

English Churchman

A Protestant Family Newspaper

No. 7788

Fridays, 12th & 19th March 2010

40p

Sodomite Lords vote for Civil Partnerships in Church

Late at night on 2nd March 2010 the House of Lords voted to change the law on Civil Partnerships, allowing them to be performed in Churches and/or with religious language.

The amendment, which was introduced by Lord Alli, an openly sodomite Peer, and backed by a number of liberal Bishops, effectively removes one of the final distinctions between Marriage and Civil Partnerships—introduced just five years ago as being purely secular in nature.

The amendment was voted through at 11pm, by 95 votes to 21—an extraordinarily low number for such an important matter—and was hailed as a breakthrough by homosexual activists.

In January 2009, the Government had resisted Lord Alli's amendment, reassuring the public that it was 'not a workable solution to this issue'. However, in an unexpected move, the government suddenly allowed its Peers a free vote on the issue.



Lord Alli

The Conservative Party and Liberal Democrats also gave its Peers a free vote.

Ironically, the amendment was advanced as an issue of religious freedom, with some religious organisations voicing their desire to hold Civil Partnership ceremonies. However, sodomite activists have previously made it clear that any change in the law would only be a step towards forcing churches to perform civil partnerships. For example, Ben Summerskill, Head of

Stonewall, recently said: "Right now, faiths shouldn't be forced to hold civil partnerships, although in ten or 20 years, that may change."

Andrea Williams, Director of CCFON, said:

"What took place last night is nothing short of outrageous and all who care about democracy should be alarmed at the proceedings. At the end of January, Baroness Royall for the Government stated that: 'Any change can therefore be brought only after proper and careful consideration of these issues.'

"Was this statement deliberately deceitful, or do the Government believe that last night's debate constituted the 'proper and careful consideration' of the issues? The amendment was debated for less than an hour and was voted through literally at the eleventh hour, taking everybody by surprise. To have such a significant change in the law—a change to another piece of legislation no less—take place at the end of the Equality Bill's passing, without any

real debate or consultation, and at such an hour that most Peers were not even in the House, is a disgrace and a clear manipulation of the system.

"We will be calling on the Government to resist these changes, for the good of our democracy as well as for the protection of marriage."

It is not the first time that constitutional irregularities have been used to force through law that significantly favours sodomite activists. In 2006 Lord Alli introduced amendments to the Equality Bill 2005/6 at the very last moment, which led to the creation of the Sexual Orientation Regulations 2007. These highly controversial regulations were passed through on a take it or leave it basis, with no debate at all in the House of Commons and amongst other things have led to the closing of Catholic adoption agencies.

Source: *Christian Concern For Our Nation*

Christian Witness in Ulster – silenced by PSNI

By our Irish correspondent

The town of Enniskillen in County Fermanagh will long be remembered by the devastating Remembrance day bomb in 1987.

Over the years like many places in Northern Ireland, it has been a hub of Mission Halls and evangelical churches. Many of the population would be of solid farming stock, Christians who love the Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity and truth. However the horrible influence of UK equality legislation is being felt even in this lovely part of Ulster.

The local community had been aware of a Wedding Fair to be held in the town's Westville Hotel on Lord's Day 31st January. It featured 'Ant and Dick' who rose to fame in London at the time of the first Civil Partnerships ceremonies and were clearly promoting this sort of lifestyle in Enniskillen. The local paper *The Impartial Reporter* described them as 'two Gay celebrity wedding planners'.

Francis and Susan White engaged in a Christian witness outside, from the beginning of the event but were moved on from the grounds for displaying a large poster which declared, Biblical Marriage = One man + One woman and quoting Genesis 2 v 24.

They felt that the same event had a somewhat ambiguous view of marriage. Mrs White reports that not only were they moved from peacefully displaying the poster in the grounds but forced to move from the public footpath outside. 'The owner of the hotel threatened to call the police which he did even as we stood outside. He further told us that we were affecting business and when the PSNI arrived they insisted that if we continued to display this message, we would be arrested. One of the officers was quite obnoxious, threatening and intimidating to us,' Mrs White related but we reluctantly complied with their demands.

In this instance, the instrument of provocation was clearly the word of God which was too provocative to be seen! Mrs White added that this was a sad day for Northern Ireland in that their witness had effectively been stopped by police action.

The Whites plan, God Willing, to have a meeting to establish a branch of Christian Watch in Enniskillen on Tuesday 13th April at 7.30pm in the Ely Centre. This will be addressed by Andy Clarke from Christian Watch in England. Surely this is a very salutary warning that 'the price of freedom is eternal vigilance'.

Further info maybe had at www.christianwatch.org.uk

Multi-Faith at Lambeth Palace

Multi-Faith leaders came together on Wednesday 10th March at Lambeth Palace in support of Global Poverty Project's presentation, '1.4 Billion Reasons'

The presentation was introduced by Dr Rowan Williams, Archbishop of Canterbury. Speakers included Elisha London, UK Country Manager for the Global Poverty Project, and Samia Ahmed, Senior Development Education Coordinator for Islamic Relief. (Ed: There are certainly a lot of people needing relief from Islam but we fear that is not the aim of this organisation.)

The meeting aimed to unite leaders from many different faiths. The Tony Blair Faith Foundation is delighted to be working with the Global Poverty Project to extend this invitation to religious leaders from different faiths represented within the UK.

Launched at a high-level UN Summit in 2008, '1.4 Billion Reasons' was put together by expert advisors, including Hugh Jackman and Jeffrey Sachs.

Inspired by the impact of Al Gore's *An Inconvenient Truth*, '1.4 Billion Reasons' claims to demonstrate that progress has been made in efforts to address extreme poverty and aims to re-inspire and equip

individuals to take action.

Samia Ahmed said: "Central to all faiths is belief and taking action that can benefit others. The Global Poverty Project aims to do just that. Through raising awareness of the issues, we hope to inspire people to come together and take action, helping to bring hope, justice and opportunities to the world's poorest."

It is claimed that more than 40,000 people will see '1.4 Billion Reasons' in the UK this year as it is delivered to over 200 schools, universities, community groups, different faith groups and businesses.

Replying to an invitation to attend, *English Churchman* wrote:

We are a Christian country and are selling out to multifaith deception. Why give up on the God of the Bible for these idols?

John 14:6 'Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me.'

Islam and Roman Catholicism between them are leading nearly half of the world's population to hell and the Archbishop is fooling around with these games.

It is time to repent and for Dr Rowan Williams to turn to Jesus Christ and to the 39 Articles of the Protestant

Church of England to save him from his heresies. We need a biblical preacher as Archbishop in place of Dr Williams. We need men of the biblical faith of the Protestant Reformers and of Wesley and Whitefield and JC Ryle and CH Spurgeon and Dr M Lloyd-Jones, not this liberal/popish deception.

This is not hate mail. I am very sad of the tragic state of this Islamophile government and call on you to turn to the real God of the Bible in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ who DIED for sinners, a fundamental FACT denied by Islam and other religions.

Romans 3:21-26 But now the righteousness of God without the law is manifested, being witnessed by the law and the prophets; Even the righteousness of God which is by faith of Jesus Christ unto all and upon all them that believe: for there is no difference: For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God; 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.

EVOLUTION REJECTED BY UPC

by John Smart

The Spring Public Meeting of the United Protestant Council had Dr. Monty White speaking on Biblical Creation against Evolution.

In the first address, we were informed of how evolutionary thought had permeated our nation and its effects on the population.

There were statistics shown to tell us the problems our teenagers have in their understanding of the things of eternity, a number even accepting beliefs such as reincarnation, maybe not so surprising when we consider the secularist state education system we have in our land. The 'Big Bang' is the current philosophy believed and taught by many scientists and a number of quotations were given to show the absurdity of the argument. The basic idea is that, NOTHING EXPLODED and therefore we have the universe and everything in it. The idea is to remove God. The Atheist says, "We make the rules now." We can see this of course in the way that marriage, abortion, pornography, the family and to some extent racism are treated by such, compared to what the Bible teaches. The ultimate end of this teaching is: Evolution=Atheism=No Purpose and No Rules.

In his second address, Dr White taught about the way this philosophy has effected the church. We should, of course, as Christians be influencing the unbelievers, it is not them to be influencing us. Sadly we see that this does seem to be happening regarding evolution. The question, however, is, WHO DO WE TRUST? THE WORD OF GOD OR THE WORD OF MEN? The undermining of Genesis 1 means that the Ten Commandments and many other scriptures are also questioned. It has to be the case that Scripture, not science, must be the test of all truth.

The meeting was chaired by David Carson who appealed for support throughout the year as UPC held open air witnesses in London, Manchester and Belfast at "Pride" events. London churches were represented at the meeting.

Dr. Monty White has a website: www.biblicalfoundations.org.uk and also a programme on Genesis TV.

English Churchman Letters to the Editor

Letters for publication should be sent to:
PO Box 60163, London, SW19 2TL
or email: ecletters@aol.com

Confidence in God's Word

Dear Editor,

After reading John M Brentnall's letter in response to Stuart Olyott's article on Martin Luther in the Banner of Truth magazine recently, I thought it would be good to be reminded of the word of God's self-confessing testimony.

In Hebrews 4:12 it describes itself as being "quick and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword". Quick means alive, so we may well ask how or in what way is the word of God alive and powerful?

In Ephesians 6:17 where we have Paul's analogy of a Christian as a soldier, he is to take the "sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God." Notice the Spirit and word here are synonymous, united and indivisible.

Comparing Eph.6:10 with Isaiah 59:16-21 Paul builds his analogy of a Christian as a soldier from the mighty soldier/redeemer figure prophesied coming to Zion. In v21 this soldier/redeemer reveals his covenant made with his seed. "As for me, this is my covenant with them, saith the Lord; My spirit that is upon thee, and my words which I have put in thy mouth, shall not depart out of thy mouth, nor out of the mouth of thy seed, nor out of the mouth of thy seed's seed, saith the Lord, from henceforth and for ever". Notice the union of "my spirit and my words".

What happens when this powerful and sharp word is taught, explained and preached? I think the Westminster Confession of Faith can answer this for us as it is in Chapter 10 under the heading "Of effectual calling": "All those whom God hath predestinated unto life, and those only, He is pleased in His appointed and accepted time to effectually call, by His Word and Spirit, out of that state of sin and death, in which they are by nature, to grace and salvation by Jesus Christ, enlightening their minds spiritually and savingly to understand the things of God; taking away their heart of stone, and giving unto them a heart of flesh; renewing their wills, and by His almighty power determining them to that which is good, and effectually drawing them to Jesus Christ; yet so, as they come most freely, being made willing by His grace."

2 Thess.2:13, 14 says "chosen to salvation through sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth". Here also Spirit and truth or Spirit and word are joined together.

Again hear the testimony of Scripture to its own sufficient power to accomplish all that God the Father is pleased to do. Isaiah 55:11 says "So shall my word be that goeth forth of my mouth; it shall not return unto me void, but it shall accomplish that which I please, and it shall prosper in the thing whereunto I sent it".

May we not lose confidence in the mighty power of the word of God. May we hold onto our Biblical, reformed and credal heritage, for it is priceless.

Yours sincerely,
RICHARD HOLT,
Pembrokeshire

Affirmation 2010

Dear Sir,

May I please offer the following response to the publication of Affirmation 2010 in the English Churchman. I endeavour to make these comments humbly, courteously and in a spirit of brotherly love, with profound respect for the compiler and signatories of the Affirmation.

I share the Affirmation's grave concern over the crumbling of conservative evangelicalism. I also commend many of its sections, particularly those regarding the Lord's Day, six-day creation and penal substitution. Paragraph 10, Reverence in Worship, is superb.

The Affirmation, however, publicly repudiates a major component of 'old paths' Protestantism, one which has been a source of enormous blessing to our nation. I refer to para. 3 which states, "We reject Arminianism in all its forms, especially decisionism and easy-believism". The phrase "in all its forms" must of necessity include evangelical Wesleyan Methodism. The wording of the sentence obscures the fact that there are also Arminians who reject decisionism and easy-believism. The early Methodists would have rejected totally the revivalist, free will teachings of Charles Finney, but this wording in para. 3 could easily be interpreted to mean that Arminianism and Pelagianism are the same thing.

The church of which I am Pastor is established upon Wesleyan Methodist doctrinal standards. I am sure that we are far from perfect, but we uphold the inerrancy of Scripture; we shun all ecumenical involvement; we use the AV; we maintain reverent forms of worship, we engage in vigorous open air preaching, calling on sinners to flee from the wrath to come; we teach total depravity, the bondage of the will and salvation by grace alone, through the merits of Christ's death alone. Yet, despite this, we are categorically dismissed by the statement, "We reject Arminianism in all its forms".

The English Churchman recently reviewed, most favourably, 'Fire from Heaven' by Paul Cook. In this book Mr. Cook comments: "The Wesleyans were Arminian in their theology, but ... their view of conversion and of the word of God was essentially more Biblical than that held by many among us today ... They thought of conversion as God coming to a man with saving power ... There was no talk about 'commitment', no mention of 'decision' ... When confronted by seekers desiring to be saved from their sins, they did not imagine that some simple Gospel ABC was all that was required ... They regarded salvation not primarily as the sinner coming to God ... but as God coming to the sinner ... nor did they believe that God could be made to come ... In practice they took far more seriously than we do the imperative need for the sovereign activity of God within the life of the churches".

