

REFORMATION TODAY



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The Carey Baptist Church,
Reading, Berkshire.



Selwyn
Morgan.

Selwyn Morgan, minister of the Carey Baptist Church, Reading, tells of his own experience, describes the conference held at Wadderton, near Birmingham, during the first week of the 'seventies, and speaks of hope for the future.

The Carey Conference

THE CAREY CONFERENCE WAS A NATURAL AND MOST NECESSARY development of the growing Reformed interest among evangelicals in these days. Its place at the commencement of the 'seventies may be significant. Much is owed, under God, to the ministries of the Evangelical Library, the Puritan Conference, Dr. Martyn Lloyd-Jones, and to publishers such as the Sovereign Grace Publishers of the U.S.A. and the Banner of Truth for the increasing liberty many of us have begun to enjoy in the doctrines of grace. This movement, however, has carried with it particular challenges for Baptists which we must face in the 'seventies. For instance, there are several ministers who have accepted the position of the Reformers in respect of baptism and rejected ours because of its weak theological presentation by so many. My personal experience is similar in some ways to that of many others and it will emphasise this particular point. After my conversion I joined a local Presbyterian Church and was subsequently baptised in a Brethren assembly. I held Arminian views at the time. It was during the second half of Bible College training that I began to embrace the basic principles of the Reformed faith. But along with these I accepted the Reformers' teaching on baptism. I found nothing among Baptist writers to compete with the works of Calvin, Berkof, Marcel and Murray. I came to despise my baptism as a believer and was a strong contender for baptism of believers' children. I was ordained a Presbyterian minister. It was during struggles in the pastoral setting against indiscriminate baptism that my views were tested. I set myself to study the Covenant arguments more closely in order to strengthen my position. I was determined to take a firm stand. But I began to see flaws and inconsistencies. Apart from encouragement given by one Baptist minister, I found no others who could help me. By the grace of God I began to see my way through to liberty. It was then, during this particular struggle, that I needed the Carey Conference. There are many who are experiencing intense exercise of heart and mind at present, and the ministry of this conference will be invaluable, under God.

There are also other pressing challenges, such as the need for reformation of the doctrinal teaching and preaching in Baptist churches, and reformation in the spheres of worship, government and evangelism. This con-

ference provides a forum in which those of like mind are able to share and discuss these issues.

Three fundamental principles which are reflected in Reformed Baptist history since the 17th century characterised the conference, namely,

- 1 *Evangelical Reformed doctrine*
- 2 *Independence of the local gathered church*
- 3 *Baptism (by immersion) of believers only.*

The first point is, of course, by far the most important and provides the basis for the other two.

Most of the twelve sessions consisted of papers of about an hour's length followed by discussion. It was an exacting conference as far as the mind was concerned, but a warm devotional spirit was felt throughout and the need for practical application was never lost sight of. Time for a little bodily recreation was provided in the afternoons.

Erroll Hulse gave two papers on Baptist history. Those who, like myself, had seceded from the major denominations found these particularly helpful. We had been brought up in schools of thought where "Anabaptist" was all but a naughty word. Our knowledge of Baptist history was very limited due partly to the lack of good, evangelical Baptist historians and partly to our previous prejudice.

We were first led by the paper into a more balanced view of the Anabaptists. Mr. Hulse's main thrust was that in our reassessment of attitudes of the Reformers we must by no means despise the main body of their teaching from which we have learned so much. We saw that the Reformers' attitude to Anabaptists sprang from genuine fear that their views would disturb law and order and if tolerated threaten to destroy the whole Reformed movement. The root of the conflict lay in the Reformers' view of the church embracing the baptised children of believers. This was coupled with their sacral view of church and state—society held together by a religion to which all citizens are committed. Mr. Hulse's second lecture in somewhat abbreviated form is contained in this issue as well as a very useful diagram illustrating the three main streams of Baptist thought. The Arminian stream, beginning with John Smyth, showed how such theology was powerless to prevent the movement from sinking down into the mire of Unitarianism. The middle mainstream of Calvinistic (or Particular) Baptists stood for the three distinctives which characterised the Carey Conference. Cameos were given of men such as Bunyan, Gill, Fuller, Rippon and Booth. It was also demonstrated how many Baptists went into hyper-Calvinism and Gospel Standard extremes to form a third stream. The mainstream, however, continued. We saw how the Arminian Baptists started again with Dan Taylor. Then there was the more "woolly" approach of many among the Particular Baptists (the mainstream) which led in due time to the rapid growth of the Baptist Union which was achieved by compromise and ultimate rejection of Reformed theology, Arminianism and

liberalism having gained the ascendancy. We were reminded of Spurgeon's great stand during the Downgrade Controversy and how in a very real sense the Particular or "Mainline" Baptist stream virtually came to an end when he left the scene. The Carey Conference represents the commencement not of a new line, but the restoration of the old stream of Particular Baptists, something which would have rejoiced the heart of Spurgeon. Mr. Hulse's papers concluded with a call for dynamic evangelism based on a dynamic theology.

Herbert Carson gave two papers and led the afternoon discussion sessions. In his first paper he provided a review of the Roman Church today. We were shown how the current movement away from Roman orthodoxy does not mean a turning to orthodox Protestant theology, but rather to an extreme liberal theology as obnoxious as that of Protestant liberalism. During this time of ferment we should seek every opportunity to make our distinctives known to Roman Catholics, a matter in which Mr. Carson has enjoyed unique opportunities, in which some Roman Catholics have acknowledged the Baptist position to be more consistent than that held by paedobaptists. In his second paper he followed up the thoughts begun by Erroll Hulse regarding Sacralism. The concept of the state church could be traced back to Constantine. It developed into the view of the state administration being the "secular arm" of the church for the punishment of wrong-doers. This had obvious advantages for the maintenance of law and order. The failings of the Reformers, generally speaking, resulted from their sacralist views and this led to lamentable mistakes. They looked to civil magistrates to safeguard the life and doctrine of the church. Magistrates were encouraged to punish the Anabaptists, who were opposed to sacralism. It was much the same in England which has resulted in "Establishment". This paper led to a very lively period of discussion during the afternoon in which such matters as trade unions and strikes were debated.

David Kingdon's three sessions provided the solid theological core around which the conference was built. It was thrilling to hear a Baptist, without embarrassment, embrace the riches of Covenant theology and with powerful reasoning reprove those who would turn us away from these priceless Biblical treasures. The unity of the two Testaments was demonstrated and it was clearly shown how wrong Baptists have been to limit their theology of baptism to the New Testament, without seeing its roots in the Old Testament Covenant theology and the clear analogies between circumcision and baptism. Continuity in the Covenant must not be denied. Other covenants must be seen as the diversity of administration within the one covenant of grace. Admitting to belief in the one covenant of grace seems to many to open the door to the paedobaptist position. Simply stated this is that if children received the covenant sign in its Old Testament covenant administration, why should not children receive the new sign under the new administration? If it is said that believers in the New Testament would have taken this for granted. The

main thrust of Mr. Kingdon's argument lay in the necessity to interpret "circumcision", "seed", "children of promise", etc., in the light of New Testament development and fulfilment. Circumcision has deep and spiritual inferences which are only clearly seen in the New Testament, although "heart circumcision" was called for in the Old Testament. The great failure of the paedo-baptists has been to stress the unity of the Covenant in such a way that the diversity of its administration has been suppressed or to put it in the words of Paul K. Jewett, "they have Christianized the Old Testament and Judaized the New". Mr. Kingdon quoted freely from Jewett's book which is to be published by Henry E. Walter this year.

It was a great joy to welcome two brethren, Walter Chantry and Bill Wenger, from the U.S.A. Walter Chantry gave a paper on children in a Baptist church. Paedo-baptists, to be consistent with their view of baptism, must regard their children as believers until they show otherwise. This often leads to a false security and fosters a dead orthodoxy. As Reformed Baptists we do not presume that our children are regenerate. There is no greater blessing than the light of the Gospel and how we present the truth to our children is an area of practical theology in which much work awaits to be done.

Bernard Honeysett's clear account of his secession from the Gospel Standard fellowship of churches was solemn and heart moving.¹ It made us realise that to stand for our convictions agonises the soul. Several at the conference had been through this themselves and tears were in evidence. But our testimony to God's faithfulness should inspire others to be faithful to their consciences. This session reminded us that we must be willing to involve ourselves with the burdens of our brethren. Glib platitudes are insufficient. Love, prayer and practical help are needed.

The final session consisted of a world survey of the rising tide of Reformed Baptist interest. This was truly revealing as it showed a similar pattern of work in widely differing quarters which is above human organisation or ingenuity.

A spirit of real and deep unity on all major matters bound the conference together in a remarkable manner. But some of the general and private discussion periods showed that there were divergent opinions on a few practical matters. Some, to my mind, were tending to be rather exclusive on the issues of co-operation in evangelism. My belief that there is a possibility of demonstrating Evangelical unity at church level with paedo-baptists, seemed too broad for others. The relationship between baptism and evangelistic preaching was another issue which deeply provoked my mind. I cannot at this stage see it to be such a vital part of

¹ Bernard Honeysett has prepared an article for the next issue in which he tells the amazing story of how the Standard brethren have suffered needlessly through the addition of articles which have never had Scriptural warrant.

preaching the Gospel as some seemed to suggest. But these differences should direct us to be even more diligent in our prayer, study and discussion together before we take hardened positions. Brethren who have long breathed the air of the Reformed Baptist tradition will have to bear patiently with those of us who have just entered this invigorating atmosphere. But how I praise God for a conference where this was clearly in evidence.

The future plans of the conference to write and publish its message with its powerful, positive thrust can be a mighty force for good in these days. May God grant this for His glory. Covenant Baptist theology is all comprehensive and when it is preached in the power of the Holy Spirit is the only message that can satisfy the heart and mind of men as well as truly glorifying God. Our view of the local gathered church, living holy lives under the direct headship of Christ is the only consistent effective evangelising agency. We need not be ashamed of our convictions regarding baptism because it is the only one consistent with the Scriptures and the clearest sign of newness of life in Christ.

In conclusion one can only thank God for this conference, which, as David Kingdon pointed out, was the first of this kind in England for 157 years, and humbly dare to believe that history will point to this event at the commencement of the 'seventies as a landmark in Baptist history.

The 71 Conference

The next conference is to be held from Monday afternoon, 5th July until Thursday morning, 8th July, 1971 (D.V.). We hope that overseas countries will be well represented—therefore this early notice of the date. The organisers are Herbert Carson, Peter H. James (who seceded from the Church of England in January this year), Bernard Honeysett, David Kingdon and Erroll Hulse. Careful consideration has already been given to possible subjects. Please do not hesitate to correspond if you have suggestions to make. Bookings to be sent to the Editor.

Here we seek to answer as many questions as possible in regard to this magazine.

