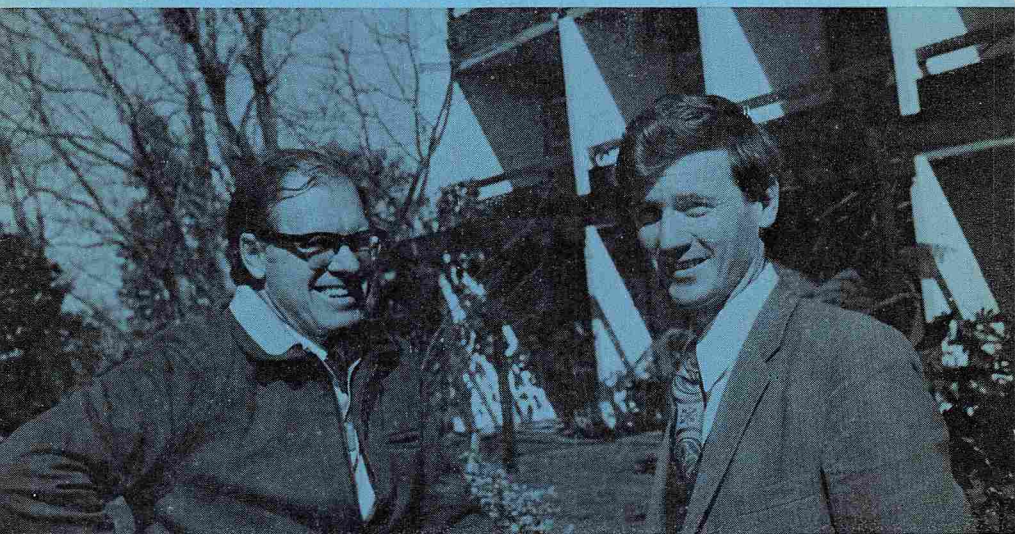


# REFORMATION TODAY '73



- 1 EDITORIAL
- 6 ATHANASIUS AGAINST THE WORLD *W. J. Grier*
- 9 FOREKNOWLEDGE *Joe Wieland*
- 14 REFORMATION IN CHURCH RELATIONS *Maurice Redmill*
- 19 THE GIFTS OF THE SPIRIT *Ken Haarhof*
- 27 CONFERENCES WORLDWIDE
- 36 THE LOCAL CHURCH AND REFORMATION *Erroll Hulse*

See back inside cover for further details

# Leeds, Yorkshire, 1974

	9.30 a.m.	11.30 a.m.	4.30 p.m.	8.00 p.m.
TUESDAY 1ST JANUARY	Theme: Helps and hindrances in Church planting		Church planting in the New Testament <i>David Kingdon</i>	<i>Preaching Services</i> Our vision for the Future <i>Erroll Hulse</i>
WEDNESDAY 2ND JANUARY	The Minister and the discipline of Study <i>Geoff Thomas</i>	Church discipline among the Anabaptists <i>David Kingdon</i>	Testing Charismatic claims <i>Alec Taylor</i> Rome and the New Pentecostalism <i>Herbert Carson</i>	Breaking the chains of traditionalism <i>Herbert Carson</i>
THURSDAY 3RD JANUARY	The local Church and Evangelism <i>Erroll Hulse</i>	John Calvin and the ministry of encouragement <i>Jim van Zyl</i>	Discussion	The way forward <i>Herbert Carson</i>

The evening sessions are open to visitors and will be held (DV) at the Lawnswood Comprehensive School, West Park, Leeds.

*n.b. Jim van Zyl's contribution is dependent on practical difficulties being overcome*

# Editorial

## The Captivity and Deliverance of the Church

THROUGH HISTORY THE DELIVERANCES OF GOD HAVE VARIED VERY MUCH in character. In the Old Testament they were largely of a military character designed to preserve God's people and the truth which was committed to them. In New Testament times the battle has been of a polemical nature. Having failed in his attempt to destroy Christ the man child and to thwart the establishment of the church (Rev. 12: 1-6), the attentions of the enemy have been primarily directed toward distorting and obscuring the truth in order that the world may be subjugated to spiritual darkness.

Great encouragement can be derived from a contemplation of the manner, timing and wisdom of God's deliverances. In the case of the exodus from Egypt, for example, the intervention was so extensive and the provision made in the wilderness so comprehensive that no slave in Egypt could ever in his wildest dreams have conceived of it. The law, ark, tabernacle and priesthood all belong to that deliverance and formed the foundation of future revelation. How do we know that God has not designed for this present age a deliverance as comprehensive as that which he provided then?

In the case of the deliverance from Midianite oppression by Gideon and his three hundred, no one was less certain how to proceed than Gideon himself. The architect of the victory from start to finish was the Lord. However, we should be careful not to oversimplify the deliverances of God. They have been sublime in their simplicity yet profound in their complexity. There is a temptation, for instance, to point to David's victory over Goliath and conclude that fundamentally it is very easy to overcome the enemy. But it is foolish to forget that David had gained valuable experience. Have you killed a lion or a bear at close range when to miss the mark would have cost you your life? Also various other means of deliverance could easily be thought of in this particular case. Goliath could have succumbed to bronchitis or twisted his ankle. But God intended to illustrate once more that our victories are of his making and that it is not by human might, or man's power but by the Spirit that his cause emerges triumphant.

Other deliverances, such as that described in Esther, then the deliverance from Babylon, the coming of the Saviour and the subsequent deliverances

---

*Front cover. Michael Griffiths, on the editor's left, is one of the leaders involved in planting a church in Auckland, New Zealand. The picture was taken at Logan Park, a motel in Auckland where an interdenominational conference took place in September. A description of this encouraging gathering is included in this issue.*

of the church through Athanasius (see Mr. Grier's article which follows), Luther, etc., show the diversity of conditions and complex situations that can prevail and the various means employed for preservation and deliverance of the church.

### *The situation today*

The Psalms are particularly helpful in describing the various states of Zion. Psalm 44: 22-26 would seem to be an appropriate description of the sufferings of the faithful under Communist domination in the twentieth century. There is the abject cry for deliverance. Think of China. Is a change possible? The answer is surely in the affirmative. The Lord who intervened in a remarkable way to save Indonesia from Communist domination can raise up a Cyrus in Mao's place who will decree freedom of worship.

When we turn to non-Communist countries our attention is arrested by the weakness of the major denominations, as Maurice Redmill points out in his article on church relations. The crumbling of the established bodies provides an opportunity to build afresh on better foundations. Anything less than the Reformed faith has proved inadequate and unsatisfactory in the history of the church. All the doctrines of Scripture are to be developed. The truth speaks to man in the wholeness of his being and in the entirety of his world. This is not the impression given generally when listening to the average evangelical preacher. More and more the tendency has been for a chasm to develop between the churches and the world in respect of relevance. A deliverance is needed to bridge the chasm.

Our Western culture regards the Bible as irrelevant, unreliable and mythical. To confirm them in unbelief is the giant Evolution who daily stalks onto the stage of the mass media with his taunts that the Biblical account of the origin of the world is nonsense. It is no use imagining that this Goliath does not exist. But this kind of situation has existed before. Spurgeon, preaching at a time when there was a wholesale debunking of Scripture by archaeologists, prophesied that, "the stones buried in the earth cry out to confirm each letter of Scripture". Old manuscripts, coins and inscriptions are on the side of the Book. Creation is also on the side of the Book. Buried facts will yet arise like Elijahs to rebuke the technological priests for their derision of the Word of God. Not as though we think that natural man in his enmity to God will ever be turned by scientific arguments. He will not. Nevertheless it is comforting to know that widespread delusions which hinder the progress of the Gospel will last only as long as God permits them to last. As we look at our situation we cry: "Turn again our captivity, O Lord as streams in the south" (Psalm 126: 6). Various means of deliverance are suggested to us. There are sound reasons for believing that the following four means are in and of themselves *unlikely* to turn the tide.

