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**North Road Chapel (Evangelical)
BIDEFORD**

THE LAW OF GOD

The Fifth Commandment

"Honour thy father and thy mother: that thy days may be long upon the land which the Lord thy God giveth thee" (Exodus 20:12).

It is sad to see the widespread disregard of the fifth commandment in our day, as it must surely be one of the most arresting of the many signs of the times. The truth contained in this section of the Decalogue is so practical and penetrating that it is doubtful if there is a man or a woman who could speak in depth upon this matter with an absolute clear conscience. To quote this Divine statute and perhaps give a little homily is one thing, but to thoroughly examine it and go into its depth of meaning is a very heart searching exercise. There are two aspects of teaching in this commandment, one affecting the parent and the other the child.

The apostle Paul wrote, giving Timothy pastoral instruction and among many other things he stated, *"This know also, that in the last days perilous times shall come. For men shall be lovers of their own selves, covetous, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, without natural affection"* (2 Timothy 3:1-3); a devastating list of sins and misconduct.

There is no doubt that parents must bear much of the blame for the trouble with young people today. The Word of God places great emphasis upon headship; this is a Divine principle. Those in positions of authority, whether in the home, school, business, nation or church, are held responsible by God for guidance and discipline. All too often

delinquency in young people can be traced back to delinquent parents; 'delinquent' meaning 'neglect', 'a failing in duty'.

Scripture clearly states that husbands and wives are to love one another, and to cleave to one another as long as they both shall live (cf Ephesians 5:28-33 & Romans 7:2,3). However we see that one marriage in three breaks down and affections are transferred from one partner to another with little if any regard to the consequences. Homes are broken up, often with devastating effect upon the offspring of the original union. "*Children are an heritage of the Lord*" (Psalm 127:3), but do parents view their children in this way today? It is inevitable that in circumstances such as these, children are uncertain who their true parents are, for in many instances they spend time with both parents, mixing with children from different unions. This is **not** natural affection; by it humans are worse than animals in such conduct. Those of us acquainted with agriculture know that it is most difficult to put a lamb to a ewe which is not its mother; neither will settle and invariably the ewe will reject it because it is not hers.

What has this to do with the fifth commandment? It has everything to do with it, as was stated at the beginning of this article, there are two aspects of truth incorporated in this statute. One concerns the parent and the other the child. This commandment commences, "*Honour thy father and thy mother*". The word 'honour' implies obedience, but it means very much more, indeed it is a comprehensive word conveying the thought of 'esteem', 'respect', 'reputation', 'conformity to the accepted code', 'chastity', 'probity', 'uprightness', to 'revere', even to 'exalt' and to 'glorify'. The question must be asked, How can parents who act in the manner described be revered? What child can highly esteem a parent who has literally cast them off? Is a child to look upon a father who is living in sin, as upright and chaste, or respect a mother who entertains other men? How can the father be esteemed who has divorced their mother and

married (so called) another woman? All these are relevant questions which everyone (including church leaders), needs to bear in mind as God's commandments are exceeding broad (cf Psalm 119:96). These commandments cover every aspect of life; many issues enter into them. From other Scriptures we soon discover the depth of teaching contained in the fifth commandment and the great responsibility that parents have to their children. They are to, *"bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord"* (Ephesians 6:4). Every parent must remember that it was by natural generation that the plague of sin was communicated to their children, therefore it is incumbent upon them to endeavour to make known to them the way of life. Timothy's mother instructed him in the Holy Scriptures from early childhood (cf 2 Timothy 3:15); Obadiah was brought to fear the Lord in his youth (cf 1 Kings 18:12).

One of the most important words in Scripture to parents is found in the book of Proverbs, *"Train up a child in the way he should go: and when he is old, he will not depart from it"* (Proverbs 22:6). This verse speaks of parental authority and general training, and covers the secular as well as the spiritual. Parents are to be kind and loving, but not over indulgent as invariably a spoilt or untrained child will bring embarrassment upon a parent rather than honour. David spoiled his son Adonijah and we read, *"And his father (David) had not displeased him at any time in saying, Why hast thou done so?"* (1 Kings 1:6). David did not correct him, and this son in later years became a great grief to his father. When Divine principles are ignored, there are inevitable consequences.

