

REFORMATION TODAY



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141

The Carey Conference for Ministers

The Hayes Conference Centre,
Swanwick
Derbyshire

4-6 January 1995



Sinclair Ferguson

DAY 1

Geoff Thomas Powerful Preaching from Daniel Rowland to Dr Martyn Lloyd-Jones. What were the distinctive features of Welsh preaching which God has blessed for over two centuries, which eventually gave Wales the title 'Land of Revivals'?

Albert Mohler

The Authenticity of the Gospel Today – 1.

DAY 2

Sinclair Ferguson

Knowing the Holy Spirit

Bob Sheehan

The Love of God for Sinners

Erroll Hulse

The Implications of Revival and Revivalism Today

PRAYER AND SHARING

Albert Mohler

The Authenticity of the Gospel Today – 2

DAY 3

Sinclair Ferguson

Experiencing the Holy Spirit

Concluding session to be decided.

Front Cover: Led by Nathan Straub (top of picture), children enjoying the Carey Family Conference. See report on page 32.

Editorial

Evangelicals and Catholics Together

A document with the title *Evangelicals and Catholics Together* has been circulating in America. This Statement or manifesto was the outcome of a consultation which began in September 1992 between leading evangelical Protestants and Roman Catholics. The length of the Statement would make 16 pages in this magazine. The posture and conclusion of the manifesto are of unity and cooperation. It was signed by 14 evangelical leaders including a representative of the Southern Baptist Convention and one from the Assemblies of God. Charles Colson who avows the doctrines of God's sovereignty is among the signatories. 24 further names endorse the Statement including Dr John White, Os Guinness, Mark Noll, Jim Packer, and Bill Bright of Campus Crusade.

We need to stress that the pressure in a pagan anti-Christian world to maximise unity is great. Our Lord's prayer for unity and the teaching of Ephesians provide additional motivation to express unity wherever it can be found. While that may be so we are bound by the Word of God where that Word itself forbids compromise. Not surprisingly the reaction to the manifesto *Evangelicals and Catholics Together* has been critical. For instance Michael Horton in particular exposed the flaws in the document. Subsequently some, including J I Packer and John White, withdrew their names from the original manifesto and have identified with an amended statement.

The amended document is signed by Tom Nettles (who is an associate editor of this magazine), E Clowney, James Boice, R C Sproul and others. There is expressed the fact that while there is agreement on historical creeds, justification by faith alone is still a bar to unity with Roman Catholics. The new Statement points out that the Council of Trent anathematises those who embrace the doctrine of justification by faith alone, a position maintained by some more recent Catholic pronouncements! The new document also challenges key RC teachings on such matters as papal infallibility, transubstantiation, the immaculate conception, and the assumption of Mary.

From Dr George Crawford, a practising attorney in California, has come an excellent response to the original document which would make about ten pages in RT.

With his permission some of Dr Crawford's responses have been extracted as examples of how we should exercise discernment when reading documents which advocate unity with Roman Catholics. Even though most of our readers will not have the original document the sense should be clear enough.

The Real Mary and the Counterfeit

Reference is made above to the immaculate conception, and the assumption of Mary. Mariolatry plays a major role in Roman Catholicism. Herbert Carson explains how the



Colonel Thomson

doctrine of Mary has developed over the centuries becoming a complex deception. If we follow the main headings in Herbert Carson's article it becomes clear that one fabrication has led to the next up to the present-day accumulation of heresy in which powers are attributed to Mary which strictly and only apply to the Trinity.

We sympathise with Roman Catholics who come to a living faith in Christ and who may see many truths clearly. We will not help them by ignoring the atrocious traditions which have accumulated in their system and which will have to be renounced if there is to be unity.

Colonel Thomson – Missionary Extraordinary

R C Thomson was a man of exceptional courage and unusual talent. He was

fluent in German, French, Spanish, Italian, Russian and Polish. Roger Weil narrates his life in two parts, the first of which appears in this issue. We may well wonder how the Church in Eastern Europe originated. It was a glorious work of revival that multiplied the churches and some of this is recounted in this article.

Divine providence ordered circumstances which enabled Robert Thomson to minister in Russia, the Ukraine, Poland and Romania. Thomson was instrumental in retrieving from the Nazi High Commission war records which were invaluable in the post-war Nuremberg war trials.

Part two, which will appear in RT142, begins with Thomson's retirement at the age of 64. He thought that was the end of his life when in fact it was a new beginning. It was then that all his years of experience in the Foreign Office uniquely qualified him to minister to and encourage Christian pastors and churches under Communist persecution. Roger Weil himself has inherited Colonel Thomson's mantle having carried on ministry and visits of encouragement. He edits the magazine *Slavonia* which is a 16 page missionary report on work in Eastern Europe obtainable by request from the Secretary:

*Mr R Weil,
28, Hayesford Park Drive,
Bromley,
Kent BR2 9DB, UK.*

Roger Weil has just completed a Systematic Theology that is designed specifically for Russians.

Evangelicals and Catholics Together

George A Crawford

Extracted from a m/s with the title, 'The Rejection of Katherine von Bora: A critique of "Evangelicals and Catholics Together – the Christian Mission in the Third Millennium"', by George Crawford. See editorial.

Martin Luther nicknamed the letter to the Galatians his Katherine von Bora. The Galatians epistle is Paul's answer to those who challenged the truth of justification by faith alone and by grace alone. Galatians is the most emphatic confirmation that the gospel of justification by faith alone and by grace alone is the only way of salvation.

The most recent significant move which undermines this reality is the coming together of a considerable number of Roman Catholic and Protestant leaders to publish a document of unity *Evangelicals and Catholics Together* – a Statement which denies the truth of salvation by justification alone.

The third paragraph begins: '*As Christ is one, so the Christian mission is one.*'

A key underlying problem is that this Statement overlooks the biblical teaching that all who name the name of Christ are not his own. Not all Catholics – nor all Protestants for that matter – are truly Christians. A crucial and recurrent feature of the Statement is that it completely ignores the biblical truth that it is possible for a person to be self-deceived as to whether he or she is truly a Christian. In other words, as at the time

of the Reformation, it is imperative at the outset to define what we mean by a Christian.

The end of paragraph 7 states: '*The scandal of conflict between Christians obscures the scandal of the cross.*'

But it is precisely the scandal of the cross that makes the present scandal of conflict inevitable. The scandal of the cross is ultimately its affront to human pride and its demonstration of the futility of obtaining salvation by works, or 'legalism' (the performance of good works or fulfilment of rituals – Gal 5:11). And legalism is the fundamental trait of any theological system that allows for salvation to be obtained through the sacraments. Conflict will be inevitable when legalism is confronted by the gospel (Gal 4:29). But as he who was born in the ordinary way then persecuted him who was *born by the power of the Spirit*, even so it is now. This indicates that there will be continual persecution of the true Christian by the legalist.

Paragraph 13 begins: '*We affirm together that we are justified by grace through faith because of Christ.*'

Here there is a key omission, i.e. the word 'alone'. Dr Martyn Lloyd-Jones emphasised the importance of carefully noting what a particular preacher does *not* say as the 'acid test' [see Lloyd-Jones *Knowing the Times* pp 320-321]. The key Reformation principle of

salvation by faith alone (*sola fide*) is ignored.

In paragraph 15 we read: '*We recognise together that the Holy Spirit has so guided his church in the past.*' (Reference is made to the formation of the canon of Scripture and the great Christological and Trinitarian controversies of the early centuries.)

In the agreement, the guidance of the Holy Spirit is mentioned on a recurring basis and invariably after a reference to Scripture. It appears that the guidance of the Holy Spirit is the underlying basis for a claim to the authority of Church tradition. The passage omits to note that the Holy Spirit will never lead contrary to the written Word. The development of Church tradition cannot be claimed as authoritative and attributed to the work of the Holy Spirit when that tradition goes contrary to the Scripture.

The above mentioned quote from paragraph 15 is probably one of the most subtle, insidious and potentially most damaging points of the Statement. As such, it deserves some additional comment.

Calvin anticipates and responds to this ruse, both in dealing with the more radical Anabaptists and the Roman Catholic Church. He argues that they cannot claim to have the Spirit of Christ since Christ himself insisted on the inviolability of Scripture. Citing 1 Thessalonians 5:19-20, 'Do not put out the Spirit's fire, do not treat prophecies with contempt', he argues that in disregarding the written Word, they are effectively squelching the Holy Spirit. He also contends that the Church is founded upon the Word and does not have the right or privilege to effectively reject any of the written Scriptures. [*Institutes of*

the Christian Religion, 1559 edition, Book IV, ch 10.17, also Book I, ch 9.]