## *Evangelism*

While evangelism is the ever present and constant responsibility of all churches and all believers, we are deceived if we think that "hotting up" our outreach will in itself change the present situation. It is alarming that the majority of those who profess the evangelical faith in Western countries today have imbibed an outlook which makes them complacent, since they believe that their organised evangelistic efforts are quite adequate to meet the needs of the world. A mentality has developed which is hostile at every point to the concept that salvation is entirely of God and that regeneration precedes repentance and faith. We are facing a new kind of Romanism in which man saves himself, by mere assent, without repentance. The old Romanism looked to sacraments such as a few drops of water: the new to a simple formula of assent. The shallow evangelists of this century can be likened to farmers who reap crops without putting anything back into the soil. Gradually the land becomes barren, unfertile, hard and unresponsive. Oversimplified, decisionist Christianity which neglects the necessity of repentance is itself a curse from which we need to be delivered rather than a deliverer of the people.

## *Orthodoxy*

Believing in the Reformed faith in and of itself does not bring deliverance. There are those who can testify to tremendous personal strengthening derived from an experience in the heart and mind of the sovereignty of God. This is like finding a rock on which to build after battling for years through treacherous quicksands. Certainly there is an armoury here for the soul and from here the churches' weapons of deliverance may well be forged. However, there is a danger of resting in the joys, blessings and assurance of the doctrines of grace in such a way that we think we have arrived in heaven and can now take our rest. On the contrary, our energies, knowledge, abilities and resources are required to the very utmost. Discipline, prayerfulness, alertness and effort of the highest order are required of us.

## *The Charismatic Movement*

Here much caution is needed, for not a few believe that this movement is set for the deliverance of the spiritual Israel in this twentieth century. The idea prevails that the supernatural extraordinary gifts of the Spirit have been neglected and that their recovery will herald a new age. This kind of thinking is gaining ground. For instance a very recent I.V.P. book, *Spiritual Gifts and the Church*,<sup>1</sup> is written by two authors, Donald Bridge and David Phypers, who claim that they exercise pentecostal gifts and argue from this standpoint.<sup>2</sup> This work is basically the same as other pentecostal books except that it is much more plausible, pleading for moderation and warning against some of the dangers involved. It is highly significant that the Inter-Varsity Press should publish a book

which wholeheartedly commends the new quest for all the gifts on a foundation which is appallingly shallow.<sup>3</sup> How the editorial department let it through is a mystery !

With similar approval Clark H. Pinnock writes in *Christianity Today*<sup>4</sup> describing the New Pentecostalism as a “ genuine movement of the Spirit of God ”.

But not all the traffic is running in the one direction. It is of no small significance to find men who after many years in Pentecostalism give testimony to the fact that they have by experience and study come to that point where they no longer believe it and now confess that the old writers such as Owen, Edwards and Warfield were right. In this issue Ken Haarhoff speaks for himself. The number of such men is growing and it may be profitable for such to come together some time for two or three days to compare experiences. If readers in this category are interested, please let us know.

The questions raised by the New Pentecostalism are made all the more urgent because of the alignment of the movement with ecumenism and Rome. In too many instances the Word of truth has been supplanted by subjective experience as the believer's first love and loyalty. It is the latest vision, prophecy, or tongue which is the touchstone, not the written Scripture.

A catalogue of reasons could be given why the Charismatic movement is not the deliverer, but to highlight the failure of such movements in the past, it is interesting to note that Edward Irving's church in Edinburgh, the scene of 19th century charismatic phenomena—also high church—is today the meeting place of a Reformed Baptist church ! If Edward Irving failed to usher in a new era of the miraculous it is difficult to see that lesser men today will achieve more.

### *The Cultural Mandate and Political Philosophy*

One of the most significant books of our generation is *The God Who is There* by Francis Schaeffer. Along similar lines one of his disciples, Os Guinness, has now produced a study called *The Dust of Death*.<sup>5</sup> This book is not only interesting, it is exciting. It helps greatly when we can see from where we have come and where we are going. Guinness not only reviews past movements, cultural, philosophical and political, but brings us up to date in regard to all manner of contemporary phenomena and discusses the Christian's relationship to the modern world. But all this knowledge, important and relevant as it may be, does not in itself provide deliverance. The importance of the local church and Holy Spirit revival are not developed or applied by Guinness as priorities.

### *Seeking Deliverance*

God's order is the local church and we should think in terms of reformation and revival as they apply to this fundamental realm. The need

worldwide, as seen in the conference reports, is for a gracious visitation of God in spiritual revival by which churches are renewed and people changed in disposition—in which there is a renewing of those characteristics which the Lord himself delights in, namely humility, modesty, true affection, gratitude, worship, meekness. Man tends to delight in sensation, fervour, show and extravagance.

Reviewing the aspects considered so far, the discussion might be summed up by saying that all the points mentioned, while not providing deliverance in themselves, have their own importance. Sound doctrine is essential, as is a vigorous application of that truth to the different spheres of life. Church centred, biblical evangelism is indispensable if the mandate to preach the Gospel to every creature is to be observed. The greatest danger in regard to the charismatic movement is that those who see the dangers of it react so much that they neglect the Holy Spirit.

When the Spirit of God does come in genuine revival, then every family will mourn apart (Zech. 12: 11-14). No boasting then. The missing experience of evangelicalism will then return—deep, radical, fundamental and lasting repentance, bringing about a comprehensive change of life and adoration of the Trinity. Then the doctrines of grace will be loved and esteemed. Surely when we are graciously enabled to pray for such a visitation (Zech. 12: 10) it will be a sign that the Lord is returning to deliver Zion.

<sup>1</sup> 160 pages, 40p.

<sup>2</sup> cf. p. 149.

<sup>3</sup> The authors are too ready to accept the undocumented claims of writers such as Michael Harper that Augustine, Luther and Thomas Goodwin exercised charismatic gifts (cf. pages 138 and 107). They also do not pay sufficient attention to the pastoral problems which the Neo-Pentecostal movement has created, nor do they seem to be aware of the psychological in tongue-speaking. Walter Chantry in *Signs of the Apostles* does this in his recently published book by the Banner of Truth (102 pages, 25p) which, although far too brief to be adequate, will be welcomed by those who do not have the time to read longer treatises.

<sup>4</sup> Sept. 14, 1973.

<sup>5</sup> I.V.P., 416 pages, 95p. A well produced, worthwhile, most readable book.

### *Editorial Notes*

South African readers please note that Martin Holdt is now the agent. We are thankful to him for relieving Jim van Zyl who is thus enabled to spend more time promoting the work of the David Livingstone Fund, a work to further expository books among the non-European peoples of Southern Africa and one well worthy of our prayers and financial support.

David Guthrie, formerly British agent for the magazine, has joined forces with Alec Taylor in Birmingham to establish the Chelmsley Wood Reformed Baptist Church. They meet on Sundays at 10.30 a.m. at 43 Sheepclose Drive, Chelmsley Wood, Birmingham 37. At the same address they meet for prayer and Bible Study on Wednesdays at 7.30 p.m. At 6.15 p.m. on Sundays the address for the meetings is Alder Hall, Alder Close, Chelmsley Wood. For further information phone Alec Taylor 021-458 7398 or David Guthrie 021-705 0634.

