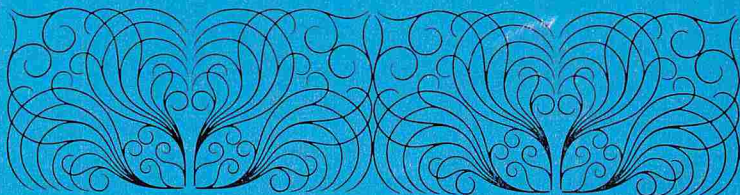
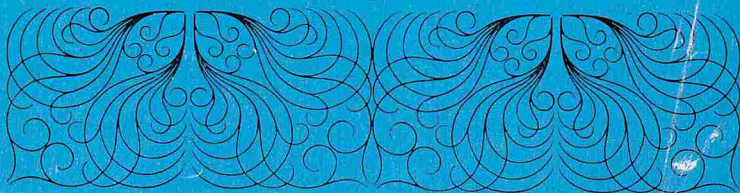


# REFORMATION TODAY



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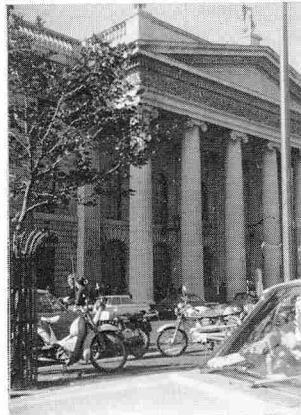
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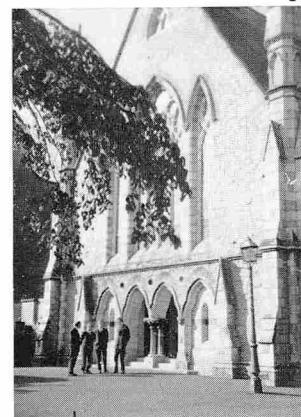
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# Editorial

AFTER PENTECOST THE REFORMATION MUST SURELY BE REGARDED AS THE most momentous event in the history of the Church of Christ. Truth sprang out of the earth and that righteousness which is imputed to those who believe in the Son of God came down in abundance from heaven. To scrutinise the lives and actions of the individual Reformers is to put one's finger on the very watershed of contemporary evangelical religion. Before the Reformation there were isolated springs of water, but they were contemned. The Reformation opened channels so that there were rivers to swim in.

Where do the Baptists fit in? Menno Simons, probably the most successful of the early Baptists, gathered together the pieces of a battered cause and shaped an evangelical movement of considerable worth. Mennonite churches can be found to this day in countries like the United States and France. Menno Simons, however, like John Wesley after him, did not embrace the doctrine of the bondage of the will (and consequently the doctrines of grace), which was thundered out by Luther as "the hinge upon which all turns". Free Grace Baptists were to emerge later, particularly in England<sup>1</sup>. The theology of the Reformation in respect of the doctrines of grace blended perfectly well with the Baptist doctrine of the church and eminent men such as Abraham Booth were to demonstrate this later in their written works.

In more recent years the Baptists were to find their David in Spurgeon. His departure from the scene midst clouds of war dust caused by the downgrade controversy was followed by serious decline in regard to the cause of Free Grace among Baptists. When it seemed that that cause could hardly become more wretched, renewed interest was rekindled through a revival of Free Grace literature during the past decade. This stirring has largely been among young men in the ministry—most of them Baptists. For them their relationship to the Reformation is more than interesting. It is crucial. Should they retain the paedobaptist doctrine of the Reformers? Why did the Reformers retain infant baptism? Did they take over Popish practice and later accommodate it in modified form in the house of covenant theology? Did they give the subject open-minded treatment? The anabaptists were groping their way and were hardly in a position to offer clearly formulated or well-reasoned arguments. Hubmaier, in particular, was exceptional and came near to presenting a systematic biblical case of which we would not be ashamed.

It can be seen then that the story of the relationship of the Reformers to this subject is vital if we are to understand the history of ensuing centuries.

<sup>1</sup> The streams of English Baptist history were outlined in *Reformation Today*, issue 1.

## **Various Aspects of Reformation**

Readers will see that we are beginning to grapple with various aspects of reformation in this issue—missionary policy and church discipline. In regard to the latter it is obvious that a wide diversity of opinion will exist in regard to details. Freedom of expression is the avowed policy of this magazine. For instance, the editor, in contrast to Robert Oliver's article on education in the first issue, believes in Public Schools for boys in some instances, and feels that we can be too idealistic in these matters. The editors do not always agree on all points but publish articles on the grounds of their scriptural weight and merit. This surely is the only way forward. Robert Oliver's article succeeded in bringing the editor over "a bit", and stressed basic principles which have been appreciated by many.

## **Correspondence**

Letters have been received from overseas countries indicating that desire for reformation and revival is on the increase. Christians seeking fellowship or advice in these matters have written interesting descriptions of the situation pertaining in their own areas. This has particularly been the case in regard to America following the article in the last issue with the title "The History of Baptists in America". Since some of the details are personal it would be unwise to publish these. We are also thankful for letters of appreciation. For instance, from Australia a brother writes:

I've now received the first two copies of *Reformation Today* and I can't help but write and say how much I have enjoyed reading them. Many of the articles strike a real responsive chord in my heart as well as enlightening me on many facets of the Reformed Baptist movement in England. It augurs well for the churches that a magazine of this quality is published. May God make it fruitful in the extension of Christ's will being done and the building up of the church in the faith.

How I would have liked to attend the Carey Conference and heard those very timely messages on the Covenant of Grace. I have believed for a long while that it was possible to have a theology of the Covenant without accepting paedobaptism, but I have never read or heard anything on the subject from a Baptist point of view.

## **Conference in Port Elizabeth, South Africa**

A Conference for ministers is being organised by Jim van Zyl to take place from the 5th-7th April, 1971. This will be attended by those of various denominations. Practical and doctrinal subjects will be handled. David Kingdon and the editor hope to be present and take part in this Conference which, because of its general character, may well be the first of its kind in the history of the country. Mr. van Zyl in a circular letter expresses sentiments which apply to the 1971 Carey Conference as well. "We would urge you to pray most earnestly to God," he writes, "that He will providentially overrule in all the arrangements—the choice of speakers and subjects—and that God will protect us from the certain onslaughts of the Devil."



## Future Articles

Besides the series of articles on different aspects of reformation today, we have to hand an intriguing historical article by Dr. Jack Milner on the life of William Kiffin which is full of practical instruction. *What is Going on in the Church of England Today*, by Peter James, is planned for the next issue. Many vital questions which concern us all are asked in a direct fashion by way of interview. After a lifetime of experience in the Church of England, Peter James is able to answer these questions without mumbo-jumbo or sidestepping. Included are answers to questions about the book *Growing into Union* of which J. I. Packer is one of the authors.

It is assumed that Dr. Packer's alignment with Anglo-Catholics is the reason why there is to be no Puritan Conference this year. Those who have supported this annual Conference hope that the chairman (Dr. Lloyd-Jones) can be persuaded to continue. In a future issue of *Reformation Today* we hope to include a review of the Conference from 1956 when the papers were first reproduced until the last Conference in 1969. There are several papers which should be gathered together and published in book form for the benefit of the Christian public.

Two articles on Reformation in the home, one for husbands and the other for wives, have been held over. Similar interview articles, as described above with Peter James, are planned, exploring the possibility of reformation among the Christian Brethren and also those of Pentecostal persuasion. Geoff Thomas has provided us with first-class material on the battle being waged among the Southern Baptists over the question of the inerrancy of Scripture. Then our associate editors have been busy. The larder is full. Providing the Bank-safe is also full we can anticipate fat issues. We are thankful for gifts received and have been able to purchase an ideal addressograph machine in good condition at half-price.

Most important of all is the need for material that can be used in evangelistic work. Writing in an arresting, relevant way for unbelievers is most exacting. We earnestly hope and pray that *Reformation Today* will help fill this great need in the future. It is said that the number of pamphlets issued in Germany in 1521 through 1524, exceeds the quantity for any other four years of German history to the present, and Bainton attributes the winning of most of Northern Germany to an unprecedented spread of literature, consisting mostly of tracts and booklets, liberal use being made of cartoons. May it be said of our generation that, *The Lord gave the Word, and great was the company of those that published it* (Psa. 68:11).

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*Baptists in many parts of the world are appreciating as never before the doctrinal and practical value of the literature of the Reformation. In other words, the Reformation is more relevant than ever. This raises several important questions. How did the leading Reformers regard the subject of baptism? Were there any to plead with them concerning this matter? If so, who were they and what became of them? What conclusions ought we to draw from this history?*

# The Reformation and Baptists

THE PURPOSE OF THIS STUDY IS TO TRACE THE BAPTIST CAUSE AT THE time of the Reformation and then to draw out some practical conclusions. The need for a positive and well-formulated doctrine of the ordinance of baptism that existed then, and which has continued more or less ever since, should become more and more obvious as we proceed.

## The Reformation Era

What happened when Luther nailed his 95 theses to the door of the Castle Church at Wittenberg on October 31, 1517, has been likened to a shattering blow directed upon a large earthenware vessel. The vessel, already riddled with cracks, immediately disintegrates into a pile of pieces. It is a mistake to view the Reformation apart from the history preceding it. Indeed, to understand the major issues of the Reformation one has to grasp the nature of Constantinianism. From the time of Constantine one can discern the tensions experienced by true believers who were unhappy with the sacral idea, which is that the whole of society should form a monolithic church.

The Reformation occasioned a tremendous upsurge of radical opinion in regard to this question of the church. The radical reformers believed not that the church should be reformed merely, but rather that the apostolic church should be restored. In other words they believed that the Church of Rome was beyond reformation and also that a Protestant Church along "comprehensive" lines was inadequate.

"The Radical Reformation", as G. H. Williams described it, "was a massive movement at the core of Christendom which embraced innumerable people from differing backgrounds from one end of Europe to the other." It is almost impossible to do justice to the movement because of its tremendous diversity of character. In recent years historians have come to recognise that a true understanding of the Reformation is impossible without due consideration of this left wing. Moreover, an increasing volume of research material is being made available and this has cast a great deal of new light on the true nature of the Anabaptist movement. Traditional interpretations have had to be changed considerably. The entire Anabaptist movement was blackened by the excesses of the minority. The catastrophe at Munster in 1535, particu-

larly, has served to dub the Anabaptist cause as fanatical and unworthy of serious attention.

Henry Bullinger, successor to Zwingli, at Zurich, wrote extensively on the Anabaptist movement, which he described as "Satanic". Bullinger became recognised as *the* authority on the subject. Fearfully biased, his work served to prejudice generations against serious consideration of the Anabaptist cause. Modern research has shown the inadequacy of Bullinger's work, and successive layers of misrepresentation are being removed. Of the modern writers Leonard Verduin's book, *The Reformers and their Stepchildren*<sup>1</sup> is probably the best known. He describes the Anabaptist movement as "the Second Front" and chooses to tell the story using as chapter headings, the nasty names ascribed to the Anabaptists. The strength of Verduin's book is that it shows that the Anabaptists were essentially at loggerheads with the sacralism of the magisterial<sup>2</sup> reformers. This sacralism was maintained by equating paedobaptism with circumcision. Very simply Verduin defines sacralism as, "society held together by a religion to which all the members of that society are committed". Another strength of Verduin's book is that it illustrates that the Anabaptist thought had its roots in the preceding centuries. On the other hand the book fails to give a composite, overall and accurate picture of the movement as a whole. This is provided by G. H. Williams in his monumental study *The Radical Reformation*,<sup>3</sup> a volume ill-suited by reason of its size and detail for any but the most avid readers. It provides a voluminous storehouse of extremely well-documented material from which one soon learns that the left-wing movement can be likened to one of those large patchwork blankets our grandmothers used to knit—copious and very diverse in character. To estimate what percentage of those involved in the Radical Reformation were evangelical in the sense that we understand that term today, is impossible but then this is equally true of the Protestant Church of the Reformation. We know that by 1586 the Anabaptists formed a quarter of the total population of Friesland. In many cities churches of the Radical reformation numbered hundreds of members. In Groningen there were 1,100.<sup>4</sup> The amazing rapidity with which the Anabaptists spread is ascribed to the emphasis which they placed on the Great Commission. The instances that have just been cited apply to areas where the Anabaptists were not exterminated. Those who study the Radical Reformation for the first time should be warned against disillusionment in regard to some of the Reformers. Their part in the persecution of the Anabaptists is not a pleasant subject. The attention given to the

<sup>1</sup> Paternoster Press, 296 pp., 25s. (£1.25). Referred to as *Verduin* hereafter.