Editorial

1. Why Reformation Today?

EVERY AREA OF LIFE, THE CHURCH, THE HOME, CIVIL GOVERNMENT STANDS in need of continuous reformation. This will be so to the end of the age because of the destructive and retarding forces of sin. The Scriptures form our absolute, unchanging standard. To that we must conform. Since the local church is where God manifests His saving grace it follows that it is the duty of every local church to conform to Scripture in regard to worship, evangelism, teaching, discipline and literature. From such churches we can expect the principles of reformation to spread into society as a whole with salt-like effect. Unhappily some churches have become traditional to the extent that self-criticism is no longer possible. This magazine, emanating from a local church, seeks to extend fellowship to all churches interested in reformation in all its aspects and at the same time provide a mouthpiece for the Carey Conference.

2. What about The Christian's Pathway Magazine?

The Christian's Pathway began in 1897 and was edited for many years by Pastor Benjamin Warburton. It served the Strict Baptist denomination as a monthly denominational paper which he owned and which became the property of Mr. S. D. Hogwood, who was one of the main enthusiasts in pioneering the work at Cuckfield and who is now an elder of that Church. During 1969 it became clear that it was no longer possible to finance the Directory (a list of churches with preaching engagements) which made up the bulk of the magazine. The Directory was dropped for the November and December issues, 16-page supplements being inserted instead, *The State of the Nation* by the Editor, and *Riots and Religion* by Herbert Carson, printing costs being shared with Henry E. Walter, the publisher.

Following the Carey Conference it was decided that it would be best for all concerned if we united our resources to produce this quarterly magazine in place of *The Christian's Pathway*. Mr. Hogwood, whose address is 13 Lucastes Avenue, Haywards Heath, Sussex, has expressed in writing that he is prepared to restore a Directory as a separate item for circulation in the United Kingdom if support is adequate. This should be altogether possible if enthusiasm shown is equal to that given for the supplements of November and December. For instance, on account of *Riots and Religion* Herbert Carson was invited for an interview by Ulster Television during January of this year. This was very successful and has led to an invitation from the B.B.C. which means further opportunity for forthright Gospel proclamation in which Mr. Carson is eminently equipped. In the meantime it has been announced that *Free Grace Record* (a quarterly published by the Strict Baptist

Corporation) has merged with *The Gospel Herald* (a Strict Baptist monthly) to form a new monthly denominational paper with the title *Grace* which will be edited by Mr. John Doggett.

3. What about Finance?

The success of any magazine depends not only upon the number of subscriptions but also upon the generosity of Christians. There are very few magazines which are not subsidised in one form or another. It has been thought wise to charge a realistic subscription for this magazine and also make it quite clear that we depend upon the contributions of Christians. For instance, the Carey Baptist Church at Reading has contributed £100 towards the promotion of Reformed Baptist literature and part of that sum will be used to promote the Spring issue of *Reformation Today*. Other gifts have come from local churches including £10 from a struggling Baptist Church in Southern Ireland.

Mr. S. D. Hogwood has agreed to act as financial secretary for *Reformation Today*. Mr. David Guthrie, an experienced banker, is to act as treasurer. An account has been opened and cheques should be made out to *Reformation Today*. This account is to be used in the interest of *The Carey Conference*, this magazine and Reformed Baptist literature, details being made available upon request. Miss Pyner has kindly agreed to assist Mr. Hogwood, and former readers of *The Christian's Pathway* who have paid their subscriptions and who wish to continue by receiving this magazine are asked to correspond with Miss Pyner, 16 Farm Hill, Woodingdean, Brighton, BN2 6BH.

4. What areas will the Magazine serve?

As expressed elsewhere in these pages it is clear that there is a Reformed awakening in many countries. A new situation is developing as a result in which it is vital that there be an organ which is able, without fear of reprisal, to tackle the subject of Reformation—particularly as it affects those with Baptist convictions—hence the need for associate editors in other countries. Mr. Jim van Zyl has suggested that associate editors serve in rotation for a year or two each since the responsibility for spreading the magazine and representing the needs of a country which will rest with the associate editor is no small task. Bank charges are such that we are planning to have a representative for each major country who will receive the subscriptions and then post one lump sum. If South African readers would correspond with Mr. Jim van Zyl, P.O. Box 1918, Port Elizabeth, we would be grateful. Australian brethren have suggested that we air-mail a copy to them which they will reproduce by litho-process adding their own material. In the meantime if Australian friends wish to subscribe would they please correspond with Mr. Ray Levick, 25 Amoroo Avenue, Mt. Colah, N.S.W. 2079.

5. What about the size of the Magazine and future articles?

We wish to devote a primary place to literature which is useful in outreach to unbelievers. For instance, *The State of the Nation* has been discussed by a variety of secular people. Nor do we forget that there can be no prosperity unless we "meditate in the Word day and night"

(Joshua 1. 8). For several years Sermon Outlines have been sent out from Cuckfield, expositions both by the Pastor and visiting preachers being reported. In this issue we include one such outline and hope to combine this service so that our literature endeavour is concentrated in the magazine work. Wherever possible we will use the type for tracts or booklets as in the case of *Riots and Religion*.

The number of pages is limited only by financial considerations. Either ready for print or near completion are several articles such as that by Bernard Honeysett already referred to in the first article. Also ready is a work describing how Luther, Zwingli and Calvin turned away from Believer's Baptism together with a survey of literature up to the present day, and David Kingdon is completing work on *The Argument from Silence in Paedo-Baptist Apologetic*. John Davison has contributed a survey of the position of Baptist Churches in Scotland which is instructive for local churches generally. Through the initiative of an Australian correspondent a study entitled, *The Puritans and how they can help us today*, is under way as a popular introduction to the Puritans.

6. What about Advertising?

Opinions vary greatly as to whether advertisements should be received and in the light of this we have decided to take a middle position using the inside covers for photographs and for specialised advertising. Only those adverts which add to our general knowledge of the Christian scene and which can be attractively presented will be accepted, photographs being particularly welcome. We do not agree with the ultra conservative viewpoint that it is unseemly to include pictures of people. Since we have been endowed (we hope) with personality it is interesting for readers on the other side of the world at least to know what their friends look like!

7. Who will do the work?

All these plans are naturally contingent on the will and blessing of God. We have been blessed with a gifted team of workers. The magazine is to be published by the Cuckfield Baptist Church. This means that the officers of the church will be responsible just as Trustees or Directors are for a publishing house. The church concept is advantageous and healthy. It circumvents intellectualism as such and compels contributors to define their terms for the benefit of the average church-member.

8. Is there an Editorial Policy?

The contents of any magazine declare its policy. While we contend for truth we are earnestly concerned about evangelical unity. Baptists are years behind in their work on Covenant Theology and it is not to be inferred that we are not concerned about unity with our paedo-baptist brethren with whom we have some of our most encouraging correspondence. For a long time we have enjoyed their literature and we hope that many of them will enjoy ours. Our prayer is for the prosperity of evangelical local churches everywhere, but particularly those who have had to secede from major denominations because of Modernism and Ecumenism.

Baptist heirs of the Reformation

TWO DISTINCT GROUPS OF BAPTISTS EMERGED DURING THE SEVENTEENTH century in England, the General Baptists and the Particular Baptists. The General Baptists were the first to arise and had their origin in John Smyth (d. 1612) who had strong Puritan leanings. Persecution drove him and his Separatist church to Amsterdam from Gainsborough in 1608. Smyth strove hard to build his church according to the New Testament pattern and his study of the Scriptures brought him to practise believers' baptism. Common ground brought contact with the Mennonites with whom he sought union which caused the separation from him of Thomas Helwys and several others who returned to London in 1612 to establish the first Baptist Church in England. This church was Arminian in doctrine. Smyth died the same year having suffered a prolonged illness. His writings were significant and included a long and detailed Confession of Faith in which we can see to what extent he departed from the Calvinism of the English Separatists. It is highly probable that Smyth was the first to claim full religious liberty in England, as found in article 84 of his Confession of Faith. Helwys died in prison in 1616 and was succeeded by John Murton. By 1630 there were six congregations. These corresponded with and sought fellowship with the Mennonites of the Continent.

The Particular Baptists, so called because of their belief in a definite or particular atonement in which Christ died specifically and only for his elect people, arose through secession from a Calvinistic Independent Church whose theology they retained. This Church was none other than the first Congregational Church founded by Henry Jacob (1553-1624) which later became known as the Jacob-Lathrop-Jessey church after the succession of Puritan pastors.

The first congregation of Particular Baptists can be traced to between 1633 and 1638 with John Spilsbury (1593-1668) as the pastor.¹ Baptist convictions are close to the concept of the local church held by Indepen-

¹ Due mainly to scarcity of source material historians differ in regard to some of these dates. Some are prepared to be more dogmatic than others. For instance, John Clifford's, *History of Baptists*, gives date of first church as 12.9.1633.

dents. Believers' baptism dovetails with the idea of a gathered separated body of the faithful. It is not surprising therefore that further secessions from the Independents took place in which, happily, resentment and rancour were markedly absent. In 1545, Hanserd Knollys (1599-1691), a Puritan who seceded from Anglicanism, became pastor of one Particular Baptist Church, William Kiffin (1616-1701), a successful and wealthy merchant, being the pastor of another. The influence of Knollys and Kiffin brought a third to embrace Reformed theology whose name begins with 'K', Benjamin Keach (1640-1704), a General Baptist whose title to fame rests largely on the fact that he is reputed to be the first to introduce hymn singing into worship and also because he was the second minister at Southwark in the long line of Calvinistic ministers at that church leading up to Spurgeon.

Growth was steady so that by 1660 there were about 131 Particular Baptist Churches and 115 of General Baptist persuasion. Increase continued until 1689 when Parliament passed the Act of Toleration. Although this Act did not grant full religious liberty it certainly made things much easier for non-Conformists. But an alarming indifference to spiritual things soon began to prevail and sluggishness overcame the churches.

During the first half of the eighteenth century many of the General Baptists lapsed by way of Arianism into sheer Unitarianism while at the same period hyper-Calvinism began to raise its ugly head among the Particular Baptists.

It is significant that doctrinal standards soon disappeared among the General Baptists so that there was nothing to prevent them from drifting into error during this period when adverse winds were blowing. In contrast to this the Particular Baptists were doctrinally minded. Both groups had published confessions but the General Baptists were so weak doctrinally that as early as 1697 they could not even commit churches to a clear statement on the Trinity, whereupon seven Midland churches withdrew from the General Baptist Association.

The first Particular Baptist Confession was published in 1646. This was revised in 1656, 1677 and 1689. Nothing was said about restriction of the Supper to baptised believers but the case was argued in an extended appendix for believers' baptism, rejecting the contention that infant baptism is for the New Covenant what circumcision was for the Old. Circumcision was "suited only for the male children, baptism is an ordinance suited for every believer, whether male or female". This Confession was endorsed by representatives of over a hundred churches who met in 1689. Among those who signed the 32 articles were Knollys, Kiffin and Keach. Spurgeon republished the 1689 Confession in the second year of his London ministry in 1855, pointing out in his preface that "for between 150 and 200 years it had remained the definitive Confession of Faith of the Particular Baptist churches of England and Wales".

