

EVANGELICAL MENTOR AND MODEL *continued*

Simeon went on to be ordained, and after a short stint at St. Edwards, Cambridge, at age 23, he was appointed vicar of *Holy Trinity Church*, Cambridge. The parish had wanted another minister, and this fact—combined with Simeon’s evangelical preaching—quickly alienated them. They locked their rented pews against him, and those who came to hear Simeon were forced to stand in the aisles. When Simeon moved to put benches in the aisles, the church wardens threw them out. However, slowly the pews began to open up and fill, not primarily with townspeople but with students.

Simeon, an untiring activist, also helped found evangelistic organisations like the London Jews Society, the Religious Tract Society, and the British & Foreign Bible Society. He was also one of the founders of the Church Missionary Society, and he inspired dozens of young men from his church to take the gospel to the far corners of the world. By the time he died, it is estimated that one-third of all the Anglican ministers in the country had sat under his teaching at one time or another. He was more influential than the best known prelate!

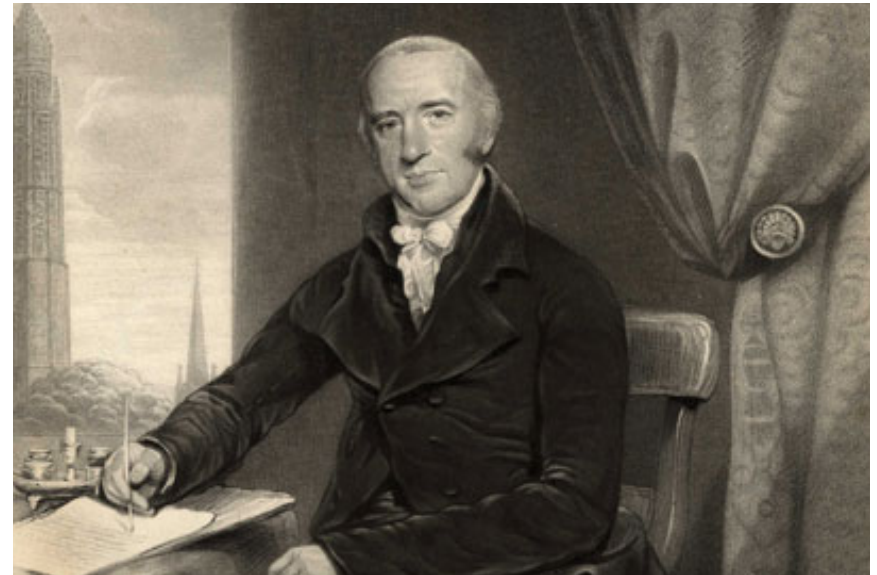


MEETINGS TODAY

- Sunday School – 10.15am
- Morning Worship – 11.30am: *11th Message in the Galatians Series: “A Story of Sonship”*
- Evening Service – 7.00pm: *“Reasons Why Sinners Will Not Come to Christ.”*

INSPIRATION IN A SENTENCE

“You often feel that your prayers scarcely reach the ceiling; but oh, get into this humble spirit by considering how good the Lord is, and how evil you all are, and then prayer will mount on wings of faith to heaven. ... The sigh, the groan of a broken heart, will soon go through the ceiling up to heaven, aye, into the very bosom of God.” [Charles Simeon]



CHARLES SIMEON (1759-1836)

EVANGELICAL MENTOR AND MODEL

In 1779, the young Simeon, from an aristocratic family, came to Kings College, Cambridge, to study, and he was told that he must attend chapel on Easter Day to receive Communion. Simeon’s main interests to this point had been horses, games, and fashion. He considered that, *“Satan himself was as fit to attend [the sacrament] as I.”* Still, he tried hard to see how he might sort out his conscience. He began to read the Scriptures and various devotional books.

As he read about propitiatory sacrifice in the Old Testament, he thought, *“What, may I transfer all my guilt to another? Has God provided an offering for me, that I may lie my sins on his head?”* He immediately laid his sins on Christ alone.