If parents are to retain honour amongst their children then they must maintain authority and there are occasions when the cane might well be essential. 'Spare the rod and spoil the child' is not a Biblical quotation but it is sound moral teaching, thoroughly in line with Holy Scripture. *"He that spareth his rod hateth his son; but he that loveth him chasteneth*

him betimes" (Proverbs 13:24). "Withhold not correction from the child: for if thou beatest him with the rod, he shall not die. Thou shalt beat him with the rod, and shalt deliver his soul from hell" (Proverbs 23:13,14). However in this matter of correction the parents must always act in a just and fair manner, never in rage or a fit of temper. "Fathers, provoke not your children to anger, lest they be discouraged" (Colossians 3:21); this is a most important exhortation. Parents must be prudent in disciplining a child and must always be disciplined themselves.

Saul said to his son Jonathan in a rage, *"Thou son of the perverse rebellious woman" (1 Samuel 20:30). This was far from a wise manner of correction and in fact Saul is a glaring example in Holy Writ of the way parents are **not** to discipline their children. He would strike without cause, which a parent must never do; once he threw a javelin at his son whilst they were having a meal, with the result that Jonathan arose from the table and left in fierce anger (cf 1 Samuel 20:33-34). By so doing he provoked his son to anger and what parent has a right to expect honour if they act after this manner! Parents must never be tyrants.*

Partiality and favouritism towards a member of the family is also reprehensible. Jacob did this, with a resulting failure to be honoured by other members of the family. *"Now Israel (Jacob) loved Joseph more than all his children, because he was the son of his old age: and he made him a coat of many colours. And when his brethren saw that their father loved him more than all his brethren, they hated him, and could not speak peaceably unto him" (Genesis 37:3,4).*

Children must never be asked by their parents to do that which is inherently wrong. Saul commanded Jonathan to fetch David saying, 'He shall surely die'; Jonathan refused and in doing so did not honour his father's instructions (cf 1 Samuel 20:30-42), nor was he wrong in refusing to obey such a wicked command. Inconsistent parents who constantly

act in an irresponsible, irrational manner do not deserve honour, as their life discourages the child from obedience. It must always be remembered that just as children are required to honour their parents, so must parents remember not to dishonour their children.

The example that a parent gives and the love they show are essential elements in training a child. Children will despise their parents if father and mother do not live up to that which they profess. How can a child come to a right understanding of morals if parents find entertainment in obscene jokes or immoral activities displayed in plays or television? How can a child be trained in the evils of alcohol and the necessity of total abstinence if such products are in the home or taken by parents at social events? As a son once said to his father, 'If this is evil, remember I learnt it from you!' How many parents today have seen their children's marriage flounder, yet have been unable to help or counsel because they themselves have been divorced! If parents are to be honoured by their children, then their example must be right.

Love is the overriding element in the training of children; it should permeate rebuke, correction and punishment; no child can be loved too much. To spoil or indulge a child's every whim is not love, but to demonstrate true affection engenders confidence, security and a sense of belonging to which a child will respond. In the spiritual realm it is said of God's children, "*We love Him because he first loved us*" (1 John 4:19). These words set out a principle which is also most applicable within the human family. Children love their parents because their parents first loved them. But if parents are cold and formal in their relationship with their families, showing no real ardour or affection then they must not be disappointed or upset if they receive little in return, for love begets love. If children are conscious from their earliest days of warm ardent love, it has the effect of drawing and enclosing them. Throughout their lives it will be as a hedge about them. The place of love in the home cannot be

over-stressed and it certainly has a great bearing in the fifth commandment.

Finally on this aspect, Christian parents should be burdened in prayer for their children, that they may be kept from the appalling evil of this age; that they be convicted of sin and brought to salvation in Christ; that they may be vessels unto His glory and faithfully serve the God of their fathers, teaching all these things to the generation following, and to children's children.

Having dealt at length with the responsibilities of parents we now look at what God requires from children. The commandment states, "*Honour thy father and thy mother*". Children are to honour their parents by revering them (cf Hebrews 12:9); to 'revere' means to treat with 'respect' mingled with 'affection'. In a healthy parent/child relationship where parents walk circumspectly before their children this will invariably be the case; there will be an inbuilt respect mingled with affection. It is laid down in the Pentateuch "*Ye shall fear every man his mother and his father*" (Leviticus 19:3). This is not to be afraid, or to live in dread of; rather is it veneration begotten by confidence in, and love to, the parent. This will be manifest in the way the children treat their parents.