He went on to describe it as "the ancient gospel of martyrs, confessors, reformers and saints". The 1689 Confession was again republished in 1958, the year when revival of interest in Reformed theology really began to accelerate. Thus we can trace an unbroken line of Baptist belief in the Puritan doctrines expressed at Westminster in 1646, 1677, 1689 and on to 1958. The most recent edition of the 1689 Confession is dated 1966. In the same year the Strict Baptists published *We Believe*, an Affirmation of Faith based in many respects upon the 1689 Confession, endorsing all its teaching with some modern application. A considerable proportion of the Strict Baptist Churches have refused to accept the 1966 Affirmation, mainly because Strict Communion is left an open question, but also because no reference is made to "duty faith". Some Strict Baptists deny that saving faith is the duty of unregenerate man which is the essence of hyper-Calvinism.

From this sketch we observe that Continental Anabaptist influence was confined to the early General Baptists who had some contact with the Mennonites but whose genesis must be traced to Puritan stock.

The Particular Baptists stemmed from the Reformation and apart from Baptism have held to Reformed teaching through the years. Since the turn of the present century a serious decline in doctrinal standards has taken place, but latterly, particularly during the last decade a revival of interest in books by Reformers, Puritans and Presbyterians has multiplied in many different areas. Reformed literature of the perennial type from Baptists apart from generous contributions from Bunyan and Spurgeon is meagre. We should note at the beginning that, through the centuries and during these last few years, Particular Baptists have been children of the Reformation. They have followed the Reformers and Puritans in the main body of truth and hence are true heirs of the Reformation. They have, however, rejected infant baptism as well as sacramentalism. In regard to believers' baptism, the concept of the gathered local church consisting of saints, and on the question of religious liberty they have kinship with the despised Anabaptists of the sixteenth century who, for all their faults, did, for the most part, see these matters in a clear light.

At this point I would like to illustrate the history of the Particular Baptists in the British Isles by outlining the outstanding personalities. These are undoubtedly Bunyan, followed by Gill, then, clustered together, Fuller and Carey, Ryland, Pearce and Booth; then Alexander Carson and the Haldane brothers, and finally, the most famous of all, Charles Haddon Spurgeon.

John Bunyan, 1628-1688

If Spurgeon outstrips all others for the number of printed sermons circulated, Bunyan has no rival for the popularity of his world classic *The Pilgrim's Progress*, now translated into over 120 languages. Every Christian can see himself portrayed to some degree in

Bunyan's famous allegory. As with Luther before him and Spurgeon after, Bunyan's grasp of the Sovereign grace of God can be attributed to the deep conviction of sin that gripped his soul, particularly during the early stages of his pilgrimage. His spiritual experience covered the entire keyboard from deepest bass to highest treble. Baptised in the Ouse in 1653 Bunyan soon began to preach and most surely takes his place among the powerful preachers of history. He was well equipped in his personality to enact the graphic passages which we frequently discover in his writings. A perusal of a recorded sermon such as the one entitled "A few sighs from Hell" should prove the point. John Owen, the greatest of Puritan theologians, told Charles II that he would willingly exchange all his learning for the tinker's power of touching men's hearts.

For the odious sin of continuing to preach when forbidden to do so by the magistrates in 1660 he was put in prison where he was kept by his own conscience for a total of twelve years. He could have obtained freedom if prepared to sacrifice principle. Separation from his family caused him acute suffering, yet out of gall came sweetness in the form of his most edifying writings. An Open Communionist, Bunyan has not always been held in high regard by Strict Baptists, yet he typifies some of the most admirable features which adorn Baptist history.

1. He was pre-eminently a man of the Book, Biblical to the marrow. 2. He stressed doctrine, experience and practice in the best proportions typical of the Puritan era in which he lived. 3. He was a mighty preacher whose eloquence was the gift of the Holy Ghost. 4. He was not embittered by persecution. 5. God rendered his service immortal in spite of his poverty and lack of education. Like Carey and Abraham Booth he was self-taught. 6. Unlike many of much greater learning God gave the tinker an inspired aptitude for what we now call "communication". His imaginative, lively allegories and illustrations touch the innermost chords of the human heart. Christmas Evans (1766-1838), later Baptist preacher of great power, was nicknamed the "Welsh Bunyan" because he shared Bunyan's mastery of parabolic comparison and dramatic presentation. An enquiry into why these gifts have disappeared would be of no small profit.

John Gill, 1697-1771

John Bunyan, although a separatist and despite his unusual features, was typical of the Puritans. He stands in marked contrast to Gill who lacked his evangelical warmth and urgency. But it would be a mistake to under-rate Gill or bypass him. He forms a watershed in the Particular Baptist movement which was to develop another stream with its own features along hyper-Calvinist lines. But let us look at John Gill the man.

By the age of eleven Gill had gained a basic knowledge of Latin and Greek. His school studies terminated at this age because his non-

Conformist parents refused to agree to compulsory attendance for the boys at the Grammar School. Gill's thirst for learning was insatiable and he studied privately, gaining a knowledge of Hebrew, philosophy and logic among several other subjects. He was converted at nineteen and baptised. Soon afterwards he began to preach. In 1719 at the age of 22 he was called to the church at Southwark which was to become famous for its succession of famous ministers: Benjamin Keach, Benjamin Stinton, Gill, John Rippon and Spurgeon. Gill served the Southwark church for 52 years, and Rippon who followed him for 63 years, 115 years between them. In his four-volume autobiography Spurgeon tells the story of his predecessors in scintillating fashion.

Gill excelled in the Rabbinical learning by which he obtained his Aberdeen doctorate. A profound and comprehensive theologian and prolific writer he produced his first commentary, a work on the Song of Solomon, in 1724 (published 1728), which led to his writing a massive commentary on the whole Bible. To this was added a three-volume Body of Divinity and a work defending Calvinism in four volumes with the title *The Cause of God and Truth*. In regard to Calvinism Toplady said of him, "Certainly no man has treated that momentous subject, the system of divine grace in all its branches, more closely, judiciously, and successfully". Gill vigorously opposed infant baptism as he did the Arminianism of John Wesley.

As we look closer at his life and works we find that he mingled exclusively with high Calvinists and you will look in vain for references to men at lower Calvinistic levels. Although these names may not be familiar to us now it is noteworthy that Gill's friendship was with Richard Davis, John Skepp, and John Brine who were all hyper-Calvinists. His preferences in literature lay in the direction of Tobias Crisp and the orthodox men of Holland such as Witsius, but also happily with Thomas Goodwin and John Owen. Gill's failure lay not so much in what he said but in what he omitted to say. Had he followed John Owen's line he would surely have ranked amongst the greatest theologians. He certainly was one of the most learned men the Baptists have ever produced. Unhappily he restricted the Gospel by failing to beseech the unconverted to be converted to God. To omit those parts of the Scripture which highlight man's responsibility to believe and repent and to ignore the gracious invitations of Christ to all men is to deprive the word "Gospel" of its real meaning. Invitations and exhortations are to the Gospel what heaters are to cold buildings in an English winter. Turn them off and the people freeze. Gill's disinterest in evangelism is seen in the fact that while he was preoccupied with learning (which we shall never decry) he did not bestir himself to go and hear Whitefield who was preaching to thousands within easy walking distance. John Newton was there by the light of lanterns to see and hear the Prince of English preachers. Despite this lamentable weakness Gill's contribution in keeping Baptist churches

on orthodox lines during a period of theological confusion should never be underestimated.

Hyper-Calvinism largely explains why it took some time for the evangelical awakening of the eighteenth century to have effect upon the Particular Baptists. Andrew Fuller was one of the main instruments used to overcome the hyper-Calvinism which had spread among the churches.

Andrew Fuller, 1754-1815

Fuller was brought up under preaching of the Gill type. "The minister", he wrote later, "had seldom anything to say except to believers." When Fuller came under intense conviction of sin at the age of fifteen all the minister could say was, "attend the means of grace, and may the Lord call you by it in due time". Fuller reckons he might have found relief from his soul's agony had he known that he needed no preliminary qualifications for coming to Christ. When he overcame his difficulties he was baptised in 1770. Eighteen months later he came across a gross instance of antinomianism which is a plant that grows well in the soil of hyper-Calvinism. A church member had been guilty of drunkenness and excused the sin by saying that he could not help himself. Fuller reasoned with the man but was "ticked off" on account of his youth. The whole church became involved and eventually called on the minister to resign because he supported Fuller who claimed that we are responsible for our actions and that we are not stocks and stones.

At the age of 21 Fuller became pastor of a church in Soham, moving from there to Kettering seven years later. Early in his ministry he received much help from the writings of Bunyan and Gill. He soon detected the difference between the two. Both believed in predestination but Bunyan, in contrast to Gill, believed in the free offers of the Gospel. At first Fuller concluded that Bunyan was in error but after further prayerful thought and study he was convinced that Bunyan was right after all. In 1776 he began to exhort the unconverted to repent of sin and believe in Christ. His flock were not impressed and this was one of the main reasons why he left Soham for Kettering in 1782.

These exercises in the question of divine sovereignty and human responsibility extended Fuller in further study, prayer and research. He began to collate his notes. This eventuated in a manuscript to which he gave the title *The Gospel Worthy of All Acceptation*. He feared to publish it but friends prevailed upon him. Appearing in 1784 it caused an immediate storm. The hyper-Calvinists fired a broadside from one side and the General Baptists raked him with gunshot from the other. By now Fuller had come to detest both hyper-ism and Arminianism. He was well and truly fixed in the saddle of Puritan theology without any danger of falling off front, back or sides. His theology was soundly scriptural and sanely balanced and he held the antimony of Predestination and Responsibility with an iron grasp. He had nothing in common

with the shallow notions of free willers and writing to Dr. Ryland he said, "If my present connection (the Particular Baptists) were to disown me I should rather choose to go through the world alone than be connected with them (the Arminian Baptists)."

Fuller's book, opening up the whole question of the moral responsibility of sinners in regard to the Gospel, was mightily used in his day and has been a blessing ever since. His pen was both fluent and versatile and he wrote on a variety of subjects exposing the errors of his day. One of his best works was an Exposition of Genesis which Spurgeon rated highly, describing it as "weighty, judicious and full of Gospel truth".

Fuller served as secretary of the Particular Baptist Missionary Society from its inception in 1792 to the day of his death in 1815. The extent of its work was tremendous. He was tireless in his efforts to promote what must be regarded as Britain's first proper missionary society. The influence of this society in stimulating missionary interest and inspiring the commencement of other such societies cannot be computed. T. E. Watson in an excellent paper on Fuller's conflict with hyper-Calvinism given at the Puritan Conference in 1959 has this to say, "It is no exaggeration to say that Carey's going to India was the logical outcome of Fuller's emancipation from hyper-Calvinism. Fuller maintained that the Gospel was worthy of *all* acceptance, from which Carey deduced that its acceptance ought to be pressed on *all* mankind."

