



A Christian perspective on the family

Western civilisation is, in our time, undergoing dramatic changes, reaching out into every level of society. Standards which had been generally accepted for generations are now being questioned and abandoned. The family, the basic social unit, has not escaped unscathed in the current turmoil and ominous developments affecting it are forced upon our attention regularly in our pastoral work, in wider social contacts and through the media. The emerging picture is one of confusion, uncertainty and a total lack of direction. In the absence of moral absolutes, public opinion takes its cue from the latest philosophic theories. It is therefore vital that the moral vacuum is countered by a positive Christian approach based on the divine revelation, which lays down clear guidelines for both individual and family life. In dealing with the subject, I propose first to define the family, considering it in its contemporary form and framework, then to go on to discuss problems which are undermining family life and finally to give attention to the relationship between the church and the family.

Defining the family

What comes to mind most readily when we think of "family" is a group consisting of father, mother and children, which is described by anthropologists and sociologists as the "nuclear family" — the basic biological unit. There is no single word in the Old Testament that is the exact equivalent of the English word "family". The nearest approximation would be "house" or "household", originally representing the group of people and subsequently referring to the actual dwelling. All those sheltering under the one roof would be included in its scope. "Household" was in use in Roman and Hellenistic times and in the first century Jewish world, embracing all who were associated with a home and shared its benefits — husband, wife, children, slaves and any dependants. Although a nuclear structure may be at its centre, the Biblical family is not exclusively nuclear as we understand the term. In some cultures "family" would still be understood in this wider sense. It could include grandparents, uncles, aunts and cousins and those further removed, with whom there was a felt sense of kinship. By contrast with the "nuclear" family this would be called the "extended" family, a variety which was not uncommon in our own past national history before the industrial revolution and more recently in rural communities. However, with the advance of urbanisation and the consequent disturbance in the structure of society, there has come about a discontinuity in family networks. It is now mainly in the non-industrialised parts of the world that extended families subsist.

In modern societies, besides nuclear families there are what may be termed "alternative families". Into this category comes the situation in which one of the parents has separated from the other and has either remarried or formed an association with a new partner. Children from the first marriage will now have a stepparent and, if there are new children born, they will be half-brothers or sisters of the existing family. One can see the potential for tension here, because harmonious relations will depend upon the accommodation that the newly introduced members are able to make to one another. There now exists also in our society a great number of single-parent families, responsible for the rearing of one and a half million children. Frequently such families are the innocent victims of failed marriages, left to carry burdens that they find overwhelming, as they struggle to make ends meet in the face of very harsh economic conditions. In some cases it is young, very inexperienced, immature, single-mothers who are involved, trapped by the pressures of the permissive society, in a set of circumstances for which they are psychologically unprepared, but from which there is no easy way of escape.

The family, in its several varieties, is the institution into which the majority of children, the most dependent of creatures, are delivered at birth, to be given the necessary caring and nurturing until they attain self-sufficiency. Here they are moulded and given a distinct identity, because, as the closest and most tangible world in their experience, it imprints itself upon their consciousness. The learning process through interaction with a child's immediate environment begins very early and continues until maturity. *"The human child,"* says O.R. Johnstone in *Who Needs the Family*, *"is not instinctively programmed... Admittedly the human child has a complex brain and immense creative potential. But all the skills of living and surviving are taught. These things are transmitted by cultural channels. The child needs to learn them. He does not know from birth. It is these essential needs of the child upon which the survival of the race depends and which bring the importance of the family into the foreground."*

Divergent views of the family have been held throughout history. Plato gave consideration to the idea that it might not be too great a loss if it were abolished. Karl Marx's radical views influenced political thought in the Soviet Union to such a degree that an attempt at the complete dissolution of families was made in the 1920s, with disastrous consequences. In 1967 the opinion was expressed by anthropologist, Edmund Leach, in one of his BBC Reith Lectures, that *"the family was the source of all our discontents"*. Many present day sociologists, whose ideology influences, and is influenced by, contemporary trends, would applaud this assessment. However, the value and importance of the family have always been recognised by a large proportion of society and particularly those whose thinking is enlightened by Scripture.

The Bible gives us glimpses of family at its best and at its worst for there is no glossing over of reality.

