

REFORMATION TODAY



-
- 1 EDITORIAL.
-
- 4 EARLY LIFE OF A. W. PINK. *Alan McKerrell.*
-
- 10 THE POISONER AND PUNISHMENT.
-
- 13 REFORMATION IN BUSINESS. *Erroll Hulse.*
-
- 21 THE GREATEST NEED. A Mid-Sussex tract.
-
- 23 MIRACULOUS HEALING TODAY? *Terence Aldridge.*
-
- 29 TRUE SPIRITUALITY—a review by *Ray Gaydon.*
-
- 30 MINISTERIAL TRAINING. *Peter Savage.*
-
- 35 MICE AND MEN.
-
- 39 DESPIISING SMALL THINGS. *Correspondence.*
-

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Above: A. W. Pink. Below: his wife Vera.

Editorial

Arthur Walkington Pink

ALAN MCKERRELL'S ARTICLE MENTIONS HELP RECEIVED FROM MR. I. C. Herendeen. At the age of 89 Mr. Herendeen is a paragon of zeal and activity. He negotiates with publishers for the publication of a wide variety of the writings of A. W. Pink. His informative letters have been no small encouragement to us. Mr. Herendeen informs us that Mr. Pink's work on *Elisha* and also on the *Perseverance of the Saints* should be available soon.

Mr. Herendeen has recorded some fascinating details concerning A. W. Pink for the purpose of introducing Mr. McKerrell's article. He writes: "Arthur Walkington Pink was born on April 1, 1886. He was about 5ft. 8in. in height, and weighed about 150 pounds. He had a fairly heavy head of black, bushy hair, large forehead, and keen, penetrating eyes. He had an unusually keen mind and retentive memory. It always seemed to me that he never forgot what he read. He was most familiar with all the Puritan writers and their works. His knowledge of the Holy Scriptures was out of the ordinary. He knew much of the Word by heart, and could remember without hesitation where to find most unusual Scriptures to substantiate truth".

The monthly magazine, *Studies in the Scriptures*, which Pink published for 30 years, had under 1,000 regular readers. Business tycoons would regard this as a drop in the bucket—quality and quantity do not always go together! Little did the author know to what extent these studies would be read. Their popularity in book form seems continually to increase. One of the most recent is the helpful paperback *Profiting from the Word*.¹ On a larger scale there are three volume sets, one on John² (written in the early period and not up to the later standard), and one on Hebrews.³ The latter is excellent and very practical in emphasis. A recent publication is *Man's Total Depravity*.⁴

Pink was practically the only contributor to his magazine, which was wholly devoted to the exposition of Scripture. Combining, as he did, clarity of exposition with powerful and relevant application, he must surely be ranked with the foremost of Christian writers, particularly when we take into account the spiritual barrenness of the period in which he laboured. His zeal and perseverance give cause for wonder.

What is even more amazing is to find that much of this work was carried on from an unusually non-static base. In his movements A.W.P. seemed

to pack his belongings almost as frequently as the children of Israel had to pack theirs during their trek through the wilderness. Particulars are supplied by Mr. Herendeen as follows: "Beginning with the May 1929 issue of *Studies in the Scriptures*, he gave his address as Arthur W. Pink, Morton's Gap, Kentucky. In the May 1930 issue, the address was 1139 Alameda Ave., Glendale, California. In the January 1931 issue he gave his address as 1339 Bates Ave., Los Angeles, Calif. In May 1931 it was 559 Dupont Ave., York, Penna. On October 4, 1933, he removed to 531 Thomas St., York, Pa. where he resided until September 5, 1934, when he returned to England. Here he first resided in Cheltenham, then gave his address for a number of months as c/o Miss Murray, 386 Great Western Road, Glasgow, Scotland, until in May 1936 his address became 31 Colbourne Rd., Hove, Sussex. There he stayed four years".

Lest the reader imagine that we are bent only on garnishing the tomb of this prophet, let us hasten to say that he was in several ways eccentric and not to be emulated in all points. In his later years he appears not to have thrown in his lot heartily with any local church. The prevalence of formalism, Arminianism and hyper-Calvinism probably served to make him pessimistic about the possibility of reforming existing churches.

It is evident that Mr. and Mrs. Pink had close friends with whom they had much fellowship in their different travels. In the December 1940 issue of *Studies in the Scriptures*, he writes: "An old friend in Scotland renewed his kind invitation to sojourn with him. It meant a journey to Glasgow . . . (where we) had a week's rest with dear ones who devotedly ministered to our every need so that we were much refreshed both spiritually and physically. Then another railway journey . . . a twelve hour sea trip . . . a few days fellowship in the home of another kind friend and his wife . . . and our haven was reached. We are now situated on an island far removed from the scene of conflict where we can quietly study and conduct the work of the magazine in peace, and what is better still, we are once more in a place where we can have fellowship with some of the choicest of God's people. Our new address appears on the front page"—27 Lewis Street, Stornoway, Isle of Lewis, Scotland.⁵ Here he resided until his death.

That we are left in ignorance concerning much of the life of A.W.P. is due in some measure to the reclusive side of his character and also to the frequency with which he moved about. Before his conversion he is reputed to have been involved in spiritualism, but we are ignorant of details. We do not know how long he was at Moody Bible College nor what he thought of it. He may well have picked up dispensationalist thought there. This appears quite dogmatically in his early writings. It is rather odd to move from a section which is Puritan in character to another volume where one finds fantastic, weird assertions!

Further information is welcome. In the meantime, Mr. McKerrell has written more which awaits publication. To him and Mr. Herendeen we record our sincere appreciation.

Criticism

The most sensitive among us may feel that the review of Dr. Shaeffer's book, *True Spirituality*, strikes an unduly negative note. Such friends may be reassured to know that we are admirers of L'Abri and the great contribution made by the Shaeffers. However, in the world of publications and literature, terse comment, providing it is not ungracious, can often do much good. Too many reviews are banal in their indiscriminating recommendation of all the fare which lands on the editorial table. In this case minor reservations (not serious criticism), about presentation more than content, will not, we hope, offend the tenderhearted!

Tracts to explain and commend the Gospel

For several years we have been conscious of the need for the truth we love to be communicated to unbelievers in a clear and serious way, avoiding a slick approach or the use of slang. Our own ineptitude at this has been felt acutely. House to house visiting is for us a weekly exercise and in this we have, we hope, achieved a certain degree of effectiveness through dependence upon God. But in writing material suitable to be used in conjunction with visiting, failure has so far been our lot. In this issue three endeavours are recorded, blemishes and all. 1. The Poisoner and Punishment. 2. The Greatest Need. 3. Mice and Men. Readers would help us if they let us know their reaction to these articles.

¹ Banner of Truth, 124 pp. 25p.

² Zondervan, U.S.A.

³ Baker, U.S.A.

⁴ Moody, U.S.A., 347 pp. \$5-95.

⁵ The photographs of Mr. and Mrs. Pink on the inside front cover were obtained by Mr. Harold Bradshaw, of Norwich, on a visit he made to the Pinks when they lived in Stornoway. He writes: "On July 4, 1945, I went specially from Inverness to Stornoway in the hope of seeing Mr. Pink, following a long correspondence I had with him in 1943. Mrs. Pink answered my knock on the front door. She was astonished that I had come so far, but said she really did not know if Mr. Pink would see me as he did not welcome visitors! She quickly returned and asked me up to their bed-sitting room, crowded with furniture, books and papers, and I spent a fascinating three hours with them. About 10.30 p.m. Mr. Pink suddenly announced that I had stayed my welcome! Before I left, Mrs. Pink brought cocoa and jam sponge. I have never forgotten the way Mr. Pink asked God's blessing on the food. He seemed, as he clasped his hands and bowed his head, to have a tremendous sense of the glory and majesty of the God he was approaching. The tone and deepest reverence of his voice made such an impression on me at the time that I have many times recalled it. I left and caught the midnight boat to the Kyle of Lochalsh; but not before he very reluctantly, at my request, gave me these photographs of himself and his wife".

As explained in the editorial Alan McKerrell, of Australia, has provided this biographical sketch. Any materials which might assist him in his work as he prepares the second part will be welcomed.

The Early Life of A. W. Pink

AMONG BIBLE EXPOSITORS OF THE TWENTIETH CENTURY THE NAME OF Arthur W. Pink undoubtedly ranks among the greatest, yet to so many it is only a name, for very little is known of the man himself. This is surprising considering the fact that God's servant passed into his eternal rest no more than 20 years ago.

Since Mr. Pink's death on July 15, 1952, his written ministry has circulated the globe, especially the best known of his works, *The Sovereignty of God*, and with the present return to the Reformed Faith of our fathers, the works of Mr. Pink are ever increasing in demand. For this we can praise our sovereign, almighty God who said, "When the enemy shall come in like a flood, the Spirit of the Lord shall lift up a standard against him" (Isa. 59:19).

I suppose I would be one of the youngest men of our day who, as a boy, had the privilege of sitting under Mr. Pink's ministry. This was for a short time but the impact made upon me was profound. As I draw this brief sketch of the life of this servant of God I am indebted to quite a few of my older friends in Australia who also knew him personally and received spiritual help and blessing from his ministry, and especially to Mr. I. C. Herendeen, whose detailed comments appear in this issue, for some of the information that I record here.

His Ministry in America

After being saved from spiritualism and theosophy, Mr. Pink decided to go to the U.S.A. to study at the Moody Bible Institute. After this he took a pastorate in the Baptist Church at Colorado. From Colorado he went to Garden City, California, and then to Albany, Kentucky, where he also pastored at Burkesville, holding the two pastorates at the same time. In the year 1917 he moved to the Northside Baptist Church at Spartansburg, South Carolina, until 1919, when he moved to Swengel, Union County, Pa.

Mr. Pink's profound gift of teaching the Scriptures was recognised by lovers of the truth and consequently he received many invitations to preach. After leaving Swengel he travelled up and down the Pacific Coast for some months, preaching as he was invited and lecturing on Bible doctrine, eventually returning to Swengel and later moving on to Los Angeles and Seattle.

While Mr. Pink was pastoring at Spartansburg in 1917, he wrote his classic work, *The Sovereignty of God*, which Mr. Herendeen published in 1918. The first edition came at a time when these teachings were anything but popular and the publisher had much difficulty in disposing of it. However, as time went on, the demand for this volume became greater and today it is in constant demand. My own sentiments are that no preacher's library would be complete without a copy of this valuable work.