In similar vein, may I quote to you what C. H. Spurgeon said of the Wesleyans: "The great body of the Methodists ... contended for man's entire depravity, the necessity of the direct agency of the Holy Spirit, and that the first step in the change proceeds not from the sinner but from God. Does not the Methodist hold as firmly as ever we do that man is saved by the operation of the Holy Ghost and the Holy Ghost only? Are not many of Mr. Wesley's sermons full of that great truth, that the Holy Ghost is necessary to regeneration? ... When we (as Calvinists) say man could not of himself repent or believe, the old Arminian Standards said the same".

Sadly, Affirmation 2010 makes no such gracious recognition. My congregation and I would regard it a great privilege for any of the signatories of the Affirmation to minister in our pulpit. All that we ask is that we too be regarded as part of the old paths conservative evangelicalism which has so greatly exalted our nation in times past, and which, by God's grace, may yet do so again.

Yours sincerely,
PASTOR PETER SIMPSON,
Penn Free Methodist Church.

Environmentalism

Dear Sir,

My guess is that many of your readers will feel that Dr Napier's article, "Why Christians Must Oppose Environmentalism" is conspiracy theory gone mad. For myself, it solidly confirms much of the material I have seen in the last fifteen years or so. I think Dr Napier's views should be given serious consideration.

I have believed for some time that 'green' environmentalism has a hidden agenda. In around 1967 a book was published in the US called, "The Report from Iron Mountain." Whether true or a hoax, it seems to lay out, forty years in advance, the very government activities we are now witnessing. The opening sections discuss the functions of war, listing such things as population control, employment for ne'er-do-wells, the destruction of national production as an economic fly-wheel, the rallying point for national identity, and on and on. Next the question is asked, How can these functions be fulfilled in a peaceful world? The answer? Manufactured global enemies!

I quote from the book,

"... an effective political substitute for war would require "alternative enemies," some of which might seem ... far fetched.

"It may be for instance, that gross pollution of the environment can eventually replace the possibility of mass destruction by nuclear weapons as the principal apparent threat to the survival of the species. Poisoning of the air, and of the principal sources of food and water supply, is already well advanced, and at first glance would seem promising in this respect ..."

"It is true that the rate of pollution could be increased selectively for this purpose ..."

"However unlikely some of the possible alternate enemies we have mentioned may seem, we must emphasize that one must be found, of credible quality and magnitude ..."

"It is more probable, in our judgement, that such a threat will have to be invented, rather than developed from unknown conditions."

There was a furore when the book was first published, the UK government claiming that it was a hoax. I reserve judgement, but modern political and social development so mirror the ideas in the book that I am deeply suspicious. (*Ed: Parallel to this is the way that it is generally accepted today that Huxley's extraordinary "Brave New World" and Orwell's "1984" visions of the future have pretty well come to pass, albeit a few decades after 1984.*)

As far as Dr Napier's claims about US and Canadian oil reserves are concerned, again, I believe he is right.

Lindsey Williams is a Baptist preacher who was given the post of 'padre' among oil workers in Alaska. His book "The Energy Non-Crisis" gives details of discoveries of massive oil finds in Alaska. The US government forced the oil company to cap the wells and seal the records. At the time this was happening, Americans were paying through the nose for oil from elsewhere. Just one quote from Mr Williams,

"After only one week on the North Slope of Alaska, Senator Chance had said to me, 'Almost everything said to me [about the energy crisis] by those briefers from Washington DC was a lie.'"

The nations of the world are 'going south'. I thank God I am going north. (Psalm 76:6)

"Why do the heathen rage, and the people imagine a vain thing? The Kings of the earth set themselves, and the rulers take counsel together, against the LORD, and against his anointed, saying,

Let us break their bands asunder, and cast away their cords from us.

He that sitteth in the heavens shall laugh: the Lord shall have them in derision

Then shall he speak unto them in his wrath, and vex them in his sore displeasure.

Yet have I set my king upon my holy hill of Zion." (Psalm 2:1-6)

Yours in Christ,
COLIN TYLER
Birmingham

Charles Darwin

Dear Sir,

Darwin came to believe in the Lord Jesus Christ about a year before he died.

Lady Hope, wife of Admiral Sir James Hope, visited him and he invited her to preach in his summer house about "Jesus and His salvation".

Mr AH Nicholls quoted a nurse who said that Darwin asked her to read the New Testament to him. Greatly moved he said, "How I wish I had not expressed my theory of evolution as I have done. They have made a religion of it,"

Yours sincerely,
DAPHNE ELWIN
Spaxton

Hebrew Genealogies

Dear Sir,

The claim of Wright that "The Bible directly tells us that Adam was created approximately 2000 years before Abraham," and that "the name of Cainan" in Luke 3:36 "does not alter the" idea "that Salah was born 35 years after ... Arphaxad" (EC 7786), is not correct. Hebrew genealogies may be selective for various reasons. E.g., Wright also refers to the genealogy of "Matthew 1."

Yet this genealogy contains many gaps. At Matt. 1:5 between Rahab from the Conquest period (Joshua 2:1,3; 6: 17,23,25) and Jesse, the father of David, the period of the judges spans several hundred years, so that e.g., from Boaz and Ruth are missing about 10 bastardy generations (Deut. 23:2-6). Or between "Joram" and "Ozias"/"Uzziah" (Matt. 1:8), we know of three extra generations since II Kgs 8-15 and II Chron. 21-26 tells us of: (1) Joram/Jehoram, (2) Ahaziah, (3) Jehoash/Joash, (4) Amaziah, and (5) Ozias/Azariah/Uzziah. But these were stylistic selections of "fourteen generations" (Matt. 1:17). Gaps in Hebrew genealogies can be thousands of years, e.g., "Jesus Christ, the son of David, the son of Abraham" (Matt. 1:1) makes selections of about 1,000 years back to David, and then about 1,000 years back to Abraham.

The citation of Cainan in Luke 3:36, also found in the Septuagint, most naturally requires the conclusion that the genealogies of Gen. 5 & 11 are incomplete to an unspecified extent; since when the Hebrew says x begot y, y might mean x's grandson or many times great grandson; and the period of years x is said to live after begetting y, are really the period of years x lived after begetting the first "son" between x and y, but this first "son" is known by the name of his and x's famous progeny, y, rather than his own name. Thus e.g., x might be long dead before his descendant y (begat through many intermediate "sons") further begets.

Ps. 105:8 teaches that the "covenant" of grace had been "commanded to a thousand generations" i.e., in about 1,000 B.C., there had to have been "a thousand generations" who had received the covenant of grace, of which "Abraham," "Isaac," and "Jacob" are three generations (Ps. 105:9,10); so that if e.g., each of them begat on average between the ages of 35 like Arphaxad (Gen. 11:10) or 70 like Cainan (Gen. 5:10), then Adam would date to somewhere between about 35,000 B.C. to 70,000 B.C. .

Yours faithfully,
GAVIN MCGRATH.
Sydney, Australia.

Ed: We don't like to argue with our letter writers but our opinion is that the missing generation of some genealogies does not support Mr McGrath's theory that the actual dates of births refer to people from different generations. It is a Hebraism to call someone the son of their grandfather or even a son of Abraham. We do not believe that Hebrew expression extends to saying that the grandfather begat the grandson when he was so many years old or indeed that when Abraham was a certain age he begat John Calvin or anyone else.

In paragraph 4 we think that the "commandment to thousands" does not prove such an early date for Adam but rather echoes the words in the 10 Commandments in Exodus 20:6 that while the iniquity of fathers may be visited to the third and fourth generation, the mercy of God is unto

thousands, "of them that love me, and keep my commandments".

European Union, voting and Christians

Dear EC,
What a shame that the European Union seems to have slipped off the political agenda. At the forthcoming general election it is clearly not going to be discussed much. I think many politicians like it that way, too.

Yet the E.U. continues to affect every aspect of our lives. It controls so much of what happens in the U.K. politically, economically and socially. In areas such as the European Constitution (a.k.a. the Lisbon Treaty in all but name) we were promised a referendum, but not given one. Once again, those with the power probably like it like that.

So when the general election is announced, I suggest all Christians make the E.U. an issue. We should ask difficult questions of would-be M.P.s. It is up to ordinary voters to lead the fight back against federalism. It's a matter of democracy.

Yours faithfully,
GRAEME KEMP
Shropshire

Opinions expressed in the correspondence columns are not necessarily those of The English Churchman. We welcome letters of less than 400 words and reserve the right to abbreviate letters. Please state clearly whether letters addressed to the editor are for publication or not.

Civil Unrest Affecting Missionaries in Bangladesh



Chittagong Hill Tracts

A Gospel for Asia leader in Bangladesh narrowly escaped with his life when he was caught up in a violent clash between two warring ethnic groups. The leader was picking his children up from school on February 24 when he was caught up in one of the riots. He was able to return home unharmed, but he is asking for prayer for the country.

The ethnic tensions reignited February 23, resulting in at least 15 deaths and dozens of homes being burned to the ground in Chittagong Hill Tracts in southeastern Bangladesh.

Thankfully, police are doing all they can to protect the missionaries working in the area of the most intense clashes.

News reports indicate that the rioters are angry and blaming their government for failing to implement a 1997 peace accord that divided the lands between the warring tribal groups. There are 12 major ethnic minority groups in this part of Bangladesh, which shares a border with Myanmar (Burma). The flow of Burmese refugees into Bangladesh has also caused problems in the area.

The tense situation prevents the missionaries from travelling freely to share the Gospel and meet with believers. It also makes it difficult for believers to travel to church for worship services. In some instances, government-imposed curfews force people to stay in their homes for extended periods, too.

Missionaries and believers who live in that area are also providing food and housing for those who lost their homes. They are committed to helping them rebuild once it is safe. ANS

Moral Challenges to David Cameron MP

For your encouragement, we received this from the former Mayor of Coleraine, Cllr David Barbour currently a member of the UUP and also of Portrush Baptist Church:

To David Cameron

Rt Hon Sir,
You are on dangerous ground if you are seeking to do a double act by pretending that teaching in schools that gay marriage and child adoption is equivalent to traditional and may I say the biologically and historically and theologically natural state of marriage.

Just do your assumed projections and think on the Roman Catholics, the Muslims, the various Indian and Chinese communities, the Protestant churches and many secular communities who mostly support the historical and natural model of marriage and child rearing. I do not believe in mistreating people who hold another view to me but I must have the liberty to oppose and reject a way of life that I find totally unacceptable and which I consider harmful to the benefit of mankind. You are an academic and I am sure your party has members of outstanding ability who could formulate policies on matters that present moral and important questions such as abortion, euthanasia, promiscuity, age for legal sexual activity, same sex claims to equal conditions for traditional couples, the meaning of the family, latter days of living, religious education, national service, citizenship, nationality security etc. Your recent statement was on supporting the family you need to say what you mean by this. I think that if you are trying to engage in what David Trimble once said was constructive ambiguity your party will end up in a worse state than before. If you believe in a broad church you must also try to create the opportunity for majorities to vote for you as well as minorities. John Major talked of getting back to basics but unfortunately did not get there, people see through shallow profession and weathercock politics. Mrs Currie soon exposed that one.

When it comes to the privacy of the polling booth and personal conscience kicks in, the ordinary traditional family person will reject the glossy appeal to pressure groups that arrogantly strut the national stage undermining values that served the nation for centuries. If a moral backlash is provoked because of liberal groups who challenge the rights of traditionalists to decide how they want to live their lives, rear and educate their children, and serve their nation, the political party who has prevaricated on sensible responses will pay the price. You are running out of steam because you are not clear on what you mean and people like me think that you are taking a broad sweep of elements that is untenable and incompatible. All things to all men never works. The Ladodicean church of Revelation ch 3 was spued out of the mouth of God because it was lukewarm. I think you also have a spiritual duty of care to the nation. For centuries we were a God fearing nation but today it is more popular with the media to nurture scepticism and encourage irreverence. Having seen your photograph physically running, I ask the question, will you consider the statement of the Apostle Paul, who hoped that in his service of Christ he had not run in vain, neither laboured in vain. Philippians 2 v 16. Whilst it is no longer popular in Britain to 'Do God' as Tony Blair's aid remarked, either one believes the nation needs spiritual leadership or not. If you believe in a living God then you must consider your service to Him as well as to modern Britain. Darkness is the absence



of Light, Darkness is not a measurable substance on its own, what is measured is the amount of light. Britain needs a God-fearing conscience again based on the core teaching of Christ. But then we need talented people who are willing to rebut the humanist atheist a-moral press and risk their reputations with the chattering classes for the good of the nation. It really depends on who you think will write your history and what you want to be written.

Many Regards
COUNCILLOR DAVID BARBOUR
Coleraine Borough Council
Northern Ireland

Another friend wrote to his Conservative candidate as follows:

David Cameron claims to support the traditional family - but his words and actions betray his hypocrisy.

For example, in July 2009 he apologised to homosexuals for Section 28. More recently he gave an interview to Johann Hari of Attitude where he attacks the Archbishop of Canterbury over the Church of England's attitudes to homosexuality.

Might I remind you that at her Coronation, Her Majesty the Queen gave an oath to uphold the Protestant Reformed Faith which is defined in the Thirty-nine Articles, and that she is the Supreme Governor of the Church of England. Her government ought to assist her in this - and not undermine her - as successive governments have done.

Article 6 states:

"VI. Of the sufficiency of the Holy Scriptures for salvation.