*The Rev. W. J. Grier is well known as a stalwart and gracious defender of the faith. He trained for the ministry at Princeton before it succumbed to liberal theology. His ministerial life of forty-five years has been spent in the Evangelical Presbyterian Church of Northern Ireland which is a secession from the Presbyterian Church in Ireland. Realising the importance of providing solid Reformed literature the Evangelical Presbyterian Church has for many years maintained a bookshop in Belfast which has consistently stocked the finest range of Reformed books for sale in the British Isles. Having himself lived through hard times he is well placed to write on the following subject.*

## Athanasius Against the World

SIXTEEN CENTURIES AGO THERE DIED ONE OF THE GREATEST MEN OF THE Christian Church—Athanasius of Alexandria. With the single exception of Augustine he was *the* greatest between apostolic times and the Protestant Reformation. Indeed he was often called “Athanasius the Great”. He was born about the year 296 A.D. The day of his death was probably the 2nd May, 373, or possibly the 3rd of May. It was remarkable that after a life full of danger he died peaceably in his bed at a ripe old age.

Born at Alexandria in Egypt he had only scanty private means but he showed great promise and was given an excellent education. He enjoyed the favour and the supervision of Alexander, bishop of Alexandria (311-328), and while still in his youth came to live with him as his companion and secretary. He also acted as his counsellor on important issues. In the Arian controversy which broke out in 318 between Alexander and Arius over the deity of Christ, Athanasius “found his life-purpose” (Dr. W. N. Kerr). While still in his early twenties he was appointed a deacon and about the same time he wrote two important treatises, “Against the Greeks” and “Concerning the Incarnation of the Word”. Dr. F. F. Bruce says of the second of these that it is “one of the great classics of Christian theology”. In the discussions and debates at the Council of Nicaea in 325 Athanasius, though not yet thirty years of age, came forward as the foremost and ablest of the defenders of the deity of the Lord Jesus. He stood up for the “rightful honour” of Christ and Gregory of Nazianzen describes him as “doing his utmost to stay the plague” of Arianism. “Nothing was to him more certain than that Jesus was, in the full force of the words, God incarnate . . . and that it was infinitely worth while to go through any amount of work or suffering in defence of such a truth and in the cause of such a Master” (Prof. W. Bright). In the prolonged battle which he fought on this issue he was convinced, to use his own words, that “our contest is for our all”.

When Alexander was dying in 328 he was anxious that Athanasius should succeed him as bishop. A little later this took place, and, still later, a letter by a number of Egyptian bishops proclaimed that a majority of them



had elected Athanasius as Alexander's successor "in the presence and with the applause of the whole Alexandrian laity".

A few years afterwards the campaign of persecution and calumny began. It was to beset him for most of the rest of his life. Prof. F. F. Bruce gives a list of serious charges levelled against him: "illegal consecration, venality, rapacity, sacrilege, assault and murder". Most of these he had little difficulty in refuting, but even after they were refuted some of them were revived again. The Arian party was led by Eusebius, bishop of Nicomedia, and with them were allied the Semi-Arians and the Melitians of Egypt. "He bought them," says Athanasius, "with large promises". Eusebius urged that the sentence pronounced on Arius at the Council of Nicaea be annulled and that he be restored into communion again. Athanasius replied: "It cannot be right to admit persons to communion who invented a heresy contrary to the truth". Eusebius appealed to the Emperor Constantine (the Great) and he commanded Athanasius to admit to the church "all who desired it". Athanasius took the opportunity of presenting his views to the Emperor, stating that there could be no fellowship between the church of Christ and "the heresy which was fighting against Him". The Arian party presented lying reports about Athanasius to the Emperor. A Melitian bishop named Arsenius was persuaded to go into hiding and it was reported to the Emperor that Athanasius had murdered him in order to cut off his hand and use it for magical purposes. They even produced a severed hand before a Church Council, but Athanasius managed to produce Arsenius complete with his two hands and cried out: "Does any man have more than two hands?" At length, however, they succeeded in inducing the Emperor to banish him to Trèves in the Rhine-land, where he remained for some years (335-337).

Restored for a time after the death of the Emperor Constantine in 337, he was exiled from his bishopric again in 339 and resided for a time in Rome. His witness there helped to strengthen the cause of the orthodox faith. It was not till 346 that he was allowed to return to Alexandria where he was greeted by his people with the greatest enthusiasm. From 346 to 356 has been called "the golden decade", because in that period he was left in comparative peace.

The Empire had been divided by Constantine between his three sons, but one of them, Constantius, became ruler of both East and West (the whole of his father's dominion) in 350, and he became, to use the words of Bishop Hooker, "the scourge and torment" of Athanasius. By 356 Arianism seemed to have triumphed. The Emperor Constantius was friendly with Eusebius of Nicomedia, the enemy of Athanasius. Bishops and Councils were terrorised by the Emperor and the Arians into compromising. Even loyal friends of Athanasius succumbed to strong pressure—so that it seemed that he stood alone. Hence the phrase "Athanasius contra mundum"—Athanasius against the world! On 8th February, 356, when he was at a service, the church was surrounded by a large body of soldiers

and he barely escaped with his life, taking refuge in the deserts of Egypt. This was his third period of exile. It lasted from the victory of Arianism in 356 till its downfall in 362. "This period," says A. Robertson, "was the most stirring in spiritual and literary activity in the whole life of Athanasius". At this time he produced more than half of his writings which have been preserved for us. While the police were busy searching for him, he was busy with his pen.

The Emperor Constantius died in 361 and Julian, called the Apostate, came to the throne, and as if to show his scorn for the disputes of the "Galileans" permitted all the bishops whom his predecessor had exiled to return to their flocks. So Athanasius came back to Alexandria in 362 amid the rejoicing of his people. But Julian's aim was the restoration of paganism and he could not tolerate Athanasius; so the good bishop was exiled again a few months later. To the faithful people who gathered around him weeping he said: "Be of good heart, it is but a cloud; it will soon pass", and he immediately boarded a ship to go up the Nile. Government agents, however, were in close pursuit. They met a boat coming downstream and asked for news of Athanasius. A voice from the boat replied: "he is not far off". The boat was his and the speaker no doubt himself. He had become aware of the pursuit and coolly decided to turn in his tracks, and so escaped. The cloud did pass, for Julian was killed in a skirmish in Persia in June 363, and Athanasius returned to Alexandria in February, 364. He spent the remainder of his life there except for a short period in 365-366 when he was forced to go into hiding again. The closing years of his life were comparatively undisturbed. In one of his last utterances he quoted Hebrews 12: 18-22 ("ye are come to an innumerable company of angels, to the spirits of just men made perfect and to Jesus the Mediator of the new covenant") and added: "who would not wish to enjoy high companionship with these!"

Athanasius was in the goodly succession of those who were "tormented and afflicted" and barely "escaped the edge of the sword" (Heb. 11). We have much to learn from his life and witness. Let us note the following points:—

(i) *His high regard for the Scriptures.* Like Calvin in a later day he was not so much concerned for certain traditional theological terms, good though they might be. His loyalty ever was to the Scriptures and the great truths plainly taught in them. He clung with all his might to the written Word as the revelation of the living Word.

(ii) *His prolonged sufferings.* One writer has described his life as a "continual martyrdom". One of the bitterest ingredients in the cup of his sorrows was that the antagonism towards him came chiefly from within the Church. And those who pursued the vendetta against him stooped at times to abysmal depths of base falsehood and malicious hate.