In the year 1922, at the suggestion of Mr. Herendeen, he and Mr. Pink first published as a joint venture the well known and much loved *Studies in the Scriptures*, which continued until just after Mr. Pink's home call in 1952.

Australia

Early in January 1925 Mr. and Mrs. Pink left Philadelphia for California to conduct several Bible Conferences, and on March 3 they sailed for Australia at the invitation of the late Mr. George Ardill, of the Christian Workers Union, whom they had never previously met. Mr. Pink wrote regarding their proposed visit, literally to the other side of the world: "It is indeed a journey by faith, neither of us know a single soul in that country, no financial guarantee is given. But the call of God is clear and we go forth (by His sovereign grace) in simple dependence upon Him with our expectation in Him".¹ They arrived in Australia on March 24, 1925, and took up residence in Ashfield, N.S.W.

It was very apparent that God's good hand was upon His servant from the commencement of the Australian venture. On April 25 he writes, "Most graciously has God wrought for us in giving us favour in the eyes of His people and in opening many doors of ministry. We are already reluctantly obliged to refuse numbers of invitations, being booked up for several months ahead. There has been little Bible teaching in Australia but there has been much prayer on the part of numbers of the Lord's people that God would be pleased to supply the felt need. Everywhere we have been there are many really hungry for Scripture food. We really expect a joyous season of heaven sent blessing".²

I feel I must add here, for the sake of those who are unfamiliar with Mr. Pink's mode of writing, that Mr. and Mrs. Pink worked together as a devoted pair, and when referring to his activities in the ministry he usually uses the term "we".

"The meetings here afford much ground for praise to our most gracious God. The attendances are steadily increasing, the interest most manifest and goodly numbers are being blessed. Many here have been earnestly praying for months past that the Lord would send a teacher to open up to them some of the inexhaustible treasures of Scripture. Hundreds of eager souls are coming out five and six nights a week with Bibles and

notebooks. God is granting most blessed liberty of utterance and joy and liberty in ministering His precious Word. We are receiving more invitations than we can accept. There is every indication that a great door and effectual avenue is opened unto us.”³

“Let our fellow Christians continue praying that we may be kept in that place where neither the frowns nor the flatteries of men will either move or affect us; may Divine grace enable us to say in truth, ‘In God will I praise His Word; in the Lord will I praise His Word. In God have I put my trust: I will not be afraid what man can do unto me’ (Psa. 56: 10-11).”⁴

The above is a part of an account of Mr. Pink’s “Ashfield Baptist Tabernacle” Campaign in 1925. One now elderly lady told me recently that she used to walk miles each evening to sit under his ministry. She described him as an excellent teacher, very clear in his exposition of the Scriptures and most convincing. He seemed to draw people like a magnet. He was not what some might term a “fiery” preacher although he was very forthright, clear and uncompromising. He preached the whole truth of God’s Word as he saw it in Scripture. She said that so thorough and gifted was he in expository preaching that he could take a single text of Scripture and preach from it for several weeks. He was capable of preaching a sermon from every word of the text.

The Sovereignty of God

Actually Mr. Pink held two campaigns in the Ashfield Tabernacle and at the close of the second campaign delivered a series of addresses on the much neglected but most important truths of the Sovereignty of God and Divine election. He writes concerning this, “It was July and the weather was cold and wet, yet from four hundred to five hundred people came out Monday to Friday inclusive, and on Sundays the Tabernacle was packed, many extra seats having to be brought in. The Lord most singularly honoured His Word, saints being edified and sinners being saved”.⁵

Mr. Pink was obliged to close his second campaign in order to keep an appointment at the Auburn Baptist Church where he and his wife spent two happy weeks enjoying the most hearty co-operation of its widely loved pastor, Clough Black.

Mr. Pink published in his studies some of his addresses at the Ashfield Tabernacle, then one of the strongest churches in Sydney. The substance of his messages on the Sovereignty of God was entirely new to the congregation—and it is recorded, as with the Apostle Paul in Acts 28:24, “and some believed the things which were spoken, and some believed not”.

In Baptist circles during the late 1920s, Mr. Pink was one of the most controversial figures and his preaching on election and God’s Sovereignty

caused a stir in the General Baptist churches. As a result he was asked to prepare a paper on "Human Responsibility" which he subsequently read at a monthly meeting of the Baptist Ministers' Fraternal on 5.8.25.

A full column in *The Australian Baptist* of 11.8.25 was devoted to commenting upon this article and the discussion that followed the reading of it. The reviewer stated, "Opportunity was taken at the lunch table to express the thanks of the Fraternity to the visitor for his address, the vote of thanks being very heartily carried on the motion of the Rev. Sharp, seconded by Dr. Waldock. At the close of the meal an adjournment was made to the committee room where for upwards of an hour the Doctor⁶ was submitted to a further series of questions, all of which he answered with unfailing courtesy. It was a fairly searching test and one calculated to reveal any weak spots in his theological armour, supposing such to have existed; and whether in full agreement with him or otherwise, there was a concensus of opinion that a more profitable and thought-provoking session of the Fraternal had not been held".

It would appear that the outcome of this questioning was that the Ministers' Fraternal failed to penetrate Mr. Pink's theological armour as he had a Scriptural answer for every question. However it was the beginning of the end as far as his ministry in the Baptist Union of N.S.W. was concerned, for at the next meeting of the Fraternal the following resolution was passed and inserted in *The Australian Baptist*, 29.9.25.

"Having heard conflicting statements concerning the doctrinal position of Dr. A. W. Pink, at the invitation of the Baptist Ministers' Fraternal of N.S.W. he stated his views in a paper at a meeting held on Tuesday, September 8. As a result of this paper and the questions and discussion that followed, the Ministers' Fraternal unanimously resolved that they could not endorse Dr. Pink. Yours in Christian Service, (signed by Chairman and Hon. Secretary)." Dr. Pink wrote concerning this, "We refrain from any other comment on the above, except to point out what a solemn and vivid illustration it furnishes of that declaration of Holy Writ, "The legs of the lame are not equal" (Prov. 26:7)."

A Closed Door

So the door was closed to Mr. Pink among the ranks of the Baptist Union churches in N.S.W. A little later on I heard the folk talking about the name "Ichabod" being painted in white paint on the notice board and door of the Ashfield Baptist Tabernacle—evidently someone had deep convictions that "the glory of the Lord had departed".

Mr. Pink was then invited to preach at the Belvoir Street Particular Baptist Church in Sydney where he continued for nearly two years. Owing to certain doctrinal differences concerning the preaching of the Gospel he was forced to resign from that church, being accused of preaching

“free will” by some of the deacons who had embraced the more recent “Articles of Faith”. Mr. Pink stood for the 1689 London Confession and the Philadelphia Confession (as did the late C. H. Spurgeon). Far from preaching free will, Mr. Pink strongly opposed this false view. However, he did assert strongly the responsibility of man to believe the Gospel, even though faith is outside the power of the natural man.

After Mr. Pink resigned from Belvoir Street many of the congregation who supported him gathered around him and it was decided to form an Independent Church at Summer Hill, an inner suburb of Sydney. On 27.9.27 a meeting was held at the home of Mr. Ted Grice when 26 former members of Belvoir Street met to form a church after the New Testament order with Mr. Pink as pastor. The newly formed church met at the Masonic Hall, Liverpool Road, Summer Hill.

The complete “Minutes Book” I have in my possession and treasure it very much. According to the Minutes of the church meetings it does certainly appear that the blessing of the Lord rested upon the newly formed church as souls were saved, baptised and added to the church. It seems likely that the church membership doubled over this comparatively short period. One of my present friends, who was converted through Mr. Pink’s ministry and baptised by him, still talks often of those times of blessing under his ministry.

In Australia Pink was known as Dr. Pink, but at a church meeting dated 12.10.27 he renounced his title of “Doctor” and asked to be referred to in future as “brother Pink” or “the pastor”.

Conviction of Sin

My father and our family commenced to attend the church at Summer Hill and it was here that we first came in contact with Mr. Pink who preached twice each Lord’s Day, with a Sunday School and Bible Class being held in the afternoon. We would spend the whole day there as it was too far to travel home and back for each service.

It was during this time that I first came under conviction of sin, and being only a lad in those days, perhaps the only thing I can remember personally concerning Mr. Pink’s ministry is his preaching on the text Rom. 6:23. Through this text in the providence of God, in His time, I was brought to see myself as a sinner deserving eternal death, and in due time was led by God’s grace to true Gospel repentance with contrition and tears and to faith in our Lord Jesus Christ.

As time went on, according to church records, Mr. Pink became greatly concerned regarding the forming of the new church and the split at Belvoir Street, and on the Lord’s Day 25.3.28 he announced that he would make a statement to the assembly at the close of the evening service.

In this statement he confessed that he believed the church had been formed in a way that was not glorifying to God, for each member had been asked to give a statement that would establish mutual confidence within the membership. This was as high as their thoughts had reached. Mr. Pink felt that unsaved members had been brought in, despite the fact that requirements for membership included giving testimony to God's dealings with one's soul.

Mr. Pink confessed that he was as much to blame as anyone. The Lord had shown him that the church had been formed in a way distasteful to Himself and he desired to resign as pastor forthwith, although he would preach if requested to do so. This seemed to be the climax of his oral ministry. On 20.7.28 Mr. and Mrs. Pink sailed for England on the "Ormonde" from Circular Quay, Sydney. From then on Mr. Pink's life was mostly confined to a written ministry.

The photo in *Reformation Today* No. 10 was taken from the quay before the ship sailed. To the sorrowing brethren and sisters, who had gathered to bid him farewell, Mr. Pink called out a parting word from the ship—Acts 20:32, "And now, brethren, I commend you to God, and to the word of His grace, which is able to build you up, and to give you an inheritance among all them which are sanctified".

As the ship broke moorings and commenced to glide down the harbour, the little company sang the doxology. We never had the privilege of seeing Mr. and Mrs. Pink again in the flesh, but, praise God, in the Glory-land we shall meet again and we shall know even as we are known, as we gather round the Throne of God and sing the new song "Unto Him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in His own blood, and hath made us kings and priests unto God and His Father; to Him be glory and dominion for ever and ever. Amen" (Rev. 1:5-6).

To be completed, D.V., in future issues.

¹ *Studies in the Scriptures*, Vol. 4, p. 1.

² *ibid.*, Vol. 4, p. 144.

³ *ibid.*, Vol. 4, p. 167.