A STORY OF SONSHIP

Text: **Galatians 4:1-7**.

The Judaisers of Paul's day were like the agents of the Equality Agenda in ours: professing themselves to bursting with tolerance, in practice they were bruisingly intolerant! Paul's teaching in **Galatians 3** would have offended them – that each person, on conversion, is considered a true heir of Abraham. However, the development of this truth in **Galatians 4** was destined to shock them to their legalistic core: each converted person, whether Jew or Gentile, is adopted into the family of God and so becomes a son or daughter within that family.

[1] THE REQUIREMENT FOR SONSHIP; 4:1-3.

The opening phrase in **4:1**, “*Now I say ...*” (i.e. “*What I have been saying ...*”) links us back to the argument Paul made in **chapter 3**, that justification is by faith alone, not works.

Once again Paul pulls in a picture from his times in **4:1-3**: (i) the Roman child becoming an adult at the family festival *Liberalia*, held on 17 March, (ii) the Jewish boy receiving his *Bar Mitzvah* when he is legally reckoned an adult. Until these ceremonies, though the children were heirs, they did not enjoy the freedom of the house as they were under the authority of guardians and managers.

Paul compares the Law to the guardian, guiding us through the ABCs of instruction and preparing us for Christ's appearance (**3:23-25**). In Christ we receive much more than the ABCs for He who is Himself the “*Alpha and Omega*” (A–Z), reveals ‘the entire alphabet’ of God's word to man. He elevates us by His grace to adult sons in the house (cf. **4:5,7**: the term “*adoption*” (**4:5**) means, “*to place as an adult son*”).

[2] THE RECEPTION OF SONSHIP; 4:4-5.

The essence of the message in **4:4-5** is that Christ came so that we might receive sonship.

(a) WHEN CHRIST CAME: just as the son matured from childhood to adulthood at the appointed time (**4:2**), so Jesus came into the world at an opportune moment (**4:4**). Providential factors that favoured this time included: peace in the Roman Empire, developments in infrastructure, a common language (Koine Greek), a Greek Bible, the Jewish dispersion had caused synagogues to be planted throughout the entire known world. Each of these factors enabled the spread of the Gospel.

(b) WHO CAME: Paul points to the dual nature of Christ, both God and man. The sending forth of the Son indicates His Pre-existence / Deity (cf. **John 16:28**); the fact that He was “born of a woman” underlines His humanity (cf. **Genesis 3:15, Matthew 1:18-25**).

(c) HOW HE CAME: Christ was made “*under the law*” in the sense of **3:13** – that He was subject to the Law's demands and bore its curse for us. He who was the architect of the law allowed that law to exercise authority over Himself.

(d) WHY HE CAME: **4:5** brings us one of the great programmatic statements of Scripture: in unpacking it, Puritan preachers could preach for years, generating huge folios of text. **Redemption** is the focus of Christ's coming – a term borrowed from the marketplace where a slave is purchased and, in this case, brought out from this arena (*ex-agerazo*). We were not purchased to remain slaves, but become sons.

[3] THE RESULTS FROM SONSHIP; 4:6-7.

The apostle proceeds to sketch the plan of salvation, underlining how the entire Trinity is involved.

(a) THE SPIRIT IN THIS SONSHIP:

God the Father sent the Son to die for us (**4:5**); God the Son sent His Spirit to live in us (**4:6**).

(b) THE SUBSTANCE OF THIS SONSHIP: this is best displayed by contrasting the lot of the servant and the son.

(i) The son has the same nature as the father, the servant does not, (ii) the son has a father, while the servant has a master, (iii) the son obeys out of love while the servant does so from fear, (iv) the son is rich (“*sons and heirs*”), while the servant is poor, (v) the son has a guaranteed future, while the servant does not.

In one sense our adoption is not yet final (cf. **Romans 8:23**).