Children respond to the example shown by their parents. Scripture states of a mother, that "*her children arise up, and call her blessed*" (Proverbs 31:28). Children of all age groups are instructed in the Word of God to honour (respect) their parents. Joseph was a mighty prince in Egypt, but when his aged father came down, the two having been separated for such a long time, Joseph treated him with such respect and affection, even to falling on his neck and weeping (cf Genesis 46:29).

Such incidents are not recorded in Holy Scripture just to make interesting reading; they are inspired by the Holy Spirit of God for our instruction,

so it can be seen adults are affected by the fifth commandment as well as children.

To children and younger people who are still under parental control, God says in His Word, *"My son, hear the instruction of thy father, and forsake not the law of thy mother"* (Proverbs 1:8). This is all embracing; it most certainly includes spiritual instruction, but it is not confined to that alone, for wise parents will give guidance on all matters, to which children should give heed.

"Isaac called Jacob, and blessed him, and charged him, and said unto him, Thou shalt not take a wife of the daughters of Canaan" (Genesis 28:1). Every Christian parent should ensure that their children who **are** believers, are instructed in the Scriptural teaching that they are not to become unequally yoked with an unbeliever (cf 2 Corinthians 6:14; Amos 3:3).

"Jonadab the son of Recab our father commanded us, saying, Ye shall drink no wine, neither ye, nor your sons for ever" (Jeremiah 35:6); those Recabite children obeyed their father. In contrast to this it is recorded of Eli's sons that, *"They hearkened not unto the voice of their father"* (1 Samuel 2:25); they were disobedient to him. They were described as the *"sons of Belial"* (1 Samuel 2:12), 'Belial' meaning 'worthless' or 'wickedness'. The rebellion of children to sound Biblical instruction invariably results in tragedy and sorrow. *"Children, obey your parents in the Lord: for this is **right**"* (Ephesians 6:1).

When a child has been disobedient, then it is essential that there is consistency in punishment and in discipline. It is disastrous when a father punishes the child, and then the mother gives sympathy, this destroys true discipline in the family. Parents **must** be united in bringing up their children, chastening them in love, which should cause them to be

sincerely sorry for their actions; in this they honour their father and mother.

Young people must remember that a failure to honour parents is a failure to honour God, for it is a breaking of His Law which says, "*Honour thy father and thy mother: that thy days may be long upon the land which the Lord thy God giveth thee*" (Exodus 20:12). There is a promise attached to this commandment which is the more emphasized in the New Testament, "*Children, obey your parents in the Lord: for this is right. Honour thy father and thy mother; which is the first commandment with promise; that it may be well with thee, and thou mayest live long on the earth*" (Ephesians 6:1-3).

For young people to know the blessing of God upon their lives they must obey, thus honouring their father and their mother.

This commandment in its dual aspect, is as relevant today as it was when it was given and it is not valid to say that we are not subject to the Law but under grace, as many do. It must surely be a rule of life for all believers.

W.H.Molland

"Though children must obey their parents in 'all things', yet it is with the limitation of 'all things just and honest'. "*Obey in the Lord*"; that is, so far as the commands of parents agree with God's commands. If they command against God, then they lose their right of being obeyed".

"If you would have your children honour you, teach them by a holy example. A father is a looking glass which a child dresses himself by; let the glass be clear and not spotted".

Thomas Watson (17th century)

An Extract taken from:

'IN THE ARENA OF FAITH'

by Erich Sauer

It is a fact which almost regularly repeats itself in the history of the people of God that every new generation of the Church is accompanied by a crisis. Very often the third generation especially of a spiritual movement has failed. It has so often given up spiritual energies and Biblical truths and convictions which by the pioneers of their movement, the fathers of earlier revivals, had been held to be precious and holy. One can recognize this in Old Testament history. *"And the people served the Lord all the days of Joshua (first generation), and all the days of the elders that outlived Joshua (second generation), who had seen all the great works of the Lord, that He did for Israel. And also all that generation were gathered unto their fathers: and there arose another (the third) generation after them, which knew not the Lord, nor yet the works which He had done for Israel and they forsook the Lord God of their fathers and followed other gods"* (Judges 2:7,10,12). How very grave! Let us not lull ourselves to sleep in false security. No group of Christians, whether arising out of state church or free church, whether organized or unorganized, has any guarantee of retaining the freshness and vigour which it had at its beginning. Every new generation in the local churches as well as in spiritual movements in general must *"lay hold"* (1 Timothy 6:12), afresh for themselves, quite directly, personally and individually, of the blessings which had been received and held fast by their spiritual fathers. Spiritual possessions cannot be merely 'inherited'.