Rippon, Pearce and Booth

These three outstanding men ought to be mentioned as those responsible for adding brightness to the Particular Baptist scene toward the end of the eighteenth century. John Rippon (1751-1836) did sterling work in building up the church at Southwark which was beginning to decline when Gill died in harness in 1771. Rippon's life teaches us, however, that there is a time to retire from office. Fine man that he was he nevertheless continued too long, which had a deleterious effect not only upon the patience of the congregation but also upon its size. Samuel Pearce (1766-99) by contrast burned himself out at 33 but not before he had baptised 335 in nine years in his ministry at Birmingham. For holiness of life and intense devotion to Christ, Pearce was similar to M'Cheyne. And then we must mention Abraham Booth (1734-1806). Whereas Fuller came down from hyper-Calvinism, Booth came up from Arminianism and these two deserve to be regarded as worthy to take their place alongside the most useful theologians in the Puritan stream from the days of Manton and Flavel on to Spurgeon. Here we find that beautiful blend of doctrine, experience and practice which is the priceless characteristic of Puritan tradition. Booth, son of a small-holder, made his way into life as a weaver. He taught himself Latin and Greek and read deeply into history, also wading chest high into the Puritans, John Owen being the favourite. Unlike so many who merely copy others, Booth used his gift of a clear logical mind and retentive memory to

develop an independent judgment of his own. But here again, unlike some who have done this only to produce unscriptural novelties, Booth was Biblical from top to toe. He wrote many helpful books including a treatise on baptism. His most popular book for reprinting has been *The Reign of Grace*.

Bridging the gap between these men and Spurgeon we must remember Alexander Carson and the Haldane brothers.

Alexander Carson, 1776-1844

At the early age of eighteen, Carson graduated from the University of Glasgow having taken top place in his large class. He immediately entered the Presbyterian ministry in Northern Ireland at Tubbermore, a village of 2,000 people. Here he was to minister for nearly 50 years. As is customary in most Presbyterian churches an outward profession was considered adequate and efforts to discipline slack members were of little avail. Racing, cockfighting and dancing were the rage and Carson did not hesitate to ride into the throng at the race track to remonstrate with his people. He appealed to the Presbytery for support in the matter of discipline but they consistently held to the view that allegiance to the Westminster Confession was all he could demand. Convinced that none but true believers were to be granted the privileges of Church membership, Carson resigned from the Presbytery. This alienated his wealthy father-in-law and in terms of this world's goods he paid dearly for his convictions. He continued to preach in the church until the next crisis which arose when some of his members embraced Baptist convictions. He opposed them with vigour and charity but the dispute served to convert him to the Baptist position as well. This really provoked the wrath of the synod and they sent a delegation to evict Carson from the church by force. He appealed to them to allow him to complete his sermon, upon which one of the deacons took the pulpit Bible and exclaimed to the congregation, "Let all who wish to follow the Bible come this way." The place was immediately emptied. They gathered in the fields for services and when winter came met in a barn. Conversions were frequent and eventually the baptised membership totalled 500. Despite their material losses God provided for the Carsons (there were thirteen children) and for the church. The new Presbyterian minister took up the cudgels against Carson but was no match for him, Carson's written works testifying to his ability. Some have wondered why Carson dealt at such lengths and gave such prominence to *Mode* in his classic work *Baptism: its Mode and Subjects*. There are important reasons for this order, one of which is that we have no warrant to begin the study of baptism by studying circumcision. The relationship of baptism to circumcision follows after we have ascertained the nature of baptism itself. Carson wrote other books and helped Robert Haldane with his great commentary on Romans.

The Haldane Brothers: Robert, 1764-1842, James, 1768-1851

The Haldane family for many centuries possessed the barony of Glen-eagles and over the years were blessed with many illustrious sons, not least Robert and James both of whom received a handsome education. Robert inherited the Estate and throughout his life was known for his discreet and generous support of the work of the Lord to the tune of thousands every year.¹ Both brothers were noted for distinguished and gallant service as officers in the Royal Navy and Robert in later life sometimes described famous battles in which he had taken part. For several years he was engaged in the administration of his large estate until at the age of 30 he was converted, as was his brother in the same year. A godly mother long before had been used to sow the incorruptible seed and it is remarkable that both brothers independently of each other resolved to lay aside the worldly life about the same time. It would seem as one reviews James' career in the navy as a captain that he was made half of oak and half of steel, and it is not surprising to find that his natural gifts—an alert mind, physical courage and determination, combined with spiritual gifts of discernment—helped mould him into a preacher of apostolic order. Three years after his conversion in 1797 James toured Scotland, preaching in the open air after the style of Wesley and Whitefield. He preached on an average three times a day to assemblies which frequently numbered from 3,000 to 6,000. Glorious conversions attended this ministry. For instance, in one small town visited on the tour 40 solid conversions were accounted for years later.

1798 saw the sale by Robert of the Airthrey estate and the year following James was ordained into the Congregational ministry. A second tour of the North followed.

Robert Haldane, although not possessing the compass or power of voice of his brother, was nevertheless an able preacher. His efforts centred mainly in Edinburgh where he was instrumental in establishing a seminary. Robert built a Tabernacle for his brother in Edinburgh to seat 3,200, which was opened in July 1801. Here James ministered for nearly 50 years whilst at the same time conducting preaching tours in the North and in Ulster where he had fellowship with Alexander Carson. It should not be thought that Carson's was the only source of influence to persuade the Haldane brothers to become Baptists. Besides a Dr. Stuart in Edinburgh they had fellowship with Andrew Fuller and contributed toward the Serampore Mission. James was baptised in 1805 and announced that he would explain the reasons for his action the next Lord's Day. 4,000 packed the Tabernacle. But he desisted from his design and preached the Gospel, deferring his explanation until the next week. The dignified and wise way in which the Haldane brothers

¹ He gave between £50,000 and £60,000 towards propagating the Gospel at home between 1799 and 1807. What he gave later cannot be computed. *History of Baptists in Scotland*, p. 56.

ENGLISH BAPTIST HISTORY

it is important to note that a diagram of this kind is intended to convey a general idea only. for instance some particular baptists maintain strict communion, arminians are found among strict baptists and calvinists among general baptists

JOHN BRINE 1703-1765

hyper calvinism

The Strict Baptists

have been characterized by the following distinctives

1. denial that saving faith is the duty of unbelievers (the duty-faith articles)
2. communion restricted to believers of the same faith and order - "strict" communion
3. the gospel, not the moral law the rule of life for believers.

calvinism.

1644 Part. Bapt Conf of faith

JOHN GILL -

1697-1771
SAMUEL A. FULL

Henry Jacob d. 1624

ABRH. BOOTH
WILLI

The Particular Baptists

Rider Keach Stinton John Gill

1689 Act of Toleration

arminianism

MATTHEW. CAFFYN d. 1714

1660 ± 115 churches

1612
first Baptist church.

DAN TAYLOR
no 12

J. SMYTH d. 1612
T. HELWYS d. 1616

The General Baptists

unitarianism

1689 Bopt. Confession of Faith

1600

500

1700

500

hyper-calvinism

calvinism.

arminianism

non-baptist influence

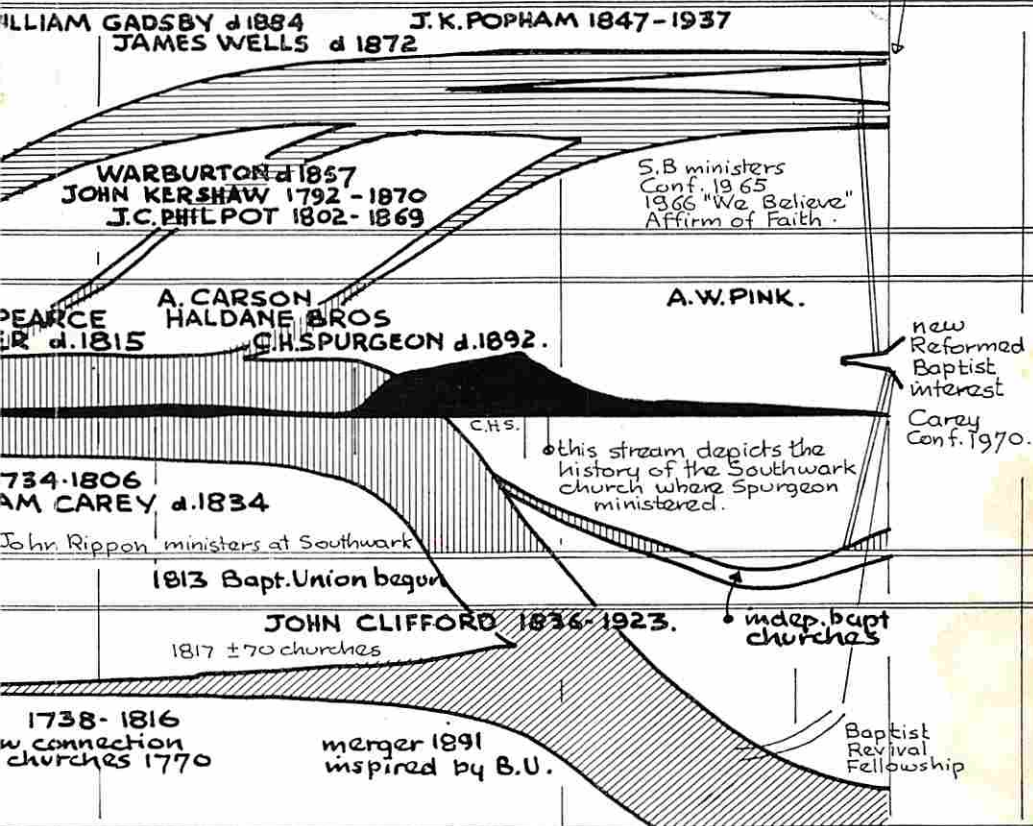
Puritans M. Henry
John Owen, Flavel,

Joseph Hussey d. 1726

G. Whitefield. Tennent
Edwards
J. Wesley. Fletcher

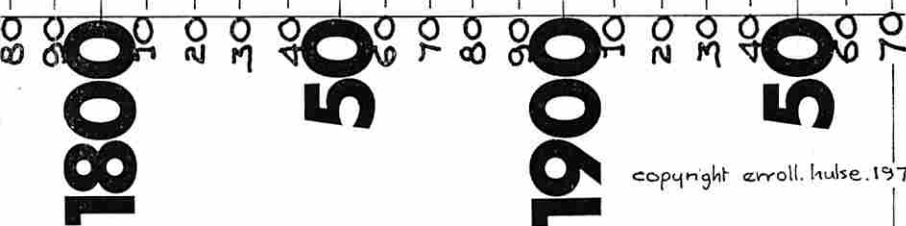
n.b. the streams are diagrammatic and not necessarily to scale

Gospel Standard stream in serious decline



modernism

1855 republished by Spurgeon, reprinted 1958.



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John Skepp. W. Huntington d. 1813

Boston
Erskines

C. Hodge J.C. Ryle
Smeats
C. Finney

Warfield Berkhof
Machen Kuiper
D.L. Moody

handled the controversy which resulted from their change of view should be noted by those who are in a similar predicament.