<sup>2</sup> They are called "Magisterial" because of their reliance on civil magistrates to maintain the cause of religion.

<sup>3</sup> Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 924 pp., 5 gns. (£5.25). Hereafter referred to as *Williams*.

<sup>4</sup> Johannes Warns in his book on baptism, Paternoster, now out of print, provides many details of this kind.

long neglected left wing inevitably means the rewriting of the Reformation in some of its aspects, and the reflection on the Reformers is not always sweet, to say the least. David Marshall, in reviewing Verduin's book in the *Banner of Truth* magazine,<sup>1</sup> records understandable alarm. "This is hardly the time to denigrate the Reformers", he says, "when most evangelicals are tragically ignorant of the immense debt we owe to them." We fully sympathise with these sentiments. On the other hand we do not wish to live with a romanticised idea of the Reformation, or, for that matter, foster dreamland concepts of any epoch of history. When one has received incalculable blessing from the lives and teachings of the Reformers it is painful to read of their intolerance and harshness. The eminent historian Bainton confesses: "I felt intense resentment against Luther because he spoke so magnificently for liberty in the early 1520s and condoned the death penalty for the Anabaptists a decade later. Having worked for eight years on a biography of Luther in the 1940s anger changed to sadness through the discovery that in this case, as often elsewhere, it is the saints who burn the saints."<sup>2</sup>

Lest we be righteous overmuch about the maltreatment of the Step-children let us remember that the Reformers truly believed that social anarchy would prevail if the radical movement was allowed to hold sway. As far as they were concerned, the preservation of the Reformation was at stake and the church-state relationship was essential to the Reformation. Hence they sought to preserve the church-state relationship at all costs. Because of what the Lord did through them in raising up truth in the earth the 16th century reformers tower above most.

What then do we, who embrace the soteriology or the main doctrines of the Reformers, stand to learn from the Anabaptists? The answer should emerge when we see how Luther, Zwingli and Calvin reacted as they came into contact with those who reject the doctrine of paedobaptism.

## Luther

Late in December 1521, a small group of radical prophets arrived from Zwickau at Wittenberg. The leaders of this group were Storch, Stubner and Müntzer, the latter of ill-fame because of his extremely unbalanced notions—such as the claim of prophecy, the ability of inspired speech, similar to the claims of neo-Pentecostals today. Included in their attack on unscriptural practices was the rejection of infant baptism. Luther was away at the Wartburg at the time and the men at Wittenberg were

<sup>1</sup> *Re-writing the Reformation*, Issue 45, 1966, p. 7.

<sup>2</sup> Quoted from *Studies in the Reformation*, 1964.

We would not concur with Bainton's categorical statement that "saints burned saints", but rather see the secular arm of the State mixed up in all this. Just as in our day the Ecumenical Movement is mostly secular, nominally Christian, and political (even to the point of providing funds for the promotion of violence), so in the 16th century persecution of the real saints had its spring in sacralism. That genuine Christians should be implicated is sad and seems inexcusable, but who among us could say that he is without sin?



caught off-guard. Melancthon, although repelled by their rejection of infant baptism, was impressed by the biblical knowledge and the cogent reasoning of the men from Zwickau. University trained, Stubner was particularly impressive. He succeeded in winning Luther's disciples, Cellarius and Westerberg, to the Anabaptist cause. Westerberg was later to become a leading Anabaptist. Carlstadt, a well-known personality in the town, was much influenced by the visitors. Eventually he came to the position where he refused to administer infant baptism. In 1524 he was banished from Electoral Saxony. Moved by the visitors the unstable Carlstadt was responsible for much unhealthy extremism.

The disturbances at Wittenberg required stern, corrective measures by Luther on his return during March 1522. The unrest created by the prophets from Zwickau and their influence upon Carlstadt particularly, did little to endear Luther to the Anabaptist movement.<sup>1</sup> To Luther, Müntzer became "the arch-devil", and there can be little doubt that those opposing infant baptism tended to be associated in his mind with fanatics of this kind. It is on record that Storch and Stubner of Zwickau, had separate conversations with Luther on infant baptism, which induced him to write defending the view that a kind of faith is infused into infants.

Luther hardened more and more in his attitude toward the left wing. By March 1530 he gave his consent to the death penalty for Anabaptists. This was further confirmed in 1536, when he signed a document clearly stating that the Anabaptists were to be put to death, not because they were given to physical violence, but because their programme entailed a complete re-orientation of church, state and society. We can see the contrast of these later views with those held by Luther in 1520 when he wrote his *Babylonish Captivity of the Church*. In this work he considered the idea of reshaping the church as a body of believers only. We see then, in broad outline, why Luther moved further away from the Baptist concept of the church.<sup>2</sup>

## Zwingli

A group of men very different to the Zwickau prophets were destined to represent the Baptist cause at Zurich. To start with, we find in Zwingli a man who, at the beginning of his Reformation pilgrimage, entertained grave doubts about infant baptism. "Nothing grieves me more than that at present I have to baptise children, for I know it ought not to be done", he said. Verduin declares of Zwingli, "Here was a

<sup>1</sup> *Luther and his Times*. E. G. Schwiebert. Concordia, pp. 535-550.

<sup>2</sup> For my own part I would rather have a good biography of Luther than any other figure in church history. Following him it could be wished that there were complete and ideal biographies of Whitefield, Tyndale, Spurgeon, Carey, Wiccliffe, Calvin, Edwards, Knox, Bunyan, Judson and John Dod (1558-1645), the latter because we need to see the Puritan period as a whole through the eyes of one who had intimate knowledge of the scene over a long period.

man who was deeply aware that the renewal of the church called for a radical break with 'christening'." The matter weighed heavily with the Swiss reformer. He knew well that the civil leaders were sacralists and that they barred the way to any change in regard to infant baptism. Zwingli wrote, "I leave baptism untouched, I call it neither right nor wrong; if we were to baptise as Christ instituted it, then we would not baptise any person until he reached the age of discretion; for I find it nowhere written that infant baptism is to be practised . . ." He added, "However we must practise infant baptism so as not to offend our fellow men".<sup>1</sup> To his associates he confessed, "If we were to baptise in accord with the command of Christ, then we would not baptise anyone until he has reached the age of discretion".

Zwingli's friends were well acquainted with his views and it was a terrible disappointment to some of them when he compromised over the matter. Two who studied Latin, Hebrew and Greek with him in 1522-1523, were Grebel and Mantz.<sup>2</sup> Mantz (1498-1527) was the obvious man to become Hebrew tutor at Zurich, but Zwingli declined to give him the position because of his radical theological tendencies. Conrad Grebel, son of a wealthy merchant who was one of the most influential magistrates in Zurich, had the advantage of an excellent education at Basle and Paris. A playboy, he did not make good until his marriage in 1522. This displeased his father, who cut him off, since he felt that he married below his station. Family responsibilities had a sobering effect upon Grebel who in due course experienced evangelical conversion. Zwingli's exposition of the Greek text was partly instrumental in this change. Grebel and Mantz, who knew Zwingli well, and who benefited from his ministry, were later to suffer for their convictions as we shall see.

There were several other men of note who desired Radical Reformation, including Reublin, a preacher in the villages of Wytikon and Zollikon. In 1522 Reublin became the first Roman priest to marry. Haetzer, Hubmaier and Blaurock, all ex-priests and well equipped intellectually, were other influential characters involved in the Anabaptist movement in the Zurich area.

As we look more closely at Hubmaier (1481-1528) we will be in a better position to appreciate the situation of those days.

After study under John Eck at Freiburg University, where he made rapid progress receiving his doctorate in theology, Hubmaier was ordained into the priesthood. Being a full-blooded Roman Catholic it is with regret that it is to be noted that he played an ignoble part in persecuting Jews at Regensburg where the synagogue was burned down. However, he became disillusioned with Roman practice and feeling his way toward the evangelical position, was glad to receive a call to Waldshut, a village situated just outside Switzerland, not far from Zurich. By 1524 Walds-

<sup>1</sup> For further details see *Verduin*, p. 199.

<sup>2</sup> See *Williams*, p. 93.

hut was evangelically reformed under his ministry. It is noteworthy that Hubmaier appeared at the second Zurich disputation in October 1523, where with Haetzer, Mantz and Grebel he argued against the Mass.<sup>1</sup> At this disputation Zwingli temporised, not wishing to divide the canton. Consequently he disappointed his friends. They felt that he had compromised by committing the Reformation into the hands of the civil authorities. As time went on the rift deepened. In conventicles (private religious gatherings) in the environs of Zurich the issues became clear. The radical Christians interpreted Zwingli's Reform as a replacement of one civil order with another. In other words, Papal Christendom was being replaced with Protestant Christendom, the magistrates being the major instruments in the change-over. The idea of a separated church, free from the jurisdiction of both prelates and magistrates, seemed to be set on one side. The dissenters sought a gathered church of believers and this idea crystallised in the first baptism, when Grebel baptised Blaurock in the home of Mantz on January 21, 1525.<sup>2</sup> In the weeks preceding this event, on two successive Tuesdays, January 10 and 17, 1525, Grebel, Mantz and Reublin had discussed baptism with Zwingli and Bullinger. This was known as the First Baptismal Disputation. Several were won over to believers' baptism and the Council soon afterwards reaffirmed its position in regard to infants by passing a decree that all who failed to have their offspring baptised within eight days would be banished. Evening gatherings in the homes of the dissenters continued, and represented the first informal beginnings of gathered Baptist churches in the area. In the course of the week following the first baptism thirty-five were baptised by affusion (pouring) at Zollikon, which was followed by the Lord's Supper, both bread and wine being distributed in an informal celebration of the Lord's Supper. This was in marked contrast to the ritual ceremony of the Mass.

Mantz and Blaurock in particular were powerful preachers. They laid great stress on repentance and the Great Commission. Deep conviction of sin attended the movement, which spread rapidly. Restrictions imposed upon the preaching activities by the authorities were ignored. The magistrates were soon to prevail, however, with increasing power and severity.

In the meantime Hubmaier had been dedicating infants at Waldshut, in lieu of baptising them. He had written to Oecolampadius at Basle, contending against paedobaptism in lucid terms. "I know", he declared, "that it will not go well with Christendom, until Baptism and the Supper are brought back to their original purity."<sup>3</sup> Oecolampadius had replied disapprovingly, by quoting Augustine that the faith of the parents suffices for infants. In April 1525 Hubmaier and sixty others were baptised by Reublin. Hubmaier in the days following baptised over 300, whereupon

<sup>1</sup> Described in detail by *Williams*, p. 90.

<sup>2</sup> *ibid.*, pp. 118-120.

<sup>3</sup> We do well to ponder this profound statement.

he wrote to Zwingli desiring to debate the issue of believers' baptism. Earlier, on May 1, 1523, Hubmaier had conferred with Zwingli. Referring later to this he declared: "Then and there you (Zwingli) said that I was right in saying that children should not be baptised before they were instructed in the faith; this had been the custom previously, therefore such were called catechumens. You promised to bring this out in your exposition of the Articles, as you did in the 18th Article of Confession. Anyone who reads will find therein your opinion clearly expressed."<sup>1</sup> It is important to note that Hubmaier, unlike his Swiss brethren, sought the sanction and support of evangelical magistrates. The Zurich Council apparently ignored Hubmaier's request for a debate. In November 1525 we find Grebel, Mantz and Blaurock imprisoned. Hubmaier, who was formerly part of the Magisterial Reformation and hence more secure, went to Zurich to try and save the Radical Reformation by pleading with Zwingli. G. H. Williams describes his attitude at this point as "Quixotic". He did not have a hope, as events were soon to prove.