Furthermore it should be noted that this passage contradicts Scripture concerning the role of the Holy Spirit in the inspiration of Scripture. In a passage familiar to evangelical Christians, 2 Timothy 3:16, Paul writes that all Scripture is *God-breathed*. In doing so he is presumably emphasising the unique role of the Spirit in the authorship of the Scriptures, since the Hebrew term for the Spirit of God, (*Ruach*) is literally the 'breath' of God (Gen 1:2; Ps 33:6; Job 26:13; Ezek 37 1-14) [See Smeaton, *The Doctrine of the Holy Spirit*, p 9]. For the Spirit to breathe out the Scripture and then to contradict himself in subsequent revelation would be for the Spirit to be duplicitous and to violate his own commands (Jude 4; Rev 22:18,19). The Spirit does not 'speak with a forked tongue'.

It should also be noted that the book of Galatians places the proponents of the Statement in a fatal dilemma in the emphasis given the ongoing guidance of the Holy Spirit in the development of Church tradition. Those who emphasise that guidance, in the Statement, as a source of authority alternative to that of the Scripture are also those who claim salvation can occur through the sacrament of infant baptism. Yet the book of Galatians clearly and repeatedly indicates that the Holy Spirit comes by faith alone (Gal 3:2,14; 4:29). That being the case, it is inescapable that the Spirit by which they claim to be guided cannot be said to be the Holy Spirit.

A copy of the full manuscript may be obtained by writing to Dr George Crawford, 27521 Cherry Creek Drive, Valencia, CA 91354, USA. Please enclose two dollars for copying and postage expenses.

The Real Mary and the Counterfeit

Herbert Carson

Walsingham in Norfolk was, in the Middle Ages, one of the favourite pilgrimage shrines in England. It was modelled on the so-called holy house of Nazareth where the angel appeared to Mary. It was destroyed in the sixteenth century but restored in 1931 to satisfy the desires of the Anglo-Catholics to have a focal point where the cult of Mary would be encouraged. Even the *Church Times*, sympathetic to Anglo-Catholicism, was critical, querying whether the focus of their piety was Mary or Jesus.

Things have gone very much further since then. It has become more widely acceptable to go on pilgrimage, and doubtless this will be encouraged by George Carey in Canterbury. An article in the December 1990 *Walsingham Review* reported on the pilgrimage Carey led two years earlier and commented on the fact that he had formerly been bishop of Bath and Wells, 'the only one of our English Cathedrals to contain a shrine of our Lady of Walsingham'.

The report goes on to give us extracts from his address on that occasion 'when he shared the basis of his own devotion to Our Lady'. He confessed his shame that he was eighteen years in the ministry before preaching on Mary. He recalled his hesitation and added: 'Perhaps that indicates there was a good old Protestant in me.' He then pictured the Lord saying to him in reply to his fear of obscuring him: 'But you will not be obscuring me if you pray with, and to my Mother as well.' It all brought back to my mind a book published in 1976 by SPCK, *Mary and the Christian Gospel*, by John de Satge, an Anglican, in which he aimed to commend the cult of Mary to evangelical Anglicans. One wonders how many other erstwhile evangelicals have been deflected down the Marian road.

A major impetus to the increasing dominance of the cult of Mary was the promulgation in 1854 of the dogma of the immaculate conception. The papal bull defining the dogma was issued by pope Pius IX who later succeeded in pushing through at the first Vatican Council the dogma of papal infallibility. So the claim that Mary was without stain of sin is not the opinion of a nineteenth-century bishop of Rome which modern Catholics may ignore. It is a dogma and thus essential to salvation and also beyond any redefining by a future church council.

The word immaculate is derived from the Latin word *macula* which means 'a stain, blemish, or spot'. It needs to be emphasised that this has nothing to do with the biblical truth of the virgin birth where the one who was conceived without spot or blemish was our Lord Jesus. The papal theory refers rather to the moment when

Mary herself was conceived, and claims that she was faultless. This claim implies that Mary shared the sinlessness of Christ.

The obvious reply to such a fanciful notion is the clear admission of sin by Mary herself in her song of praise recorded in Luke 1:46-55: 'My soul praises the Lord and my spirit rejoices in God my Saviour.' In this song she reflects the theme which is so often on the Christian's lips as we thank the Lord who has saved us from our sins by sending his own Son to bear our sins in his own body on the tree (1 Peter 2:24). The significance of the word 'Saviour' is seen here in its verbal form in Matthew 1:21: 'He will save his people from their sins.' So in praising her Saviour Mary is rejoicing that she is a sinner saved by grace. She marvels that, sinner though she is, God has given her the humbling privilege of being the human agent for the incarnation of the Son of God.

Rome however has an answer. It was first formulated by Duns Scotus (1266-1308) who advanced the speculative 'redemption by exemption'. This enabled him to say that yes – Mary had a Saviour; and yes – she was redeemed. Her redemption however was different from ours in that we are redeemed from the guilt and penalty of our sins, whereas she was delivered from contracting sin and thus can be presented as being conceived in an immaculate or sinless condition.

This fanciful theory conflicts with the entire biblical testimony on the nature of redemption. The word can only be understood against the background of slavery which is why it was applied to the deliverance of Israel from Egypt. For the same reason it was a word easily understood in the first century AD when a slave was set free when the redemption price had been paid. So we were redeemed 'not with perishable things such as silver or gold ... but with the precious blood of Christ' (1 Peter 1:18-19). This shows the absurdity of Duns Scotus' theory in that it claims that the price was paid to deliver from a slavery which never existed, and the blood was shed to cleanse a non-existent stain.

The perpetual virginity

Allied to this false idea of Mary's immaculate conception is the theory of her perpetual virginity, namely that she remained a virgin. This is plainly contradicted by the record of Joseph's reaction to the angel's message reassuring him as to Mary's chastity; 'He ... took Mary as his wife but he had no union with her until she gave birth to a son' (Matt 1:24-25). The key word is 'until' (*heōs*) which obviously refers to a point of time when a course of action which has been suspended is resumed – in this case Joseph deferred intimacy with Mary until the baby was born. Ronald Knox, a famous convert to Rome, perpetrated a gross mistranslation in his version of the New Testament when he substituted 'when' for 'until' and then he had the gall to add a footnote acknowledging that a twenty year old person serving a twenty years prison sentence might say that he would still be

in prison when he was thirty because his sentence would have ten years to run. He could only use 'until' if he was speaking of his fortieth birthday because that would mean the end of his sentence and freedom would be resumed.

We have no need to engage in the spurious theories which try to find a mother to whom the brothers and sisters of Jesus really belonged. They belonged obviously to Mary the mother of Jesus. He was her first-born and to deny that is to insult God the Creator's sanctifying the physical union between a man and his wife. Mary was a virgin when she conceived but that condition ceased when she and Joseph came together to produce a family.

Sinlessness

Even more seriously erroneous is the totally unbiblical assertion that she was to the end of her days totally without sin. According to the highly significant newly published (1994) 690 page Catechism for the Catholic Church we are told that, 'By the grace of God Mary remained free of every personal sin her whole life long.'¹ So she is designated as 'The All Holy'. The claim is made that she had the 'splendour of an entirely unique holiness'. This flies in the face of the vigorous assertions of Paul that 'there is no-one righteous, not even one ... for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God'(Rom 3:10,23).

The Catechism tries to justify its fanciful claims by appealing to Ephesians 1:3-4 which affirms that all Christians have been blessed 'with every spiritual blessing in Christ'. Without the remotest scrap of evidence the Catechism claims that Mary was even more blessed than the rest of us! What this special pleading does is in fact to underline the fact that the word 'blessed' addressed to Mary in Luke 1:28 is applied to every believer in Ephesians 1:3. The word means that we are debtors to God's grace for every gift we have received and whatever responsibility has been given to us. We, like Mary, stand before the Lord as sinners forgiven by the grace of God and endowed by that same grace with the power of the Holy Spirit to do his will.

Mediatrix

Rome however goes even further in elevating Mary to the key role in the work of salvation. Having been raised to the same level of sinlessness as the Saviour, she is given a share in the atonement. Thus while the Gospels picture her as a grief-stricken mother seeing her Son die, Rome sees her as 'joining herself with his sacrifice in her mother's heart'.² The Bible says that God gave his only-begotten Son, but Rome involves Mary in that giving of the Saviour. It is no surprise to discover the conclusion that one of the titles given to her is 'mediatrix' (female mediator), in utter defiance of the assertion of Paul that 'there is one mediator' (1 Tim 2:5).