The letter to the Hebrews itself grew out of the crisis connected with the arising of a new generation. The letter is a warning and an appeal by the

Spirit of God to that second generation to hold fast the confession in witness and life of the first generation.

A 'crisis' need not of necessity be a 'catastrophe'. Trials are opportunities for victories. The ever-available power of the omnipresent Christ, which never grows old, is at hand for new times and new people.

This is at the same time the meaning of the well known verse, "*Jesus Christ the same yesterday, and to day, and for ever*" (Hebrews 13:8). This word should be read in connection with Hebrews 11 and 12, and in relationship to its own context. It had just been said, "*Remember them which have the rule over you, who have spoken unto you the word of God: whose faith follow, considering the end of their conversation*" (v.7). Immediately after this text follows that radiant word dealing with the ever-living, mighty Divine Lord of all times and all history.

This means: Men and women are called away. Generations sink into the grave. The leaders of past generations are no longer here. **But Christ remaineth.** In the midst of the coming and going of the generations, He is the rock of His Church. He is far above all changes in situations and persons. He is the One who binds the generations together. He is the living link between "*yesterday*" and "*today*" in the history of His people, the connection between each generation at any given time and all generations before and after. He is the Head who unites all the redeemed through the generations past, present and future. So He is the living, personal, uniting principle of the Church. This is true from the view point of the contemporary, 'horizontal' cross-sections of the Church, that is, of each generation living simultaneously in all parts of the earth. It is also true from the view point of the 'vertical', longitudinal sections of the Church's history, that is, throughout the successive centuries and generations forming the entire development of the Church from the day of its founding to its completion and perfecting at His coming. This

means that in spite of all individual changes in detail, the spiritual essence of the life of the Church remains in Christ unchanged throughout all generations. The death of the heroes of faith, those forerunners, leaders and examples (Hebrews 13:7,17, 24), does not cause the slightest loss in the essence of the life and faith of the people of God. Even though the teachers go, the teaching remains the same. It is true, as I read on John Wesley's tomb in Westminster Abbey, that "God buries His labourers but His labour and work goes on". Therefore do not grow weary! The Lord is ever present. The homecall of faithful servants of God brings with it a holy obligation for all those who remain behind.

Our life is short. Our days fly by. Earthly things are not the real things. That which really matters lies somewhere else, not in time, but in eternity, not in that which passes by, but in that which remains, not in the past or the present, but in the future. Thus we must press forward with a serious turn of mind and yet inwardly comforted, not trusting in ourselves and yet full of courage, not looking at our own powerlessness but looking to Christ's victorious power. *"Therefore seeing we have this ministry, as we have received mercy, we faint not"* (2 Corinthians 4:1).

"The testimony for the true God is to be transmitted from generation to generation by the careful instruction of succeeding families. The commands and teachings of the Word of God are not worn out; they are calculated to exert an influence as long as our race shall exist. How blessed would it be if each age improved upon its predecessor; but, alas! it is to be feared that decline is more general than progress, and too often the heirs of true saints are far more rebellious than even their fathers were in their unregeneracy".

C.H.Spurgeon.

Recollections of Spiritual Work in the County of Devon in Generations Past

"We have heard with our ears, O God, our fathers have told us, what work thou didst in their days, in the times of old" (Psalm 44:1).

Throughout history there have been times when God has worked in an exceptional manner as at the Reformation, the Evangelical Awakening and other revivals in England, Ireland, America and many other parts of the world. However such seasons have been rare. In general the work of God is less spectacular and has gone on in a more local manner as God has raised up men in different localities, chosen vessels unto Him to do a specific work in a given area. These men have had little, if any publicity, neither would they have sought it, as their one and only desire was to serve their generation by the will of God (cf Acts 13:36).