As O.R. Johnstone states in *Who needs the Family*, *"The family chronicles of Genesis 11-50 are packed to the very end of the book with intense personal records of family life — jealousy and hatred, betrayal and revenge, scheming and deception, as well as forgiveness, faithfulness and joy. Few can fail to sense the utter modernity of this ancient account, full of deep perception of the dynamics of family relationships. It is no mere modern discovery that the family can be the focus of destructive urges, a place of damage and despair as well as of love and security... Scripture constantly warns about the way human sin can turn the source of great blessing into the source of greatest damage and torment"*.

The reality that the Scripture confronts us with is the fact of the fall of the human race, which has blown us off course to such an extent that we do not of ourselves know what is for our good. Rodney Clapp, commenting on Romans 1 and 2 in *Families at the Crossroads*, states, *"In our fallenness we are given up to a corrupted imagination, to a senseless, darkened, debased mind (Romans 1:21, 28). In ignorance and self-deception, we deny and corrode our true nature. This results in no less than the degradation of our bodies and the fracturing of all our social relations, including the family"* (Romans 1:24-32). Because of the fall a special supernatural revelation of God has become necessary. This revelation sets out a framework which, if conformed to, will correctly regulate all our conduct.

Framework for the family

The institution that lays the basis for and supports the fabric of the family is marriage and stable marriage provides the most effective framework upon which the appropriate nurture of children may be based, because it provides the love, harmony and security that are so desirable in a child's formative years. Yet many influences are operating that may have the effect of destabilising marriage. The partners, even given the best of circumstances, are only human and so bring many imperfections to the partnership. The innate self-centredness of human nature, for instance, is liable to intrude personal interest into the place of primacy and if not countered and held in check through self-discipline, will impose great strains upon the relationship and lead to disharmony.

Society glamorises marriage in particular ways, with the result that many partners may enter into it with unrealistic expectations. Successful marriages do not come about fortuitously but rather as the

result of the goodwill and cooperation of each party in an atmosphere of tolerance and patience. It is apparent that many modern marriages have failed owing to a lack of understanding of the level of commitment required and because there has not been enough willingness to devote real effort to making the relationship work. Marriage demands persevering self-denial and self-sacrifice in the long term, in the interests of the continuing happiness of both spouses. It is obvious that many present day young married couples have not come to terms with this and so when the marriage comes under strain through a crisis such as illness or unemployment, one or other, instead of facing up to the dilemma, may opt out of their responsibilities.

Prevailing social and cultural trends, producing a particular moral and spiritual outlook, will colour the way in which people will interpret their marriage obligations as permanently binding or otherwise. If one were to extrapolate from the very frequent occurrence of divorce, one conclusion to be drawn is that there has been a change of perception in regard to the permanence of marriage. What this means in practical terms is that, although many people verbally agree to be for each other till death, there may be a mental reservation which will allow for an opt-out if their expectations are not fulfilled. Marriage as traditionally understood involves a covenant into which the partners enter with each other, whereby without any qualifications or reservations, they will be faithful until death, in prosperity or adversity.

It would appear that this is not altogether the way that many people now approach matrimony. It is more like a transaction in the form of a contract between two self-interested partners. In certain instances specific, written, pre-marriage contracts, drawn up by lawyers setting out contingencies and qualifications, are made. The assumption that underlies these is that if, or when, the marriage ceases to be to the advantage of one or both partners, it will be dissolved and the assets apportioned as agreed. In this arrangement of things the door is left open for insecurity from the outset and insecurity does not make for stability or permanence. Matrimonial security has to be undergirded by a solemn binding covenant, promising lifelong love and fidelity.

On the economic side many occupations require the mobility of their employees. This may mean being deprived of an existing family network, providing supportive relatives to help in time of illness or other emergency, or as child-minders. Under the pressure of economic circumstances many wives and mothers are finding it necessary to change their role to the extent of becoming the family breadwinners in full or part-time work. It is reckoned that approximately one half of all married women are economically active.

The influence of the feminist movement can exert its own unhelpful pressure, as Edith Schaeffer points out in her book, *What is the Family*.

"Confusion exists among many girls today because of some of the things put forth by the Women's Liberation Movement. There are girls who fear that they may be giving in to a weakness if they show longing or interest in being mothers or homemakers. There are others who, already married, have become so 'turned around' that right seems wrong and wrong seems right and they feel that a split in the home is what they must head for if they are going to be really liberated and free. As a result homes that were once secure are breaking and shattering. Saddest of all is the knowledge ... that God has made men and women as people with capacities and needs for a continuity in relationship and that life is all too short anyway, so that there is terrible loneliness ahead for people who have torn up their homes with their own hands."