⁴ *ibid.*, Vol. 4, p. 192.

⁵ *ibid.*, Vol. 4, p. 233.

⁶ An honorary Doctorate had been conferred on Pink.

⁷ *ibid.*, Vol. 5, p. 163.

The Poisoner and Punishment

"GRAHAM FREDERICK YOUNG, AGED 24, WHO ONCE CONFESSED TO POISONING his father, sister and a school friend and was freed after nearly nine years in a maximum security mental hospital, was jailed at St. Albans Crown Court, Hertfordshire, for life today for four crimes, including two of murder, again involving poison." The correspondent, writing in *The Times* (June 30, 1972), goes on to review the case and the evidence, including the medical opinion that Young was not insane, but was suffering from a psychopathic disorder.

It becomes increasingly apparent that criminality is regarded by most people as an unfortunate sickness requiring cure. This is explicitly admitted in the title of a recent address to the Royal Society of Medicine: "The disease of crime—punishment or treatment?" The recommendation of the Council of the Law Society is that the purposes of criminal law should be the protection of society, deterrence from crime, and the rehabilitation of the offender.

In this view the idea of retribution is completely jettisoned; it is a primitive, Old Testament concept and nothing more. Instead of punishing wrong-doing we should be attempting by medical means to render those who accidentally fall into error more capable of normal existence. During this course of treatment, prisoners, or rather, patients, should ideally be housed in the most comfortable and amenable surroundings, furnished with every luxury. Recent plans envisaged for de luxe prisons could soon bring about the time when, instead of queueing to pay huge sums for houses in St. John's Wood, London, people queue to be convicted at the criminal court! What price deterrence? Certainly "rehabilitation", after such ostentatious circumstances, is likely to be a big drop.

On the question of the protection of society, the case of Graham Young is typical of many. Because of the abolition of the death penalty, people are alive and even enjoying life who have committed cold-blooded, callous and deliberate murder, and who still couldn't care less. Thus none of the three aims of the Law Society are being met. Robert Mark, Commissioner of the Metropolitan Police, pointed out in the address already mentioned to the Royal Society of Medicine (published in *The Guardian*, June 21, 1972) that "known crime has increased threefold since the war", and that this includes a "disproportionate increase in deliberate crime, in planned robberies . . . involving the use of weapons".

The ghastly flaw in the whole contemporary approach is that it takes punishment out of the realm of justice and into the realm of pseudo-

science. The framework of British justice has in the past been built on the foundation that to punish an offender is a moral necessity. The punishment should be proportionate to the offence. "An eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth", though regarded as incredibly barbaric, is in fact humane. It means that ordinary men, after considering the evidence, have a right (and duty) to say that a defendant found guilty of a crime *deserves* punishment for a certain duration and in a certain way. After that, he is free. Treatment, in contrast, is a realm in which the layman is bound to be floundering out of his depth. Only the psychiatrist is supposed to be competent to judge, and *The Times* editorial (also June 30, 1972), in commenting that "psychiatry is not such a precise science that all risk can be eliminated", considerably understates the position! We are then left at the mercy of a man whose first devotion may well be to his theories and experiments, and what was thought to be freedom and enlightenment could turn out to be a far more menacing tyranny. It was a psychiatrist who recommended Graham Young to be released from Broadmoor: eighteen months later he had murdered his colleagues.

Even to base punishment on deterrence has horrifying implications. If a deterrent is ineffective it must be made increasingly severe. Where does this end? The ultimate deterrent, that is the death penalty, would have to be extended to scores of offences, as it once was in England. Yet even when our highways were adorned with numerous gibbets, crimes of murder, rape and robbery were commonplace. Only a proper understanding of "an eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth", guards against misapplication of justice. This is not to say that deterrence (or, for that matter, reform and the protection of society) can be ignored. They are important, but definitely secondary.

Returning to the prevalent notion, that crime is a disease, who is to decide which criminal tendencies, or rather states of mind, are to be cured? Any deviation from the norm could be regarded with suspicion. Attitudes to many actions once thought of as crimes, have changed radically. Some psychiatrists regard religion as a neurosis, in much the same way as they regard crime as a neurosis. Will Christians one day be whipped off for treatment till they conform to the mass? It is useless to protest that such a thing wouldn't be just, or wouldn't be deserved. These concepts are primitive.

One of the main arguments for doing away with punishment as such is that a socially disruptive person's character and actions are determined genetically and by his environment, and that therefore he cannot be held responsible for them. This emerges in the defence made for the poisoner,

Graham Young, that "the authorities have a duty to protect Young from himself". Everyone recognises, however, that a heroic act, a scientific discovery, or a life of sacrifice are genuinely due to individual endeavour, and not environment. Otherwise, praise and reward could never be given. In the same way, acts of violence, theft and murder are responsible actions incurring blame and punishment.

Our present chaos can be traced back to our abandonment, in twentieth-century society, of the unchanging principles of the law of God. In the ten commandments—which King Alfred placed at the head of the Statute Book—we have the only absolute basis for law. Not all the commandments should be enforced with punishments. Paul, in speaking of the magistrate as the servant of God bearing the sword against the wrongdoer (Romans, chapter 13), speaks of crimes against our neighbour—adultery, killing, etc. Sins against the first part of the commandments—our duty to God—will be punished by God at the judgment, but do not fall within the scope of our courts on earth.

The Christian Gospel teaches that sin must be punished because it deserves so to be treated. God Himself embodies perfect justice. He is the judge of all the earth who will do right. He treats every man as a responsible being, not as a victim of circumstances. Those who sin and never repent will be punished eternally in hell. In this basic doctrine, taught so often by Christ, we have the final and ultimate exhibition of justice. Hell cannot be for reform, since it is a place from which no one is let out. It is eternal and infinite punishment because it is a result of man's sin against an infinitely holy, majestic and eternal God. The true Christian, however, knows that God will never punish him in this way. He is a sinner, but his sin has been taken by Jesus Christ and punished in Him. "He was wounded for our transgressions, and bruised for our iniquities" (Isa. 53:5). "There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus" (Rom. 8:1).

Repudiation of current theories of crime is urgent. Respect for man, God and truth is at stake. C. S. Lewis puts it well: "To be punished, however severely, because we have deserved it, because we ought to have known better, is to be treated as a human person made in God's image". It is part of the glory of the gospel that it proclaims that men are not animals. They resemble their Creator, particularly in the moral realm. But they are sinners, and must be judged; in this life temporarily, in the next eternally. The amazing mercy of God is that He invites rebel, sinning creatures—whether murderers such as the poisoner Graham Young, or the mistaken members of the Law Society with their ignorance of the law of God, or you and me with our very imperfect grasp of our dangerous condition—to return and receive His abundant pardon.

How are we to conduct our business life? The housewife, the office-worker, the student, the school child—all have activities to attend to. The Christian will surely set about his business in a way which expresses his union with Christ.

Reformation in Business

THE TEXT FOUND IN ROM. 12:11 IS TO BE THE BASIS OF OUR consideration; “not slothful in business”. From the original it reads, “in diligence not slothful”. The Greek word for business means haste or activity. The word “haste” gives the idea of getting a move on—not hanging about. Apathy or lethargy should not characterise the Christian.

But we now have three words which together comprehend just about the whole of life. 1. Business. 2. Activity. 3. Diligence. All our active life should be carried on with diligence. The life of Christ was marked with power and vitality, compassion and good works, humility and meekness, wisdom and joy. Since the believer is united with Christ the power of Christ’s life should be in evidence.

My own experience has been in architects’ offices, in a publishing firm and in a pastorate. In each of these spheres I have noticed the same fundamental issues in regard to business and these could be summed up as follows:

- 1. Zeal is essential if a Christian is to have a consistent testimony. This I will seek to illustrate from the text Rom. 12:11.*
- 2. Finding one’s vocation and then attending to it with fervour is vital. This will be illustrated from the context preceding Rom. 12:11.*
- 3. A number of specific qualities must be maintained if sloth in business is to be avoided. These will be listed and explained.*

1. Zeal is Essential

“In diligence (all business) not slothful; fervent in spirit; serving the Lord.” With the text in mind we will first see the necessity of zeal.

The testimony of a believer is easily marred if he is slothful in business. He may use his lips to declare his faith in the Son of God and in the Scriptures. He may even have the courage to rebuke his fellow workers for bad language and taking the name of the Lord in vain. But the worth of his profession is immediately devalued if he is consistently late for work, shirks difficulties, makes elementary mistakes because he does not concentrate or if his work generally lacks the quality or output

achieved by his unbelieving companions. A person who is a “gasbag” is a menace and likewise one who leaves the dirty jobs to others.

Paul points to the fundamental factor when he reminds us that we are “serving the Lord”. Shallowness at this point has been widespread because so many have been deceived by the notion that only specifically Christian work falls into the category of true service. This can be refuted by reference to such passages as Eph. 6:5, 6, where slaves are exhorted to serve, “not with eye-service as men pleasers; but as the servants (redeemed slaves) of Christ, doing the *will of God* from the heart”. When we turn to our verse it could hardly be imagined that all the believers were “full-time workers” in the Lord’s service. In fact at that stage it may well have been that there were few, if any, elders or deacons who were able to devote all their time to the church in the way we describe as “full-time”.

The New Testament idea is that every believer is a full-time Christian worker—the mother in her home, the child at school, the worker in the factory and the accountant at his desk. We are all serving the Lord. Every day we ought, therefore, to avoid sloth. A joyful, driving, vitality should characterise all we do. See Jesus, in the most awesome work ever to be undertaken, stepping out before His disciples toward Jerusalem—to die for our sins! (Mark 10:32). Shall we be flabby layabouts in our callings which require little sacrifice in comparison to His?

The word “spirit” probably refers to our human spirit (cf. Rom. 1:9, I Thess. 5:23), although not infrequently the term has been taken to refer to the Holy Spirit. In this case the text would read, “fervent in the Holy Spirit”. This interpretation does not conflict with the context in any way and certainly reminds us of our responsibility to be filled with the Holy Ghost. It is appropriate that in all matters we should seek to walk after the Spirit. This should not be thought of as a mystical, inexplicable experience. It involves a conscious understanding of the precepts of God and a conscious dependance on the Holy Spirit to fulfil them.

We see then that all our activities should fall under the description of the Lord’s service and that these activities should be characterised by fervency. There should be an unmistakable quality about a Christian’s service, both in his attitude to his work and in the actual execution of it.

