

REFORMATION TODAY

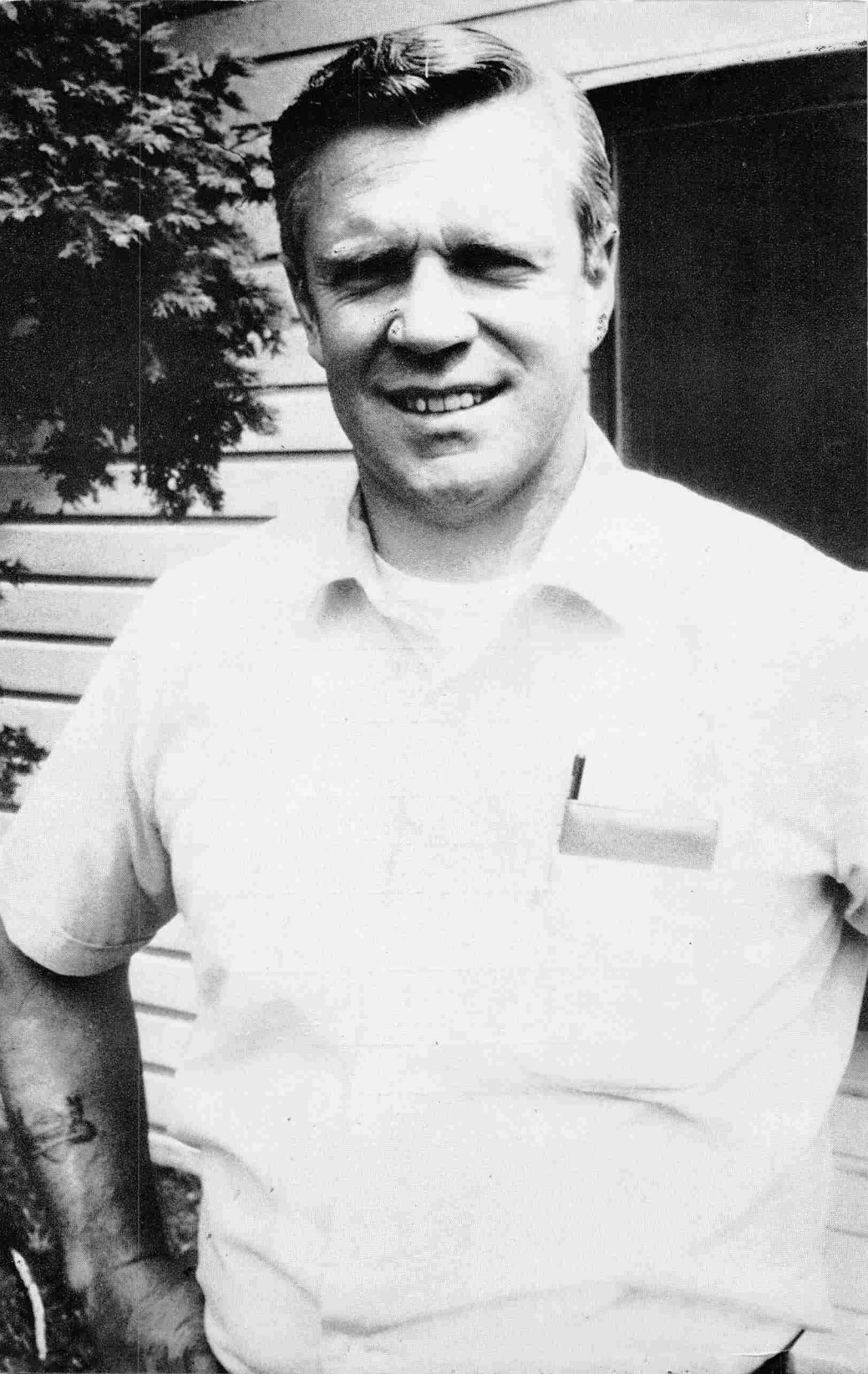


-
- 1 THE ENEMIES OF ULSTER. *Herbert Carson.*
-
- 6 THE ARGUMENT FROM SILENCE IN PAEDO-
BAPTIST APOLOGETIC. *David Kingdon.*
-
- 10 THE HISTORY OF BAPTISTS IN AMERICA
1620-1970. *Erroll Hulse.*
-
- 29 THE GRACE OF UNITY. *Ian Tait.*
-
- 34 A CREDAL CHURCH. *Stuart Fowler.*
-
- 37 THE MISSIONARY AND THE LOCAL CHURCH.
Frank Ellis.
-
- 38 THE REFORMED BAPTIST FAMILY CONFER-
ENCE AT PINEBROOK.
-
- 40 EDITORIAL.
-



NUMBER 3

AUTUMN 1970



Unrest in Northern Ireland continues. Herbert Carson, minister of the Hamilton Road Baptist Church, Bangor, draws out lessons which are valuable for us all, reminding us in particular of the necessity for religion that is spiritual in character.

The Enemies of Ulster

A GOOD GENERAL IS CONCERNED NOT ONLY WITH THE ENEMY HE SEES BUT with those he does not see. He does not make the tactical blunder of committing all his strength to one sector where there is an attack while leaving his flanks unprotected. Indeed, he may well realise that what seems to be a major offensive is really only a diversionary tactic. It is the enemy force concealed from view which is his main concern.

To many people in Ulster who long for peace and quiet the enemies of the Province are those who destroy water mains or blow up electricity pylons, those who set fire to shops and factories in the hope of reducing the country to a state of anarchy, those who deliberately plan violence. But these are not the only foes. These are simply the opportunists who are fishing in troubled waters, using the present situation for their own political ends. Where then are we to look for the enemies of Ulster? I would suggest that there are at least four: Protestantism, erroneous Catholicism, comfortable materialism and militant Marxism.

Ungodly Protestantism

It may come as a surprise and indeed an insult to many to mention Protestantism in a list of enemies of Ulster. Surely, they would retort indignantly, a godly Protestant is the friend not only of Ulster but of any country of which he is a citizen. I agree, but then I did not refer to godly Protestantism but ungodly, and there is abundant evidence that there is a more than adequate supply of the latter commodity in Ulster.

The designation "ungodly Protestant" is really a contradiction in terms. The Protestant by definition is one who bears witness to the truth of the Word of God. He is against any false teaching which subverts that Word. The ungodly man is an enemy of the Word of God. Surely, then, it is nonsense to link the two together. Again I agree, but the tragedy is that thousands do link them together by the kind of life they lead. They may be Protestant in name and in the vigour of their protest, but their way of life, judged by the standards of the Bible they profess to honour, can only be described as ungodly.

How many there are in Ulster who will march with bands playing "Stand up for Jesus" or "Onward Christian Soldiers" who give little evidence of

any concern for the honour of Christ. Indeed, many of them will before long be taking His name in vain, as they emerge from a public house with alcohol inflaming their anti-Roman fervour.

How many there are whose only appearance in a place of worship is at the annual services to which they parade. There are areas of Belfast where Sunday morning normally suggests that an ecclesiastical curfew has been imposed. There are streets where only a small minority crosses the threshold of a place of worship—though some still send their children to the churches they themselves shun. But let the pipes begin to swirl and the flutes tune up and they are out to sing “O God our help in ages past” with as little reality as an English crowd at Wembley singing “Abide with me” before the F.A. Cup Final.

The spiritual tragedy of Ulster is that there are thousands who are blinded to their own deep need by their fervent hatred of Rome. They can curse the Pope with great fluency but fail to see that apart from an experience of the new birth they themselves are under the curse of God. They dispatch the Pope to Hell with their traditional slogans and fail to see that unless they repent and turn to Christ they themselves are doomed. The New Testament is quite clear as to the terms of salvation. It is not he who curses the Pope but he who believes on the Lord Jesus Christ who is saved. It is not the vigour of anti-Roman feeling which saves a man but the presence in his life of the Spirit of God. The issue on the day of judgment will not be men’s attitude to the Pope but whether they have been washed in the blood of Christ.

Roman Catholicism

To turn from Protestantism to Catholicism is to meet the other main ingredient in the Ulster situation. In this case it is the false teaching of Rome which blinds Ulster Catholics as surely as nominal Protestantism blinds their opponents. I am not referring now to Roman educational policy which with its segregation of Catholic children drives a wedge into the community, nor to the political role which Rome has always played and which many Protestants have unhappily imitated. I am concerned rather with those dogmas which obscure for the Ulster Catholic the simplicity of the Gospel.

In Rome the Church has virtually taken the place of Christ. The Church is viewed as a continuation of the life of Jesus on earth. Just as men saw Jesus of Nazareth and heard Him speak and obeyed His call, so, Rome claims, Jesus still lives on in His Church. The voice of the Church is the voice of Christ. To submit to the Church is to submit to Christ. So men endeavour by their careful observance of the Church’s requirements to find peace with God, when all the time the Saviour is calling them directly to Himself. “Come to me,” He says “and I will give you rest” (Matt. 11: 28).

In the New Testament, "there is one God and there is one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus" (1 Tim. 2: 5). This leaves no room for any other mediator. No one else must usurp the role which belongs to Christ alone. Neither Mary nor the saints nor the priest must intrude into Christ's unique priesthood. Through Him and Him alone men may go directly to God.

Nor must men be robbed, as they are by penance and purgatory, of the assurance and peace which God gives to the penitent who trusts in Christ. The Gospel does not leave men in a morass of uncertainty as they try to make amends for their sins, nor does it leave them in doubt about their condition after death. The New Testament has a ring of assurance. The Apostle John puts it like this: "I write this to you who believe in the name of the Son of God, that you may know that you have eternal life" (1 John 5: 13). There is no groping uncertainty but the exultant conviction such as the Apostle Paul had when he wrote: "I know whom I have believed, and I am sure that he is able to guard until that Day what I have entrusted to him" (2 Tim. 1: 12).

Materialism

An increasingly powerful factor in Ulster, as it is in Western society generally, is the creeping paralysis of materialism. I use the description advisedly as the present pre-occupation of men with the supposed benefits of the affluent society is deadening men's souls, so that they are increasingly insensitive to spiritual issues.

The pressure to conform to the spirit of a materialistic age is intense. The advertisements of the glossy magazines, the snappy gimmickry of the T.V. commercial, and the message of ten thousand hoardings all proclaim the same philosophy—food and drink, clothes and furniture, the weekend cottage, and the continental holiday, these and all the other luxuries money will buy are the ultimate goal.

It is significant to notice the reaction of many young people to what to many is the summit of the materialist's ambitions—the affluence of the United States. The hippie revolt is a symptom of the reaction which comes when young people surfeited with the lush food of the rich society rebel in nausea against the pointlessness of the whole thing. This is not to overlook the fact that their state basically results from estrangement from God as it does with the rest of society.

The television screen has brought a new dimension here. The most remote hamlet is caught up in the surge of modern thinking which sets money in the place which God should hold. Indeed, the concern of many in Ulster about the troubles is often only at the grossly materialistic level—what will happen to the economy and the tourist trade and how will it affect our personal purchasing power? The insistent word of Christ "Man shall not live by bread alone but by every word that proceeds out of the mouth of God" passes unheeded by many whose religion is to bury the snout in the trough of what they consider to be pleasurable delights.

Marxism

Meanwhile, as Protestants and Catholics face each other across the barricades, and while the troops wearily maintain a role, which to them must seem incredible, as they keep "Christians" from slaughtering each other, a new factor has appeared. The young dedicated revolutionaries of the Left see the present situation as a challenge. To them the only answer to Ulster is a Marxist one with the establishment of a workers' and peasants' republic.

While acknowledging the justice of some of the claims of the young radicals—yet not condoning their methods—one must come back with the reminder that man remains evil in his essential character. You may move him from the Falls to the middle-class suburbs of Belfast. You may give him the decencies of life—and as Christians we affirm that he should be given these—but if he is not to remain just the same kind of man he needs a radical change in his nature—he needs, in Jesus' words, to be "born again".

