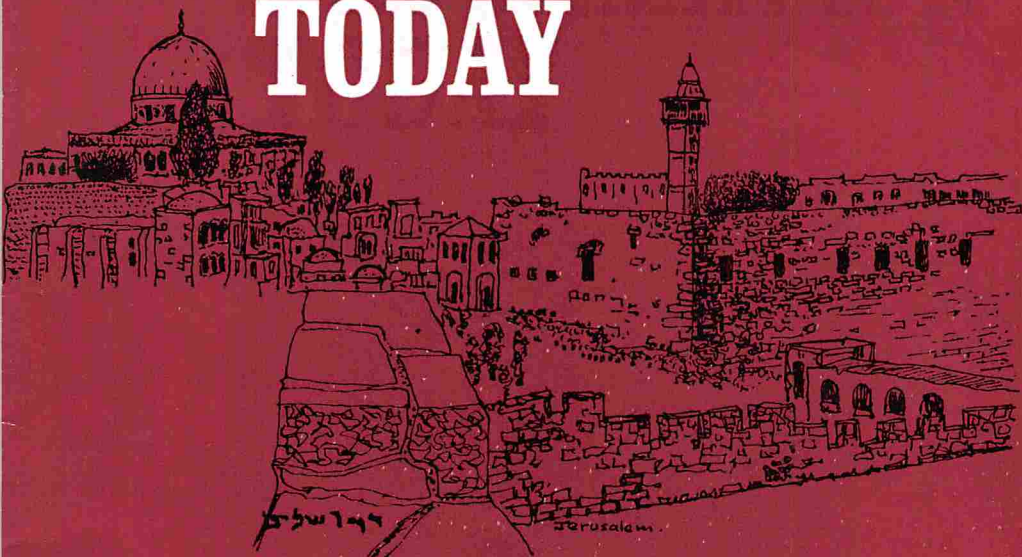


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Ron Edmonds, above, and Brian and Nessie Ellis from the Philippines, below, together with Ron and Thais Edmonds.



Editorial

The Carey Conference—Nottingham 1971

A FEW DAYS IN THE NOTTINGHAM HALLS OF RESIDENCE IS ENOUGH TO impress anyone that bad environment is not the reason for student unrest. The facilities provided by British tax-payers for the students of the land are princely, and the surroundings ideal. A pleasant walk between the music hall where the meetings were held and the hall of residence helped spiritual digestion. Concentration was required and the pace of instruction and debate was such that not a few left the Conference edified and refreshed but physically tired.

For those coming from arid spiritual wastelands or from jungles of error the Conference proved invigorating and uplifting. Writes one after the event: "to come from a land that is dry, hard, and so often unresponsive, into the glorious warmth and sunshine of the Conference, this is almost indescribable. Very humbly it has caused me to reflect upon my own life, to yield it afresh to the Lord, that He might cleanse me anew so that in His Spirit I may proceed with new vigour to proclaim these glorious truths."

Attendance has doubled from the first Conference and a strong desire, among other matters, for reformation in church life, in evangelism, pastoral work, the teaching of children, is following in the wake of rediscovering Reformation truths. Many of the churches represented are vigorous growing concerns. Several have recently been formed. Problems abound and practical issues were discussed at a brisk pace, none more so than the details arising out of David Fountain's stimulating paper on eldership—where does the authority lie? The exact nature of that authority provoked intense debate. All the discussion sessions were lively and chairman Carson sometimes seemed like a Roman centurion in his chariot, driving furiously, yet keeping the straining steeds under control so that, despite a free, fast, gallop along controversial highways, there was a very firm, unrelenting insistence to keep to the road, and to time!

Though the papers were theological, none were dry. If sleepers were to be spotted other reasons were the cause. David Kingdon's first paper was his best, in the view of most present. The precis work which follows and for which we are indebted to Bob Letham (a Nottingham student who is helping Peter Lewis in his work at Nottingham) will give some idea of the content of the papers. Herbert Carson's contribution was a surprise to those who thought that they knew all about the mode of baptism. It was sharp in thought and precise in conclusion. Personal experience and the pain of having to make a very expensive and sacrificial change probably accounted for much of the quality of this paper.

Considerable research lay behind the paper presented by Terence Aldridge. This ought to be particularly helpful when printed.

The most personally disturbing and convicting address was that by Ian Tait, of Welwyn. Twelve of the members of his church are in far flung areas backed by about a hundred at home, the union between home church and missionaries being close; the support in prayer and realistic provision of need, outstanding. Speaking then from first hand experience pastor Tait made a powerful plea for Reformed missionary endeavour from the local church which, he showed, should be without any compromise of free-grace truths. It proved a fitting climax in the very town where William Carey preached on the same theme with historic effect.

Three short impromptu sessions were illuminating. Ron Edmonds, straight from smog, earthquake and the Hippy Jesus Revolution of California described his church work, opportunities in the Hippy communes where he is wont to resort for preaching sessions, and the situation in America in general. Chris Robinson reminded us of the continuing opportunity in Southern Ireland and in Dublin in particular. Brian Ellis, who has subsequently with his wife found a spiritual home at Wattisham where Gordon Hawkins is the pastor, told of his work in the Philippines where he plans to return next year. For some time the Ellis's have recommended believers' baptism to their Philippino brothers, sisters and new converts, but now have themselves been led through the waters by pastor Hawkins.

Celtic voices were much in evidence. Pastor Jack Seaton from Inverness with his Irish accent, for instance. From Scotland came Reformed Baptists of American extraction, Bob Doom and David Straub, also John Davison. These are from foreign soil but genuine sons of Scotland were present. A brother from Holland helped to diversify representation which was fairly evenly spread over the United Kingdom.

Support for a fund to publish Carey Conference material has been helpful and gifts have come recently from Gloucester and Cornwall to mention only two sources. More support is needed if objectives are to be realized.

Mention should be made of the exciting cricket match which formed part of the recreation times organized by pastor David Fountain of Southampton. Some fast Welsh bowling by McCabe and McDonald of Cardiff, including a dose from Peter James, was hair-raising. Despite this bowling England beat the rest-of-the-world team by a narrow margin. David Steere of Woking hit two magnificent sixes and several other bold strokes which seemed to surprise him as much as anybody.

What about criticisms? The main criticism that could be levelled at the Conference was that it lacked in the area of application. On the other hand the ministers come to be fed themselves with strong meat, and are capable of making their own application. Pastor Tait's paper certainly did not lack application and the other speakers were pressed to fulfil their mandate in the time allotted. The Gospel is inexhaustible

and it would be an exercise of no small profit to repeat the Conference, this time devoting all the time to positive conclusions to the doctrine that has so far been expounded. These Conferences provide a tremendous scope for making progress in the work of reformation, give opportunity for spiritual fellowship of an edifying character, and lend encouragement to those who get weary in the exacting task of the Christian ministry.

Photographs

In their August issue the *Evangelical Times* have described the Carey Conference and included photographs of such quality that the editor of *Reformation Today* is ashamed to display his in this issue. That is one reason. The other is economic. It is not always possible to have 40 pages (or 44 as in number 6) and sometimes it is necessary to economize with the photos. We wish to be careful stewards with an eye to the future to meet promises and commitments. Generous support from subscribers enables us to print as much as we do. 16 pp booklets cost 10 new pence and even at that price publishers struggle to make ends meet.



The home of Ray Levick, our Australian agent.

Future articles

Ray Levick of Australia has arranged for research to be made on the life and ministry of Arthur W. Pink who is, we believe, the most prolific free grace writer of this century. Moody Press have recently published a fine bound edition of Pink on the depravity of man. Probably there is more valuable material to be produced and Alan McKerrel who is preparing the article for *Reformation Today* will no doubt describe how Pink came to be an acceptable writer. From America we have a first class article

by Wayne Mack on the history of the Philadelphia Association which played a major role in the history of Calvinistic Baptists in North America. Also ready is a work of the same excellent quality by Robert Oliver—a biographical study of William Gadsby.

The cost of including an article of length, say 12 to 16 pages is about £80.00 or 200 dollars. Providing we allow for postage there is no reason why the magazine should not be larger to accommodate such articles. For instance the paper given by Jim van Zyl at Port Elizabeth in April on Luther's conflict with Erasmus is very readable and deals with a vital subject. These facts are mentioned in case a reader might feel led to sponsor the publication of articles of this kind.

Jerusalem

This year saw the first ever eschatological Conference (open to all shades of prophetic opinion) which took place in Jerusalem, which city is featured on the cover of this issue. Comment has been made that this "first of its kind" gathering was disappointing because it lacked in substance. Jerusalem is afar whereas the local bookshop might be down the road, where, the reader seeking substance in the prophetic field, will find it in *The Puritan Hope*, by Iain Murray. This book is a mine of information, but chapter nine called "The Eclipse of the Hope" is particularly helpful. It traces the influence of Edward Irving, a Pentecostal protagonist, and J. N. Darby, who left forty volumes of writings and about 1,500 assemblies across the world. Other chapters furnish valuable material on the nature and history of Revival.

A world-wide awakening?

Quotations from letters are published and discussed in this issue under the above title. It would be hard to believe that a doctrinal awakening is without significance. Besides correspondence from all over the British Isles we are encouraged by letters from the Continent of Europe, Canada, various parts of the U.S.A., Japan, Australia and different parts of Africa and Israel. Many other places could be mentioned. If you have written to us, but have not received a reply, please write again as sometimes letters do stray. Please note the editor's change of address on the back of the magazine. The volume of work pastorally and abroad has made larger premises imperative. Ian Randall (who helped compile the report on the Carey Conference in this issue) is helping David Guthrie with some of the correspondence.

The cause would be promoted if you would write to us and suggest names and details of those who might profit from receiving *Reformation Today*.

The Westminster Conference for Theological and Historical Studies with particular reference to the Puritans—The Puritan Conference, for short, is to take place on the 14th and 15th December, 1971, at Westminster Chapel, London. For details please write to Pastor David Bugden, 75 High Street, Warboys, Hunts, PE17 2TA. For details of the annual B.E.C. Conference see page 22.

Society is drenched with propaganda that degrades women. Low standards, particularly in dress, are everywhere in evidence, including the churches. H. M. Carson helps counteract wrong thinking and poor practice by exposition on the role of women, and by comments on chastity and modesty.

Woman in Creation

MEN ARE NOTORIOUSLY HELPLESS WHEN LEFT ALONE TO COPE WITH THE children or the housekeeping. Indeed what adds pathos to the sorrow of being a widower is the helplessness which accompanies the loss of one on whom he leaned so heavily. It is this fact of human nature which is recognized and explained in the account of woman's creation in Genesis 2. Her first appearance on the scene is as a fitting companion for man. It is in view of the statement of God that it is not good that man should be alone that the conclusion follows "I will make him an help meet for him." It was not that Adam was absolutely alone for Creation teemed with life. But what was required was one who was fitted or suited to him, one who not only at the physical level but also in the realm of mind and spirit would provide the companionship without which he remained a pathetic and lonely figure.

Woman, as created, is thus of the same essential stuff as man. She is in Adam's own words "bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh". Hence the one flesh relationship which in the Bible is at the very centre of the marriage union is the return to an original unity. It is for this reason that men and women find their true fulfilment when two who are essentially one because of their very creation become actually one.

This centrality of the relationship to men is stressed by Christ (Matt. 19:5) and again by the apostle Paul (Eph. 5:31; 1 Cor. 7:4). There is no room in Scripture for the ultra feminist stress on the independence or autonomy of women—any more than there would be on that of men. Both were created for each other and any clear thinking about their distinct roles must always have this background.