In West Devon three men, William O'Brien, James Thorne and Frederick William Bourne were greatly used of God, and through their preaching the body of believers known as the Bible Christians came into being. In the nineteenth century, scores of nonconformist chapels were built by these dear folk. Sadly, today, very few of these chapels remain and of those that do, Ichabod is written over most of their doors.

In coming months, God willing, it is intended to give a little insight into some of the spontaneous works of God which sprang up in the last, and first half of the present century and who were the instruments in His hands in the accomplishing of it. Such unobtrusive labours accompanied with Divine blessing in remote areas are thrilling to recall and can only be described in the words of the late G.H.Lang in a book which he wrote some forty to fifty years ago entitled 'God at Work on His Own Lines'.

Our first visit is to mid-Devon, the Teign Valley. This edition will be introductory as much more will follow in the months ahead.

The upper reaches of the valley of the River Teign are areas of outstanding beauty, much of the scenery breath-taking. The lower half is rich in industry, much mining at one time took place, now it is mainly quarries, claypits and potteries. The villages of Bridford, Christow, Doddiscombsleigh and Trusham are the main parishes in focus. The key figure is a Mr William Surrige who was born in 1823 and who died at the age of 79 years. That which is to appear will all be taken from a book entitled "The Finest of the Wheat" written by Mr Fred Surrige (son of the above) in the middle of the present century. Permission has been granted by members of the Surrige family for extracts to be reprinted from this book and we express our appreciation, praying that it might be to the glory of God and a challenge to the present generation. It might be of interest to say that, when a boy, the editor of this magazine well remembers Mr Fred Surrige who was then a very elderly gentleman, greatly revered by all who knew him.

In the first half of the nineteenth century in this Teign valley area, a good work sprang up among the Baptists. They had a controversy at the time with the Anglican church over the matter of infant sprinkling and they earnestly contended for believer's baptism by immersion. It is at this point that Mr Fred Surrige takes up the story:

"A very flourishing community of Baptists met in a little chapel at Christow, and other smaller companies maintained a bright testimony in some outlying villages. Then as the mining industry sprang up in this district, a good number of Cornish miners were attracted here to work in the lead mines. Amongst these were quite a number of zealous and godly Methodists, who soon made their presence felt, and whom the Lord greatly blessed.

It was into these surroundings that my father, Mr William Surridge, found himself when he moved into the district about the year 1850.

My father's early days

My father was born at Ashleigh, near Tiverton, and was the eldest of four. At an early age he was brought up by his grandparents, in whose employ was a servant girl, by the name of Dorcas Sloman. 'Dorky' as she was called, used to attend a Wesleyan chapel, and would often take little Willie with her to the service. One Sunday the preacher spoke on the crucifixion of our Lord, which made a great impression on his infant mind. During the following afternoon, when a few lady friends had called for afternoon tea, Willie came running in among the guests and cried out, "Grandma, why **did** they nail Jesus Christ to the cross?" But the only answer he got was, "Run away, my dear, don't come asking us such questions". No one was able to give him an intelligent answer, but the seed of the gospel was sown in that little heart, which in due time was destined to be quickened into life by the Holy Spirit. So nurse girls, go and do thou likewise.

On leaving school, he was sent to learn the milling business, after which he spent some years in the company of the parson's son, indulging in the various pleasures and pastimes of the day. He was passionately fond of singing and shooting, and these two matters so gripped his mind that he went to London, with the express intention of opening up an entertainment business, in which singing and shooting were to be the principal items. He was exceptionally gifted in both, being the possessor of a marvellous bass voice, and was an accurate marksman. I never remember his missing anything he shot at, whether fish, fowl or animal. This entertainment project, however, he had to abandon, owing to his health.