The classless utopia of an Ireland in which Catholic and Protestant live together may seem an idyllic situation when viewed against the background of street violence, petrol bombs, and mutual recrimination. But such harmony will not come by economic means any more than it will come by religious means, if by religion we mean what the average Ulsterman means, namely an attachment to some religious body which does not commit him to any serious spiritual involvement. The economic factor is, of course, important as is the educational. But of supreme importance is the need for men as individuals to be humbled before God, which is the only adequate prelude to being humbled before their neighbour. And if there is one thing that is sorely needed in Ulster today it is that men should be driven out of their present defensive positions, where they are constantly justifying themselves and their community, to a place of penitence, of self-humbling, of readiness to apologise and make reparation—a place in short, of godliness and true righteousness.

Our weapons

It is not enough for a general to know the location of the enemy: he must also be equipped for the battle. And in face of a desperate situation, pious aspiration or religious platitudes are of little use. We have had these in abundant measure and all the time the situation has deteriorated. We must set our face against the reaction provoked by the present drift. The readiness to countenance force is a sorry commentary on the fragile grasp men have of the New Testament. To hear an Ulster clergyman declaring that if the security forces would not act firmly then the ordinary Protestants would do so, was to listen to a voice sadly remote from one which said "My kingdom is not of this world. If my kingdom were of this world then would my servants fight" (John 18: 36). The Christ who told Peter to put his sword away is hardly likely to stand behind

the appeal to force, even if that appeal is covered with a Protestant or Catholic veneer.

“The weapons of our warfare,” says the Apostle Paul, “are not worldly but have divine power” (2 Cor. 10: 4). What, then, are those weapons? If we are not to employ the methods the world uses to further worldly ends, what weapons may we legitimately use?

Our primary weapon is the Gospel of Christ which tells sinful men of a way of reconciliation, first of all with God and then as a consequence—and only as a consequence—of reconciliation with his fellows. But it must be the Gospel in its essential simplicity. It is not the Gospel adulterated by the so-called wisdom of men who have lost their way as far as biblical truth is concerned. Nor is it to be the Gospel tied up in the same bundle with a political theory—the attempted marriage of the Gospel and the Ulster constitution will only produce a barren result, like the union of horse and ass which produces a sterile hybrid, the mule—and in view of the bitter and sterile obstinacy one sees on all sides the illustration of the mule is perhaps not so inappropriate!

The second weapon to be employed is the love of Christ in the heart. It is a strange idea that you can change men’s thinking by public scorn and vilification. If a Roman Catholic is in error he is hardly likely to change his views if the representative of what purports to be the truth is an embodiment of bitter anti-Catholic prejudice.

Let me make a personal confession! I was brought up in the Ulster countryside with the usual rooted aversion to Catholic priests. This may not have been expressed openly but certainly it meant an inner revulsion. But this ingrained antipathy I have come to see is a hindrance to the work of the Gospel. I have visited Catholic seminaries—not for ecumenical dialogue whose indefiniteness is futile, but to bear witness to what I believe to be the truth. To go into such a situation with a bitter heart would produce an inevitable reaction. Men are hardly likely to listen to a man who scarcely conceals his hatred. But the love of Christ not only opens doors but opens hearts. I have found that one can be quite uninhibited in criticising Rome if that criticism is accompanied by the love of Christ. A further weapon is the fear of God. Paul could speak of the fear of God as a potent influence in his own witness. We shall each one stand before the Judgment throne. We shall give an account to the eternal Judge. Our failures, our inconsistencies, our bitterness, our irrational animosities, all of which are so readily tolerated in a divided community, will in that day be laid bare before the Judge of all men.

The final weapon, and an indispensable one, is that of prayer. We are not called to an emergency type of praying each time a new crisis blows up. Certainly we are not to pray in a merely routine fashion. Our praying is to be with a sense of urgency and in deep earnestness. Nor must the

(Continued on page 9)

David Kingdon, Principal of the Irish Baptist College, deals here with cardinal points in respect of a matter which has perplexed many Christians.

The Argument from Silence in Paedobaptist Apologetic

TO JUDGE BY THE FREQUENCY WITH WHICH IT OCCURS, THE EMPHASIS that is laid upon it, the argument from silence occupies the central place in the paedobaptist case for infant baptism. It is the purpose of this article to examine the use to which the argument is put and to suggest reasons why it does not have the compelling force which its proponents claim for it.

The argument from silence runs as follows. The rite of circumcision, the sign of the Abrahamic covenant, was bestowed upon the patriarch and his (male) seed (Gen. 17:9-14). Baptism has now replaced circumcision as the sign of the new covenant and, like circumcision, it ought to be administered to believers and their infant seed, both male and female. Since there is no express command in the New Testament abrogating the principle of "thee and thy seed after thee" it follows that it was intended to operate in the Church of God for all time. Far from proving a difficulty, the fact that the New Testament nowhere commands the baptism of infants is, according to paedobaptist theologians, a strong proof of the rightness of the paedobaptist position since if the principle of "thee and thy seed" was taken over into the church from the Old Testament an express command to baptise infants was not to be expected. In harmony with this type of reasoning paedobaptist writers repeatedly emphasise that the main case for infant baptism rests upon the Old Testament in general, and the Abrahamic covenant in particular. Frank Colquhoun's statement is typical:

"The O.T. argument is the main argument, the conclusive argument, the only real justification for this doctrine. The N.T. facts, let me repeat, are not the primary proof. They are the most important corroborative proofs, and from that point of view they are indispensable. They certainly establish and confirm the scriptural authority for infant baptism; but they do not prove it. Indeed, it may be said quite frankly that so long as we keep to the N.T. alone and ignore the O.T. it is impossible to prove this doctrine." ("Is Infant Baptism Scriptural?" p. 9.)

Baptists must face up to the implications of Colquhoun's statement. In particular they must appreciate that if they point to the absence of any New Testament command to baptise infants they will be met with the reply that there is no command not to do so. They will then have to grapple with the fact that in Genesis 17 circumcision is undoubtedly

enjoined upon Abraham and his seed. It therefore follows that Baptists must attempt to answer the paedobaptist case by carefully examining the argument from the Abrahamic covenant.

When the paedobaptist's use of Genesis 17:1-14 is examined we find that the argument from silence operates in a peculiarly selective fashion. All our attention is concentrated on the indubitable fact that the covenant-sign of circumcision is to be administered to Abraham and his descendants after him (v. 10). Not nearly so much notice is given to the fact that the male children of concubines (those "born in your house") and male slaves ("bought with your money from any foreigner who is not of your offspring") were also to be circumcised. The argument from silence is suddenly dropped at this point yet it ought still to apply since there is no express command in the New Testament not to baptise either children by concubines or slaves. My observation might appear artificial but that it is not can be appreciated if we consider the implications of the fact that in Presbyterian circles in the southern states of the U.S.A. in the slave-owning era there was considerable discussion as to the propriety or otherwise of a Christian master requiring his slaves to be baptised. That some theologians were, it seems, prepared to argue for the baptism of slaves in such a context is evident that some persons at least appreciated the inexorable logic of the argument from silence at this point.

When it suits them paedobaptists inveigh against Baptists for dividing the covenant. Pierre Charles Marcel is particularly severe. He writes:

"The device whereby an attempt is made to divide this Abrahamic covenant into two or three covenants distinct from each other, in order that, to suit the convenience of certain people, a 'carnal' element may be inserted into it, has no justification, for when the Bible refers to the covenant with Abraham it always speaks of it in the singular." ("The Biblical Doctrine of Infant Baptism", p. 87.)

But are not paedobaptists doing just this in their selective use of Genesis 17:1-14? In particular are the children of concubines and slaves less privileged under the new covenant? Surely not if paedobaptists will follow out the logic of their own argument!

The use paedobaptists make of Gen. 17:1-14 is arbitrarily selective at another point. Part of the covenant promise to Abraham and his seed is that they will enjoy "all the land of Canaan for an everlasting possession" (v. 8). No apologist for infant baptism that I have read argues that Christian believers today have a title to the land of Canaan. Yet consistency demands that believers have an interest in the literal land of Canaan since there is no statement in the New Testament which specifically abrogates Gen 17:8. Unless instructed to the contrary all Jewish Christians of the first century A.D. would undoubtedly believe that the land of Canaan was still included in the promised blessings of the Abrahamic covenant.

I do not see how the paedobaptist can escape from the logic of his argument. If the argument from silence holds good for baptism then it

also holds good for the land of Canaan. Of course my paedobaptist friends may point out to me that the land of Canaan is no longer to be understood as promised *literally* since in the New Testament it is viewed as fulfilled in the inheritance that believers enjoy in Christ (I Pet. 1:4). Thus, they would argue, there is no need for an express New Testament abrogation of the promise of a literal land since the apostolic interpretation of it clearly rules out any idea that believers ought today to expect to possess the land of Canaan.

With this understanding of the promise of the land I perfectly agree but what I find so strange is the persistent refusal of paedobaptists to apply the same hermeneutical principle in their treatment of the seed of Abraham. They insist that the promise of the land is not to be understood literally but the seed is. Thus "thee and thy seed after thee" can, they emphasise, only mean that the infant seed of believers are included within the covenant of grace. Yet the apostolic writers interpret the seed of Abraham in exactly the same way as they interpret the land of Canaan—spiritually not literally. According to Paul the true seed of Abraham are *believers* who walk in the steps of Abraham's faith (Rom. 4:18). In Rom. 9:7 he distinguishes between merely physical descendants of Abraham (*sperma*) and the true children of Abraham (*tekna*) who are the children of the promise (v. 8, cf. Gal. 4:21-31). The apostle is, if anything, even more specific in Gal. 3: 29 where he states that those who are Christ's are Abraham's seed. So far as I can see there is no room within the concept of the true seed of Abraham for the idea of the infant seed of believers. The true seed of Abraham are believers and believers only.

If my argument thus far is correct it is proper to put the following challenge to paedobaptists: "If you are prepared to understand the promise of the land of Canaan in harmony with the New Testament interpretation of it as fulfilled in the believer's inheritance in Christ why are you not also willing to accept the apostle Paul's understanding of the seed of Abraham?" Surely if it is right to understand the promise of the land in terms of Peter's interpretation of it it cannot be in order to jib at the fact that according to Paul's understanding of the seed of Abraham the literal seed *as such* no longer have covenantal significance.

The argument from silence appears impressive only so long as it is not examined in the light of Paul's clear description of the true seed of Abraham. The apostolic definition is the explanation of the fact that the New Testament contains no prohibition of infant baptism. None was needed, since the early Christians were taught that the seed of Abraham are believers in Christ. Why should an express command not to baptise infants be necessary when the seed of Abraham was defined as restricted to believers only? It seems to me that the only way to escape this conclusion is to attempt to modify the New Testament definition of the seed of Abraham so that it can be made to include believers' children. When I made this point in a review of Douglas Bannerman's booklet,

"Difficulties about Baptism" the Rev. J. L. Heaney of Mountpottinger Presbyterian Church, Belfast, replied:

"I cannot see that because believers only are to be reckoned as the seed of Abraham there should be any difficulty in their having the privilege accorded to Abraham in the matter of including their seed with the covenant relationship. If, as Gal. 3:26, 29 avers, believers are heirs according to the promise, why should they be denied that part of the promise which relates to 'thy seed after thee' (Gen. 17:7)?" (See *The Gospel Magazine*, April and May, 1968.)

With respect I suggest that Mr. Heaney has failed to meet the point at issue—that Paul's definition of the seed of Abraham excludes any idea of a birth qualification for membership of the covenant people of God. Moreover, on Mr. Heaney's reasoning believers ought not to be excluded from that part of the promise which relates to "all the land of Canaan, for an everlasting possession", especially since this element of the promise occurs within the context both of the declaration "I will give (it) to you, and to your descendants after you" and "I will be your God".

In this article I have attempted to show that the argument from silence is employed by paedobaptists in a very unsatisfactory manner. It depends upon an arbitrary selection of certain elements of the Abrahamic covenant and the transposing of these into the New Testament without due regard to the fact that the Pauline definition of the seed of Abraham must be allowed to shape our understanding of Gen. 17:1-14. On examination the argument from silence, far from being the most impressive gun in the paedobaptist armoury, turns out to be a most unpleasant boomerang.

(Continued from page 5)

intercessor function from a condition of conscious superiority and self-justification but from a position of humility and brokenness of heart. His concern must be, not the preservation of his own security, or the maintenance of any particular social or political order, but the triumph of the Gospel and the glory of God.