There is of course a vast gulf between Adam as he came from the hand of God and Adam as a sinner. The story of the fall in Genesis 3 marks the decisive watershed between the glory of creation unsullied by sin and the order of things subsequently in which everything is affected by the all pervading corruption. And at no point is this sorry transition more clearly seen than in the relationship between the sexes. At the end of Genesis 2 Adam and Eve are together in the garden "naked . . . and not ashamed". They had no inhibitions for their whole relationship was

unimpaired. But with the entry of sin there comes also a sense of shame and of guilt and the spontaneity of Genesis 2 is lost.

Eve of course played a key part in the fall. As Paul points out (2 Cor. 11:3; 2 Tim. 2:14) it was Eve who was first approached and she who fell. It was as one who had already succumbed to the devil's blandishments that she misused her God given influence over Adam to lead him into sin as well. There is a prophetic element in the story in that it gives the pattern for the future. Woman with her high calling and powers of influence, when she turns aside from God herself, becomes a potent instrument for the devil to use in reaching man as well.

The consequences of the fall are quickly seen. Apart from the sense of shame there is the further impoverishment of the original relationship. Genesis 2 is in terms of mutual love but in the word of judgment spoken to Eve there is a new legal element, and she is to be in subjection to her husband. The command to "be fruitful and multiply and replenish the earth" now has the darker shadow thrown across it with the warning of the sorrow that will accompany conception.

All that the Bible has to say about woman's place and function must be understood against the background of Genesis 3. It is as one who is a fallen creature and who has the power to influence men in the wrong direction that she so often appears. When this sorry state of affairs is reversed by the grace of God, and a woman is seen as the inspiration and strength of husband or son we are catching a glimpse of the glory that was lost in Eden and which is only regained in the new creation.

This sombre truth that man is fallen is reflected in many ways. It was brought home by the ritual which accompanied conception and childbirth. In Leviticus 12 a woman is ceremonially unclean each month and also after giving birth to a child. This ritual defilement which required cleansing was teaching the same lesson as did the circumcision of the male, namely that the procreation and propagation of the race involves the perpetuation of sin in the world, in that every child is born of tainted stock. Hence the purification of the woman and the cutting away of the ritual uncleanness of the male child alike declared the constant need of the cleansing of regeneration. Indeed even the divinely ordained union of man and woman is now affected by their fallen state. So in Leviticus 15:18 the one flesh relationship, itself ordained by God, has also an element of uncleanness which needs to be purged. It is only when both men and women recognize this sinfulness which is endemic to human nature, and only when they find the inner cleansing that God alone can give that they begin to realise the high calling outlined in Genesis 1 and 2 and so miserably forfeited by disobedience.

Woman's status was adversely affected by the fall in that she who was created to be a help meet for man, became all too often the instrument of his lust to be exploited and cast aside just as he chose. The two most

obvious tokens of this are polygamy and harlotry. A polygamous marriage is of necessity a degrading affair. The divine ordinance has an exclusive character about it so that the woman reigns supreme in her husband's affections. But with polygamy she is reduced to the level of a mere competitor, and it is a competition which brings jealousy, bitterness, quarrelling and misery both to the wives and to their children.

Harlotry likewise is a degrading of what is pure and holy. A woman in marriage is an end in herself. She is loved for her own sake. But a harlot is simply a means to an end and that end is one which debases all who have a share in it. It is no wonder that the harlot is painted in such dark colours in Scripture. No wonder too that the reception of such by the Messiah was an evidence of the amazing character of the grace of God. But as in other realms of human life so in this, the common grace of God has not left men to reap the full consequences of their sin. The laws which restrict evil are themselves for man's good. Hence we find on the one side woman being debased and abused by men, but on the other she is protected. Apart from biblical religion the protection is very tenuous and indeed in some societies is almost non-existent. Even there, however, laws against adultery, though probably designed to guard men's rights, do, even if only incidentally, safeguard women. But in the more specific laws of the Bible a woman is protected both in her position as a wife and as a mother. Rape was an offence punishable with death (Deut. 22:25). Divorce had to be in a regular fashion—the bill of divorce gave a woman some measure of protection in that the dismissal had to be legally recognized (Deut. 24:1-4). Her character too must not be lightly impugned so that if a man queried his wife's pre-marital virginity he must substantiate his accusation or face the consequences (Deut. 22:13-19). The penalty imposed on one who so injured a woman that she lost an unborn child clearly comes into the same category. That this was not simply a Levitical regulation is reflected in Amos' denunciation of the barbarity of the Ammonites who "ripped up the women with child of Gilead" for although they were pagan, yet in prophetic thinking, as those who were subject to the general law of God they were in this act of savagery guilty of gross inhumanity.

Woman's chief glory is the exercise of her God given power as a wife and a mother. While obviously the unmarried woman does not have the same opportunity for the exercise of these gifts of sympathy and concern towards husband and children yet none the less the influence she wields, for good or ill, over men and over children belongs to the same category as that wielded within the family. The biographies of Scripture are a constant illustration of this power for good which can equally become a power for evil if misused. One has only to think of Samuel in the Old Testament and Timothy in the New to see the impact of a godly mother and in the latter case, of a godly grandmother as well. The parents of Moses clearly supported each other in a time of acute crisis while in the New Testament Priscilla is so evidently a partner of Aquila that they are

regularly mentioned together. For the darker side of the picture there are only too many examples in Scripture and in history—Jezebel, Herodias, Bernice. They and many like them used the power which was theirs because of their sex to drag others down and at the same time debased themselves.

Woman thus fulfils her role when she is essentially herself. The attempt to act the part of the man which to some in the twentieth century seems to be the supreme goal is in fact a sorry decline. The regulation of Deuteronomy (22:5) about the women not wearing the clothes of the man nor the man those of the woman is simply a reminder of this distinctiveness. It is when men and women see their own distinct roles in the order of creation that life attains the richness and fulness designed by the Creator, who purposed that the sexes should complement one another.

Allied to this element of distinctiveness is that of modesty. A woman has a tremendous power of attraction and a man can be like clay in her hands. Such power can be disastrous for both if not controlled and it is the woman who in this matter is the stronger of the two. One means by which she controls the situation and by which incidentally she enhances her own essential beauty (which in Scripture is no mere physical quality) is her modesty. She is not to dress or to behave in such a way as to incite men to lust or even worse. Even a pagan like Vashti in the Old Testament can show how a woman's modesty is to be maintained as she refuses to parade her charms before her husband's guests. The twentieth century with its dubious advertising, its prurient literature, its suggestive clothing, needs the witness of women who are not so dazzled by the values of a sex obsessed generation that they forget that their strength is not in accentuating their physical appeal, but in a purity and modesty whose consequences for good are far reaching.

No book in the Bible deals more adequately with the subject than Proverbs. It does so in a series of contrasts. On the one side are all the undesirable and indeed pernicious characteristics of a woman who has lost sight of her real destiny. Here is the loose living and the adulteress; here is the contentious and quarrelsome; here the gossip and scandalmonger. On the other side there is the superb portrait, in the last chapter, of the good wife who is "far more precious than jewels". Her husband trusts her and she is a stabilising factor both for him and for her family. The welfare of her home is of such prime concern that she does not spare herself and yet she is not so taken up with her home that she forgets the needs of those outside. Her husband may be in a prominent position in the community but the discerning onlooker knows how dependent he is on the strength and encouragement of his wife. She has learnt the lesson that so many, chasing the modern will o' the wisp of sexual satisfaction, are pathetically failing to learn—"Charm is deceitful, and beauty is vain, but a woman who fears the Lord is to be praised."

The Ideal Church

WHAT WOULD YOU REGARD AS THE IDEAL LOCAL CHURCH? WERE YOU TO move to another part of the country or across the seas to a land new to you and your family, what would you hope for by way of a local church? From the epistles of the New Testament and the letters to the churches recorded in the early chapters of Revelation we can get some idea of what the different churches were like. And from the New Testament we can establish what a local church ought to be like, this being the purpose of our study.

It is important to say that we are not dealing with any one particular church, or group of churches. With some there is the problem of *death*. Some causes live more by tradition than by Scripture. As a consequence they are very dead, like the bones Ezekiel saw. (Ezek. 37). Some of the most vigorous and gifted men have been brought to despair in their efforts to revive dead causes. On the other hand there is the problem of *life*. How do you lead a number of converts, some with crazy ideas, some in their spiritual experience, like a yoyo, right up one week, rock bottom the next; others despising discipline as though it were an ugly, monstrous robot which threatens to crush their freedom to do as they please. No church this side of Heaven's border is ideal. If anyone reading this thinks that if he heads for Cuckfield he might find the golden pot that lies at the end of the rainbow, he is warned now! We have our own catalogue of sins, inconsistencies, weaknesses, disappointments and inadequacies. And, if anyone thinks that reading this is going to solve the problems of his church he too will be disappointed. Most churches would need a volume of wisdom the size of John Flavel's six volume set to solve their perplexities! No, in these few pages the ideal will be outlined. We will then stand back and say, "Well there it is, if that is truly Scriptural what kind of inward and outward surgery is needed for our church to be like that? What reformation is required?"

That we should be concerned about the church at all is interesting. We are living in an age of organizations. These have proliferated and the area of religion is not unaffected. Individuals who have no church connection and who themselves have never been subject to others in regard to spiritual discipline have set up organizations of all kinds. An organization has, for them, been a substitute for a church. As in the time of the Judges, every man is apt to do that which is right in his own eyes. To go back to the time before the Judges, to Moses and the children of Israel in the wilderness, can we imagine the confusion if over a thousand agencies registered themselves as authoritative organizations for hastening a quick and independent entry into Canaan? No! Either they did it together, God's way, or they did not get to Canaan at all. *The local church is God's way.*

There are some believers who are unlikely to read to the end of this article because they have picked up the popular notion of what a church should be. For them the ideal church is where they can take their relations and friends with the least embarrassment. There is some truth in this concept and we ought not to dismiss it. The popular idea is that services should be bright and attractive, the singing should be inspiring, the message short, to the point, always containing a brief, simple outline of how to be saved. The minister ought to be charming, well dressed, and preferably good looking. The decor ought to enhance the impression received by visitors. The people must be friendly. Well, it is obvious that there is no advantage in ghastly singing, an unkempt minister, uncomfortable seats, frigid people, or dull preaching. But it is superficial to stop with that which is mainly outward. The church has to do with the sanctification of believers and preparation for the world to come. If we read the book of Numbers we soon see the wide range of experience to which the church in the wilderness was subject. Gradually, a disorderly, rebellious mob was transformed. During forty years a change took place, until Joshua was able to lead a united people into the promised land.

What then does constitute an ideal church? The above-described popular notion is rejected as superficial, which idea often leads to a situation in which worship services are little more than services of entertainment.

A survey of Scripture and of literature on this subject would seem to confirm that all the essential features of an ideal church can be comprehended by an exposition of the following marks:

1. *Biblical preaching.*
2. *Scriptural church government.*
3. *The sacraments of baptism and the Lord's Supper.*
4. *Spiritual life evidenced by:*

| | |
|------------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| (a) <i>spiritual worship</i> | (b) <i>holiness of life</i> |
| (c) <i>brotherly love</i> | (d) <i>evangelism and good works.</i> |

1. BIBLICAL PREACHING

Biblical preaching is the first feature to be sought in a local church. If the preaching is truly Scriptural, edifying and inspiring it will make up for much else that might be imperfect. The Scriptures form the spring from which all life is derived by the Holy Spirit of God. All directives and all corrections stem from the Word of God.

As one fly in the apothecary's ointment maketh it to stink so it only needs one serious defect or eccentricity to spoil preaching. Preaching ought to be doctrinal, expository, evangelical, experimental, practical, applicatory and relevant in substance.¹ The delivery of the sermon should be charac-

¹ A preacher ought to analyse the current intellectual climate. By reference to matters and events which touch and concern the daily lives of his hearers he will be relevant, and more so, if he is able to bring the light of Scripture to bear upon daily problems.

terized by sincerity, fervency and wisdom. The impression made upon young and old alike should be that a message from God has been heard. Hearers should come away not only having been taught some of the content and meaning of Scripture, but should be convicted of the imperative need to apply what they have heard to their everyday lives.

