

Dear members and friends of SEC,

It's quite a remarkable thing how various aspects of the ministry of God's Word – on the Lord's Day morning, evening and in the Midweek Bible Study – dovetail together. On the last Wednesday of May we looked at 1 Samuel 4, that tragic chapter in which the elders of Israel, responding to defeat at the hands of the Philistines, decide to bring the ark of the covenant into the battlefield, with disastrous results. Not only is there a great slaughter, in which Eli's two sons are killed, but the ark is captured, underlining the truth of the words uttered by Eli's dying daughter-in-law – 'Tchabod...the glory has departed'.

On Sunday mornings we are currently in Luke 12, where the Lord Jesus directs his disciples not to be like the rich fool in the parable, securing (so he thinks) a bright future for himself while not giving a thought about God. Followers of the Saviour are urged not to be anxious about earthly things, but to seek first the kingdom of God, and everything else that we need will be added to us. 'Fear not, little flock, for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom' (Luke 12:32).

And on Sunday evenings we are drawing to a close in our studies in 1 John. The apostle finishes the letter by urging his 'little children' – a mode of address very similar in its tenderness to 'little flock' – to have nothing to do with idols. Throughout his letter he has been demonstrating that it is Jesus Christ alone, the God-man, the full and perfect propitiation for our sin, who is our Saviour and the eternal life by whom we live. To deny or to diminish Jesus Christ, to turn to some lesser 'Jesus' as worshipped by the cults, is to wander away from the truth and to turn to idolatry.

We should not be surprised – but we should be grateful – when these seeming coincidences take place. Of course, the very idea of a coincidence betrays a lack of trust in the sovereign power of our God. What do we get when we put all these things together? The overwhelming message is that we are to hope in, to rely upon, to expect great things from the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. When we trust in 'means', or in ourselves, or in what seemed to work in the past, we invariably hew for ourselves broken cisterns and forsake the fountain of living waters.

Your brother and fellow-servant in the Lord Jesus,

Paul Yeulett

The 2010 Northern Men's Convention

On Saturday 8th May, after a short walk from the local railway station, we arrived at the Armitage Centre (Manchester) for the start of this year's convention entitled 'Be Men walking with Jesus.' This year's speakers were Christopher Ash who addressed the first and third sessions, and David Johnston who took the middle session, speaking on Galatians 5:16-24. These verses contain a command, a promise and a reminder of the conflict within us between the works of the flesh and the fruit of the Spirit. They also affirm that victory is certain in Christ.

Christopher Ash looked at John 6:35-71 in the first session entitled 'Food for life - only by the Book' (feeding on Jesus through the Bible). He reminded us that we are to be men of the Word. In session three we examined John 17 under the title 'Knowing the Father - only by the Book' (knowing the Father's love through the Bible). This reminded us that the Bible is a wonderful book! As in previous conventions, all three sessions were a great challenge and encouragement.

Differing from previous years' conventions, in the afternoon we had 'On the record, off the cuff.' This replaced the seminars usually held. It took the form of interviews with the main speakers and a chance to ask questions arising from the morning talks to be put to them. Both Matt and I appreciated their humble honesty in their answers. Although I have found the seminars most helpful in recent years, having this style of session was easier to cope with, as four talks in one day can be hard work on the concentration and this helped avoid information overload!

Throughout the day we had a number of hymns, prayers and other interviews. There were also several reports on people's experiences of 'Passion for Life' held at Easter. It is a great encouragement and

blessing to hear of how God has been working in other's lives both here and abroad, which should spur us on to live and work and witness for Him more ourselves.

Men - put May 7th 2011 in your diaries now and come with us next year - I heartily recommend it!
Women - the Women's Convention is to take place at the same venue on Saturday 9th October 2010.
For details or any other information, please see Matt or Adrian. -Adrian Alcock

Illuminate Christian bookshop and cafe

On Thursday 27th May there was a meeting about the future of Shrewsbury's Christian bookshop, which is currently under threat of closure by the end of June. The mood of the meeting was very positive, with everyone present wanting to keep the bookshop running (probably as a charitable trust), especially in order to keep the evangelistic ministry aspect of the work alive. Many people come to ask questions in what is seen as a friendly and neutral environment and are often introduced to churches. There were many offers of ideas and skills, and a steering group was set up. The current owner, Phil Whittall, extends an invitation to every church in Shrewsbury to offer their help and support, without which the bookshop will certainly have to close. He can be contacted on 01743 233319.

We wait in hope for the LORD;

he is our help and our shield.

Psalms 33:20