2. Finding the Correct Vocation and Attending to it with Fervour

Paul declares that the believer should stay in the same vocation in which he finds himself when converted (I Cor. 7:20). In other words, unless immorality is involved in his job, in all likelihood he has found the work to which he is most suited and should stay in it.

Suitability for a vocation cannot be stressed enough. No matter how zealous a believer may be, if he is ill-suited in the matter of his daily vocation his testimony will be marred. There is a sense in which he is already a speckled bird but if he is a clumsy and inept bird as well he will not receive much mercy from others.

We are required to recognise a wide variety of gifts in a local church. This is illustrated in the preceding context which in effect declares that each person finding his sphere of service should attend to it with wholehearted devotion. Literally translated (omitting the words in italics which appear in our A.V.) the text reads: "Or ministry, *ministering*; or teaching, *in the teaching*; or the exhorting, *in the exhortation*; the sharing, *in simplicity*, the taking the lead, *in diligence*; the showing mercy, *in cheerfulness*".

When stated in this way the full force is seen. If a man has practical deaconing work to perform let him concentrate on that—let him get on with it. If a man is called to be a teacher, let him apply himself to it in a wholehearted way. If a brother is given to exhortation and truly possesses that unusual ability to raise the spirits of the downhearted without getting their backs up—let him use the gift. As for the giver, he too must be diligent. The essential need in his case is for simplicity. Giving must be directed by the Spirit of the Lord. The result of this is that the right amount is given at the right time. This involves prayerfulness. But the simplicity surely indicates that the giver must not sound a trumpet before him. Silently and unobtrusively he ministers as directed by the great Giver of all gifts, and as should be the case in every service, looks not to men for praise or honour, but desires only to please Him who is the King.

Then there are those who show mercy. Here we think of doctors, nurses and the whole host of people who attend to the very young, the very old, the infirmed, the handicapped or the unfortunate. In this realm cheerfulness is essential. A grudging, grumbling nurse deprives her patients of the encouragement they so much need. She may be efficient and hard-working, but failure in her spirit, in that she is not cheerful, is tantamount to sloth. The singular appropriateness of this quality of cheerfulness is seen when we reflect on the disagreeable and taxing demands that frequently fall upon those whose calling involves showing mercy in this way.

Now imagine a local church where all the believers function together in harmony, like the limbs of a fit athlete. Every part of the body assists the rest. Every one has a part to play. No grouching, no backbiting, no jealousy, no griping (some use the term "bellyaching" for grumbling)—everyone in the body keen and zealous to contribute to the overall cause, irrespective of the exacting or humble nature of the task.

Let me illustrate the spirit of harmony that is sometimes found in firms of architects. One architect may be gifted in running the office, another in dealing with clients, another in preparing working drawings and another in the actual design or concept of the buildings. Happiness and prosperity lie in the recognition of this diversity of gifts. We are generally happiest in the work to which we are best suited. As each gift complements the overall pattern, so prosperity is likely. The client is happy with the attention he receives, the building has a beautiful aesthetic touch, the details are well supervised. Each member of the team has played his part. But once let a quarrelsome, interfering, niggling or critical spirit predominate and life becomes miserable for the whole firm. Likewise in a publishing house—there are editors, proof-readers, book-keepers, clerks and packers. There is the sales and advertising department and there is the production manager who collates the details of production, including art-work. The latter detail in itself is interesting since too often people imagine that they know what good art-work is when they really have no artistic acumen at all! But in reference to the whole firm how satisfying it all is when there is a fine team spirit. Humility is needed by all members of a staff or church. How interesting to observe that Paul prefaces the context of Romans 12 with the words: *"For I say, through the grace given to me, to every man that is among you, not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think; but to think soberly"* (verse 3).

The question of the right calling is so important that it deserves separate treatment. It is realised, of course, that in modern society this question is becoming more difficult. Nevertheless let every man examine himself and have others give an assessment of his gifts and abilities. Much unhappiness would be avoided if more attention was paid to finding the correct vocation. But once a person has found his niche, the calling for which he is equipped in God's providence, let him then devote himself wholly to it. Balance, of course, is required. Time allotment to work, to the family, and the church, will be easier when there is efficiency, and when productivity in work is high.

3. Specific Qualities to be Maintained

Our age has its peculiar demands when it comes to business. As moral values (which can be traced back to Christian revivals or awakenings) break down, we see the inadequacy of our present generation to meet these demands. Without divine intervention the situation is likely to deteriorate further. Teachers from a variety of schools report an increase of immorality, violence, carelessness and apathy among the students. They express their fears for the future.

Christians may be few but their influence is great. Just as a little salt affects a whole meal, so one believer can influence a whole factory. Just

as one globe can fill several thousand cubic feet with light, so one faithful and diligent Christian can affect a whole sector of the community. Bearing in mind our twentieth-century way of life, the following factors play an important part in contributing to efficiency, and deserve attention.

Wisdom

Wisdom can be defined as "putting knowledge into practice in the best possible way". Wisdom is the application of experience to difficult situations. Our leaders and statesmen frequently face the most terrible predicaments and we wonder how they can survive without being driven to their knees to seek true insight and understanding which comes from God. Discretion or wisdom needs to temper, refine and polish all the points we are to consider. Wisdom is gained by asking God for it. Joseph possessed wisdom in Egypt and Daniel in Babylon. True wisdom comes from above and increases as the Christian grows in grace and knowledge.

Care for detail—accuracy

If a farmer's furrows are not straight he may lose some of the crop but no irreparable damage is likely. A great deal in our modern age requires more scrupulous attention to detail. The pharmacist, the air pilot and the surgeon have other lives in their hands. Even the common car driver can kill by a single lapse of concentration or a wrong signal.

The economist cannot afford an oversight, and in legal matters (as we have seen recently in Britain in regard to the Industrial Relations Bill) mistakes can be disastrous. The architect's dimensions and the engineer's drawings require the same careful attention to detail—checking and cross-checking. Bankers hardly need reminding that the books either balance or they do not, and that work is only completed when the balance is found.

Yet so much shoddy work is to be seen. House decorators will overlook parts they think may not be inspected, and deficiencies in manufactured goods are legion. Often sheer dishonesty is involved in "cutting the corners"—in omission either of detail, or of material which forms part of a contract.

Truthfulness

Secretaries and others often have difficulty in business life when expected to tell lies. Who can be really trusted in business? What about the payment of bills? Some firms try to escape payment altogether, and if that fails they work on the basis that payment is delayed as long as possible. After all, money can earn interest. It would be good if a "pay within thirty days" rule could apply everywhere. "Tax fiddles" are

so common that many do not regard it as theft. The Christian needs to be scrupulously honest in making tax returns.

Christians affected by the low standards which prevail, can err, sometimes badly, in this area. The commandment "thou shalt not steal" is absolute. Sometimes pressure of work is the cause of inadvertence. Rearrangement of time schedules may help. "To every thing there is a season, and a time to every purpose under heaven" (Eccles. 3:1).

Truthfulness includes honesty and reliability in keeping delivery dates. The over-optimistic are not the best heads of departments responsible for making promises. Often, publishers fail here, but soon learn to allow for delays of all kinds!

Respect

One of the disadvantages of large organisations, is that there is little sense of responsibility on the part of many employees. A man working in his family business is much more likely to be careful about the way in which he treats his customers.

A basic tenet of the Gospel is the dignity of man because he is made in the image of God. We are to love our neighbours as ourselves. Here is scope for those whose work involves them with the public.

And in regard to respect it is important to answer letters. Some ministers are guilty of sloth in this department. Even if they are busy they should find time to acknowledge letters as a matter of concern for the interests of others.

It is important that we should contend for respect in public relations. The situation has become so bad that all too often people just shrug their shoulders in despair, as they feel there is no court of appeal. It will help if we declare our reasons for believing in these standards. For instance, I was once reminded of this when on a long journey by train. Suddenly one of the passengers turned to me and without any introduction commented on the dirty state of the stations through which we were passing. This led to the reason why people did not care, and in turn to a long and detailed conversation concerning the moral law, Jesus Christ and salvation.

Appearance and cleanliness

It is not by chance that unkempt appearance has accompanied the advent of poor standards in business and life generally. If a doctor is unable to keep himself clean, this undermines confidence in his ability to keep his instruments sterilised. If a restaurant waiter is filthy, one wonders to what extent the kitchen is infested with cockroaches! If a letter is

received which, apart from errors and poor layout, is dog-eared and grubby, it destroys confidence in the ability of the firm.

Employers have every right to demand definite standards as to the appearance and cleanliness of employees. A regular use of bath, comb and brush, dry-cleaner and boot polish are beneficial exercises for a generation where shabbiness has become acceptable.

Timekeeping

Those of philosophic and artistic temperament may find the requirement of keeping to set times more irksome than those who by nature are businesslike. Efficiency not only in timekeeping but in other details comes more easily to some nations. Many factors bear upon this subject, such as natural ability, background, climate and tradition. But whether we find it difficult or not, contract agreements must be kept. Withholding of time, or wrong use of time, constitutes a form of theft. To arrive late or to leave early without making good the deficiency is to steal.

Cheerfulness

Solomon wrote "a merry heart maketh a cheerful countenance" (Prov. 15:13). Bridges, in his commentary, says that "a man's countenance is the index of his spirit", and quotes Rutherford, who declared that he wondered whether a child of God should ever have a sad heart, considering what his Lord is preparing for him. The joy of the Lord gives strength and this joy can only be inspired and sustained as the truth is understood, meditated upon and carried home in all the fullness of its meaning by the Holy Spirit.

Lamenting the evils of the day should not be an excuse for being miserable. Jeremiah denounced the sins of his generation but at the same time testified: "Thy word was unto me the joy and rejoicing of mine heart" (Jer. 15:16).

A glad and joyful spirit cannot be imitated with success. Keeping up a hearty but superficial "praise the Lord" front will only irritate people. The *heart* must be joyful, and where this is the case others will be cheered, "a merry heart doeth good like a medicine: but a broken spirit drieth the bones" (Prov. 17:22). A cheerful, energetic and imaginative spirit is a boon to any enterprise, but a depressed, lethargic and pessimistic attitude is a liability.

Patience

A spirit of frustration, impatience and cursing is everywhere abroad. In contrast to this, the believer, having the nature of Christ, is meek, long-suffering and patient.

In London I once watched a van driver and a bus driver argue like two fighting cocks while everyone was waiting. Nothing was achieved by the war of words.