From this point the situation only hardened. Hubmaier was cast into prison and tortured. A new mandate threatening death to anyone re-baptising was issued. Mantz was condemned to perish by drowning, and became the first "Protestant" martyr to die at the hands of Protestants on January 5, 1527. His end was brave. He praised God on the way to execution and his last words were the same as his Lord's and Stephen's. Blaurock escaped lightly by comparison, being stripped to the waist and beaten out of the city with rods. Hubmaier was forced to recant, by means of the rack, and then allowed to leave Zurich. Several notable persons were converted to believers' baptism by Hubmaier after this time. But persecution was mounting, and in January 1528 he was burned alive. Encouraged by his wife, a person of outstanding courage, he kept up his spirits by repeating the scriptures to himself on the way to the stake. His last utterance was "O Jesus, Jesus". A few days later, his wife was thrown into the Danube with a stone tied about her neck.

What of Grebel?<sup>2</sup> He had died of the plague in prison in Zurich in 1527. Few of these men were permitted to reach any degree of experience and some of them died at a very young age. Most, if not all, of the potential leaders, were cut off before they could develop depth and maturity of judgment. Such was Michael Sattler, a talented young man, who at the age of 29 in 1527 had his tongue torn out, his body lacerated with red hot tongs and then burned. His wife perished in the same way as Hubmaier's wife. *Let us remember that the state-church system*

<sup>1</sup> B. J. Kidd, *Documents of the Continental Reformation*.

<sup>2</sup> By using the indices the stories of these men can be traced in *Williams*. Various research articles have also been consulted. It is a pity that wholehearted recommendation of some works is not possible due to the modernistic views of the authors.

*rather than the Reformers was responsible for these gruesome events.* The ugliness of recent events in Northern Ireland reminds us that human nature is not changed by state religion or parties. The pattern of what happened at Zurich was repeated more or less at other centres such as St. Gall and Berne. But our study would be incomplete if we did not consider the great reformer of Geneva.

### **Calvin**

Calvin did not have as much contact with the Anabaptists as did Zwingli, although he married Idolette van Buren, widow of John Stordeur. Stordeur had confessed "his crime" of Anabaptism and had gone over to the Reformed party. Calvin was horrified at the numerical extent and influence of the Anabaptists. He devoted one of his earliest works to the refutation of an error common among them namely, psychopannychia (soul-sleep). This was published in 1544. Calvin's last personal encounter with evangelical Anabaptism seems to have taken place in 1546, with the arrival at Geneva of one Belot, a colporteur. The prevailing stringent policy against Anabaptists was immediately applied, and Belot was arrested whereupon Calvin interviewed Belot. We have only Calvin's description to go by but he mockingly caricatures Belot as "giving himself with raised head and rolling eyes the majestic aspect of a prophet". We can well understand how an unfortunate impression of Belot confirmed Calvin's bad impression of Anabaptists, to whom he refers in his Institutes as "furious madmen".

### **Subsequent trends**

Thus we have seen that the gulf between the Anabaptists and the Reformers widened to irrevocable proportions. From 1535 to 1546 in Friesland alone, no less than 30,000 Baptists were put to death, Romans and Protestants joining in the butchery. "It can be safely said", declares the historian Dr. Rufus Jones, "that no other movement for spiritual freedom in the history of the Church has such an enormous martyrology." In Germany, particularly, the Baptist cause was thoroughly suppressed, so that it never amounted to anything of significance until Johann Oncken (1800-1884) pioneered a Baptist work in which he eventually overcame intense opposition and persecution. By 1950 there were 559 Baptist churches with a total of over 100,000 members. In England, however, the spiritual descendents of the left wing gained a permanent foothold and, as Bainton points out, "did even more than the Established Church to fashion the temper of England and America".<sup>1</sup>

To refer to areas beyond the Continent is consistent since the ecclesiastical pathway structured by the Reformers was to be trodden elsewhere. The reformation of the church brought deliverance from Popery and superstition on a scale beyond calculation. It was, however, a road which radical Christians could not tread and Baptists in England suffered in the same way as did their brethren on the Continent. Protes-

<sup>1</sup> *Studies in the Reformation*, p. 129.

tantism has treasured the memory of her martyrs, and recently we have been reminded that there were Roman Catholic martyrs as well. During 1970 the Pope canonised 40 English Roman Catholic martyrs of the 16th century. But buried under the dust of that era, unheralded and forgotten, lie large numbers of English Baptists who died for their faith. Spurgeon, in his colourful way tells the story of one of the early Baptist martyrs:

Jane Bouchier, our glorious Baptist martyr, the maid of Kent, when she was brought before Cranmer and Ridley, was able to nonplus them entirely; of course we believe part of her power lay in the goodness of the subject, for if there be a possibility of proving infant baptism by any text in the Bible, I am sure I am not aware of the existence of it; Popish tradition might confirm the innovation, but the Bible knows no more of it than the baptism of bells and the consecration of horses. But, however, she answered them all with a singular power—far beyond what could have been expected of a countrywoman. It was a singular instance of God's providential judgment that Cranmer and Ridley, two bishops of the church who condemned this Baptist to die, said when they signed the death-warrant, that burning was an easy death, and they had themselves to try it in after days; and that maid told them so. She said, "I am as true a servant of Christ as any of you; and if you put your poor sister to death, take care lest God should let loose the wolf of Rome on you, and you have to suffer for God too."<sup>1</sup>

To summarise the account so far. We have seen how the idea of a gathered church was seriously considered by Luther in 1520, but how a decade later he was committed completely to the sacral system, even to the point of agreeing to the death penalty for Baptists. The influence of the Zwickau fanatics undoubtedly assisted to discredit the Baptist view in Luther's mind. In the case of Zwingli, we have a man who faced an agonising choice. He chose the way of magisterial reformation. His friends who went in the other direction perished, and with them the brightest hopes ever fostered for a Baptist share in the Reformation. By the time we come to Calvin the lines are set, Bullinger and Oecolampadius being confirmed paedobaptists. It is doubtful whether Calvin ever entertained any serious thought that the Baptists might be right. The contact he did have with them seemed only to confirm his convictions that the Baptists as a whole were just misguided pests.

Despite the spread of the concept of religious freedom, the threat of sacralism is still with us today in the form of the ecumenical movement, with its quest for one, united, world territorial church. This is an exceedingly dangerous movement and it is lamentable that evangelicals should be found giving it support. During the last century Dr. Francis Wayland, a Baptist author, expressed the danger of sacralism in vivid terms as follows:

"A church organised after the manner of civil commonwealth may retain its form long after the last vestige of piety has vanished and continue for ages as an enemy of Christ and a persecutor of the saints. The soil of Christendom at the present

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<sup>1</sup> *New Park Street*, 1860, p. 481.



day is covered with the festering carcasses of churches from which the Spirit has for generations departed. The moral atmosphere is rendered pestilential by their presence and neither piety nor humanity can breathe it and survive.”<sup>1</sup>

## Conclusions

The main application is clear. In contrast to the Old Testament idea of a national territorial church, Baptists believe that a radical change has taken place with the coming of the New Covenant. In contrast with the national territorial idea, Baptists believe in a gathered church in which every member knows the Lord “from the least of them to the greatest of them” (Jer. 31:34).

It is necessary to confirm our union with the Reformers in all aspects of their theology—infant-sprinkling and sacralism excepted. It is the core of Luther’s evangelical experience, his rejection of free will, his belief in predestination, his clear formulation of justification by faith alone, through grace alone, upon the authority of scriptures alone, that unites us in spirit to him.

We admire Calvin for his great example of exegeting scriptures, and we are thankful for his commentaries and his Institutes. With Spurgeon, we acknowledge our great debt to the Puritans for their rich expositions of the grace of God. Speaking for myself, I have greater unity with a paedobaptist minister who loves the doctrines of grace, than with a Baptist pastor whose ministry is stunted through shallowness and lack of doctrine. Unhappily Liberalism has increased among Baptists, and needless to say once a minister denies the fundamentals of the faith, Christian fellowship is no longer possible. While not ready to join formally with a sacral church, I would, for the benefit of the whole family, rather attend one such, where expository preaching was maintained, than endure so much that is infantile and dishonouring in some Baptist churches where the concepts of God and His sovereignty fall far below what scripture sets forth.

It is necessary to assert these sentiments boldly, since our formulation of a clear doctrine of baptism and of the nature of the church is based squarely on what we commonly call the Reformed Faith. The name “Reformed Baptists” is sound, since it conveys the true position, namely, that we embrace Reformed theology in every aspect except for believers’ baptism and all that goes with that by way of a gathered believing church. Moreover, wherever possible, we should call the orthodox evangelical Anabaptists of the Reformation “Baptists” and not “Anabaptists”. As far as we are concerned, paedobaptism is no baptism. Therefore the question of re-baptism does not arise. Indeed our greatest objection to paedobaptism is that it destroys believers’ baptism. Modern Roman Catholic Spain illustrates this. Reformed paedobaptists working there acknowledge (and herein they are consistent with themselves) the validity of Roman Catholic infant baptism. This con-

<sup>1</sup> *The Principles of the Baptists*, Bunyan Lib., 1861.

cept, if followed in practice, means that believers' baptism is never witnessed and as a general rule we might say of paedobaptist churches as a whole that they simply have no idea of the meaning of believers' baptism as practised in the New Testament. Never having been baptised as believers themselves, their aversion for the ordinance is often as great as is our love for it.

Because of our union with them in regard to the main body of truth, it behoves us to present our position in a way which shows that we have taken all their reasoning into account. Recently I had fellowship with an Anglican who seceded from the Church of England after ten years as a vicar. I found I had union with him in every aspect of the faith, except baptism. We have been corresponding over the matter, and in reply to one of my letters he wrote as follows: "I could not agree with you more when you say the last thing we want is cleavage. Already I can see that this one issue is dividing Reformed Christians and I cannot but feel that this division will be a great hindrance to the Lord's work in the future."

The position has not been helped in the past on account of the attitude assumed by some Reformed paedobaptists who have tended to regard Baptists as sub-Reformed and "unenlightened", on account of their presumed inability to understand the implications of the Covenant. Admittedly, this unfortunate attitude has often been encouraged by the fact that so many Baptists have been superficial in doctrine, and because Particular Baptists who hold consistent views of the Covenant have been a minority. The great majority of Baptists today are of Arminian persuasion and hence are in no position to impress Reformed paedobaptists with their arguments.

It is not, however, just for the sake of better relationships among the Reformed that we need the clearest expressions of believers' baptism. We are required by the terms of our office in the ministry to teach our people in such a way that there is no doubt about the matter. Believers' baptism, and the union with Christ that it expresses, is so intimately bound up with the doctrine of the church that we cannot afford to be obscure about it.

Let us guard against lowering our estimate of the Reformers or of the Reformation because of sacralism which harmed the Baptists then, and which has tended to make them suspicious of Reformed teaching as a whole ever since, thus depriving them of great theological riches. Basic human factors, as we have seen, influenced Luther, Zwingli and Calvin. They acted within the context of their times. As we are called to act within ours, we do well to seek a grasp of truth as profound as theirs, combining that with the main facet for which the Baptists contended, namely, that the Church of Christ upon earth is to consist only of those who meet the requirements of the New Covenant—a new heart and a new spirit.