Mary's physical resurrection from the dead

Pius XII added further to the accumulation of false doctrine undergirding the cult of Mary. In 1950 he issued another dogma declaring that she had been given the privilege 'like her Son before her to conquer death ... and be raised body and soul to the glory of heaven, to shine refulgent as Queen at the right hand of her Son'. Lest any should imagine that this is an optional extra – 'I'm a Catholic but I don't really accept this' – Pius added a solemn postscript: 'Wherefore, if anyone – which God forbid – should wilfully dare to deny or call in doubt what has been defined by us, let him know that he certainly has abandoned the divine and Catholic faith.'

Search the New Testament from end to end and there is not the remotest hint of this teaching. In contrast the resurrection of Jesus was prophesied beforehand both in the Old Testament and in the repeated statements of Jesus himself. The event was declared and the evidence adduced. Paul could list a great number of personal witnesses. That is why we are so persuaded that Jesus truly conquered death and rose again. But where are the prophecies about Mary's assumption? Where are the witnesses to this event? The answer is a thunderous silence. Apart from a reference to Mary's presence with many others in the post-ascension gathering, she disappears completely from the pages of the New Testament. Here were the documents which were basic to the apostolic testimony. Here was guidance to the new born churches as to their pattern of worship and their way of life. But in complete contrast to the excessive claims about Mary in Roman Catholic statements and writings the New Testament is totally silent.

Sharing in the work of salvation

Having gone so far downhill it is not surprising to find that the descent into error became even more pronounced. The second Vatican Council, lauded by many outsiders as if it were the herald of a new day, only succeeded in deepening the darkness. So Mary is presented as one who had a unique role in the work of salvation not simply, as the Gospels present her, as the virgin mother of the Saviour, but as one who played a cooperative role with Christ himself – 'cooperating in the work of salvation'.³

They quote or rather misquote references to Mary. Thus they ignore Christ's gentle rebuke at Cana. They refer to Mark 3:35 and Luke 11:27-28 but distort the texts. In Mark 3:35 however the contrast is between any exclusive reference to Mary and the actual statement which reaches out to all believers and puts them into a relationship with Christ which transcends that with his mother and his brothers. This is brought out more forcibly in Luke. The woman cried out, (as in the Rosary), 'Blessed is the mother who gave you birth and nursed you.' Jesus immediately countered the notion that Mary had any special role, hence his reply, 'Blessed rather are those who hear the word of God and obey it.' To omit 'rather' is to miss the point completely.⁴

The same kind of distortion is seen in the appeal to Christ's commending his mother to John (John 19:26-27). The obvious meaning is surely that Jesus, in love for his mother who was clearly widowed, gave her into the care of John whose love for the Saviour was so marked. It is a far cry from this story of Jesus' tenderness to the wholly unsubstantiated speculation that Mary as 'mother of the church' has a ministry of intercession in heaven by which 'she continues to win for us gifts of eternal salvation'.⁵

The development did not end with Vatican II. Paul VI in his *Marialis Cultus*, issued in February 1974, strongly encouraged the devotion to Mary. He tried, as Rome has traditionally done, to distinguish between the worship given to God alone (*latría*), the adoration of Mary (*hyperdulia*) and the veneration of the saints (*dulia*). This distinction is totally without biblical warrant, and in practice is virtually impossible to sustain. The extravagant devotion to Mary with the ascription to her of all kinds of elaborate titles is simply idolatrous. But lest anyone should query the excessive repetition in the Rosary of appeals to Mary to pray for us, we are assured by Paul VI that the practice has been 'approved by papal authority, which also enriched it with numerous indulgences'.⁶ There in fact is the essential character of the cult of Mary – it is the invention of the popes rather than the biblical writers!

The present pope has been an enthusiast for this cult. His devotion to the shrines of Fatima Czestochowa and Knock is well known. He visited Ireland to celebrate the centenary of the alleged appearance of Mary in Knock. He prepared himself for that visit by going to the so-called holy house of Loreto, alleged to be the original house of Mary in Nazareth, and transported by the angels first to Dalmatia and then to Italy! His preface to the new Catechism shows how utterly steeped he is in the cult.

The pagan origins of Mariolatry

One must surely ask – how did such a pagan cult infiltrate the Christian Church? The answer lies in the paganising of the churches soon after the rapprochement with the state in the reign of the Emperor Constantine. This is not to say that heresies were not already present – the father of lies saw to it that they were! Rather, it was the era when the floodgates began to be opened and so much of the developing errors of the Middle Ages can be traced to that period. This is eminently so of the cult of Mary the roots of which are in the cult of the Mother Goddess so popular in the fourth century. The very titles used then, 'Our Lady' and 'Stella Maris', have been continued. The picture of Isis and Horus, the Mother Goddess with the child on her knee, has been repeated innumerable times in the picture of the Madonna and the infant Jesus.

The cult had even earlier roots as we discover in the denunciations of Jeremiah (7:18-20; 44:17,25). God's judgment is pronounced on the devotees of the 'Queen

of heaven' – another title which has come down the centuries. This deity has older Canaanite roots in the cult of Ashtoreth (1 Kings 11:5). One can understand the popular appeal of these ancient cults with their emphasis on the motherly care of the goddess. This also has percolated into the Catholic piety, and into the kind of argument used by Catholic apologists. Who, they would ask, could be more sympathetic than a mother, and who could have greater influence with her Son? The answer to that is to turn to the letter to the Hebrews where Jesus is presented as the all sympathetic high priest (Heb 4:15). There is no need of the alleged sympathy of Mary when we have direct access to the Lord himself.

The true Mary of the Bible

Let me end by emphasising as strongly as possible that this 'Mary' of Catholic devotion has no links whatever with the Mary of Nazareth. The latter was a humble believer entrusted with the unique privilege of conceiving the incarnate Son of God. We thank God for her just as we do for Joseph or Peter or Paul or any of the believers in the New Testament whose faith and obedience encourage or challenge us. The Babylonian goddess with her pretensions is a hollow sham. Mary the mother of Jesus learnt how to recede so completely into the background that she disappears in the pages of the New Testament. But then her aim was what ours should be, that the one and only mediator, our Lord Jesus Christ should have all the glory.

The 'Mary' of Catholic theology and devotion embodies perfectly their doctrine of merit. 'From this community of will and suffering between Christ and Mary she merited to become the restorer of the world and the dispenser of all the benefits which Jesus won for us by his death' – that was Pius X ignoring the truth that Jesus himself bore our sins, and the further truth that the Holy Spirit is the dispenser of gospel blessings. This doctrine of merit embodied in 'Mary' indicates the basic reason for Rome's resistance to the doctrine of justification by faith alone through grace alone. Much as they may protest that Mary remains still human, the fact remains that the role they gave her – the extravagant titles, the omniscience to know the prayers of people around the world – all this points to the ultimate idolatry, and the enthroning of a female goddess alongside the Saviour.⁷

References

- 1 The Catechism of the Catholic Church published by Geoffrey Chapman, £12.99, p. 110.
- 2 Ibid 220
- 3 Vatican II *Lumen Gentium* ch 8 para 56
- 4 In order to correct an erroneous statement, the Greek particle *menoun* (rather, on the contrary) is used (see Arndt and Gingrich's Lexicon).
- 5 *Lumen Gentium* ch 8 para 61
- 6 *Marialis Cultus* p 82
- 7 Those who wish to research further into the cult of Mary should consult *The Virgin Mary*, by Giovanni Miegge (who was professor of Church History at the Waldensian Faculty of Theology in Rome), Lutterworth Press, now probably out of print.

The Original Text of Scripture

Bob Sheehan

The original Scriptures, or autographs, as they came from the hands of their writers are no longer in our possession. We merely have copies, many copies which may be studied. This is true for both the Hebrew Old Testament and Greek New Testament.

The absence of the originals ought not to surprise us, for if they still existed they, rather than their Author, would be worshipped and their fabric, rather than their content, would be honoured. The human tendency towards superstition is notorious!

The problem with any hand-copied document is that error occurs. Most of the variants in the manuscripts are one of seven types:

1. The scribes failed to repeat a letter or word (haplography);
2. The scribes repeated what should have occurred only once (dittography);
3. The scribes included in the manuscript something occurring in a similar passage elsewhere or another manuscript, thus adding to the text;
4. The scribes omitted a passage between identical words;
5. The scribes omitted a line;
6. The scribes confused similar looking letters;
7. The scribes inserted marginal notes into the text.

Discovering the correct text will involve some method of eliminating these errors. This activity is called 'textual criticism' and is an activity in which every Bible translator has to engage in order to have a text of the Bible from which to translate!

The Old Testament Text

The Old Testament Hebrew text is represented in Hebrew manuscripts dating from the third century BC to the twelfth century AD. There are also ancient versions in Aramaic, Greek, Latin and Syriac.