When I say that the preacher should be sincere I mean that it should be obvious that he has himself experienced the reality of the Christian Gospel and is fully aware that the eternal destiny of souls is involved as he addresses his congregation. By fervent I mean that he should be earnest, bold and affectionate in his preaching. A great deal is included in the word "wisdom". A wise preacher will not be too long, nor too short, nor too simple for the profound, nor too profound for the simple. He will avoid distasteful forms of speech, will be thoughtful in his use of illustrations, and, if possible, will seek by the help of the Holy Spirit to have a symmetry, beauty and proportion both in the content of his address and the style in which it is presented.

Let us never lose the sight of the primacy of preaching. Preaching is the means both by which souls are born again and by which they are built up in their most holy faith.

The systematic, expository method is important, if not vital, to a church. In this way all important subjects can be handled in a thorough way. Far more is learned and retained both by the preacher and by the congregation when a passage is fully opened up, the meaning explained, the doctrine drawn out, the teaching applied—than by the jumping about method. Great care has to be taken not to get bogged down when using the expository method. Happy preacher, he, who is skilful in the speed with which he travels down the straights and negotiates the corners of the expository track. To sustain the interest of the congregation is imperative. Each sermon should be complete in itself. Each should have a total impact of its own upon believer and unbeliever, young and old, educated and uneducated alike; yet each should interlock with the other expositions in the series.

Preaching of this order is the first mark that I would seek in a church. If the preacher's pantry is well stocked, if the diet is nourishing, balanced and well presented, then spiritual health is likely to result in every department of the Christian life. If the Scriptures are honestly, faithfully and fully expounded there will be light and direction for every subject and every situation.

How do we attain to preaching of the order just described? This leads us to consider the second mark:

2. SCRIPTURAL CHURCH GOVERNMENT

It is difficult to know which should be placed first, preaching or Church Government. When we think of preaching we think of declaring all that

is in the Scriptures—the whole counsel of God. But from where will such preachers come, and to whom are they responsible? Leadership is vital in every realm—civil government, the army, society and even a cricket team. Every aspect of a local church is affected by leadership which in the New Testament is synonymous with the eldership. (Heb. 13:7 and 17—“have the rule” could be translated “ones taking the lead”).

The ideal church is a church in which elders have been appointed according to the requirements of Titus 1:5-9 and 1 Tim. 3:1-7. If this has been the case it is to be expected that the elders will feed the flock, which embraces the whole of the first point just outlined—*i.e.* Biblical Preaching. They will also shepherd, or pastor with diligence, the word “shepherd” being an ideal word because this term includes so much. The tasks of shepherd are many and varied, but can all be summed up in the word “care”. As in the New Testament deacons ought to relieve the elders of such matters as book-keeping, accounts, maintenance etc., so that they may give themselves to prayer, doctrine, and the nurture of souls.

For the fulfilment of their duties the elders have authority delegated to them by the Head of the church. All they do in His name should be reflected in their bearing, conversation, decisions and actions. Their responsibilities can be summed up under three heads as follows:—

(a) The ministry of the Word¹

The church is described by Paul as “the pillar and ground of the truth”. (2 Tim. 3:15). The value of truth can hardly be over-estimated in a world overrun with error. In each locality the Church must exhibit the truth as the columns of the Parthenon bore aloft the emblems of ancient Greek glory. So a reigning Christ, the Lamb once slain, able to save to the uttermost all who come God by Him, must be raised to view by means of truth. As the columns of the Parthenon were raised upon stable foundations so preaching must stem from solid doctrinal presuppositions. We should be concerned not only with the pillars but also with the foundations. Our heritage of Reformed truth should not only be taught, but means should be taken for its preservation for future generations. “The things which thou hast heard of me,” said the apostle, “the same commit thou to faithful men, who shall be able to teach others also.” Jude found it necessary to exhort the believers of his day to contend earnestly for the faith because false teachers were corrupting the Gospel. There is a constant tendency to compromise truth, especially truth which is distasteful to fallen human nature. The decrees of God, the fall of man,

¹ James Bannerman expounds under three heads: 1. Potestas dogmatike; 2. Potestas diataktike (power belonging to the church by way of administering ordinances); 3. Potestas diakritike (power concerning discipline, admission and exclusion) *The Church of Christ*, Vol. 1, p. 225 ff.

original sin, the bondage of the will, effectual calling and particular redemption are some doctrines of Scripture which we may be tempted to by-pass.

In most churches members are at different stages of doctrinal understanding and growth, but the elders should be mature men of experience who are zealous for the whole counsel of God, and diligent too, to ensure that our confessional standards are preserved and handed on to the children of the next generation. Spurgeon when he reprinted the 1689 Baptist Confession of Faith, and when he republished Thomas Watson's *Body of Divinity*, set a good example in this respect. A church is less than ideal if the elders fail in their concern for truth in this way, or if they are not zealous to maintain the highest standards in the pulpit. Watchfulness and oversight should extend to all meetings that are organized. Some churches find meetings in homes very effective as a means of Evangelism. The same high standards should be sought here as elsewhere. Oversight should pertain to young people's meetings where there is often a temptation to lower standards to accommodate the desires of young people who tend to over-simplify the Gospel, desire gimmicks, and seek worldly means to attract outsiders to the meetings.

(b) The personal application of the Word

It has been said that most believers retain less than twenty per cent of what they hear in the preaching. Some of the Puritans were noted for their efforts to conserve teaching by way of catechism. After morning service the heads of families were encouraged to ask their children at the dinner table to repeat the main points of the sermon.

In an ideal church the teaching ministry ought to be followed up by the personal interest of the elders. They should not only pray for all the members but also try to maintain personal contact with them. Private devotion, family Bible reading, prayers and catechizing ought to be arranged for all the flock. Suitable books should be recommended as a further means of teaching and edification. The natural and spiritual gifts of members ought to be recognized. Such gifts are not privately owned, but are given by Christ for the blessing of the body. (1 Cor. 12. Rom. 12:3-8). Gifts ought, therefore, to be developed and put to use. Some who might think of themselves more highly than they should ought to be restrained. "Reprove, rebuke, exhort with all long-suffering and doctrine," wrote Paul to Timothy. It is in the field of personal application of the Word that there is widespread weakness today. Never was there a greater need for the restoration to the church of a plurality of ruling elders who will be diligent in the care of souls. The care of thirty people is about the maximum for any one elder if he is to be diligent. The elders should seek to review together all the members of the church at least once a month, if not more frequently.

(c) Discipline, admission and exclusion to membership

An ideal church is one where discipline is maintained. If discipline breaks down a church can soon be overrun by unspiritual people and become the synagogue of Satan.

The elders are to present applicants for baptism and church membership to the church only after they have made a careful examination of their standing in Christ and after they are satisfied that the candidates understand the responsibilities which belong to them as believers.

The under-shepherds are also responsible to Christ and the church to attempt the recovery of any who are straying, either morally or spiritually, or who neglect their responsibilities as members of Christ's body. If such attempts fail then discipline must be enforced, either by exclusion from the Lord's Table, or, in extreme cases, by excommunication.

Elders are to be watchful as to the timeliness of the appointment of additional elders or deacons according to 1 Tim. 3:1-13, the unanimity of the church being sought before such are set aside or ordained to office.

That services and the ordinances are carried out with order and reverence belongs also to the responsibility of the elders.

3. THE SACRAMENTS

What is a sacrament? It would be difficult to find a better definition than that found in the Larger Catechism which declares that, "a sacrament is an holy ordinance instituted by Christ in His Church, to signify, seal, and exhibit to those that are within the covenant of grace, the benefits of His mediation, to strengthen and increase their faith, and all other graces, to oblige them to obedience, to testify and cherish their love and communion one with another, and to distinguish them from those that are without." By this definition there can only be two sacraments, namely, Baptism and the Lord's Supper. We should not be afraid of the word "sacrament" even though it has been abused by the Roman Church which maintains that there are seven sacraments. The word ordinance which we commonly use is inadequate as it is a term used for more general use to describe that which has been ordained of God. Thus preaching is rightly termed an ordinance. The word "sacrament" is derived from the Latin *sacramentum*—an oath. Roman soldiers were bound by oath to Caesar. God by oath, and it is impossible for Him to lie, has bound Himself to save His elect people. (Heb. 6:17). A sacrament denotes an outward sensible sign of an inward, spiritual grace possessed by the recipient. An ordinance does not carry this connotation and is therefore not an altogether adequate expression for either Baptism or the Lord's Supper.

The Sacraments are important for the following reasons: 1. They are both instituted by Christ. 2. They are visible signs of the main truths of salvation. 3. They seal and confirm the blessings of the New Covenant. 4. They are a means of grace to those who rightly partake of them. It is important to note that both sacraments imply and presuppose repentance,

faith and grace in those who partake of them. In other words, they are for believers only.

Baptism signifies union with Christ in His death, burial and resurrection. It is union with Christ by faith that secures our justification, our sanctification and ultimately our glorification. Immersion alone is adequate to symbolize union with Christ as His burial and resurrection, and is also fitting as a symbol of "the washing away of the corruptness of the old man beneath the water"¹ and the resurrection to newness of life by emerging from the water.

The Lord's Supper should be a service simple in form in which both bread and wine are distributed. It is helpful if a time is allowed for members to pray as they may be moved by the Spirit. The Lord's Table should not be so infrequent as to deprive believers of the strength which the sacrament is meant to impart and it is my view that it should not necessarily be confined to the Lord's Day, but I would not, as do some brethren, make a major issue of these details.

4. SPIRITUAL LIFE

So far we have been considering the ideal church from the human, or subjective point of view. We may well ask what, in the eyes of God, forms an ideal church? The Lord's messages to the seven churches of Asia indicate that more than orthodoxy is required. It is possible for everything to be correct according to the letter, but dead in spirit. The believers at Ephesus had laboured patiently to add good works to their orthodox faith. Nevertheless, the church had left her first love and on this account, the candlestick was to be removed. For a church to be true, there must be genuine evidence of spiritual vitality. How do we define spiritual life?

Jonathan Edwards in *The Religious Affections* shows that more is to be looked for than moving testimonies, and appearances of love, zeal, fervour and assurance. For spirituality to be genuine there must be evangelical humility, the spirit and temper of Christ, tenderness of heart, and an all-round symmetry in the Christian life expressed not in word only, but also in practice. Bearing these factors in mind we will now examine four areas in which spiritual life should be in evidence.

(a) *Worship*

Those who say that they can be Christians without going to church show that they do not have the mind of Christ. In the 84th Psalm we see that the sanctuary of public worship is for the true believer. 1. The place of admiration for which he longs with the most intense longing (v. 1-4). 2. The source of his strength (v. 5-8). 3. The place of his supreme happiness, for there he meets with God Himself (v. 9-12). For His part the Lord declares that He loves the place of public worship more than all the

¹ *The Church of Christ*, James Bannerman, Vol. 2, p. 48.

private devotions of His people. (Ps. 87:2). This is not to disparage family worship but rather to show the pre-eminence of public worship.

The word used for worship in the New Testament could be translated "service". We gather to ascribe supreme worth to God and to give ourselves wholly to Him in love and obedience. The public worship of God should be reverent in that we have awe before a holy God. The angels cry, "holy, holy, holy, is the Lord of hosts, the whole earth is full of His glory." (Isa. 6:3, Rev. 4:8). We do not read that the angels crack jokes. Flippancy and lightness in God's house are out of place. Worship must be *humble* in that we realize that we are sinners, but *joyful* also, because we are redeemed from sin. This joy should be reflected in the melodious singing of psalms and hymns, suitably chosen in regard to their content. Worship ought to be *spiritual*. We should not have to rely on externalities such as special music items or ornate architecture. It should also be *prayerful* in that the worshippers should be led to entire dependence upon the sovereign grace of God for their every need.