*William Payne hails from Liverpool and has been Pastor of the Calvary Baptist Church, Burlington, Ontario, Canada, for several years. He was one of several young pastors from Canada who attended the recent Pinebrook Conference which is reported elsewhere in these pages, and contributed a fine exposition on the subject of election.*

## **The Faith of Our Fathers— What Was It?**

I WRITE THIS PAPER AS ONE WHO IS UNASHAMEDLY AN EVANGELICAL CHRISTIAN. Indeed, I am not at all afraid to be called a “Fundamentalist”, if the term means one who believes the fundamentals of the faith as preached by our forefathers and set forth in their creeds. I not only believe *all* of the fundamentals, I also rejoice in the privilege of proclaiming them as a preacher. Furthermore, I am a Fundamentalist who believes in the importance of the truth of biblical separation, not only from worldliness but also from religious apostasy. I have no sympathy with the kind of ecumenism that tries to mix truth with error, and which endorses men as Christian ministers who openly reject the very foundational truths upon which historic Christianity rests.

However, I am deeply disturbed with many of my “fundamental, separated brethren”. As I listen to many of these brethren preach, and especially as they accuse religious Liberals of having forsaken the old faith, I wonder if they have not left themselves open to the same charge. Such a statement may startle some, but I beg you to read on. In the scriptures—and by “fundamental separated brethren”—we are exhorted (and rightly so) to “earnestly contend for the faith”; but what faith are we to contend for? We sing heartily “Faith of our Fathers”; but who are our true fathers, and what was their faith?

I fear there is a sad ignorance among God’s people, preachers included, as to what the faith of our fathers really was. In evangelical pulpits the names of men like Spurgeon, McCheyne, Müller, Edwards, Whitefield, Brainerd, Carey, Bonar, and Bunyan are used in glowing terms, and with reverence and affection; but would these great men endorse the preaching and theology of the majority of Fundamentalists today? Men speak of the “great Puritans”, but do they believe and teach as the Puritans did? Many brethren speak often about the Reformation, and denounce the attempts of the Liberals to minimise or downgrade that great movement; but do these brethren preach the same doctrine as the Reformers? Would such great men of God as Luther, Calvin, Farel, Knox, and Latimer be able to count on an amen to their preaching if they preached

today? I am afraid the answer to these questions must be a loud and clear No!

The majority of our Fundamentalist churches today are not preaching the Faith of our Fathers. Of course, they are preaching some of the things that our fathers taught, but there is a total neglect, and in many cases, a blatant denial of the basic truths that formed the heart of the message of the men mentioned above. If only people today would take the time to read what our forefathers preached and wrote, and study the great creeds they have left us, it would soon be seen that the assertions of this paper are correct.

### **Total Depravity and Human Responsibility**

The Faith of our Fathers not only embraced the divine inspiration of the scripture, the doctrine of the Trinity, the reality of Heaven and Hell, and the need of personal salvation, but it also taught the total depravity of human nature, and therefore man's inability in and of himself to make himself right with God. By total depravity our fathers did not mean, as some think, that every man is as bad as he possibly can be, but that every part of his being has been affected by sin; his mind has been darkened (Eph. 4: 18), his affections are corrupted (John 3: 19), and his will is in bondage (John 6: 44). Never do we find our forefathers telling sinners, "God can do no more; only you can open the door". They would have said that such a statement was not only untrue but that it was dishonouring to God. It would give sinners a false sense of ability, and rob them of the very sense of helplessness that it was necessary for them to recognise if they were ever to seek mercy from God.

This is not to say that these great men played down human responsibility; on the contrary, they realised that man's inability, because it had been produced by his own sinfulness, did not diminish his responsibility to God at all. They drove deeply into the hearts and consciences of men their awful state in nature, by emphasising their responsibility on the one hand, but their total inability apart from divine grace on the other. In a sermon entitled "Human Inability" Spurgeon gives a statement that shows how differently yesterday's preachers talked about the power of man's will from present day evangelicals.

It is strange how people, when talking about free will, talk of things which they do not at all understand. "Now," says one, "I believe men can be saved if they will." My dear sir, that is not the question at all. The question is, are men ever found naturally willing to submit to the humbling terms of the Gospel of Christ? We declare upon scriptural authority that the human will is so desperately set on mischief, so depraved, and so inclined to everything that is evil, and so disinclined to everything that is good, that without the powerful, supernatural, irresistible influence of the Holy Spirit, no human will will ever be constrained toward Christ.

The usual fundamentalist notion today is that man's will has the same ability to "accept Christ" as it does to reject Him. This is the same as saying that man's will was not affected by the Fall. Sinners, we are told,

must take the first step by becoming willing, by “making the decision”, and then God will take over from there—somewhat like telling a corpse, “If you get out of the casket, we will do the rest”!

### **God’s Sovereignty in Election**

Our fathers also taught the truth of God’s sovereignty in election. Having a biblical understanding of man’s fallen condition, as being “dead in trespasses and sins”, unable and unwilling to come to God in true repentance and faith, yet responsible and accountable to do so, they did not complain about election, but rather they gloried in it, and blessed God that it was really true. They knew that without election none would ever be saved. Our fathers did not gloss over the ninth chapter of Romans, Acts 13: 48, 2 Thess. 2: 13, John 15: 16, and such texts. They declared sovereign, unconditional election as part of the “whole counsel of God”. When souls were saved, our fathers did not give the credit to the “free will” of man but to the electing and free grace of God. How sad it is to see this glorious truth reviled, denied and cast out by many fundamentalist preachers today, especially when these men claim to be the sons of the Puritans and the Reformers and the great preachers in church history. Men who are looked upon as leaders in the evangelical world have been known angrily to denounce the very truth of election that was believed, loved and proclaimed by Luther, Knox, Spurgeon, Bunyan, and a host of other giants.

Again, as we read the works of our forefathers, we find that they speak of the atonement as something that did actually atone for the sins of God’s people. They preached a Christ that actually saved the lost, not One that just made it possible for the lost to be saved. The blood of Christ had a definite purpose, and they believed that that purpose would be perfectly fulfilled. They taught that the sacred flow did redeem those for whom it was shed (Gal. 3: 13), it was a ransom (Matt. 20: 28), and it did bring us nigh unto God (1 Pet. 3: 18). Our forefathers declared that the death of Christ actually secured the salvation of those for whom it was intended, not as something which was ineffectual until man added the necessary something to make it work. They also preached a supernatural regeneration by the Holy Spirit, in and by which God’s elect were effectually called, quickened from spiritual death, brought to repentance and faith, and renewed, and kept, in holiness. Our fathers taught that regeneration produced repentance and faith, thereby making men dependent on God to do for them what they could not do for themselves, thus shutting men up to the mercy of God; whereas today we are told that man must of himself take the first step (believe), and only then does God regenerate the soul. This, of course, makes God dependent on man before He can act; but this was not the Faith of our Fathers.

Finally, our fathers taught that the mark of a true Christian was that he would persevere in faith and holiness unto the end. He may have his backslidings and his stumblings, but though he fell he would arise again

(Prov. 24: 16). Thus they insisted on the fact that the only true evidence of salvation was a life lived in accordance with the Word of God. Not mere profession, but a life of holiness, obedience and good works was called for in anyone claiming to be a Christian.

These things formed the heart of the Faith of our Fathers. We must ask, "Is this the faith we hear preached today in the majority of evangelical churches?" Is it not almost the exact opposite? Today we are told that man, far from being "unable", is quite capable of doing all that is necessary by the power of his own "free will". Election is either unheard of, or else it is drained of its biblical meaning by insisting that God "elects those whom He foreknows will accept Christ when the opportunity arises". That is, God elects those that elect themselves! Christ is presented as having died for everyone in general but no one in particular. Regeneration is made to depend on man's "decision", and the evidence of being a Christian is that we have "made a decision for Christ".

### **The Confessions of Faith**

We are not suggesting that every Christian during the first 1,800 years of church history believed the things we mentioned. There have been a few who have differed, but we do claim that the things mentioned above formed the heart of mainline historic Christianity. If this is doubted, let the reader refer to the great confessions of faith drawn up by the Protestant denominations. Let the Baptists read the Philadelphia Confession of Faith, or the New Hampshire Confession; let the Presbyterians read the Westminster Confession; and let the Anglicans read the thirty-nine articles of the Church of England. These creeds testify that the historic Christian faith has been built upon these truths of which we have spoken. These doctrines have been nicknamed Calvinism by some and by others they have been called the doctrines of grace. Indeed, let the reader study the most famous hymns of the Church and he will discover an ample and clear testimony to the same fact. The works of the men already referred to as leaders of the Church in history are available to all in these days if they will but take the time to read them. Let the reader study the sermons of Spurgeon, the hymns of Bonar and McCheyne, the diary of Brainerd, the works of Jonathan Edwards, and he will soon be able to see for himself that the doctrines of grace have been the heart of the Faith of our Fathers.

Is it not significant, that the times of the Church's greatest power and influence, the times of the largest number of spiritual revivals, were the times when the doctrines of grace were believed and preached with clarity and power? What a sad state the Church is in today; lots of noise and activity, but little power and holiness of life. Well might we listen to Octavius Winslow in this connection:

Is there not in the present day a criminal keeping back by some, and a painful undervaluing by others, of the scriptural and holy doctrines of grace? The doctrines which unfold the eternity of God's love to His people—the sovereignty of His grace in their election, the effectual power of the Spirit in their calling, the free justification of their



persons through the imputed righteousness of Christ, and the entire putting away of their sins by His atoning blood, the solemn obligation to live soberly, righteously, and godly in this present evil world, and the certainty of their final glorification in the world to come—are not these divinely revealed truths at the present moment, and by the great mass of Christian professors and preachers, excluded from our pulpits and exiled from our land? Are they not considered mean and unfashionable? And having lost their savour with many, are they not cast out and trodden underfoot of men? We verily and solemnly believe that it is so. By some they are professedly received, but criminally held back; by others they are professedly preached, but with such timidity and obscurity, as to render them of none effect; and by the many they are disbelieved altogether, and therefore openly and boldly denied! And yet these are the doctrines which shine so luminously in every page of the apostles' writing; these are the doctrines which formed the grand themes of Christ's ministration; and these are the doctrines, to the preaching of which by the Reformers, we owe all the civil and religious liberty, which, as a nation, we now possess. We hesitate not then to say, that along with the denial or the undervaluing of these doctrines of grace, there will go forth an influence that will wither the spirituality and obstruct the prosperity of the churches of our land. It is true, an outward appearance of fruitfulness may follow the exhibition of opposite and conflicting doctrines—crowds may flock to their standards and multitudes seem to be converted by their influence—but soon these delusive appearances are seen to pass away. The time of trial and sifting comes, and then it is found, when alas! too late to close the floodgate against the overwhelming evils which the preaching of error has produced, that the truth, and the truth only, in the hands of the eternal Spirit of God, can really enlighten the dark mind, regenerate the lifeless soul, and subdue and sanctify the rebellious heart; it is then discovered that the true prosperity of a church, its stability, its spirituality, its vigour, and its holy influence, are essentially, and therefore inseparably, connected with a fearless and holy maintenance of the doctrines of grace; that where they are denied or held back, or in any way obscured, there may indeed exist the form of godliness, but the power—the glorious, divine, and sanctifying power—is wanting. The preaching of false doctrine may build up a church composed of wood, hay, stubble, but the preaching of truth alone can rear a church composed of “gold, silver, precious stones”. *Personal Declension*, pp. 121f.