Holy Scripture containeth all things necessary to salvation: so that whatsoever is not read therein, nor may be proved thereby, is not to be required of any man, that it should be believed as an article of the faith, or be thought requisite as necessary to salvation"

One of the things that Holy Scripture teaches is that marriage is approved by God, and that it is between one man and one woman:

Genesis 2:24 Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife: and they shall be one flesh.

Hebrews 13:4 Marriage is honourable in all, and the bed undefiled: but whoremongers and adulterers God will judge.

Holy Scripture teaches that homosexuality is an abomination to God, and in no way acceptable to him.

Leviticus 18:22 Thou shalt not lie with mankind, as with womankind: it is abomination.

The New Testament teaches that homosexuality is "vile affection", "unseemly" and "unnatural":

Romans 1:24 Wherefore God also gave them up to uncleanness through the lusts of their own hearts, to dishonour their own bodies

between themselves:

Romans 1:25 Who changed the truth of God into a lie, and worshipped and served the creature more than the Creator, who is blessed for ever. Amen.

Romans 1:26 For this cause God gave them up unto vile affections: for even their women did change the natural use into that which is against nature:

Romans 1:27 And likewise also the men, leaving the natural use of the woman, burned in their lust one toward another; men with men working that which is unseemly, and receiving in themselves that recompence of their error which was meet.

However, as with other sinners, homosexuals who repent of their wickedness may obtain salvation ("abusers of themselves" below refers to homosexuals):

1 Corinthians 6:9 Know ye not that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God? Be not deceived: neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor abusers of themselves with mankind,

1 Corinthians 6:10 Nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners, shall inherit the kingdom of God.

1 Corinthians 6:11 And such were some of you: but ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God.

We are further very unhappy at the way in which David Cameron is imposing candidates on the constituencies, and making it appear as if the constituency has selected the candidate. This method results in suitable candidates, such as married men holding traditional Christian views, not being selected.

To sum up, while we have supported suitable Conservative candidates in the past, we will not be supporting the Conservative Party as long as it upholds such immoral policies.

We agree that Britain needs change, but this change is a return to biblical values. Only then will the massive reversal of the country's morality and fortunes be reversed. Only then will it again receive the blessing of the Almighty, true and living God.

Yours sincerely,

PAUL MANSBACHER

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Top Atheist Scientist Concedes That Intelligent Design Asks Valid Questions

Peter Atkins, outspoken atheist and Professor of Chemistry at Oxford University, has admitted that the theory of 'Intelligent Design' asks valid and interesting questions. Atkins made the comments during a debate on Premier Radio's programme, 'Unbelievable', hosted by Justin Brierley. The broadcast came in advance of a screening of controversial Intelligent Design film, 'Expelled: No Intelligence Allowed'. The scientist and fierce critic of religion made the remarks during a debate with US intelligent Design theorist Stephen C Meyer, co-founder of the Discovery Institute. Atkins said, "There is one good thing about Intelligent Design, so I will make that concession to you Stephen. You do ask interesting questions, for example 'how does the eye develop?' and 'how does information in the cell emerge?' These are valid questions, in my view." The theory of Intelligent Design asserts that the Theory of Evolution is flawed and that the complexity of DNA can only be explained in terms of Divine Intelligence.

The film 'Expelled', which they were debating, claims that freedom of thought is at risk within the scientific community as those who question Darwinism are being 'expelled' from their jobs. However, Atkins was quick to dismiss any scientific merits of Intelligent Design. "I don't think Intelligent Design can ever count as scientific inquiry, there's no science involved at all." He went on to describe the theory as, "a straw man dressed up in a cheap tuxedo." Meyers rebutted Atkins' comments, saying that he was always taught to consider both sides of the argument. "One of my tutors at Cambridge used to say, 'beware the sound of one hand clapping,'



if there's an argument on one side of a question, then there is bound to be one on the other. The debate about Intelligent Design and Darwinism is not a debate about the facts, both sides agree about the facts. The question is how to interpret the facts and what we will allow as explanations of these facts. The general public and science students are better served when both those points of views are openly discussed, and that's the central message of 'Expelled'. The heated debate saw accusations fly in both directions. Atkins dismissed Meyer's belief in Intelligent Design as "intellectually lazy". When Meyer responded by asking the question, "why isn't it also intellectually lazy to just assume that some materialistic process was responsible, whatever the evidence?" Atkins struggled to answer the question, before stating that "the simplest explanations are sufficient unless they can be shown to be deficient".

Iran Arrests Pastor and Shuts Church

Iranian authorities recently arrested a "low-keyed" evangelical pastor and shut down his church, a news agency specializing in Iranian Christians reported.

The Rev. Wilson Issavi of the Assyrian Evangelical Church in Kermanshah, a remote city in western Iran, was arrested by security agents and taken to an unknown location on Feb. 2, the Farsi Christian News Network reported Monday. The pastor was hauled away while visiting an old friend's house in the central city of Isfahan. The couple who owned the house as well as another guest were also arrested, but the wife of the host has been released. Issavi's family and friends have not been able to find information about his whereabouts.

Though Issavi's arrest was sudden and unannounced, there were warning signs since January that Iranian authorities were monitoring the long-time pastor. Last month, security agents in plain clothes raided Issavi's home and then shut down his church. Authorities also had ordered the pastor not to reopen his church. FCNN said it immediately found out about the house raid and closure of the church, but did not publicize it at the request of Issavi. The "meek, humble" and "unassuming" Iranian pastor was afraid that authorities would crack down on his church even more if news got out about the raid and the order to shut down. He wanted to quietly negotiate with local authorities to reach a compromise.

A FCNN news correspondent in Iran said Issavi lived respecting the law of the country despite its many restrictions and endured harassment in order "not to give any excuse to the authorities to quench the dwindling lights of this church" and to stop the small Christian community in the area from worshipping. The Kermanshah church is one of the few places in Iran where Christians worship openly. Most Christians in Iran worship in house churches or in buildings without the government's permission and knowledge.

Several months ago, Iranian authorities also ordered the country's largest church that gives public services to stop its Friday worship gatherings or risk being shut down completely. Leaders of the Assemblies of God Church in Iran had resisted pressure to stop the Friday gatherings, but finally relented in October. The church now only holds Sunday services. Earlier, in March 2009, the Assyrian Pentecostal Church in Tehran shut down after receiving threats from the government. Iranian Christians increasingly fear that the government is beginning a new campaign against public Christian worship gatherings.

An Iranian human rights organization strongly protested the arrest of Pastor Issavi. The group demands that the Iranian government immediately release the pastor who remains detained without any legal proceedings. Iran's constitution states that Islam is the official state religion and provides that Christians, Jews, and Zoroastrians are recognized as "protected" religious minorities. Despite the protected status, in practice non-Shi'a Muslims face discrimination and the government severely restricts freedom of religion, according to the U.S. Department of State's 2009 International Religious Freedom Report. Non-Muslims are estimated to account for 2 percent of the population.

CONGREGATIONS LARGER THAN POLITICAL PARTIES COMBINED

Peter Kerridge, Chief Executive at Premier Christian Media Group, has spoken out on political apathy in Britain, after news that more people in Britain attend church than belong to a political party. A report by Christian Research states that the average church attendance on Sunday is almost double that of the membership of the country's three main political parties combined. "As a country we can no longer remain apathetic about politics. Individuals have to vote if they want to help shape the future. There are almost a million people attending services on Sunday and under 500,000 members of political parties. If we want Christian growth and change in this country then we need to mobilise the Christian vote." Christian Research found that approximately 978,000 people attend church on a weekly basis, with data from Parliament showing that the total membership of the three main parties is under 500,000. "This research shows us that people may have lost faith in politics, but they haven't lost faith in God," said Peter Kerridge. Premier Christian Media have recently launched a campaign called 'Promise to Vote'. The campaign asks Christians to sign a declaration at www.promisetovote.com stating their intention to vote. The campaign has received support from MPs and leaders across the Church.

Ed: This only proves our point in *Canterbury Tales* 7786 about the odd ways that people use church statistics.

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Dangerous Areas

by Peter Murcott

3: Pride

Pride is humanity's perennial problem. It is –

Pernicious in that it can readily masquerade as a virtue. Pride can wear humility's cloak, as Charles Dickens brilliantly portrayed in the ever so 'umble Uriah Heep. It is –

Rebellious as has been demonstrated by the ongoing challenges to the settled Word of

God. Pride is –

Irrational — though you will never persuade a proud man of this. For instance, how can anyone reasonably suppose that mortal man, whose earthly span is but a shadow, can set himself up intellectually, let alone physically, against Almighty God? Pride is –

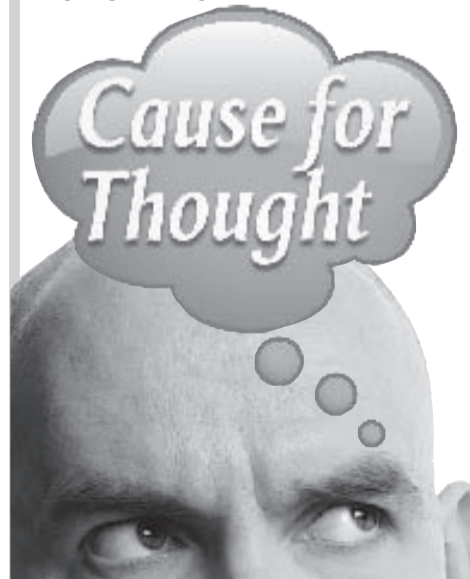
Devilish — since it originated with Satan who not only sought to be greater than God, but who knows well how to exploit the fatal flaw in every human heart. In fact, those who are full of themselves are completely –

Empty — You might compare pride to a tower without a staircase. Who, in his right mind, would want to climb to the top by the bare stonework?

Proverbs 29:23 says: 'A man's pride shall bring him low; but honour shall uphold the humble in spirit.'

So what's to be done? If you remove the 'p' and 'e' from pride, you get 'rid'. There's the answer to pride: get rid of it!

Read Matthew 11:28-30, noting especially verse 29



THE
CHRISTIAN
INSTITUTE

News in Brief

FROM THE
CHRISTIAN INSTITUTE

- Senior church leaders and politicians fear that clergy might be taken to court if they refuse to allow homosexual civil partnership registrations to take place in church.
- Twelve-year-old boys in Switzerland will soon be able to buy packets of extra small condoms, and the controversial contraceptives may soon be on their way to the UK.
- Lord Carey, the former Archbishop of Canterbury, has condemned Britain's marginalisation of Christianity and has called on believers to stand up for their faith.
- Children as young as five will be added to compulsory 'hate registers' for using playground insults under new plans by Government ministers.
- The "startling" claim last week that school skirts may break equality rules shows that the 'loony Left' policies of the 1980s have been embedded at the powerful new Equality Commission, a columnist has warned. (*Ed: It is time to scrap the Equality Commission.*)
- A Coronation Street (a UK soap opera) character known as a 'born-again Christian' is set to have an on-screen lesbian kiss next month with a friend from her Bible study group.
- Children are being harmed by exposure to sexual and violent images in the media and parents have limited opportunities to prevent it, a Home Office commissioned report has said. (*Ed: Ironically the Government itself encourages immorality through its secular sex education policy.*)
- Pro-lifers have voiced their concern over new assisted suicide guidelines which say prosecutions are unlikely if the act was "motivated by compassion".
- The Conservative Party vowed that it would halt the Government's controversial plans to clamp down on home-schooling families.
- The Government's controversial sex education plans were forced through the Commons this week, but critics slammed a faith schools amendment as an "incoherent muddle".
- Homosexual couples should be able to have civil partnership ceremonies in churches, a group of liberal bishops and academics have said in a letter to *The Times*. (*Ed: And the next week this abomination was voted through late one night in the House of Lords*)
- Prayer is helping police in Devon and Cornwall to tackle crime, a police Inspector with the force has said. (*Ed: We don't mean to be cynical but we seriously wonder how long he will now keep his job.*)
- The UN has named Scotland as the drug crime capital of the world.

For more details of these and other news items go to:
www.christian.org.uk

Youth Ministry

by a correspondent

I was very surprised to read the letter on The Notes and Comments page of the issue 7785. The article that I supplied had nothing whatever to do with home schooling. The item clearly stated that 'modern youth ministry is (also) inherently destructive in its impact, it divides the church by creating generational division and multiple cultures instead of a unified body'. This is clearly affecting many churches here in the UK and many of us need confronting with what is going on. Here in Worthing there are evangelical Anglican churches where they now have two separate styles of services. One service is a reverent worship service to which the majority of the congregation are, to put it delicately, no longer teenagers. The other service is happy clappy style, entertainment orientated, complete with popband etc. sometimes referred to as 'contemporary' worship. Here 'worship time' is often limited to a period of singing that involves swaying to the music, dancing and hand waving, very reminiscent of scenes of pop concerts on television. This is where the division is at its most obvious, how many people will for example be going to both services? And surely the most extreme result, as the article pointed out, is that 'churches are contributing to the break up of the family'. This can happen where teen age children no longer wish to attend a service with their parents unless it is 'contemporary'. Other results are where otherwise spiritually minded parents sacrifice their own beliefs regarding spiritual worship in their desperation to see their children coming to faith, when the youngster's only interest, due to peer pressure, is in the pop world, so they are allowed or in some cases encouraged to attend, albeit against their better judgement.

