattice in his upper chamber that was in Samaria, and was sick: and he sent messengers, and said unto them, Go, enquire of Baalzebub the god of Ekron whether I shall recover of this disease. But the angel of the Lord said to Elijah the Tishbite, Arise, go up to meet the messengers of the king of Samaria, and say unto them, Is it not because there is not a God in Israel, that ye go to enquire of Baalzebub the god of Ekron? Now therefore thus saith the Lord, Thou shalt not come down from that bed on which thou art gone up, but shalt surely die. And Elijah departed. And when the messengers turned back unto him, he said unto them, Why are ye now turned back? And they said unto him, There came a man up to meet us, and said unto us, Go, turn again unto the king that sent you, and say unto him, Thus saith the Lord, Is it not because there is not a God in Israel, that thou sendest to enquire of Baalzebub the god of Ekron? Therefore thou shalt not come down from that bed on which thou art gone up, but shalt surely die" (2 Kings 1:1-6).

Ahaziah, another king in Israel, was in a serious condition through an accident and he sent to Baalzebub, a supposed god in Ekron, in the hope that some light might be thrown as to his chances of recovery. At that point God intervened, He did it by sending a **living** prophet, His man, to reprove. The God of heaven was no less able to send a **departed** prophet to Saul than to send a living one to Ahaziah, and this He did. The same solemn message being conveyed to both, that their doom was sealed.

The appearance of Elijah to the servants of Ahaziah is understandable, but how can this appearance of Samuel who had died and was buried in Ramah, be explained? Was it by the power of the witch of Endor?

When a regenerate man or woman departs this life, they are eternally with Christ in heaven, the dwelling place of God Himself; absolutely and entirely beyond the reach or even the view of Satan. No power of

witchcraft or divination can ever penetrate that realm. No medium or wizard has any access there or ever will. The risen Christ holds the keys of that place, it is a realm of eternal security and safety. What is more Christ also holds the keys of death and hell, Satan can release no one from either place.

What the devil can do is to create visions and produce hallucinations which are real and convincing. He can also impersonate to almost a degree of perfection for he is the great deceiver; but to bring a man's body out of the grave and extract his soul from the eternal realm and reunite that body and soul so as to be the real and true prophet Samuel, and to put the very words of the eternal God into his lips is beyond the power of Satanic divination.

King Saul **did** consult this witch, and she **did** practise her art of divination, but Divine sovereignty and providence was over it all. In the same manner in which God brought Moses and Elias to the Mount of Transfiguration (cf Matthew 17:3), so did He bring Samuel to announce to this apostate king his doom. When this happened, no one was more surprised than the witch herself as verse twelve shows, "*When the woman saw Samuel, she cried with a loud voice*"; this surely proves the point.

Having embarked upon this subject of divination, it must be expanded upon, for many Christians have been influenced by the cheap, sensational literature before mentioned, much of which is highly exaggerated. Forgetting the paperbacks, we turn to the infallible Word of God for further information. What saith the Scripture? On such serious matters as this, we dare not engage in conjecture. What is more, divination and demonism is forbidden territory to the believer. "*There shall not be found among you any one that maketh his son or his daughter to pass through the fire, or that useth divination, or an observer of times, or an enchanter, or a witch, or a charmer, or a consulter with familiar spirits, or a wizard,*

or a necromancer" (Deuteronomy 18:10,11). Here in the very early part of the Bible (the Pentateuch) in one sweeping statement, **all** these things, or any thing that savours of it, is to be dismissed and put away. It is not to be countenanced by God's people.

What are the forms of this evil today, and how can they be recognized?

Astrology (Not astronomy, which is a science)

There are regular publications in the press which supposedly foretell the future by the study of the stars, the horoscope column in the daily papers. This is read by thousands of people, and alas there are Christians who are among them. The Word of God says this is to be "*put away*", not read.

Charmers

"They shall seek to idols, and to the charmers, and to them that have familiar spirits, and to the wizards" (Isaiah 19:3). *"The voice of charmers, charming never so wisely"* (Psalm 58:5). The charmers are by no means extinct. People who use symbols, old boots, horse shoes, skulls, wishbones, the crossing of fingers, touching wood and a host of other things which are all demonstrative of superstition. Says Almighty God, these things shall not be found among you. Alas it is, Christians have used these things and still do. I knew men who professed the name of Christ who would charm warts and ringworms, and it would work! Have not those who ought to know better, been seen wearing such symbols as jewellery? Bangles with horse shoes, wishbones and old boots attached, a chain with a cross worn around the neck among many other things.