The time has come—indeed it is already past—for Ulster Christians to fling aside their comfortable illusions. A complacent self-congratulation that this is an evangelical bastion in an increasingly pagan world is becoming more and more an empty boast. God forgive us, but the world laughs at the incredible gulf between our loud profession and the inconsistency of our behaviour. We talk about revival but we are in danger rather of judgment. Indeed, we cannot even expect confidently to escape such judgment. We can only turn to God in repentance for our pitiful failure to share our Gospel with almost a third of the total population of Ulster. We must repent for our hidden bitterness and our open antagonisms. We must cry to God that He would work among us. It may still be that God has mercy for us instead of judgment.

The History of Baptists in America 1620-1970

IN MARCH 1639, JUST UNDER TWENTY YEARS AFTER THE PILGRIM FATHERS sailed from Plymouth, a simple but historic service took place in the New World. The scene was the new settlement of Providence—now known as Rhode Island—which in three years had attracted 30 immigrant families. This was the service: a certain Ezekiel Hollyman baptised his minister, Roger Williams, whereupon the latter, a Welshman who had been ordained in the Church of England, baptised Hollyman and ten others. Thus the first Baptist Church on American soil was constituted, with the fitting number of twelve disciples.

Today, Baptists in the United States number 27 million and the world total is 31 million, having increased 25 per cent. in ten years.¹

The growth of America

The large number of Baptists in America is due firstly to early seeds coming to fruition, to revivals which multiplied the converts, and to tremendous endeavour on all fronts thereafter. Indispensable to an understanding of this growth is the factor of population increase. At first progress was slow but the revolutionary war (1776-1783) saw the thirteen colonies emerge as the American Republic established upon a constitution drawn up by eminently gifted leaders. George Washington became the first president in 1789. Under his leadership the country acquired renewed stability and esteem. The story was already one of expansion, but from now on immigration accelerated and the possession of vast tracts of land in the West hastened the process. The Civil War of 1862-1866 was more about Union than about the emancipation of slaves. Union was achieved. The cost in blood and suffering was staggering but America's place as the greatest and wealthiest nation in the world was secured. The streams of immigrants became swollen rivers, until now there is a population of over 200 million. The growth can be seen as follows—1800: 5m., 1850: 23m., 1900: 75m., 1950: 150m. Today besides 27 million Baptists, there are approximately, in millions, 43m. Roman Catholics, 14m. Methodists, 9m. Lutherans, 4m. Presbyterians, 4m. Protestant Episcopal and half a million Pentecostals. Baptist growth has kept pace with and at most times exceeded the population growth—that is in proportionate terms!

¹ Of four million Baptists in the rest of the world Europe has about 1,180,000, Asia 1,120,000, Africa 720,000 and South America 390,000. Countries outside the United States with the largest number are: India (640,000), Russia (550,000), Congo (450,000), Brazil (342,000), and Burma (250,000).

Three distinct periods emerge as follows:

1. THE OLD WORLD OF TINY BEGINNINGS	1620-1727	Some leading Baptist personalities: Roger Williams John Clarke Henry Dunster John Miles
--	-----------	---

2. THE PERIOD OF REVIVALS	1727-1860	John Gano Isaac Backus Shubael Stearns Adoniram Judson Luther Rice
----------------------------------	-----------	--

3. THE AGE OF HUMAN ORGANISATION	1860-1970	Many gifted men were responsible during this period for expansion in all directions—education, evangelism, missionary endeavour—yet no one prophet of Spurgeon's calibre emerged to uphold the old Reformed faith and effectively withstand the insidious advance of Modernism. In lieu of biographical sketches, we devote this section to application.
---	-----------	--

1. THE OLD WORLD OF TINY BEGINNINGS: 1620-1727

The struggle for religious freedom in the New England colonies was similar in many ways to that in England although it would be wrong to regard the colonies as merely an extension of England. There has always been a tendency to underestimate the Dutch and German influence and in any case the spirit of independence very soon characterised the New World. Religious predisposition was nevertheless deeply ingrained and while persecution was not as intense as it was in England it was bitter.

The "Mayflower" sailed from Plymouth 350 years ago, an epic in faith and courage but the new Plymouth of 1620 would have been of little significance had it not been for a much greater Puritan migration which took place in the 1630's. To this group belonged Roger Williams. Baptist beginnings cannot be traced back to 1620 although one can say that the spirit of the Mayflower Pilgrims was typical in many ways of the early Baptists of America.

Roger Williams (1600-1685)

Determination and resourcefulness flowed in the veins of this son of Wales. Educated at Pembroke College, Cambridge, he obtained his Bachelor's Degree in 1627, whereupon he entered the ministry of the

Church of England. He became firmly opposed to the Establishment and was particularly alienated by the antics of Bishop Laud, the arch-persecutor of the Puritans. Williams left Bristol in 1630 and reached Boston February 5, 1631. He became a convinced Separatist in his views and strongly opposed any ties with the Church of England. Ministering among the Congregationalists he soon realised that corruption and persecution was inevitable in America as it was in England. He objected to the principle that the magistrate might punish a breach of the first table of the Law—the first four commandments. He began to voice his protest in this regard. The expression of uncompromising views led, in due course, to his banishment from Massachusetts. Such an event might well astonish those who learn it for the first time and so it is well for us to look at the conditions of that time through the eyes of Roger Williams.

The New England Puritans believed firmly in the union of Church and State. They found it necessary to establish their own Civil Government and, by this means, protect themselves as a body from intrusion from without and corruption from within. Conformity was one of the conditions of acceptance in that early society and it was required of all citizens that they give faithful allegiance to the Church. It is a mistake to conclude that these men did not know what religious liberty was all about. They knew it but feared it, for they believed that liberty would lead to anarchy. True freedom, as far as they were concerned, was to be found in the truth as they saw it. This was all very well if you held to all their views, but Roger Williams did not. One writer has put the matter in a facetious way as follows:

“The Puritans came to this country to worship God according to their own consciences, and to prevent other people from worshipping Him according to theirs.”

However, it would be entirely wrong to belittle these great men. They ought to be respected for their high ideals and for their cleaving as close to Scripture as they did. Their mistake was to enforce the first table of the Law.

To Williams belongs the immortal honour of having been the earliest champion of “soul liberty”, as he called it. “I desired”, he said of the town of Providence which he founded in Rhode Island, that “it might be a shelter for persons distressed of conscience.” This tree survived stormy weather to spread its branches mightily. For instance, American Jews acknowledge with gratitude the liberty afforded them, a liberty uninterrupted since Williams’ day. The first Jewish congregation settled in Rhode Island as early as 1658 there to enjoy freedom such as was afforded nowhere else on earth. By 1763 this Jewish congregation had increased to 60 families.

When Williams was banished in 1635 his departure was greatly lamented by his flock at the Church of Salem where he had ministered since 1631. Without bed or bread for almost four months William was the first white man to be cast upon the care of the Indians of that area. God had prepared the way for him in that he had before this time taken the trouble to befriend the Indians, learn their language and preach the Gospel to them. They had come to love him and so took him to themselves in his hour of need. Following this period, Williams set up, together with a few others, a new Settlement at Providence, deliberately so named by him because of God's kindness to him during the bitter winter which he described as, "a miserable, cold, howling wilderness" in which he sang his song of pilgrimage as follows:

God's providence is rich to his,
Let some distrustful be;
In wilderness in great distress,
These ravens have fed me!

The Settlement at Providence in the territory which soon became known as Rhode Island was initiated in June 1636. In about three years the numbers had increased to about 30 families. In March 1639, Williams and eleven others were baptised and the first Baptist Church in America was constituted.

It is with sadness that we note that those who have enjoyed the clearest apprehensions of truth (including some in our own day) have wavered to become inconsistent in respect of both faith and practice. Williams was in this category. He did not deviate in such a way, however, as to cease enjoying spiritual fellowship with fellow-believers. After founding the Baptist church in Rhode Island he resigned to become a "seeker", a "seeker" being one who despaired of finding a true church by apostolic succession, a strange thing for Baptists to concern themselves with. The root of this error is the notion that it is necessary to trace a line of pure churches right back to apostolic times, which of course it is impossible to do. True believers there have always been but during some periods the churches have been far from pure. Akin to the "seekers" is the error of Old Landmarkism in the Southern States of America today. These people have sought to preserve what they call the "old landmarks". They have assumed that the early Christians were Baptists of their kind and they refuse to acknowledge any other believers or any other kind of ministry as valid.¹

John Clarke (1609-1676)

While scholars argue about the details it can with reasonable certainty be stated that John Clarke formed the second Baptist Church in America

¹ John Thornbury, the Reformed Baptists minister of Winfield, Pennsylvania, has put his hand to the onerous task of refuting the ultra-sectarian Landmark theories. Pastor Thornbury is responsible for the biography of David Brainerd in *Five Pioneer Missionaries*, Banner of Truth. His address is Box 17, Winfield, Pa. 17889.

at Newport in 1644. The details of Clarke's are intriguing and help us to understand the circumstances prevailing in the old world.

Born in Suffolk, Clarke enjoyed a generous education and practised as a Doctor of Medicine in London for some time. He was also student of Law which much assisted him when he came to America and aided him when he returned in 1651 with Roger Williams to obtain a charter¹ from the king for Rhode Island. After his arrival, in 1637, he went with a group to New Hampshire but found the climate there too cold, whereupon he turned southwards to Providence where Roger Williams, in typical fashion, gave the group a warm welcome in 1638. Through Williams, Clarke purchased land from the Indians and began a Settlement called Newport.

To illustrate the intolerance that existed in the Massachusetts colony it is worth relating the account of a visit made by Clarke and two of his friends, Holmes and Crandall, to a Baptist friend in that colony. While conducting a meeting in the house of a friend whose name was William Witter, the three men were arrested. Clarke was fined £20, Holmes £30 and Crandall £5. On refusal to pay, they were tied to stakes to be whipped but an onlooker was so affected by the sight of Clarke in this condition that he promptly paid the fine on his behalf. Crandall was also rescued but Holmes chose to endure the torture. So powerfully was he sustained while blood poured from his body that he prayed for those who were whipping him and cheerfully declared, "You have struck me with roses". This may well have been a reference, then well known, to a Baptist martyr who suffered under Sir Thomas More. This martyr, James Bainham, a learned barrister, was burned at the stake and when his arms and legs were half consumed he exclaimed in triumph, "Oh ye Papists! behold ye look for miracles, and here you may see a miracle. In this fire I feel no more pain than if I were in a bed of down; it is to me as a bed of roses!" We ought to remember, in the comfort and safety we enjoy today that these early Baptists suffered intensely for their faith and memories of burning and burials and drownings were fresh upon their minds at that time. In the century previous to that of Clarke it is purported that 30,000 Baptists suffered martyrdom in Holland alone. It was the custom to mock the idea of baptism by bringing about death through drowning or by burial. After laying a body in a coffin a cord was tied around the neck and violently drawn tight whereupon earth was thrown upon the coffin and a living burial made complete. Happily, such severity was not the custom even in Massachusetts. It is to the credit of many of the early American Baptists that they did not bear resentment to their persecutors, which brings us to the story of Henry Dunster.

¹ The remarkable document obtained from Charles II in 1663 was held as fundamental law in Rhode Island until 1842. Included were the words to this effect, "that no person be at any time molested or punished or called in questions for any differences of opinion in matters of religion".

Henry Dunster (1612-1659)

Dunster was the first President of Harvard College, named after its earliest benefactor, the Rev. John Harvard, who dying at the age of 30 left the College half his fortune and a library of about 400 volumes. Henry Dunster, who was born in England and educated at Cambridge where he embraced Puritan principles, came to Boston in 1640. A master of oriental languages he was one of the most learned men of his time and, in establishing Harvard as a centre of learning, he enjoyed outstanding success. He set such a high standard in the liberal arts as to attract students from Bermuda, Virginia and England. Throughout the depression of the 1640's Harvard flourished, the students paying their bills with farm produce. The first printing press in the English colonies and the second in North America was set up at Harvard in 1639. The most amazing achievement of this press was to print the entire Bible in one of the Indian languages which came about through the initiative of John Eliot. This was the first Bible to be printed in the New World and the first translation into a tribal tongue since Bishop Ulfila turned the Old Testament into Visigothic.