*Continued on page 13*

*Joe Wieland is a Baptist pastor in Leeds. He plays an important part in encouraging the young yet vigorous Reformed Baptist movement in Yorkshire. He here contributes part of an exposition given at his own church.*

## Foreknowledge

CONTROVERSY HAS ALWAYS CENTRED AROUND THE DOCTRINE OF GOD'S sovereignty in election. The fact that a scriptural doctrine is, and always has been, objected to should not prevent us from endeavouring to understand it correctly. Indeed, if the doctrine did not produce the objections raised against it in Romans 9, then "election" would be *our* doctrine and not the doctrine of the Bible. The same objections which were brought against Paul's doctrine of election were brought against the same Pauline doctrine when taught by Augustine, the Reformers and those who continued to teach it in later centuries. The same objections are raised today and the same answers are given (see Rom. 9: 14-23).

In order to avoid the difficulties associated with election some affirm that the Lord chose us for salvation because he foresaw that we would first choose him. This, on the surface, appears to be fair enough. No one could object to such teaching. We are left wondering, however, why Paul in Romans 9 did not give this simple explanation and extremely easy solution to the whole problem. Had he done so, he would not have required to say: "What shall we say then? Is there unrighteousness with God? God forbid." Again, "Thou wilt say then unto me, Why doth he yet find fault? For who hath resisted his will?" We can conclude only that Paul did not resort to this explanation because it would not have been true. He rather continues to defend the sovereignty of God in election and to his objectors he administers a most humiliating rebuke. "Nay but, O man, who art thou that repliest against God? Shall the thing formed say to him that formed it, Why has thou made me thus?" In trying to avoid difficulties connected with the doctrine we put ourselves into greater difficulty.

The view that God foresaw something we would do and, on the basis of that, predestinated us to salvation, is made to stand upon an interpretation given to the word "foreknowledge" in Romans 8: 29, where it is said to mean mere prescience or foresight. It is claimed that God foresaw that some of their own "free-will" would meet the conditions of salvation, and these he predestinated to salvation. What God is said to have foreseen they would do of their own volition varies, and opponents of God's sovereignty are united only in contending that the cause of their election is not in God but in themselves. Some say that God foresaw that they

would believe of their own volition and, after having seen that they would do this, God then did the rest by predestinating them to be conformed to the image of Christ. Others affirm that it was necessary for God to see not only that they would believe, but also that they would continue according to the choice of their own "free-will" to endure right to the very end, and only those whom God foresaw would persevere to the final moment did he predestinate to salvation. Yet others believe that even the salvation of the elect is not certain, because it was their "free-will" that put them into the company of the elect and, if they so decide, their "free-will" can take them out of that company. God predestinates them to salvation, certainly, but their "free-will" can frustrate the eternal, predestinating purpose of God. Why God should, according to this view, elect to glory those whom he knows before will never enter glory, remains a mystery and why there should be joy in the presence of the angels in heaven over some sinners who repent but whom God knows will go back on their repentance, remains an even greater mystery. Spurgeon says:

"Where are those words which you have added, 'Whom he did foreknow to repent, to believe and to persevere in grace'? I do not find them in the English version or in the Greek original. If I could so read them the passage would certainly be very easy, and would very greatly alter my doctrinal views; but as I do not find those words there, begging your pardon, I do not believe in them. However wise and advisable a human interpolation may be, it has no authority with us; we bow to Holy Scripture, but not to glosses which theologians may choose to put upon it. No hint is given in the text of foreseen virtue any more than of foreseen sin, and therefore we are driven to find another meaning for the word. We find that the word 'know' is frequently used in Scripture, not only for knowledge but also for favour, love and complacency. Our Lord Jesus Christ will say in the judgment concerning certain persons: 'I never knew you', yet in a sense he knew them, for he knows every man; he knows the wicked as well as the righteous, but there the meaning is 'I never knew you in such a respect as to feel any complacency in you or any favour toward you'."

All other views, in the final analysis, simply state that it is man who determines who is to be saved and not God, but those who believe that God is sovereign in election maintain that the cause of our election is not in ourselves but in God. It is God who determines who is to be saved and not man. It is God's solemn prerogative to elect, in his sovereign mercy, whom he wills and he claims and exercises this right in the salvation of his people. ". . . I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I will have compassion. So then it is not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth, but of God that sheweth mercy." (Rom. 9: 15, 16). If Paul in Romans 8: 29 were saying that God foresaw who would will to be saved and that God upon their "willing" or "willing and persevering to the end" (according to whatever view is held) elected

men to be saved, then he would be flatly contradicting himself in Romans 9: 16 by saying it is not of him who wills. Paul uses this word “foreknow” on one other occasion—Romans 11: 2. “God hath not cast away his people whom he foreknew . . .” Here the word cannot possibly mean a mere prescience, but has reference to the loving acquaintance and regard which the Lord had for his chosen people. “God has not repudiated his people, his predestined people!”

Robert Haldane in his *Exposition of Romans* declares:

“By foreknowledge, then, is not here meant a foreknowledge of faith or good works, or of concurrence with external call. Faith cannot be the cause of foreknowledge, because foreknowledge is before predestination, and faith is the effect of predestination. ‘As many as were ordained to eternal life believed’ (Acts 13: 48). Neither can it be meant of the foreknowledge of good works, because these are the effects of predestination. ‘We are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works; which God hath before ordained (or before prepared) that we should walk in them.’ (Eph. 2: 10). Neither can it be meant of foreknowledge of our concurrence with the eternal call, because our effectual calling depends not upon that concurrence, but upon God’s purpose and grace, given us in Christ Jesus before the world began. (2 Tim. 1: 9). By this foreknowledge, then, is meant, as has been observed, the love of God towards those whom he predestinates to be saved through Jesus Christ. All the called of God are foreknown by him, that is, they are the objects of his eternal love, and their calling comes from this free love! ‘I have loved thee with an everlasting love; therefore with lovingkindness have I drawn thee.’ (Jer. 31: 3).”

When the scriptural meaning of this word “foreknow” as it is used by Paul in Romans 9: 29 and 11: 2, is understood, it will be found that rather than contradicting the doctrine of election, it actually is part and parcel of it, thereby harmonising with and strengthening it.

Foreknowledge, therefore, in the New Testament is more than prescience. It is practically identical with the divine decree in two instances, and in the other places where the term occurs, it denotes the sovereign, loving regard out of which springs God’s predestination or election of men to salvation.

We do well to consider the meaning and implication of this statement.

### 1. *Foreknowledge in the New Testament is more than prescience.*

Put negatively, this means that the word in our text does not merely suggest that God chose us because he foresaw that we would first “choose”, “repent”, “yield” or “persevere to the end”. Scofield, commenting on the same word, which is translated “foreordained” in 1 Peter 1: 20, says: “Scripture nowhere declares what it is in the divine foreknowledge which determines the divine election and predestination.” He thus rejects the view that we were chosen because of something which God foresaw we

would do in response to the general call. To hold such a view is to hold a view which cannot be confirmed by Scripture. All, then, who deny the doctrine of God's sovereignty in election are compelled to base their respective views upon assumptions, and to enlist support for their assumptions by inferences from other Scriptures. One interpreter assumes that God foresaw that the creature would do one thing, another that he would do another thing, and yet another something else. According to this mode of "interpretation", one assumption seems to be as good as another because no one has any Scripture to prove his own particular theory. Once, however, we accept scriptural fact and begin to ponder its deep significance, we find ourselves turning away from trying to find anything foreseen in us as the cause of our election. Clearly the cause of our election is to be found only in the sovereign, gracious will of God.

2. *Foreknowledge is used "as being practically identical with the divine decree".*

It becomes clear why in the Authorised Version the same word translated "foreknow" in Romans 8: 29 is translated "foreordained" in 1 Peter 1: 20. Moffat, in the texts we are examining, consistently translates the word "predestined". He evidently also judges the meaning of the word "as being practically identical with the divine decree".

1 Peter 1: 20. "He was predestined before the foundation of the world."

1 Peter 1: 2. "Whom God the Father has predestined and chosen."

Romans 11: 2. "God has not repudiated his people, his predestined people."