Exorcists

"Then certain of the vagabond Jews, exorcists, took upon them to call over them which had evil spirits the name of the Lord Jesus, saying, We

adjure you by Jesus whom Paul preacheth. And there were seven sons of one Sceva, a Jew, and chief of the priests, which did so. And the evil spirit answered and said, Jesus I know, and Paul I know; but who are ye? And the man in whom the evil spirit was leaped on them, and overcame them, and prevailed against them, so that they fled out of that house naked and wounded (Acts 19:13-16). Is not this yet a further instance of the power of another spirit being called upon in the name of Christ which back-fired. This is common in the present day, many are playing with the Devil in the name of Jesus Christ.

Necromancer

Probing into the unknown. The claim of communication with the dead. This was the art of the witch of Endor. *"And when they shall say unto you, Seek unto them that have familiar spirits, and unto wizards that peep, and that mutter: should not a people seek unto their God? for the living to the dead? (Isaiah 8:19).* Those that peep and mutter; the one pertains to sight, the other to speech. The modern counterpart of these visions and impersonation by Satanic power is the spiritist medium.

That there is a tremendous upsurge of demon practice and worship today, we should all be aware. Playwrights have seized upon it and books and films are full of it. Much of modern so-called evangelism thrives upon investigating it. It appears exciting, it appeals to the flesh, and it will draw the people. Children play with it. Ouija-boards are common place, this is all occultism. Linked very closely with this is drugs, pop and rock, often leading on to Satanic gatherings.

Some years ago, the Daily Telegraph reported over twenty witches' covens in Birmingham alone, and that number is not likely to have decreased; that is just one city. More recently did that same paper report on hallucinations induced by rock and heavy metal so-called music. This

kind of thing has gripped the young people, what is worse, ministers and elders have allowed this music of the pit into the churches.

The Charismatic movement has not helped, indeed it has provided fertile soil for the development of witchcraft and associated practices. Visions, phoney healings, exorcisms, which has now developed further into the Toronto experience. It must all be viewed as being of another spirit. *"For there shall arise false Christs, and false prophets, and shall shew great signs and wonders; insomuch that, if it were possible, they shall deceive the very elect"* (Matthew 24:24). That day is with us. Whilst it is a great mistake to become obsessed with the Devil and his legions, it is equally wrong and foolish to be unaware of his devices. Daily must God's people pray *"Deliver us from evil"* (Matthew 6:13).

"Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord, and in the power of His might. Put on the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places" (Ephesians 6:10-12).

Amen

Spiritism is a Sin

Whether it takes the form of witchcraft, sorcery, wizardry, necromancy or enchantment, it is abhorrent to God, who condemns it in plainest terms (Deuteronomy 18:10-12). In Galatians 5, it is bracketed with murder, idolatry and uncleanness. It is a transgression of the Law, and an abomination to the Lord.

J.Newcombe Goad (Bible League, July/Sept 1967)

Editorial

It is a commonly held belief that the period in history known as the 'Protestant Reformation', brought with it soundness of doctrine and integrity of church order and practice. Benefits which accrued from the glorious work of the Holy Spirit in enlightening the minds of men through the Scriptures of truth must never be denied, yet the Reformation was incomplete as many practices have continued, which find no place in the Word of God. The Reformers **did** strongly contend for 'the faith' when they championed for example, 'justification by faith' as opposed to 'salvation by works' which was the accepted belief of the Romanists. However in two fundamental matters they were far removed from Scripture; that is baptism and the link of church and state, to which could be added, church government, titles and vestments. All this forms a vital part of 'Reformed' religion and, with degrees of variation, is the practice of a large section of christendom today. In recent years, if a person or local assembly of the Lord's people stand for and preach the truths of Divine sovereignty and election, including the general call of the gospel as did the Reformers and Puritans, they are termed 'Reformed' or 'Calvinists'. In many cases they will call themselves this, but preaching the gospel of the sovereign grace of God in salvation, in no way makes a person 'Reformed' or a 'Calvinist' in the correct sense of such terms.