The whole tenor of a worship service should be such that all ages are catered for, common sense allowing for the use of a creche for babies, and provision for young children to be instructed separately for part of the service if necessary.

A spirit of worship should be experienced at the prayer meetings where opportunity should be given for all believers to participate. Needless to say, an ideal church is one in which all concerns, activities and plans are laid before God in intercession. The times for prayer should be convenient so that all members have the opportunity of attending at least one prayer meeting a week.

(b) *Holiness of Life*

Holiness can be defined as separation from the world to the worship and service of God. It can also be understood as heartfelt conformity to the moral law or ten commandments. If we love God with all our hearts and minds we will fulfil the law, for love is the fulfilling of the law. (Rom. 13:10). The moral law will have a prominent place in the teaching and life of an ideal church. Holiness should be evident in the conversation of believers as Peter says, "so be ye holy in all manner of conversation". Sharing together of spiritual life and experience by way of fellowship is important. When those who profess the Gospel are reluctant to speak of anything else but worldly things it shows that they are in a poor spiritual condition.

(c) *Brotherly Love*

In the New Testament we see the wall of division broken down between believing Jews and believing Gentiles. We also see those of many different nations and languages brought together into one united body. In any local church we ought to expect an exemplification of this unity. Professional men should sit side by side with those of humble occupation. Rich and poor, Chinese and Negro, Ceylonese and Argentinians should find

spiritual fulfilment together in the same church in any locality. Happily this is the case in some of our churches, but in too many places assemblies tend to consist of one class only. We do not minimize differences of culture, background or temperament, but brotherly love should be of such power as to overcome these things. Pastors find that even when people are very much the same from the natural point of view, there can be terrible clashes of character or differences of opinion. Resentment, however, must be overcome. The emphasis on brotherly love throughout the New Testament is such that we must say that if this is not found in practice then a church is less than ideal.

(d) Evangelism and good works

Evangelism is not placed last because it is least in importance. In Israel there are two lakes, the one called Galilee and the other the Dead Sea. The Sea of Galilee is fresh. It takes in and gives out fresh water. The Dead Sea is deadly to life. It only takes in but does not give out. So any church which is solely taken up with the edification of its own members, without concern for outreach, is inadequate, and likely to be spiritually stagnant. The command to preach the Gospel to every creature, and to teach all nations, is binding upon the churches until the end of the age. Every believer, if he has a true experience of salvation, has deep desires for the conversion of his relatives, his neighbours and workmates. He longs, too, for the conversion of the whole world, Jews and Gentiles, to Christ.

The local church should take practical steps to ensure that the Gospel is being made known throughout the locality at all times. It is here that good works are important. It does not help if people get the impression that the Gospel consists of words only, or even of special evangelistic meetings arranged for their benefit. If the lives of believers do not ring true; if they are guilty of shoddy work; if they are not zealous for good works; are not compassionate toward the needy, then evangelistic activity is likely to be fruitless. Without love the words of evangelism will be like a sounding brass. The hiring of special evangelists or the organization of special evangelistic campaigns will little avail when the churches are in a chronic spiritual state.

In a society in which people insulate themselves from others great stress ought to be laid on hospitality. It is possible to be very lonely in a great city for the simple reason that each family is living in a watertight compartment. This is particularly noticeable with flat-dwellers, many of whom watch events on the other side of the world on television but who rarely speak to their next door neighbours. The example of Cornelius (Acts Ch. 10) in the use of his home is noteworthy. Hospitality is essential for the office of eldership.

The local church should not only be involved in the task of evangelizing in its own annual crusade (that is evangelism from the 1st January-31st December) but should be concerned, too, with the establishment of other churches in the country. God's agent for evangelizing the world is the local church. Furthermore, if a church is ideal, prayer will ascend for

churches in all nations, and practical support will be given for the establishment of true churches in other countries. The emphasis should be upon the establishment of churches rather than the establishment of missionary societies.

The mistake is sometimes made for a church to be enthusiastic about everything in general but support nothing well in particular. Resolution is needed to refuse to have too many interests. R. B. Kuiper in *God-Centred Evangelism* says, "The conveying of the evangel to the Antipodes is as deserving of the name *evangelism* as is the conveying of the evangel to one's next door neighbours." A church which is committed to evangelizing an area fifty miles away need not be less worthy than one involved in the establishment of a church in the jungles of New Guinea.

Application

It might be profitable, if each point outlined under the four main headings be considered in respect of the churches to which we belong. A warning is necessary. The manner in which we contend for reformation is just as important as the changes we would like to see. Brotherly love and patience are essential especially when we realize that reformation is the work of a life-time.

In conclusion we turn to two general points in which churches have degenerated from the Scriptural pattern, the first is practical, and the second, doctrinal.

1. A weak ministry

Neglect of the qualifications required by Scripture for elders has resulted in many entering the ministry who are not truly called or adequately equipped. This has resulted in poor preaching, noticed particularly in the omission of the doctrines of grace. These are vital as they concern our whole understanding of God and man. A. W. Pink in *The Sovereignty of God* describes ten ways in which God's sovereignty is important, one of which is that the truth about God's sovereignty is the solid foundation of all true religion. A weak ministry has not only led to a breakdown in discipline as to the doctrine taught, but also in the oversight and discipline of church membership or members.

Ways and means of recovering Biblical standards for the ministry is a large subject which would need separate treatment.

2. The composition of a church

The admission to church membership by baptism of the infant progeny of believers has been stoutly advocated by the Reformers and Puritans, and those who follow them in that conviction.¹ John Owen² maintained that

¹ c.f. R. B. Kuiper, *The Glorious Body of Christ*, p. 208 ff. A. A. Hodge, *The Confession of Faith*, p. 344 ff. William Cunningham, *Historical Theology*, Vol. 2 p. 148 ff. Charles Hodge's Commentary on *I Corinthians*, p. 117 ff., and innumerable other references from books which we like most, and commend as best, but in which this serious error recurs again and again.

² Vol. 16, p. 12.

baptism is the symbol of regeneration and also that "nothing can be more unreasonable than that men should be taken into the privileges attending obedience unto the laws and commands of Christ, without avowing, or professing that obedience". The profession required, according to Owen, consists of: "1. A competent knowledge of the doctrines and mystery of the Gospel. 2. A professed subjection of soul and conscience unto the authority of Christ in the church. 3. An instruction in and consent unto the doctrine of self-denial. 4. Conviction and confession of sin. 5. The constant performance of all known duties of religion. 6. A careful abstinence from all known sins."¹

Now all infants of believers until they prove the contrary have, according to Owen, "a right to all the privileges of the church".² This is a serious error which gives birth to more error as follows:—(i) The presumption that children are regenerate since they have a right to all the privileges of the church. (ii) Reluctance to withdraw church membership from such children who are obviously only nominal in their attachment to the church.

The granting of baptism which Owen rightly terms "the seal of regeneration" to the infants of believers, thus leads in due course to a situation in which many, perhaps the majority, in a church are not regenerate. Once such people gain the ascendancy a church becomes very far from ideal. This position not only pertains to those bodies which we call "sacral"—i.e. which embrace a whole society irrespective of the marks just outlined by Owen, but also to many churches which are Independent, but practise infant baptism. We maintain that it is fundamentally wrong automatically to include the children of believers in the formal membership of a church. We deny the charge made by Thomas Shepherd in his article *The Church Membership of Children*³, that children must lack "the enjoyment of the special watch and care of the whole church", if they be not formal members of it. The composition of a church is vital. The place of children relative to a church is also vital. Children do not have to be baptized to enjoy the watch and care of a church. If a church consists of a truly regenerate membership and is blessed with a godly eldership it is unlikely that the children will be neglected. In striving for ideal churches we acknowledge the need for clear thinking as to the spiritual state of our children, their need for example, teaching and preaching.

Attention has been drawn to these general points which concern the Carey Conference in particular. The place of children in the church and their nurture is a subject requiring detailed attention. By printed papers and tape-recordings much can be done to further reformation. In the meantime it is the duty of all believers to pray and strive for local churches which will be a light to the community and a glory to God.

¹ Ibid., p. 15.

² Ibid., p. 22.

³ *The Reformation of the Church*, edited by Iain Murray, p. 403.

Walter J. Chantry, pastor of Grace Baptist Church, Carlisle, Pennsylvania, U.S.A., answers questions that puzzle many. The material has been adapted from Contemporary Christianity which 16 pp quarterly is edited by Stuart Fowler of Australia.

Predestination and the Gospel

IN THE STUDY OF GOD'S WORD WE SHOULD ALWAYS REMEMBER ISAIAH 55:9: "For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts." Before the mind of God, human reason can appear ludicrous. Logic often tries to capture God, but it is meant to be God's captive.

Some Christians have begun to understand predestination. They see in the Bible that the eternal God has fixed all events before the world began; that He causes everything to come to pass, even events that are evil in our eyes; that the eternal destinies of all men were determined prior to the creation of the world.

Seeing that salvation is all of grace, and that it is God who makes the difference between those who are finally saved and those who are forever lost, many Christians draw the conclusion that God does not desire all men to be saved. Such reasoning is contrary to the express statements of Scripture.

Surely predestination makes God into a harsh being?

Notice Ezekiel 33:11: "Say unto them, As I live, saith the Lord God, I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked; but that the wicked turn from his way and live; turn ye, turn ye from your evil ways; for why will ye die, O house of Israel?"

God desires the salvation of all sinful men; all without exception. There is no other way to understand the text. We are here speaking of God's will as His desire, not as His decree. God has not foreordained that all men will be saved. All men will not be saved.

There is eternal punishment for those who despise God and continue in their rebellion against Him. The Lord Himself has purposed and promised to carry out that punishment, but the Lord does not delight in the destruction of His enemies.

You will notice, at the start of the text, how forceful God is in making this statement. He swears by Himself, for He can swear by none greater. "As I live, saith the Lord." I am swearing by myself that I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked. I am swearing by myself that I do have pleasure in the wicked turning from his ways to live.

The prophet often repeats this statement. If you turn to Ezekiel 18, you will find precisely the same assertions in verses 23 and 32.

How can God be sincere in His invitation to men if they are unable to come?

Now God is not playing with words. He is not baiting hopelessly lost men with sarcastic appeals. He really desires that all men be converted. So many universal pleas are made to sinners. Some cannot be understood in any but universal terms. "Look unto me and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth: for I am God and there is none else" (Isa. 45:22). "God now commands all men everywhere to repent" (Acts 13:30). God clearly invites you to mercy and forgiveness of sins in Jesus Christ. More than that, He commands you.

But there are some problems in our minds arising from this truth. Be assured that the problems are in your minds. God is not uncomfortable with His words. He does not contradict Himself.

You may wonder, How can God be sincere in offering salvation to men whom He has appointed to wrath before they were born? How can God sincerely urge men to repent when He knows that they are unable to do so? What is the sense of an impassioned plea to men so enslaved to sin that they cannot respond, especially when He has not purposed to give them the grace to respond? Other questions could be asked. We will find these difficult enough for now.

These are human problems. We ask in perplexity, "How can God desire that some men be saved when He has appointed those same men to final destruction?" Jesus Christ feels at home with these two concepts side by side.

Matthew 11:25 records our Saviour praying: "I thank thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes. Even so, Father: for so it seemed good in thy sight." He praised the Father for his sovereignty. He rejoiced that God finally determines who will be saved, by hiding things necessary for salvation from some and revealing them to others: and all this because it "seemed good" to Him.