1. The Massoretic Text

Up until the twentieth century we only knew of one main tradition of Hebrew texts named after the Massoretes who were Jews responsible for the preservation of the Old Testament between 500 and 1000 AD. This text became known as the Massoretic Text.

The Massoretes were very careful with the text and developed all sorts of procedures for detecting and eliminating variants. They counted the number of letters in each book, checked its middle letter, and counted the words and the middle word of each book. Peculiarities in spelling were noted, as were peculiar words and phrases. In this way they guarded against scribal errors in the text.

2. The Dead Sea Scrolls

The discovery of the Dead Sea Scrolls in 1947 AD unearthed manuscripts a thousand years older than those preserved by the Massoretes. There was no shortage of scholars and pseudo-scholars who assured the world that the new discoveries would discredit the integrity of the Massoretic text.

However, although there are some variations, many scholars have concluded that the Dead Sea Scrolls maintain the essential integrity of the Massoretic text and, in fact, are an essential independent witness of its reliability, and the reliable copying which must have taken place in the thousand years for which we have no extant manuscripts.

3. The Samaritan Pentateuch

The Samaritan Pentateuch is an ancient edition of the first five books of Moses written in Hebrew. Its disagreement in various places with the Massoretic text endears it to those who oppose the integrity of the traditional text. However, great care needs to be taken in using the Samaritan Pentateuch to correct the Massoretic text because it is clear that the Samaritan scribes altered the text of the Pentateuch to suit their own historical and theological interests, and it contains other mistakes which are clearly the result of misunderstanding of grammar and syntax.

Also there is no evidence that the Samaritans ever had a body of trained scribes as the Jews did. Nor did they collate their manuscripts properly or reveal any serious textual knowledge. Their additions and carelessness with the text make reliance on their text a dangerous exercise.

4. The Septuagint

When we turn from the Hebrew there are a number of versions of the Old Testament in Greek, Latin and Syriac and targums or paraphrases in Aramaic. These usually date from the Christian era, having been commenced in the first half of the third century BC. It was an attempt over a period of time to translate the Hebrew Bible into Greek for Greek-speaking Jews.

The Septuagint translation often suggests a different Hebrew text from the Massoretic text as its basis. Sometimes this is similar to what is found in the Samaritan Pentateuch but often it is different. The problem, however, in assessing the underlying Hebrew text is the unevenness, even eccentricity of the translation.

Sometimes the translation is little more than Hebraistic Greek. At other times it is free paraphrase. The Septuagint translators changed the text for reasons of theology, gave interpretations rather than translations, reinstated the characters of some of those criticised in the Hebrew text, and made various conjectures. Its use to correct the Massoretic text is, therefore, something which needs to be approached with great caution.

In finding a text from which to translate the Old Testament, it is wisest to stay with the Massoretic text and to use the other materials as comparative aids, but not as the basis for changes.

The New Testament Text

The New Testament in whole or in part is found in over 5,000 Greek manuscripts; translations of all sorts from the early centuries, books of Bible readings for early church use and numerous quotations from the early church Fathers. These sources of evidence of the New Testament text range from the second to the sixteenth century in their dating.

The problem of the New Testament manuscripts is that no two manuscripts are exactly the same. Every manuscript has oddities of its own. Altogether, there are hundreds of variants. Before we become too alarmed, however, it needs to be recognised that most of these variants are easily recognisable as an obvious form of scribal error and can be seen to be mistakes rather than a part of the real text of the New Testament.

Nevertheless, there is a dispute over a minority of the text: some would say as little as 3%; others would talk in terms of 7 to 8%. The question which arises is

how we are to determine the correct text in the areas where there are disagreements. There are five main approaches:

1. Follow the Received Text

The 'Received Text' or 'Textus Receptus' is a title given to the text of the Greek New Testament published by the Elzevir brothers in 1633. They coined the term to support their claim that their Greek text was the text that was generally accepted by the scholars of the day. In England a similar title was applied to the text published by Stephens in 1550. The only meaning that the Elzevir brothers gave to the phrase was that all the scholars of the day accepted this text. It was received by them, not from God, or antiquity or anything else. Its retention and the aura that accompanies it makes it one of the most successful pieces of publisher's advertising of all time.

The 'Received Text' is basically the text compiled by Erasmus in 1516. He created it by a comparison of six manuscripts and checked and amended it by reference to the Latin Vulgate from which he constructed a small part of the text for which he lacked any Greek manuscript.

If we are to follow the Received Text slavishly, then we argue that Erasmus' decisions were correct even when the majority of the manuscripts and the earliest manuscripts disagree with him. We are insisting on following the text he made up from the Latin even where there is no Greek evidence at all to support him. To follow the Received Text is to ignore all other evidence and to invest in the infallibility of Erasmus.

2. Follow Westcott and Hort

In the nineteenth century the textual critics Westcott and Hort set out to establish a text on other principles than those used by Erasmus, and made their starting point a hatred of the Received Text.

They argued that where manuscripts had the same variants they had to be related and, therefore, felt able to divide the manuscripts into families. Each family was a representative text type, however large or small it might be.

Westcott and Hort had a special liking for what they termed the 'Neutral Text', a very small set of witnesses largely dependent on two early manuscripts known as Sinaiticus and Vaticanus.

If we follow Westcott and Hort slavishly then we are arguing that their decisions were correct even when the majority of the manuscripts are against them. The

infallibility of Erasmus' six manuscripts is replaced by the tyranny of Westcott and Hort's two. Virtually all other evidence is rendered irrelevant.

3. Follow subjective opinions

In the twentieth century two scholars, GD Kilpatrick and JK Elliot, have developed a third approach to textual variants. They determine the correct reading by answering just two questions. They ask: i. Which variant best suits the context? and ii. Which variant best explains all the other variants? No other evidence is taken into consideration at all.

The highly subjective nature of this method is immediately apparent. The New Testament text is to be determined by my opinion as to which variant I think would fit the rest of the text and explain the alternatives. The infallibility of Erasmus is replaced not with the two infallible manuscripts of Westcott and Hort, but the opinions of anyone who wants to make a case for a particular variant. This is the ultimate in subjectivity.

4. Follow the majority reading

An increasingly popular and simple method of cutting through the whole problem of weighing the evidence in any way for a particular reading is to count the number of manuscripts in favour of a variant. It could not be simpler!

However, there is some unease about establishing something on the basis of the opinion of the majority. Is the majority always right? If we did this with the text of the Latin Vulgate we would undoubtedly end up with an inferior text. Is it safe to follow a majority reading even though there may be no evidence for its existence before the fourth century? Are we simply to count and ignore evidence? Although this approach has its attractions, is it not just too easy?

5. Follow the variants that satisfy most principles

During the twentieth century an approach to the New Testament text has been developed termed 'eclecticism'. This refers to the selection of a variant from among others on the basis of reasonable principles. These principles divide into two groups: external considerations and internal considerations.

The external considerations are three:

1. Has this variant ancient support?
2. Has this reading geographical support, i.e. is it found in various different parts of the world?
3. How does the evidence of it compare with the evidence in support of the other variants?

The internal considerations are five:

1. Which variant would be the most difficult for the scribe to accept and, therefore, most likely to be replaced by him?
2. When there is a longer and shorter reading, is there any evidence of an accidental omission due to a slip of the eye? Is the omitted material something that a scribe would have omitted because it seems superfluous or harsh or contrary to orthodox belief or practice? If not, the shorter reading is to be preferred.
3. When there is a variant in a passage which involves a quotation from the Old Testament or which has a parallel New Testament passage, then the scribe is more likely to harmonise than to disharmonise, so the less harmonised variant is probably wrong.
4. Variants creating a more rugged text are more likely to be authentic than smooth readings which involve no difficulties.
- 5 Variants which best fit the immediate and general contexts are to be accepted over against other variants.

These principles are not infallible. The external principles are stronger than the internal. There is a considerable element of subjectivity in the internal principles. The assertion that scribes would have done this or that is only an assertion. Those who have studied scribal habits are not entirely agreed as to what the evidence suggests about their habits. To speak of 'the assured results' of textual criticism seems an over confident assertion.

Most modern translators have opted for a New Testament text based on eclectic principles. Some maintain the Received Text. There are no major translations at the moment based on the other three approaches. Perhaps the best thing that readers of Bible versions can do is to recognise the complexity of the problems of textual decisions and remember that the motivation of most Bible translators is not a desire to be perverse or to destroy much loved texts, but to restore the true New Testament text. The fact is that there is no infallible way of proving which approach is correct. Disagreements over the correct text are therefore inevitable. Abuse of those who differ seems hardly appropriate. Understanding and discussion of the choices seem more suited to those who share a common view of Scripture and a common salvation in Christ.