Co-habitation is one of the common-places of our era. It is argued that it is better for young people not to make the commitment required in marriage until they have first made the experiment of living together, to see whether the partnership is going to work out. It may not, however, even from a social point of view, be what is best for the couple concerned, or for wider society, because they do not have any formal status and their relationship with each other lacks definiteness and certainty. And as it is not a true equivalent of marriage, in which a public and binding commitment of each to the other is made, it is not a valid indicator of the likely result of marrying. An American study *The National and International Religion Report* states that, *"Marriages that are preceded by living together have 50% higher disruption (divorce or separation) rates than marriages without premarital co-habitation"*.

The ideal model of what marriage ought to be is set before us in Paul's letter to Ephesians, where he speaks of matrimonial love as being illustrative of the love of Christ for his church. Referring to Ephesians 5:25, Professor F. F. Bruce says: *"...there are no shortcomings about the love of Christ for his church, which is here prescribed as the model for the Christian husband's love for his wife. By setting this highest of standards for the husband's treatment of his wife, Paul goes to the limit in safeguarding the wife's dignity and welfare. For the love of Christ is a self-denying love: he gave himself up for his church, and the natural inference is that there is no sacrifice, not even the sacrifice of life itself, which a husband should not be prepared to make, if necessary, for his wife."*

The erosion of the family

A perceptive comment on Family Values in *The Scotsman* of 2nd March 1996 states:

"The issues and problems facing young people today are virtually unrecognisable next to those faced by older generations... The new 'in-your-face' technological society brings with it the belief that all human needs are essentially technical and can only be satisfied by material goods, economic programmes and management skills. In this individualistic, manmade society, family life is often marginalised as being no longer of value. When the nurturing, supportive role of the family is weakened, people's emotional need can be neglected and as a result people can end up feeling alienated from each other."

Stephen Davies, in his article *The Remoralization of Society* parallels this comment when he writes, *"...many features of contemporary British life, and much of the information available to us, are explicable only in terms of a threatened or actual process of demoralisation. This has reached a stage in parts of Britain where the very existence of a moral community is at risk. The notion of demoralisation does not refer to such obvious matters as the rate of crime, the disregard of sexual and other taboos or levels of single-parenthood. It means that the very idea of morality and of a moral code or rule which governs relations between individuals is in doubt. Matters such as rising delinquency are symptomatic of the erosion of the belief that there can or should be moral values of any kind. In particular there has been a falling away of the belief that people as individuals have rights or claims which should be respected in all relations public or private."* He goes on to indicate that the most important means by which a moral community is promoted and upheld is through a range of institutions which both enable and encourage people to act in one way rather than in another and cites families and households among the most significant of these. It should be noted that neither of these comments has been made from an avowedly Christian or even religious standpoint.

There can be no denial that there has been in the last half-century, or so a significant shift of opinion on the social and moral level. Many of the older generation referred to earlier had been furnished through home or school or religious teaching, with basic ideas of what constituted acceptable or moral conduct. While it is true that these principles have been imbibed by a sizeable minority of young people who are giving expression to them in commendable actions, nevertheless, the assumption that dominates a substantial proportion of the contemporary generation is that there are no absolutes and that consequently there is no right or wrong; that one way of thinking or acting is as good as any other. Only a step away from such moral relativism is nihilism, the view that nothing matters, that no real value can be attached to anything and that virtue is impossible. It would be difficult to imagine what farreaching effects such a philosophy could have in the area of personal relationships.

One popular way of thinking promotes the idea that a person's own wishes and desires should never be thwarted and that anything that prevents the fulfilment of them should be removed. Contemporary thought in the field of psychology and sociology seeks to place a great part of the blame for complexes and hang-ups in adult life upon the experience of repression in childhood and youth. Yet if a child is indulged and led to expect the fulfilment of every desire and whim, surely this is the worst of all preparations for the real world, because as he grows up he is compelled to realise that it is only by being willing to make concessions to the wishes of others that he can survive or succeed.