Yet, immediately, in verse 28, Jesus cries: "Come unto me all ye that labour and are heavy laden and I will give you rest." In so saying, Christ expresses His sincere desire that His hearers acknowledge their burdens and come to Him for rest. Christ is comfortable with these two things side by side.

As John Calvin has said: "Although God's will is simple, yet there is great variety in it, as far as our senses are concerned. Besides, it is not surprising that our eyes should be blinded by intense light, so that we cannot certainly judge how God wishes all to be saved, and yet has devoted the reprobate to eternal destruction, and wishes them to perish."

Why should it all be so complicated?

There is complexity in the character and mind of God. There is simplicity, but, especially to the ignorant human mind, there is complexity to God's way. Hence, Jesus may weep for Jerusalem even while He solemnly states His intention to destroy her.

Some men would say: "Either Jesus was incapable of saving Jerusalem, or else He was insincere in saying that He wished to do so." Neither is true.

If you are insistent that God cannot sincerely invite sinners while He has justly assigned them to an eternity of suffering, then answer another question. How could God be really angry with His elect at the same time as He fully purposed to redeem them?

Ephesians 2:3 says that Christians were in the past "children of wrath even as others" who finally perish. How could God be angry against you, just as He is angry against the reprobate, when He loved you with an eternal, electing, love?

These are by no means simple questions. Do not try to reduce the mysteries of God's mind to the simplicities of your mind.

If I believe predestination does it not mean that I need not preach the Gospel?

It is your responsibility to take a sincere gospel invitation to all sinners, even if your mind is still confused as to how God's desiring will, expressed in the gospel, can be reconciled with God's decreeing will, accomplished in history.

You are commissioned to tell men of God's displeasure at wicked men dying in their sins. You are to tell them that it would please Him if sinners turn from sin and live. You are to beseech men, "Why will ye die?" You are to invite men to turn. You are to command all sinners to turn and live. You are to do so on God's authority.

B.E.C. Annual Conference, Westminster Chapel

Tuesday and Wednesday, 2nd and 3rd November, 1971

At 10.30 a.m. each morning Prof. A. Loughridge will minister the Word, this being followed by exposition on the subject of The Sufficiency of Scripture, by Pastor Paul Cook. Tuesday afternoon, beginning 2.45 p.m., will be devoted to the question of planting Churches in new towns, while Wednesday afternoon will concern B.E.C. affairs and be confined to members only. The evening rally on Tuesday, 6.30 p.m., will be addressed by Rev. Roland Lamb, subject, *The State of the Church*. The conference will conclude with the evening rally, again 6.30 p.m., with Dr. D. Martyn Lloyd-Jones speaking on *The State of the Nation*. Prayer sessions, led by Pastor A. E. Chillington, at 9.45 a.m. and 5.30 p.m. each day.

The Carey Conference Papers

THE IDEAL CHURCH—*Erroll Hulse* (see p. 9)

CHILDREN IN THE OLD TESTAMENT—*David Kingdon*

Entry into the covenant community in the Old Testament was by means of natural birth. There was no ceremony subsequent to circumcision. As there was no provision for voluntary inclusion, nor was there such for voluntary exclusion; to repudiate the covenant was a breach of criminal law, with execution the penalty. Israelite children were never regarded as other than covenant members; indeed, male children were such in the full sense. However, recognition was given to their subordinate status; they were not regarded as responsible adults—being unaware of moral distinctions for some years after birth—and were under instruction in the covenant redemptive action of God. The principal sphere in which covenant privileges and obligations were encountered was the family.

However, the Mosaic period of revelation is not final in defining the relationship of children to the covenant community. The Old Testament teaching concerning the remnant and the new covenant should lead to redefinitions or else the significance of the historical development of revelation will be lost and misinterpretations result.

The revelational development of the remnant is the history of a dwindling process and marks the future transference of religion from a national to an ecclesiastical basis. The basis for membership was different from that of the covenant community; it was not natural, but spiritual birth. Its members were those who trembled at the Word, who did not bow the knee to Baal. They had contracted in. The child could only be included on the same basis as the adult. It comes to its most pointed expression in the promise of the new covenant, in which the members would all know the Lord.

The changed basis of membership of the covenant people did not exclude children but required spiritual birth of them—a new relationship between children and the covenant people.

CHILDREN IN THE NEW TESTAMENT—*David Kingdon*

The Old Testament's challenge to the assumption that merely natural descent from Abraham is constitutive of the true Israel of God is renewed in the New Testament.

John the Baptist, Paul and our Lord all draw a distinction between the true spiritual Abrahamic seed and those who could claim physical descent only.

It does not allow the concept of natural birth into the covenant community to be applied to the church; hence, the infant seed of believers are not counted members of the visible church on the ground of birth connection with believing parents.

Jesus' teaching does not warrant the popular belief that children as such inherit the kingdom of God. Neither in Matthew 18 vv. 1-6 nor 19 vv. 13-15 does He teach that children are saved on the ground of supposed innocence or non-accountability; rather, through having come to Christ in faith. At the same time, He taught that He and the Father have a tender regard for children, and that they are not debarred from salvation because of their age. He gave no warrant for a distinction between the children of believers and those of unbelievers—the concept of covenant children is absent—nor for the baptism of believers' children.

Paul's instructions to children do not necessitate their being church members through birth connection; whilst to adduce Acts 2, v. 39 and 1 Corinthians 7, v. 14 in support of infant baptism is exegetically and linguistically invalid. In short, the New Testament teaches that natural birth has been superseded by spiritual rebirth as the basis of membership of the covenant community.

CHILDREN AND REGENERATION—*David Kingdon*

An underlying issue is whether regeneration and its visible manifestations can be separated by a considerable period of time or whether they are simultaneous. The New Testament makes clear that all men are born in union with Adam and only by rebirth can they be in union with Christ. Since this Adamic status is contracted at birth, children are of necessity included. They require regeneration no less than adults and that on the same ground. For instance, they are not saved because of supposed innocence; for all are—by nature—depraved, and this cannot be maintained without denying the grace of God. Moreover, Scripture nowhere defines an age of discretion, which hypothetical age would effectively tie God to a calendar date. Nor are small children necessarily psychologically incapable of understanding the truth; Scripture is silent concerning an age of psychological capacity and there are many instances of genuine child conversions. Again, God is denied the ability to save children until they are psychologically ready. We must insist that there is no barrier to the operation of God's Spirit.

The popular supposition that all children dying in infancy are saved has no express Biblical warrant. A reverent and hopeful agnosticism must be maintained, for God has not chosen to reveal their eternal destiny. If, indeed they are saved it will not be because they are children or on the grounds of parentage but through the sovereign election of God.

Believers' children, in conclusion, whilst having a privileged position, are not entitled to church membership until they show evidence of regeneration. Paedo-baptists, who view their children as in the covenant until they voluntarily opt out, should face Jesus' challenge to a covenant child who had not opted out—"You must be born again".

AUTHORITY AND ELDERS—*David Fountain*

All authority comes from God. The central issue in this instance is—where is the seat of Christ's authority in His church? Is it vested in the elders? Or in the whole church—and delegated to the elders on their behalf?

The local church, being the body of Christ, is complete in itself and can be subject to no outside authority. Once elders were appointed in New Testament times, the apostolic ministry was no longer required.

The office of elder is permanent and its occupant must possess the moral and spiritual qualities Paul delineates in 1 Timothy 3 and Titus. Moreover, the New Testament teaches that they are required to rule, to lead or guide the church, to be over the brethren, to act as overseers; while obedience and submission to them is commanded of the flock, similar to that obedience required to authority in the State and the family, for the elders must give account to God of their responsibilities.

Whilst there is a distinction between elders who preach and those who rule, Owen states that all elders rule and none rule in the church but them. It is a spiritual rule, watching over the church members. Excommunication is the elders' job in terms of power; the church's in terms of execution.

Those who reject this assert that church government is democratic—often misinterpreting Matthew 18, which deals with private trespass. Hence, they often appoint those unqualified and the office consequently declines. But since it has been instituted by Christ and since He has Himself committed authority to its occupants, those set apart to look after the church must not be put in a position where their rule can be overthrown. Since the favour or displeasure of God towards His people is invariably indicated by the supply or lack of true "shepherds" (or leaders), the crying need is for the restoration of the primacy of the eldership.

THE SPIRITUAL NURTURE OF CHILDREN—*Terence Aldridge*

Increasingly, the local church is being forced into a relationship with its children by proxy, through the tyranny of the self-styled expert. Moreover, a mindless rigidity has obstructed the forces of reform. Only two per cent of Sunday School children eventually become church members. Low aims and trivial procedures have predominated. There has been confusion in both objectives and practice. It is inadequate to aim merely at bringing children to a saving knowledge of Christ—there must be training for heaven and the kind of development exemplified in Jesus' childhood. This can only be achieved through a total Christian education in a realised partnership between church and family.

Although the origins of children's work are not readily determinable, the Talmud indicates the great value placed by the Rabbis upon Bible schools, where the law was, almost exclusively, inculcated. Instruction was chiefly catechetical, the underlying assumption being that knowledge was not fully possessed until verbalised. A great deal of Jesus' ministry was in this interlocutory style and it proved to be the mainspring of church expansion in the ante-Nicene age; the Alexandrian school being at the forefront and aiming mainly at children, teaching according to the pupil's capacity. As the church-state axis became entrenched and spiritual life declined, so teaching exercises diminished. It was (Luther's) catechisms which helped conserve the gains of the Reformation. Similarly, the Catholic catechetical schools helped halt and repulse the Protestant tide. In England, the rise and fall of spiritual life was correlative to proper catechetical instruction of children.

From 1800, profound changes have occurred. Changes in matter—the emphasis on propositional truth having been replaced by that on textual knowledge, with the consequent imposition of infantile standards; changes in means—many spiritually inexperienced teachers; changes in methodology—false premises with regard to spiritual truth and its reception having replaced interlocution by visual aids.

THE MODE OF BAPTISM—*Herbert Carson*

Linguistically, the obvious meaning of the Greek word for baptism is "to dip". The unusual sense—"to pour"—is used very rarely. Two questions follow:—

Does the theology of baptism confirm the linguistic usage?

Is the mode of primary, or of minor, significance?

In Romans 6 language is used of the sign that properly belongs to the spiritual reality, so vividly does baptism portray union with Christ. Paul uses baptism merely as an illustration and must not be put in a homiletical straight jacket by stretching the analogy, but it is nevertheless clear that it symbolises union with Christ in the reality of death, burial and resurrection—of which immersion is the vivid representation.

In Colossians 2, baptism is illustrative of spiritual circumcision. The reality is the new birth—the evil nature put off and cast away. The violence and inconvenience of immersion indicate a change, a death, a casting away.

Does New Testament practice confirm these deductions? Jesus was baptised by John INTO the river and went up OUT of the water, the Greek word denoting separation from an element where one was previously. The same construction is explicit in Acts 8—nor does Philip's presence negate it. If pouring was sufficient, how would they have needed to GO DOWN to the water?—a traveller's water bottle would have been satisfactory.

Nor does the gift of the Holy Spirit—represented as baptism—counteract these conclusions merely because it was "poured out". Various images are used—what mode is indicated by "being filled"?—since no one term can adequately describe it. It is the initiatory aspect of the baptism that is in view, not the precise manner of administration.

Further consideration is needed on the issue of the validity of baptism by pouring. The crucial point is whether the ordinance's administration fully declares the gospel.

MISSIONARY OUTREACH AND THE LOCAL CHURCH—Ian Tait

Whilst no unbiblical dichotomy must be drawn between outreach at home and abroad, this paper is concerned primarily with the latter, although its premises can apply to evangelism in general.