The careers of the brothers form a rich tapestry. Of many aspects to which we could advert, two deserve a special place. The visit of Robert Haldane to Geneva in 1816 resulted in a rich harvest in which some of France's most eminent Gospel labourers were established in the truth. Merle d'Aubigné, Malan, Gaussen and Monod are amongst those who could be named. And secondly, the culminating act of Robert's distinguished life was the publication of his superb commentary on Romans. If I may be allowed a word of personal testimony at this point I will say that this commentary first set my feet on the highway to an understanding of the doctrines of grace. We can be sure that countless souls have been strengthened through this commentary which is characterised by the unction and thoroughness that were part of the Haldane brothers.

C. H. Spurgeon

How poor we Baptists would be without Spurgeon! Like Carey his labours were prodigious in every direction. It would be foolish to attempt the story of Spurgeon here. It should be well-known to us. Just a line sketch will do. When he came to the Southwark church, situated in a most disadvantageous spot, there were only about eighty in the congregation but soon all 1,500 seats were taken. This led not only to extensions which ended in the Metropolitan Tabernacle seating 6,000, but in the hiring of huge auditoriums, such as the Surrey Gardens Music Hall, seating 10,000.

Unlike many who never commit themselves one way or the other Spurgeon declared himself against Arminianism and hyper-Calvinism. Explicit preaching which was doctrinal, expository, experimental, practical, highly topical and absolutely relevant made New Park Street and the Metropolitan Tabernacle, like Westminster Chapel of this century, famous. Good men followed Spurgeon but they lacked that distinctive insistence upon explicit truth which is necessary if the Gospel is to be preserved in purity for future generations. This readiness to contend for the truth brought Spurgeon into controversy. He did not relish conflict and the final battle, known as the *Downgrade Controversy*, shortened his life. He showed increasing concern at the compromise among the Particular Baptists (so called even though they had long since left their moorings) who in their quest for unity were prepared to compromise with "the new learning". In the end they were prepared to dilute the truth to such an extent that in 1873 they were unwilling even to contend for the word "evangelical". Spurgeon avowed his beliefs in republishing the 1689 Confession as early as 1855. He always believed that the only adequate basis of faith for the union of churches was one in which the doctrines of grace formed a substantial part. When he saw that this was not possible for the Baptist Union he resigned in 1887. He could not accept that there was any such thing as an undoctinal Christianity.

Writing in the *Sword and Trowel* he declared: "I am unable to sympathise with a man who says he has no creed; because I believe him to be in the wrong by his own showing. He ought to have a creed. What is equally certain, he has a creed—he must have one, even though he repudiates the notion. His very unbelief is, in a sense, a creed." "We are going downhill at breakneck speed", he said, and so it proved, for in 1891 the General Baptists joined the Baptist Union thus uniting the two streams for the first time since their inception.

Arminian Baptists

The drift has continued ever since and it is not surprising to find Baptist Union leaders of our day not only immersed in Ecumenism but also ready to do business with the Pope of Rome. This brings us to our application. Examination of the streams in Baptist history indicate that departures from the doctrines of the 1689 Confession have led to disaster.

It is true that the Arminian Baptists cannot be accused of departing from the theology of the 1689 Confession since they never embraced it anyway. However, their early plunge into Unitarianism illustrates that it is impossible to survive without clearly defined beliefs. The majority of Baptist churches today, like the early Baptist churches, are Arminian in theology. That is they believe that every person has free will and that God gives every man a chance to give his heart to Jesus. Those who choose God are the elect—God foreknew those who would choose Christ and thus he elected them. Success depends upon our endeavours to persuade men to use their free will. Hence the emphasis on the altar call and decisions. In some quarters a preacher is barely regarded as evangelical if he does not end his sermon with an appeal. Doctrine is frowned on in many Arminian churches as something dangerous because it tends to divide Christians. Lack of doctrine in Baptist churches everywhere is reflected in the published reports of the *Baptist World Alliance* for the eleventh congress held at Miami Beach 1965. The Alliance reflects the position of some 26 million Baptists. The section on Doctrine is as emaciated for truth as present-day Nigeria has been of protein. The highest note struck throughout from the doctrinal point of view came from Dr. Billy Graham, who quoting some of the great worthies of the past such as Bunyan, Spurgeon and Carey, went on to cite the Apostles' Creed as their faith and ours. This was a noble effort in comparison with the rest, but as for the doctrines of grace which the old worthies regarded as absolutely fundamental they might as well not exist as far as the majority of present-day Baptists are concerned. The call goes out constantly to get on with the business of winning souls. Now while it is true that we must evangelize, it is also true that those who are won to Jesus must be built up in gospel truth and if they are never encouraged to get down to the deep things of God and to the doctrines, it means we are going to produce a race of weak, ignorant Christians.

Moreover, a terrible vacuum is created for a shallow Gospel fails to fill a man's emotional and intellectual needs.

It is not surprising therefore to find that neo-Pentecostalism sweeps into General Baptist churches. The modern tongues movement is appallingly superficial and embraces High Anglicans and Romanists who fail to pass the basic Scriptural requirement of Justification by Faith. It is a wonder that Hindus who speak in tongues are not invited to join the cult! Why is this movement so attractive? The answer is that Arminian Christianity has failed to bring believers into a deep experience of the sovereignty and majesty of God. A void has been left and this void must be filled. Many Christians are yearning for reality and neo-Pentecostalism, with its claim to be like apostolic Christianity, seems to be real. Those who are well grounded in the truth soon discern the shallowness of the teaching.

What about the intellectual vacuum that is created by Arminian Christianity? Many believers, particularly those who have received disciplined intellectual training in universities, are not satisfied with shallow answers to their questions. Arminianism fails to answer their questions. Great areas of truth are avoided and neglected. Frustration results. It is not surprising therefore that Barthianism—neo-orthodoxy—the old Modernism dressed up in Reformed language) is making rapid headway among the intellectuals in General Baptist Churches. How can these subtle heresies of neo-orthodoxy be resisted when the believers have not been built up in systematic theology? Here is language which purports to deal with God's sovereignty as it relates to the varied spheres of life. It sounds wonderful. But we discover that the advocates of this teaching are universalists who deny the evangelical belief that "All Scripture is God-breathed".

It is tragic that the vacuum left by ignorance is being filled all over the world by that which is not true. Even now, Modernists are being groomed in colleges thought to be evangelical, soon to make their way into evangelical Baptist churches where the poor sheep have never been taught the differences between one system and another.

Strict Baptists

The Strict Baptists have been blessed in the past with preachers of unusual power such as William Gadsby, John Warburton and John Kershaw who could boast of thronged churches. James Wells had a weekly congregation of 2,000. These men were well able to convey the truth of God's glorious holiness; and spoke with an unction that is rare today. However, they were individualists and one very rarely finds that they recommend Puritan authors. Some of them, like James Wells, who opposed Spurgeon, were clear-cut hyper-Calvinists. J. C. Philpot, a seceder from the Church of England and a learned man, was strongly individualistic. He found it necessary to emphasize inward reality of the experience of salvation. Some of his sermons are magnificent in this

respect. However, this emphasis has been pressed to an extreme with the result that many have become inordinately introspective and suffered very deeply as a result, never attaining assurance because they feel their experience is not deep enough.

As the leaders passed from the scene many Strict Baptists have tended to press individualistic characteristics to extremes. The awful state of Arminian churches has not encouraged them and the Gospel Standard group of churches in particular have become exclusive, resisting all inter-communion with other evangelicals. One salutary result has been that Modernism has been shut out and it is hard to find any Strict Baptist preacher anywhere with Modernist views.

The removal of leaders has also resulted in an increase of itinerant preaching. There are literally scores of places with a handful of people going from week to week under an itinerant ministry of a weak character. Destitute of pastoral leadership and oversight many have become so lethargic, introspective and restricted that they have no desire to co-operate with other Christians. The itinerant system in which a man leaves his family responsibilities, travels a considerable distance, delivers an oration or two and then disappears again until the next year is pernicious in the extreme. This system runs counter to all that the New Testament declares about Eldership, shepherding and feeding the flock.

Attempts have been made to change this system by way of two or three men devoting their attention to a single cause instead of travelling about all the time. Way back in 1955 officers and members of Strict Baptist churches met at Chadwell Street, London. It was suggested that pastorless churches should invite itinerant brethren to provide a continuity of ministry for several weeks in one church. The voting was overwhelmingly in favour of the motion, 109 votes for, and 4 votes against. Many other splendid resolutions were passed in favour of abolishing the itinerant system but to no effect.

Conclusion

As we look back over the years we see that the balance of theology and practice, doctrine and evangelism is very important. If evangelism is neglected the churches become lifeless. God will have us honour the Great Commission. If we neglect theology preaching becomes shallow or distorted.

Bunyan, Booth, Carey and Spurgeon; indeed most of the leaders were self-taught men without Bible College training. Yet they never despised learning but placed great value on well furnished libraries having respect for what the Holy Spirit has revealed to others.

The history of Presbyterianism illustrates the importance of an educated ministry. Their preachers have reaped immense advantages from high

standards of training. Think of some of the Scottish Presbyterians of the last century whose writings and ministries have enriched the Church at large—George Smeaton, James Buchanan, Patrick Fairbairn, William Cunningham, Rabbi (John) Duncan, John Kennedy, Hugh Martin, David Brown, the Bonar brothers and others. Then there is the Princeton school in the United States leading to Westminster Seminary. We would be much poorer in the theological arena of today without the contributions of Warfield and more recently of E. J. Young, Cornelius van Til and Professor Murray to name a few leading lights.

It is noteworthy that Andrew Fuller was truly representative not only of the main stream of Particular Baptists but of the Reformed tradition as a whole in holding human inability and responsibility together. Thomas Boston and the Erskine brothers fought a similar battle against hyper-Calvinism and all the above-named leaders would concur with Fuller in his contention that the Gospel is worthy of all acceptance.

Theology and Evangelism

The main lesson which emerges is surely the urgent need for another reformation in which theology comes to life. The nature of God, the fall of man, the place of the moral law, the work of the Holy Spirit, the atonement and present reign of Jesus Christ—when these and inter-related themes of revelation become burning issues—in short when theology becomes dynamic then evangelism will spring forth once more with mighty irresistible power.

Basic to theology becoming alive is conviction of sin and the latter is the result of a realisation of the holiness of God and the meaning of the moral law. This can be illustrated by the life of George Whitefield. As a young man he took ship for America for the first time soon after the Revival had spread in Wales and England. During this voyage God gave him such a sight of his own heart that he wrote to a friend: "I have seen more and more how full of corruption I am", and "God has been pleased to let me see something of my own vileness." He complained of pride and self-love, and prayed "Oh, that these inner conflicts may purify my polluted, proud and treacherous heart." In regard to the sins of his youth he declared, "The remembrance of my past sins overwhelmed my soul, and caused tears to be my meat, day and night."

So great was his conviction of unworthiness that he even contemplated giving up the ministry. His experience was the outcome of his doctrinal belief. During the voyage he wrote to his friend Hervey, "It is sweet to know and preach that Christ justifies the ungodly, and that all truly good works are not so much as partly the cause, but the *effect* of our justification before God. Till convinced of these truths you must own free will in man, which is directly contrary to the holy scriptures and the articles of our church."