After a thorough and scholarly examination of the question of Baptism, Dunster began to preach against the practice of infant baptism in 1653. He claimed, "that the subjects of baptism were visible, penitent believers, and they only", and also that, "the covenant of Abraham is not a ground of baptism, no, not after the institution thereof. That there were such corruptions stealing into the church, which every faithful Christian ought to bear witness against". This acceptance of Baptist views might have been overlooked had it not been for Dunster's refusal to maintain silence on the matter. For his convictions he paid dearly for after twelve years of brilliant service he was compelled to resign office. In desperate concern for the care of his family during the winter he begged the use of his home for six months until he could settle his affairs. Unhappily this request was rejected. He died only five weeks after moving away from Harvard but Dunster's example in the midst of his sufferings affords important instruction for us in that he showed a wonderfully magnanimous spirit to his opponents. Cotton Mather says of him that he fell asleep "in such harmony of affection with the good men who had been the authors of his removal from Cambridge, that he by his will ordered his body to be carried there for its burial and bequeathed legacies to these very persons". Inspired by a gracious master we should be generous and large hearted in all our dealings as was Henry Dunster who, by his firm stand for the truth and by his example planted a seed in the heart of the Puritan Commonwealth of the New World which proved to be indestructible. It ought also to be noted that some of the brightest lights in the Baptist world have come from the opposite camp. Had more love been shown others might have been won, such as a father of American Presbyterianism, namely Archibald Alexander, who for some time refused to baptise infants. He clearly saw the consistent

case argued by Baptists who contend not merely for the purity of the ordinance as such, but essentially for the nature of the local church of which believer's baptism is the safeguard.

John Miles (1621-1683)

A brief description of Miles will help illustrate the quality of some of the founding fathers of the Baptist cause in America. Miles was responsible in 1649 for the first Baptist Church in his native land of Wales. He possessed unusual qualities soon to be employed in the New World where he emigrated shortly after the Act of Uniformity in 1662 when 2,000 ministers were ejected from the Established Church. With a large proportion of his church, Miles settled at a new Swansea, about ten miles from Providence in Rhode Island. Despite stout opposition Miles prospered greatly and the new church grew. Once, when brought before the magistrates, he asked for a Bible and quoted Job 19 and verse 28, which reads: "Ye should say, why persecute we him, seeing the root of the matter is found in me?" He said no more but sat down, and the court was so convicted by the context of the passage that cruelty gave way to kindness. Miles was responsible for the establishment of two churches which took deep root in the colony. During these formative years growth was slow and sometimes almost imperceptible, yet these tiny churches grew gradually in size and multiplied in number.

Conclusions

Those Pastors of our day who are labouring in isolated places against great odds should take encouragement. Patience is needed in pioneer work, especially during the times when nothing appears to prosper. The early Baptists faced a hostile world in which they endured persecution. Regarded as sectarian and schismatic, they were often ridiculed, particularly for their adherence to the Scriptural mode of baptism. Being so regarded by the world was hardly an encouragement to evangelise.

These early men have their counterpart today. Difficulties of a different nature militate against Baptist pioneers of the 1970s who are seeking to re-lay solid doctrinal foundations in their churches. They cannot report the sensational results of those who employ modern methods. They are derided as narrow minded and are accused of division because of their espousal to the old, well-tried doctrines of grace.

Let perseverance be the watchword for these stalwarts who dig deeply in order to build upon a rock strata. Evangelism is far less difficult today than it was for our forebears even though the church situation seems to have become as intricate as it was in the 17th century. History proves that the Lord will own faithful work and in due season a harvest will be reaped. The Baptist pioneers of America little dreamed that Psalm 72:16 would find a fulfilment in their case. "There shall be an handful of corn in the earth upon the top of the mountains; the fruit

thereof shall shake like Lebanon: and they of the city shall flourish like grass of the earth.”

The handful of corn was sown during those early years in adverse conditions and in an environment which seemed in every way to militate against growth. Yet contrary to human expectation a harvest of grain was to appear so rich and profuse that it can be compared to a rich harvest of corn, which in the Psalm is likened to the mighty cedars of Lebanon. The reference in the Psalm is to the wind which, when rustling through the ripe ears of corn, would sound similar to the movement of the majestic forests of cedar.

The handful of corn faithfully sown in unpropitious circumstances has enormous potential, for the power of increase belongs to the Lord and this power is clearly seen in spiritual awakenings to which subject we now turn.

2. THE PERIOD OF REVIVALS: 1727-1860

During 1727 a revival took place in the Moravian community in Herrnhut in Germany, and at the same time there was a spiritual awakening under the ministry of Freylinghuysen, a Dutch Reformed minister in New England. When the force of this awakening seemed to be on the decline the Holy Spirit came upon the congregation under Jonathan Edwards at Northampton in 1735, this being one of the most remarkable revivals in the history of the church. Details of this awakening are recorded in “A Narrative of Surprising Conversions”, which Isaac Watts described in this way: “Never did we hear or read since the first ages of Christianity any event of this kind so surprising as the present narrative has set before us”. The reading of the Edwards’ description in the English-speaking world had an incalculable effect in stirring up believers to seek similar blessings. As it happens, this was to be an age of recurring outpourings of the Spirit. It is interesting to note, for instance, that there were at least fifteen major revivals in Wales from 1760 to 1860. Indeed this was a period during which believers thought in terms of revival. When a spiritual dearth overcame the churches, time would be set aside for fasting and prayer. Re-awakening and the outpouring of the Holy Spirit was earnestly sought. There was no doubt in the minds of these disciples that God was sovereign. He was not obliged, and nor could He be forced or compelled to work. His sovereignty in giving grace and salvation was respected. Nevertheless, the believers would implore Him to visit them once more and when waited upon with fervency and expectation it invariably pleased the Lord to come among them to demonstrate the power of His might in salvation.

When it seemed that the impetus of the Edwards’ awakening was declining, George Whitefield visited America for the second time. His first visit had been confined to Georgia and when he returned to England he experienced the mighty tide of revival, first at Bristol in the open air,

and later in London, drawing crowds of an incredible size for those days. These extraordinary happenings are skilfully and accurately portrayed in the new biography by Arnold Dallimore of George Whitefield. Crossing the Atlantic for the second time, we could well wonder whether the Lord would be pleased to use Whitefield in a similar way to that which had transpired at Moorfields and Kennington Common. Our hearts are filled with wonder and praise when we discover that this indeed was to be the case. Whitefield's ministry was used in America to spread the fire from heart to heart, many being quickened in fervent love for the Lord, and multitudes being awakened and retrieved from darkness and brought into the light.

The Baptists benefited to the full from these revivals. Gatherings of considerable magnitude were experienced during this period. An example from the revival which visited the churches in 1800 will illustrate the point. One Association of 29 churches recorded only 29 conversions in 1799. By 1801 the same churches were able to report the reception of over 3,000 members by baptism! In addition to this, nine new churches had been formed during that brief time, and a year later a further ten churches had been formed.¹ One could multiply such instances.

We should avoid the mistake of thinking that these revivals made the work of God a simple matter. Sprague, in his book "Lectures on Revival",² will help correct this erroneous idea. Times of revival are fraught with dangers and difficulties and periods of coldness and unbelief can soon follow, which proves the natural ingratitude and forgetfulness of the human heart.

Short sketches of the lives of some of the leading men of this period will enable us to picture something of the times in which they lived.

John Gano (1727-1798)

A direct descendent of the Huguenots of France, John Gano was born at Hopewell where he joined the Baptists at a young age, being ordained in 1754. Before his ordination he had preached in Virginia for which he was required to give an account by the church and requested to preach before the members. His calling was immediately recognised and consequently he was sent on a mission to the South. At Charleston he preached before distinguished company, including George Whitefield who was one of twelve ministers present. At first Gano feared this illustrious company but as he began to preach the thought passed through his mind that he had none to fear and obey but the Lord. An idea of his gifts is given by the testimony of an Episcopalian in New York who declared: "Mr. Gano possessed the best pulpit talent of any man that I ever heard". His first pastorate following his itinerant ministry was in New York, where in due course the meeting house had to be enlarged

¹ Torbet, *The History of the Baptists*, p. 301.

² Banner of Truth.

to contain the crowds that flocked to hear him. In 1763 this church numbered only 41 members. Gano baptised 297 during his pastorate there.

The revolutionary war interrupted his ministry during which time he distinguished himself as a chaplain in the army. He showed great courage at the Battle of Chatterton Hill, when he sprang to the front and urged the men to battle when many had fled. He knew that his rightful place was with the surgeons but confessed that he could not resist the urge to press forward. The famous men of his day including Washington were among his personal friends. Gano was noted for his leading role during services of thanksgiving at the end of the war.

Returning to New York, which had been occupied by the English during the war, he and others confronted a scene of desolation. Of nineteen churches only nine were usable. Two fires and a plague had swept the city and the work had virtually to begin again. His own church had been used as a stable by the British. Gano gathered 37 members of the original 200 and preached his first sermon from Haggai chapter 2:3, "Who is left among you that saw this house in her first glory? And how do ye see it now? Is it not in your eyes in comparison of it as nothing?"

With the exception of eight years of service during the war, Gano devoted twenty-six years of his life to his New York pastorate. In 1787 he moved to Kentucky where he greatly strengthened the Baptist cause. There had been a powerful revival in Upper Kentucky in 1785. After a lifetime of distinguished service as a preacher and leader Gano passed to his reward in 1798.

Isaac Backus (1724-1806)

Converted during the Great Awakening, Backus became a Baptist several years later and his life at that stage was typical of the movement toward the Baptist position. He was involved in the "New Light" controversy. Whitefield's preaching resulted in the division of the Congregationalists into the "New Lights" and "Old Lights" and of the Baptists into the "Separates" and "Regulars" and of the Presbyterians into the "Old Sides" and "New Sides".¹ The "New Lights", "New Sides" and "Separates" were generally speaking hostile to too much organisation, were more emotional and laid great stress on the necessity of evidence for the conversion experience. The "New Light" movement tended to consist more of the less privileged classes of frontier people in the rural areas, while the "Regulars" in contrast consisted more or less of those in the urban areas who were more conservative and formal in their outlook.

¹ For a lucid description of the religious convictions prior to and during that Awakening under Whitefield see Arnold Dallimore's biography of George Whitefield, pp. 413 ff.

The life of Backus spans a period of much increase among the Baptists. He himself became a foremost Baptist historian, being the author of "A history of New England, with Particular reference to the Baptists"—three volumes, 1777-1796. A powerful preacher, he was by no means confined to the study. The extent of his energies can be gauged by the fact that from 1757-1767 he preached 2,412 sermons while travelling 15,000 miles in New England. In 1740 there were, according to Backus, about 60 Baptist churches and by 1776 this number had increased to 472 and again, by 1795, the number had spiralled to 1,152 churches, representing approximately a twenty-fold increase in 55 years.

Backus is an example of one who used all his talents to the full. He was in every sense an all-rounder, an indefatigable and patient worker which probably accounts for his becoming an able historian. George Bancroft, one of America's favourite authorities on history, said of Backus, "I look always to a Baptist historian for the ingenuousness, clear discernment, and determined accuracy which forms the glory of the great historian Backus". We might add that there is much need for Christians to seek an appreciation of church history and for preachers to encourage a knowledge of the past among their people.

Shubael Stearns

Stearns was a native of Boston. Converted under the preaching of Whitefield he thereafter associated with the "New Lights" (Congregationalists). In 1751, however, he became a Baptist and after immersion was ordained as a minister. His fame as a preacher soon spread over a wide area and in North Carolina. He was instrumental in gathering an immense harvest of souls. Aided by a strong musical voice, his orations were deeply moving often reducing the congregations to tears. One strong opponent of the Baptists, a man by the name of Tidence Lane, who himself afterwards became a distinguished Baptist minister, confessed that he could not resist the urge to go and hear Mr. Stearns despite his loathing of Baptists. The preaching was so used that day that Lane, despite all the power of his will to resist, was unable to stand upright upon his feet, but sank to the ground under overwhelming conviction of sin.