One of the growing needs is for Christians today to have a clear understanding of 'Biblical' worship. The Bible clearly tells us that we must worship God in 'spirit and in truth' (John 4:23-24) meaning that it must be genuine and come from our hearts and that it cannot be contrived or just for show ie not manipulated by the rhythm or beat of music or the excitement generated in the service. The other Biblical criteria is that worship must be 'with reverence and godly fear' (Hebrews 12:29). This I believe we can only do adequately when we realise the holiness, majesty and glory of the almighty sovereign God and his hatred of our sin, 'who is "of purer eyes than to behold evil"' (Habakkuk 1:13). We also need to understand that even our smallest sin needed the sacrifice of his sinless and only son to rescue us from Hell and that this was only made possible by His grace and the incomprehensible love that he has for the lost, rebellious sinners that we are whatever our age. It is interesting that throughout the Bible, when men meet God and get a glimpse of Him in His glory, majesty and holiness and realise their sinfulness, they fall on their faces before Him. I am not advocating this for our services but when I realise who God is and what I am apart from His grace, and why He should ever want me for his child, I understand why they reacted in that way. What we need in our churches is to gain that glimpse of Him as he really is and a realisation of what he has done for us, and that will bring out true worship, and reverent worship from our hearts. Is that what 'contemporary' worship really does for us? I really don't think so. Surely however it does show the urgent need for churches to start teaching children, young people and older people too, the seriousness of sin, the magnitude of the only sacrifice made that could possibly deal with it, and then how we should worship the one who led us to see our own need and granted us salvation. Age doesn't really come into it, does it. True worship won't divide the generations it will unite us.

Canterbury Tales

Highlights and Lowlights from the Anglican Communion

Abominations

In better days sodomites were prosecuted for their crimes. Today they are applauded. What is shocking is not so much that the world applauds, but that the Church of England joins in and often takes a lead.

One can hardly imagine how the February 2010 General Synod of the Church of England could have reached the abominable conclusion that men sodomised by Church of England clergymen or men sodomising clergymen (or the female version of this perversion) should be eligible for full pension rights. A church that condones a Government calling sodomy "Civil" has clearly lost its way and is under God's wrath.

While it is our view that the Church of England is a false church from which the Bible commands us to come out from and be separate, there are some within the Church who are prepared to stay on the understanding that they are protesters against such abominations that are wreaking desolation within the Church. One such voice in the wilderness is Church Society which exists to uphold biblical teaching and to promote and defend the character of the Church of England as a reformed and national Church.

Church Society has recently issued the following statement:

Religious Ceremonies for Civil Partnerships

Earlier this week parliament voted to lift a ban on

religious ceremonies being conducted for civil partnerships.

Because of other legislation in recent years, purporting to be about equality, this latest change will create an even more difficult environment for Christians. Clergy of the established Church will be under particular pressure to conduct services which they in conscience believe to be wrong. They may face the threat of legal action if they insist on following their conscience. Parliament has increasingly sought to interfere in religious affairs.

We remain convinced that the recognition of Civil Partnerships by the state was a grave mistake and one which our nation will come to regret. It is one of a number of policies that have undermined families. Families are the fundamental building block of society. The collapse of families and family life is having terrible consequences for individuals, particularly children, and will erode society further. In this, as in other areas, we are witnessing political leaders who are abandoning the wisdom of God in preference for the folly of man.

For many Christians, the anti-Christian nature of recent legislation, supported by all the main political parties, creates a particular problem. The mainstream parties have all abandoned the Christian moral tradition and the Biblical foundations of our legal and education systems. Christians will not want to vote for political parties who are antagonistic to their beliefs and who are acting to prevent Christians living in accordance with their faith.

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English Churchman & St. James's Chronicle

ENGLISH CHURCHMAN 1843  ST. JAMES'S CHRONICLE 1761

Issue No. 7788

Fridays, 12th & 19th March 2010

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Annual Subscription: UK £17.50 including postage

Europe £35, Overseas: £32 including postage by surface mail



The state we are in

All great empires and civilisations end in decay and death. It is a process that is not always visible to those whose lives take place during the period of decline. They do not necessarily sense what is happening, but the seeds of decadence are germinating, and will certainly end in the overthrow of all the achievements and the grandeur that successive generations have attained. We suppose that those who lived at the height of the civilisation and splendour that was displayed in the Greek and Roman Empires never imagined that it would all one day pass away, and crumble into ruin. But for those who had eyes to see it, the seeds of death and destruction were already sown, were germinating, and would in time bring destruction and ruin in their wake.

What were those seeds? They were hubris and concupiscence, man's overweening pride in his achievements, which led him to overreach himself, and to presume upon what he can do; and his insatiable appetite for self-indulgence and carnal pleasure. These are the things that humble man, and bring him down, and reduce all his grand achievements and culture ultimately to the dust of death. We would do well to remind ourselves of this at the present time, though nobody much seems to be warning of the danger.

The Christian religion has much to say about hubris, and about man's pride and folly. The season of Lent is a time particularly when we are called upon to consider these things, to rein in our appetites, to humble ourselves before God, to repent of our evil ways, listen to the Word of God, and get things in their proper proportion. It is a time when we should be serious and give to the things of God the priority that they deserve.

The Collect for Lent is particularly

helpful in this respect. It states that the Lord does not hate anything that he has made. He has made us with natural appetites. These are not wicked or evil in themselves. It is only concupiscence, that is, an inordinate desire, that is wicked and evil, and makes us overreach ourselves. The Scriptures chosen for Ash Wednesday call for repentance, which means literally a change of mind.

Man in his natural condition is not his true self, as God made and intended him to be. He is beside himself. He needs to turn to God and ask for a new mind and heart. "Create in me a clean heart, O God; and renew a right spirit within me" (Psalm 51:10). He needs to stop in his tracks, and take a good, calm, objective look at himself. He needs to fast, that is, abstain from over-indulgence of the appetites. All these things are very necessary, if we are to get a proper perspective on life and see things in proportion.

No message could be more relevant and necessary to our condition today. All the signs of decadence and decay are visible in our society – over-indulgence of the appetites of the body, the pursuit of leisure for its own sake, the love of sloth and ease, and in particular the universal exploitation of sexuality. A particularly evil manifestation of this is the targeting of children. A journalist writing recently about this stated, "You can't preserve a child's innocence by retreating from the world... there is no escape from the culture... it is the same wherever you go." Such is the condition to which Western civilisation has been reduced. It is precisely the state to which Roman civilisation had been reduced in the last stages of its decay. It is the nemesis of sin, and, as Paul puts it in Romans 1, the revelation of the righteous wrath of God against such wickedness, for reason, which is "the candle of the Lord in the soul of man", has lost its power of judgement.

Should England be a Catholic country again?

The *Spectator* magazine organised a debate on the subject "England should become a Catholic Country again" on 2nd March 2010. The speakers for the motion, Cardinal Cormac Murphy O'Connor, Piers Paul Reid and Rev Dom Antony Sutch, were all strong Roman Catholics who made their case for Roman Catholicism being the dominant church while being inclusive of other churches to give a united Christian witness to our secular society. The speakers against the motion were Lord Harries, former Anglican Bishop of Oxford, Matthew Parris, a journalist with *The Times* and Stephen Pound, a Labour MP and a Roman Catholic.

Cardinal O'Connor presented the view that the Reformation was a loss to the country causing a "millennium of Christian history" to become alien territory to the church. He denied the view that the clergy before the Reformation were largely corrupt and that the only good priests were the Lollards, although he did say that the translation of the Bible into English was a good thing. He did not mention the fierce opposition to the translation of the Bible into English by the Catholic Church at the time.

Cardinal O'Connor presented a benign view of a Catholic dominated England in which the Church of England is united with the "Universal church" (i.e. Rome) in a "shared endeavour" to speak to our secular society and ensure that "the forces of darkness" will not prevail as a united church brings "good news" to all.

The second speaker for the motion, Piers Paul Read, a Catholic writer, spoke strongly on Catholic doctrine as bringing the means of salvation through the sacraments, confession and the Eucharist. He went on to speak on family and moral issues. He said that the permissive society has made an institutional attack on the family by promoting sex outside of marriage and same sex marriages. He then accused Protestant churches, in particular the Church of England, of failing to stand for the biblical teaching that heterosexual marriage is the only sexual union sanctioned by God. I have to say that although I disagree with Catholic doctrine on salvation, on this issue he spoke the truth and this points to one reason why the Roman Catholic Church is likely to reach a stronger position than the Church of England in this country.

The third speaker for the motion, Rev Dom Antony Sutch, gave a rather rambling talk on how faith is necessary for all religions and that we should all be one. When all Christians agree we can have an influence in society. Since all the speakers for the debate were convinced Catholics it was not surprising that they took the line that they did. The real scandal of the debate was that not one of the opposition speakers was able to give a reason either from history or faith for not being a Catholic country.

By far the most abject and pathetic speech of the evening came from the first speaker opposing the motion, Lord Harries, former Bishop of Oxford. He began by expressing his huge admiration for the Roman Catholic Church, its saints and the Jesuits and its absorbing of Greek Aristotelian thought. His defence of the position of the Church of England was to point to how it had "reacted creatively to social developments," which he said the Catholic Church had failed to do. Examples of this were how the Church of England had accepted Darwinism and Evolution into its teaching and absorbed Higher Critical Theology from Germany. Higher Critical Theology means denying the Bible as the Word of God, questioning God in creation, the miraculous interventions of God in the Old Testament, the virgin birth of Jesus, His miracles, sinless life and death as a sacrifice for the sins of the world, His resurrection and the promise of His return in power and glory to judge the world in righteousness. In other words the achievement of the Church of England according to Lord Harries is to abandon the Bible as the Word of God and make it up as they go along. His speech did not contain a word about God or Jesus and later in the discussion time he said that you could not say that a baby in the womb has life from the moment of conception. In many ways he exemplifies the reason for the decline of the

Church of England – its bishops generally let us know what they do not believe about Christianity rather than what they do believe.

The best speech by far of the evening came from the second speaker opposing the motion, Matthew Parris. He announced that he was an atheist and in the course of his speech said that he did not believe that Jesus was the Son of God. However he was the only speaker to bring to light the vast difference between Jesus as revealed in the New Testament and the Jesus of the Catholic Church. In fact as an atheist he was the only speaker to say much about Jesus at all. He said how Jesus was an embarrassment to the Catholic Church. He said how Jesus would have set his face against the ritual, robes, finery and pope-mobiles of the Catholic Church and its hierarchy of Bishops, Cardinals and Popes. He said how Jesus had been pushed to the margins of the church and how the clergy had sought to keep the record of his life from the laity and clothed the Virgin Mary with powers they had created and which are entirely absent from the Gospels. He denied that Catholic Church in power had a record of tolerance towards others. Pity he was speaking as an atheist.

The final speech came from Stephen Pound, a Labour MP who is also a Catholic. He said that he did not want to see England as a solely Catholic country, and that Catholics have many things in common with Anglicans. He agreed with the speakers for the motion that Roman Catholic teaching makes for a better way of life.

The evening was then thrown open to the audience to make points. The first speaker made the best point of the evening by saying that the whole thing was a set up. On the side of proposing the motion were three convinced Roman Catholics. On the side opposing there was no one able to give the historic reasons for biblical Protestant Christianity and opposition to the Church of Rome. In fact only one of them, the atheist Matthew Parris, gave any critical view of Roman Catholicism. The Reformation view has been blotted out. This in fact is what is happening in our media in general.

At the end of the discussion I was able to get in a brief comment that the church needs to preach the Gospel of salvation through faith in Christ alone and how the Roman Catholic Church teaches error in such areas as the Mass transubstantiation, the role of the Pope, the status of the Virgin Mary and life after death / purgatory. It was good to find that one of our church members, Tony Beasley, had been standing outside the meeting handing out leaflets making this point to people as they left the hall where the debate took place.

Perhaps the most serious issue of this evening was the way in which the real issues of difference in theology are being air brushed out of the debate over the place of Rome and how the media will not give a place to those who stand for the truth of the Gospel and against the traditions of Rome.

With the Pope coming to England in 2010 and the Church of England in disarray there is no doubt that the push for Catholic dominance will continue. Bible believing Christians are being pushed to the margins and face discrimination and suppression when they try to get their view across in the public domain. In my view the likely end result is that some kind of EU wide registration of churches will be brought in with the only option being between Roman Catholic and liberal ecumenical Protestant churches, the unity of Babylon (see Revelation 17). In this case the true church will have to go underground. But the Lord Jesus will have the last word and He will build His church and the gates of hell will not prevail against it.

Tony Pearce
Light for the Last Days

enquiries@lightforthelastdays.co.uk

Ed: None of this surprises us. On receipt of an invitation to this debate we replied to the Spectator, expressing our disapproval at the utter inadequacy of those chosen to speak against Popery. In our opinion the Spectator may be somewhat outspoken politically but is devoid of spiritual light, ie an understanding of the Gospel which is Protestant.

THE CHRISTIAN YEAR

THE GOSPELS

Lent 5 & The Sunday next before Easter

Some brief reflections: by Bishop Barry Shucksmith

The fifth Sunday in Lent is often referred to as Passion Sunday. 'We enter, as it were, the last lap of our Lenten pilgrimage, with Calvary now at last in view,' is the way in which one writer expresses it.

The royal banners forward go,
The Cross shines forth in mystic glow
Where He in flesh, our flesh who made,
Our sentence bore, our ransom paid.