For a further discussion of New Testament Criticism see 'Which Version Now?' by Bob Sheehan, Carey Publications, £1.20 from E P, 12 Wooler St, Darlington, Co Durham DL1 1RQ.

News



Evangelical Press

The above photograph was taken at an *Evangelical Press* Board meeting in Welwyn on 25th July. Pictured from the left, standing, are John Legg, Willis Metcalfe, John Rubens, Prof Edgar Andrews, and Bill Clark. In the front row, from the left, are Erroll Hulse, Peter Meney, Valeri Grigoric, David Clark and Jean-Claude Souillot. John Legg, Willis Metcalfe, Prof Edgar Andrews (chairman of the EP board), Bill Clark, Erroll Hulse and David Clark (a business man living in the USA) are directors. John Rubens is the general manager and Peter Meney publications manager both of EP and the monthly newspaper *Evangelical Times*. Jean-Claude is the leader of *Europress* in France, originally organised by EP but now an independent evangelical

and reformed publishing house which works closely with the EP offices situated in Darlington, County Durham, UK. Valeri Grigoric and his wife Irina have one little boy. They are beginning a pioneer work in Belorus in conjunction with EP. The photo stimulates news items as follows:

Bill Clark and French-speaking countries

Bill Clark regularly prepares gospel sermons in French which are broadcast over the African continent and Mauritius. A large amount of mail comes from Benin in Africa where Bill's gospel messages are broadcast by Benin State Radio. Enquiries are especially numerous from the Ivory Coast and Zaire. The sermons are also broadcast to the French-speaking parts

of the Caribbean and Quebec, Canada. There is a steady response from many countries especially Haiti. A group of Haitians in New Jersey, USA have established their own radio station using Bill's expositions.

In addition to the radio work, Bill Clark and missionary Ken Wymer of the Ivory Coast offer preachers' correspondence courses in French for those in pastoral office or who have preaching responsibilities. Hard, disciplined study is involved and it takes from 12 to 18 months to complete the course on Romans. The course on Hebrews follows, taking the same length of time and after that, one on 1 Corinthians. The courses are free. Those interested should write to EUOPRESS S.A.R.L. BP 505, 71322 CHALON-SUR-SAÓNE, FRANCE.

Bill Clark's itinerary this year includes Benin in August and Belorus in September where he will be joined by Willis Metcalfe with the purpose of assisting Valeri Grigoric to establish a literature base in that country.

France

Jean-Claude Souillot, general manager of Euopress, is a member of the church pastored by David Vaughn in Chalon-sur-Saóne. David and Nicki his wife, originally from Johannesburg, South Africa, are encouraged in the ministry with many opportunities of reaching out to the town.

The Far East and the North American Continent

The editor is due to spend September ministering in Singapore, West Australia, and Indonesia. Missionary Eric Michael who has laboured in Jakarta, Indonesia for many years, has arranged an itinerary of ministry and lectures in cooperation with local church and seminary leaders.

Lyn is due to accompany him to the 7th International Baptist Conference in Toronto scheduled 17-20 October, followed by a visit to Bill and Hetty Payne of Burlington, Ontario. An itinerary in the USA includes time with Tom and Sue Lutz of Anderson, Indiana; Tom and Margaret Nettles at Libertyville; and Tom and Luanne Wells of Cincinnati.

China

Newsweek, May 23, 1994 has a stirring account of the resurgent Christian Church. A 69 year-old labour camp survivor is described as a fiery Baptist preacher who has a congregation of over 1,200, mostly young, the result of 'a wall of conversions pushing in to fill the moral vacuum left by disillusion with Communism'. *Newsweek* states that estimated numbers of Christians vary from 50 to 70 million. The State Statistical Bureau for China estimated 63 million Protestants and 12 million Catholics in 1992 which, since the statistics of 1969, represent a 33-fold increase for Protestants and a 4-fold increase for Catholics.



Trevor and Lucy Routley of Argentina with Sue and David Straub at the Carey Family Conference.

It helps to keep the Chinese world in perspective. The population of mainland China represents 1.2 billion, that is about 1 in 5 in the world. Chinese outside mainland China number about 56 million of whom about half live in Taiwan, Hong Kong, Malaysia, Macao and Singapore. The other half live in over 100 nations. World-wide there has been a significant turning to God among Chinese people.

During the 1960s Wenzhou City in Zhejiang was selected as a model for the campaign for renouncing religion. Yet today it has the reputation for being the most Christian city in China. In our prayers we should be especially concerned about the vulnerability of the Church in China because of the paucity of teaching materials. Also since some

provinces have been reached far more than others, we should intercede that the gospel should spread to all parts of China. Finally we should remember that the persecution sometimes is very severe. Many believers suffer in labour camps where they share their faith with fellow prisoners.

Argentina

Trevor and Lucy Routley from Tandil, Argentina attended the Carey Family Conference (see p32). Trevor held up the cover of a new magazine for the Argentine with the title, *La Reforma Hoi (Reformation Today)*. A Reformed ministers' fraternal has been organised and initiated by Willie Robertson of Buenos Aires and Trevor Routley.

The Righteousness of God

Don Garlington

The biblical concept of the righteousness of God is rooted in creation. In the beginning, a bond (covenant) was established between the Creator and his creatures. It is precisely loyalty to this relationship of mutual love and faithfulness established in Eden which is righteousness, both on the part of God and of humanity. Genesis 1 and 2 record God's pledge to bless, multiply and sustain all his creatures as the outgrowth of his fidelity to them. It is pre-eminently the human creature who bears God's image and was made to hold fellowship with his Creator and who, therefore, is the recipient of his particular love and commitment. At the same time, however, there is the threat that if Adam sins, that is, forsakes his commitment to his Lord, he will die (Gen 2:17). Consequently, righteousness from the divine side entails both the obligation to bless the faithful and to judge the unfaithful.

The actual terminology of righteousness (Hebrew *sedeq*, *sedaqah*; Greek *dikaiosyne*) emerges from the post-fall situation, when 'covenant' (Hebrew *berith*; Greek *diatheke*) becomes a part of the biblical vocabulary, particularly in the Mosaic period. The bond established at Mount Sinai continues the creation emphasis on a relationship between God and his people, the most common metaphors for which are husband/wife and parent/child. It is within this family unit that the law of God forms the 'house rules' or the norm according to which the behaviour of Israel (righteousness) is to be measured. The adjective 'righteous' (Hebrew *sadiq*; Greek *dikaios*) henceforth becomes the standard term to designate those who remain loyal to Yahweh's covenant and endeavour to do his will. For this reason, Psalm 106:31 attributes righteousness to Phinehas, who in his zeal for the covenant strove to maintain its purity, thus averting the wrath of God from Israel (Num 25:6-13).

However, because Israel is not only a family but a nation with a civil and political structure, righteousness features prominently in Hebrew jurisprudence and the law court: the righteous are those judged to be in conformity with the Torah, Israel's 'constitution'. Thus, to be exonerated by the court from wrongdoing is to be 'justified' or 'vindicated' in the specifically Hebrew sense, that is, to be restored to the community relationship and allowed to resume one's responsibilities and privileges within the covenant.

When the prophets eventually perceive that Israel en masse has apostatized from the covenant and cannot fulfil the ideal of righteousness, there arises the hope that a remnant of the people will return to the Lord (eg. Isa 10:21) and be characterised by a devotion to the holiness of the covenant and a determination to persevere in it, the

When we define righteousness we can begin with the observation that there is divine righteousness and human righteousness.

The Scriptures show the Triune God to be righteous in the sense that he is perfect, holy and just. Don Garlington takes this further and explores the exercise and reign of God's righteousness.

As far as human righteousness is concerned, in the fall Adam, the head of the human race, lost that original righteousness in which he was created. Christ's righteousness, being the sum of the merit of his life and death for us, is imputed to all who are united to him by faith. Imputed, forensic righteousness occupies the focal point in the last of three articles by Don Garlington. Editor.

result of which will be peace and security (e.g. Isa 32:1-20). From the divine side, it is especially in the prophets and many of the Psalms that God's righteousness is synonymous with his salvation, that is, his deliverance of Israel from bondage and his vindication of her in the presence of her enemies (e.g. Ps 35:27-28; 72:1-4; 85:11-13; 96:13; 98:2-3, 9; Isa 9:7; 11:1-2; 45:8, 22-25; 51:5-6; 53:10b-11; 61:1-2, 11; Jer 23:5-6; Mal 4:2). Thus, Yahweh's righteousness in remaining faithful to his people is to be matched by the people's renewed fidelity to him. Accordingly, reconciliation between the partners of the marriage covenant becomes a keynote of the promised salvation.