Another sinister aspect of the modern world is the denial of personal responsibility. Such an outlook is arrived at by arguing that we humans are not truly free, but are in concealed ways acted upon and dominated by our background and environment, so that our actions are not in a true sense our own. As a result we do not have the capacity to make our choices freely. What explains them is our biology or our psychology. While there can be no question that background and environment can be very significant factors in the moulding of an individual's life and outlook, it cannot be realistic to look for all the triggers for a person's actions outside of himself.

All the foregoing factors, or any combination of them, add up to a very negative prescription for the wellbeing of modern families, because they form part of the framework against which families are being reared. But there are other important issues that have to be taken into consideration. The occurrence of divorce, for instance, has reached such proportions that it is reckoned that two out of every five marriages will end this way.

Rodney Clapp in his book *Families at the Crossroads* puts the view that *"...divorce may by some measures increase the mental health and fulfilment of the former spouses: only rarely does it do the same thing for the children"*. According to psychologist, Michael Thomson, quoted by Clapp, *"We've had a thirty-year epidemic of divorce and a generation of shell-shocked children. We have only begun to understand the long term effects of having so many busted-up families."* Several studies of the aftermath of divorce have shown the damage and trauma suffered by some children and concern for them must be given priority.

The proportion of divorces in which dependent children are involved is very much on the increase. Figures published recently by the Government's Office of Population, Censuses and Surveys, show that in 1993, 165,000 marriages ended in divorce, (and the most up-to-date estimate puts the number at 40% of all marriages) directly affecting 176,000 children under 16 years. It is not surprising that the scale of distress among children throughout our land is vast. It is reckoned that approximately 100,000 children run away from home each year and that several thousand calls a day are made to the telephone Childline service. It may be that the reporting and recognition of problems has become more effective but what cannot be questioned is that a very large number of children are suffering and the most likely form of suffering and distress is psychological. The occurrence of teenage suicide, depression, anorexia and drug abuse is increasing and family breakdown will feature as one of the significant causes, along with others. Many children are not being brought up in either one or two-parent families. There are in the region of 100,000 children in the care of the local authorities and voluntary organisations. The reason the majority are in care is some form of deprivation in their home circumstances, often resulting in behavioural problems. Removal from their homes does not prevent them from being vulnerable. It is not always the case that they are moving from a less stable to a more stable environment, because the subsequent history of many of them will be that they will move between different homes and foster homes.

A recent Church of England Report under the title *All God's Children* says very relevantly that: *"elements in our society are combining to create for today's children a prematurely adult and somewhat lonely world that accustoms them to materialism, hedonism, selfishness, sexual amorality, the unseriousness and even normality of violence, the possibility of spiritual power through openness to the occult — and all this against an ever-weakening acknowledgement of the truth and relevance of Christianity"*. Each post-war decade has seen its own particular expression of youth culture and now, in the middle of the nineties, there are symptoms of a new variety of delinquency. A contemporary writer, Peter McDougall, the victim of an unprovoked attack on a city street and interviewed in *The Herald* on 1st December 1995 is of the view that,

"Young people have been spiritually bankrupted, ... one of the great mistakes we constantly make is that we judge them on our moral standards without realising that their whole culture is without morality. We constantly judge things on how we'd react ourselves ... on what we would do in a particular situation. Then you realise it's a hopeless task because they are not like us. They don't feel the same way at all." He continues, "You are talking about kids that have been brutalised to the degree that they don't know the difference between right and wrong. Conscience doesn't exist anymore. It's the new barbarism."

The causes of the unacceptable behaviour ought not, therefore, to be attributed to these young people themselves: they are due rather to the permissiveness, domestic disharmony, indiscipline, selfishness and irresponsibility of the adult role-models whose example they imitate. While doubtless the trauma of divorce must have devastating consequences for the separating parents themselves, the agony and suffering that will follow in the experience of the children is incalculable. Some may spend the rest of their childhood and adolescence in alternate stays in their separated parents' homes, while their loyalties are pulled now in one direction and now in another. Who can measure the effects upon a child of one of the parents leaving the home and never returning? Who can understand the disillusionment if the parent who has gone away subsequently shows little real interest in the children?