Romans 8: 29. "God has decreed of old that those whom he predestined should share the likeness of his Son . . ."

To be foreknown by the Lord is therefore to be foreloved by the Lord.

3. *Foreknowledge is used as denoting the sovereign, loving regard out of which springs God's predestination or election of men to salvation.*

Behind God's predestination there is his everlasting love for his people. Charles B. Williams in his translation, *The New Testament in the Language of the People*, gives the following rendering:

Romans 8: 29. "For those on whom he set his heart beforehand he marked off as his own to be made like his Son."

Romans 11: 2. "No, God has not disowned his people, on whom he set his heart beforehand."

The way in which the word translated "foreknew" in Romans 8: 29 is used, not only in the Greek original of the New Testament, but also in the first Greek translation of the Old Testament gives absolutely no basis for the theory that it means in our texts mere prescience; it rather supports fully the scriptural truth of God's sovereignty in election. To be foreknown by the Lord is to be foreloved by the Lord.

Words are the expressions of thoughts and what profound thought is expressed by this one word "foreknow". Its full meaning has not yet been exhausted, but we have seen that it comprises various aspects of truth, not one aspect contradicting another but each contributing to a fuller understanding of the whole. It tells us of our predestination, of God's great love for us behind his merciful predestination and of his foreknowing us as his own from before the foundation of the world, simply because, in his infinite love and sovereign, gracious will, he chose us to be his own. What infinite love, supreme wisdom and absolute sovereignty are all embraced here! He loved his people as his own—he chose them as his own—he claims them as his own. His own have been foreloved, foreordained, foreowned, foreknown. Let the wonder and glory of it sink right down into our hearts. Once the truth of God's everlasting love for his people possesses our minds and grips our hearts, we would die rather than deny it.

---

*Continued from page 18*

Churches should promote Christian literature. Christians ought to be using opportunities of obtaining Reformed books at reasonable prices. There is no excuse for unread Christians, at least among those who speak and read English and who live in prosperous countries. Next to the Word we ought to read books of Christian doctrine and biography.

Churches should seek to plant other churches. Where new churches are being founded it is not enough to announce that this is a Christian church or even that it is an evangelical church. Such action soon proves inadequate. When preaching takes place, will it be the message of repentance or an easy believism? What will be the basis of membership? What is the policy on baptism? What is the position of children? What principles will govern relationship with other churches? Those eager to separate to the truth will want to ensure that they have an adequate basis for witness. Baptists will find that the 1689 Baptist Confession of faith provides an excellent outline of belief that covers the questions just raised. In this way the local church is founded on the truth and is preserved from much harm.

May God by his grace enable us to maintain truth in our day and manifest it in our belief and behaviour.

---

*Continued from page 8*

(iii) *His absolute faithfulness.* Good men like Hosius and Liberius yielded under heavy pressure, but he stood firm as a rock no matter from what quarter in Church or State the challenge came. May we follow in his steps, in his burning love for Christ and in his zeal to guard the sacred "deposit" of the truth of God!

*Maurice Redmill is the minister of the Sidley Baptist Church, Bexhill on Sea, Sussex. Recently he preached verse by verse through John's second epistle. The material which follows stems from that series of expositions.*

# Reformation in Church Relations

EVER SINCE NEW TESTAMENT TIMES THERE HAS BEEN THE TEACHING OF BOTH truth and error in the professing Christian church. Today the climate of opinion is opposed to any distinctions or definitions in theology. The pressures for church unity would make it appear that there are no more heretics; indeed the very mention of the word would be likely to cause ecclesiastical shudders! In the Scriptures, however, we find clear directions for churches concerning their relationships with those who teach heresy.

## The Nature of Heresy

The second letter of John defines heresy when it says in verse 9: "Who-soever transgresseth, and abideth not in the doctrine of Christ, hath not God". Heretics are people who have transgressed God's truth. Like motorists who have gone over the centre line in the road, they endanger themselves and others. The thought of the verse is that it is possible to think oneself so clever and advanced that one walks right out of the truth and, therefore, away from God himself.

Paul had the same thought as John when in 2 Thessalonians he talked about those who were walking disorderly (3: 6). He took the picture of a long line of soldiers with one going in the wrong direction. The more this man marches the more he goes astray. Such is the case with those who leave God's truth.

If we look at our church situation in the world we can see the relevance of the Bible's teaching on false doctrine. Many preachers have transgressed in moving away from such fundamental doctrines as justification by faith. A young couple moving into our district visited many churches of different denominations, trying to find one where the Word was preached and exemplified in the lives of Christians. Their conclusion was that justification was not recognised, far less preached. In one sermon the name of God was not mentioned!

Some churches, though not guilty of heresy, are in a potentially dangerous situation, because they have left the truth of the Word and depend upon feelings and impulses to guide them. This is particularly true of some who put a wrong emphasis on the doctrine of the Holy Spirit and his work, and tend to reject the "dead letter" of the Word for the "living power" of the experience of the Holy Spirit.



Those who embrace the Reformed faith are also in danger. Our peculiar danger is that mere academic interest in the truth of God as revealed in his infallible Word can lead to arid intellectualism. We may be correct in our doctrine of justification, we may preach the divinity and humanity of Christ, we may rightly stress that baptism is for believers only, but the danger is that we advance so much in our reading and learning that we arrive in a land of neat, systematised, orthodox doctrine which is powerless, merely academic and cold. As someone once said, order and symmetry in themselves are not virtues for a cemetery has these!

There are four principles we can consider from the Scriptures which show us why we must separate from false teaching:

1. *The Nature of God and the Nature of Scripture.* The Lord is described as being “jealous” in nature. As a husband shows a jealous regard and love for his wife, so God is jealous towards and for his covenant people. In the context of Exodus 34 the Lord commands his people to worship no other God, simply because his essential being is jealous and he will brook no rivals. God’s nature is the same today as it was in the Old Testament days. The Lord God is jealous and cannot tolerate heresy. He demands that his covenant people be separate from heretical teaching and practices, which not only dishonour him, but deny his very nature, which is truth. Many Christian writers have pointed out that one’s view of Scripture depends largely upon one’s view of God. Hence Calvin said: “The highest proof of Scripture is uniformly taken from the character of him whose word it is. The prophets and apostles boast not their own acuteness, or any qualities which win credit to speakers, nor do they dwell on reasons; but they appeal to the sacred name of God, in order that the whole world may be compelled to submission”. If the Bible has been given by God as the revelation of his nature and will for the direction and correction of men, those who claim to be Christians must obey that Word. Where there is clear direction, as in the matter of commands to separate from heresy, Christians are to seek to understand and obey.

2. *The Example of the Old Testament People of God.* God revealed to Moses the moral law as expressed in the twentieth chapter of Exodus. The ten commandments were given as conditions under which the covenant people of God were expected to live. They mark out the limitations of acceptable behaviour and show right belief. Exodus 32 narrates the sad account of how the people grew tired of waiting for Moses, prepared the golden calf and worshipped it and it is most instructive to see how God viewed this event. God declared it to be a great sin (v. 21). To mix true religion with false was rebellion against God. He punished the people for their idolatry and pagan practice.

This was followed by a call to the faithful to separate themselves to God, “Then Moses stood in the gate of the camp, and said, who is on the Lord’s side? Let him come unto me” (v. 26).

A second Old Testament example is Joshua's last charge to Israel before his death (Josh. 24). He exhorted them to fear the Lord, serving him in sincerity and faithfulness (v. 14). He then made application by commanding them to put away false gods—to separate themselves from false religion.

Thus it is clear from these cases that the service of God involves separation from heresy. Today, as then, God must be Lord of our belief and behaviour.