Although limited in education, Stearns possessed much discernment and was responsible for the establishment of the well known church at Sandy Creek in North Carolina. From this base, 42 other local churches were formed. Now I have included Stearns in this outline of brief biographies because he was typical of the times. Stearns worked with his brother-in-law, Daniel Marshall, and Col. Samuel Harriss, a trio which co-operated as well in their way as did the famous Carey, Marshall and Ward in India. These three constituted the main leadership of the Separate Baptists in the U.S.A. Marshall was an ex-Presbyterian minister who had been a missionary to the Mohawk Indians.

Other men of the same calibre characterised this period such as Hezekiah Smith who attended the first Baptist school in America (Hopewell Academy in New Jersey—1756). He graduated from Princeton in 1762. He is credited with the founding of thirteen churches.

Adoniram Judson (1788-1850) and Luther Rice (1782-?)

These two men emerged from a revivalistic atmosphere which fostered zealous missionary concern. It is to the credit of the Baptists that they had given generous financial support to the Congregational Mission Board which was responsible for sending Judson and Rice to India. Independently of each other, while crossing the high seas, these two men came to see the Scriptural nature of baptism by immersion. This involved them in a terrible dilemma. No alternative existed but that of resignation from the Board, whereupon the Baptists welcomed them into their family. Luther Rice returned to the States and became to the cause of Baptist overseas Missions what Andrew Fuller was to Carey and his colleagues in India. He travelled from Boston throughout the Middle and Southern States, which work resulted in a Convention in Philadelphia in 1814, from which a Society was established called "The Baptist General Convention for Foreign Missions" (called the "Triennial Convention" since it met every three years). The Judsons were adopted as the first missionaries who, in the meantime, had been driven by the intolerance of the Government of Bengal to Rangoon. The measure of Adoniram's tenacity can be gauged by the fact that despite the most appalling difficulties he was able to lay the whole Bible, faithfully translated, before the Burmese people twenty-one years later. This is wonderful when we consider the responsibilities which he bore together with the fact that he spent agonising years in prison, during which time he was as near to execution as was Daniel to the lions or his three brethren to the fiery furnace. The courage of Ann Judson under intense privation is one of the most inspiring annals of the Church.

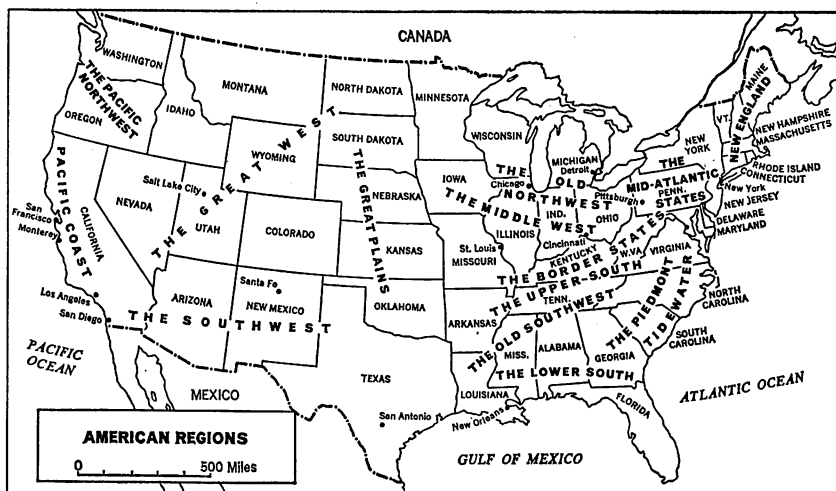
Initially the mission to the Burmese was as tedious in its progress as was Carey's work in its initial stages. When the British Government took over Burma a copious hinterland of gospel opportunity opened up by way of preaching to the Karens, a people of the hills and forests, glorious gains being made, 30,000 being baptised by 1886. Only about 1,200 Burmese were converted up to the same period.

The influence of Judson and Rice in creating interest in missionary work can hardly be over estimated. Judson continually prompted the churches at home to broaden their enterprise to include Siam, Indo-China, China and Japan. Rice, at 31 years of age in 1813, was already arresting the attention of many congregations using his great ability as a speaker to quicken zeal for missions. He was a prime mover in enlisting support, not only for overseas work but also in the sending out of the first missionaries to the western frontiers. John Mason Peck and James E. Welsh

were the first home missionaries sent out to the West in 1817, Peck himself becoming an enthusiast in creating new interest in evangelising the expanding western frontiers. It should be noted that Luther Rice early saw the necessity for a well trained ministry if overseas missions were to be successful.

3. THE AGE OF HUMAN ORGANISATION: 1860-1970

These biographical sketches illustrate that revivals were instrumental in bringing about the great missionary awakening. To meet the needs of the day it is understandable that a tremendous emphasis should be laid on missionary activity. Growing Associations vied with each other in the evangelisation of new fields. Of these Associations the American



*This map is included as a reminder of the enormous size of the country.
It will also help readers locate the different States.*

Baptist Convention led the way at the beginning but, in due course, the Southern Baptist Convention was to outgrow the Northern counterpart by six or seven times. As the years went on, a new force of liberalism emerged which had to be combatted and this did much to enervate the work of evangelicals. Baptists suffered as did other bodies, by the growth of higher criticism which undermined faith in the Scriptures. The decline in doctrinal standards was largely responsible for the advance of unbelief which began to harass some of the Associations, bringing division and separation in some of the missionary societies.

It is difficult to choose leading figures from this period. There were many men of vision, some of whom possessed a genius for organisation, a gift that was needed in order to contend with the increasing needs of expanding frontiers. Impressive statistics illustrating growth and vivid

descriptions of expansion are not hard to find. The Baptists were industrious in the establishment of seminaries, training schools, academies and colleges. Many of these, however, were soon to fall into the disastrous error of regarding the Scriptures as merely human documents. We come now to an analysis of this period which is designated "the period of human organisation" because of the beliefs that have come to prevail in Baptist circles concerning both God and man. As we do so we remember the statistics mentioned at the beginning and again remind ourselves that in 1960 the Southern Baptist Convention claimed a membership of about 9,700,000 while the Northern Baptist Convention numbered about 1,500,000. The National Baptist Convention, representing the negro population, numbers an astonishing 7,500,000. The Regular Baptist churches, which trace their history back to the Great Awakening being the conservative side as explained just now, numbers about 135,000. There are innumerable smaller bodies, including foreign-speaking groups such as the Danish, Hungarian and Italian Baptist Associations.

Naturally, the dates used to demarcate these sections are arbitrary. It would be wrong to conclude that revivals ceased altogether after 1858-60. For instance, an account has been written describing the revivals experienced in the camps of the Confederate armies during the Civil War of 1862-1865¹ and multitudes were added to the churches in the South between 1872 and 1880.

Application

The outstanding question to emerge from our survey is: why have revivals disappeared? Organised religion has more and more come to predominate in the minds of evangelicals, with the result that now there is confusion as to what revival really is. It is not uncommon in America today for revivals to be announced before the time! In the minds of the majority of Baptists in America organised crusades and revivals are synonymous. This, of course, is far removed from the biblical concept of the outpouring of the Holy Spirit. A definition of revival from Scripture can be found in the second chapter of Acts, in the 17th verse Peter quotes the prophet Joel—"I will pour out of my Spirit". These words show clearly that both in regard to timing and locality the outpouring of the Spirit belongs entirely to God. It is His sole prerogative to pour out His Spirit. Indeed it can be said that nothing militates more against genuine revival than the presumption that we can control God.

The predominance of human organised, decisionist Christianity has resulted in self-deception which is widespread. The idea that people can receive Christ as Saviour and yet not as Lord and Master prevails in many quarters. We are reminded of our Lord's solemn words: "*Every plant, which my heavenly Father hath not planted, shall be rooted up*" Matt. 15:13.

¹ John W. Jones, Atlanta, 1904.

We have become accustomed to using the word "Arminian" to describe those who believe in the free will of man and who reject the idea that man's will is enslaved by sin. We do not think carefully enough about some of these terms. Perhaps the following definitions will help:

The Pelagian believes that anyone who wills to become a Christian can do so.

The semi-Pelagian believes that God's help is necessary for a man to become a Christian.

The Arminian believes that God gives equal ability to all and some men use this ability to become Christians and some do not.

The Lutheran believes that without God's prevailing grace men will not believe. Those who resist this grace are lost while those who do not resist are saved.

The Calvinist believes that men by nature will never believe and that God's regeneration is essential, this quickening being the cause of repentance and faith.

But this list is not adequate. We need to make room for a new class as will be illustrated presently, namely:

The Xavierite believes that anyone who responds to an appeal is, and should be, recognised as a Christian.

Francis Xavier (1506-1552) was a disciple of Ignatius Loyola, founder of the Jesuits. Few men in history can compare with Xavier for zeal. There is a false zeal such as that which characterises Communists and Jehovah's Witnesses and a mixed zeal in which truth is mixed with error. It is hard to say how much truth there was with Xavier. He was prodigious in his efforts to evangelise, pioneering in both India and Japan. In South India whole village populations were baptised. To Xavier, assent to Christianity was adequate. If whole communities embraced the Christian name then whole communities were sprinkled.

The religion of many Baptists today is of this order, as Mr. Nelson wittily stated it at the Pinebrook Conference, "Brother it's a case of anything that's warm and breathing is saved!".

It cannot be denied that the profession of faith which is required today is at a very shallow level. The kind of evangelism prevailing today, particularly as propagated by such as the Southern Baptist Convention, is a type of Xavierism, that is they baptise large numbers upon profession of faith but, instead of sprinkling like Xavier, they immerse those who have given assent to Christ. But we remember that profession of faith does not regenerate. As John the Baptist said, "A man can receive nothing except it be given him from above". Regeneration is from heaven and is not something we can control. It is our task to preach, to spread the word. It is God's prerogative to regenerate.

Dr. C. E. Autrey, leading Southern Baptist spokesman, puts it in this way:

"Lead people to pray . . . create a deep spiritual concern . . . promote complete surrender . . . organisational preparation is vital . . . Publicity is also essential for all types of revival meetings. It creates expectancy. It advertises the great spiritual values of the crusade . . . Evangelistic singing is an essential part in revival . . . A stirring song service brightens the atmosphere and assimilates the motley crowd into a congregation of worshippers."

"Three things will help assure big attendance and phenomenal results. They are: 1. Organisation; 2. Involvement; 3. Proper Publicity."

He follows this explanation by saying that between 1954 and 1964 the Southern Baptists have won to Christ and baptised 4,334,000, and he then describes plans for this kind of extension in other countries.

Observe that in the mind of C. E. Autrey a crusade is the same thing as revival.

This kind of thinking prevails throughout the English-speaking world among Baptists. I was reading the other day in the South African Baptist magazine a report from Dallas. The headline stated that there had been 708 converts in a crusade in Dallas. In reading the report, however, we are told that there were 708 professions of faith. Now converts and professions of faith are not the same thing, but this very superficial kind of exaggeration passes in most Baptist magazines. How did Xavierism come to prevail on such a wide scale? Why is it that so many today are victims of Xavierism?

We have to go back to the time of Charles G. Finney for the answer. Finney exercised a profound influence, not only in his own denomination but upon evangelicals everywhere. If you read his lectures on *Revivals of Religion* you will find that he teaches that revival can be produced whenever we really want to produce it. He declares: "A revival is nothing else than a new beginning of obedience to God".¹

Finney was quite dogmatic about the fact that a revival is a natural thing. It is not a miracle, or dependent on a miracle, in any sense. It is purely the outcome of the right use of the constituted means—as much so as any other effect produced by the application of means.² In other words, Finney propounded the view that revival could be produced at any time. Finney also laid stress on the "anxious seat", that is calling people to the front which encouraged the call for decisions which is a major feature in evangelistic crusades today. In addition to this, Finney also stressed the need for novelty, that is that we should always be ready to abandon old methods and invent new ones in order to attract and hold the attention of the people, bringing them by moral persuasion to make the necessary decision. Finney made no bones about the fact that he believed that "religion is the work of man. It is something for man to do. It

¹ *Revivals of Religion—1840*, p. 8.

² *Ibid.*, p. 5.

consists in obeying God. It is man's duty". This stress on human ability has paved the way to the situation which prevails everywhere today.