The doctrines of grace were meat to his soul. "The doctrines of our election, and free justification in Christ Jesus are daily more pressed upon my heart. They fill my soul with a holy fire and afford me great confidence in God my Saviour." He saw these truths as a unity and deplored any separation of them one from another, "I bless God, His Spirit has convinced me of our eternal election by the Father through the Son, of our free justification through faith in His blood, of our sanctification as the consequence of that, and of our final perseverance and glorification as the result of it all. These I am persuaded God has joined together; these, neither men nor devils shall ever be able to put asunder."

This depth of experience which has all but disappeared from the earth is called for today. In other words we need a dynamic theology which results in dynamic evangelism.

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Specialists in Baptist History engaged in research are well advised to consult Edward C. Starr's *A Baptist Bibliography*—which is available for reference at Dr. Williams Library, 14 Gordon Square, London. This massive work was begun in 1933. Volume 14 has been reached which includes names from Lea to McQuire. References go back to 1609. Anti-Baptist works are also listed. To cite a typical instance of the value of this bibliography the reader can find in it a complete list of all the writings of Abraham Booth and by use of the symbols provided know which Libraries in America and Britain stock the individual items.

For almost twenty years The Independent Evangelical Church at Coldharbour struggled along with a handful of people, first using homes and huts but later a modern, well-designed church building for meetings. In recent months the church has grown numerically. This, as far as human agency is concerned, is partly due to house-to-house visiting. Here Bill Summers, who has been pastor at Coldharbour for two years, answers a few questions.

House-to-House Visiting

When did you first start visiting?

About thirteen years ago I began visiting a small estate consisting mostly of old people. I believe that at least one of those old folk was converted as a result of that work. Following that I was with the London City Mission for eleven years.

Did you enjoy success in this effort?

The training, discipline and particularly the humbling process was invaluable. Very few were converted and in terms of results it was discouraging.

How did you set about visiting at Coldharbour?

I continued as I had done formerly, moving systematically through the area from door to door. Several young people are keen to help and I take one with me at a time. In this way others gain experience in the work.

What practical advice do you give?

Common sense plays a major part. Dress well. Call at a convenient time. Stand at a reasonable distance from the door. Be polite. Never retaliate if people are unkind. Leave well chosen literature with those who will receive it. Keep a record of the calls made.

Do you follow-up visits?

Yes. This is long term evangelism. It is necessary to nurture contacts.

What about prayer?

What is the use of visiting without prayer? Our prayer gathering takes place on Monday night and while the meeting is in progress the visiting takes place. I like to think of Moses and Joshua at the battle of Rephidim. As Joshua fought the battle Moses interceded for victory, being supported by Aaron and Hur.

Do you believe the doctrine of election?

Of course! Doesn't everyone? At least we expect evangelicals to believe this!

Does this not hinder your evangelism?

Far from it. To me this is the greatest of all incentives to evangelise. Did not the Lord say to Paul, "I have much people in this city"? In this way the Lord reminded Paul of the necessity to preach. Allow me to put it in a simple way. Paul was required to preach the truth to all men. That was his task. God by His Spirit used the preaching to draw out His elect. That surely is God's sovereign work. I do not agree with those who try and do the Spirit's work for Him or with those who have a wrong view of God's sovereignty. If belief in God's sovereignty paralyses action then it is erroneous belief. The apostles were not paralysed. In addition I would like to stress that I do not rely merely on inviting people to church or children to the Sunday School. I endeavour to bring the Gospel to them directly.

Do you think that all ministers should engage in house-to-house visiting?

I recognise that this is the most difficult aspect of a minister's work. Some, for instance, might not be capable of it from a physical point of view as it can be very exacting. M'Cheyne, for instance, said that his health would not permit this kind of evangelism. We neglect this work to our great loss.

Have you anything further to add?

Yes. I would exhort my brethren in the ministry to set an example to their flocks by showing a true zeal to reach lost souls. Take members of the church with you. Carry the fight aggressively into your neighbourhood, even if this means a reappraisal of your mid-week activities. It is our business as Christians to spread the good news. After all, if we are too busy to tell our fellow men about eternal life what have we come to?

Carey Conference Tapes

BAPTISM AND THE COVENANT OF GRACE

Walter Chantry (U.S.A.)

B. B. Warfield's assertion that there is no express reference in the New Testament to baptise infants, but that the warrant is to be sought in the Old, leaves an immense hermeneutical problem. Nor do appeals to isolated New Testament texts convince. Proper exegesis and careful hermeneutics alike show the paedobaptist position to be groundless. A clear view of the inter-covenantal relationship shows the marked differences in administration between them. While the old covenant was characterised by outward formalism, the new is entirely spiritual. While the ceremonies of the old were an aid to understanding, those of the new demand a prior comprehension. The old concerned a physical nation: the new concerns a spiritual. All this has a profound bearing on our treatment of believers' children, and on their understanding their true condition.

This address, delivered at the fourth annual conference in the United States of Calvinistic Baptists in June 1969, provides an ideal introduction to the whole subject and is commended to those coming to the subject for the first time. Pastor Chantry has agreed that we use this address instead of the paper he gave at the Carey Conference which opened up an area so extensive (bringing up children under the Gospel) that it is generally felt that it is better to await its further development, probably at the next Carey Conference planned for 5th to 8th July 1971 at Nottingham. (45 minutes.)

THE RADICAL REFORMATION

Erroll Hulse

The Reformation gave rise to an upsurge of radical opinion favouring the restoration of the apostolic church! The Anabaptist movement, though marred by extremists, has been grossly misrepresented. The Reformers were concerned at the challenge they presented to the church-state axis, and persecuted them with both pen and sword. Both Luther and Zwingli, though initially tolerant, hardened during the 1520s and sanctioned the death penalty for the heretics, while Calvin's limited and unfortunate contact hardly endeared him to the movement. The main issues were sacramentalism and infant baptism. The Anabaptists were correct in their conviction that both were scripturally indefensible and lacking any authority. The colossal effect on church history of these ideas is indisputable. The issues have not changed but Baptists have been at a disadvantage and are so today.

Two main reasons cause us to reject infant baptism. 1. It is unauthorised in the New Testament. 2. The analogy between baptism and circumcision has been wrongly interpreted. The subject must not become merely academic or be divorced from evangelism. (64 minutes.)

BAPTIST HEIRS OF THE REFORMATION. (60 minutes.)

MODERN DEVELOPMENTS WITHIN THE ROMAN CATHOLIC CHURCH

Herbert Carson

Since Vatican 2, the progressives have gained dominance within Rome, and Paul VI has been fighting a rearguard battle. It is noticeable how frequently the progressives appeal to Scripture, though this is unfortunately vitiated by the increasing influence of Protestant radicalism. A big problem they face is the tension between the traditional Catholicism they continue to espouse and their progressive ideas, evidenced by the search for biblical doctrines of the church and of baptism. An upsurge of interest in the doctrines of grace gives Reformed Baptists a unique opportunity for evangelism. (45 minutes.)

BAPTISM AND THE COVENANT OF GRACE

David Kingdon

Covenant theology as understood by Reformed paedobaptists is summed up by Prof. Murray, in asserting that God's redemptive action is covenantal action, the children of believers being included in the New Testament Church, as in the Abrahamic covenant. This provides the *raison d'être* of infant baptism, against which it is misleading to level the charge of its being "Old Testament".

That such a position has a continuing appeal is that it provides a non-sacramental rationale of infant baptism, while respecting the unity of the Bible. Moreover, it attempts to produce a theology of believers' children. It is important to grasp these issues before proceeding to deal with details. (33 minutes.)

CIRCUMCISION AND BAPTISM

David Kingdon

The analogy between circumcision and baptism is central to paedobaptistic covenant theology, though it was not applied to this purpose until the Reformation. It assumes that, since the covenant sign in the Old Testament—circumcision—was given to children, so baptism in the New Testament is intended for believers and their children.

Barth's extreme dichotomy between circumcision as a natural and baptism as a spiritual rite fails to appreciate that a purely natural interpretation of circumcision is invalid. Moreover, it had a wider reference than the national alone. That there is an analogy between these rites is clear, the New Testament showing that they symbolise the same inner, spiritual reality. However, the covenantal types had both a temporal and dispensational; both a spiritual and transdispensational fulfilment. Paul unequivocally points to the spiritual significance of circumcision, its antitype being found in regeneration, not baptism. This is not to divide the covenant, as some would suggest, but is to affirm that the age of preparation has passed, while that of fulfilment has arrived. (57 minutes.)

A CRITICISM OF THE ARGUMENT FOR INFANT BAPTISM THAT IS BASED ON COVENANT THEOLOGY

David Kingdon

Reformed paedobaptists are using wrong hermeneutical methodology. They are correct in their defence of the unity of the covenant, but ignore differences in administration. Thus, they produce many inconsistencies in interpretation. Such an approach ignores the historical unfolding of redemptive grace. In short, it confuses the Old and New Testaments, being guilty of Christianising circumcision and of Judaizing the New Covenant. (36 minutes.)

TOWARDS A BAPTIST THEOLOGY OF THE COVENANT

David Kingdon

If we let the New Testament interpret the meaning of Abraham's seed in the New Testament, we find that it shows the true seed to be believers, and not believers and their children. Circumcision, Paul insists, is not something outward, but inward and spiritual. Thus, baptism is the mark for all who are of the seed of Abraham, men of faith; and the link with the Old Testament is through the believing remnant, not the theocracy.

A New Testament interpretation of the covenant has important implications. It commits us to a theology of Divine grace. To insist on repentance and faith is not to yield to subjectivism, or to overstress human decision. Ecclesiologically, we must therefore work from the New Testament definition of the visible church to the existential situation, not vice versa.

Finally, this position's strength is shown by its proper view of the relation between circumcision and baptism; the justice it does to the continuity and diversity of revelation; its clarity of distinction between church, family and state; and its biblical foundation for pedagogics. (65 minutes.) Summaries by Bob Letham.

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*Now therefore fear the LORD and serve Him in sincerity and in truth—
And if it seem evil unto you to serve the LORD, choose you this
day whom ye will serve—but as for me and my house, we will serve the
LORD.* (Joshua 24:14, 15.)

Joshua's Call for Decisions¹

At the close of his long and distinguished career Joshua twice addressed assembled leaders from the twelve tribes of Israel together with a large representative gathering of the people. He was the grand old man of Israel, loved, revered and looked up to not only as the hero of many battles but also on account of the fact that of those who came out of Egypt he and Caleb alone were accounted worthy to enter the Promised Land.

Joshua's grandchildren and great-grandchildren would be gripped by his descriptions of the cruel bondage that tore the hearts of God's people in the land of Pharaoh (Deut. 6:7). They would be enthralled by his eye-witness accounts of the dramatic deliverance from Egyptian chariots at the Red Sea. The burning mountain at Sinai and that fatal day when the people made a disastrous decision not to enter the Land of Promise would be recalled. Unbelieving unregenerate hearts lay behind that choice.