Research into the effects upon the development of a child's personality, shows the harm that can result if the close, loving relationship with its mother is broken. And one would not expect it to be otherwise, considering the bonding that exists in normal circumstances, between mother and child. Some experts in the field, such as John Bowlby, author of *Child Care and the Growth of Love*, go so far as to say that up to a certain limit, *"Young children thrive better in bad homes than in good institutions"*. The dilemma, however, for those dealing with such problems is determining the appropriate time for intervention.

The church and the family

The interests of the church and the family have been inextricably linked together from the dawn of human history. From the church's earliest stages the role of the family has been supremely significant, for the true religion has been cradled in its bosom. Indeed the church at the beginning was a family and a particular family was the church, as we see in the case of Adam, Seth, Enoch, Noah and Abraham. And the faith nurtured within the family was through its instrumentality transmitted to the next generation, the Lord himself determining the family member to whom his saving mercy would be made known and who would be faithful in preserving and propagating the knowledge of the truth. Abraham and his family dwelling in Canaan were anxious to remain free from contamination by the surrounding heathen worship. That concern was given practical effect in Abraham's prayer that this separation would be safeguarded in the matter of Isaac's marriage and God said of Abraham,

"For I know him that he will command his children and his household after him, and they shall keep the way of the Lord to do justice and judgement; that the Lord may bring upon Abraham that which He hath spoken of him"

(Genesis 18:19)

Job's consistent practice was to pray and offer sacrifices on behalf of his grownup family whenever they had been banqueting together, lest in their excesses they should have blasphemed God in their hearts. We could assume that if this was his concern for his adult family he would also have used every effort to give them the right spiritual and moral guidance in childhood. Solomon repeatedly refers to the need of parents to train up their children in the way that they should go, so that when they are old they will not forget it. Part of the training consists in discipline, the absence of which, he makes clear, is no kindness to the growing child: if the hand of discipline produces tears it is to be applied nevertheless.

The unique importance of family religion in Old Testament times is brought home to us when we take account of the fact that the public means of grace were not immediately and readily accessible in the way that they are to ourselves. In those times there was a stipulation that the males would appear three times in the year at one particular central shrine for the stated festivals and rituals of their religion. For the rest of the year, while the tabernacle in Shiloh or the temple in Jerusalem functioned, up until the stage when local synagogues were established after the exile, the requirements of their religion were very closely linked in with the personal piety of parents who made conscience of nurturing their children in the faith.

The Passover, one of the significant annual events in the religious life of the Hebrew people, had both a national as well as a family focus. It celebrated one of the most momentous divine interventions in their history, when a tribe who had gone from Canaan four hundred years

previously were about to be dramatically liberated from captivity. On the eve of their departure they were gathered together by families in their own homes and each, separately, was to sacrifice its own Passover lamb. Subsequent annual commemoration observed by families provided opportunity for parents to explain the meaning of the ritual to their children, who asked, "What mean ye by this service?" The rite of circumcision in the Old Testament, corresponding to the sacrament of baptism in the New Testament, involved the church and the family. It spoke of the desire of parents to secure for their children the benefits of a covenant relationship and their readiness to promise to bring up their family in a God-honouring way.

The emphasis of the New Testament in relation to the parental nurture of children does not contradict but confirm the thrust of the Old Testament. It was God's purpose that, when his own Son came into the world, he was to be born into the bosom of a human family, to be nurtured by the tender care of a human mother and supported by the diligent industry of a human foster-father. If his presence at a wedding is confirmatory of his positive approval of the institution of marriage, so his belonging by birth to a human family marks the unique role which it occupies in his purpose. Both Mary and Joseph were devout and righteous and the environment of their home provided the background that met the needs of the Holy Child.

Jesus himself ministered to many families, transforming what were bleak and apparently hopeless situations into occasions of joy and thanksgiving, as seriously ill children were healed and some others raised from the dead. The effect of one miracle recorded in John 4:53 is that *"the father himself believed and all his household"*. The ministry of the apostles, as they went out to preach, reached out to households, and whole families embraced the faith and were baptised e.g. Cornelius, Lydia and the Philippian jailor. Upon conversion family teaching in the home was expected. Some scholars are of the view that there was a table of basic family duties based on the instruction of the apostles, which they see in such passages as Colossians 3, Ephesians 5 and 1 Peter 2.