1. *A local church must know that missionary outreach is the work of God.* It springs from the counsels of the triune God and is not, fundamentally, a human undertaking. It is Christ who is the foundation and the builder of the Church.
2. *A church must know that missionary outreach is the responsibility of every church.* There can be no divorce between Divine sovereignty and human responsibility, for God has foreordained the means as well as the ends. The Synod of Dort insisted that "the gospel should be spread to all nations promiscuously". Indeed, the church which has no missionary vision is no New Testament church.
3. *A church must appreciate the biblical basis of the missionary call.* While we are all called to witness, some—in a special sense—are called to preach the gospel to the unsaved. It is a specific call to specific people, originating from God and being ratified and validated by the church, which separates and lays hands on such and sends them away.
4. *A church must fulfil its missionary responsibilities.* It must meet the needs of the missionary sacrificially and unitedly, not abdicating in favour of a society. The church itself must be spiritually fit, both to initiate and consolidate such outreach. Its missionaries must meet the requirements for elders laid down by Paul and associates must not hamper them from proclaiming the whole counsel of God.
5. *A church must recognise the immediate rule of the Holy Spirit on the mission field.*
6. *A church must rejoice in its high privilege.* No work can rank above this, of being labourers together with God. No priorities of earth can override it.

CAREY CONFERENCE TAPES AND CASSETTES

5½ inch tapes or C120 cassettes are available, each with two recordings, at the following pairings:

1. The Ideal Local Church, Hulse (53 minutes) and Missionary Outreach and the Local Church, Ian Tait (57 minutes).
2. Children in the Old Testament (38 minutes) and Children in the New Testament (59 minutes) both by David Kingdon.
3. Children and Regeneration, Kingdon (39 minutes) and The Spiritual Nurture of Children, Terence Aldridge (59 minutes).
4. Authority and Elders, David Fountain (34 minutes), The Mode of Baptism, H. M. Carson (50 minutes).

Including postage, the cost of each tape is £1.20 and of each C120 cassette £1.25. For full details of these, the 1970 Carey Conference Tapes, and a complete list of a variety of other tapes for hire (U.K. only) or purchase, please write to Peter Dixon, 73 Pasture Hill Road, Haywards Heath, Sussex.

Censorship in Britain is a live issue. It is frightening to observe the "pro-porn", liberal, or pro-permissive, attitude taken by almost every national newspaper. A commission led by Lord Longford has been set up to examine the issue of pornography and its effects. In the meantime a school children's magazine, Oz, and a publication, the Little Red Book, both vile by Christian standards, have been condemned in British courts. A hue and cry was raised during August when the three young men responsible for Oz received prison sentences, one for nine months. The debate in the press reached a high pitch with much derision of those who dare to challenge the assumptions of contemporary permissiveness. Permissives are militant and vociferous. Christians, mainly evangelicals, form the main core of opposition to obscenity. In this connection an understanding of the meaning and place of Censorship in society is important. The article by Herbert Carson on this subject first appeared in the August issue of the Irish Baptist.

Censorship

"REALLY, SOMETHING OUGHT TO BE DONE ABOUT IT!" HOW OFTEN THAT is our instinctive reaction to the increasing volume of corruption which assails us on every hand. But the further question immediately arises, "What should be done?" It is this question which ushers us into the problems of censorship, for the moment we look to the authorities to take action we find how many difficulties there are. It is one thing to be agreed that the present moral drift should be challenged. The issue is—how should it be done?

We begin with a basic New Testament distinction between Church and State. In 1 Cor. 5:12 Paul makes it quite clear that there are standards upon which we must insist within the church, which are not enforceable upon the world. Our problem however is that the church itself today easily succumbs to the pattern of the world. Censorship, if we might vary Peter, must therefore begin at the house of God.

For the Christian the censor is the Holy Spirit applying the standards of the Word of God. That is why the tests are so stringent, affecting thoughts (Col. 3:5), words (Col. 3:8, Eph. 5:3) and deeds (Eph. 5:11-12, Rom. 13:13). Indeed they go as far as demanding modesty in clothes (1 Tim. 2:9).

Does this mean then that we abandon the world and simply try to rescue, by means of the gospel, those whom we pluck as brands from the burning? But then the Lord reminds us that we are the salt of the earth, there to arrest corruption. Furthermore we have responsibilities as citizens

(Rom. 13:1, 1 Peter 2:17) and in a democracy this involves the readiness to speak out on moral issues. It is certainly true that only the gospel can meet a man's real need, but this does not mean we have no concern for those who are the object of our Creator's care. A Christian doctor knows that a man must be born again, but he is still concerned to heal the unregenerate man's body! The Christian agricultural adviser knows that man shall not live by bread alone, but he still advises unregenerate farmers on the best yielding grain crops to grow! In other words while we are members of God's kingdom by the new birth, we are also responsible members of the created order.

Some Guiding Principles

What then are some of the principles which should guide us? First of all we challenge the humanist contention that complete freedom enables a man to find his true humanity. We maintain that sin de-humanises a man. Far from leading him to fulfilment it degrades him to the level of the beast and ultimately reduces him to an even more debased condition.

We point out also that thoughts affect conduct. What a man thinks he in fact becomes. But thoughts are influenced by words and by pictures. Hence our concern with whatever tends to corrupt the mind.

A third principle is that certain sins not only have an effect upon the individual but also affect society. Violence, as we have proved in the sad history of the last couple of years, begets further violence. Again sexual immorality not only affects the sinner's own body, but damages family life and ultimately destroys the whole fabric of society.

Because we are children of the God who "makes His sun to rise on the evil and on the good and sends rain upon the just and upon the unjust" we are concerned with men's welfare. We stand therefore against the sins which corrupt the family or the social structure. It is for this reason that we reject the forces of obscenity.

Defining Obscenity

The problem however is just this—how do you define obscenity? The basic definition of the obscene is that it is whatever tends to deprave or corrupt. We accept this, but it is the outworking which is the problem. Thus one person may have a sense of delicacy which is really more a relic of Victorian prudery which was unwilling to talk openly about sex. But the Bible is not prudish. Its description of man's sin, its very explicit delight in the female body in the Song of Solomon, its vivid portrayal of Judah's unfaithfulness in Ezekiel 23—all these would offend the prude. But clearly they are not obscene. We must therefore beware lest we draw the limits more tightly than the Bible draws them.

On the other hand we must not be forced by high-brow arguments to allow literary merit to determine the issue. Is pornography to be rejected if it is badly written, but permitted if its literary quality is high? Surely it is the

moral issue which is paramount. If a book is morally corrupting then its literary form cannot atone for its evil influence.

Someone may object that you cannot compel men to be pure. We agree! What we are saying is that you can restrain them from spreading their filth. A man may reduce his own house to a pig-sty but public health regulations refuse to allow him to foul the footpath. A man may pollute his own lungs with cigarette smoke but he can be compelled to keep the pollution out of a non-smoking compartment. So we contend that we cannot compel men to be pure, but we can challenge their right to force their corruptions on us all. To allow the brazen display of photographs of nude women on the average bookstall is just one example of a flagrant intrusion into the life of the ordinary passer-by.

Appointing the Censor

Who then is to act as censor? The man who is quite ready to take the job is probably the wrong one for if he does not see the dangers to his own soul his judgment is hardly likely to be acute. On the other hand a godly man will be reluctant to embark on a task in which like Lot he is liable to be defiled himself. The answer might well be a panel of men and women who only serve for a short period. Jury service is a familiar feature of legal administration, and a jury could well be summoned to deal with censorship issues. The fact that their service would be occasional would be a help in preventing their own corruption.

Christian Action

It is a sobering thought that many Marxists have been more forthright than Christians. The Communists in China quickly cleared the Shanghai waterfront, one of the most notorious centres of prostitution in the world. The young Maoists in Dublin were loud in their denunciation of immorality in College and of student pornography. Are Christians then to be silent in face of blatant social evils?

It is not a case of the Church setting up as a moral censor. This would be contrary to the principle of 1 Cor. 5:11. It is rather a question of so teaching our people that when they go out into the community as citizens, they act as salt arresting the moral corruption which threatens to destroy our society. In this conflict they may well be prepared to join forces with other citizens who are not Christians. During the war Christians joined with non-Christians in fire watching duties. When oil pollution threatens our beaches Christians will co-operate with non-Christians to clear the oil. Surely then when moral pollution threatens we should be ready to encourage any who are resisting it. This is not a plea for ecumenical effort—indeed nowadays it may well be the ecumenical forces who are in league with the corrupters. It was a Bishop after all who defended the novel *Lady Chatterly's Lover*! It is rather that we are not here moving in the realms of the gospel but in that of common grace, and so we can support any effort to cleanse our environment of the moral pollution which threatens to stifle us.

Much encouragement is derived from letters received, and much learned. That many continue to discover the relevance and significance of the Reformation raises the question, will Reformation lead to revival?

A World-wide Awakening?

CORRESPONDENTS FROM ALL OVER THE WORLD REPORT AN AWAKENING interest in our Puritan and Reformed heritage. In some parts concern is shown by a tiny minority, but the numbers are growing. From New Zealand a friend writes:

I have been greatly encouraged lately by hearing of the developing interest amongst English Baptist Churches in the Biblical doctrines of grace. As a member of a Baptist Church in New Zealand and holding to the beliefs of our Puritan forefathers in the area of doctrine, I find that there is very little support for these things amongst the leaders of our church. Most appear uninformed, or at least unconcerned that the doctrinal position of our church now is far removed from that of the Baptist leaders of the past. I am convinced that the cause of declension in our churches is not their failure to adopt progressive modes of communicating the gospel but the failure to build on the doctrines of Biblical solidarity that proved to be the foundation for ministers such as Bunyan and Spurgeon, and until we return to such foundations our hope for the outpouring of God's blessing on the church will remain on the superficial level that ebbs and flows with the coming and going of "crusades" and special "missions".

However over the past twelve months my wife and I have made contact with a number of Baptist people who being unsatisfied with the depth of doctrinal teaching have, like ourselves, been convinced of the value of a greater appreciation of the Biblical doctrines of grace.

Being a subscriber to the *Banner of Truth* I was interested to hear of the Reformed Baptist Conference in U.S.A. in the September, 1970, issue. Accordingly I contacted Mr. Eshelman of Puritan Publications, re. the taped messages of addresses at the Conference. Of particular interest was your address on English Baptist history. A few weeks after hearing of the works of the men mentioned on the tape it so happened I was able to retrieve copies of the works of Bunyan and the complete works of Andrew Fuller as they were on their way to be *dumped* from a recently renovated Baptist manse. Such neglect of these great works is astonishing but this has worked out to my profit.

Our correspondent of Auckland then goes on to speak of ways and means of maintaining contact with those of like mind. He also testifies of the help that this magazine has been to him.

Is it not presumption to think in terms of a *world-wide* awakening? No. Perhaps it would be better to call it a doctrinal awakening, but it is evident that the Holy Spirit is bringing people in many different parts to the same mind independent of each other. Only the Holy Spirit can create an appetite for truth especially Biblical truth which concerns the depravity of man. From the State of Texas a Southern Baptist pastor writes as follows:

For background purposes let me state that I am a twenty-eight year old pastor of a Southern Baptist church. I was reared in the home of a Southern Baptist pastor and so have had only limited contact with other Baptist and evangelical groups. I have become increasingly dissatisfied with the liberalism, worldliness, and superficiality of Southern Baptists and feel very much like a misfit in Southern Baptist ranks.

Southern Baptist churches generally have a most haphazard manner of receiving members. A person simply has to walk down the aisle during the invitation at the conclusion of the service and state that he wants to join the church. A quick and automatic vote of the church to receive him follows instantly. This is, I believe, one great reason why Southern Baptist churches are filled with unregenerate people. What is your church's policy with regard to receiving members? What procedure is followed?