But we should also investigate why there has been such little opposition to this form of Pelagian religion.

As early as 1707, the Philadelphia Baptist Association was formed which was destined to have an extensive influence upon Baptists in America throughout the years. In 1742, this Association authorised the publication of the *London Confession of Particular Baptists of 1689*, a famous statement of faith which was re-published by Spurgeon in his opening years at New Park Street in London. It has been the most popular confession for Reformed Baptists since the Puritan era. The Philadelphia Association was instrumental in winning much ground for the Reformed faith. Men of the Philadelphia Association were missionary-minded and, generally speaking, leaders in education and in progressive ideas. However, during the 19th century the position of this Association weakened and apart from the publication of the *New Hampshire Confession of Faith*, which was drawn up in 1830 to offset Arminian teaching in New England, there was relatively little to stem the tidal wave of decisionist Christianity.

In addition to this, the Reformed cause was much weakened by false Calvinism in the form of the peculiar "Two Seed in the Spirit" denomination which, at one stage, had 13,000 members but which has now only about 200. There was also the primitive "Anti-Mission Baptists" who numbered over 120,000 in 1844. They have declined to about 65,000 members today.

The charge is constantly reiterated that the Reformed are anti-missionary and anti-evangelistic. The presence of hyper-Calvinism in different forms has done much to discredit the true Reformed witness.

The greatest need for Baptists is to return in faith and practice to the truths of Scripture. These truths are capable of definition. If we are not prepared to contend for intelligible truth then we are in no position to resist the forces of Liberalism and Ecumenism. Our evangelistic methods will continue to be superficial, effeminate and even ludicrous unless we recognise the necessity of worthy biblical exposition and the need to honour the sovereignty of the Holy Spirit. He must be trusted to apply the Word without our attempting to do the work for Him. Striving to extract numbers of decisions is often motivated by a desire for success.

Superficiality is a disease that has invaded every area of life. Indeed this is not only true of the Baptists. A. W. Tozer put it this way:

Evangelical Christianity, at least in the United States, is now tragically below the New Testament standard. Worldliness is an accepted part of our way of life. Our religious mood is social instead of spiritual. We have lost the art of worship.

We are not producing saints. Our models are successful businessmen, celebrated athletes and theatrical personalities. We carry on our religious activities after the methods of the modern advertiser. Our homes have been turned into theatres. Our literature is shallow and our hymnody borders on sacrilege. And scarcely anyone appears to care.

The widespread increasing stress on human activity has resulted in a proliferation of human organisations and societies, with the result that we have largely lost sight of the fact that God has commissioned only one form of organisation which is the local church. We should seek, therefore, to establish strong local churches in which there is comprehensive teaching along the lines of systematic, expository preaching.

Evangelism which stems from the local church, upon a long-term basis, including oversight and discipline of those members who engage in this form of work is what we should aim at. While we continue striving for a return to the biblical pattern in regard to local churches we should, at the same time, seek a revival from heaven. We should not lose sight of the fact that God has not changed and while our ever-present duty is the reformation of the church as well as fervent evangelism and missionary outreach, it is God's prerogative to send awakening.

This long-term approach may seem unexciting and unsensational to evangelicals who have been fed with milk and misled by organisations, but I am persuaded that non-church based activities which have abandoned the local church have been to the detriment to the cause of God over the last 100 years despite all their claims to magnificent results. The evidence points to the fact that there has been an actual decline in spirituality and in genuine conversion work while all these fantastic claims have been made concerning success in organised crusades.

But as we seek to do what we can we remember that revivals are a reality. Surely this study reminds us that the first need in the United States and the whole world today is Revival—an outpouring of the Spirit of God in convicting men of their sin and bringing them into the new life of union with the Lord Jesus Christ. Revival has a twin sister, Reformation—reformation of the doctrine and structure of the church. The only true doctrine of the Bible regarding salvation is Reformed doctrine, and the only true doctrine regarding the nature of the church is Baptist; *gathered church* doctrine. In seeking to establish Reformed, Baptist churches, we are working in accordance with the will of God as revealed in his Word. It is, of course, possible for such churches to be orthodox and lifeless, but this in no way lessens the fact that Reformed theology and believers' Baptism are alone Scriptural.

Although such a large percentage of Baptist churches have failed because of wrong theology, the principle of the gathered church, the only gateway to which is regeneration with its sign of baptism, is none the less the teaching of the New Testament. The Reformers of the 16th century recovered the doctrine of justification by faith, and tremendous blessing

to the world was the result; but they failed to recover the doctrine of the gathered church. We have seen subsequently that it is as easy to be an unregenerate Protestant as an unregenerate Roman Catholic.

History is "His story"—the story of God at work in the world fulfilling His predestined, infallible purposes. He is at work in grace—in calling out of the world sinners to form His Church—and in judgment, declaring His holiness in His wrath against all forms of ungodliness. In tracing the history of the Baptist movement in America we have seen the triumphs of His grace, but we have also had to map out the more recent roadway, a downward way of declension into superficiality and neglect and rejection of truth. As we see so much that is dishonouring to God let us heed the Lord's command to Jeremiah, "Call unto Me, and I will answer thee, and shew thee great and mighty things, which thou knowest not", Jer. 33:3.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Those who relish history will find Admiral Morison's, *History of the American People*, 1,150 pp., O.U.P., 84s., a source of enjoyment and relaxation. For the general reader the latter is the ideal volume. Wide in its sweep it nevertheless contains adequate detail, being interspersed with the author's interpretations, particularly in regard to the analysis of personalities, war strategies and political events. As is common with secular authors, Morison is neither discerning nor accurate in regard to the Gospel. For instance, he attributes too much to Jonathan Edwards: "Edwards' preaching at Northampton was the womb of all modern revivalism", p. 152. John R. Alden's *Pioneer America*, Hutchinson, 310 pp., 50s., and *History of the American Revolution*, 541 pp., 70s., are also highly readable and full of well documented material.

The History of the Baptists, by Thomas Armitage, 977 pp., last published in 1887, contains a mine of information presented in a colourful style. If you come across a copy procure it if you can. After this I consulted Torbet, Vedder and Maring. A contemporary Baptist, Edward H. Overby, has written *A Short History of the Baptists*, 148 pp., Independent Baptist Publications, 8321 Ballard Road, Niles 48, Illinois. No price is shown. The same author, together with N. B. Magruder, is responsible for an informative article on Baptists in *The Encyclopaedia of Christianity*. As we would expect the Baptist Union Library, Southampton Row, London, possess a wide range of books on Baptist history, but I searched in vain for adequate material on America. Other libraries were consulted but it was not until a visit to Bucknall University, Lewisburg, Pennsylvania, that pure gold was discovered and lots of it! Lining the shelves at Bucknall are volumes recording detailed histories of the different Associations from Maine and Vermont in the North-East right across the country. Using these sources it is possible for instance to extract details as to the character and extent of particular revivals such as that of 1800-1801.

The map on page 22 is included by permission of Hutchinson the Publishers.

"Ian Tait, minister of The Evangelical Church at Welwyn, has been engaged in research on Ecumenism in which he has brought valuable material to light and in which he illustrates the inexorable and alarming progress of the movement. At the same time he documents the increasing involvement of evangelicals. It is hoped that we may enjoy the fruits of this research in due course by way of a book. In the meantime Mr. Tait has given us permission to quote extracts from his work. The following deals with the positive side of what true unity is all about."

The Grace of Unity

UNITY IS A LOVELY THING, GOOD AND PLEASANT IN THE SIGHT OF GOD (Psa. 133:1). The unity with which true believers are concerned is something rare and costly, of which one Christian may say to another:

Sirs, I charge you, keep it holy,
Keep it as a sacred thing,
For the blood you see upon it
Is the life-blood of your King.¹

This unity comes to us from the Throne of the Lamb, who at Calvary loved us and gave Himself for us . . . and then ascended to His throne to give gifts unto men. Unity is of this order. When we come unto God by the Lord Jesus, He brings us also to one another, and the family prayer begins "*Our Father . . .*". Christian unity is the unity of a family. This means unity in diversity, for a family consists of a variety of ages, personalities, tastes. It means, too, that wherever the family of God is to be found there is already a unity that transcends distinctions of nationality, culture, or colour.

The unity of the Body of Christ cannot be manufactured, but it can be recognised, enjoyed, and its manifestation encouraged. One can no more organise unity into existence than produce love by business efficiency methods, peace by arithmetic, or compassion by chemistry! Unity is the work of God; it is "the unity of the Spirit". It is not achieved by mathematicians cancelling out awkward factors; nor by religious politicians playing ecclesiastical chess.

You can mar unity by trying to organise it because unity belongs to the realm of grace. The New Testament draws a clear distinction between works and grace. One is achieved, earned, deserved, produced; the other is freely given, "or grace is no more grace". In the New Testament unity is seen to be part of the Christian heritage: a birthright, a bestowal,

¹ A. E. Aytoun: Adapted from Edinburgh after Flodden.

one of the many blessings in Christ. Although the exercise and enjoyment of it may require organisation, it is not the result of organisation. Organisational unity is one thing, the unity of the Body of Christ is another. Far from being organisational, the latter is organic. The last time there was an organised World Church it needed an Inquisition to maintain its unity, or more accurately its "uniformity". It is a function expressing the health of the body. Disunity is disease, not faulty organisation. Sick evangelical churches will find unity in a return to the principles of spiritual health, not by trying to join themselves to other allegedly Christian bodies in which essential truths of the Gospel are ignored or denied.

The subject of unity pervades the New Testament epistles, but nowhere so completely as in the epistle to the Ephesians. Each epistle underlining an ingredient of unity or a facet of its enjoyment:

Romans—justification by faith in Christ;
Corinthians—a holy discipline of church fellowship;
Galatians—a pure gospel;
Ephesians—a right understanding of the nature of the Church;
Philippians—a recognition of the joy of unity;
Colossians—the pre-eminence of Christ;
Thessalonians—the prospect of Christ's return;
The Pastorals—right behaviour and relationships;
Philemon—an uncommon courtesy toward others;
Hebrews—a realisation of the superiority of Christianity;
James—the works of true faith;
Peter—humility in all relationships;
John—an assurance of new life in Christ;
Jude—the inevitability of conflict.

In the letter to the Ephesians the phrase "in Christ", or its equivalent, is used 25 times. Unity is the exclusive possession of the true believers by virtue of their being members of the body of Christ. The standing of believers "in Christ" is by grace alone.

This grace is seen in the word "maintain". We are not to *produce* this unity, but to maintain it. We are to "maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace" (Eph. 4:3). In the British Army the word is a familiar one. A driver has to maintain a military vehicle; there is a maintenance procedure; there are maintenance sheets; there is daily maintenance, weekly maintenance, and monthly maintenance. But a soldier's responsibility is not the production or manufacture of the armoured car. His responsibility is to maintain that which is provided by the "grace" of Her Majesty's government.

Psalms 133 compares unity to the fragrant anointing oil poured upon Israel's high priest. From Christ (literally "the anointed one") the Church's High Priest, unity comes down upon His people. Imitations of the oil were forbidden. The Israelites were commanded not to "make any other like it, after the composition of it: it is holy, and it shall be holy unto you. Whosoever compounds any like it . . . shall even be cut

off from his people" (Exod. 30-32-33). Imitation of true unity is likewise forbidden! The Psalm likens unity to the dew of heaven, and dew, like the grace of unity, comes down upon the ground. Consider the character of unity. It is Christ-centred, and by this hallmark we recognise it as genuine. It is essentially spiritual. "The unity of the Spirit" is not social, national, ecclesiastical or organisational, but essentially spiritual.

Then true unity is also a doctrinal thing. So I understand the phrase "the unity of the faith". The unity of the early Church is described as a continuance "in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship". The order is important. Fellowship does not precede the doctrine, much less does it determine doctrine. Apostolic fellowship is the product of apostolic doctrine. When the apostle writes the phrase "the unity of the faith" he is arguing that the pulpit work, the Bible teaching ministry, whether of apostle, prophet, evangelist, or pastor and teacher is the means by which unity is brought to fruition and to maturity. Unity then is essentially doctrinal and, being born of truth, feeds thereon and grows thereby. Oh how impoverished and puerile, how wretched and trifling is that unity which is attempted at the cost of biblical truth. Shall we stifle truth? Do we silence Scripture? Why this is like slaying the Son of man who is the truth!