Turning to the Proverbs again we read that "he that hath no rule over his own spirit is like a city that is broken down" (Prov. 25:28). Self-control in the face of trial, the incompetence of others, losses or one's own oversights, constitutes a vital part of Christian testimony.

It is far from easy to be patient if work is monotonous, repetitive and unrewarding. No doubt part of our industrial problem is caused by many employees gaining no satisfaction from their work. To be patient does not mean merely accepting such a situation. A Christian should be in the forefront of every effort to make working life more interesting and creative.

Loyalty

Loyalty means faithfulness in duty and allegiance to one's family, firm or country. Loyalty is mutual. Employers who treat their employees well, should be able to depend upon loyalty in return. When little loyalty is exhibited, it surely behoves the Christian to give the right example.

Some managers, unfortunately, rate the successful man more highly than the man who is faithful to the firm. Thus the latter may be passed by without much ceremony in the rat-race of an inhuman business community. It is very difficult for a Christian, unless he has managerial responsibility, to improve such procedures.

Of course, our first loyalty is to truth, and a Christian who has no alternative but to work for a firm in which much is to be deplored is faced with a grim predicament. He can hardly lie about products which do not come up to scratch, but it may be his business to keep to a certain level of sales. Other openings may not be possible. Such situations demand wisdom and courage and sometimes serious loss to those who know that they must maintain a clear conscience.

Conclusion

We have not examined every aspect of diligence. Yet it can be seen that much is expected from the Christian. He has an additional sphere in which he is wholly engaged, namely, the spiritual. He has to wrestle against principalities and powers which conspire to destroy his testimony. The unbeliever has no such warfare to distract him. Nevertheless the Christian has great blessing and the privilege of daily communion with Father, Son and Holy Spirit. If the Lord Himself is with us, we ought to be victorious in being diligent in all the business of life.

Local secular newspapers present an opportunity for presenting the truth. The following article was published recently in "The Mid-Sussex Times".

The Greatest Need

IN A RECENT ISSUE OF "THE MID-SUSSEX TIMES", DIFFERENT MINISTERS voiced their reactions to the failure of the Methodist-Anglican reunion scheme. One could recognise the evangelical ministers by the way they expressed their misgivings. Their caution concerning the ecumenical movement can be appreciated.

An evangelical is one who believes the Bible in a literal sense—that it is the record of God's actions as He revealed Himself through the prophets of Israel, through Christ His Son, and through the Apostles. An evangelical holds to the expectation of a universal resurrection at the end of the world followed by the Great Judgment and then an eternity for all individuals in heaven or hell. The necessity of the new birth (a change of heart) forms part of his belief.

It is impossible, therefore, for evangelicals to compromise on these issues. That would be a denial of "the faith" (Jude 4). Therefore evangelicals—and they are found in varying proportions in all major protestant denominations—are very uneasy about the ecumenical movement since it is built not according to truth, but at the expense of truth. It is impossible to divorce Christianity from the divine revelation that forms its foundation. The central import of this revelation is that man is lost and the only way of salvation for him is by faith in Jesus Christ. To miss that is to miss everything. But salvation by faith in Christ is possible only where the truth about Christ is known. This truth is called "the Word of God" or "the word of truth" (Eph. 1:13). Men receive salvation by receiving this word.

Now where would Paul and the Apostles stand in regard to perversion of this truth? Paul's tone is startling as he pronounces imprecations upon any who pervert the way of salvation. People say today that so long as a minister is sincere that is enough, but Paul says that even if an angel pronounces that which is contrary to God's way of salvation he is accursed (Gal. 1:8). To pollute the spring of eternal life was as criminal to Paul as the addition of arsenic to our water supply would be to the Water Board of our day. In this Paul was, of course, following Christ, who, when He prayed for unity, prayed for it within the context of truth and not at the cost of truth.

If we examine Christ's prayer (John 17), we will see how far removed His unity is from the unity of the denominations of our day. The class of people for whom He prays are: (1) Those whom the Father gives Him, which implies divine election and calling (verse 9); (2) those who are separated from the world (verses 14-16); (3) those who have received eternal life (verse 2); (4) those who have an intimate, personal, conscious knowledge of union with Christ and the Father (verse 3); (5) those who are made holy by the truth (verse 17).

Precisely because leaders of the great religious body of His day opposed the reality of these essentials, Christ denounced them as "blind leaders of the blind", "hypocrites", "whited sepulchres" and "serpents".

Are we to imagine that there are no counterparts of the Pharisees in history? Invariably great religious magnates have persecuted minority groups. I was reminded of this recently when George Constantinides, a Greek evangelical, was summoned to appear in a criminal court in Pyrgos, Greece. The Orthodox Church of Greece, which claims to represent 98 per cent. of the population and is a member of the World Council of Churches, was behind the summons. George was guilty of the crime of circulating Greek New Testaments and a 48-page booklet entitled, "Reconciliation with God". The charge has been made despite the fact that George's ministry has the consent of the present Greek Government.

Christianity's most pressing need is not unity of masses of people whose adherence to and grasp of the Gospel is minimal. The most urgent need is for a recovery of the dynamic message of the Apostles which turned the world upside down. Those who are transformed by this Gospel have a unity which is part and parcel of their faith. This unity has to be maintained but it can never, on account of its spiritual nature, be manufactured or organised by committees or organisations.

To me the ecumenical movement is as unsound as Constantine's edict pronouncing all the world to be Christian when in fact nothing was further from the truth. On the other hand, I find a dynamic unity with believers within different denominations because the facets described by our Lord in His prayer form the basis of that union, and go back to where we began. Our church at Cuckfield would sympathise with those who voiced their misgivings recently.

Terence Aldridge examines the question of the prayer of faith found in James 5:13-15, with particular reference to the way in which this has been interpreted in the past. Views on this question vary considerably but whatever the feelings of the reader he is likely to concede the value of the information which follows.

Miraculous Healing Today?

IT WOULD SEEM AXIOMATIC THAT DURING PERIODS OF DECLENSION IN THE Church, attention is diverted from the primary and fundamental, indeed the spiritual, aspects of the gospel and the Christian life, to those which are secondary and more in the nature of derivations. So the gospel of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ becomes a social gospel. The welfare of the soul is displaced by the welfare of the body and mind. Fellowship turns into sociability. The Kingdom of God, which is "not of this world", transmutes into a kingdom having pronounced earthly connotations and even delineations. This undoubtedly accounts in part for the renewed interest in faith healing. Lourdes, of course, has been with us since Bernadette Soubirous had her visions in 1858, but it is essentially a 20th century phenomenon. So are the healing campaigns promoted among certain sections of the Christian Church, and by numerous independent itinerating evangelists. Likewise, Christian Science emphasises the preoccupation with the relationship of health and disease. The neopentecostal movement, similarly, devotes intense interest to faith healing. These may well be some of the reasons for a revived interest in the importance and relevance of the statement found in James 5:13-15. With the development of modern medicine has the Christian community become too secularised in its approach to disease? What place has the Church in this area? If the answer is in the affirmative then in what way, and to what extent?

The literature dealing with this passage is copious and historically extensive. The church-fathers Irenaeus, Tertullian, Eusebius and Jerome concerned themselves with it, as did the Reformers, the Puritans, and the numerous commentators of the 19th century, down to B. B. Warfield and others in modern times. Moreover, it is yet another facet of the historical cleavage between the Eastern and Western Church, in as much as the Greek Orthodox Church practises to this day, as part of its normal pastoral ministry, the injunctions of James for the ministration to the sick; while the Roman Catholic practises it as *extremae unctionis*, not to recover the sick but to prepare them for death. Naturally such comprehensive material, covering so long a period of time, contains divergent and sometimes contradictory views. Nevertheless, a broad consensus of

opinion emerges as to the meaning and relevance of the passage, which we shall arrive at after having examined the problems involved.

The context forms a kind of summary of instructions in Christian behaviour, which the writer binds upon believers while they await the return in glory of the Lord. This James expected to occur within their life-time: "Be patient therefore, brethren, unto the coming of the Lord" (v. 7). He takes examples from nature and history to exhort to patient, peaceable, upright living until the realisation of the "great hope". He deals with human relationships and the vicissitudes of life, and puts all these within the context of being "patient unto the coming", insisting that all these require spiritual attitudes. Dishonesty is inimical with the nature of a Christian. Affliction is not "a run of bad luck", but an incentive for prayer. Being merry is not the precursor of debauchery, but of joyful praising of God in the singing of psalms. And sickness (the Greek implies grave illness) is not a retreat into private misery and torment, but an entrance into the sympathetic, spiritual involvement of the whole church through the medium of the elders. Surely, "He setteth the solitary in families".

James makes a number of propositions, the first of which would command general agreement: that it is the *duty* of the gravely ill to inform the elders of the church of his condition and solicit their help. He is not to wait for the minister, but to call! There is also an intensely practical point at issue. The afflicted can pray; the merry are capable of singing; but the desperately ill usually find the state of the spirit to be acutely affected by the state of the body, and spiritual exercises become extraordinarily difficult. Furthermore, here is the concept of the gathered Church, the Body of Christ *in loco*—one member, one part of which is in mortal danger, the possible loss of which would profoundly affect the whole.

Equally, James' second proposition would command general agreement, and constitutes the practice of the pastoral ministry at all times, namely that prayer should be offered on behalf of the sick for their recovery and blessing. John Mayer, one of the earliest of the Puritans, recounts his constant experience, not only in the practice of this, but its effectiveness in the relief and recovery of the sick.

The Text Examined

But at this point the difficulties of exegesis arise, for James makes three additional statements. First, there is to be an anointing with oil in the name of the Lord; secondly, the "prayer of faith", which *shall* save the sick, is to be offered; and, thirdly, there is to be forgiveness of sins. Two questions arise. Is James proposing an alternative to conventional medicine to be practised in the routine life of the church? Let there be

no misunderstanding, this would mean miraculous healing because of the absence both of "physick" and physician—the miraculous reversal of the natural course of disease (compare Mark 6:13 with Matt. 10:1-8, and Luke 9:1-6). The second question is whether James is laying down a continuing regulative principle, not only for Apostolic times but subsequent church-times.