### The Testimony of Spurgeon

We are accustomed to hearing quotations from Spurgeon by preachers who think they preach the same Gospel as he did whereas in fact they would be reproved by him as the following words testify:

The old truth that Calvin preached, that Chrysostom preached, that Paul preached, is the truth that I must preach today, or else be a liar to my conscience and my God. I cannot shape the truth. I know of no such thing as the paring off the rough edges of a doctrine. John Knox's gospel is my gospel. That which thundered through Scotland must thunder through England again. The great mass of our preachers are sound enough in the faith, but not sound enough in the way they preach it. Election is not mentioned once a year in many a pulpit; final perseverance is kept back; the great things of God's law are forgotten, and a kind of mongrel mixture of Arminianism and Calvinism is the great delight of the present age. And hence the Lord has forsaken many of His tabernacles, and left the house of His covenant; and He will leave it till again the trumpet gives a certain sound. For wherever there is not the old gospel we shall find “Ichabod” written upon the Church walls ere long. The old truth of the Covenanters, the old truth of the Puritans, the old truth of the apostles, is the only truth that will stand the test of time, and never need to be altered to suit a wicked and ungodly generation.

May God restore to us the Faith of our Fathers—the preaching of the whole counsel of truth to all nations.

*It is very useful to have informative book reviews, especially when they are extended in length and penetrating in analysis. However, review columns can sometimes become a bit dreary. A few books do not deserve review, while others merit special attention. The main thing is to have the right books at the right time in one's Christian experience. Books that Have Helped Me Most is designed to draw attention to outstanding volumes. This series should also contribute toward an understanding of Christian experience. A deacon of the Central Baptist Church, Pretoria, David Cowan is an architect by profession.*

## Books That Have Helped Me Most

*David Cowan*

MY LIFE AS A CHRISTIAN BEGAN IN ABOUT 1950 WHEN I WAS IN MY LATE TEENS, and from that time until 1964 I had little idea of what the Reformed Faith was. The word "Reformed" would have baffled me for I had not heard of such a thing. It was during this period that I came across *The Life of Hudson Taylor* in two large volumes. This biography brought me into a new experience of the Christian life for I understood the reality of total commitment and the meaning of our Lord's saying that a man should be ready to forsake everything in order to be a disciple. At any rate the story of Hudson Taylor and his consecration to the work of evangelising China was an inspiration.

The second piece of writing which has had most influence upon me was an early publication by the Banner of Truth with the title *Select Sermons of George Whitefield*. This was my first introduction to Reformed doctrine, and a sermon by Whitefield, *The Method of Grace*, made an indelible impression upon my heart. To this day I am affected by it and can point to the very paragraphs that arrested me and compelled me to examine myself. Perhaps this sermon has had more influence upon me than any other I have read. The following extract might well illustrate what I mean. But, oh, how wonderful it would have been to hear Whitefield express these sentiments in his preaching.

"There is a mixture of corruption in every one of our duties; so that after we are converted, were Jesus Christ only to accept us according to our works, our works would damn us, for we cannot put up a prayer but it is far from that perfection which the moral law requireth. I do not know what you may think, but I can say that I cannot pray but I sin—I cannot preach to you or any others but I sin—I can do nothing without sin; and, as one expresseth it, my repentance wants to be repented of, and my tears to be washed in the precious blood of my dear Redeemer. Our best duties are as so many splendid sins. Before you can speak peace to your heart, you must not only be sick of your original and actual sin, but you must be made sick of your righteousness,

of all your duties and performances. There must be a deep conviction before you can be brought out of your self-righteousness; it is the last idol taken out of our heart."

If Whitefield could say these things of himself then I felt the prospect of my own depravity was too appalling for human expression.

The third volume—this time a paperback—came with the title *The Forgotten Spurgeon*, the author being Iain Murray. I was not only struck that Spurgeon actually believed such doctrines as are outlined, but I was also surprised that such things were so seldom preached. It came to me with force as I read this book that regeneration precedes faith and repentance. For me this meant reorganisation of my theological ideas. The thought of regeneration being a creation of God is forcibly stated by the Prince of Preachers.

In case you have not read the book I would like to introduce to you one of the many quotations from Spurgeon's sermons which are included.

"Unless God the Holy Spirit, who 'worketh in us to will and to do', should operate upon the will and the conscience, regeneration is an absolute impossibility, and therefore

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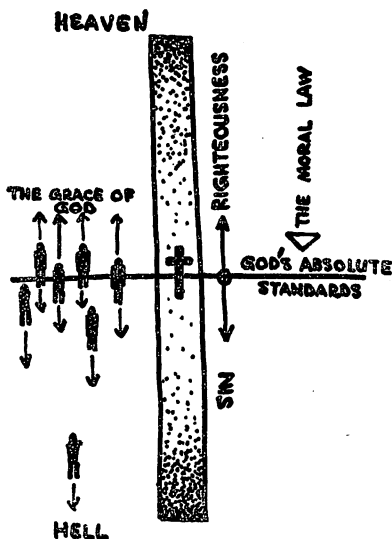
#### **Books referred to in this article and a note about Dr. Francis Schaeffer**

The Hudson Taylor biography by Dr. and Mrs. Howard Taylor used to be published by the China Inland Mission (now the Overseas Missionary Fellowship). The editor's volumes are dated 1958 by which time 39,510 copies had been printed. *Whitefield's Sermons*, *The Forgotten Spurgeon*, and *The Sovereignty of God* are Banner of Truth titles. Dr. Boettner's book on Predestination is published by the Pres. and Ref. Pub. Co. in the U.S.A. Dr. Schaeffer's *The God who is There* is published as a paperback at 6s. by Hodders. In this book the intellectual and cultural climate of the second half of the 20th century is described and the relationship of the New Theology to the latter explained and compared with Historic Christianity. The author shows how the arts reflect cultural and philosophic trends, and how our Reformation heritage is all but washed away. More than any other we know, Francis Schaeffer has warned of the terrifying implications of a wholly a-moral society, and of contemporary evangelical inability to even understand, let alone do anything about it. Now the secular world is beginning to wake up. A-morality is fast becoming a foremost political issue in America. Christopher Booker, a secular author, in his book *The Neophiliacs*, 380 pp., Fontana paperback, 8s., has documented the landslide in Britain from 1956 onwards. *The Viewer and Listener*, published at irregular intervals (address: Far Forest, Kidderminster, Worcs.) at sixpence or min. annual subs. 5s., provides a mine of information in regard to the "Permissive Society" as reflected in British mass-media. *The Times*—now a shilling a copy!—occasionally includes something helpful on this theme. For instance, Michael Holbrook, a secular author now living in Australia, wrote recently in an article, *Art or Corruption*, "The arts in England and America seem to me to be suffering now from a corruption, a moral inversion—from which they will take at least half a century to recover, if indeed, they ever do," and referring to the obscene show, "Oh! Calcutta!" declares, "I do not want to return to an England in which such a crime against human dignity and value can be committed, daily, and nothing done about it . . . the public at large has been demoralized by absurd arguments," October 14, 1970. In my booklet *The State of the Nation*, Walter, 2s., I try to explain what Dr. Schaeffer describes in much more detail.—EDITOR.

so is salvation. 'What!', says one, 'do you mean to say that God absolutely interposes in the salvation of every man to make him regenerate?' I do indeed; in the salvation of every person there is an actual putting forth of divine power, whereby the dead sinner is quickened. . . Now, in every Christian there is an absolute creation—'Created anew in Christ Jesus.' 'The new man, after God, is created in righteousness.' In the bringing of any man to believe in Christ, there is as true and proper a manifestation of creating power, as when God made the heavens and the earth. . ."

The fourth book which brought much light to me was a volume by Loraine Boettner with the rather awe-inspiring title *The Reformed Doctrine of Predestination*. This volume has the great advantage of being easy to read and, apart from some American flag-waving, is significantly free from eccentricity. This was my first encounter with the five points of Calvinism stated in a clear systematic fashion. We need to remember, however, that the five points are only one part of an overall theology which rightly conceives of God as absolutely Sovereign. Boettner's congenial style reminds us that we have urgent need for versatile writers able to express truth effectively for those who live in the age of Jet travel. About this time my wife was deeply affected by A. W. Pink's *Sovereignty of God*, so much so that she was compelled to question her standing in grace, but, happily, this experience ultimately strengthened her in her assurance.

The fifth and last book which has helped me most is one of more recent vintage, being written by Francis Schaeffer, namely, *The God Who is There*. This volume was a revelation to me since it enabled me to see the whole of history in perspective with new meaning. I am really thankful for the application which the author makes, showing the relationship of a wide area of cultural forms to Christianity, and also for explaining how we have come into an era of post-Christian culture, in which it is necessary to reassert the absolutes of the moral law, etc. This stupendous fact of believing and preaching "absolutes" in a world that thinks and acts relatively has convicted me deeply, and I have felt compelled to test Schaeffer's presuppositions. His thesis, as far as I am concerned, has been found to work in experience. Using his ideas I sometimes, in talking with others of my vocation, illustrate points with drawings, one of which is included here. If a reader cannot understand my drawing it may indicate that he, too, might be helped by reading what I feel to be the best of Schaeffer's books, namely, *The God Who is There*.



*In many mission fields there is a confusing profusion of true and false churches, denominations, teachings and missionary societies, with the result that few countries have strong, well-taught, thriving local churches. Missionary re-thinking needs to put the local church back into the place in which it is found in the New Testament. Bill Clark spent several years in a missionary society before coming to some of the conclusions advocated in this article; in more recent days he has been instrumental in the building up of a thriving Baptist church in the great city of Marseilles.*

## Reformation in Missionary Thinking

HISTORY SHOWS THAT, GENERALLY SPEAKING, BAPTISTS HAVE SHOWN considerable concern for the missionary outreach of the church. They have taken seriously our Lord's command to go into *all* the world and preach the gospel to *every* creature. The increased interest in missionary activity since the time of William Carey has been evidenced mainly in churches with Baptist principles, even though they may not take the name "Baptist". While we thank God for this fact, there is no room for complacency, for if many churches and groups took the time to reconsider scripture, they would undoubtedly be forced to the conclusion that much of this activity is contrary to the clear teaching of the Bible which evangelical Baptists consider to be the supreme authority in faith and practice. To begin with, let us remind ourselves of some of the basic principles which underline all missionary work.

### Basic Principles

*What is a missionary?* This question is of primary importance. It is worth noting that the term "missionary" is not found anywhere in the Bible. Apart from the apostolic age, there are only two offices in the God-ordained church, those of elder and deacon.<sup>1</sup> If we maintain (as

<sup>1</sup> In the apostolic age there were special gifts and offices in view of the incompleteness of the canon of scripture and the sealing of the Gospel message with miracles. However, in the main period of church life between the closing of the apostolic era and the return of our Lord Jesus Christ, there are only two offices in the church—elder and deacon. The personal and spiritual qualities of the men whom God raises to fill these positions are clearly set out in such passages as 1 Timothy 3 and Titus 1 (Elder, presbyter, bishop, shepherd and pastor are terms for the same office. Deacons have practical rather than teaching and ruling ability). Apart from elders and deacons, we have no guidance for the recognition or appointment of any other church officer. It follows, therefore, that anyone sent out to spread the Gospel overseas must be either an elder or a deacon.—*Editor*.

we should do) that the missionary is one who is "sent out" from the local church to take the message of the Gospel to the unevangelised world, then he must occupy one of these two offices. He is either an elder or a deacon.

*The goal of missionary endeavour* This is defined for us by our Lord himself in Matthew 28:19: it is to teach all nations to observe all the commandments of God (and the command to repent and believe must have high priority) and to baptise in the name of the Triune God. Thus the missionary task of the church must not be confused with social work. It is true that we must offer more than the spiritual Bread of Life to those who are dying from malnutrition, or eternal spiritual life to those whose bodies are in dire need of medical treatment, but these must take second place to the preaching of the Gospel.

Likewise, the church's missionary enterprise must not be confused with the exportation of our Anglo-Saxon culture and its implantation in various countries of the world. This has certainly been the error of past generations. The missionary must seek to rid himself of everything which is merely Western tradition, however good that tradition may be, so that he will be better equipped to preach the Gospel and apply its essential teaching to the people and culture to whom he has been sent. He must be careful not to take with him among his baggage some of the evangelical or ecclesiastical moulds of his home country, into which he can "pour" his new converts so that they turn out just like their British or American counterparts.