The Epistle is Hebrews 9:11-15 and the Gospel is John 8:46-59. The Gospel speaks of Christ's sinlessness and his deity, important factors in any theory of atonement. It may also help to keep the words of Article 2 before our minds, as we approach the final stages of our Lord's entry into Jerusalem and His crucifixion. 'Christ truly suffered, was crucified, dead, and buried, to reconcile His Father to us, and to be a sacrifice not only for original guilt, but also for all actual sins of men.' The words of consecration at Holy Communion (BCP) are deeply illuminating. 'Jesus Christ... (suffered) death upon the Cross for our redemption; who made there (by his one oblation of himself once offered) a full, perfect, and sufficient sacrifice, oblation, and satisfaction, for the sins of the whole world; and did institute, and in his holy Gospel command us to continue, a perpetual memory of that his precious death, until his coming again.'

His death – the heart of the Christian gospel – is central in today's well-chosen Epistle. 'Christ being come an High Priest of good things to come, by a greater and more perfect tabernacle, not made with hands; that is to say, not of this building; neither by the blood of goats and calves; but by his own blood he entered in once into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption for us' (Heb.9:11ff.). Alan Stibbs says, 'This one event of the cross of Christ is a final revelation both of the character and consequence of human sin and of the wonder and sacrifice of divine love.' Martin Luther struggled long and painfully to find a permanent solution for his overwhelming burden of sin, in the face of God's perfect righteousness. He found forgiveness and peace at the Cross. He became a Christ-centred man, by grace alone. Here is his testimony... 'there is not a word in the Bible which is extra crucem, which can be understood without reference to the cross.'

It is difficult to understand how men can so deeply hate the Lord Jesus Christ, and reject his saving work on their behalf, until we examine and reflect upon our own pre-conversion state. Today's Gospel passage reveals the deep hatred of the Jewish leaders for their Messiah. Such is the depth of sin in our hearts, due to the historic Fall, without God's gracious intervention, none of us would respond any differently. Notice how the Gospel verses end – 'Then took they up stones to cast at him: but Jesus hid himself, and went out of the temple.' We can so easily miss the emphasis of these last four words. The opposition came from those who frequented the temple! So the devil is as active in the visible church as he is in the onlooking world. There was no room for Jesus in the inn when he was born. There is no room for him now in the temple, as he prepares to die for sinners, like you and me. Lent is quickly drawing to a close. Good Friday is only twelve days away. The shadow of Christ's inevitable death, and the anticipation of his bloody cross, closes in. And yet, for a few days more, it is not the cross that concerns us but his character. Who is Christ? Who is the Man who chooses to die for sinners?

1. He is the SINLESS MAN

The Lord Jesus Christ is the only man who has lived who can truly look the world in the face. As we reflect upon the Gospel narrative, we become increasingly convinced, he is without sin. Jesus challenged his accusers - those who would soon arrange his execution. 'Which of you convinceth me of sin? And if I say the truth, why do ye not believe me?'

When we read Romans chapter 3, we are bound to admit, 'all have sinned and come short of the glory of God'. Or we look into our own hearts, in some quiet moment, and we know for certain, we fall far short of what is required of us. Thank God for His mercy in not fully revealing the depths of depravity within the human heart. It would be an impossible revelation for us. Yet, Jesus is the very embodiment of moral perfection. He is not even conscious of sin; how could he be? But in a few days' time, he will feel and know it, as no man has ever sensed it, before and after. 'My God, My God, why hast thou forsaken Me?' He was made sin for us – He who knew no sin. Only a truly Perfect Man can save such imperfect men.

2. He is the SON OF GOD

Furthermore, the Lord Jesus Christ is not only fully human. He is also fully divine. He is the eternal Son of God. He claims God for His Father, in the transcendent sense. The Father honours him and Jesus honours the Father v.49 & v.54. He does not seek his own glory but the glory of the Father v.50. And, because he is the perfect Son of God, those who believe in him shall not taste eternal death v.52. He even claims (v.58) 'before Abraham was, I am'. Such words can only identify him as fully God (Exodus 3:14).

The revelation of the Man/God, who prepares to enter Jerusalem to die for sinners, demands our response. One of two responses can be made. Either we pick up stones and cast them at him, removing him and his claims from our lives. Or we fall down and worship Him, in repentance and wholehearted surrender. It is impossible to be neutral in the presence of Jesus Christ. And is it not a solemn thought - those who cast stones now will face Jesus later, no longer as the passionate Saviour, but as the personal Judge (Acts 17:30-31)?

The Gospel for the Sunday Next before Easter – Matthew 27:1-54 – is perhaps the longest of all the set gospel readings. Today is also called Palm Sunday. We might expect to read the record of Jesus' triumphant entry into Jerusalem with psalms, palms, and praises. But the architects of the Book of Common Prayer had a higher motive – to keep our thoughts centred on Jesus and His crucifixion. An earlier scholar, J. Paterson Smyth, once commented, in his *A PEOPLE'S LIFE OF CHRIST*, 'the world in miniature can be seen around the Cross that first Good Friday'. Somewhere you and I are in this crowd which begins to gather around the Lord Jesus, as 'he sets his face toward Jerusalem.'

A rich study can be undertaken by looking at the seven Last Words of Jesus. You will need to consult all the Gospels for this. In Matthew, today's gospel, we have only one, the cry of dereliction, v.46. It could be considered in the light of 1 Peter 2:21-23. For now, we will undertake a short biographical study. We consider a few of those in the crucifixion narrative.

1. THE CHIEF PRIESTS ARE PRESENT

There are several references. One characteristic is

THE CALENDAR

March 21st to April 3rd

PRAYER BOOK WORSHIP

MARCH 21ST

The Fifth Sunday in Lent

M. Ex.3; Mark 15:1-41

E. Ex.5 or Ex.6:1-13; 1 Corinthians 12:1-28

THE COLLECT

WE beseech thee, Almighty God, mercifully to look upon thy people; that by thy great goodness they may be governed and preserved evermore, both in body and soul; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

The Epistle. Hebrews 9:11-15

The Gospel. St. John 8:46-59

MARCH 28TH

The Sunday Next Before Easter

M. Exodus 9; Luke 3:1-22

E. Exodus 10 or Exodus 11; 2 Corinthians 1:1-22

THE COLLECT

ALMIGHTY and everlasting God, who, of thy tender love towards mankind, hast sent thy Son, our Saviour Jesus Christ, to take upon him our flesh, and to suffer death upon the cross, that all mankind should follow the example of his great humility; Mercifully grant, that we may both follow the example of his patience, and also be made partakers of his resurrection; through the same Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

The Epistle. Philippians 2:5-11

The Gospel. St. Matthew 27:1-54

common. Their aim is to remove Jesus and to do it as quickly as possible. Not once do they appear in a favourable light. They are moved with envy, v.18, hand the prisoner over to be crucified, v.1-2, play politics with the Roman authorities, and influence the crowd to choose Barabbas, not Jesus, for release v.20. They have no interest in justice and seem to be morally-dead. Yet, culturally, they are at the top of the ladder. This is religion without Christ.

2. JUDAS ISCARIOT IS PRESENT

Need we say much more, vs3-5. Few men have experienced so many spiritual privileges, or been so near to the Lord himself. He was gripped by avarice, sinned against the light, and made shipwreck of the faith. His end was a tragedy of the highest order.

3. PONTIUS PILATE IS PRESENT

For him it was, either the end of his political career and social standing in Rome, or removal of Jesus. It was impossible to please the Jewish authorities, or the crowd, unless he got rid of Jesus. Present power and material possessions mattered more to him than executing an innocent man. God spoke to him through his wife and his conscience and, foolishly, he ignored both.

4. BARABBAS IS PRESENT

He represents the kind of Messiah and Deliverer the unbelieving leaders hoped for. Barabbas was the convicted criminal, Christ is the innocent One. Indeed, the crowd, influenced by godless leaders, made the wrong choice too. Don't the majority invariably make the wrong decision? 'Men still reject Jesus Christ... the man who says that God is on the side of the big battalions, who ignores the moral forces of the world, is still choosing Barabbas rather than Christ' (Dr J H B Masterman).

5. ROMAN SOLDIERS ARE PRESENT

One - apparently only one - comes to faith in the Son of God, v.54.

Some of the Roman soldiers mocked our Lord, vs.27-31. Others carried out the awful task of executing Jesus (vs. 33-36). But a single soldier, while wearing his Roman uniform, in the act of doing his military duty, as unpleasant as it was, looks up at Christ's Cross and confesses, 'Truly this was the Son of God.' The record gives hope to the worst of sinners.

The Negro Spiritual – 'Where you there when they crucified my Lord?' asks a question which demands an answer. Is your answer the same as Isaac Watts?

When I survey the wondrous cross,
On which the Prince of glory died,
My richest gain I count but loss,
And pour contempt on all my pride.

Were the whole realm of nature mine,
That were an offering far too small;
Love so amazing, so divine,
Demands my soul, my life, my all.

Good News

Pakistan

Praise God for the purchase of a good secondhand van for the Bible-believing Lahore churches and Calvin's Academies ministry. Pray that all hindrances to getting the Urdu gospel broadcasts on the air might soon be removed.

Ethiopia

Praise God that construction is underway for the new Ethiopia Reformed Fellowship biblical training and ministry centre in Addis Ababa. Pray for those lonely individuals and fellowships in outlying areas eager for the teaching of God's Word.

Egypt

Praise God that the Arabic translation of Series F (The Armour of God) of the Sunday School curriculum based on the simplified Shorter Catechism is at the press. Pray for more Arabic churches and families to be solidly grounded in God's Word through this curriculum. Middle East Reformed Fellowship MERF – P.O. Box 265, Hayes, Middx UB3 3AU

More Immorality From David Cameron

by a correspondent

Tory front bench spokesman and sodomite, Nick Herbert, in an address to a think-tank in Washington, suggested that churches should support gay (sic) marriage and should support gay (sic) adoption.

He said a future Tory government would legislate to promote gay (sic) equality and beef up laws on homophobic bullying and hate crimes. He said that whither it was given by God or set by nature, homosexuality is not nurtured by doting mothers or weak fathers. He went on to say that 'It isn't a condition to be cured and it can't be willed away by prayer.'

The wholesale sellout to the 'gay' (sic) agenda is gathering pace. I would urge all Christians to get in touch with Cameron and let him know what you as a Christian think and that he can't count on your vote. If this is followed up, should the Tories win power, truly we will be in dire straits. According to the media, local Conservative associations are having candidates forced upon them, candidates that toe the Cameron line.

Ed: We have written to our local Conservative MP, who has a good moral voting record himself, to tell him that we cannot vote for Mr Cameron's immoral Conservatives.

English Churchman Book Review

ALWAYS REFORMING – Continuation of the Sixteenth-Century Reformation;

Editor David J Engelsma;
Reformed Free Publishing
Association, 1894 Georgetown
Center Dr. Jenison MI 49428-
7137 USA; Phone 616 457-5970,
Email mail@rfpa.org; 2009;
308pp; pbk; Dollars, \$16.95;
ISBN 978-0-916206-99-4

This is the latest book to be added to the collection of Protestant Reformed Biblical Studies, under the editorship of Dr David J Engelsma, who is emeritus professor of theology at the Protestant Reformed Seminary, Grandville, Michigan. Eighteen distinguished theologians and scholars, from a variety of backgrounds and periods, are contributors. Some of these are now dead but their "papers" add significantly to a thorough, solid, scholarly, and wide-reaching panorama of theological themes. The overall argument is standard protestant belief – a church should not only be reformed, but should always be reforming herself according to the further light of God's Word written. Scriptures quoted are taken from the Authorised Version.

The work follows the continuing reformation in the Netherlands in the 17th and 19th centuries and, also, in the Protestant Reformed Churches in North America in the 20th century. In order to prove the thesis, the book is presented in five parts: 1. The Synod of Dort, 1618-1619. 2. The Secession of 1834. 3. The Reformation of 1886 in the Netherlands. 4. The Reformation of 1924 in North America. 5. The Reformation of 1953 in the Protestant Reformed Churches.

In the Editor's Preface, he states the reason for the book. There is common misuse of the motto, "Reformed and always reforming". Often in contemporary churches, particularly liberal churches, the motto is used as an excuse for the introduction of teaching and practice which is anything but biblical and reformed. Perhaps, a more appropriate motto would be "deformed, always deforming". All Biblically-orientated Christians will have much sympathy with this observation. The Ecumenical Movement, in dumbing down its confessions, has done immense damage. So has the Charismatic Movement, large parts of which have replaced Biblical-centrality with something more akin to the authority of mystical experiences. The purpose of this book is to prove the case – that the Holy Spirit has carried on the reforming work of Christ in one particular branch of the church of the Reformation – in the Netherlands and in the Protestant Reformed Churches of North America. Discerning readers will be able to assess whether this is really the case, or not, bearing in mind the only perfect church is now glorified in Heaven. For the churches of the Netherlands and North America, there have been five distinct doctrinal controversies. By contending for

the faith, they have managed to restore the church to the faith of the sixteenth-century Reformation. This is highly commendable, but we should beware of being contented with this alone. The Reformation churches were far from perfect themselves and our aim should be the total re-capture of apostolic Christianity, if this is at all possible in today's theologically confused climate, and often biblically-illiterate evangelicalism.