Let us look at the three statements separately, and then draw conclusions. There can be no question that anointing with oil in Biblical times (as well as before and after) was used in both a medicinal and sacramental sense. No doubt, at times, both were intended simultaneously. In a medicinal sense it relieves pain and tones-up tissues. In a sacramental sense it denotes authority. The anointing of kings and priests in the Old Testament, as well as the practice of anointing the sick by the apostles in the New Testament (Mark 6:13), illustrates that the persons performing this were authorised by God—"in the Name of the Lord". However, both these aspects of anointing with oil are questionable in the modern context. No medical authority today would ascribe curative powers to a topical application of olive oil, adequate to deal with grave sickness. Few patients in such condition would do so either! Is there then any warrant from Scripture for accrediting the elders with a divine authority similar to that granted to those who anointed the kings and priests to their offices, and to the apostles who miraculously cured the sick? It must be pointed out that James, in fact, accords no curative power to the oil, but attributes this to the prayer of faith. Alford rightly states that the anointing had sacramental significance, not medicinal.

In the next place we must discuss the meaning of the "prayer of faith". We find that a four-fold answer can be advanced. First, the prayer of faith is one of the charismatic gifts as instanced in I Cor. 12:9. It is the gift of the Holy Spirit by which the elders, in this case, have received an exceptional degree of faith in the ability and power of the Lord to heal. In exercising this faith by prayer, they restore the sick. Broadly speaking, this is the pentecostal and neo-pentecostal position. Second, the prayer is a "given" faith, by which divine assurance is given in a particular case, that the Lord is willing to grant recovery, and a petition to this effect is then offered. The first and second view differ in that the one is general, the other restricted to particular instances. There are some in Reformed circles who hold this view. Third, the extraordinary element of both the charismatic and the "given" faith are dismissed by defining the "prayer of faith" to be inherent in the office and calling of the elders. Writes Bishop Andrewes: "Every priest taken from among men is ordained for men in things pertaining to God (Heb. 5:1), that he may offer prayers; the prayers he offereth he offereth out of his office, and so, even in that respect there is, *caeteris paribus*, more force and energy in them, than in those that come from another whose calling it is not so to do"

(Bishop Andrewes, *Sermons*, 5, 230-231). An identical view would be defended by Bishop Hooker. Fourth, while subscribing to the third as a general principle, the "prayer of faith" is interpreted to be a glad and wholehearted submission to the will of God, who will do only what is best and in keeping with His perfect and good will; who either will give power to recover, or grace to endure: "Thy will be done". This view finds the widest support, both among the Puritans, such as John Mayer, as well as more modern commentators, such as Barnes.

The third statement of James makes reference to the forgiveness of sins. It is usually explained in this way: there are numerous instances where sinful living in general, and some sins in particular, result in physical disease. Clearly this is the import of our Lord's words to the paralytic at the pool of Bethesda: "Go, and sin no more". Where this is the case, the calling of the elders by the sick person in his concern for the need for prayer, indicates repentance and public sorrow for sin. Here, the recovery of health becomes the evident token of the mercy of God, not merely in the restoration of physical health by the removal of disease, but of a spiritual restoration by the forgiveness of sin.

The Historical Aspect

Having discussed these three statements there is a further factor to be considered—the historical. Our thinking must be theological, yet it cannot be divorced from what has happened in history. Was this injunction ever generally observed by the Church, and if so to what extent and with what result? (It must be observed that this is a unique statement, to which there is no counterpart in the epistles of Paul.) Bishop Wordsworth has valuable comments to make at this juncture:

"For a considerable time the Church retained the gift of healing (*Irenaeus* vol. 5:6; *Tertullian*, *de Bapt.* c. 10; *Euseb.* vol. 5:7; *S. Jerome*, *vit.*; *Sup. Sever. vit Martini*, c. 15) and the practice of anointing with oil, with a view to recovery from sickness, was continued in the Eastern and Western Churches. Indeed . . . it is continued in the Eastern Church to this day for this purpose . . . The Latin Church has adopted a different course. She perceived in course of time that the effect mentioned by St. James ('the Lord shall raise up the sick') did not ordinarily ensue from the anointing with oil; she saw that the miraculous and extraordinary powers of healing granted by Christ to the Apostles and other primitive disciples in the Apostolic ages, had gradually been withdrawn, as was the case with those other miraculous gifts, coupled with that of healing by St. Paul (*I Cor.* 12:28), viz., the gift of tongues. But she would not lay aside the practice of anointing the sick. She retained the practice, but abandoned the design for which the practice had been instituted. At length, in the 12th and 13th centuries, the Latin Church had diverted the practice into a direction quite contrary to the purpose for which it was originally prescribed . . . The Apostle St. James had enjoined the practice with a view to the recovery of the sick . . . but the Church of Rome prescribes, in the Councils of Florence (A.D. 1436) and Trent (A.D. 1551), that the anointing should not take place except where recovery is not to be looked for . . . and therefore she calls this anointing extreme unction, and she regards it as a Sacrament for conveying grace to the soul. Thus, on the one hand, the Greek Church is a witness by her present practice, that the anointing was designed with a view to bodily recovery; and the

Roman Church, on the other hand, is a witness, that the miraculous effects on the body, which were wrought in primitive times by God through the instrumentality of those who anointed the sick, and which accompanied that unction, have ceased."

It is at this point that the broad consensus of opinion emerges. First, that the healing here spoken of is miraculous; second, that the miraculous gifts ceased with the apostolic era. John Trapp (1656) wrote: "Anointing with oil, an extraordinary sign of an extraordinary cure . . . used as an outward symbol and sign till miracles ceased". Matthew Poole: "Anointing, an outward rite used in those times in miraculously healing sick persons, which might be kept up while the gift whereof it was the symbol continued; but the gift ceasing it is vainly used. Faith in prayer to show that this remedy was effectual only when faith (requisite to the workings of miracles) was active". Dr. Hammond: "Anointing is not now a ceremony of any propriety or fitness for use, the gift of miraculous healing being not now pretended to in the Church". Dr. John Owen: "I am apt to think that the gift was communicated in an especial manner unto the elders of the churches, even that were ordinary and fixed, it being of so great use and such singular comfort unto them that were poor and persecuted; which was the condition of many churches and their members in those days". John Howe: "The prayer of faith shall save the sick: that is in those days, when the state of things did to the divine wisdom make it necessary that frequent miracles should be wrought for the confirmation of Christianity". To these may be added the voices of Patrick, Lowth, Whitby, Doddridge, Macknight, Benson, Barnes, B. B. Warfield and many others.

Dr. Barnes succinctly comments, "It is proper to call the ministers of religion in time of sickness, and to ask their counsels and their prayers. It is proper to use the ordinary means of restoration to health. It was proper then, as it is now, to do this 'in the Name of the Lord' . . . And it was proper then, as it is now, having made use of these means, to implore the divine blessing upon them. Thus used, there was good ground of hope and of faith in regard to the recovery of the sufferer".

John Howe divides James's injunction into two parts. First, "that there was something in this matter extraordinary, and appropriate to the times; second, somewhat ordinary and common to all times. We are to distinguish the one and the other".

Conclusions

We live in confusing and perplexing times. Men, even spiritual men, clutch at straws. In a barren era there is a desperate hunger for spiritual life and vitality. With this deep concern for spiritual reality we have every sympathy. But this must not allow us to give way to intemperate

zeal, which is not according to knowledge or which is not supported by Scripture. We must avoid the road which leads to false experiences and ultimately to spiritual disillusionment and frustration. It is at best the height of unkindness, at worst a terrible fraud, falsely to raise the hopes of those in a desperate extremity by any practice unwarranted by Scripture and unsupported by experience. It is true that there have been cases of recovery in the "miraculous" sense of this discussion. It is equally true, however, that the vast majority of these occur in functional rather than organic disease. More important still, it would be difficult to define the mechanism of the recovery either within the context of the procedures employed in faith healing or of the statement in James as to how the recovery is accomplished. The valuable contribution to this discussion by Dr. Lloyd-Jones, entitled *The Supernatural in Medicine*, sheds a great deal of light, especially upon the relationship between health and disease, and the factors which disturb that balance in either direction.

The consensus of opinion of those who have earned the respect of the people of God through the ages for their godliness and discernment is that the charismatic gifts ceased with the apostles and those directly influenced by them. This is not to say that God is not able to act where and when He pleases in any miraculous way that is pleasing to Him but we are concerned here with what is to be regarded as normal procedure in the churches. He may intervene with supernatural power but Scripture is always to be the basis of our practice, not this or that experience to which brethren may give testimony.

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True Spirituality

By Francis Schaeffer. Hodder and Stoughton. £2.

A review by Ray Gaydon, who is a member of Coldharbour Evangelical Church.

FRANCIS SCHAEFFER'S LATEST PUBLICATION, COMPOSED OF A NUMBER OF sermons and entitled *True Spirituality*, is currently selling well. No doubt the intriguing title coupled with the mystique surrounding the author's name have induced many to buy this book.

Apart from one or two notable exceptions, it is rare to publish sermons nowadays but the Schaeffers have already successfully launched at least ten other books, and perhaps it is to be expected that this one will find initial acceptance on the merits of previous works. Whilst not wishing to be hostile to such an outstanding man, one does wonder whether he is not constantly persuaded to rush into print whilst the *charisma* is still good. Complaints have been heard that one or two of his later books are a little thin on the ground in places.

The Preface to the present work seems to suggest that the ensuing treatise is autobiographical in terms of a particularly crucial spiritual pilgrimage, whereas in reality the chapters are "straight" sermons containing the occasional personal reference. They are in no way comparable to the baring of the anguished soul as is familiar and customary in personal spiritual manuals. The reviewer, therefore, found the Preface slightly misleading. The sermons themselves are not too discursive, but they are occasionally pedestrian due in places to unnecessary repetition. Editing could have been done to good effect. Even so, if you have the time to read these addresses you will not be too disappointed as they are generally both readable and interesting, giving an insight into Schaeffer's theology and expository gifts. It is the "pastor" and not the "doctor" who comes through the distinctive conversational and undramatic style. The subjects of sin, justification and the Christian life are dealt with clearly. In particular, the short section which relates to psychological problems is well worth reading for a basic understanding of the Biblical approach.

Dr. Schaeffer always has something meaningful to say and this book is an example in the context of the ministry of the Word. It is well produced but the price of £2 may deter some.

Peter Savage has been engaged in missionary work in South America for about 15 years. One of his main concerns is the training of pastors (elders) who are unable to leave their churches or their employment for full-time study in traditional residential colleges. Week or weekend seminars held at intervals, together with reading courses form the basis of the training, which has been very effective and beneficial. There are about 5,000 now studying in this way in Latin America. Lest any should think that Peter is just out "to get at" Bible colleges in the following interview with the editor, it should be remembered that his work is based at a seminary which has its own residential programme. It is one thing to draw attention to the grave weaknesses of the present system but another to bring about reformation.

