

Editorial

Dr. Allen Baird

"Endeavouring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace" (Eph. 4:3).

Welcome to another edition of the *British Reformed Journal*. At the start of this brief editorial I would like to include, for the sake of general interest, a few of the responses I have received. The first is from Mr. Peter Campbell, a software engineer from Ballyclare, Northern Ireland.

Allen,

Congratulations on your first two editions of the BRJ. Both the style and content of the journal is improved. The diversity of topics brings the BRJ back to the people. It is particularly rewarding to read topical articles that explore the fuller extent of one's Reformed worldview. The recent journals have obviously begun with this aim. It is vital that Christians act and talk in a form that is constructive and generous, especially when dealing with other followers of Christ. It is encouraging to see this spirit evident in the journal. Hopefully it will continue. I find it incredible that some dislike the changes. Perhaps there is room for a "A Friendly Dialogue on the Diversity of Biblical Literature" - and no that's not an indication of my willingness to write. Keep up the good (hard) work. - Peter

The second is from Mr. Samuel Bell, a teacher in an Institute of further education.

Dear Dr Baird,

Could I express my appreciation for the latest BRF journal (No. 33) which I have just received. The articles were most stimulating and very well written, especially those on the subjects of "Christian Males" and "Modern Peter Pans." I was also very encouraged by the note of Reformed unity struck, the nature of the article on the relationship between Church and State, and the general breadth of coverage in the subject matter. If this high standard is maintained I will have no hesitation in recommending the Journal widely. Keep up the good work!

-Sam Bell, Antrim, Northern Ireland

The gracious and helpful character of these letters is all the more significant once it is pointed out that these two gentlemen are Reformed Baptists by conviction, and are therefore in disagreement with the

doctrinal basis on the *British Reformed Fellowship* in some areas. Oh that those of us who find ourselves fully able to subscribe to this basis could demonstrate half of their spirit! Then our problems would be fewer and our usefulness greatly increased.

But what I would particularly like to highlight from the content of these responses is the emphasis both men give to the importance of Reformed unity in attitude and doctrine. This is a subject which has been on my mind for some time now. It seems that the Reformed faith in the United Kingdom, even - or perhaps particularly! - as it exists within our own circles, is doomed to a perpetual, downward spiral of internal fragmentation and mutual isolation. This not only weakens our credibility in the eyes of other forms and shades of Protestantism, and our strength in the face of opposition from the world, but is an offence to the commandment of Christ that all things be done with charity, and that we love one another as the greatest evidence of our love to God. In order to bring this urgent matter to the awareness of the people of God who read this journal, I have decided to give over a special section of the journal to the cause of promoting peace and unity among Calvinistic believers in the United Kingdom. It will be entitled a **Special Essay For Reformed Ecumenicity** and it is open for all who have an interest in this vital topic to send in any material for consideration which is relevant to it. In order to highlight just how important it is, I close this editorial with some pertinent quotations from Calvin himself.

The disagreement of members within the Church can lead to nothing else than the ruin and consumption of the whole body. *Gal. 162.*

[On Rom. 15:6] God sets so high a store on the unity of His servants that He will not allow His glory to be sounded amid discord and controversy.

How great a blessing unity in the Church is, and with what eagerness pastors should endeavour to secure it. *Philipp.-Col. 50, 51.*

The chief indication of a prosperous condition of the Church is - when mutual agreement prevails in it, and brotherly harmony. *Philipp.-Col. 51.*