There is much here to inform, inspire, and debate. How many of us have spent sufficient time thinking about the Synod of Dort? There has been considerable secession in British churches during the 20th century but what do we know about the characters of the secession of 1834 and the Netherlands Reformed Church? Or what about Abraham Kuyper, a remarkable Christian leader, who could skilfully guide us today in many of the challenging political and theological arenas we have to face? Have we given as much thought as we should to the place of Covenant in Christian theology? Arminianism, particular grace, common grace, regeneration, the promise and command of the gospel, church government, the place of children in the covenant, commitment to Psalm singing, Christian education, and the well-meant gospel offer of the "apostate" State Church of Holland, which, along with other contentious issues, led to the secession in 1834, are discussed at considerable length. These, and a whole plethora of mind-stretching, biblically-challenging themes, are brought forward for consideration. The book ends with a ringing challenge – "Is there among us today a lack of interest in sound, doctrinal preaching? Do we clamour for less emphasis on doctrine and more emphasis on daily living? Is there a trend among us towards worldly-mindedness, even though we may not be aware of it? Have we become lethargic? A bit of self-examination may be beneficial to all of us."

A "bit of self-examination" must be the understatement of the year! It is hard to disagree with this. Orthodoxy is of the very essence of true Christianity. Almighty God honours those who honour Him, His infallible Word, His indescribable Son. But we also need "orthodoxy on fire." We need the truth of the Holy Spirit, in God's Word written, to be translated into transformed lives. According to Philippians, chapter three, Paul was as orthodox as Gamaliel, his great teacher and mentor. But if we take the experience of the Damascus Road encounter, the experience of the Living and Resurrected Christ, away from Paul, we are not left with much. His own description is "Dung" (Philippians 3:1-8). The model for the Christian must be taken from our Lord Himself. We should aim to be fully human, dwelling among the people, full of grace and full of truth" (John 1:14). This is a specialist book, of great interest to the student and scholar, worthy of a wide academic readership, and an important contribution to areas of considerable ongoing discussion. It will appeal most to Presbyterians, Scots, Americans, and others, will find it absolutely fascinating. South African Christians in particular, seeking to come to terms with their own history and Dutch background, could find this an invaluable tool. Other non-theologically-trained Christians may have to work hard to master the contents.

Rt Revd Dr J Barry Shucksmith Royal Navy (Rtd)

Stand for Truth

Peter Masters

Sword & Trowel

(Tabernacle Bookshop)

Pbk; 36 pages; £0.50

ISBN 978-1-899046-11-9

Initially published in 1996 as "Separation and Obedience" this booklet has undergone several reprints until its current version printed in 2009.

The first 4 pages give a brief history of what has happened to the so called evangelical church in the last 150 years. Starting with the 'Oxford movement' which began the rot within the Church of England by the spreading of Roman Catholic practices. In that time true evangelicals responded with a famous publication called *The Fundamentals*. It goes on to highlight the 1967 Keele Conference where, as Masters puts it, "the majority of evangelical clergy decided they would no longer view the Church of England as a largely apostate body, or disown its Anglo-Catholic and liberal wings."

The booklet works through the Nottingham Statement and then the Evangelicals and Catholics Together (ECT). Peter Masters shows clearly how where once true evangelicals stood against declension, the more recent generation has not only not made a stand but chosen to 'go with the flow' thereby showing an acceptance of what is wrong and contrary to scripture within the church.

Masters shows there is nothing new in this for - as in times gone by - from Samuel to Nehemiah, Israel was plagued by apostate priests who accepted false gods, and mixed marriage with outside tribes. No doubt, in those times there were those who did not want to rock the boat for whatever reason.

For the rest of the booklet he concentrates on the teachings of 2 Corinthians 6:14-17 and how separation from the apostate is positive. "Separation means that we are exclusively on the Lord's side and that we render no service whatsoever to his enemies."

Peter Masters shows clearly how any route to God preached other than through Jesus Christ is but a lie.

This booklet is a good, concise reasoning directly from the scripture while destroying arguments that are sometimes advanced with misinterpreted texts.

Andrew Hope-Hall

OLD PATHS, NEW SHOES - Papers read at the Westminster Conference, 2008

138 pages; paperback; £5.95
post free; Available from the
Conference secretary: John
Harris, 8 Back Knowl Rd, Mirfield,
West Yorkshire, WF14 9SA

The Westminster Conference, the successor to the Puritan and Reformed Studies Conference, meets each year at a venue in London to discuss various aspects of Church History and the lessons that can be learned from them. Over the years the papers have been published and form a valuable addition to the minister's library. The papers have brought a greater understanding of aspects of the "story of God's mighty acts." Most of the conference reports are still in print and available from the conference secretary. The papers given at the now defunct Puritan and Reformed Studies conference were republished in the USA and, we understand, can be obtained from such internet booksellers as Amazon, The Book Depository &c. The papers given by Dr Lloyd-Jones on various occasions were published by The

Banner of Truth Trust under the title of "The Puritans, their origins and successors."

In the past, conferences have followed a particular theme, but I found it difficult to find a recurring theme in the papers at this conference.

Iain Murray's paper asks the question: "What can we learn from the Puritans?" He gives us six lessons to be learned, viz., The Puritans teach us (1) There is no true Christianity without a Saving Conversion to Christ, (2) That the Christian Life needs Method and Structure, (3) We have much to Learn on the Sanctification of the Lord's Day, (4) The Importance of Unity, (5) The danger of Roman Catholicism, & (6) The Power of the Word of God Preached. This paper is, as we would expect from Mr Murray, masterful and it would be well for it to be expanded into a publication in its own right.

I found John J Murray's paper "The Recovery of the Reformed Vision" rather lacking in that he ignored the work of certain of the various Presbyterian Churches of Scotland and N. Ireland, the Strict Baptists &c. He fails to mention the Calvinistic Witness in Britain between Spurgeon's Death and the 1950's by such bodies as The Sovereign Grace Union, The Gospel Magazine (which has been holding the torch of "Reformed" truth since 1766), The English Churchman, The Protestant Reformation Society, &c. &c. Messrs C & J Farncombe who were the only independent Calvinistic publishing house in England from about 1900 to the late 1940's is not mentioned.

"The Life and Legacy of E F Kevan" by Paul Brown was certainly interesting, but the paper on "Tradition - The Puritan and Reformed Perspective" by Robert Godfrey was rather tedious. The final two papers were: "Spiritual Conflict" by Jonathan Watson, an introduction to Thomas Brook's "Precious Remedies Against Satan's Devices"; and "William Grimshaw and his Preaching" by Faith Cook.

J E North

Christian Online Community Open Arms As Atheist Forum Implodes

Justin Brierley, host of 'Unbelievable?' on Premier Christian Radio, has invited discussion with disgruntled atheists, asking them to join Premier's online community after one of the biggest atheist forums in the world has been locked down. RichardDawkins.net has announced that its forum will be taken offline to make way for a new one where 'irrelevant postings and frivolous gossip would no longer be tolerated'. Brierley joined users of the site in expressing his surprise and disappointment with the move. "As a user of the forum myself, I was shocked to see how these changes have been implemented. The nature of the forum and its free exchange of ideas have been threatened." Dawkins attacked users who had vented their frustration online, saying, "surely there has to be something wrong with people... over-reacting so spectacularly to something so trivial." He also questioned "the underlying agenda of these people". Brierley has invited people unhappy with the changes to Dawkins' site to join Premier's online community. "Our own forum ... is a place where atheists and Christians regularly interact in an open and peaceful way. I invite anyone who feels let down by RichardDawkins.net to come and join us. At Premier Community we allow Christians and atheists alike to express their views without fear of repercussion or censorship, but we never tolerate hateful attacks on users. I recently had a user of Dawkins' site on my show who converted to Christianity after suffering abuse from other users on the site. 'Unbelievable?' is Premier Radio's flagship faith discussion show where atheists and Christians regularly debate issues of faith, belief and reason."

CLERGY APPOINTMENTS

4 March 2010

NEW ARCHDEACON OF DORSET

Revd Stephen Waine, Vicar, Romford St Edward; and Priest-in-Charge, Romford St John (Chelmsford): to be Archdeacon of Dorset (Salisbury).

Julia Babb, Vicar, Cowgate St Peter (Newcastle): to be Priest-in-Charge, Whittington St Bartholomew; and Priest-in-Charge, New Whittington St Barnabas (Derby).

Revd Dr Neal Barnes, Vicar, Anlaby St Peter; and Chaplain, Ambulance Service Hull (York): to be Priest-in-Charge, Kingston upon Hull Holy Trinity (same diocese).

Revd Dr Mark Betson, Assistant Curate, Southwick St Michael (Chichester): to be Priest-in-Charge, Lower Beeding Holy Trinity; and Diocesan Rural Officer (same diocese).

Revd John Darling, NSM (Assistant Curate), Melksham St Barnabas; and NSM (Assistant Curate), Atworth with Shaw and Whitley St Michael; and NSM (Assistant Curate), Broughton Gifford, Great Chalfield and Holt St Katherine St Mary (Salisbury): to be NSM (Associate Priest) to all current Benefices.

Revd Andrew Evans, Priest-in-Charge, Broughton Gifford, Great Chalfield and Holt St Katherine St Mary; and Assistant Curate, Atworth with Shaw and Whitley St Michael; and Assistant Curate, Melksham St Barnabas; and Rural Dean, Bradford Deanery (Salisbury): to be Rector, Melksham St Barnabas (same diocese). Remaining in all other posts.

Revd Paul Gooding, NSM (Assistant Curate), Grove St John (Oxford): is now also Assistant Chaplain, Abingdon School (same diocese).

Trudy Gray, NSM, Great Finborough with Onehouse, Harleston, Buxhall and Shelland (St Edmundsbury and Ipswich): to be NSM (House for Duty Priest), Upper Coquetdale (Newcastle).

Rev Canon Dr William Lamb, Chaplain, Sheffield University; and Residentiary Canon, Sheffield Cathedral (Sheffield): to be Vice-Principal, Westcott House Cambridge (Ely).

Rev William Lang, Rector, Elstead St James; and Vicar, Thursley St Michael (Guildford): to be Priest-in-Charge, Redhorn (same diocese).

Elizabeth Marshman, Assistant Curate, Clifton St Philip (York): to be Priest-in-Charge, Lockington and Lund and Scarborough with Leconfield St Mary (same diocese).

Rev Laurence Mathew, NSM (Associate Priest), Warminster Christ Church (Salisbury): is now also Wilts Archdeaconry Support Officer for Associate Clergy (same diocese).

Jacqueline Maw, Assistant Curate, Iwerne Valley (Salisbury): to be Team Vicar, Wareham Lady St Mary (same diocese).

Rev David Parr, Assistant Curate (Associate Vicar), Shepton Mallet with Doulting St Peter (Bath and Wells): to be Team Vicar, Melksham St Barnabas (Salisbury).

Rev Canon Paul Richardson, Rector, Devizes St John and St Mary (Salisbury): is now also Rural Dean, Devizes Deanery (same diocese).

Rev Paul Sandford, Priest-in-Charge, Sinfon St Stephen; and Rural Dean, Derby South Deanery (Derby): to be Vicar.

Rev David Brinley Singleton, Rector, Chapel St Mary with Little Wenham and Great Wenham St Mary (St Edmundsbury and Ipswich): is now also Rural Dean, Samford Deanery (same diocese).

Anne Stratton, NSM, The Bradgate Team (Leicester): to be Priest-in-Charge, Belper St Peter (Derby).

Madeline Strong, Spiritual Counsellor PROMIS (Canterbury): to be NSM (House for Duty Priest), The Stone Street Group; and NSM (House for Duty Priest), Wye with Brook and Hastingleigh with Boughton Aluph and Eastwell St Gregory (same diocese).

Kara Sugden, Chaplain, Canford School

Wimbome (Salisbury): to be Team Vicar, Wirksworth St Mary (Derby).

Jennifer Taylor, Chaplain, Salisbury Cathedral School; NSM (Associate Team Vicar), Chalke Valley Team Ministry (Salisbury): is now also Sarum Archdeaconry Support Officer for Associate Clergy (same diocese).

Rev Dr Robert Thomas, Assistant Curate, Bathampton with Claverton St Nicholas (Bath and Wells): to be Priest-in-Charge, Trowbridge and Keevil St James (Salisbury).

Preb Pippa Thorneycroft, Retired; and Chaplain to the Queen (Lichfield): is now also Assistant Curate (Associate Minister), Tettenhall Wood and Perton Christ Church (same diocese).

Rev Canon Martyn Trembath, Chaplain, Royal Cornwall Hospital Trust; and NSM (Associate Priest), Godrevy (Truro): to be Rector, Godrevy (same diocese).

Rev Timothy Vasby-Burnie, Assistant Curate, Stone and Oulton-with-Moddershall Christ Church (Lichfield): to be Vicar, Wednesbury St Bartholomew (same diocese).

Rev Simon Weeden, Rector, Bramshott and Liphook St Mary (Portsmouth): to be Rector, Whitton (Salisbury).

Rev Rowan Williams, Chaplain, University Hospitals of Leicester NHS Trust (Leicester): to be Chaplain, University of York (York).

RETIREMENTS AND RESIGNATIONS

Rev Roger Balkwill, Vicar, Albrighton, Boringale and Donington St Mary; and Rural Dean, Edmond and Shifnal Deanery (Lichfield): to retire with effect from 25 March 2010.

Rev William Cole, Priest-in-Charge, St Ruan with St Grade and Landewednack (Truro): to retire with effect from 18 April 2010.

Rev Canon Bryan Gracie, Chaplain, HM Prison, Birmingham (Birmingham): to retire with effect from 7 April 2010.

Louisa Halliday, NSM (Assistant Curate), Wyllye and Till Valley (Salisbury): has retired with effect from 31 August 2009.