The day of Joshua's farewell drew near. Marshalling his remaining strength he did all he could to persuade the people to be faithful in their service of the Lord. We now consider Joshua's last sermon recorded in the 24th chapter. To grasp the proceedings of that memorable day in which Joshua called for a verdict we need to examine:

1. The basis of Joshua's appeal (verses 1-13).

"Therefore" reminds us that the appeal has a solid foundation.

2. The nature of Joshua's appeal (verses 14, 15).

It is:

- (i) comprehensive—*serve him in sincerity and truth.*
- (ii) discerning—if *it seem evil unto you.*
- (iii) urgent—*this day.*
- (iv) backed by personal testimony—*as for me and my house we will serve the LORD.*

3. The result of Joshua's appeal (verses 16-28).

- (i) The overwhelming response is rejected—"Ye cannot serve the Lord" (verse 19).
- (ii) The whole matter is clarified—"this stone shall be a witness" (verse 27).

1. The basis of Joshua's appeal (verses 1-13).

Note Joshua's method. He stresses the actions of the living God on behalf of Israel. This theme gathers momentum and concludes with the *therefore* of application. In contrast to Jehovah's mighty acts pagan idols had achieved nothing. Thus when he reaches his conclusion and appeal—verses 14, 15—he is not saying that the choice is between the gods of Ur or Canaan (Mesopotamia—the other side of the flood or river from where Abraham came) or the gods of the Amorites.

¹The outline of a sermon preached at Cuckfield Baptist Chapel by the Pastor, being the 29th exposition in a series on Joshua.

This would be contrary to his reasoning from the outset. No! Ultimately the choice is between Jehovah and idols irrespective of their origin. This is clear too from verse 22. Joshua is sarcastic. Idolatry is contemptible. There is nothing to choose between one idol and the next. They are all perfidious. Bowing to them invokes the wrath of God. For every man there are only two alternatives: God or mammon: idolatry or the service of the LORD.

Joshua's preaching throbs with power and authority. He speaks the literal words of God. He is God's mouthpiece. His words are described as the "words of the LORD" (verse 27). There is a tremendous emphasis on God's sovereign rule in history. God takes the initiative and intervenes all the way through. "I took Abraham", "I sent Moses", "I brought you into the land". This is the emphasis we need today. Solid doctrine and substance well reasoned forms the basis of Joshua's appeal. He brings his hearers face to face with the infinite, holy, personal God. We should do the same. We have more history to prove God's faithfulness. Better still, we preach Christ crucified and His shed blood for the remission of sins and God's command to all men everywhere to repent and believe.

2. The nature of Joshua's appeal (verses 14, 15).

Imagine Joshua's feelings as he looked back over the years. He loved the people he is about to leave. He longed for their well-being. His appeal to them is therefore:

(i) *Comprehensive. In sincerity and in truth.* He wishes to avoid momentary resolutions made lightly or glibly. No easy decisionism for Joshua. Service of the LORD must be sincere and it involves the putting away of idols. Godly fear is required (verse 14). It is easy to say these things. It is another thing to experience them. It is significant that when the people respond they make no reference to putting away idols.

(ii) *Discerning.* In effect Joshua declares that he knows what they are thinking. *And if it seem evil unto you to serve the Lord.* Does the Lord's service seem troublesome, irksome, inconvenient to you? Here is a rebuke not only for the idolaters then but those today who prefer television on Sundays to worship and fellowship. Here is reproof for the "oncers"—who only attend God's house once on the Lord's Day and who rarely, if ever, join God's people for prayer. How can they profess to "serve the Lord", when they are serving the idols of their hearts?

(iii) *Urgent.* "Choose ye *this* day." Not tomorrow, not next week or next year! Today is the day of salvation. Every minister visiting a hospital finds case after case of those who are not ready to die. Cancer seizes one victim and thrombosis another. They have procrastinated until their hearts have hardened. In the light of eternal hell or heaven how urgent is the call for salvation. Today! Choose ye *this* day!

(iv) *Backed by personal testimony.* Who could doubt the sincerity of the aged leader. His whole life testified of sincerity and zeal. But note that this extended to his family. As for *me*—Yes I will serve—but he does not stop here. As for *me and my house* we will serve the Lord. We must never forget that the religion of Old and New Testaments is family religion. Heads of houses have an effect on the whole family in a crucial way. Their example tends to be followed. Weakness in the head reflects itself in all the members. If Dad is weak, feeble and compromised where will the children appear who by nature follow the easy way? If Mum is a lukewarm Christian and makes an idol of her home what will the children be like? Joshua's was more than an egocentric example. His family served the Lord. Nothing less than family Christianity will do today. Oh let us be conscious more than ever before that our children will either be with us in paradise or banished to outer darkness.

3. The result of Joshua's appeal (verses 16-28).

(i) *The overwhelming response is rejected. Ye cannot serve the Lord* (verse 19). The response to Joshua's appeal was overwhelming. "God forbid", declare the people, "that we should forsake the Lord to serve other gods." Joshua, however, rejects their decisions. He is not impressed, "Ye cannot serve the Lord", he says. There may have been 100,000 decisions that day for we can be sure that the assembly accompanying the elders was very large. Superficial witnesses

may well have been impressed and excited. Joshua, however, was a veteran of long experience. He knew the fickle, unreliable nature of the human heart. He would well remember how the people acclaimed Moses one day and were ready to stone him the next.

Whether men are to be saved hinges upon their will. Hence the depth and fervency of Joshua's appeal. He knew that man's will is utterly indisposed and disabled from doing God's will. The people were no doubt impressed by the truth and by their leader's eloquence. They claimed to make the right choice, but it would seem that they make it too easily. They had not reckoned with the *heart* which is deceitful above all things and desperately wicked (Jer. 17:9). The heart is the controlling factor. The heart governs the will. Hence the affirmation "ye cannot serve the Lord". "No man can come to me except the Father which has sent me draw him", said Jesus. A renewed heart is necessary. Regeneration comes first. Those who have truly discovered their corruption by divine illumination are careful to qualify the resolutions they make.

The word "choose" is seldom used in Scripture yet the terms "choose" and "decide" have come to dominate the vocabulary of evangelism. It seems that the word "decide" is never used in the Bible. "Repent", "believe", "call upon the Lord", "seek the Lord", these are used repeatedly. Their meaning reaches within to grasp the whole man whereas a decision can just be a passing emotional volition.

Has not a shallow view of man's will been the great error of our century? We know that Christ stands at the door and knocks and that it is imperative that a man "open the door" of his heart. We know that Christ said "how oft would I gather you but ye would not". A man must be willing to be saved. Yet we are reluctant to admit that man must be made willing and that he will not be made willing except God come in the day of His power (Psa. 110:3).

We have rejoiced in thousands of decisions and have been disappointed in thousands turning back. We have not said with Joshua, "Ye cannot serve the Lord!" We have not emphasised the moral law and conviction of sin. Self-loathing is rare (Ezek. 36:31). We all agree that all men are responsible for all their thoughts, words and deeds, but we have made the fatal mistake of thinking that responsibility implies ability when this is not the case. Because this is difficult to understand we have pleaded a "simple Gospel". While there is a simplicity about the Gospel it is also called a mystery. Some truths defy our understanding. That a man should be born with a sinful nature and a will in bondage to sin and yet be held responsible is a deep mystery. Joshua acknowledged it. We do well to follow his example. "Ye cannot serve the Lord." The work is spiritual and beyond natural capacity. Therefore each individual is brought to despair. I must yet I cannot. I am shut in—shut in to God so that I can only look up and say, "turn me and I shall be turned". The power comes from above and I must seek that power. What about you? Like those Israelites of old you have only two alternatives before you: idols or the Lord! Look to the Lord Jesus Christ for He is able to save to the uttermost all who come to God by Him. Relying upon Him and trusting Him wholly resolve this day that in dependence upon the Holy Spirit you will serve God with all your heart.

(ii) *The whole matter is clarified. This stone shall be a witness* (verse 27). Joshua sought to clarify, confirm and perpetuate true resolution by practical measures. He wrote out an agreement, had it signed and ratified. He ensured its safe keeping. He built a stone pillar as a memorial and a witness. He sought to conserve the results of his preaching.

Why is it that modern preaching results in so little? Do we neglect steps to conserve our resolutions? Do we spend enough time on application? The subject is large as it is neglected. We shall return to this important matter next week (D.V.) and seek to follow the example set by Joshua.

Lord's day morning, 1st March, 1970.

Many children from Christian homes are being subjected to dangerous teaching and influence at an early age. Robert Oliver, himself a school-teacher, discusses this question.

The Problem of Educating Our Children

TRADITIONALLY CALVINISTS HAVE LAID GREAT EMPHASIS ON EDUCATION. The Reformers were not only concerned to give the people the Bible, but also to ensure that they could read it. The Reformed emphasis on preaching demanded a learned ministry. This ministry in its turn raised the educational level of the congregations. Wherever Protestantism triumphed there followed a recognition of man's duty to glorify God with his mind. At the same time parents learned again their responsibility to train up a child in the way he should go and they saw all education as being involved in this process. These responsibilities were recognised by the English Puritans and later by the Nonconformists who saw education in a religious context. During the eighteenth century the Dissenting Academies pioneered an education, which shamed the ancient universities of Oxford and Cambridge. More recently, however, the initiative has slipped from our nerveless fingers. The state for better or for worse has assumed the responsibility for providing a national system of education, which caters for most children. Certain facilities exist to assist religious denominations to run and maintain their own schools, but only the Roman Catholic denomination appears to take any great advantage of these. Of course, those parents who can afford to do so may opt out of the state system and try to find some institution which more closely approximates to their own philosophy. For the majority of parents, however, the state system is the only choice.

While the provision of a free education for all children is excellent, the present monolithic state system does present certain difficulties. One effect of the growth of the present English educational system is that parents have tended to have less and less control over the training of their children. Two extreme reactions to this fact have developed. A few Christian parents have seen the dangers in present emphases in education and have successfully inculcated in their children a deep suspicion of the use of the mind. This has produced the wrong sort of tension and in some cases has produced lasting damage to the development of the children concerned. Instead of facing the challenges of our present situation they have fled into their own intellectual ghettos and have proved incapable of communicating the truth to their fellows. At the other extreme some parents have put up no fight against prevailing

tendencies and as a result have wondered why their children have ultimately rejected so much that they themselves hold dear.

Biblical Principles

In this situation certain Biblical principles must be stated. Much of our present trouble stems from our failure to think through such principles and apply them to our present situation.

1. The education of children is primarily a parental responsibility.

The Bible makes it plain that the family is an institution ordained by God. The husband is the head of the family and is responsible for its rule (Eph. 5:22-25; 6:1-3; Col. 3:18-21; I Pet. 3:1-7). This rule must be exercised in submission to the precepts of God Word and in a spirit of love. With the support of his wife the father is to train up his children in accordance with the teaching of Scripture (Deut. 6:7; Prov. 22:6; Eph. 6:4). From this responsibility no parent can escape; all will be called upon to account for their stewardship. This training primarily consists of the doctrines of salvation, but it also embraces all that revelation which guides men to live as God's creatures in His world. Certain practical deductions follow inevitably from this doctrine. First of all a boarding school education cannot be right for children from Christian homes. No parent can train a child who is out of his immediate control for most of the weeks in the year. Clearly children ought to live with their parents.