It is this rich Old Testament background which underlies Paul's presentation of the righteousness of God in Romans. That his thought is rooted in creation is evident from the outset. On the one side, the apostle's depiction of the plight of mankind, in Romans 1:18-32 (3:23), is cast in Adam-like terms. Having announced that the righteousness of God is revealed in the gospel (Rom 1:17; cf. 3:21), he proceeds to explain that the wrath of God is now being revealed from heaven. Wrath is the punitive side of righteousness, in that God has not only pledged to bless his obedient creatures, he is also determined to punish those who have broken faith with him by signing a 'declaration of independence' and renouncing the Creator/creature distinction. On the other side, Romans 3:21-8:39 argues that God's rightwising act in Christ, the last Adam, has restored the image of God in the believer, who is in the process of being transformed 'from glory to glory' (2 Cor 3:18). As a result of the gift of God's righteousness (Rom 5:17; 6:23), the Christian's commitment is now to the new creation and its values: this response to the grace of God is the believer's righteousness; to him God has pledged ultimate vindication and glorification (Rom 8:18-39).

Of pivotal significance is Romans 5:1, as set within the cadre of Romans 5-8 as a whole, with its theology of the new creation: 'Therefore, being justified by faith, we

have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.' The term 'peace' (= 'rest') is one which characterises much of the Old Testament's outlook on the future salvation. In the prophetic expectation, the Messiah is the 'Prince of Peace' (Isa 9:6), in whose person Yahweh's peace (*shalom*) will attend the time of world-wide bliss, the new creation, when the lion and the lamb dwell together, and war is no more.

Romans 5:1 is, in fact, based on Isaiah 32:17-18: 'And the work of righteousness shall be peace; and the effect of righteousness quietness and assurance forever. And my people shall dwell in a peaceful habitation, and in sure dwellings, and in quiet resting places.' According to the prophet, the peace of the restored Israel is to be the outcome of her renewed commitment to the covenant (righteousness), an event commensurate with the effusion of the Spirit of God (v5) and the appearance of a king whose own rule is characterised by righteousness (v1). Romans 5:1 thus announces the fulfilment of Isaiah's oracle in the rightwising of the believer in Christ. The long awaited eschaton is here, because the vindication, restoration, and blessing of the people of God have been procured by Christ, as attended by the outpouring of the love of God into our hearts by the Holy Spirit (Rom 5:5).

Consequently, latter-day people respond qualitatively in the same way as the faithful people of old, that is, with the obedience of faith (Rom. 1:5; 16:26), which manifests itself in love of God and perseverance within his new covenant; that is, theirs is the response of righteousness. The outstanding difference is that whereas the righteous of Israel were to conform to everything written in the book of the law (Deut. 27:26), including the boundary markers and badges of Jewish self-identification (circumcision, the dietary laws, and the special days), the Christian embraces the gospel of Jesus Christ as the revelation of God's eschatological righteousness 'apart from the law' (Rom 3:21). It is no longer the law of Moses, but the 'law of Christ' (1 Cor 9:21; Gal 6:2) which forms the standard of Christian conduct. It is Christ, himself the obedient one, who is to be obeyed (Phil 2:8,12); it is to his image that believers are being conformed (Rom 8:29; Eph 4:22; Col 3:10; cf. Rom 13:14; Gal 3:27).

In sum, 'righteousness' is the Bible's compendious way of designating loyalty to a relationship and the resultant behaviour appropriate to that relationship. Whereas the primal bond between God and humanity forged in the creation was ruptured by the disobedience (infidelity) of the first Adam, in Christ, the last Adam, that bond has been repaired. Now, humankind in Christ, as it bears his image, is enabled to render to God the righteous response required of and appropriate to the Creator/creature relationship (Rom 5:12-19). While the norms (laws) regulating the household of God have varied throughout the phases of salvation history, the standard set before the Christian is the gospel (the New Testament as a whole), in which the righteousness of God has been definitively revealed.

Part 1 – This material first appeared in The Gospel Witness, Toronto, March 1992 and has been revised for RT, parts 2 and 3 to follow.

Colonel Thomson – Missionary Extraordinary



Colonel Robert Thomson (second from left) and Roger Weil (centre back) visiting the family of a village pastor in Northern Yugoslavia in 1965

This wonderful account of a remarkable pioneer is told by Roger Weil, Secretary of the Slav Lands Christian Fellowship, in collaboration with Ernst Priefert.

Robert Currie Thomson was born in 1886, the eldest of four children, to a poor tenant farmer in Corstorphine near Edinburgh. He appears to have been a precocious child and was educated at a local grammar school through the generosity of his uncle. At the age of eighteen he won a civil service scholarship. After a short spell with a branch of the Home Office in Edinburgh, he moved to London in 1906 to take up a junior appointment at the Foreign Office. Here he served with distinction in various posts until his retirement in 1949.

Little is known of his early spiritual impressions. All we do know is that he attended Christian meetings for young men held by one Fuller Gooch, and became thereafter a decided and forthright Christian. He fought a good fight and held fast his confession to the end. It seems likely that it was through these meetings he attended the Open Brethren, though he never disavowed his earlier connection with the Church of Scotland or with Calvinistic theology. He was always loyal to the evangelical faith. Wherever he was he would have fellowship with those of like precious faith regardless of their name – he abhorred party-spirit and the very name of anything but

'Christian' grated on his ears. He believed that God had spiritual gifts for all his children and never lost an opportunity to exhort, in a kindly manner, all he met to consider what contribution they could make to the cause of Christ. Especially was this so with those who seemed least able. Many would appear startled, or even shocked, to think that they had anything to offer to the Church and its ministry until he opened the Scriptures to them. In this as in all else he practised what he preached.

When he married a Swedish lady in 1919 he moved to a house in Pinner. Not only were they keen to keep open-house for missionaries on furlough, they also held regular prayer meetings for them in their home. They built a meeting room in their garden and held services there on Brethren lines for several years.

In the days before the First World War the Foreign Office did not commence work until eleven o'clock in the morning! Thomson discovered that members of staff received an increment in salary if they achieved proficiency in a foreign language. He therefore took full advantage of the opportunity to take lessons before work commenced and soon was fluent in German, French, Spanish, Italian, Russian and even Polish. This ability greatly prospered his career in the Foreign Office and he soon rose to the rank of Chief Translator. In this capacity he was attached to the diplomatic staff of two important international Treaties, that of Rapallo in 1922, and the more famous Lucarno Treaty ratified in London in 1925. Undoubtedly foreign languages, or rather his ability to master them, played a major role in his life and career. During his retirement he was a frequent speaker at all kinds of meetings in many parts of the British Isles. At one of these, in an army barracks, he was asked to give an evangelistic address to the soldiers. As he brought his talk to a close, instead of giving the expected appeal, he said, "Young men, may I give you a word of advice? If you want to make a good start in life, learn foreign languages!"

His Travels Begin

Quite early in his career he became for a time one of the 'King's Messengers'. Their duties are to deliver diplomatic communications to foreign embassies and to accompany 'the diplomatic bag' to and from our embassies abroad. They have quarters in Whitehall because when they are 'on call' they may have to travel at short notice to all parts of the world. More importantly, from Thomson's point of view, they have a diplomatic passport that gives them immunity at border-crossings as well as the aura of a diplomatic uniform. Frequently he was able to use these privileges to visit Christian workers by extending his business trips in different parts of Europe.

In the nineteenth century such eminent figures as Lord Radstock, Dr Baedeker, George Müller and R C Chapman pioneered and supported missionary work in Europe and Russia. Thomson to some extent followed in their footsteps in that their



A conference in one of the churches built during the awakening 1919-1939. The place is now called Stolbise. When this picture was taken in 1933 the town (population about 10,000) was just outside the Russian border. Commencing with the sudden conversion of Anton Gromyko who became a pastor and evangelist, a remarkable revival took place in the town. The town authorities were so impressed with the transformation of life seen in former drunkards and thieves that they donated a site for the building of the church. According to Colonel Thomson this kind of spiritual awakening was widespread.

fruitful labours were carried on by other Brethren missionaries whom he began to visit in about 1920, men like F W Butcher in Slovakia, Richard Hill in northern Romania and D T Griffiths and Alec McGregor in Polish Ukraine.

For twenty years, between the two World Wars, Thomson was constantly in and out of all the countries of Eastern Europe visiting the missionaries without fail every year. He had been brought up in a hard school and was no stranger, especially in his youth, to poverty and adversity. Travel in those areas was often by horse and cart and conditions in the villages were very primitive indeed – no electricity, gas or running water could be expected. When the author was invited to accompany him on a visit to Yugoslavia in 1965 he was pointedly asked, ‘Are you ready to sleep in a haystack? Can you eat stale bread? Can you shave in cold water?’