Rev Timothy Hawkings, Priest-in-Charge, Axbridge with Shipham and Rowberrow St John; and Priest-in-Charge, Mark with Allerton Holy Cross; and Rural Dean, Axbridge Deanery (Bath and Wells): has resigned as Priest-in-Charge, Mark with Allerton with effect from 11 February 2010. Remaining in other posts.

Rev Edward James Martin Hogan, Vicar, Stithians with Perranarworthal and Gwennap (Truro): to retire with effect from 25 March 2010.

Rev Anthony Johnson, Vicar, Yardley Hay Mill St Cyprian (Birmingham): to retire with effect from 30 April 2010.

Rev Nicholas Lock, NSM (Assistant Curate), Melksham St Barnabas; and NSM (Assistant Curate), Atworth with Shaw and Whitley St Michael; and NSM (Assistant Curate), Broughton Gifford, Great Chalfield and Holt St Katherine St Mary (Salisbury): has resigned with effect from 28 February 2010.

Rev Ronald Lowrie, Rector, Westwood and Wingfield St Mary; and Priest-in-Charge, Bradford-on-Avon Christ Church (Salisbury): has retired as Priest-in-Charge with effect from 14 February 2010. Remaining Rector.

Rev Suresh Menon (Retired): is now Assistant Curate (Associate Minister) Oxford St Ebbe with Holy Trinity and St Peter (Oxford).

Rev Canon Christopher Rutledge, Vicar, Talbot Village (Salisbury): has retired with effect from 28 February 2010.

Rev Canon David Trustram, Vicar, Tenterden with Smallhythe St Mildred; and Priest-in-Charge, Tenterden St Michael (Canterbury): to retire with effect from 5 September 2010.

Rev Idris Vaughan, Priest-in-Charge, Lanzarote (Canary Islands, Europe): to retire with effect from 13 June 2010.

LAY AND OTHER APPOINTMENTS/ RESIGNATIONS/RETIREMENTS

Mrs Anne Carter: to be Children and Young People's Development Worker, Leeds

Archdeaconry (Ripon and Leeds).

Captain Keith Shaw CA, Lay Minister, Cannock and Huntington St Luke; and Lead Chaplain, Mental Health Community Chaplaincy Project; and Lead Chaplain, South Staffordshire and Shropshire Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust (Lichfield): has resigned as Lay Minister. Remaining in Chaplaincy posts.

Mr Steven Simmonds, Fresh Expressions Community Outreach Worker in Nottingham Malt Cross (Southwell and Nottingham): to be Lay Pioneer Youth Minister, Central Wolverhampton All Saints (Lichfield).

25 February 2010

Revd Geoffrey Boucher, Priest-in-Charge, West Monkton St Augustine (Bath and Wells): is now also Rural Dean, Taunton Deanery (same diocese).

Cheryl Collins, Priest-in-Charge, Barton St Peter; and Priest-in-Charge, Coton St Peter; and Priest-in-Charge, Dry Drayton St Peter; and Rural Dean, Bourn Deanery (Ely): is now Mission Priest Red Lodge (St Edmundsbury and Ipswich).

Rev Paul Darlington, Priest-in-Charge, Oswestry Holy Trinity (Lichfield): to be Vicar.

Judith Glover, Vicar, Alston Moore St Augustine (Newcastle): to be also Hon Canon, Newcastle Cathedral (same diocese).

Rev Canon Michael Hart, Canon Missioner, Southwark Cathedral (Southwark): is now Public Preacher; and Hon Canon, Southwark Cathedral (same diocese).

Rev Mark Heather, Vicar, Leeds Halton St Wilfrid (Ripon and Leeds): to be Bishop's Chaplain (Guildford).

Janice Hill, Assistant Curate, Formby Holy Trinity (Liverpool): to be Team Vicar, The North Meols Team Ministry (same diocese).

Rev Ian Hooper, Retired (St Edmundsbury and Ipswich): to be Retirement Officer (same diocese).

Rev George Howard, Vicar, West Streatham St James; and Priest-in-Charge, Streatham St Paul (Southwark): is now also Hon Canon, Southwark Cathedral (same diocese).

Rev Kevin Hunt, Vicar, Walker Christ Church; and Assistant Diocesan Director of Ordinands; and Area Dean, Newcastle East Deanery; (Newcastle): to be also Hon Canon, Newcastle Cathedral (same diocese).

Rev Brian Hurst, Vicar, Bamburgh St Aidan; and Vicar, Ellingham St Maurice; and Area Dean, Bamburgh and Glendale Deanery (Newcastle): to be also Hon Canon, Newcastle Cathedral (same diocese).

The Ven Michael Igrave, Archdeacon of Southwark; and Priest-in-Charge, Peckham St John with St Andrews (Southwark): is now also Residentiary Canon Missioner, Southwark Cathedral (same diocese).

Janet Jackson, Chaplain, St Oswald's Hospice Newcastle-upon-Tyne (Newcastle): is now Bereavement Services Co-ordinator, Tynedale Hospice Hexham (same diocese).

Rev Canon Anthony Jewiss, retired: is now Assistant Chaplain, Midi-Pyrénées and Aude Cahors (France, Europe).

Janet Mackenzie, Assistant Curate, Sandy (St Albans): to be Priest in Charge, Luton Limbury St Augustine (same diocese).

Anne Murray, NSM Fairfield St John (Liverpool): to be NSM, Edge Hill St Cyprian and St Mary (same diocese).

Dr Ann Nickson, Vicar, Norbury and Thornton Heath St Stephen; and Area Dean, Croydon North Deanery (Southwark): is now also Hon Canon, Southwark Cathedral (same diocese).

Rev Ian Pankhurst, Assistant Curate, Watford St Luke (St Albans): to be Priest-in-Charge, Watford St Andrew (same diocese).

Rev Richard Clive Pattinson, Team Vicar, Penrith with Newton Reigny and Plumpton Wall Christ Church; and Priest-in-Charge, Dacre St Andrew (Carlisle): is now Chaplain, Penrith Hospital; and to be Team Vicar, The Good Shepherd Team Ministry (same diocese). Remaining Priest-in-Charge, Dacre.



CHURCHES & MINISTRY

ABERDEEN. Free Church of Scotland [Continuing]. Pittodrie Community Centre, Golf Road. Sabbath 11.00am & 6.00pm. Prayer Meeting Wednesday 7.30pm. AV & Metrical Psalms. Rev T. McGlynn, tel no 01224 865714 Website:www.fccontinuing.org/aberdeen

BALLYMENA, NI; Covenant Protestant Reformed Church, Protestant Hall (Opposite Police Station). Sabbath:11am, 6pm. Expository preaching, Metrical Psalms, AV. Rev Angus Stewart: (028) 25891851 www.cprc.co.uk

BROADSTAIRS, Kent. Free Presbyterian Church of Scotland. Sabbath services: 11.00am and 6.00pm at Portland Centre, Hopeville Avenue, St Peter's. Tuesdays: 7.00pm, Quaker Meeting House, Fordoun Road. Rev. John MacLeod. Tel. 020 8309 1623. www.fpchurch.org.uk

CHELMSFORD. Presbyterian Church. Sunday: 11.30 a.m. and 6 p.m. Worship services (A Sunday School is held for children during the Morning service and a creche provided during the evening service). Location: Hall Street Methodist Church, Hall Street, Chelmsford, CM2 0HG. Minister. Rev. Dr. John Scott. Telephone: 01245 399570.

DUBLIN. Arann Reformed Baptist Church Services: Lord's day 11am, meeting at St Johns GAA Clubhouse, Ballinteer, Dublin 16. Wednesday 8pm in homes. contact Mark Fitzpatrick, (00353) 862667070 AV & Metrical Psalms, www.arann-reformed.org, Website: www.sermonaudio.com/arann

EDINBURGH. Free Church of Scotland [Continuing]. Services held at Napier Morningside Campus, Morningside Road 11.00am and 6.30pm. Thursdays 7.30pm. AV and Metrical Psalms. Minister: Rev James Gracie. Tel: 0131 667 4730

FRINTON & TENDRING DISTRICT. Holy Trinity, C of E (Continuing) Lord's Day Morning Prayer 11am at Frinton Community Centre. 6pm Evening Prayer. BCP (1662) & AV. Mr Philip Lievesley 07972 159908.

GLASGOW. Knightswood Free Church Of Scotland (Continuing) 361 Fulton Street, G13 2SP 11am & 6.30pm Tuesdays 7.30pm, Rev William Macleod 0141 959 0292

LONDON N22. Pilgrim Tabernacle. Reformed Evangelical, Stirling Road, Wood Green, N22. Lords Day 10.00am and 6pm service and Tuesday 7.30pm Bible Study. Friday 7.30pm Prayer in members homes. Contact Pastor John Sherwood 0208 368 8080 www.pilgrimtabernacle.co.uk

LONDON E1. Free Presbyterian Church of Scotland, Varden Street, Whitechapel. Sabbath services 11.00am and 6.30pm. Wednesdays 7.00pm. Rev. John MacLeod. Tel. 020 8309 1623. www.fpchurch.org.uk

LONDON. South Wimbledon, St Johns C of E [Continuing]. Sabbath Day Services 11am, 6.30pm. AV. Prayer Book (1662). Phone: Rev. Peter Ratcliff 0208 417 0875.

READING. St. Mary's Chapel. Castle Street. Sundays: 11 am Morning Prayer (1st Sunday, Lord's Supper); 6.30 pm Evening Prayer (3rd Sunday, Lord's Supper). Prayer Book Services, A.V. Bible Study and Prayer Meeting Tuesdays 8pm (2nd Tuesday Missionary Prayer Meeting). Rev. E. J. Malcolm 0118 959 5131

SOUTH BUCKS. The Free Methodist Church, Penn (near High Wycombe). Traditional worship, expository preaching. Lord's Day 11.00am, 6.30pm. Rev. Peter Simpson Website: www.realchristianity.org. Telephone: 01494 816202.

WEST MIDLANDS. Tipton, St. Paul's, Owen Street. Sundays 10.30am; 6.00pm. Prayer Meeting, Bible Study, Wednesday 7.30pm; BCP services. Rev. John Dunn. 01215571902

WOLVERHAMPTON. St. Silas. C of E [Continuing], Wolverhampton St Silas C of E (Continuing) 49 Long Street, WV1 1HU. Morning Prayer 11am (HC 1st Sun) Evening Prayer 6pm (HC 3rd Sun) AV & BCP. Tel. 01547 528815.



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Affirmation 2010

PART TWO

5. Penal Substitution

We affirm Christ's atonement to be one of "penal satisfaction to the justice of God". In the plan of redemption, He was appointed "a surety", and as such was obliged to perform a service or pay a debt for others.¹ Fulfilling this engagement, in infinite love to His people, He not only rendered obedience to the Law's precepts but also suffered the Law's penalty of the wrath and curse of God.² Throughout His life, but particularly in His death, He "bare our sins", an expression which means that He took the punishment of all those sins,³ and so it is said that He, being "delivered for (peri – 'on account of') our sins", actually "suffered for sins, the just for (huper – 'in the stead of') the unjust".⁴ Indeed, it was thus that He became a "sacrifice",⁵ our guilt being transferred to Him and, in consequence, His life being taken as the penalty due.⁶ There can be no doubt, therefore, that God inflicted upon Him – the sinner's legal Substitute – "chastisement" and "punishment", in order that we might be "saved from wrath through Him".⁷ This is the glory of the Gospel and it is the only hope of poor, wretched sinners.

We reject the views of certain modern liberals (claiming to be "evangelicals") who dare to suggest that "penal substitution" is a mere "theory" of the atonement, one which they blasphemously assert to be "cosmic child abuse".

¹ Hebrews 7:22 cf. Genesis 43:9; Philemon 18
² Isaiah 53:4,5; Galatians 3:13
³ 1 Peter 2:24 cf. Leviticus 20:17ff ⁴ Romans 4:25; 1 Peter 3:18 ⁵ Ephesians 5:2; Hebrews 9:26 ⁶ Isaiah 53:4-7 cf. Leviticus 1:4,5 ⁷ Isaiah 53:5,10; Zechariah 13:7; Romans 5:9

6. Justification by Faith Alone

We affirm justification to be God's gracious act of declaring sinners righteous in the sight of His Law:¹ hence it is used in Scripture in contrast to accusation or condemnation.² This verdict, pronounced once and for ever, is not on account of any merit in the sinner, either present or future, but solely on the basis of the righteousness of Jesus Christ,³ that is to say, His active obedience whereby He perfectly fulfilled all the precepts of the Law,⁴ and His passive obedience whereby He endured the full penalty of the Law.⁵ This active and passive obedience was vicarious, in that it was an obedience offered by Him, as the Representative of elect sinners, in their place and on their behalf.⁶ Justification is decreed from eternity, but the decree is fulfilled and takes place in the experience of the elect when, through grace, they believe, receiving Christ as Saviour in reliance upon the all-sufficiency of what He has done for them in life and death,⁷ and when Christ's righteousness, which perfectly satisfies the Law, is actually imputed to them, that is, reckoned to them or put to their account.⁸ God then pronounces His judgment or sentence of justification, pardoning all their sins (past, present, and future), or remitting the penalty due for them,⁹ and declaring them righteous before Him, as if they had obeyed every precept.¹⁰ This gives to believing sinners a title to eternal life;¹¹ and such justification is irrevocable.¹²

We reject the Romanist doctrine that infused righteousness in the sinner is meritorious and contributes to final justification, as we also reject the "New Perspective on Paul", "Auburn Avenue Theology" and "Federal Vision", which similarly compromise the doctrine of Justification by Faith Alone, suggesting that it is partly by works and, more particularly, by "faithful faith", "faithful obedience" or "(a mere external) covenant membership".