3. *The Example of the New Testament People of God.* 1 Timothy 1 teaches that there is only one body of Christian teaching which is to be adhered to and that those who depart from this faith are to be neither listened to nor followed. They may claim to be apostles, or angels from heaven, but if they preach any other gospel contrary to the received gospel, they are accursed (Gal. 1: 6-9).

“The preacher of another gospel exposes himself to the Divine indignation, and the awful penalty incurred by him is not inflicted by man: he falls into the hands of the living God”.

This principle is also clearly stated in Romans 16: 17ff. Paul warns the Roman church against those who create dissensions and difficulties “contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned”. Such people are to be avoided.

2 John 10 is another clear imperative regarding false teachers. Some of these were going from home to home spreading their pernicious doctrine. Christians are forbidden to offer hospitality, or even greet these men. The reasons for shutting the door on them are given; if a Christian offers food and a bed overnight to these men he is in fact furthering their work. He would be a partaker of their evil deeds. The word “partaker” is also translated in terms of fellowship. Just as a believer is by the grace of God in fellowship with Christ, so if he welcomes false teachers he is in fellowship with heresy.

4. *The Example of the Lord Jesus Christ.* It is most instructive to look at the teaching and example of our Lord on this matter. Many argue today that rather than separating from heresy and so (according to them) “disrupting fellowship”, we must seek to be more like Christ who accepted all kinds of people. Such an interpretation of the life of Christ is certainly not that given by the gospel writers.

Matthew 23 records Christ's terrible condemnation of the pharisees and scribes. He called them hypocrites, blind guides and fools, because they perverted true religion. They observed the minutiae of the law (man-made rules and regulations), but had obscured and forgotten the weightier matters. Jesus solemnly warned his followers against such false teaching.

Another example of our Lord's teaching is the letter written to the church at Ephesus (Rev. 2: 1-7). The church was commended by Christ because

she did not tolerate evil men. This local church refused to be mixed with men of evil intent and deed and in separating from them won the approval of the Lord of the church. Ephesus was also commended because she tested the claims of men who came purporting to be apostles, and found them to be false.

### **Doctrine and Heretics Today**

Having considered the facts about true doctrine we now need to see how this effects our practice today. We must seek to reform our church relations. What can we say about our relationships with modern leaders of heretical thought? This is a major issue because some Christians are unwilling to apply the scriptural teaching to modern leaders and local churches. They mistakenly think that this is somehow “unchristian” or uncharitable. The Christian course of action is, in fact, to apply the teaching, but if we are not right in our believing we will not be right in our behaviour. We must never be tempted to argue that friendships and associations, or denominational ties, are more important than doctrine. The testimony of the whole of Scripture is that if the foundation is wrong the superstructure will be unsound. If the doctrine is not right then fellowship cannot follow. We must constantly test our doctrine and the doctrine of others, and if false teaching concerning fundamentals is found then we must, in obedience to the Word of God and to the honour of God, separate from it.

When invited to dinners in fellowship with heretics we are to refuse. Many have been led into serious compromise by being impressed by the personal charm and “niceness” of heretics. We are to be separate from those who teach false doctrine in that we must not receive or greet them for to do this will identify the only true Gospel with their heresy. We are to shut the front door on them. To guard the pulpit *from* them and guard it *for* the truth is imperative. We seek to honour God and therefore cannot permit Christ’s lambs to be fed with deadly poison.

We are to be separate from false doctrine in our reading. We are to test all we read by the supreme standard of the Word of God. This does not mean we are to be foolish and read only those books with which we agree, but it does mean that whatever we read must be brought to the searchlight of the Word and tested. If it is found to be false we are to reject it ourselves and ensure that others are not hindered by its message.

We are to be separate in our hearts. While John, in his second letter, stresses that the first century Christians must be separate from the false teachers of their day, he is equally forceful in stressing Christian fellowship (v. 12, 13). Positively we devote ourselves to building up and encouraging believers. Negatively we are to be separate from that which by its very nature, is calculated to undermine and destroy the churches.

The following relevant questions should be answered.

Can I invite the General Secretary, Moderator or Bishop of a denomination which is not specifically evangelical to preach in my church? The answer is No! He represents a body which is mixed in its attitude to the Word of God and to Christian doctrine. These are not indifferent matters and we cannot be associated with views alien to God. All too often God's people are deceived because the man who comes may "turn on" an evangelical sermon. Like the chameleon he changes colour whenever he goes deceitfully preaching what he knows will be to the liking of the different groups whether heterodox or orthodox.

Can I appear publically on the same platform as Roman Catholic clergy? The answer is certainly not! For this is to give the impression that there is more than one way to salvation. If the evangelical associates in public with those who teach regeneration by infant baptism, he has conceded by his compromise that justification by faith is not the only way to salvation.

Can I exchange pulpits with a non-evangelical, protestant minister in order to preach the gospel in his church? Again the answer is firmly negative, for to do so is to allow my people to be led from the truth. If the church hears the doctrines of grace from her own teaching elders and then hears non-biblical teaching hard on its heels, this leads to confusion.

Can I participate in an evangelistic campaign which is not church based and which includes men of liberal convictions? Definitely not! We may not disobey the injunctions of scripture on pragmatic grounds. We must not lie to the public by pretending to have union when in fact it does not exist because of the denial of the Gospel by liberal teachers.

Can the elders of a local church involve that church in ecumenical activities so that the evangelical doctrine can be represented? Still the answer is No! The evangelical does not accept that his Gospel is just one interpretation or viewpoint or particular emphasis of the truth. He humbly yet firmly insists that true evangelicalism *is* Christianity; that the Gospel of Romans 1: 16, 17 and John 3: 16 and 14: 6 is the only way of salvation from eternal perdition; that the whole Bible confirms but one way of justification and that is by the imputation of Christ's righteousness alone.

### **Separation to the Truth**

I will briefly outline some suggestions as to how churches may separate to the truth.

Churches should encourage and maintain expository preaching. Such preaching arises out of the Scriptures, is doctrinal, experimental and applied to the hearers. It is God's special way of nourishing his people in the truth and of introducing sinners to himself.

Churches should maintain church discipline. People who are under discipline from other local churches should not be accepted into membership unless there is evidence of repentance and reformation.

*Continued on page 13*

*The subject of Pentecostalism is very much in the air. Has it come to help or hinder Christendom? Ken Haarhof of South Africa both as a layman and a pastor has observed and experienced Pentecostal practice. He has witnessed the work of most of the better known Pentecostal leaders at close quarters. This makes his contribution all the more valuable and noteworthy.*

## The Gifts of the Spirit

PRETENSIONS BY ANY CLASS OF MEN TO THE POSSESSION AND USE OF miraculous powers as a permanent endowment are, within the limits of the Christian church, a speciality of Roman Catholicism. Denial of these pretensions is part of the protest by virtue of which we bear the name of Protestants. "In point of interpretation, the history of Protestantism, is a uniform disclaimer of any promise in the Scriptures that miraculous powers should be continued in the Church," says B. B. Warfield, "... the claim to the possession and exercise of powers of this description by individuals has always been received in Protestant circles with a suspicion which experience has only too completely justified."

Protestantism, to be sure, has happily been no stranger to enthusiasm but enthusiasm with a lower-case "e" unfortunately easily runs into that Enthusiasm with a capital "E" which is the fertile seed-bed of fanaticism. Individuals have constantly arisen so filled with the sense of God in their own souls, and so overwhelmed by the wonders of grace which they have witnessed, that they foster and indulge an appetite for the remarkable and develop an ability to read into ordinary occurrences the immediate and extraordinary interventions of God. Hence, clothed in a nimbus of miracle they walk through the world, not living by God's every word, but rather by each last amazing event.