One of the places he frequently visited, an area about 600 miles deep by 160 miles wide, is now part of Western Ukraine and White Russia. In 1920 it had been taken from Russia by the Polish army. Shortly thereafter, and without any warning, a glorious and spontaneous work of the Spirit began. Let Thomson tell it in his own words:

Little was heard at the time about an outstanding work done by the Lord between the two Great Wars in a remote region of Europe contiguous to the frontiers common to the Soviet Union, Poland, Romania and Czechoslovakia.

Prior to the First World War the area in question had been included in the monarchies of Russia and Austria-Hungary. During the course of that war the great revolution took place in Russia which not only led to the empire eventually becoming the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, but also paved the way for claims to be raised in several quarters to areas on the former empire's periphery.

One of the principal claimants was Poland, a land which achieved a marvellous resurrection as a result of the most unexpected simultaneous defeat of all the three empires which had partitioned the ancient Polish kingdom.

The religion of the territories thus acquired by Poland by conquest from Russia and by cession from Austria was Orthodox or Uniat (that is Orthodox in ritual but Roman Catholic in allegiance). There were very few evangelical Christians. The movement which the Lord initiated was not a revival, for there was nothing to revive. It was not a campaign or an effort of man backed by organisation or propaganda. Big results came from slender causes. People became easily interested in the things of God. It was not the work of foreign missionaries, although the few workers who did come from other lands certainly contributed to the notable results. Meetings were held under all sorts of unfavourable conditions, with large audiences which practically carried on by themselves. Numbers grew rapidly, while meeting places multiplied. People just got saved and formed themselves into little communities. There was no excitement or emotion reminiscent of more stable lands. Things just spread and the number of believers greatly increased. And thus it was when the Second World War broke out.

Indigenous Protestant missionaries from the small evangelical church in Poland and other places also moved into the area to help with the work. One whom I met in subsequent years said, 'The Lord wonderfully blessed his word – it was like sowing and reaping at the same time!' A missionary writing to friends in Britain in the 1930s said:

I visited three villages where the Gospel has never been preached before. In each village practically the entire population came to the meetings and eagerly listened to the exposition of the Word of God. When preparing to

leave, men and women gathered round me and with tears begged me to tell them more and to come again. In another village where there is a Gospel witness, fourteen souls were definitely saved by faith in the Lord Jesus. We thank God for this glorious victory.

In later years Thomson referred to this sudden and amazing work of grace in these lands as 'the overruling providence of God ensuring that a godly seed got absorbed into Russia when she eventually took these territories back in 1940'. He refers to this in recounting a visit he made in about 1933 to Richard Hill, a missionary in northern Romania:

My objective was a promising spiritual work in the Bucovina, a province of Romania inhabited by a number of races. The responsible worker was an elderly man born at the Russian seaport of Riga, who had gained much spiritual insight and experience in America, so that he did not need to experiment and thereby perpetrate disastrous blunders, as is so often the case with youthful would-be missionaries. After the Russian Revolution he attempted to return with his wife from the USA to his native land as an evangelist, but could proceed no further than Constantinople, so he did the next best thing, namely settled in Bessarabia and later in the Bucovina. He was a real pastor and true father in God to his widely scattered flock, and the result of his labours was that some seventy little local churches were established in the Bucovina, the greater part of which was absorbed into the Soviet Union in 1940 when that country presented an ultimatum to Romania demanding the cession of considerable territory. Of course the Lord knew what was going to happen, and took steps to have ready a godly population for incorporation into a professedly godless state. Strangely enough, the remains of the old pioneer lie, still in Romania, not much more than a mile from the new frontier.

On The International Stage

As we have seen, Thomson's duties frequently took him into the embassies of other countries not only abroad but also in London. Naturally he became well acquainted with some of their officials and in particular one of the most senior in the German embassy, Albrecht Achilles, a professional diplomat. He was Number 2 to the Ambassador Joachim von Ribbentrop. In 1938 Ribbentrop was recalled to Berlin to become Foreign Minister leaving Achilles in charge. Neither Achilles nor his wife were Nazis and she, sensing that they would soon all be recalled to Germany if war were declared, decided that she would prefer not to go. With her husband's agreement she decided that if the worst happened she would go instead to Switzerland for the duration of the war. Her husband would not be permitted to

support her from Nazi Germany so they would have to stockpile funds in London and forward them at regular intervals to Zurich. But who could do this for them? Then Achilles remembered his trustworthy friend R C Thomson. So it was that Thomson agreed to help them in their predicament. Throughout the years of the war, funds were sent at regular intervals to Mrs Achilles in neutral Switzerland.

During the closing stages of the war, when Germany was about to surrender, Achilles managed to get an important message through to Thomson via Switzerland. Because of the Allied bombing of Berlin and the approach of the Russian armies, the entire records of the German Foreign Office had been microfilmed and, together with the coffins of Frederick the Great, Field Marshal von Hindenburg and his wife, had been removed from Potsdam for safe keeping to a remote castle in Thuringia. The coffins incidentally were of immense symbolic significance to the German people. Thuringia, although presently in the American sector, was shortly to be handed over to the Russians. No one knew for certain what the Russians might do if these treasures were to fall into their hands – there was a strong possibility that they might not respect them nor allow access to the vital documents. Thomson immediately informed his superiors in the Foreign Office of these developments and they decided that he was the best person to retrieve them from Thuringia and bring them safely to the British sector. He was given the honorary rank of Lieutenant Colonel, taught the rudiments of military etiquette, and sent off with all possible speed to Germany. There was a convoy of American vehicles waiting for him and his subordinates to drive them straight to the castle in Thuringia. All the articles were retrieved and taken quickly to Marburg Castle in the British zone. Thomson told me that he managed to locate other records hidden in disused wells etc. He also discovered records subsequently destroyed in Hitler's private bunker. Hitler's assistant interpreter had been given strict instructions to destroy everything there, but, said Thomson, 'Being a good German he took microfilm of it before he did!' All the microfilm was then taken by Thomson to Berlin to be examined and collated by his special Documentary Unit.

It was this highly detailed material that was of such crucial importance to the prosecutor who used it as evidence against the Nazi Party's leading personalities at the Nuremberg Trials. Every letter, every signal, every communication that the Nazi High Command sent to its allies and to their rulers in the conquered territories through their Foreign Office was recovered and used in evidence against them. In recognition of his valuable role in the recovery of information he was offered the post of British Consul-General in Berlin but declined it. He told me afterwards that his reason for doing so was the degree of entertaining involved – he found that side of diplomatic life quite foreign to his instincts and beliefs.

To be concluded in the next issue.

Revival and Revivalism

The Making and Marring of American Evangelicalism 1750-1858

Iain H Murray

451 pages hardback, Banner of Truth £12.95, USA \$27.95

This well researched and carefully documented study tells the story of how the Holy Spirit has been ousted from the driving seat of revival and that position taken over by man. Revival has been replaced with Revivalism. Whereas God originated and promoted revivals before, now the idea prevails that human methodology and instrumentality provide the source of their promotion (pp 374ff). The result for the life of the churches is catastrophic. Our greatest need today is reformation and revival: reformation to restore truth to the churches, revival of believers, and spiritual awakening to save the world.

The spiritual relevance of this subject makes this book essential reading. Accounts of revival, doctrinal definition, church history and biography are skilfully woven together. The biographical sections are richly laced with descriptions of personal experience which spiritually enrich the reader.

Revival is defined in several sections (pp 19-30, 374-80, 384-80). The difference between the regular work of the Church and revival is a difference of degree, not kind. In an 'outpouring of the Spirit' spiritual influence is more widespread, convictions are deeper, and feelings more intense, but all this is only a heightening of normal Christianity. Samuel Davies and his brethren rejected the idea that revivals restore miraculous gifts to the churches (p 23).

A revival is understood as a sovereign and large giving of the Spirit of God, resulting in the addition of many to the kingdom of God. The word 'revival' does not appear to have

been used until Cotton Mather's *Magnalia Christi Americana* of 1702, but the phenomenon was understood in the same way long before that. For instance Robert Fleming (1630-1694), speaks of an extraordinary out-letting of the Spirit (p 374). The old definition taught that revival was the extraordinary and not the normal condition of the Church. The later definition (Charles Finney), asserted that revival ought to be the norm, and that it would be if only the right steps were taken. This idea of human control not only depreciates the place and importance of the normal, it propagates an illusion. The men of the Old School kept the possibility of great effusions of the Spirit before them, but they never supposed that without revival all labour was futile (pp 384ff).