¹ Romans 3:24; 5:17; 8:33; Titus 3:7 ² Romans 8:33,34 cf. Deuteronomy 25:1
³ Isaiah 45:25; Jeremiah 23:6; Romans 3:24-26; 5:9,18;

10:4; 1 Corinthians 1:30; 2 Corinthians 5:21 ⁴ Psalm 40:8; Romans 5:19; Philippians 2:8 ⁵ Romans 4:25; 5:9; 8:4 ⁶ Isaiah 53:6,11; Romans 5:15-19; 1 Corinthians 15:22; Galatians 4:4,5; Hebrews 7:22 ⁷ Acts 13:39; Romans 3:22,28; 5:1; Galatians 2:16; Philippians 3:8,9 ⁸ Romans 4:6-8, 20-25; 1 Corinthians 1:30; 2 Corinthians 5:21
⁹ Romans 4:6-8; 8:1,33 ¹⁰ Romans 4:5; Ephesians 1:6 ¹¹ Romans 5:1,2,18,21; Titus 3:7 ¹² Romans 8:1,30-34

7. Holiness of Life

We affirm that, because God is holy, He requires holiness in the lives of all believers.¹ Made holy in Christ as to our standing, we are to live holily by Christ as to our state.² Holiness is, first and foremost, a matter of the heart,³ but inevitably it must show itself in conduct, both in words and in deeds.⁴ This will involve, for the Christian, separation from all that is worldly and sinful, so that our lives are markedly different from those men and women round about us.⁵ This is the purpose of God's grace,⁶ and therefore the continuing work of God in us;⁷ and although never perfect in this life,⁸ it will be blessedly perfect in the life to come.⁹ As the Lord's people, we therefore long for that future holiness when, completely hallowed by His will, we shall be perfected in the image of our Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ.¹⁰

We reject the view of many professing Christians in these days that it is quite acceptable to follow the ungodly world in dress and in the ways they think, speak and behave.

¹ Isaiah 35:8; 1 Peter 1:15,16; 2 Timothy 2:19
² 1 Corinthians 1:30; Hebrews 12:14; 13:12
³ Psalm 45:13; Matthew 5:8; 23:25-28
⁴ Ephesians 4:29; Titus 2:12 ⁵ 2 Corinthians 6:17; Philippians 2:15; 1 John 2:15,16
⁶ Ephesians 1:4
⁷ Philippians 2:12,13; 1 Thessalonians 5:23
⁸ Romans 7:14-25; 1 John 1:8,10
⁹ Ephesians 5:25-27; Hebrews 12:23;
 1 John 3:2; Jude 24; Revelation 21:4,27
¹⁰ Psalm 17:15; Romans 8:29; Ephesians 1:4

8. Christian Experience

We affirm the need for experimental Christianity or true Christian experience.¹ While knowledge is not to be despised, there is danger in an unspiritual pre-occupation with the intellect. The Reformed Faith, in its purest form, is the theology of the heart, and it should therefore deeply move us and profoundly change us.² Shown, by grace, God in His infinite sovereignty, majesty and glory, we are filled with a sense of adoring wonder and a sense of great unworthiness.³ We feel amazement that there is mercy with Him, enabling Him to receive sinners.⁴ Trusting wholly in the Redeemer, through Whose blood that mercy flows to us, we seek the pardon which fills our souls with joy and peace.⁵ To the Lord our God we constantly turn for refuge and comfort, our lives being characterized by persistent prayer for the fulfilment of the divine promises.⁶ His Word is our daily meditation: in it we find sure counsel, and from it we derive all necessary strength and support.⁷ In our daily walk, we are aware that His all-seeing, watchful eyes are upon us, and we therefore ever seek to walk humbly with Him.⁸ At times, such is our sweet communion that we are lost in love and praise, and great is our delight on Sabbath days to draw near to God, in the way of His appointments, glorying in the fact that He is our blessed Portion, in this life and the next.⁹ His love for us not only begets love for Him, but also leads us to love His people with pure affection, and poor, lost sinners with earnest longing that they may be saved.¹⁰ In all these things, our great end is that God may be glorified – that everything concerning us, as chosen, redeemed, and called sinners, may redound to the glory of God.¹¹

We reject that representation of the Reformed Faith which is little more than assent to a

particular theology and that bare academic Calvinism which makes even the Doctrine of Grace to appear dry and arid.

¹ Jeremiah 31:3; Romans 8:16; Philippians 3:10
² Ezekiel 36:26; Acts 16:14; Ephesians 3:14-19
³ Isaiah 6:1-5; Romans 11:33-36; 1 Corinthians 4:7
⁴ Psalm 130:3,4; 1 Timothy 1:12-14; 1 Peter 2:10
⁵ Job 19:25-27; Micah 7:18; Romans 15:13
⁶ Psalm 71:3; 119:49; 142:5; Jude 20,21 ⁷ Job 23:11,12; Psalm 1:1-6; Matthew 4:4 ⁸ Genesis 16:13; Psalm 16:8; 139:1-5; Micah 6:8 ⁹ Psalm 43:3,4; 48:14; 73:25; Lamentations 3:24 ¹⁰ Psalm 116:1; Romans 5:5; 10:1; 1 John 4:7 ¹¹ 1 Corinthians 6:20; Ephesians 3:21; 1 Timothy 1:17

9. The Sabbath Day

We affirm the perpetuity of the Sabbath. Appointed at the creation,¹ observed by the patriarchs,² maintained in the wilderness,³ incorporated in the Decalogue (or Ten Commandments),⁴ confirmed by the prophets,⁵ and predicted for New Testament times,⁶ it was upheld and enforced by our Lord.⁷ The keeping of the Sabbath involves the setting apart of "the seventh day"; and throughout the period of the Old Testament this was the seventh day of the week,⁸ but our Lord, while still keeping the seventh-day principle,⁹ changed the day from the seventh to the first day of the week, the day of His resurrection from the dead,¹⁰ and this day was therefore observed by the early Christian Church.¹¹ A Sabbath therefore remains for the people of God,¹² and we should keep it by resting from normal employment¹³ (except for works of necessity and mercy¹⁴) and from recreation¹⁵ (which may be perfectly lawful on other days¹⁶), and by spending the day, as far as is possible, in public and private worship, including spiritual reading, prayer, meditation, and conversation.¹⁷ The Sabbath thus kept will prove to be an inestimable blessing to individuals and to nations.¹⁸

We reject the anti-Sabbatarianism which prevails in some circles; and we deeply lament the great decline in Sabbath observance; and the fact that so many in the world – and not a few in the church – openly profane the Sabbath by unnecessary work, watching television, the practice of sport, frequenting restaurants, and holiday travel. Tragically, contemporary "antinomianism" – especially in the form of "New Covenant Theology" – encourages the sinful profanation and desecration of God's Holy Day, and we abhor and denounce these theological errors as detrimental to God's greater glory and man's spiritual good.

¹ Genesis 2:3 ² Genesis 4:3 – "in process of time", literally, "at the end of days" cf. 8:10,12; 29:27,28; Job 1:4,5
³ Exodus 16:23,26 ⁴ Exodus 20:8-11; Deuteronomy 5:12-15 ⁵ Isaiah 58:13; Jeremiah 17:21,22 ⁶ Isaiah 56:6,7; 66:23 ⁷ Matthew 24:20; Mark 2:27,28; Luke 4:16,31; 23:56 ⁸ Genesis 2:2,3; 4:3; Exodus 31:16,17
⁹ Mark 2:27,28 ¹⁰ John 20:1,19,26; Revelation 1:10
¹¹ Acts 2:1; 20:7; 1 Corinthians 16:1,2 ¹² Hebrews 4:9
¹³ Exodus 20:10; 34:21; Leviticus 23:3; Deuteronomy 5:14; Nehemiah 13:15-20; Jeremiah 17:21
¹⁴ Matthew 12:1,10-13; Luke 13:16 ¹⁵ Isaiah 58:13
¹⁶ Genesis 27:3; Nehemiah 8:10; Ecclesiastes 8:15
¹⁷ Leviticus 23:3; Psalm 92 – title; Isaiah 66:23; Luke 4:16; Acts 16:13,14; 20:7
¹⁸ Genesis 2:3; Isaiah 56:7,8; 58:13,14

10. Reverence in Worship

We affirm the concept of reverence for God.¹ Scripture distinguishes between servile fear which is little more than fear of God's wrath and punishment² and filial fear which is an holy disposition formed in our souls by the Holy Spirit,³ whereby we are enabled properly to respond to God's infinite excellence⁴ – His greatness and goodness.⁵ This is the grace which believers are called upon to exercise.⁶ It is awe, wonder, and profound respect before God,⁷ manifesting itself in a variety of ways, including strict regard to His revealed will,⁸

abhorrence of what is evil or unworthy,⁹ watchfulness over heart and life,¹⁰ sincerity, seriousness and diligence in His service,¹¹ withholding nothing from Him,¹² hope in the divine mercy alone,¹³ and a deep, strong desire for His presence and favour.¹⁴ This deep veneration for God must be especially evident in the church's worship,¹⁵ wherein God is not only recognized as the heavenly Majesty, but He is also honoured and praised as such.¹⁶ Such fear is not at all incompatible with the worshipper's love for God, but it does affect the character of that love, making it not carnal familiarity but reverential affection;¹⁷ neither is it incompatible with our joy in God, but godly fear has a sanctifying and solemnizing effect upon it, transforming this emotion into something sober and serene, not expressed in worldly laughter but rather in spiritual rejoicing.¹⁸

We reject the spirit prevailing in many churches, with its tendency to turn worship into nothing more than worldly entertainment. It grieves us that, in God's House, ministers so often choose to dress casually and conduct themselves in an undignified manner, as it also grieves us that congregations are prone to follow their bad examples, becoming cavalier about God and His holiness and behaving in a most unworthy and unseemly manner. The reverence and awe of God have tragically all but disappeared in our day.

¹ Genesis 31:42; Psalm 33:8; Proverbs 1:7; Hebrews 12:28 ² Genesis 3:10; Matthew 25:24,25; James 2:19 ³ Deuteronomy 5:29; Psalm 86:11; Isaiah 11:2,3; Jeremiah 32:39,40 ⁴ Deuteronomy 28:58; Psalm 112:1 ⁵ Jeremiah 5:22, 10:6,7. Psalm 130:4; Hosea 3:5 ⁶ Proverbs 23:17; 2 Corinthians 7:1; 1 Peter 1:17
⁷ Ecclesiastes 5:2; Isaiah 6:1-3, 8:13 ⁸ Psalm 112:1; Ecclesiastes 12:13 ⁹ Genesis 20:11, 42:18; Job 1:1; Proverbs 8:13, 16:6 ¹⁰ Romans 11:20,21; 2 Corinthians 7:1 ¹¹ Psalm 2:11; Philippians 2:12; Colossians 3:22 ¹² Genesis 22:12; Nehemiah 5:15; Isaiah 60:5 ¹³ Psalm 147:11 ¹⁴ Psalm 25:1,14; Acts 10:1,2
¹⁵ Exodus 15:11; Psalm 5:7; 89:7; Acts 9:31 ¹⁶ Psalm 29:2; 50:23, 86:9; Revelation 14:7, 15:4 ¹⁷ Psalm 70:4; 73:25 ¹⁸ Psalm 2:11; Proverbs 28:14; Philippians 4:4

11. The Regulative Principle

We affirm the divine Law for worship, known as the Regulative Principle, which states that there must be positive authority of Scriptural appointment, or prescription, in the way of direct command or approved example, for all parts of the worship of God. This Law has been expressed in the statement, "What Scripture does not prescribe, it forbids."¹ We understand that statement to mean that the parts of ordinary worship should only include the singing of scriptural and worthy praise;² the reading of the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments in a faithful and accurate translation;³ the offering up of prayer, which includes thanksgiving,⁴ confession⁵ and petition;⁶ the preaching and hearing of God's Word;⁷ and the Benediction or Blessing.⁸ In addition to these ordinances, there is also the administration of the two sacraments, or symbolical ordinances: namely Baptism and the Lord's Supper.⁹

We reject the introduction into solemn public worship of worldly entertainment, be it drama, mime, puppetry, art, dance, comedy, or pop-music (with its music groups and instrumentalists). Indeed, we deprecate so-called 'Contemporary Christian Worship', believing its innovations to be dishonouring to God, contrary to Scripture (as "will-worship"), and harmful to the testimony of Christ's professing Church.

¹ Deuteronomy 4:2, 12:32; Matthew 15:3,9; 28:20; 1 Corinthians 11:2,23; Colossians 2:22 ² Psalm 95:1,2; Colossians 3:16 ³ Joshua 8:34,35; Nehemiah 8:1-3; 1 Thessalonians 5:27 ⁴ Hosea 14:1,2; Philippians 4:6; Hebrews 13:15
⁵ Daniel 9:4; Matthew 6:12; 1 John 1:9 ⁶ Ephesians 6:18,19; Philippians 4:6; 1 Timothy 2:1,2,8 ⁷ Acts 10:33; 2 Timothy 4:2 ⁸ Numbers 6:22-27; 2 Corinthians 13:14 ⁹ Matthew 28:19,20; 1 Corinthians 11:23-29

Ed: To be concluded.