Furthermore unity is an experimental thing. It is "the unity . . . of the knowledge of the Son of God". The high priestly prayer for unity in John 17 has only just begun when the Lord Jesus says, "And this is life eternal, that they might know Thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom Thou hast sent". Paul counted all things but loss for the surpassing joy of knowing Christ. "*We know that we know Him*", writes John. This personal knowledge of Jesus, the Son of God, is essential to unity.

Now this unity, paradoxically, is found not in uniformity, but in diversity, as is made plain in John 17:22, "that they may be one even as We are One". The unity of the Godhead is the pattern of our unity, but it is unity in diversity! A trinity of Persons exists within the one Godhead. Calvin writes: While he proclaims His unity, He distinctly sets it before us as existing in three Persons. These we must hold, unless the bare and empty name of Deity merely is a flutter in our brain without any genuine knowledge.¹

In each Person of the Godhead, Calvin continues, there is a subsistence which, while related to the other two, is distinguished from Them by incommunicable properties . . . The words, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, certainly indicate a real distinction, not allowing us to suppose that they are merely epithets by which God is variously designated from His works . . . they indicate distinction only, not division.²

¹ Calvin: The Institutes of the Christian Religion (James Clarke edition 1953), Vol. 1, p. 110.

² Calvin: The Institutes of the Christian Religion (James Clarke edition 1953), Vol. 1, p. 114, 125.

In this most blessed unity therefore is diversity. In the words of the Westminster Catechism: . . . these three are one true, eternal God, the same in substance, equal in power and glory: although distinguished by their personal properties.¹ The Persons within the Godhead are so distinct that each can love the others and address the others; one can send another and pray to another, and we can pray to them.

In regard to diversity and unity within the Church Hodge has this to say: "This unity of the Church, although it involves the essential qualities of all believers, is still consistent with the great diversity as to gifts, influence, and honour. According to the apostle's favourite illustration, it is like the *human body*, which is composed of many members, with different functions. It is not all eye nor all ear. This diversity of gifts is not only consistent with unity, but essential to it. The body is not one member but many. In every organism a diversity of parts is necessary to the unity of the whole".² As it is the unity of a body (Eph. 1:23; 3:6) so it is the unity of a family (2:19 and 3:15), the unity of a building (2:21), the unity of a bride and bridegroom (5:22-23). It is a unity between God and a redeemed sinner (2:1-7, 11-20), between all Christians—Jew or Gentile—however diverse their gifts (2:11-20, 4:1-16).

It is important to recognise that diversity is not division. Diversity belongs to the natural order of life. Division in a theological sense is unnatural, hurtful, sinful. Division or schism is the bitter, grievous alienation of those in the fellowship of a local church. The gospels and epistles deal plainly with the remedy for this, especially in Matthew chapter 18. "It is not the differences of Christians that do the harm", writes Philip Henry, "it is the mismanagement of those differences".³

The Church has always been a separatist movement, in the world, but not of it. It is, notes Leonard Verduin "by definition a sect". He continues: the Church of Christ as set forth in the New Testament is by definition a *faction*, in any given situation, a *party*, a segment of society—never the totality.⁴ John 17:14-16, II Thess. 3:6, II Tim. 3:5 expresses the aspect which Verduin is endeavouring to point out. In Rev. 2:2 the Ephesian church is commended for its intolerance toward false teachers! Biblical separation however is not schism. Separation is from the world and from false forms of religion. When a body is controlled by the ungodly it may be necessary for the true believers to separate and constitute themselves as a local church, but for such a church of believers to be rent asunder—that is schism.

Among the seven churches of Asia we see no over preoccupation with inter-church relationships. This would be as unhealthy as a man living

¹ Westminster Larger Catechism: Answer 9.

² Hodge: Commentary on the Epistle to the Ephesians (Eerdmans edition), p. 211.

³ Joseph Hammond: English Nonconformity and Christ's Christianity, p. 183.

⁴ Verduin: The Reformers and Their Stepchildren (Paternoster edition 1966), p. 200.

with a Gray's Anatomy in one hand, a scalpel and bandages in the other, and a thermometer constantly in his mouth. A dose of hard work, three times a day, would improve his health. As Kipling says:

The cure for this ill is not to sit still,
Or frowst with a book by the fire;
But to take a large hoe and a shovel also,
And dig till you gently perspire.¹

Let Christians cleanse the Temple of the rubbish that abounds, magnify Christ, and go out to preach Him where He is not known. Let them honour commitments to the missionaries and proclaim the Gospel to the overseas folk in this country; let them go out and challenge the heresies of the day, and the immoralities; and let them go after "those other sheep", and they will rediscover a unity that no ecclesiastical organising can produce. The maintenance of good health in the Church is the best guarantee that the members of His body will function harmoniously.

As we have seen so much is required in true unity that only God can create it. It has to be doctrinal, spiritual and experimental. Bearing all these aspects in mind particularly that of truth, it also needs to be stressed that the love of God inspires this unity. Love which ignores biblical truth is mere sentimentality and not Christian love. We are, says the apostle as he writes of unity, to forbear one another in love (4:2). "And be ye kind to one another, tender-hearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake has forgiven you. Be ye therefore followers of God, as dear children; and walk in love, as Christ also has loved us, and has given Himself for us . . ." (4:32-5:2). As we heed such exhortations we shall discover that unity in the Church is a power for good, a power for blessing, "For there the Lord commanded the blessing" (Psa. 133:3). Unity in the Church is a *power for blessing* those outside. The Lord's prayer of intercession includes this very point: I pray not for the world, but for them which Thou has given Me . . . that they may be one, as We are . . . and that the world may know that Thou hast sent Me, and hast loved them, as Thou hast loved Me (John 17:9, 11, 23).

Such then is genuine Christian unity. It stands in striking contrast to the counterfeit unity abroad today. Our problem is to distinguish between truth and falsehood, a task made doubly difficult by the smoke-screen of ambiguity by which the advocates of Ecumenism befog the subject. Those who, for love to the Lord of the Word, love the Word of the Lord and make it their rule of faith and practice, will know the difference between the real and the counterfeit, and seeking the grace of unity will apply themselves to its outworking among all those who love the Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity.

¹ Rudyard Kipling: The Just So Stories—How the Camel Got His Hump.

Stuart Fowler pastors a church in Australia which is dedicated without reserve to a positive proclamation of the faith once delivered to the saints. The substance of this faith is summarised in a confession akin to the 1689 Baptist Confession of Faith. The following extracts are taken from a pastoral letter in which the need for a confession of faith is explained, the continuing task of reformation urged and admission conceded that when all is done the church is still far from perfect.

A Credal Church

WE ARE NOT ASHAMED TO HAVE A POSITIVE AND DECIDED MESSAGE TO proclaim. We dare to make positive assertions about truth and error. We make a point of sharply dividing truth from error by precise definitions of doctrine.

We do not fear to publish a confession of our faith. We cannot agree with those who want a creedless church. Since a creed is nothing more nor less than a confession of what we believe together, a church without a creed is a church without belief. This, to us, is a contradiction in terms, and out of harmony with the scriptural idea of a church.

This confession of ours is not above scripture, nor is it on a level with scripture. It is our confession of what we believe God has revealed to man in scripture. We only dare to confess these truths with such confidence, and to oppose the opposite errors with such resolution because we find them clearly revealed by God in His Word, and committed to the church to hold, defend, and proclaim.

We know that all Christians do not agree with us on all points. We do not in any way deny that many who differ with us are Christians of true godliness and piety, whose earnest devotion to Christ we respect. We desire to live at peace with all men, and in brotherly love with the whole household of faith. We have no love for fighting.

Some would condemn our confession as too rigid and narrow. They would press for a church where the "fundamentals" are firmly upheld, but such questions as those that distinguish the Reformed faith are left an open question. For us, to reduce our confession in this way, would be unfaithfulness to Christ who has solemnly charged us to teach men all that He has commanded.

However, we cannot buy peace by the compromise of truth. Such a peace is a treasonable peace, whether it is found under the banner of the World Council of Churches, or under some other banner of more evangelical appearance. We will willingly do nothing, therefore, that would compromise our testimony to the truths we confess. Those truths we

must uphold, proclaim, and defend at all costs, or be found unfaithful to Christ. If necessary, we must even contend with our brethren, as Paul contended with Peter, if they would oppose the truths we cherish.

We are not content merely to have a scriptural message to proclaim. We believe that the agency through which the message is proclaimed, and by which it is defended, is of equal importance with the message. Both are given by God. We are satisfied that God has established just one agency in the world for this purpose. That divinely ordained agency is the church.

We regard the church as the temple of God in which nothing may be allowed that is not appointed by God. We cannot agree that the church is merely a human society which may order its affairs in whatever way may seem good to its members. We insist that the church is a divine institution, with Christ as its divine head, so that, in all things, in worship, in government, in discipline, His Word alone is to be the rule of its life. To permit any practice to be introduced into the church, or having been introduced to remain, without clear scriptural authority, for any reason whatever, we hold to be a denial of the Headship of Christ, and a defilement of the temple of God.

Nor can we be deterred because we find many earnest Christians are blind to the importance of this work of the reformation of the church; because many see it as sufficient to proclaim the message of salvation without being unduly concerned about the nature of the agency that affords opportunity for doing this.

Sincere though they be, we do not hesitate to say that those who think this way are sadly mistaken. We are convinced that this very attitude, so widely adopted during the past century or so, has contributed more than any other single cause to the present decline in the power and influence of the Gospel in the world. We are certain that such an attitude does not have the sanction of scripture. We know that we serve Christ best, not by following our own judgment, but by adhering most closely to His Word, in method, as well as in message.

We cannot agree, therefore, with those who evade the task of reforming the church by thinking of the church as nothing but an invisible, mystical body, without visible form or organisation to which all true believers automatically belong. Wherever we look in scripture we find the church represented as a visible community of saints, united together in work and worship under an orderly government and discipline.

Neither can we support those who, seeing apostasy in the church, have turned from the task of reforming the church to set up agencies and organisations outside the church to fulfil those teaching and evangelising functions which, by right, belong to the church alone. Not only can we find no scriptural authority for this procedure, but we are certain that it serves to further weaken the church. It is an abandonment of the divine pattern for a human expedient.

We cannot doubt, as we take the Word of God in our hands, that Christ has appointed His church, and no other body, to be the pillar and ground of the truth, the upholder and proclaimer of the gospel, and has given to it a clear charter, and well defined authority for the accomplishment of this mission.

Except by disobedience to our Lord, therefore, we see no way of escape from this task of reformation. The church must be lifted up from the place of neglect, into which it has been allowed to fall, to the place of honour and dignity which is its right. The rubble and debris of human inventions and traditions that have been brought into the church without divine authority must be cleared away that the glory of God may be seen in her once more.

Some find the application of our principles to worship distasteful. They wish to see worship brightened up to make it more attractive to "the outsider". To this end they would have us make restrained and judicious use of devices for which we can find no scriptural authority, no divine warrant.

To watch against these dangers, we need to remember that, besides being a confessing and a reforming church, we are also a sinning church. Though saints, we are not yet made perfect as saints. Each one of us is a sinner still.

As such we each need to have the loving forbearance one of another in those many ways in which we irritate and hurt each other in our associations together. We each need to be ready to bear with the difficult personalities in our midst, remembering that, for someone, I am probably the most difficult of all. We should not make the mistake of supposing that the existence of these problems of personality among us are a sign of a low state of spiritual life. Our impatience with them, rather, is an evidence of spiritual immaturity. The devil will do all he can to exploit these things to disrupt our testimony and to turn us aside from our great mission. Let us watch against him here also.

At the same time, this recognition of our sinfulness, will keep us from complacency over our failures and sins. We will be a repentant church, grieving over all that displeases our Lord, and seeking His grace to subdue the corruption of sin within each one of us. It will also lead us to a readiness both to give and to receive loving admonition one from another as the need may arise.

Further, being conscious of our sinfulness, we will never make the mistake of supposing that, as a church, we have arrived at perfection. We know that we in many ways err and fall short of God's glory as a church, just as we do as individuals. So we will be diligent to be constantly reforming, constantly seeking to correct our errors and to improve every area of our church life.