The first chapter is devoted to Samuel Davies and revival. Dr Martyn Lloyd-Jones described Samuel Davies, who was author of the hymn, *Great God of wonders! all Thy ways are matchless, Godlike and divine*, as the greatest preacher America ever produced (p 3). Davies died at the age of 37. Sensing his departure he wrote an amazing letter confessing his complete reconciliation with the truth that to die is gain (p 18). The role of Princeton College occupies chapter two and 'Glory in Virginia' is the apt title of chapter three which is devoted to descriptions of the outpourings of the Holy Spirit in the years prior to the War of Independence. A further chapter is devoted to the work of the Holy Spirit in the years 1787-89. It is inspiring and encouraging to read of the nature and spread of these revivals.

Around the year 1800 a new great work of the Spirit began which is now referred to as the Second Great Awakening. This awakening is described in general in chapter five and in particular, as it spread in Kentucky, in chapter six.

While narrating accounts of revival, always stimulating and inspiring to read, there is description, reporting of controversy and analysis of the transition from the old doctrine and ways to the new (chapters 9-11). 'Numbers *seen* (note italics!) to be responding were claimed as more than sufficient evidence for the rightness of the changes in practice and teaching.' (p 283). In spite of resistance the old Calvinistic doctrine and practice were gradually usurped and replaced by the new. The rise of Arminianism and the methods of that system came into vogue long before the turn of the last century. Although on the increase those who hold to Reformed theology form only a tiny percentage of the overall worldwide evangelical constituency today.

Chapter 12 *The Baptists in Transition*, should be mandatory reading for every Baptist minister on earth! It includes a telling description of a fanatical preacher by name Vardaman who bullied congregations and coerced individuals into making a public response of conversion or of commitment (pp 310ff).

The truth of the sovereignty of God in revival is most clearly portrayed in the Third Great Awakening, sometimes referred to as the Prayer Revival, which began in 1857. It was like an irresistible rising tide which was transdenominational, and as far as America was concerned, trans-continental in effect. J Edwin Orr who devoted his life to the study of revivals came to the conclusion toward the end of his days that the 1857-58 awakening was the most thorough and most wholesome movement ever known in the Christian Church (p 332). (How that compares with the revival continuing across China today we would love to know). Sadly no definitive history of the Third Great Awakening has been written. Of that time

one writer observed, there were no revivalists, no revival machinery – no 'anxious seat' and the labours of peregrinating revival-makers were unknown (p 349). How this awakening spread to the Southern States is described in an appendix, *Revivals in the South*, which includes a thrilling description of how the revival came one evening to the large (1,500-2,000) congregation of John Girardeau and lasted about eight weeks (pp 420ff).

Chapter eight is mostly biographical and devoted to five leaders who experienced revival in the Northeastern States: Edward Griffin (*The Life and Sermons of Edward Griffin* were published in two volumes by the Banner of Truth in 1987), Asahel Nettleton (who is well known as the revival leader who contended with Charles Finney), Lyman Beecher, Edward Payson, and Gardiner Spring.

An appendix of 23 pages describes the rise and advance of revivalism in Britain.

The volume is beautifully illustrated and presented. The only error spotted is a numerical one on the contents page.

Iain Murray's mentor, Dr Lloyd-Jones, would not have allowed him to conclude this classic volume without a stirring call to the Lord's people to pray for revival. However it is understandable that after extraordinary effort by way of research, the author was fatigued in his concluding chapter.

The descriptions of revival in this book should stir every Christ-loving reader to long for and pray for the long overdue spiritual awakening needed today. According to Jonathan Edwards, the theologian of revival, the appointed means of grace to obtain revival are concerts of prayer. My book *Give Him No Rest* (EP 144 pages £4.95) urges practical action, as does the booklet, *Let's Pray for Global Revival*, the latter freely obtainable from Chapel Library, 2603 West Wright Street, Pensacola, FL 32505, USA.

Outstanding Books

Songs of Experience

Roy Clements

206 pages paperback, Christian Focus Publications, Geanies House, Fearn, Ross-shire IV20 1TW, Scotland. £5.95

Christian Focus has a fair range of reliable evangelical books and from these I have chosen *Songs of Experience* by Roy Clements, pastor of Eden Baptist Church, Cambridge, England, as an outstanding contribution. It is rare to have a modern book devoted to heart experience. The Puritans excelled in this department. Part 1 describes 'Songs in the Night': 1. Depression – Psalms 42 and 43; 2. Guilt – Psalm 51; 3. Anxiety – Psalm 55; 4. Doubt – Psalm 73; 5. Sickness – Psalm 102.

Part 2 rejoices in 'Songs in the Day': and provides exposition of parts of Psalms 34, 103, 116, 139 and 146-150.

Baptist Successionism – A Crucial Question in Baptist History

James Edward McGoldrick

181 pages hardback. Scarecrow Press, Inc. PO Box 4167 Metuchen, NJ 08840, USA. Price \$27.50

This book belongs to the category of *the only one like it*.

James E McGoldrick is professor of Church History at Cedarville College in Ohio. In this volume he shows that tracing Baptist roots to pre-16th century Reformation times cannot be realistically sustained. His scholarly treatise demolishes the imagination of the book *The Trail of Blood* by J M Carroll. He begins by defining a Baptist. There are chapters on the Montanists, Paulicians, Bogomils, Albigenses, Waldenses,

Anabaptists and Baptists in England. In the concluding chapter, Dr McGoldrick maintains:

As the present study has shown, the Baptist pioneers made no claim to any ecclesiastical succession, and, in the case of Thomas Helwys and the first generation of General Baptists, they actually scorned the very idea and excommunicated John Smyth for seeking recognition and acceptance from the Mennonites.

I am confident that our Church historians, Doctors Tom Nettles, Michael Haykin, Robert Oliver and others will be reviewing this book for various journals.

Modern Art and the Death of a Culture

H R Rookmaaker

256 pages large size paperback, Apollos, Leicester, UK, £9.99 and Crossway Books, Wheaton, ILL, USA

This is another priceless *the only one like it* book! At last IVP (Apollos imprint) have published another edition of this invaluable volume which has the potential of providing radical enlightenment for artists and art students everywhere. Rookmaaker shows clearly and powerfully how modern art has developed through various stages. For those who do not understand art, still less modern art as it portrays the disintegration of reality and absolutes with the ugliness and pain involved, this book is perfect.

What the production has gained in a larger type, it has lost severely in the definition of the illustrations. But this is no time to quibble. Be sure to buy a copy as it may never be published again.

The Carey Family Conference

Duncan Briant

The 24th Carey Family Conference was held for the third successive year at Bolney, Sussex. Just under 100 adults, teenagers and children stayed in Farney Close School, or camped and caravanned in the grounds.

The theme *Living in a Pagan World* was very relevant and was astutely illustrated by the visiting speaker David Straub of RBMS (Reformed Baptist Mission Services), Carlisle, USA as he expounded the first seven chapters of Daniel. Andrew King's seminar on *Teaching Children in a Pagan World* is recommended listening for all who have the interests of children at heart while two notable evening sermons by David Ellis and Andrew King described *The Happy Man* (Psalm 1) and *The Conqueror of the Pagan World* (Psalm 2).

The other seminars addressed issues concerning *Male and Female* (John Benton, who also preached on *Living a Life of Love*), *Living Apologetically* (David Ellis) and *World Vision* (Erroll Hulse, who also gave a paper on *The Life and Ministry of Francis Schaeffer*).

The sessions and particularly the evening meetings were well supported by day visitors from local churches and an excellent spirit of unity pervaded the conference. The programme allowed free afternoons for individual tastes such as outings and walks (one organised). The large front lawn catered for ball games for young children each afternoon.

Erroll Hulse, the founding father of the Conference, appealed to those present for the future organisation of the conference. A new team has come forward with much



Speakers at the conference, David Straub, John Benton, Andrew King, David Ellis and Erroll Hulse.

trepidation to step into the shoes of former leaders and master planners like John Rubens, Peter Parkinson and Andrew Symonds, men who have done so much to provide a conference that is both a holiday and a spiritual renewal with teaching appropriate for all age groups as well as inter-church fellowship in a relaxed atmosphere.

They now feel constrained to put something back into a fellowship event from which they have derived so much benefit. Being grateful for the guidance of the outgoing committee, the desire is to continue the task with new impetus but without change of direction.

The 1995 Conference is planned for 25-29 July to be held at Quinta Hall near Oswestry, Shropshire. For further information please contact David Jarrett, telephone 0633 866214.

Cassettes of all the 1994 sessions are available at £3.00 each incl postage, from: *Carey Conference Cassettes, Crag House Farm, Smithy Lane, Leeds LS16 7NH.*

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