*The role of the sending church* This is first of all to discern whom the Lord has chosen to take the Gospel to the uttermost parts of the earth. It is also the church's task to equip and support, both financially and by prayer, the missionaries who are thus sent out. The elder who goes overseas will continue to be responsible to his fellow elders at home.

### **Historical Developments**

It can be observed, however, that through the years many of these basic principles have been either severely modified or even lost from view altogether, with the result that the criteria of missionary methods and activity today are often more pragmatic than biblical—"It works, therefore it must be right"; or, "Whatever would have happened had we not used such methods?"

*Interdenominational societies* A comparatively recent innovation in the church's missionary enterprise has been the founding of interdenominational missionary societies—organisations which, although they are not churches (nor do they even claim to be), are engaged in the church's missionary task. There is, of course, a very strong pragmatic argument in favour of their existence, and it should be clearly understood that the work which has been accomplished by some of them is admirable;



nevertheless, we cannot escape the pertinent question—"Are they scriptural?" We read in the Bible how God used an ass to convey his message to an unfaithful servant (Numbers 22) and the writer has heard of a church which was founded in a certain seaside community in Portugal as a result of a lady finding a Bible which had been washed up onto the sands. Nobody would dare to conclude from these events, however, that we should continue to look for talking donkeys or throw Bibles into the sea as part of our missionary enterprise today! We know that our Sovereign God can use whatever means may seem good in His eyes to promote His kingdom on earth—even Satan is subject to His will—but as far as the church is concerned, God has laid down in the holy scriptures the principles and methods which govern missionary work in every generation, age and culture. The question which we must ask ourselves is not whether certain missionary methods are effective, but whether they are scriptural.

There is little doubt that God, in His sovereign plan and purpose, has used interdenominational missions in the past, but if it cannot be proved that they are scriptural, then we should seek to find out why God has used them and, as much as it is within our power, to remedy the situation rather than perpetuate what has evidently been an "extraordinary" means, raised up by God, to propagate the Gospel. Should not the churches rather consider the existence of such societies as a severe reprimand and a reflexion of their failings and disobedience in the past, and then seek to correct their methods and practice so as to bring them into line with the teaching of the scriptures?

It is evident that the existence of interdenominational missionary societies, composed as they are of people drawn from many churches and denominations, has led to a dearth of full-orbed teaching, in particular the doctrine of the church, on the mission fields of the world. This is inevitable because of the fact that such societies are obliged to adopt as their basis of faith only those doctrines which unite all evangelical Christians. The doctrines of the Trinity, the fall of man, the virgin birth, salvation by faith alone, and so on, can be found in the basis of faith of almost all the interdenominational missionary societies. Other important doctrines of scripture considered to be divisive, such as God's sovereignty, baptism and church government, often receive no mention. The missionaries are free to have their own and often widely differing views on these subjects. The result is that on the mission field evangelism in its narrowest sense is the order of the day and the teaching of the whole counsel of God is often ignored. The Lord's commission to teach the nations "all things" that He has commanded is therefore not fulfilled.

Other problems arise with the choosing and sending out of missionary candidates. Whereas the teaching of scripture is clearly that the elder or deacon is set aside and sent out by the local assembly, with a mission-

ary society it is the executive council which has the final say in this matter. It is true that they very often consult the local church before making their decision, but the fact remains that there is no biblical warrant for a board of ministers and businessmen usurping, even partially, that which is necessarily the prerogative of the local church. The finger of accusation must, however, be pointed directly at the churches themselves. Were they to be obedient to the scriptures in the calling, equipping and sending out of elders and deacons as missionaries, the existence of interdenominational societies would no longer be necessary.

### **Necessary Reforms**

That certain reforms are necessary few would question, but it is to be doubted whether many people fully realise the depth and implication of such reforms.

*Missionary vision* Churches must realise that missionary work is part of their very *raison d'être*. The church which has no missionary vision is no New Testament church.

*Appointing a missionary* We must remind ourselves that the scriptures make no distinction between the work of the Gospel at home and missionary work abroad. The same structure and principles apply to both. If we believe that the New Testament teaches that the only officers of the church at home are elders and deacons, then the same principles must be applied to our missionary thinking.

In appointing and sending out missionaries, churches must be extremely careful to commission only those members who have proved themselves in the home church as called and equipped of God as either elders or deacons. Those who possess pastoral gifts, and who fulfil the necessary personal and family requirements as laid down in the scriptures (1 Timothy 3 and Titus 1) should be commissioned as elders. Similarly, those whose gifts lie in the practical field should be carefully chosen in accordance with the scriptural requirements before being sent out as deacons. These principles could and should be applied to every missionary situation existing today.

*The place of women* If we do not believe it to be scriptural for a woman to hold office as an elder (or pastor) in the home church, then we dare not send her abroad as such. On the other hand, if we allow women to be deaconesses in the church at home, we would be justified in sending such abroad. Churches which do not allow women to hold any office would find it difficult to justify their position should they desire to send out women missionaries. Of course, a lady doctor, nurse or teacher could go abroad in a professional capacity and be partially or wholly supported by the church as part of its social outreach, with the knowledge that she will have a Christian testimony abroad, just as she would in the homeland.

*Financial support* The question of missionary support requires serious consideration. The difficulties which the missionary will have to face in learning a new language and adapting himself to a new culture should not be increased by having to endure financial hardship. No greater sacrifice should be required from the missionary than is required from those who hold similar office in the home church.

Wherever possible the local church, of which the missionary is a member and by which he was commissioned, should undertake to support him financially. This could be done much more often than at present if only the members of home churches were more faithful in their giving and if all missionary gifts were channelled through the local church instead of going to missionary societies. In the case of a small church which could not possibly undertake to support fully a missionary member, the assistance of a like-minded sister assembly, which perhaps had no missionary member of its own, could be sought. The church which commissioned the missionary would still retain spiritual responsibility for its member abroad, who would, wherever possible, work on the field under the direction and guidance of an indigenous assembly or in direct pioneer work where no such assembly existed.

Such, then, are the basic scriptural principles which should govern all our missionary work. If they are not being put into practice today it is because of the spiritual state of our churches at home. Let us seek to put our own house in order. We need a return to the Bible not only for the doctrine of justification by faith but also for the doctrine of the church. The local church must be put back into the eminent place in which it is found in the New Testament. We shall then see a greater fulfilment of the Lord's words "upon this rock I will build my church and the gates of Hell shall not prevail against it".

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*A minister of a Reformed Baptist Church in America which supports its own missionaries on the field writes to a missionary in a tribal area about a matter which has been raised on the previous page. Since it casts light on a difficult subject we feel its inclusion at this point will be helpful. We truly thank God for our womenfolk and could not do without them. But as is pointed out we should not become their drones!*

### **Are There Women Missionaries?**

First, with regard to women as missionaries, we do indeed differ. We consider the office and ordination of a missionary to be equivalent to that of the Gospel ministry. There is a very important sphere of service for women, but not in the Gospel ministry. Many mission agencies

consider wives as much a missionary as their husband and direct them as well as their husbands in their labours. We believe that the missionary may be directed by his leaders but that he is to direct his wife. This is not to say a missionary wife has no ministry. My wife types letters, teaches children's classes, and by spending time with women of the church offers me much information concerning their frame of mind that I would never discover for myself. But the amount of work she does is up to me, not the church board. Her responsibility is first to be a wife and mother. Because she has a useful ministry she is not to be considered a co-pastor or to answer as I do to the church. Neither does a missionary's wife hold the same office, nor is her time considered the mission board's. There would be a deep concern that she be spiritual and a genuine help to her husband in the ministry. But this does not make her a co-missionary.

I think that it is tragic that single women are sent to fields like your own. Our churches feel very strongly about this matter. In a polygamous society, the natives may suspect you of keeping a concubine or they may want to take the woman to themselves; for no woman is left without a husband. I have heard missionaries light-heartedly joking about such circumstances when single women arrived on the field. I cannot imagine any defence for it. Then too our own cultural peculiarities argue against single women on primitive fields. Girls are not supposed to do heavy work, but intellectual studies are feminine. So the men do all the labour on homes and air strips, and repairs, and carrying supplies, while the women study the Word and the language. They are the queen bees and the men are drones. This in fact has kept a number of men from missions to primitive tribes.

Nor can I conceive of giving women the task of teaching literacy to men. It is specifically this time-consuming work that we send men to do. In this lengthy process the most exacting disciplines can occur, and evangelism. Certainly translation is not to be left to women! They almost never have theological training. If you pass literacy and translation on to the girls, you have granted them the most influential ministries of all. They are then the real apostles of the mission field. No, we prefer to send more men to the Gospel ministry. We are opposed to our Gospel Ministers becoming carpenters for the ladies. It is fitting for them to do manual labour for their families and fellow-ministers, but this is never to take the first place.

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A note from the General Secretary of the Strict Baptist Mission says: "Regarding the last question in the interview 'The Missionary and the local church' in the last issue of *Reformation Today*, it would be more accurate to describe the S.B.M. as a Mission than as a Society. It is entirely responsible to the churches for the whole of its work, being a church-based Mission."

*A resurgence of the Reformed Faith among Baptists is taking place in the English speaking world. This movement bears the marks of Divine origin in that it has not been organised by man. Individuals have been coming to the same conclusions as they study the scriptures. The need for reformation is recognised. Apostolic doctrine needs re-assertion today as in the sixteenth century but the mistakes of the Reformers ought to be avoided. Is reformation on a global scale possible? Absolutely. God's promises are not puny, but mighty. What has this to do with the Carey Conference? Here is a meeting place for those who believe in revival and reformation for our day. Brethren like Ron Edmonds, a pastor in California, are planning to cross the world in order to be able to confer with those of like mind. We do not meet for academic reasons merely, but because we share a vision for the future of our churches and because several have already enjoyed spiritual blessings which we pray will be multiplied.*

## The 1971 Carey Conference

NOTTINGHAM—JULY 5th-8th

AT THE FIRST CAREY CONFERENCE, HELD AT WADDERTON, NEAR BIRMINGHAM, during the first week of this year, substantial progress was made in regard to the application of Reformed doctrine to Baptists and the local church. The tape recordings (particularly those by David Kingdon) have been circulated in the United Kingdom, Australia, South Africa, America and Canada. At the Conference Walter Chantry of the U.S.A. gave a paper on children. Selwyn Morgan reporting the Conference in the first issue of *Reformation Today*, describing Walter Chantry's paper wrote as follows:—

“Paedobaptists, to be consistent with their view of baptism, must regard their children as believers until they show otherwise. This often leads to a false security and fosters a dead orthodoxy. As Reformed Baptists we do not presume that our children are regenerate. There is no greater blessing than the light of the Gospel and how we present the truth to our children is an area of practical theology in which much work awaits to be done.”

As attention was focused on (1) The local church, (2) Children, the truth of the above statement was fully realised. It is not enough to observe the confusion of the paedobaptists. We need a clearly formulated theology of our own. Are we able to answer such questions as to the eternal destiny of those who die in infancy, or as young children? What are our views and what is our practice in regard to bringing children to a knowledge of the truth at a tender age? Furthermore, what place do children have in the local church, especially during the teen-age period?

Then there is the matter of the nature of the local church and the place which should be given to baptism and to the Lord's Table. Have we not neglected these doctrines for too long? It is not a matter of adopting the traditions of men. We need to work out what we believe from the scriptures within the context of the present situation. In seeking evangelical unity we need to proceed upon solid foundations of church discipline. It is no good criticising the lack of discipline in other churches if we do not attend to these matters ourselves.