Reformation in Ministerial Training

Peter, having read your articles and heard you address a large gathering of ministers on the question of training I can assure you that there is much sympathy for the views you hold. From experience we have come to see increasingly that the local church is the best place to train for the ministry and that the requirements of eldership recorded in the pastoral epistles must be scrupulously observed. A gifted man can develop through the opportunities provided in a church and in the course of time be recognised by the church as one called to eldership. This does not mean that Bible colleges are useless but certainly large question marks arise when we think of the liberalism spawned in seminaries and of those who coming from theological institutions have proved unsuitable. Could you give a thumb-nail sketch showing how Bible colleges came into being and how they became liberal?

The main thrust of the Bible college movement, independent from the university, came into being between 1717 and 1810 due to reaction to the academic theological approach in the universities, and I am speaking now mainly of Great Britain. At first the emphasis was the congregating of the candidates for the ministry round some well-known ministers who had shone in academic studies. There was limited emphasis on withdrawing them into the "schola" atmosphere for undistracted and quiet study in a secluded spot in the countryside. Rather the emphasis was on the teacher-student relationship. As time went on, the concept of truth as an academic pursuit became uppermost in many colleges. This involved bigger and bigger libraries and quieter and quieter residential life to aid intellectual reflection. And so life in the colleges became

detached, serious-minded students being taken up in digesting the packets of truth "once delivered to the saints". The full impact of daily life was omitted and the real challenges to the Christian faith missed.

And then, Erroll, you ask why, in the history of the Church, many Bible colleges, which started as evangelical even to the point of writing into their constitution clauses to safeguard themselves from liberalism, have ended in liberalism. Is there an inherent weakness that will inevitably lead Bible colleges to liberalism two or three generations after inception? Liberalising influences have in some cases come from the churches. On the whole, however, it has been the seminary which has influenced the Church. Could it be due to loss of daily relationship with the experiences, realities and heartaches of life in the church that Bible colleges drift into liberalism? Is it because of depersonalised concern for truth? Is it because there is no meaningful involvement in responsibility within the context of the local church? Is it because attention is focused on intellectual and theoretical problems rather than personal contact with the great daily practical matter of salvation of people from a lost eternity? These questions suggest an answer to your question.

But turning more to the contemporary scene, one of the difficulties we face is that those leaving school who feel they have a call to the ministry need to take advantage of a government grant and study at a recognised institution of learning while they have the opportunity. This means that they must submit to a course that is not necessarily relevant to the needs of a local church. They come out of college and expect to take pastoral charge of a church. Failure often ensues. Peter, do you have suggestions as to how this short-cut route can be discouraged?

There is no easy answer to this but it would be helpful to all if we referred to the Scriptures. We could also be explicit about the dangers of the short-cut approach.

There is no doubt that in Scripture we find a pattern that is established in the Old and the New Testaments. The man that is chosen for training into the ministry is, with one or two exceptions, the older and more mature man. I mean psychological maturity—that is, emotional stability: possibly a married man, with mature judgment in human affairs, a man established and experienced in daily life with all its problems, crises, and frustrations, and who proves reliable in secular employment. In the community in which he lived, he was recognised as a man of maturity. Further, the Biblical pattern required a man of spiritual maturity, with a recognised gift demonstrated in a local situation, and who had proved his stability when life was difficult. Having stated the guiding principle, we must now look at an apparent exception—Timothy.

He and Mark are the only exceptions noted in the New Testament. Mark had certain weaknesses and on Paul's first missionary journey he turned back. Later, it would seem that he made good. Timothy is the real exception. He was mature both psychologically and spiritually beyond his years and at an early age had demonstrated his gifts and calling. What does this mean for us? It means that the norm should be the mature, stable man, who has demonstrated his call and gifts in ministry.

For close on 1,800 years in church history this pattern has not been observed. Rather, the emphasis—with exceptions such as the early days of Spurgeon's pastors' college and the Log College—has been on the unmarried young man who is a *promising* candidate for the ministry.

And now to comment on dangers of the short-cut to the ministry. One danger is that of the "ministerial trap", whereby the young man, due to his immaturity, is moved by some fantasy to enter training and then the ministry, only to wake up one day in a pastoral situation, trapped! He realises that he is not called or gifted for the pastoral ministry, but he cannot contract out. If he opts out of the ministry, he leaves with a stigma of being a spiritual failure, which can have a traumatic effect upon his character and undermine his future. If he does not have the courage to get out, he develops a formal and perhaps professional approach to his ministry. This can be killing to the church and create a deadening experience for the young man.

Another pitfall is that a man who has little involvement with secular life before and during his training will limit the effectiveness of his ministry. While he may have intellectual appreciation of the acute problems facing his congregation, he has not felt the emotional depth of these experiences. For an effective ministry, a man must experience his message. Truth can only be fully communicated in as much as each minister has tested in depth those living, daily experiences.

This in turn creates a further danger, the "pulpit-pew gap". While the preacher may be declaring the full message within the context of his training, the congregation feels that he is both preaching over their heads and outside the context of their real situation. This may mean that the minister will feel more at home with fellow graduates, talking and sharing the life for which they seemingly were trained in the college, while feeling uncomfortable in the presence of one of his congregation. Because of the young man's lack of a broad-based experience of life, his approach to the Word of God is theoretical. Unconsciously he may feel that truth is a series of packets digested for exams. This could lead him in his ministry to require from his congregation a mere digestion of intellectual facts about the truth.

Yes, I would like to add that it takes years for anyone dealing with pastoral problems really to get experience as to how to handle difficulties well. This can only be learned in a living situation.

For my part let me say that I have been thrilled to be involved in the new extension approach. This means we are in contact with mature candidates of 35 to 45 years of age. Whether it is studying books of the Bible, church history, theology or philosophy of religion the questions and discussions are all relevant to the "living" church situation.

All this boils down to the fact that the Biblical pattern is the healthiest approach to the training for the ministry. The short-cut does not pay in the long run, whether we consider the church or the minister himself. All those involved in ministerial training must, in the light of their responsibility before the judgment seat of Christ, reevaluate their ministerial requirements. This does not ignore exceptions such as Timothy, but the pattern which must become normal for the ministry is the mature man who has demonstrated in his local church his calling by the practical use of his gifts: the church has become satisfied with his maturity, stability, judgment, discernment and ministry.

Peter, interrupting you at this point, it should be noted that to a considerable extent Bible colleges are caught in a trap in Great Britain because they depend very much on State grants or scholarships given to their students, which has meant in practice receiving students straight from school. In this way potential ministerial candidates are drawn away from the "living" church life and immersed in an academic atmosphere.

Yes, this is true and while thinking of the academic world it is also noteworthy that the most brilliant graduates are chosen to become tutors. These tutors then tend to think in terms of their academic status, the accruing of higher academic honours, with the result that the atmosphere in the seminaries becomes more and more rarified and removed from pastoral realities.

I have heard you lay considerable emphasis that only ministry can train ministry? Only a surgeon can train a doctor to operate, only a joiner can train an apprentice to make furniture. It is obvious that only those involved in the job understand fully the implications of the knowledge and skills that are required. Could you please develop this point a little?

Confusion has come in the objectives of a Bible college. Does it want to award its diploma or degree for professional excellence or academic excellence?

Ministry alone can train ministry! The vast majority of the skills required in pastoral work can only be taught and learned from the ministry and in the ministry. While there could be a place for a trained educator to help the pastor train, the emphasis should not be on the educational specialist but on the minister training the minister.

Once this responsibility of training for the ministry is given exclusively to academic professionals, weaknesses are introduced to the training programme. First, these professionals will not bring to their teaching all the "dynamics" of the ministry, having lost in some measure contact with life and the adequate balance which only daily ministry can give. The study of truth in the abstract often degenerates into an intellectual pursuit, emphasising the polemical and in some cases knocking theological phantom giants that do not exist in real life. Secondly, the curriculum can become frozen into a mould that of itself does not train a man for the ministry.

Peter, we have covered much ground and in this question of ministry training ministry the main issue involved has been aired. However it could be cogently argued that your approach is too much an "either/or" one—either theological training by extension or by traditional Bible colleges. Your method demands a seminary anyway. This involves considerable library and reference resources together with specialised teachers. From experience I can say that it is of immense value to a teaching elder active in the ministry to receive instruction of a high Biblical and spiritual standard at ministers' conferences from time to time, which is a form of training by extension. Also very helpful is fellowship with gifted ministers who succeed in maintaining high standards in their grasp of doctrine and the application of truth to an ever changing spiritual battle. A once-and-for-all training I regard as inadequate. One has to be in training every day and every week. To keep up in isolation is far from ideal.

The question arises as to how the principle of extension of theological education could be used in other countries, but since situations vary so much it will not be possible to deal adequately with this matter now. I am sure the points you have brought out will provoke thought and it is certainly encouraging to know a little of what is being attempted in Latin America. We wish you prosperity in the work of promulgating the truth of the Gospel in Bolivia and other South American countries.

We are considering printing copies of the following article for use as a tract.

Mice and Men

THE YEAR 1985 COULD MARK THE BEGINNING OF THE END FOR MAN. AN experiment with mice led ecologist Dr. J. B. Calhoun to this alarming conclusion. The doctor created his own miniature world of mice and subjected the inhabitants to the pressures of crowding which man is expected to face as a result of population explosion.

The mice became self-centred and aggressive. They ceased to breed. Eventually only 180 disillusioned old mice remained out of the original 2,200. "They were lacking in fulfilment," says Dr. Calhoun.

Commenting on Dr. Calhoun's frightening speculations, the editor of the *Daily Telegraph* (June 23, 1972) suggested that the constant presence of scientists and sociologists may have depressed the mice and affected their morale! The same editor spots the obvious flaw in all these arguments, which is simply that mice are not the same as men.

It is common to find people thinking in terms of man being a high form of animal whose foremost problem is survival (hence the emphasis on ecology), and with this animalistic view of man there is the tendency to think in terms of "animalistic" morals. Modern popular belief can be summed up as follows:

- 1 All things came by chance.
- 2 Man evolved from animals (therefore we can learn much from the behavioural pattern of animals).
- 3 Since there is no God it is up to man to work out for himself the principles by which he can live happily and survive. In other words man's reason is the best and only authority.
- 4 Morals are necessary, but human reason must dictate what is right and wrong.