I am fully aware that this is a subject which is potentially contentious; for my part I do not wish to make it so but I fear it is impossible to please all Christians in dealing with this topic. Unlike a discussion on prophecy, where all parties must wait for the final ringing down of the curtain to be proved right or wrong, we have here a subject for which one group insists that its view-point is substantiated by living proof and actual results. This has the inevitable effect of introducing a pragmatic aspect. It is in dealing with the pragmatic argument in favour of the

continuation of "miraculous" gifts in the Church that there has been so often a lack of Christian grace and fruit of the Spirit on both sides. While I do not propose to answer the pragmatic argument, I do offer a brief personal account of my own experience.

I spent over 20 years in the Pentecostal atmosphere of the Apostolic Faith Mission, Full Gospel Church and Assemblies of God, of which four years were in full-time ministry. I attended every major campaign in South Africa from the 1950's onward, including those of Branham, Oral Roberts, Lorne Fox and many others of local fame. I acted as usher in healing lines and as a counsellor in enquiry rooms. I lived through climax and anti-climax. I climbed the mountain peaks of expectation. I waded through the valleys of disappointment. I laid hands on the sick. I rebuked death. I prophesied. I spoke in tongues. I interpreted. I would now say, in all sincerity, that I saw and experienced nothing which would lead me to believe that Pentecostalism offers anything along the lines of the New Testament Churches' experience. I am often asked to explain my attitude in retrospect to my Pentecostal experiences, particularly that of tongues. Pentecostals feel that if it is not of God it must necessarily be of Satan, but I have found a more charitable view among their non-Pentecostal Christian fellows. I would say that my experience can be explained in terms of a combination of the following factors. 1. A sincere desire for a deeper experience. 2. A faulty doctrinal basis. 3. Manipulative indoctrination. 4. Enthusiasm. 5. A charged atmosphere. 6. A demonstration or example of how it is done.

Pentecostalism has produced more than its fair share of charlatans. To these I make no apology if my comments appear to be harsh, but for the overwhelming mass of Pentecostals I offer the assurance of my conviction that they are sincere fellow believers. Among their ranks I own many personal friends and for their sakes I have sought to understate my true feelings lest any take offence. There is no doubt, however, that the movement as a whole fairly bristles with snares for the ungrounded believer who seeks a deeper experience. There seems to be an almost inevitable connection between the errors of Arminianism, Perfectionism, and Pentecostalism.

I propose to divide up my subject by giving firstly a brief view from the Pentecostal side. Without this there can be no proper study of the subject, since they have written and said more on the matter than anyone else. Secondly, we will take a look at the orthodox view. Finally I will consider briefly the matter of healing.

### **1. The Pentecostal View.**

It is believed that I Cor. 12 presents a complete catalogue of precisely nine gifts and that these gifts are intended for the entire church age. It is argued that there is no hint in the New Testament of these ever being

withdrawn or ceasing. While admitting that they did fall into decay due to lack of faith on the part of the Church, Pentecostals point out that they were never entirely lost and made re-appearances throughout the centuries, notably among the Montanists in the 2nd Century, the Anabaptists in the 16th, the Camisards in the 17th and the Irvingites in the early 19th. The present day effusion, however, started at the turn of this century and came to be known as the latter day outpouring in preparation for Christ's now imminent return.

Some Pentecostals muster under the banner of the four square gospel, which is Christ the Saviour; the Healer; the Baptist; the soon coming King. For many this suffices as a statement of their doctrinal position. Most would say that they are content with "believing the whole Bible". There is often difficulty in reasoning with them from a theological basis, since one is faced with a barrage of scattered and disconnected texts of which they have a large stock.

A very sectional emphasis identifies them as being sectarian. For instance, those who have attempted to systematise their theology have had difficulty with Rom. 8:9, "If any man have not the spirit of Christ he is none of his". Some believe this teaches that a man cannot be saved unless he is baptised with the Holy Spirit, of which experience speaking in tongues is an essential sign. That this necessarily implies an exclusion from the Kingdom of vast multitudes of believers through the centuries does not perturb them. Happily, however, others have progressed beyond this earlier interpretation in a desire to be more charitable to the great majority of Christians. In order to do so the following argument has been formulated.

Manifestly, all do not receive the Holy Spirit at conversion. The "receiving" of the Spirit is normally an experience separate from and subsequent to regeneration. To allow for the salvation of those who have not "received the Spirit" a distinction is made in terms of this Scripture, between the Spirit of Christ and the Holy Spirit. The Son has a Spirit, the Father has a Spirit and in addition to these two there is the Holy Spirit, who descends subsequent to conversion to empower the Christian for service. Consequently the fruit of the Spirit relates to the Spirit of the Son which is received at conversion, not to the third person of the Trinity.

Subsequent to their initial "receiving" of the Holy Spirit, believers are urged to seek the best gifts. By far the most common are the vocal gifts. All lay claim to tongues; fewer to interpretation of tongues; fewer still to prophecy. The more dramatic and sensational gifts of healing, miracles and faith are also earnestly sought but claimed by only a few.

An individual examination of each gift will not be possible. The pertinent point is that the gifts are for today in no less a degree than they were for the apostolic age.

## 2. The Orthodox View.

John Owen in the fourth volume of his works gives the subject extensive treatment. Owen sees the gifts as having been designed primarily for the apostles.

"As no mortal men had of themselves any sufficiency for such a work, so the persons particularly called unto it by Jesus Christ lay under all the disadvantages that any persons could possibly be liable unto in such an undertaking: for,

1. They were all of them unlearned and ignorant; which the Jews took notice of, Acts 4:13, and for which the Gentiles despised them.

2. They were poor, and of no reputation in the world; which made them condemned by all sorts of persons.

3. They seem in many instances to have been fearful; which they all manifested when they so shamefully fled and left their Master in his distresses, the chief of them also swearing that he knew him not. Now, it is easily understood what great disadvantages these were unto the undertaking of so great a work as they were called unto; yea, how impossible it was for them, under these qualifications, to do anything in the pursuit of it. Wherefore, by the communication of these gifts unto them, all these impediments arising from themselves were removed, and they were furnished with endowments of quite another nature, whereby they were eminently filled with that spiritual wisdom, knowledge, and understanding, by what ways or means soever it were attained. They both had and declared a wisdom with which none of the princes of this world was acquainted, I Cor. 2:1-8, 13. Those who, during the abode of Christ in the flesh with them, could not understand a plain parable, and were at no small loss about the sense and meaning of their Master, having very low and carnal apprehensions about his person, work, and office, were now filled with a knowledge of all heavenly mysteries, and with wisdom to declare, manage, and maintain them against all opposers. Kings, princes, rulers of synagogues, were now all one to them. They had a mouth and wisdom given them which none of their adversaries could resist."<sup>1</sup>

After introducing the subject Owen singles out as "absolutely extraordinary" the gifts of "miracles, healing, tongues and the like" and allows that the remaining gifts such as teaching and shepherding are for our day. "Every true gospel minister hath now gifts of the same kind with the apostles, in a degree and measure sufficient to their work. There is a difference only in degree". Perhaps we should at this stage bear in mind what Owen's idea of a gift is. J. I. Packer gives us the following short definition of a gift, in line with Owen's analysis: "A spiritual gift is an ability, divinely bestowed and sustained to grasp and express the realities of the spiritual world and the knowledge of God in Christ, for the edifying both of others and oneself".<sup>2</sup>

Although he sees these gifts which remain in the church for all time as essential to "all true ministers", Owen allows that they might be sought and obtained by "uncalled" Christians also, who should use them "to admonish and exhort one another by assembling together of their own accord for their purpose". In this latter connection he cautions against withdrawing from public worship, forming splinter groups, despising pastors and "taking up with doctrinal and expository novelties".