It is appropriate, therefore, that the theme of the next Conference should be "the local church" with special attention devoted to the place of children in the Body of Christ. There is sparsity of literature on the subject of children. Any who read this and who have information as to literary sources are asked to share these with us. The programme is taking shape as follows:

	9.30 a.m.	11.30 a.m.	5.15 p.m.	8.15 p.m.
<b>Monday,</b> July 5th			<b>Striving for the Ideal Local Church</b> Erroll Hulse	<b>Authority and Elders</b> David Fountain
<b>Tuesday,</b> July 6th	<b>Children in the Old Testament</b> David Kingdon	<b>The Mode of Baptism</b> Herbert Carson	<b>Children in the New Testament</b> David Kingdon	<b>Discussion</b>
<b>Wednesday</b> July 7th	<b>Children and Regeneration</b> David Kingdon	<b>The Spiritual Nurture of Children</b> Terence Aldridge	<b>Discussion</b>	<b>Missionary Out- Reach and the Local Church</b> Ian Tait

At the last Conference a session was included in the afternoon at 3.0 p.m., but this tended to overload the day. Moreover, many testified that one of the main advantages of the gathering was the opportunity provided for discussion, both public and private, and that more time should be allowed for the latter.

#### *Nottingham University and the Cost*

A look at the map will show that Nottingham is very suitably placed if Scotland, Ireland, Wales and all parts of England are to be considered. The University is an ideal centre for a Conference with contemporary buildings, situated in an attractive environment. The campus, easily accessible from the M.1 Motorway, offers every facility for Conferences.

Inflation is such that the value of property is reported to be rising at the rate of over 10 per cent. per annum. Prices are spiralling in all realms. Conference centres are not immune. The price per person for the Conference, including service charges, is £8 0s. 0d. By means of gifts received we are able to reduce this to £7 0s. 0d. of which £1 0s. 0d. should be paid in advance. At the last Conference those representing more

prosperous churches were able to contribute toward expenses of those coming long distances and the main burden was lifted. There was in addition a little over with which to promote the Conference at Nottingham.

### *Space, Day Visitors, and Who should Attend*

Some were disappointed at not being able to attend the Conference at Wadderton because of limited accommodation. This time there is no such limitation and day visitors (Birmingham, Sheffield, and Derby are nearby) are encouraged to attend the sessions, there being a charge of £1 per day, unless a visitor can plead a real state of impecunity!

This raises the question of whether the Conference should be confined to ministers only. More and more we have come to see the importance of eldership so that strictly speaking we should say that the Conference is for elders (overseeing and teaching elders, 1 Tim. 5: 17). What about deacons?—and students? It is perhaps best if the Conference is confined to church officers, whether elders or deacons, and if any others, including students, wish to attend they are requested to make application explaining their position.

Early bookings for the 1971 Conference will be appreciated. An effort is being made to publicise the details as soon as possible in order to give overseas friends enough time to make arrangements necessary for travel.

### *Organisers*

Herbert Carson (Chairman), Bernard Honeysett, Peter H. James, David Kingdon, and Erroll Hulse to whom bookings for the 1971 Conference should be sent.

### *Intercession*

We began by reference to God's promises. He has indicated that Jerusalem will be a praise in the earth and has provided watchmen who knowing this will never give Him rest until it be accomplished. This is the spirit in which we look forward to the occasion. *"I have set watchmen upon thy walls, O Jerusalem, which shall never hold their peace day nor night: ye that make mention of the Lord, keep not silence, and give him no rest, till he establish, and till he make Jerusalem a praise in the earth."* Isa. 62: 6, 7.

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*Problems to do with church membership and discipline face young Reformed Baptist churches. How can a church be faithful to truth and yet exclude true Christians who may have been subject to erroneous teachings? The Perth Evangelical Church is one such church having to face these matters. Extracts from the rules of that church incorporate many important principles representing long-overdue reforms needed by a great number of evangelical churches.*

# Reformation in Church Order

## **Preliminary editorial comments**

*The church rules of the recently formed Perth Evangelical Church deserve attention because they are contemporary in every sense. For instance both Reformed doctrine and believers' baptism are upheld yet provision is made for believers who do not fully understand all that is implied in the Reformed faith or who have been subject to paedobaptist teaching.*

*Provision is also made for the young or not-so-well instructed believers by having in addition to the church's full Reformed Confession (the 1689 Baptist Confession of Faith) a shorter declaration "to which all truly regenerate believers adhere, and shall be accepted by all candidates for membership prior to admission".*

*Church membership requires baptism by total immersion upon profession of faith, but provision is made for receiving to the Lord's Table those believers who have been subject to paedobaptist teaching, the pastors having "the right to admit any unbaptised believer to the Lord's Table providing that he is walking in the fear of the Lord and not being wilfully disobedient to instruction which he has received regarding scriptural baptism".*

*Great emphasis is given in the rules to establishing and maintaining a church which is pure in its membership. The rules on admission provide for a thorough examination of candidates and a most valuable point is an annual reaffirmation of faith by each member.*

*The requirements on the standard of holiness expected of members are worthy of note, modern evils being clearly stated.*

*There is true reformation in the matter of eldership: "In accordance with the New Testament, the church is to be ruled by pastors (otherwise known as elders, or bishops). The ideal is a plurality and equality of pastors." This challenges the unscriptural anomaly of having a single "pastor" and also the idea of ruling a church by means of a diaconate.*

*The rules on associations with other churches are also relevant in the highest sense.*

## **EXTRACTS FROM THE CHURCH RULES**

### *Admission to Membership*

*A local church is a company of believers who have exercised repentance toward God and faith in our Lord Jesus Christ and whose profession evidences its reality in lives of godliness. Church membership, therefore, is to be confined to those who having a regenerate nature give satisfactory evidence of forsaking all known sin, possessing saving faith in Christ, and yielding joyful obedience to the will of God as revealed in the Scriptures.*



Every candidate for membership shall be baptised by total immersion upon profession for faith, unless previously so baptised in a state of grace.

Every candidate prior to their reception shall give their public assent to the doctrines of the church and shall sign a minute in the church minute book making reference to their assent to the Church Covenants, Rules and Declaration.

No candidate shall be a member of any secret society.

All applications for membership shall be made to the pastors, and every candidate shall be interviewed privately by two of the pastors . . . if the application is unanimously approved by the pastors it shall be placed before the church meeting. A minimum period of one month shall be given for any member who has any reason for believing an applicant is unsuitable for membership to make it known to the pastors. If at the expiry of this period no objections have been received, the church meeting shall vote on the application and if approved by a simple majority of the members present, the pastors shall take steps to admit the applicant.

If, however, at the expiry of the one month period, the pastors have received any reason for withholding membership, and shall themselves be no longer unanimous in their approval, they shall all endeavour to interview the applicant and if still not unanimous they shall withhold membership and the application shall lapse.

If, however, the pastors remain unanimous the application shall again be referred to the church meeting and if a simple majority vote is not obtained the application shall lapse.

The applicant shall be informed of the reason for non-acceptance, and whether or not the pastors propose to review the matter within a certain period.

No member may be received automatically by transfer from another church.

Every candidate shall have attended the church regularly for not less than three months prior to application.

### *Duties of Membership*

Every member shall declare his full and unreserved agreement with the Covenants, Rules and Declaration, once each year by signing at the annual general meeting a minute referring to these to be included in the church minute book . . . Failure to sign such within three months of notice shall lead automatically to forfeiture of membership.

Every member is expected to attend (except when circumstances do not allow) all services on the Lord's Day, the Lord's Supper, the meetings

for prayer and Bible study, and church meetings. Any member who fails in this duty or in uniting with the church at the Lord's Table at least once out of every four occasions without rendering a satisfactory reason to the pastors shall automatically forfeit membership.

Any member who (a) wrongs a fellow believer, or (b) commits an open sin so as to dishonour the name of Christ before unbelievers, or scandalises a brother, or (c) falls into heresy, shall be examined by the pastors, and if unrepentant shall be brought before the church and according to the offence be either admonished, or else suspended from the Lord's Table, or removed from membership until such time as he evidences a thorough repentance. This action is not to be taken in a spirit of malice or bitterness, but out of love and concern that the spirit may be saved in the day of Jesus Christ. The end in view must always be the repentance and reconciliation of the offender and the purity and blessing of the church. Great care must be taken before any such person is received back into membership.

Every member is required to recognise and to submit to the spiritual authority of the pastors as those who must give account to God for the souls of the flock.

Every member is expected to work together in love and humility with the other members of the body, each doing some part of the work which Christ has given to the church. In particular it is the church's responsibility to take the gospel to every person in the district, and to seek to establish gospel churches wherever Christ is not preached.

Every member should seek to walk in the paths of holiness and to fight against the world, the flesh and the devil. The attention of every member is especially drawn to the following:

The necessity to pursue a secular calling with all diligence.

The dangers of alcoholic beverages.

The dangers of mass media, especially indiscriminate viewing of television.

The apostle's injunction that "women adorn themselves in modest apparel, with shamefacedness and sobriety".

The importance of the Christian home. Heads of families are expected to rule their families in love and discipline, and to instruct members of their family in regular times of family worship. Wives should obey their husbands, and children their parents.

The sanctity of the Lord's Day.

It is expected that members court and marry only believing partners, but that those converted subsequent to marriage should remain with, and pray for, their partner. The church does not recognise divorce on any grounds other than infidelity.

### *Pastors*

In accordance with the New Testament, the church is to be ruled by pastors (otherwise known as elders or bishops). The ideal is a plurality and equality of pastors.

It is the duty of the pastors to exercise diligent spiritual oversight in the church. Each pastor shall shepherd the flock and in addition one or more pastors shall teach and preach regularly in the church according to their gifts as recognised in terms of spiritual edification received by the church. However, such labouring in the Word and doctrine shall not exclude the occasional exercise of the same gift by other brethren who are not called to the oversight as pastors, but whose gifts of teaching and preaching have been officially recognised by the church.

No pastor shall be appointed who does not conform to the qualifications laid down for such in 1 Timothy 3 verses 1-7 and Titus 1 verses 5-11 and who is not already doing the work of a pastor. Each pastor must be inwardly called by the Holy Spirit to the work of shepherding, and his gifts in this work shall be recognised by the church and he shall be elected to office by the vote of the church and set apart to the work by the other pastors and the church. No other ordination is required or to be recognised. Each pastor shall give an assurance verbally and in writing that he is in wholehearted and unreserved agreement with the Confession of Faith.

All proposals for additions to the pastorate shall be made by the pastors. Pastors may support themselves by means of secular employment, but it shall be the duty of the church to provide for the support of pastors whom the church may call to part or full-time service.

Every endeavour shall be made to appoint pastors from amongst the male members, but under extraordinary circumstances other qualified brethren from outside the church may be called to join the church in the same manner as other members and at the end of a period of not less than three months membership, they shall become eligible for election as pastors in the manner detailed above.

Every pastor shall remain a pastor so long as he is a member, unless his pastorate is terminated, or he be removed, or resign as a pastor. The termination of a pastor's appointment shall be initiated by the pastors and sustained by the church.

### *Deacons*

Deacons shall be appointed by the church as the need for such shall arise. It is the duty of deacons to relieve the pastors of administrative and practical duties so that they may give themselves to prayer and the ministry of the Word. It is desirable that each deacon have a specific work to fulfil in the church.

No deacon shall be recognised who does not comply with the qualifications laid down in Acts 6 verse 3 and 1 Timothy 3 verses 8-13 and who is not already doing the work of a deacon.

The appointment of deacons and the termination of their service shall be initiated by the pastors and sustained by the vote of the church.

The pastors and deacons shall meet together regularly for the transaction of business and at least once every month. The pastors shall meet together in oversight as often as shall be deemed necessary. The deacons shall meet separately as necessary with the approval of the pastors. All meetings shall open and close with prayer.

### *Church Meetings*

All votes at church meetings relating to the election of officers or the amendment of the Church Covenants, Rules, Declaration, or Confession, shall be by secret ballot. Voting relating to other matters shall be by open ballot unless a secret ballot is requested by at least 50 per cent. of members present. Members must be at least 18 years of age in order to vote at church meetings.