In stark contrast to this Christians believe:

- 1 There is an eternal, all-powerful Creator who is everywhere present and who upholds all things.
- 2 This personal God created man in His own image; that is, with faculties of intellect and affection, able to reflect with enjoyment both upon the creation and the Creator behind it.

- 3 Far from leaving man to himself God has provided him with *the* revelation (the Scriptures), which has been carefully preserved, and which is reliable and all sufficient for all we need to know about the great issues of life.
- 4 In the ten commandments recorded in the Old Testament and explained in the New, God has provided an absolute standard of morality. All men will be judged by these standards.

If we compare these two outlines of thought we will see how much they differ. The first system inevitably leads to immorality because it follows that if we are nothing more than highly developed animals and there is no authoritative basis for morals, we can please ourselves. Undoubtedly the decline in moral standards, acknowledged on every hand, is due in large measure to this false foundation.

Some maintain that the findings of science make it impossible to accept the doctrines of Christianity. But this is a delusion, possibly the greatest delusion of our times. It is foolish to imagine that all Bible-believing Christians are idiots who are ignorant about science.

Dealing with the points outlined let us examine the difference between modern thinking and the teaching of the Bible.

1. Creation or Evolution?

Scientific investigation is right and helpful since it consists in the observation and analysis of the things we see, feel, touch, hear and smell. But when it comes to the question of how matter came into existence, science is at a loss since it is limited to the observation of tangible things. This can be illustrated by research in medicine. Progress is very slow with some diseases for lack of observable material.

Creation concerns the making of the world out of nothing and this takes us into the realm of the supernatural—that which is beyond the reach of the microscope or the telescope. The supernatural involves faith, for here we are dealing with something in which science flounders.

There are several reasons behind the faith of the Christian but one of these is that he finds that the Bible is wholly consistent in regard to the supernatural. God as a person creates and then orders history, entering it in a series of actions which show unity and purpose from the beginning to the end. God revealed Himself in the lives of Abraham, Moses, the prophets, the apostles and especially the life, death and resurrection of Christ, to which all the former bear witness. Here is a framework in which the God of supernaturalism reveals Himself—a framework which when examined is found to be true and real.

The Christian rejects evolution on the grounds that it conflicts with the Biblical account of creation. In this realm scientists are constantly subject to change and are unreliable. This is illustrated by the science of archaeology which for many years was very critical of the Bible. As further discoveries were made it was found that the Bible was absolutely correct, but as far as we know no archaeologist ever apologised for helping to undermine people's faith in the Gospel. It may sound preposterous to those who are deceived by scientific claims, but remember that popular science is very different from genuine science. Much that is seen on television and in print is fantasy and far removed from genuine science. A Christian accepts God's word as infallible anyway and does not rest his faith on the shifting sands of scientific claims.

To illustrate this, take the contention of some scientists who reject evolution. Then point out the impossibility of man falling into place. It is easier for a *Concorde* airliner to fall into place by chance than for man (who is millions of times more complex than a supersonic airliner) to fall into place by chance. Yet when we come down to detail that is what evolution is saying. Hence we are expected to believe in vast ages as an attempt to make the incredible credible. Those who believe wholeheartedly in the Biblical account of the creation and the flood provide better explanations to questions involved in the history of the world than those who ignore the Bible.

However, it should be stressed that all science in this field, whether pro-Christian or anti-Christian, is subject to much change as more information (and surprisingly little exists in this field) is discovered.

Also important is the fact that people will never be persuaded to believe in the Bible by intellectual arguments alone, as we will see when we discuss the next point.

2. We are Created in God's Image

All men have both a consciousness of God and of morality (a conscience). Originally, when God created man, this knowledge was clear and pure. Then came the fall, the result of which is that all without exception—and no one disputes that all the human race is of one blood—are anti-God and anti-Christ by nature. Far from being free, the mind of man is biased against the truth of God. His nature is sinful and therefore he does not come to the light but avoids it.

Unless man does return to God he will be judged and punished for his life of rebellion against his Creator. Of himself he will never return. This is where the Gospel is good news, because it concerns God's gracious act of coming to people and saving them.

3. The Way of Salvation has been clearly revealed

The way in which God saves men is through Jesus Christ. First, Christ dealt with the problem of guilt. By bearing the punishment due to us He upheld justice. All therefore who believe in Christ have forgiveness. Second, Christ dealt with the problem of a guilty nature. The power to transform character and give it a complete change comes from Christ. Both the gift of faith and the power to live rightly before God come from Christ.

We conclude that so long as people neglect the Scriptures in which Christ is revealed they will be left to wallow in human reason and be as bereft of purpose as the mice were in the hands of the scientist.

4. God has provided clear standards for us to live by

The ten commandments show us how far short we fall in morality. They show us to be under God's condemnation. These same commandments were kept by Christ. His God-nature loved God's law whereas our fallen nature does not. Once we have had a new nature created in us, it does not mean that as Christians we are perfect. We still find it a battle, but at least we love God's law and now do all we can to keep it. We do this because we have been the subject of great love. Having been freely justified, all our guilt being removed once and for all, we take the ten commandments to be a basis for life. All aspects of life—marriage, the home, children, work, worship, service—everything has a base and has meaning.

There is no comparison between the delusion that we are no more than animals on the end of an evolutionary spiral about to give our last gasp in the struggle against the world we have polluted, and the reality of Christianity in which believers experience the love of God, His truth and authority and enjoy the harmonious way of life He has provided.

Who has Despised the Day of Small Things?

The magazine team have provided us with the following comments and extracts from recent correspondence.

ZECHARIAH THE PROPHET HAD SEEN A GOOD DEAL WHICH MIGHT HAVE depressed him. Although the people of Israel had returned from Babylon to their own land, they had failed to pursue the work of rebuilding the temple in Jerusalem with any enthusiasm. Feebleness, apathy, and selfishness were rife. It would have been easy for Zechariah to become cynical and leave the whole wretched crew to their own devices. Instead of this we find that his prophecies are full of encouragement and hope.

There is a lesson here for us. In chapter 4 of Zechariah's prophecy, the reason for his hope and optimism is seen. Progress is not due to human might or power but only to the Spirit of God (v. 6). If we are to be saved from continual gloom because of the weakness of the church, such must be our perspective.

In the light of this it is right that Zechariah should imply rebuke for those who have despised the day of small things (v. 10). The plummet in the hand of Zerubbabel shows that the work of building was going on. The foundation was laid (v. 9), and the work would not be left unfinished. All obstacles would be overcome, even though this meant levelling out great mountains. The final completion would be accompanied by the triumphant declaration of the grace of God (v. 7).

What are some of the small things not to be despised? One is the ministry of encouragement. As long as there are those like Zechariah who have a word of hope to give, the people are blessed. Letter writing is very important, and well worth the cost of a stamp. If you feel that you are contributing little to the kingdom of God, why not write to someone and leave some Scripture with them? We are always glad when letters are received. For example, a brother from Ireland writes:

As a reader of *Reformation Today* I am writing to say how I enjoy this very timely magazine. I believe you have shown to us what the New Testament pattern of the church should be. I am a member of a Presbyterian church but I have been through the waters of believers' baptism and have deep Reformed Baptist convictions.

In *Reformation Today* No. 4 there was an article on the formation of the Perth Evangelical Church. As I read it I could see true reformation in church order. I have been very much impressed with the form of eldership in its plurality which I believe is soundly Scriptural. I believe God calls and prepares men for teaching and preaching His precious Word. Would God we had more churches in like manner throughout our lands.

In regard to churches, it is easy for the world of superficial Christianity to despise the small Reformed Baptist causes which this magazine embraces. Yet often these small efforts exhibit abundant life, as the following extract from the letter of an elder of a church in this country shows:

Much outward prosperity (Psalm 1) and I trust a spiritual work is slowly being evidenced among us. Last week the Sunday School reached 87 (instead of the usual 55-65 maximum). Every seat groaned under enormous weights of children! We expect 120 perhaps next Sunday to the prize-giving. We have had to take the unprecedented step of requesting our own members and adherents to stay away or listen outside the open windows on the pavement! Attention in the school is good . . . I was surprised at the concern as I expounded the Pharisee and the Publican. The catechism is most useful in giving support to the doctrinal aspects of Scripture exposition.

The Sunday evening service has now risen over the 50 mark and last Sunday evening we had nearly 60 in. Comfort is now a real problem, as the aisle and window recesses are filled, and the organist had to sit on the pulpit seat! Not only young folk, but adults are (relatively speaking) pouring in, and we can hardly believe our eyes for only six months ago we were happy if we had 25 attending.

Zechariah speaks to us eloquently of the fact that the grace of God is ultimately victorious. This doctrine of sovereign grace is surely the only foundation for the church. It was because of sovereign grace that Christ came and purchased the church, and the same grace brings the elect to saving faith. When a believer comes to appreciate this momentous truth his whole world may be turned upside down. We should never, therefore, despise the work of spreading true doctrine in every possible way. A letter from a friend in the U.S.A. illustrates the point:

Our holiday trip almost exhausted me (I drove the whole 2,100 miles), but I was greatly refreshed in my soul and mind. The highlight of the trip involved reunion with an old friend who I met in 1962 during an evangelistic Crusade. The Lord knit our hearts together at that time. During the next year, after my faith had been virtually shattered, I providentially came face to face with the doctrines of grace. I then began to send books to my former associates, including Bill who received Pink's *Sovereignty of God*.

In the course of our holiday, since we were in the area where Bill used to be, I called the telephone company to try to track him down. This was successful, and we arranged to meet, in company with another brother who is preaching the doctrines of grace in a Baptist church in the same area. The six of us (wives included) met in a downtown cafeteria and there was almost a tearful deluge—also outside it was pouring with rain, the first for 200 days! At the meal table we learned that the Lord had brought Bill clearly into the Reformed faith. Perhaps we had there the kernel of an Association of Reformed Baptist pastors in that part of the country!

Let us indeed pray that we shall see the building of a great spiritual edifice in all the earth—the church established in purity and unity—to the praise of the great builder and maker, God Himself (Hebrews 11:10).



First hand news has come of the formation of a Reformed Baptist Church in Grand Rapids, Michigan, U.S.A. The photo above shows the meeting place of the new church. Below are four of the founding members: John Vanden Berg, Martin Luttikhuizen, Ted Christman, and James Hufstetler (extreme right), who is pastor of the congregation.



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