In Southern Baptist churches discipline is virtually unheard of. Does your church practise church discipline? Do you exclude members of your church for non-attendance? If so, please relate some details of this procedure. Also in this vein, do you have set standards of qualifications which persons must meet in order to serve as deacons, teachers, etc.?

Southern Baptist churches tend to be overrunning with programs and activities. Our particular church has an incredible sports program and personally I am beginning to wonder if a church has any business with a sports program. We also have at least eight or nine different choirs for almost all ages. What is your philosophy of church programs?

Most Southern Baptist churches, of course, try to have a great youth program. In my opinion we have pampered and coddled our young people so much that they think they can run the church. And they just about do! Our churches have gone in in a big way for folk rock music. I personally find such music repulsive and think it has no place whatever in the church.

Our churches seem to be obsessed with numbers (as the motto on the bottom of this stationery, which I inherited from my predecessor suggests)¹. It matters little if the church is Godly and holy so long as it is growing. The typical attitude is that whatever gets great numbers of people down the aisle and into the church must be right. I abhor this kind of philosophy.

I would appreciate very much your comments along these lines. Also, please send some statistics on your church such as membership and average attendances. Thanks very much for whatever help you can give me in these areas. Yours sincerely, R.E.C.

From another country we have received a complaint that a brother went to hear someone who attended a Reformed Conference. Far from hearing "Reformed preaching" he was treated to the usual jokes to lighten the meeting, a shallow view of sin, an appeal aided by young ladies, one singing and one at the organ, in which raised hands were invited, followed by arm-twisting "to have the courage to come to the front". Now let us be very clear. Attendance at a Conference does not mean that one is free grace in practice, no more than does possession of rows of Puritan books. To be of Reformed persuasion means that one has come to Biblical convictions by the power of the Holy Spirit. The experience can be very painful. It results in a willingness to conform to the requirements of Scripture whatever the cost. A good example of

¹ The motto reads: *Growing a Great Church in a Great City!*

someone going through the experience is found in the description given in the new biography of George Whitefield by Arnold Dallimore and in this connection a young minister from abroad writes to say,

I have recently come to a confirmed opinion regarding the Reformed faith. Previously I had thought of myself as a Calvinist but had very great reservations on several points. Dallimore's biography of Whitefield is what began the reformation in my own thinking, re-reading *The Forgotten Spurgeon*, a close study of *Divine Election* by Berkhouer, and a book entitled *Biblical Predestination* by Gordon Clark clarified the issue for me and now I am wholeheartedly behind the Reformed faith.

We can understand why Whitefield preached as he did when we know what he believed and the depth of conviction which attended his faith. We can understand too why he never made an appeal. He never had to.

But to return to our correspondent in Texas a further letter from him reminds us that shallow thinking about grace is not far away from compromise in other areas. He declares:

I found the article on Southern Baptists very interesting. My own personal fear is that the situation has deteriorated so grievously that there is no hope of a denomination wide return to the infallibility of Scripture. Our seminaries and colleges are liberal through and through. Denominational leaders are far more eager to keep the peace and preserve our elaborate machinery and organisation than to maintain the purity of the Gospel. Southern Baptists are still thought to be conservative by many because our widespread doctrinal apostasy and worldliness is covered by a thin veneer of "evangelism". Many think that as long as we keep giving public invitations, have walks down the church aisle, and baptize thousands, all is well. Our theological ignorance and shallow understanding of evangelism are such that the essential connection between truth and evangelism is generally overlooked.

Someone has said that if revival were to come today it would lead to sheer chaos and be like a cloud-burst on a dry land which just washes the soil away. Ploughing is needed. The restoration of order, doctrine and discipline is required. The money left in the bank of truth by our forefathers has been frittered away. The treasury needs to be restocked with the bullion of Scripture and the gold of applied truth. Is not the will and power to reform also part of God's plan? Which comes first, Reformation or Revival? That is a question which can only be answered after a careful examination of the condition of the church at any point in history. Suffice to say that true Revival will always promote Reformation and Reformation will always result in conditions more conducive to Revival.

Back numbers of "Reformation Today"

Stocks are depleted for numbers 1 to 6. Correspondents discovering the magazine for the first time continue to request former issues. If you are a bookshop manager and have not sold back numbers we will be glad to refund you if you return copies. If you are a subscriber and destroy copies when you have read them, why not return them to us? We will be very grateful and others may be edified.

Ron Edmonds, pastor of a Reformed Baptist Church in Long Beach, California, has first-hand knowledge of the Jesus Revival Movement in California. He preaches among hippies in their communes along the West coast where the warm, dry climate attracts multitudes of young drop-outs. He attended the Carey Conference at Nottingham and has just spent several weeks in the U.K. Here he discusses the nature of revival, the Jesus Revolution, Kurt Koch's book on the Indonesian revival and related questions, with the editor.

The Jesus Revolution, Revival and Long Hair

RON, WE HAVE ENJOYED FELLOWSHIP WITH YOU AND YOUR WIFE AND REJOICE to find that we have been led along similar paths. Having come from "decisionist evangelicalism" into the world of Reformation we have discovered the old paths and together we are finding enormous areas in which application of Biblical truth is urgently required. As we come to discuss the revivals that are being reported from different parts of the world I am conscious of the fact that some folk will think to themselves, "there they go again, always negative, always critical, never satisfied—these doctrinaire, ivory-tower beaks! etc." Now you have witnessed hippies of the Jesus movement come to the Reformed faith over a period of time and have plans to extend your work to reach many more of these young people. While I lack the qualification as an eye-witness you can speak with some authority.

Well, let me assure you that the very last thing I want is to be gripey and negative. I reckon if a man isn't willing to dirty his hands by getting out there among those kids who are all mixed up, some in occult Satanism, some hung up on drugs, some deceived by their own emotions and feelings, and some, thank God, genuinely seeking truth, then he surely exposes himself to the charge of being a mere theorist. Not only personal acquaintance with the situation makes me want to share it with you and readers of the magazine, but the fact that I have known what it is to hit the bottom spiritually.

Yes, as we chat about revival claims we need to analyse ourselves and keep our own thinking in perspective. And we ought to safeguard ourselves from swinging from one position to another. How do we know, Ron, that you are not just a reactionary?

No, I deny that I am just reacting. Years have tested my experience of truth and I have seen truth in operation at the pastoral level. Perhaps it

will be as well to explain that I was converted in London, in 1953, at All Souls, Langham Place. (John Stott.) Subsequent to this I entered into full-time employment with the Billy Graham and the Navigator Organization which lasted nine years. I was fully involved in the organization of large crusades such as Harringay and Wembley in London, New York and others in the U.S. such as Chicago and El Paso. At the end of this period I found myself bankrupt both spiritually and doctrinally. Gradually I sank down into a pit of despair, bondage and darkness. I became destitute of all assurance. The formulas that I had so often used in trying to assure others of salvation were completely man-centred and consequently quite useless to myself. Only one man seemed willing and able to spend the time necessary to sort me out and that was Dr. Martyn Lloyd-Jones of Westminster Chapel. Through his counsel I was for the first time introduced to the doctrines of grace. His pulpit ministry helped sustain my soul. One of the most astonishing things he said (which for me was the beginning of hope) was, "one needs to be born again in order to believe!" That shook me from top to bottom. I had based everything on the belief that the initiative is with man and all he has to do is believe. The rest must follow automatically. I now know that God is not just a man-controlled machine to be turned on at will. Anyway sitting under this spiritually therapeutic ministry, together with providential employment with the Banner of Truth, led me into a new train of thought, and it was you who encouraged me, after a year or two of getting things straightened out, to become involved in extension work in America in 1964. As you know I have been in the U.S. ever since. I have witnessed a steady growth of the Reformed faith in America, although I would stress that there is very little old-time faith along the West coast where we are virtually in the infancy stages of development in comparison to England. This is one reason why I have found it necessary to be self-supporting and having gained experience in the field of inhalation therapy, I can, by working two or three days a week, earn sufficient together with my wife's income to keep going while pioneering the growth of a church. You will see then that I have had time to test my faith and work out the implications of God's sovereignty in marriage, in work, and in church life. I really mean it when I say that this life of serving a sovereign God is as different from my former bondage as light is from darkness. Nor is my case exceptional. I know of all kinds of people who have the same kind of testimony.

Yes I know what you mean. I too have come from the Arminian world, which transition involved agonies of conviction and painful searchings of soul while working out the implications of God's sovereignty. The journey of coming to depend entirely upon God's mercy is indescribable. It involves an experience of discovering entire inability to save oneself, and the burning sensation of knowing and confessing the entire justice of God in damning one's soul for all eternity. The inward peace and joy unspeakable in the sovereign gift of free mercy, which follows the dread of just condemnation, is also beyond description. We have experienced

the realisation of sovereign grace which transcends by far the decision made when we were first introduced to the Gospel. We sometimes wonder whether our first experience was genuine.

Yes surely. The modern day claims for revival are utterly false. Let me say that quite dogmatically. I can speak from what I have seen in America. I cannot speak for Indonesia, but having read Kurt Koch's book, I can see that the same kind of shallow decisionism, exaggerated, poorly documented and naive reporting is likely to mislead many. Koch is a confusing writer. He darts all over the place. We have only the word of people who are temperamentally subject to colourful stories to rely on. The whole thing is of the same type as the American situation and Koch himself classes the Asbury revival in the same category. In doing this he shows that his idea of revival is quite different from ours, and before we go any further we must define what we mean by revival. What is your thinking on the subject?

Revival is when God comes down and the holiness and majesty of His being melts the mountains of men's arrogance. There is personal revival, a touch of which we have talked about already, but in defining Revival in the historic sense Archibald Alexander can help us. He was a mature and gifted leader who experienced revival during the last century. A letter on the subject by him appears in "Lectures on Revival" edited by W. B. Sprague, published by the Banner. He starts by reminding us of our duty to examine claims because of the false and spurious. In a desperate age like ours the cry goes up, "Lo, here is Christ in this revival", and "Lo, here is Christ in this movement", and "Lo, here, in this organization, we have Christ, we have the answers, we can convert the world, etc." Unless there is fruit such as we read of in the Sermon on the Mount we need not run to pack our bags to go after them. Alexander puts it like this: "A revival of religious excitement may exist and be very powerful, and affect many minds, when the producing cause is not the Spirit of God; and when the truth of God is not the means of the awakening. This we must believe, unless we adopt the opinion that the Holy Spirit accompanies error by his operations as well as truth, which would be blasphemous. Religious excitements have been common among Pagans, Mohammedans, heretics and papists." Alexander then goes on to say that he himself witnessed powerful religious impressions pervade large congregations yet with very little permanent result, and also, he shows on the other hand that there can be a real work of the Holy Spirit, even when there is much that is false and disorderly. He quotes the text about the Devil sowing tares when the Lord sows good seed. I have begun where Alexander begins, namely with the fact that discernment is paramount when it comes to testing revival. I will attempt a positive definition presently, but would first like to ask you whether you think the Jesus Revolution qualifies as a revival?

I understand that Richard Ostling, a reputed evangelical, who worked for Christianity Today for four years, and who now reports on religion for Time, definitely regards the Jesus Revolution as a spiritual revival. He writes,

"Spiritual revivals are, of course, a longstanding American tradition. George Whitefield and Jonathan Edwards led the first Great Awakening in the 1740's and there have been others since: the frontier camp meetings at the beginning of the 19th century, the great revival of the 1850's, and the Pentecostal explosion at the beginning of the 20th century. The Jesus Revolution, like the others, has a flavour peculiarly American. Its strong Pentecostalism emphasises such esoteric spiritual gifts as speaking in tongues and healing by faith."