Secondly parents are called upon by the Scriptures already quoted to instruct their children in the faith. They may call upon others to assist them but they may not hand this responsibility over to anyone else. It is to be feared that the establishment of Sunday Schools has in many cases led to neglect by Christian parents. Sunday Schools were originally intended for the benefit of children of unbelieving parents. They were certainly never intended to take the burden of responsibility away from Christian parents, although they may of course be used by such. On believers rests the duty of instructing their children in the content of the Bible, in the doctrines of the faith and in the history of the Church.

Thirdly, parents must be aware of their position in relation to the state and its agencies. During the past hundred years the state has made itself responsible for the provision of many benefits previously supplied by the individual. These include education. Not only does the state insist that persons between the ages of five and fifteen years be educated, but it also provides schools and arranges for their financing. This legal position must never obscure the fact to the parent that the school is his assistant to which he entrusts the child for a part of his education. In a modern society he cannot devote himself fully to the training of his children and so he employs specialist assistance. Occasionally the claims of home and school may clash. At this point the parent must remember

his responsibility before God. An obvious example of this is when the school seeks to involve pupils in an activity which involves breaking the Sabbath.

2. All education must have a Biblical basis.

The way in which we live our lives must be ordered by the Bible. The education of our children is no exception. It will be clear that we must turn to the Bible in order to instruct them in the way of salvation. However, the Bible provides us with instruction as to the whole manner of living in God's creation. When the pupil studies science he studies God's handiwork. When he studies history he studies events ordered by God. Only by remembering these presuppositions can he study in the fullest sense. Yet in many cases the pupil will find that these presuppositions will lead to profound tensions between the teaching of the home and that of the school. He may very well find the facts of God's creation being misinterpreted and used to provoke a clash with His revelation. This is of course particularly true when the theory of evolution is taught. If the Reformation is taught it may well be in such a manner as to undermine our conception of it as a mighty work of God. In many schools children are taught ideas of religion which are completely contrary to Scripture. The present vogue for the study of comparative religions puts Christianity into the same category as Bhuddism, Hinduism, Mohammedanism, etc., suggesting that each has its strengths and weaknesses and that we must take or pick, or better still, learn a little from each.

The Problem

The problem should now be painfully clear. Many children from Christian homes are being subjected to dangerous teaching and influence at an early age. Inevitably such children must soon learn of the antithesis which exists between the Christian and the world. It would be wrong to try to conceal this. The question arises whether it is right that the antithesis should exist between the parent and the agency to which he entrusts his offspring for a part of their education.

One school of thought argues that this problem must be met by the establishment of Christian schools. This proposal deserves much more serious thought than it has received from Evangelicals generally. It is to be hoped that an awareness of the problem will lead to fruitful discussion of this suggestion. The problem is, however, with us now and must be faced with some immediate action. The following suggestions are made for consideration.

1. Individual Christians and churches need to make a thorough study of the Biblical doctrine of the family. An unhealthy pietism has caused this and kindred subjects to be neglected in recent years. Let us recognise that the Bible speaks to us on all aspects of our lives and that we must labour to grasp the principles it teaches.

2. As parents we must take the instruction of our children more seriously than has been usual among us. At this point evangelical Pædobaptists often put Baptists to shame. Our children should not only be taught the facts of Scripture history, but the doctrines as well. If these are carefully taught a child of five may surprise his parents by the response and retention shown. At this stage a catechism is of great value.

3. As children grow older let us make sure that the Christian teaching on the points under attack is made plain. This may involve parents in a little hard study, which is surely all to the good. It is, however, vital that we shun at all costs vitriolic and cheap controversy which has done so much harm in the past.

4. Finally, let us remember that many educationalists are confused. They may well welcome a point of view expressed firmly and courteously by the Christian parent. It is generally agreed that something is wrong with our society. The Christian alone can diagnose its ills. May our knowledge give us authority to speak in this present situation.

Personalia

David Kingdon. In the providence of God, David Kingdon was brought up in Spurgeon's Orphan Homes, where he was converted at the age of fifteen. After reading history at Cambridge, he trained for the ministry at Spurgeon's College, London. For three years, 1960-63, he was Assistant Minister of Purley Baptist Church, Surrey. In 1963 he was appointed Principal of the Irish Baptist College, Belfast, which under his direction provides training for the ministry which is both Baptist and Reformed.

Peter James was born in Wales and converted at the age of nineteen. He trained for the ministry at Tyndale Hall, Bristol, and served as an R.A.F. chaplain. From 1949-51 he was vicar at Watford, from 1952-60 at Braintree, and at Little Leighs from 1960-70. Since 1960 he has been General Secretary of the Christian Police Association. He has always been concerned about baptism and his children (who are themselves true believers) were never presented at the font. He and his wife were baptised by immersion in 1968. He seceded from the Church of England just before the Carey Conference which probably would not have taken place without his driving force and personality. He had the reputation in his cricketing days of being able to deliver the ball with considerable velocity. His appetite for service is immense. His work among policemen alone requires shiploads of energy. The tape recording at the Carey Conference was due to his technical ability and experience. Peter's future is now uncertain but his friends pray that God will lead him to the right church, for he has a pastor's heart, and the grass does not grow under his feet when it comes to evangelism.

Note. We hope to provide details of this kind in future issues to encourage prayer for each other.

Theological Terms Defined

Reformed. This word has increased in use tenfold during the last decade. It is used to describe those who embrace the theology of the Reformers and Puritans in regard to the main body of truth, i.e. salvation by grace, the total depravity of man (including his will), election, predestination and particular redemption. Often the term is used too freely to describe those whose grasp of Reformed theology is very limited and in some quarters the name is in disrepute because of those who have a head knowledge of the doctrine but know little of its power and nothing of the discipline and godliness manifested by the Puritans of the seventeenth century.

Puritans. Strictly speaking the Puritans were Church of England ministers who sought to "purify" the Established Church. They were Reformed in theology and their greatest contribution was to develop and apply the teachings of the Reformers in the whole sphere of practical living; the home, the church, the nation. Their writings, as Spurgeon ably shows, form the greatest deposit of expository gold in the history of the church. Generally speaking the Puritan period began during the reign of Elizabeth I (1558-1603) and ended with the Great Ejection of 1662 when 2,000 ministers were ejected from the Church of England. After 1662 the Puritans were known as Nonconformists and later as Dissenters. Bunyan is known as a Puritan even though he was a separatist. This is because he was essentially Puritan in theology, practice and spirit. Puritanism in the Church of England today hardly exists. Ecumenical compromise is the exact opposite of Puritanism.

Covenant Theology. That theology which takes into account the Covenant of Grace which God has made with His elect people to save them from their sins, which covenant (agreement) is administered by God and revealed in stages in the Old Testament leading up to the New Covenant (New Testament) in which the Covenant of Grace finds its highest and fullest expression. Another way of defining Covenant Theology would be as follows: a development of theological thought within the Reformed tradition in which the idea of covenant has come to be the organising principle by which the relations of God and man are understood.

Dichotomy. A word frequently used today to express a division or separation into two parts of any subject. The term is also used as reference to man being body and soul (including spirit) in rejection of the idea that he is body and soul and spirit (three: trichotomy).

Exegesis. The explanation and interpretation of the text of Scripture.

Hermeneutics. The principles of interpretation which govern the exposition of Scripture. Several factors, including historical background and philology (the science of language), constitute the basis of hermeneutics.

Methodology. That framework of principles within which we work out details of theology.

Subjectivism. This is a term used to describe that tendency which is found among some Christians in which they judge everything by their own inward feelings and responses rather than by objective truth. The word "objective" points us outwards towards God who is unchangeable and whose truth is unchanging.

Plenary Inspiration of Scripture. The doctrine that the Scripture is fully inspired of God, so that not only the ideas but the very words of the genuine text in the original Hebrew and Greek are the Word of God, being exactly what God intended them to be, and being completely free from error.

Dispensation. A period of time in which God deals with man in a particular way. The time up to the fall of Adam formed one dispensation. From the fall to the crucifixion of Christ forms the old dispensation while the new dispensation is that in which we live which will be terminated by the second coming of Christ.

A Sacral Society. A society in which all the citizens are committed to one religion.

Book News

TWO BOOKS OF OUTSTANDING INTEREST ARE DUE TO APPEAR FROM THE Banner of Truth Trust this year. The first is a new biography of *George Whitefield*, by Arnold Dallimore, who is the Baptist minister at Cottam, Ontario, Canada. This is the first major life of the evangelist to appear this century and will incorporate material which is not found in older works. Whitefield is regarded as the greatest ever preacher in the English language and his life is a testimony to the reality of revival. He was used to break through the seemingly impossible barriers of religious indifference and scepticism of the 18th century and provides great stimulus to those who face similar indifference today. Arnold Dallimore aims not only to re-tell the story of Whitefield but to bring home to our hearts the practical application of Whitefield's life.

The second volume is a paperback of 96 pages, priced at 5s., which is due in May by Walter J. Chantry with the title *Today's Gospel—Authentic or Synthetic?* Pastor Chantry demonstrates in this book the enormous difference between much of the preaching of today compared with that of Jesus. The very heart of the Gospel message is affected. He points to the omission of teaching on the attributes of God, the moral law, repentance and he also claims that the doctrine of assurance has been perverted. It may be difficult for Evangelicals to believe that they are so seriously wrong in their preaching, but Walter Chantry points out that while not all who "make decisions" are deceived great numbers are. We look forward to this significant contribution to our bookshelves.

Planned for May this year from Henry E. Walter Ltd., of Worthing, is a paperback by David Fountain describing the Pilgrim Fathers who left this country on the "Mayflower" 350 years ago. In discussion with the author about this volume which is to have a foreword by Walter Chantry, he said that he had concentrated on illustrating the quality of life that characterised the congregations at that time and the stress that was placed on the local church. John Robinson, who was the main influence behind the pilgrims, was an excellent pastor and brief essays are included at the back of the book on subjects such as suspicion, envy, slander and flattery which in themselves show how practical these men were in their preaching.

We are indebted to Henry Walter for espousing the cause of the Reformed Baptists by way of helping to furnish their armoury in regard to Baptist polemics. For some time this armoury has been destitute and the re-printing of T. E. Watson's paperback *Baptism Not for Infants* and more particularly the publication of Paul K. Jewett's work on Covenant Baptist Theology which should appear later in the year as a paperback will help ameliorate the position. The first edition of *The Catechism for Boys and Girls* is now depleted and a new edition is planned which will include Scripture references.

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Agents for foreign countries are being arranged to avoid heavy bank charges. For further details please refer to the Editorial.

Gifts are welcomed and those who wish to support the Magazine should make out their cheques to 'Reformation Today'.

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