The Protestant Reformers were all paedobaptist and stood for the link of church and state, neither of which have any New Testament warrant. Because of this, how can those who see the error of the church and state link, together with the fallacy of infant baptism be called 'Reformed'? It is a misnomer; yet in recent times many who avow the independency of the local church and practice the baptism of believers by immersion according to the Divine Mandate have coined the phrase 'Reformed Baptist'! How is this to be reconciled to that most meaningful historic

term 'Dissenters'? These differences between the Reformed and Dissenters are extremely serious. However not a few now appear to treat such matters as of minor consequence, and certainly no bar to fellowship. This gives the impression that the once distinguishing tenets are only secondary issues. So do we see the immersionists and the sprinklers sharing platforms and exchanging pulpits. This can only be viewed as a form of ecumenism within the so-called 'Reformed movement'. It is 'Assenting' rather than 'Dissenting', which our forebears would have repudiated.

What are the 'Reformed' and 'Baptistic' positions? Does it matter or does it not? Quotes from various sources should help to give serious thought to this.

"To bind the church to the state is to destroy the true nature of both To unite 'the body of Christ', as Paul calls the Church, to the state as an integral part thereof is to convert these into monstrosities" (Armitage: A History of the Baptist p.127,128).

Concerning the Protestant Reformation: "Beginning as a religious movement, the revolution speedily became involved in political, social and economic pressures" (Encyclopaedia Britannica 1969, Vol 19 p39).

"It is a sad testimony to the superficial and imperfect character of the Reformation, that it effected so little change in the spirit of its leaders. Their mind was altered on various vital matters, such as salvation by grace and justification by faith, but their spirit frequently remained hard and cruel. Calvin could burn Servetus; Melancthon could attend Baptists to execution and attribute their constancy to a Satan-infused obstinacy: Zwingli fully endorsed severe penal measures against Baptists at Zurich. Reformers such as even Cranmer, Hooper and Ridley were unsparing in denunciation and unrelenting in persecuting, even unto

death by burning. Some of these experienced under Mary, a painful fulfilment of our Lord's warning which they had disregarded, "*With what measure ye mete it shall be measured unto you*" (Matthew 7:2) (J Warns: Baptism p237).

A true religious reformer "does not seek to unite the church with the state, or enforce his teaching at the edge of the sword and the point of the bayonet. He does not use persecution or oppression of any kind. Here was one radical defect of the Reformation of the sixteenth century. The civil arm was invoked, the state was united with the church, a political element was infused and carnal weapons were used as freely by the Reformed churches in enforcing their dogmas, as by the Papacy in maintaining its heresies" (Adams: Baptist Thorough Reformers p43,44).

Anabaptist was a nickname given to those who practised believers' baptism by immersion. These people commonly called themselves "**Christian Brethren** they repudiated their own baptism in infancy as a 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 they held that the Protestant equation of circumcision under the Old Covenant and infant baptism under the New was a monstrous distortion of the gospel" (Encyclopaedia Britannica 1969 Vol 1, p838).

Whilst there are differences in the formula used yet "all paedobaptist agree that infants are proper subjects for church membership, and by baptism they receive such to their membership. This is true, not only of the church of Rome but of all the Protestant paedobaptist denominations as can easily be shown by their Confessions of Faith. The visible church consists of all those throughout the world that profess the true

religion, and of their children" (Westminster Confession, ch 25 sec 2). "Baptism is a sacrament whereby the parties baptized are solemnly admitted into the visible church: Westminster Confession Larger Catechism 165" (Adams: Baptist Thorough Reformers p72,73).

These '**Reformed**' tenets are not insignificant; neither is the doctrine concerning believer's baptism by immersion and the separation of the church from the state secondary; they constitute a part of the indivisible Divine Mandate. For a non-Conformist of Baptist conviction to think 'Reformed' to be an enviable designation is difficult to understand. With an increasing emphasis being placed on the term 'Reformed', it is essential that Christians rightly understand the correct definition of 'Reformed Theology'. To this end the undermentioned books will be of great assistance.

Baptists Thorough Reformers by John Quincy Adams.
A most enlightening treatise. Price: £3.00 postage paid.

The Children of Abraham by David Kingdon.
A critique of covenant theology and infant baptism. Price: £1.50 postage paid.

Obtainable from: The Bookroom Secretary,
North Road Chapel (Evangelical), BIDEFORD, N.Devon, EX39 2NW

IMPORTANT NOTICE

Would those who send cheques or postal orders for books, tapes, etc., always ensure that they are made payable to North Road Chapel Bideford and not to any individual.