This quote is from Time magazine, June 21, 1971, in which there is a twelve page article, seven of which consist of photographs. Now this is naive in the extreme. The photos in themselves point to the fact that the Revolution is more a continuation of the recent Charismatic explosion and is not related to the Great Awakening, which, as we know, was hardly American in orientation.

We see then that Ostling regards the Revolution as a revival. He includes Bill Bright, founder of Campus Crusade for Christ, as part of the movement, which indicates that he, Ostling, has the Finney idea of revival. Let me quote Finney's *Revivals of Religion*. "A revival," he says, "is nothing else than a new beginning of obedience to God," that "it is a purely philosophical result of the right use of the constituted means." By "philosophical" Finney meant that a result can be explained in terms of cause and effect. Finney had a formula for revival. In other words Christians only need follow a set of conditions, and, hey presto, down the revival comes.

Unfortunately, Erroll, Campus Crusade is basically the same in respect of salvation with their push-button type evangelism—using four so called spiritual laws,—button one, two, three, four,—brother you're saved, hallelujah!—which of course is a man-centred method based upon false propositions concerning God's attitude toward man. How can we tell a man that God loves him when Scripture declares that God is angry with the wicked every day? Now all this points up the fact that we must be concise in our definition of revival.

Yes, I started by quoting Alexander. Having warned about false revival he goes on to say,

"I come now to speak of genuine revivals, where the gospel is preached in its purity, and where the people have been well instructed in the doctrines of Christianity. In a revival, it makes the greatest difference in the world whether the people have been carefully taught by catechising, and where they are ignorant of the truths of the Bible. In some cases revivals are so remarkably pure that nothing occurs with which any pious man can find fault. There is not only no wildness and extravagance, but very little strong commotion of the animal feelings. The Word of God distils upon the mind like the gentle rain, and the Holy Spirit comes down like the dew, diffusing a blessed influence on all around. Such a revival affords the most beautiful sight ever seen upon earth. Its aspect gives us a lively idea of what will be the general state of things IN THE LATTER

DAY GLORY, and some faint image of the heavenly state. The impressions on the minds of the people in such a work are the exact counterpart of the truth; just as the impression on the wax corresponds to the seal. In such revivals there is great solemnity and silence. The convictions of sin are deep and humbling: the justice of God in the condemnation of the sinner is felt and acknowledged; every other refuge but Christ is abandoned; the heart is made first to feel its own impenetrable hardness; but when least expected, it dissolves under a grateful sense of God's goodness, and Christ's love; light breaks in upon the soul either by a gradual dawning, or by a sudden flash; Christ is revealed through the gospel, and a firm and often joyful confidence of salvation through Him is produced: a benevolent, forgiving, meek, humble and contrite spirit predominates—the love of God is shed abroad—and with some, joy unspeakable and full of glory, fills the soul. A spirit of devotion is enkindled. The Word of God becomes exceedingly precious,”

and so on. Main elements to be observed are Biblical truth, a setting forth of the character of God, the atonement, and the experience of repentance toward God and faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. Dr. Lloyd Jones in the Puritan Conference of 1959 gave an historical and theological survey of revivals but before quoting his definition would you like to give some details of what you have been eye witness to in California?

Alexander's statement "there is a great solemnity and silence", could hardly be in greater contrast to what I have observed in the Jesus Revolution. A typical meeting begins with an hour or so of ear-splitting electronic music and songs which are called "spiritual rock". The preaching which follows is mainly of a dispensational character, often from the book of Revelation. Tremendous emphasis is placed upon the secret rapture. The hearers, mostly young hippies, are exhorted to receive Jesus as a guarantee that they will escape the tribulation which will follow the rapture. Before the appeal which can be quite protracted there is often the singing of choruses in which members of the congregation put their arms around one another and sway to and fro.

Essential truths, particularly the corrupt nature of man, the moral law and nature of sin, the necessity of the atonement, the doctrine of Christ's person and work, the holy and majestic character of God and his attributes have little prominence—neither does the fact that God's wrath is upon sinners.

Large numbers respond to the call for decisions but there are very few who have any idea of what conversion involves. That there are some who are truly saved is beyond doubt in my own mind and it is because of these that we must not dismiss this revolution which is a more accurate description than revival. The true marks of a revival which you have outlined from Alexander are lacking, and, also, it only affects a certain age-group in society, and that in a very mixed-up way. In spite of the shallow preaching, and in spite of the methods used and the confusion the Lord is saving some of these young people. At the same time the Devil is having a picnic. He operates best where there is error and lack of Biblical teaching. As we well know from experience it is no small task to see people make progress even when there is a maximum of discipline, doctrinal teaching, including proper application. Imagine the situation where you start with a virtually

lawless outlook and a minimum of truth. Much patience and perseverance is needed. Transformation of life takes time. This is different to cliches and singing choruses. But we have been encouraged by individuals who have embraced the doctrines of grace, and who have proved their faith by their works. This brings me to ask you whether you think the Reformed Faith is essential to revival and enduring effects?

I was about to quote the doctor. Revival, he points out, by its very meaning, means bringing new life to life which is already there but which has declined. The embers are revived into a fire which spreads so as to bring awakening to the masses of unconverted people many of whom are converted as a result. The initial quickening enlivens prayer and new power comes into the preaching of the ministers. Conviction of sin among the professing believers as well as a new awareness of the greatness of salvation is a feature. Now I have not quoted word for word, but this is a careful statement which I believe would be regarded as a valid definition by students of theology and history. But the doctor goes on to say something which will help to answer your question as to whether Reformed doctrine is essential. He says, "Man not only cannot start a revival, he cannot stop it either. Nor can he keep it going when it has stopped. Men have tried to do all these things but they have never succeeded."

And so, Ron, we would have to say that it is only in the terms of the sovereignty of God that revival can be defined. It does not surprise us therefore that genuine revivals have almost always taken place where Biblical preaching, including the truths about sovereignty, have been believed and proclaimed. It should be pretty obvious that while revival in the absolute sense is the result of the determination of God (not the result of man's decisions or organization) that He, the Lord, does use means. He prepares the way for the outpouring of His Spirit, and in mercy sees to it that the effects are enduring. It should not surprise us therefore that revivals have predominated in areas where the Scriptures are expounded in a thorough way. Latterly we have heard news of a remarkable work of the Spirit in a certain area which is not being publicised, for the simple reason that advertising such a thing invariably results in an influx of cranky people who are apt to tramp all over the Lord's garden. Calvinistic Scotland, Wales and Ulster, Presbyterian churches and some Calvinistic Baptist Associations (before the advent of Modernism) have histories of revival. Unitarian churches, as we would expect, have nothing to show, and Anglicans, apart from those who worked outside the structure, precious little, while the Plymouth Brethren have hardly anything. The Wesley Methodist revival was exceptional. While specific Calvinistic beliefs were rejected, sin and repentance were stressed—a marked contrast to the decisionism of today. Also the influence of the former Puritan generation can be clearly detected in 18th century Methodism. But to give a specific answer to your question, it would deny the

Reformed doctrine of revival to maintain that God cannot work unless every aspect of truth is preached.

Your reference, Erroll, to the necessity of Biblical truth I find interesting, not only because the lasting effect of revivals is directly in proportion to the truth preached, but also because the value of evangelistic endeavour is also to be tested by truth. It would be correct to say that much of the Jesus Revolution is the result of evangelistic outreach of the decisionist kind with this great stress on the rapture. One sees car bumper stickers with the slogan, "Maranata, what a way to go!" The lack of Biblical truth, particularly the need for clarity about justification by faith, is also seen in the unembarrassed union of the Jesus Revolution with the tongues movement which has been going on among Roman Catholics, Episcopalians and Lutherans.

Moreover, biblical truth is the standard we raise in order to draw out the genuinely converted. In visiting hippy communes I just expound the Scriptures. Some of those who have made decisions will move away in displeasure, but others will show a hunger for truth. I find that I can teach for two or three hours and find they will listen attentively, occasionally interrupting with a question, if they do not understand. With Bibles open they will turn to passages and follow carefully. There is much opportunity. Regarding the hippies we should realise that many young people leave home and drop out of society in a state of immaturity, and are quite insecure. Society has further rejected them and they have nowhere to turn for help. They tend to respond to churches that reach out to them. We should reach out to them. One young man was entirely astonished that we should ask him home for a meal with us—he is now open to discuss his needs.

One American clergyman has warned against "missing the most genuine revival of a lifetime". Now we feel, Ron, that folk today do not know what revival is, but what about the rumour that the converts are reading Reformed and Puritan books?

Yes, this applies to a minority. Jay Green, whom we believe was the first to get moving in the field of publishing the Puritans, has advertised Reformed books in the Hippy newspapers. They have their own brand of news material and news gets round quickly. It is a strange sight to see the gaily coloured, long haired kids sitting along a wall reading Goodwin, Watson or Bunyan. These books are hard going. We need them in modern language. One young man I counselled in these things, kept saying, "this is heavy, man; this is heavy!" but he was absorbing doctrine. I am convinced that in a limited way there is a search for truth and reality. But we should never allow ourselves to be carried away by journalism and exaggerated reports. Popular magazines pay their way by producing gloss, colour and material which appeals to appetites hungering for sensation and excitement. We long to see a widespread moral renewal of society but this does not mean that we should indulge in make-believe. Sound

literature has been a boon to us as we have come to see the imperative need of establishing churches which are ordered after the New Testament pattern. I believe with all my heart that the Reformed awakening is a precursor to genuine revival. I say that, not only because this seems to be the case over and over again in history, but because of the promises in the Bible. There is no short cut. The whole counsel of God must be taught. Through literature pulpits have been affected and now many more believers are receiving exposition and doctrine; as Richard Baxter said, "Reform the pulpit and you will reform the pew."

When you talk about the application of truth what do you advise in the case of long hair or a shaggy appearance?

Now obviously it is wrong to start with external things. Once the heart is reformed the rest will follow in due course. I do not agree with a section of evangelical opinion which maintains that we have to be shaggy to win shaggy people. This is nonsense. We don't become tramps to win tramps. Obviously we must be kind, hospitable and compassionate. We want to secure a centre where seekers can come and stay. Our present set-up is too small. I do not agree with those who say that former generations grew their hair long or that it is right to show contempt for the bourgeoisie society of today—a society of materialistic hypocrites who have no answers. No Sir! These drop-outs live off the society they criticise and sooner or later have to get back to hard work. They who will not work also will not eat. To me neatness of hair, dress and appearance, together with cleanliness, are consistent with the Gospel. To forge an image of Jesus being a Hippy is sheer idolatry—the usual projection of the fancies of our own minds. There is the Biblical example of Joseph cleaning himself up to come before Pharaoh. Young Christians have the responsibility of getting back into society and show the power of God to others. These young folk confess that hairiness is a symbol of rebellion. Well we are to be at peace with all men, and the right way to impress the bourgeoisie with his Cadillac and Ranch style house, is not by a trail of litter, long hair, and other symbols which disgust him as being non-productive and useless, but by hard work, integrity and symbols that show care rather than non-care.

Well Ron, I would put it this way. True freedom is found within the structure of discipline; civil liberty within the structure of civil justice; family freedom within chastity and faithfulness; spiritual joy and freedom within the discipline of a local church; liberty to earn and spend money within the discipline of labour and hard work. But all this is part of the heritage we seek to share with others.

I am sure that the Church at Cuckfield, the fraternity that met for the Carey Conference at Nottingham, and the readers of *Reformation Today* would feel it appropriate that I thank you, and your wife Thais, for your fellowship with us, and for this interview.



*A group taken after a meeting at the Ellis' house
in Tilik, Lubang Islands, the Philippines.*



*A believer, Tessie, with her son, Timothy.
Below: Moving house—a typical scene.*



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