As leader of a church choir, he had plenty of friends and admirers, but while looking out for lucrative employment, the post brought him one morning two newspapers, and each contained an advertisement offering 'The Bridford Mills' to be let. The call of Devon, the milling business, and the over-ruling hand of God led him into this district, and with his younger brother they started business here. They at once threw themselves into all the social functions of the district and were soon noted for three things. The Surridge brothers were considered to be the two finest shots, the two handsomest men and the two best singers of the west. Any church would be crowded if it were known that the Surridges were going to sing the anthem. In later years his younger brother was chosen several times to sing the bass at the Handel Festival in London and the provinces. For years my father had an open invitation to all the tithes' dinners of the district to sing songs. When he got converted and gave up all these things, the publicans used to say that when Surridge stopped singing songs, it was two hundred glasses of grog out of their pocket for every tithes' dinner. His voice was pure and resonant, producing a thrilling influence whenever he spoke or sang.

It was not long before my father married a Miss Coombe, who was the daughter of the miller of the Tiverton Roller Mills, and now I must digress a little to lead up to the means of my father's conversion.

From Waterloo to Bridford

Let me carry you back to the days of Napoleon and the battle of Waterloo in 1815. The artillery in those days used muzzle-loading cannon, which meant hard and tiring work, and the gunners were trained to work on either the right or the left sides of the gun, so that they could relieve each other by changing sides and hands. During the battle a gunner by the name of Puddicombe had been at the gun for hours with his mate, and both were well nigh exhausted. "Let us change over", said the mate.

They did so, and immediately afterwards a cannon ball crashed down by the gun and cut the mate in two; Puddicombe was spared.

Oh what could the purpose of God ever be,
In shielding and sparing a sinner like me? (F.W.S.)

Soon after the war, Puddicombe retired from the army, and after marrying, settled down in this district. Among his children was a son called William, who in his turn married, and lived in the village of Bridford. It was not long after this, that two young men came into the village to preach the gospel in the open air, but they had a hostile reception, and the villagers drove them out. William Puddicombe and his wife befriended them, however, took them in and gave them tea. No one knew who those men were, and they and their work have faded from man's memory, but not from God's. The fruit of that kindly act is seen today, for when a few years ago I conducted the funeral service of that dear man's last surviving daughter, who lived to be over ninety, we could count over three hundred of his descendants who had been saved and gathered with God's people. The tide of blessing is still flowing, and the only human ability that William Puddicombe and his wife had was a kind heart, and a cup of tea, which verily has not lost its reward. "Go and do thou likewise".

I can remember six generations in four or five branches of his family, all of whom are saved and gathered with God's people in various places, and it was at the funeral of this old brother that the controversy commenced between my father and the clergy, and which led to the passing of the Burial Act, of which I shall tell later.

Not the great, the strong, or noble,
But the weak, despised and poor.
These are oft God's chosen vessels
Through His love and grace to pour. (F.W.S.)

A Word Fitly Spoken

A man is not mighty because of what he is in himself, but because of what God does through him. In the early days previous to 1870, our postal system in country districts was conducted in a very different manner from today. Then the postman brought letters to the main villages, and those in the outlying districts had either to fetch them or pay someone to bring them from the post office. Many an old man receiving only a few shillings parish pay, could earn a few extra coppers in this way. Father and others living around used to make use of old James Rolston and pay him a penny for each letter he brought them.

One morning after attending to his correspondence, father took out his dogs and his gun to do some shooting. As he passed up the road he saw old James sitting on some timber, by a saw-pit, rebandaging his bad legs. As he passed, father said, "Good morning James, how are you today?" James answered, "Well, Sir, through the Lord's mercy I am as well as I can expect; I have much to be thankful for". Father replied "What the devil do you know about the mercy of the Lord with such legs as that?" He passed on, but had not gone far before he said to himself, "Now I ought not to have spoken to old James like that, for he evidently meant what he said". So he turned back and said, "James, I have come back to apologize for the way I spoke to you just now. I ought not to have done it". "Never mind, sir", said James. "You should not have troubled. I took no offence". These few words graciously spoken between them, had the effect of bringing back to father, a crowd of memories, and made him to feel that old James possessed something that he himself was a stranger to.

James was a member of the little company of earnest Christians, including those Cornish miners, who held their weekly prayer meeting in a cottage about a mile from the mill. The work of God in this

neighbourhood owes much to their earnest persistent prayers, and I could recount many interesting incidents in connection with it.

Just a word that's fitly spoken,
Just a little act of love,
God can clothe with richest blessing,
And with power from above. (F.W.S.)