The Missionary and the Local Church

Do societies lessen the responsibility of local churches in missionary work?

It is a fundamental principle that no organisation has biblical warrant which deprives true local churches of their principal and vital role in missionary work. It is the duty of every local church to regard the whole world as its parish. No difference can be made between "home" and "overseas" in applying this principle. There must be a vital link and lively communication of all needful supplies between the church and its workers wherever they are. Of course, groups of churches are able to do together what one cannot do alone. Such co-operation is part of the outworking of the doctrine of the unity of the church.

Does "need" constitute a call to missionary work?

No! The call of God to service is sovereign. Isaiah 6 does not describe an appeal for workers but the sovereign call of God to a worker whom He has ordained to use. We often make the mistake of regarding what needs to be done as the principal factor in determining the Lord's will. This can lead to trying to fit square pegs in round holes. We need first to assess what gifts there are in a church and then to seek God's will for the use of these gifts. We must, of course, pray for zeal to "stir up the gift that is within us".

What role has the local church in the calling of a missionary?

First, there is the duty of each member of the church to pray for God to give the gifts each church needs for the maintenance of its testimony and the spread of the Gospel. Some of these gifts are described in Rom. 12:6-8. The elders (some of whom are erroneously called deacons) will be particularly concerned to recognise gifts and see that they are encouraged and developed. Godly discernment and wise counsel are of great value in guiding and encouraging those who are seeking to exercise other gifts. Inadequacy and weakness often characterise those who have a true calling. "I cannot speak for I am a child" was the cry of Jeremiah. Humility is a mark of true vocation, and a humble person needs godly counsel so that the sense of insufficiency does not hold him back from obeying the Lord. The elders will always have in mind quality of life and conduct as well as gifts. Since a missionary is an elder requiring qualities above even the normal high standard required in a local church, he must fulfil to a high degree all the qualifications for eldership stated in I Tim. 3 and Tit. 1. It is not a case of whether he might one day have the gifts. He should beyond question be exercising spiritual gifts in his local church. Providential dealings in his own life and the life of the church will indicate that the Holy Spirit is separating him for work in another part of the country or overseas. He will realise this himself, and the elders will likewise discern the matter. In due course the whole church will set apart their brother for the task away from their area.

Does a society such as the Strict Baptist Mission have any part to play in all this?

The S.B.M. has gained a good deal of experience of the Lord's work overseas, and in conjunction with the local church will be able to offer advice. The mission has been able to advise a number of young people recently without any obligation on their part. But the real responsibility rests with the local church not only in the initial stages of commissioning a missionary but by supporting him by prayer and in every practical way in the years ahead.

The Reformed Baptist Family Conference at Pinebrook

For several years the Reformed Baptists of America, mainly through the inspiration of churches associated in what is known as the Reformed Baptist Association, have met together for a ministers' Conference. This year, for the first time, they attempted a family Conference which was attended by about 350 people, including young folk and children. It lasted a week, June 20-27, Pinebrook being situated near East Stroudsburg in Pennsylvania. It was my privilege to be present at this Conference and to share in the ministry by giving two papers on Baptist History. The substance of one of these papers is included in this issue.

Having attended Conferences of different kinds, including the Leicester Conference from its inception, the Puritan Conference in London from the time it was initiated and the first Carey Conference held in January this year, I found that this Conference at Pinebrook was different: the presence of whole families made the difference. The tendency throughout was to concentrate more on application.

Al Martin presented a series on Sanctification in the mornings, which was followed after a short break by the aforementioned expositions on Baptist History and two of a biographical nature by Ernest Reisinger on John Bunyan. The organisers saw to it that the afternoon periods were completely free, which meant that concentration was unimpaired for the evening preaching sessions led by different pastors.

From the natural standpoint the Conference enjoyed what few centres in this country possess by way of extensive and delightful surroundings with all kinds of sports available during the afternoon, including both indoor and outdoor swimming pools. Those who have families can appreciate the advantage of these amenities. I found the basket ball of quite a high standard, with Pastors Al Martin and John McConaughy well trained in the finer arts of this sport. This bodily exercise was particularly profitable for those who had become jaded for the lack of it except for Pastor Waine Mack who broke his leg, this being due to a slippery surface. I shared a room with an old friend and companion with whom I used to work at the Banner or Truth, namely, Ron Edmonds, who has recently been instrumental in gathering a flock to which he has now been called as pastor. He is seen with two of his flock in photo. 3. One of the features of the Conference was the zeal and unity displayed by the Canadian brethren, including Pastor Arnold Dallimore, who was able to autograph copies of his recently published biography of George Whitefield (Mr. and Mrs. Dallimore, photo. 6). Some who felt a calling to devote their time to Christian literature were at the Conference, including Bill Carey (shown with his wife and children, photo. 4), Bill has kindly agreed to act as one of our agents for *Reformation Today*.

Besides a number of young pastors from Canada together with lay-folk, there were representatives from right across the United States, and Jamaica. For instance, Pastor Locher, whose photograph appears on the front inside cover of this issue, came from Ohio. Should there be a query as to why his photo. is so prominently featured, the answer is that anyone who is isolated deserves special remembrance in prayer. Anybody being in Ohio would be warmly welcomed by

Pastor Locher at the Union Baptist Church: address—Box 185, Union, Ohio 45322, U.S.A. Some travelled thousands of miles to the Conference, such as James Patterson of Arizona (with his wife in photo. 5). All the pastors in the Reformed Baptist Association (there are now about seven churches) were present, including Charles Barnhart (photo. 1, shown with his wife and mother-in-law), and Pastor McConaughy who is featured with his wife and baby, Amy Beth, in photo. 7. Al Martin, photo. 8, is shown with Pastor Bloise of Jamaica, and Norman Doudy, a Canadian veteran, who is exceedingly well informed on Christian history and doctrine. A further feature of the Conference was the ministry of "Brother Nelson"—photo. 2—who has been instrumental in establishing four churches along Reformed Baptist lines. He works as a school teacher, gathering Christian folk together in his spare time, builds them up as an assembly until they are able to hire a building (he doesn't hesitate to hire Seventh Day Adventists' buildings when necessary) and then seeks the services of a full-time pastor, whereupon he moves on to start again. The State of Michigan has been the area of his labours.

"Brother Berry" (photo. 9), who flew a Mustang and experienced remarkable preservation during the War, is a Chiropractor whose practice has flourished. He has a magnanimous outgoing spirit which makes soul-winning seem easy. Every patient is informed of two remedies—physical and spiritual. Of outstanding personality Brother Berry is fervently interested in the Reformed Baptist cause throughout the world. He attends the Church of Paradise (state of Lancaster, Pennsylvania) which is in Amishland. This is a farming community of about 50,000 of Mennonite stock which is famous for its old-fashioned way of life, refusing to use modern machinery. Horse-drawn buggies are used, beards are the fashion and 17th-century clothes. Brother Berry's air-conditioned Buick and sonic-ray-controlled garage doors are in marked contrast with the Amish buggies passing by. The Amish people like the Hutterite community of Montana, who are also of Anabaptist descent, no longer evidence evangelical traits. How long ago evangelicalism disappeared from amongst them would form an interesting study. At any rate, Amish farmers like the rest of mankind have slipped discs when they are pleased to avail themselves of brother Berry's skills and superbly equipped surgery. And he for his part is delighted to receive them.

But coming back to the Conference, from which only a few features have been reported, I would say the overall impression was that the combination of doctrine, practice and evangelism which is being attained is the best remedy for our sick world.

When it came to leaving the Conference I took a Greyhound bus to New York where I was to enjoy the hospitality of Don and Eileen Dunkerley. Don is pastoring the United Presbyterian Church at Babylon. The impression given by the driver of the air-conditioned Greyhound coach was one of supreme efficiency, which I fondly imagine is a general characteristic of a great nation of free competition. So diligent was this square-shouldered driver in his immaculate uniform that he solemnly charged me upon entry not to dispose of my Coca-Cola tin on the floor of his bus, whereupon I assured him with reverence that my intentions were wholly devout. He nevertheless adjusted his large rear-mirror in such a way as to keep a vigilant eye upon me. Hippies, I am sure, class me by outward appearance as belonging to "the plastic culture". What kind of foreigner did this driver think I was to be a potential litterlout? At any rate while I sipped my Coca-Cola I thought to myself that it is doubtful whether anything more encouraging can be found in America than the young, virile and growing churches linked with the aforementioned Association. Certainly visits to some of these churches confirmed this impression. Does God bless the old truths today? We ought to pray for the pastors who lead these causes that they may continue to prove that this indeed is the case. In seeking the blessing it is heartening to think that old-fashioned revival goes with old-fashioned truth.

E. H.

Editorial

The number of subscriptions coming in have been an encouragement. The demand for the first two issues has depleted our stock, 4,000 copies having been printed of the first issue and 3,000 of the second. It seems ridiculous to send out magazines and then to ask for them back again. But if it is your custom to discard magazines when you have read them, may we beg you, in this instance, to return copies to us. We could print second editions but we lack the means for this preferring to use available funds to insure "meaty" issues in the future. This present issue is 40 pages due to gifts received, without which we would have had to divide the article on the history of Baptists in America into two, restricting the size to 32 pages. Should bookstore managers have surplus copies of either of the first two issues we will be happy to buy them back, and pay for postage. The article by Bernard Honeysett, *The Ill-Fated Articles*, which appeared in the last issue is to be reprinted separately with a more interesting title, *How we should address unbelievers*. Price 9d., including postage.

The Whitefield Meeting

Every seat was taken when between 600 and 700 people attended the Whitefield meeting at the Haywards Heath Grammar School, details of which were given in the last issue. Dr. Martyn Lloyd-Jones spoke with clarity and power, large numbers of the new biography of George Whitefield by Arnold Dallimore were sold, and the occasion proved to be a memorable one in every way.

Photos, cover and map

The editor apologises for poor definition in the photographs—which have been developed from colour transparencies. The latter do not produce the best prints. In future a twin-lens camera will be used in addition to a 36 mm camera. Some have said that they think the cover design is old-fashioned. It is supposed to be right up to date and "with it". A new cover is planned for 1971. The map shown below might be helpful both in regard to the first part of the article on the history of Baptists in America and also in connection with the report of the Pinebrook Conference. It is strictly the work of an amateur. The names of pastors are included in brackets. Some small, though important, places, such as Swengel in Pennsylvania could not be found even in the magnificent "Times Atlas", and so have been omitted.

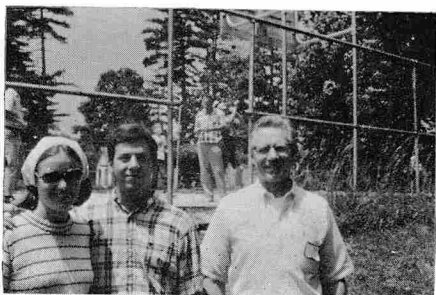




1



2



3



4



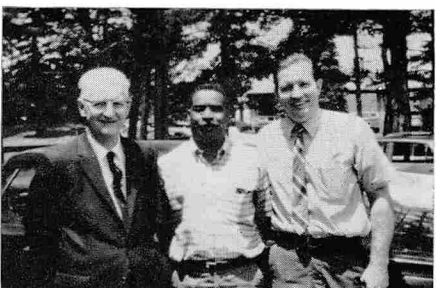
5



6



7



8



9

*For details explaining these
photographs please turn to
the description of the
Pinebrook Family Conference.*

Reformation Today is a quarterly magazine published by The Cuckfield Baptist Church, Sussex.

Editor

ERROLL HULSE.
3 Quarry Hill, Haywards Heath, Sussex.

Associate Editors

DAVID KINGDON, N. Ireland.
67 Sandown Road, Belfast 5.

JOHN DAVISON, Scotland.
23 Muircroft Terrace, Perth.

JIM VAN ZYL, South Africa.
Box 1918, Port Elizabeth.

STUART FOWLER, Australia.
*87 Atkinson Street, Templestowe. Victoria
3106, Australia.*

Secretary

STANLEY D. HOGWOOD.

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

PRICE 2 SHILLINGS