Contributing many years ago to a Free Church publication under the title *Our Evangelical Heritage* the late Professor R.A. Finlayson wrote words that are very apposite to our contemporary situation:

"We regard the home as the first line of defence and the chief base of operations in our dealings with youth. As a divine institution and the highest unit of human life and society, the preservation of its Christian sanctity and purity is the church's first great task. Home is the true nursery of the child life, morally and spiritually, as well as physically. It is the all-important factor in the determination of character and in the awakening of spiritual life... It is through the child's relation to his parents that his earliest lessons in religion are learned. The love and care of father and mother are the natural means of inculcating the love and care of God and the trust and obedience which parental love demands and calls forth, indicate the trust and obedience that should be rendered to God."

"It is in the Christian home that the child learns to love the Lord Jesus and nothing can possibly take the place of love in the formation of Christian character or the maintenance of Christian witness. We want our children to be followers of Christ because they love him and if, in their earliest years, they have been taught to love him, we are confident they will continue to love and follow him through the advancing years, in the light of growing knowledge and amidst the deepening shadows. If we are to safeguard our children against the evil influences of life we must forestall these influences by instructing them from infancy in the great truths of our faith."

One effect of genuine family religion is observable in the area of church attendance. Where parents have consistently and conscientiously taken their children to church, there is the likelihood that these children themselves in adult life will maintain a churchgoing habit. Where, on the other hand, parents have not shown such consistency and have been only sporadic in their attendance, the probability is that their families will not maintain any meaningful contact with the church. It would be interesting to discover what the actual co-relation is between those in membership in the church at present and their past family background. Many were nurtured round the hearths of Christian homes and had deep impressions made upon them from an early age. The survival of the

church to the present day and its continuance into the future have the most intimate connection with families and family religion.

How can the church faithfully and compassionately counter the confusion that exists in the minds of society in regard to the value and significance of marriage and the family? Primarily it needs to reassert the certainties of the Christian faith, without compromising what the Bible says by making concessions to a widespread unbiblical view of the family. That means presenting to our contemporary world fundamental principles, such as lifelong fidelity in marriage accompanied by mutual love and respect on the part of the spouses, and the responsibility of parents to safeguard not only the physical but also the moral and spiritual wellbeing of their children. The obligation of the children to honour and respect their parents must also be given prominence. As the Bible makes clear there is a promise bearing on this in the Fifth Commandment. Jesus condemned in the clearest terms those who opted out of their filial duties on the specious excuse that what could have been used to benefit parents was instead gifted to God.

The local congregation should itself act as a family, showing concern, giving support and offering encouragement, but above all lending a sympathetic ear to those who are in the middle of marital and family tensions and traumas. The listening ear could act as a kind of therapy, because it gives the opportunity for those who are distressed and perhaps at breaking point, to talk about their problems and thus to come to view them in a more objective and dispassionate way. If they have become involved in what we view, in terms of Scripture, as irregular relationships, it will not help to win them round to the gospel if we boycott them. Jesus did not boycott the woman of Samaria or the woman taken in adultery. If we totally alienate ourselves from such we are not likely to be able to help them spiritually.

The family unit that the New Testament envisages is not a closed, self-centred institution, but one that the Lord has placed in society to act as light and salt. The light reflected through the everyday life of his people is there to show his standards, the salt to act as a preservative against the corrupting tendencies in individual and community character and conduct. Christian families serve as a link between their church or congregation and the community. There will be interaction between them and the people in their neighbourhood through such activities as work, school, recreation and exchange visits. Their Christian commitment and lifestyle will become apparent, and the language and conduct of the children should mark them out as different, whether in the playground or on a wider social level. We must not minimise the significance of the Christian family and the access it can provide for gospel witness in a virtually pagan society.

A Christian perspective on the family alerts us to the scale of the marital and domestic malaise touching so many homes, families and individuals in our contemporary world. One clear conclusion which must be drawn is that present day standards do not produce happiness or stability in the experience of the adults and children whose family life has disintegrated. The major underlying problem has been shown to be the absence of an adequate moral framework as current philosophies and ideologies regarding the family have been proved to be flawed.

Fathers and Brethren, the church must continue to confidently proclaim the positive Christian ethic, as it reaches out to society, recalling people to an acceptance of God's code of conduct for family life. The ultimate solution to the present crisis is faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, whose compassion embraces every variety of human failure and need, for he declares,

"Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest".

N Macdonald

© 2013
www.christianstudylibrary.org