Since the spiritual oversight of the church has been committed by Christ to the pastors, no matter which they shall consider affects doctrine or discipline can be passed without the agreement of at least half of the pastors when there are three or more pastors, or the total pastorate when this numbers less than three.

All matters of importance shall be submitted to the pastors at least one week prior to the church meeting.

### *Church Ordinances*

The church only recognises two ordinances—baptism and the Lord's Supper.

The Lord's Supper is to be celebrated weekly or as frequently as deemed advisable by the pastors.

All members should examine themselves prior to coming to the Table and all disputes between communicants shall be settled and forgotten in conformity with Scriptural principles prior to partaking of the elements that the unity of the body be not marred.

It is recognised that in the New Testament all communicants were baptised believers and such shall be the normal arrangement in the church, but nevertheless, due to the present ignorance and confusion, the pastors, as those responsible for spiritual oversight in the church, shall have the right to admit any unbaptised believer to the Lord's Table providing that he is walking in the fear of the Lord and not being wilfully dis-

obedient to instruction which he has received regarding Scriptural baptism.

### *Articles of Faith*

The Articles of Faith, which are to be received and propagated by the church consist of the entire contents of *Things Most Surely Believed Among Us* being the 1689 Baptist Confession of Faith herein referred to as the Confession.

However, it is to be recognised that those young in the faith or who are not well instructed may not be able to comprehend all that is contained in this Confession and therefore a statement of fundamental doctrines, herein referred to as the Declaration, to which all truly regenerate believers adhere shall be accepted by all candidates for membership prior to admission. It is expected of members that they endeavour to understand and accept the full Confession and that the pastors seek to expound the truth contained in it.

Every preacher shall be in agreement with the Declaration and shall not spread doctrines or practice contrary to that contained in, or implied by, the Confession. All visiting preachers shall be requested to give prior written agreement to these matters. The pulpit shall be supplied as directed by the pastors.

### *Church Associations*

The church shall be an independent church and shall be free of all denominational associations and shall in no way be associated with bodies holding to liberal theology, or ritualistic practices, nor with the Roman church or the Ecumenical movement.

However, the church shall be free to associate with any gospel church, so far as is compatible with the Scripture and its own independence, and shall actively seek to promote true spiritual unity, harmonious love, consistent discipline, united witness, and concerted action between gospel churches.

The church shall be separate from politics and the State. Pastors, as such, are not free to engage in political controversy, but individual members, as citizens, may enter into national and local politics if they possess the gifts.



*Recently the editor had occasion to visit three centres in Ireland—Dublin, Cork and Belfast. Photographs were taken and notes made which might be of interest in future issues. Here a description is given of evangelistic work in Dublin.*

## *Evangelism in Dublin*

SOUTHERN IRELAND HAS A POPULATION APPROACHING 3 MILLION AS AGAINST  $1\frac{1}{2}$  MILLION in Ulster. Visitors are soon struck by the strong Roman Catholic character of Éire (95 per cent.). Dublin, the capital, has a population of 550,000. Again, the overwhelming majority (91 per cent.) of the people in Dublin are Roman Catholic. There are several important seminaries in the city and it is said that from 700 to 800 priests leave Southern Ireland for other parts of the world every year, not to mention nuns and those from other organisations such as the Legion of Mary providing full-time workers. Latterly, however, there has been a decrease in the number of those coming forward for vocations.

Of the 9 per cent. non-Roman population of Dublin the major proportion belong to the Church of Ireland, which is rather like the "low" (non-sacramental) Church of England. There are some keen evangelicals within this community. Presbyterians and Methodists are weak from the evangelical point of view. The Brethren are quite strong, but there is evidence of decline. Four small Pentecostal groups exist; one of the Pentecostal pastors has definite Reformed convictions. What about Baptists? There are three churches. Two of these have Reformed ministers. Grosvenor Road has about 150 members and a pastor of Reformed conviction who studied at the London Bible College. A smaller church is led by a pastor and a full-time elder. All the members are nurtured in the doctrines of grace. This same church, although small, has a very strong evangelistic emphasis. The pastor, elder, plus one young man each put in about ten hours a week by way of direct evangelism. This includes street evangelism, house-to-house evangelism and regular open-air preaching.

Surprisingly, street evangelism is given first place. However, one has to realise that from a religious standpoint, a pre-Reformation culture pertains. It has been found that this form of evangelism is more fruitful than the door-to-door visitation which is commonly practised in England. For instance, Marius (photo 3) was converted through street evangelism carried on by Mr Harry James (an Evangelist with the Irish Baptist Home Mission) and is a member of the Grosvenor Road Church. After indulging in open-air preaching we enjoyed lunch at the restaurant of which Marius is the manager. It ought to be stressed, however, that there is little fruit in proportion to the large amount of work that is done. Moreover, very real qualities are required to persevere in a sphere of this kind.

The Legion of Mary sense the efficacy of the work that is done and picket the open-air meetings. They also try to hinder contacts in street evangelism. They will attempt to dissuade people from listening, and will go so far as to follow workers into restaurants when interest has been shown and when discussion about the Gospel is sought. These opponents will tell the people that the workers are Paisleyites, that they are paid by Ulstermen to put doubts in the minds of Catholics, and also that a generous reward is given for every convert made. Patience is needed to endure these smear tactics.

My experience of open air work in England has made me doubtful as to its worth. Besides the bellowing that goes on at Hyde Park we have been rather put off by ill-managed, ill-advised street preaching, which seems to fill people with disdain and repugnance rather than attract them. In my opinion and experience even the Salvation Army seem only to draw pigeons and occasionally a small gathering of sparrows, although one has to account for those who occasionally lean out of the windows.

With these doubts I joined my friends as they took up a position in a central street not far from the main Post Office. The spot we used is recognised as a valid position for open-air work.

To my amazement it only took a few minutes for the crowd to gather. Those who listened were quite ready to ask questions and seemed to hold their religious convictions intensely. Dialogue between the speaker and a part of the crowd served to draw even more people. The whole aspect rapidly became exciting and the opportunity for proclaiming the free gift of salvation as against the hopeless self-effort of Romanism was excellent.

What about street evangelism? Here again, the little time spent with these brethren indicated that, once contact is made, conversations are helpful, literature can be left and, in some cases, arrangements made to meet again.

As in other parts of the world the vacuum that is left by Romanism has been realised by Communists, who are by no means inactive. They are well organised and during President Nixon's visit recently they were aggressive in their use of leaflets and placards condemning America and American policy.

The small church of which Chris Robinson and David Ellis have the oversight meet in a small home in a terraced block. There is a warm feeling of fellowship and a sense of expectancy that blessing is imminent. Sunday services are held in a hired hall in the city and the church is called the Northumberland Road Baptist Church.

Needless to say we do well to pray that our brethren in Dublin will be greatly encouraged in their witness.

## Revival and Reformation?

Reformation is inseparably connected with revival. It is God who by His Spirit quickens the zeal of His people; it is He who uses the means of propagating the truth to awaken sinners to newness of life. Though there is no set formula which brings revival and reformation, we must steadfastly adhere to God's Word, proclaim it fearlessly, and pray that God in His grace would come in mighty power, bringing reformation to the professing Christian church, and gathering many into His kingdom. Abraham Kuyper concluded his Stone Lectures with some striking words in this connection:

*"The quickening of life comes not from men: it is the prerogative of God, and it is due to His sovereign will alone, whether or not the tide of religious life rise high in one century, and run to a low ebb in the next . . . But you remember the Aeolian harp which men were wont to place outside their casement, that the breeze might wake its music into life. Until the wind blew the harp remained silent, while, again, even though the wind arose, if the harp did not lie in readiness . . . not a single note of ethereal music delighted the ear . . . Still we feel it our God-given duty to keep our harp, its strings tuned aright, ready in the window of God's holy Zion, awaiting the breath of the Spirit."*

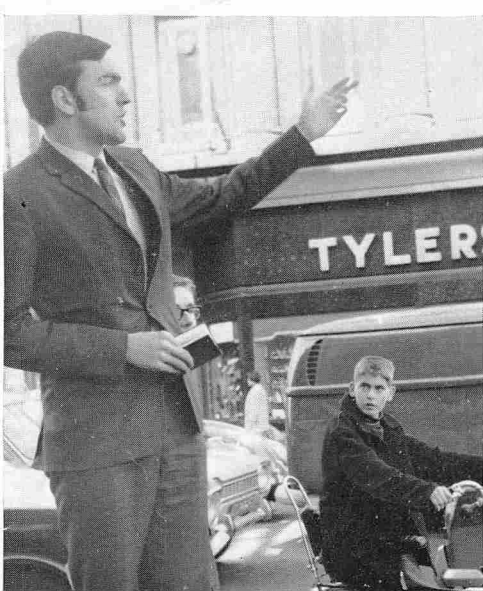
Quoted from a lecture given by Prof. A. M. Harman at a meeting of the Belfast Branch of the Evangelical Library.

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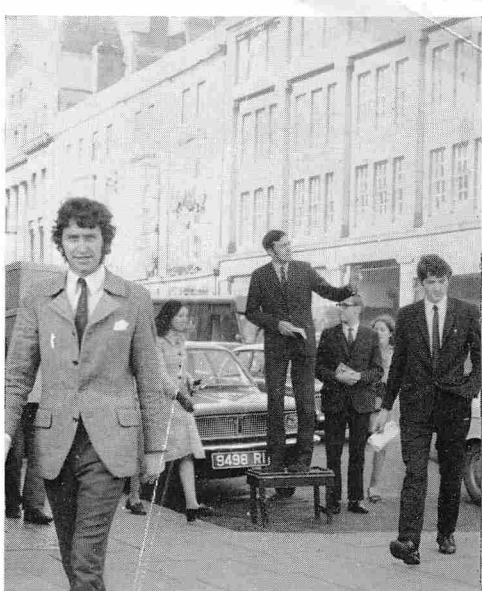
## Photographs

1. Chris Robinson in conversation with a young man, page 38.
2. The three evangelistic workers who between them, devote between thirty and forty hours a week to the task—from left to right—David Ellis, Ken Lillie and Chris Robinson. (Photos 2 to 8—front inside cover.)
3. Marius. See foregoing article.
4. Pastor Judd, minister of the Grosvenor Road Baptist Church.
5. The main Post Office.
6. Trinity College. Established through the patronage of Queen Elizabeth, during the sixteenth century. Trinity is the "Oxbridge" of Ireland. Famous people have studied at Trinity, including Oscar Wilde. More interesting as far as we are concerned, to be sure, is the fact that believers such as Herbert Carson and his wife graduated from Trinity.
7. Grosvenor Road Baptist Church.
8. Street scene, Dublin.
9. David Ellis begins preaching in the open air at a central spot in the heart of the city. (Photos 9 to 14—back inside cover.)
10. At first it seems like England! Nobody appears to care.
11. After a few minutes a few begin to listen.
12. The crowd increases. Questions are fired at the speaker, some listeners are quite aggressive. Truth, sincerity, knowledge, wisdom, alertness, grace, love and a good voice are qualities required by the preacher.
13. Useful contacts are made. Chris Robinson talks with a bystander,
14. Eventually the crowd is dispersed by the police because traffic is being impeded. The spot is recognised as a place for this kind of activity and the officers who are well disposed to the young preachers, seem genuinely sorry that they have to intervene.





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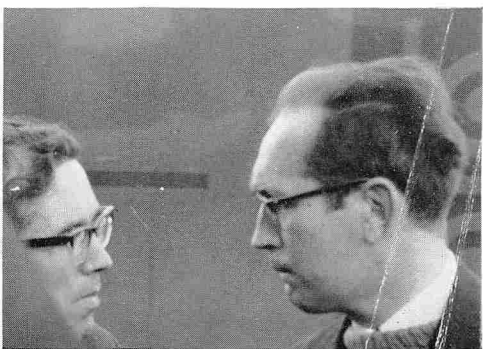
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