Faithful Gospel Preaching

Just about this time, in the village of Christow, the Lord's work in connection with the little Baptist chapel was sadly languishing. No one in the village had a care for the work, and the light would apparently have gone right out, had not a dear brother by the name of Crediford, living at Lustleigh, felt concerned, and took such an interest in it, that for five years he walked six miles every Sunday, in each direction, over the roughest of roads, and some of the wildest country to be found in Devon. Thus in all weathers he kept the light burning, with practically no encouragement. For some years he never saw any fruit to his labours, until by the grace of God he found he had been used in blessing to my father.

If you can only say a kindly word,
Or only give a friendly cup of tea,
Perchance give years of labour for the Lord,
This do, for sure thy rich reward will be. (F.W.S.)

Father's Conversion

In process of time after Father's marriage, a little baby girl was born, and she must have been something like what was said of Moses, 'a goodly child'. My father and mother were spending a week at Teignmouth when she was between two and three years of age, and as they were walking along the Den, an elderly gentleman met them, noticed the child, turned

back after going a few steps, and asked permission to have another look at her. Then he movingly said, "I should not suppose God's sun ever shone upon such a beautiful child before". We can quite understand from this incident, that my father and mother were passionately fond of their little girl.

The mill house where they used to live was a large three-storey building, with a spiral staircase, leading from the second floor to the top. One fatal day, mother having occasion to go to the top storey, took the little girlie with her, and whilst she was attending to her task, the little one wandered to the stairway, and fell from top to bottom, receiving injuries from which she never recovered. Father was so overwhelmed that he vowed, that if she died, there would be no more grog drinking, and no more song and anthem singing for him. Not only did she die but in the midst of this 'shock' and grievous sorrow, a little boy was born, but did not survive, and both the babes were buried within a fortnight.

For some time my mother almost lost her reason, and father was not much better, for God was speaking very loudly to him. They sought to comfort each other, but knew not 'the comfort wherewith we are comforted of God'. One Sunday evening, not knowing what to do with himself, he took a walk to Christow, and as he came near the little Baptist chapel, he heard singing and could not resist going inside. Mr Crediford, the old brother from Lustleigh, was preaching, and I've heard my father say that he did not remember in the least what Scriptures he read, or what he preached upon, but only this, that he held up the Bible and said, "There is pardon for a guilty sinner to be found in this book". My father said to himself, "If that is so, I'll find it , for that is what I want". He walked home in a thoughtful mood, and was very soon a changed man, having found the pardon, and Christ as his Saviour.

To be continued.

EDITORIAL

The Bible lays great stress upon the handling of Truth and of its being faithfully passed on. In this the Christian parent has a solemn charge for, "*Children are an heritage of the Lord*" (Psalm 127:3), 'heritage' meaning ;property that has been passed on to us by another'. This is how children are to be viewed, and parents are commanded by the Divine Giver to "*Bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord*" (Ephesians 6:4). "*One generation passeth away, and another generation cometh*" (Ecclesiastes 1:4), but the unadulterated truth of God must be handed on without distortion. "*Ye shall not add unto the word which I command you, neither shall ye diminish ought from it*" (Deuteronomy 4:2).

Holy Scripture leaves us in no doubt whatsoever as to the importance of this matter; it is a charge laid heavily upon us. We are to impart to succeeding generations a true knowledge of God in all the wonder of His eternal Being, His majesty, holiness, power, wisdom and grace, so that when we pass from this scene, those 'after us' are not left in ignorance as to the truth concerning the Eternal God as revealed in His Word. "*Tell it in the ears of thy son, and of thy son's son that ye may know that I am the Lord*" (Exodus 10:2).

It is a most serious thing for a generation to let slip "*The faith which was once delivered unto the saints*" (Jude v.3), yet this is exactly what is happening amongst so many Christian families and churches today. We are to pass on "*That which we have heard and known and our fathers have told us. We will not hide them from their children that the generation to come might know them, even the children which should be born; who should arise and declare them to their children: that they might set their hope in God, and not forget the works of God, but keep His commandments*" (Psalm 78:3-7).

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Lord's Day	5 May	Mr D.D.Jones (Nailsea)
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PRELIMINARY ANNOUNCEMENT

ANNUAL BIBLE CONVENTION

Saturday 3 August 1996

Speaker: Mr F.J.Harris (Cheltenham)