Herman Bavinck declares: "When the revelation of God in Christ had taken place and had become in Scripture and Church a constituent part of the cosmos then another era began. As before everything was a preparation for Christ, so afterward everything is to be a consequence of Christ. Then Christ was being framed into the Head of His people, now His people are being framed into the body of Christ. Then the Scriptures were being produced, now they are being applied".

Warfield expresses the issue as follows: "There is an inseparable connection of miracles with revelation as its mark or credential. Miracles do not appear on the page of Scripture vagrantly here, there and everywhere indifferently without assignable reason. They belong to revelation periods and appear only when God is speaking to His people through accredited messengers. Their abundant display in the Apostolic Church is the mark of the richness of that age in revelation; and when this revelation period closed, the period of miracle-working had passed by also as a matter of course".<sup>3</sup>

George Smeaton explains the extraordinary gifts as follows:

"The supernatural gifts in the New Testament Church were very abundant, but all culminated in the apostles, who were the organs of Christ's revelation to the Church . . . The Church is built on the apostles, and will continue to stand on that foundation till the second advent . . . The rich supply of supernatural or miraculous gifts with which the apostolic Churches were adorned, was a standing pledge and sign that the inward miracle of inspiration continued. The cessation of these gifts, after they had served their purpose, was a significant fact.

"These extraordinary gifts of the Spirit were no longer needed when the canon of Scripture was closed. Up to that time they were an absolute necessity. They are now no longer so. Nor is the Church warranted to expect their restoration, or to desire prophetic visions, immediate revelations, or miraculous gifts, either in public or in private, beyond or besides, the all-perfect canon of Scripture. The Church of Rome, which still claims these extraordinary gifts, is to that extent injurious to the Spirit as the author of Scripture. And enthusiastic sects that cherish the belief of their restoration, or an expectation to that effect, have not learned or duly pondered how great a work of the Spirit has been completed and provided for the Church of all times in the gift of the Holy Scriptures.

"When they began to be abused for purposes of display on the one side, or envy on the other, they were put in a secondary place; and a more excellent way presented to men's attention. Then the saving graces—faith, hope, love—were so preferred as to eclipse the most imposing extraordinary gifts (I Cor. 12:31 ff.). The inestimable blessings of regenerating grace, and of true spiritual life, were set forth as of paramount value far beyond all the transitory gifts.

"The Holy Spirit supplied prophets and apostles, as chosen organs, with gifts which must be distinguished from ordinary grace, to give forth in human forms of speech a revelation which must be accepted as the Word of God in its whole contents, and as the authoritative guide for doctrine and duty".<sup>4</sup>

Jonathan Edwards expounded I Cor. 13 in detail:

"That there seems to be no reason to think, as some have thought, that the extraordinary gifts of the Spirit are to be restored to the church in the future and glorious times of her latter-day prosperity and blessedness. Many divines have been of the opinion, that when the latter-day glory of the church, which is spoken

of in the Word of God, shall come, there will again be prophets, and men endowed with the gifts of tongues and of working miracles, as was the case in the times of the apostles; and some now living seem to be of the same mind.

"But from what the apostle says in the text and context, it seems as though we had no reason to imagine any such thing from what the Scriptures say of the gloriousness of those times, or because it speaks of the state of the church then as being more glorious than ever before, and as though the Spirit of God would then be poured out in more abundant measure than ever in times past. All these things may be, and yet there be no such extraordinary gifts bestowed on the church. When the Spirit of God is poured out for the purpose of producing and promoting divine love, he is poured out in a more excellent way than when he is manifested in miraculous gifts. This the apostle expressly teaches in the latter part of the foregoing chapter, where, after enumerating many miraculous gifts, he advises Christians to covet or desire the best of them, but then adds, 'And yet I shew unto you a more excellent way', namely, to seek the influence of the Spirit of God, working charity or divine love in the heart. Surely the Scriptures, when speaking of the future glorious state of the church as being such an excellent state, give us no reason to conclude that the Spirit of God will be poured out then in any other way than in the most excellent way. And doubtless the most excellent way of the Spirit is for the most excellent state of the church.

"The future state of the church being so much more perfect than in previous times, does not tend to prove that then there shall be miraculous gifts, but rather the contrary. For the apostle himself, in the text and context, speaks of these extraordinary gifts ceasing and vanishing away to give place for a kind of fruits or influences of the Spirit that are more perfect. If you do but read the text in connexion with the two following verses, you will see that the reason implied why prophecy and tongues fail, and charity remains, is this, that the imperfect gives way to the perfect, and the less excellent to the more excellent; and the more excellent, he declares, is, charity or love. Prophecy and miracles argue the imperfection of the state of the church, rather than its perfection. For they are means designed by God as a stay or support, or as a leading-string, if I may so say to the church in its infancy, rather than as means adapted to it in its full growth; and as such the apostle seems to speak of them. When the Christian church first began, after the ascension of Christ, it was in its infancy, and then it needed miracles, etc., to establish it; but, being completed, they ceased, which, according to the apostle's arguing, shews their imperfection, and how much inferior they are to that fruit or influence of the Holy Spirit which is seen in divine love. Why, then should we expect that they should be restored again when the church is in its most perfect state? All these miraculous gifts the apostle seems to call 'childish things', in comparison with the nobler fruit of Christian love. They are adapted to the childish state of the church, while holy love is more to be expected in its full-grown and manly state; and in themselves they are childish, in comparison with that holy love which will so abound in the church when it comes to its perfect stature in Christ Jesus." 5

James Buchanan deals with the issue in terms of building:

"Now, these two—the miraculous gifts and the internal graces of the Spirit—being distinct, and capable of existing separately, and the one being so much more valuable than the other, the only question that remains is, which of the two is the permanent inheritance of the Church? It is evidently the more valuable of the two. The miraculous gifts of the Spirit have long since been withdrawn. They were used for a temporary purpose. They were the scaffolding which God employed for the erection of a spiritual temple. When it was no longer needed, the scaffolding was taken down, but the temple still stands, and is occupied by his indwelling Spirit; for, 'Know ye not that we are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you?' " 6

### 3. **Healing.**

By far the most spectacular of the gifts claimed among today's Pentecostals is the gift of healing. So prominent is it in Pentecostal thinking that special allowance is made for it in their doctrine by a claim that Christ died for our sicknesses as well as for our sins. The doctrine of healing in the atonement solves many problems for the healing evangelist, but raises acute problems for the sick Christian. There are certain anomalies which strike one forcibly when dealing with this question.

The "healer" claims that he heals by exercising the "gift of healing", yet according to the doctrine, healing is appropriated in the same way as salvation. No one claims, however, that salvation is bestowed through the exercise of a gift.

When the laying on of hands fails to procure healing, the fault inevitably lies not with the healer and his gift but with the sick person, who through lack of faith is unable to appropriate to himself, that benefit for which Christ died. He now finds himself with a spiritual perplexity in addition to his physical disorder. His faith has proved inadequate for his physical and temporal needs. But it was the same faith which was used for his salvation. How can he know now that he has believed as he ought, for his spiritual and eternal needs? It is only a merciful inability to reason to a logical conclusion which saves such a man from despair.

While some who believe in the gifts of healing might be prepared to argue from the Scripture, there are unfortunately many who see no need for this, claiming simply that these signs occur and that their presence with us today is a sufficient argument. You might have heard the cliché: The man with an experience has the better of the man with an argument. In dealing with the question of healing it is unfortunate that this pragmatic argument cannot be avoided and in order to face up to it considerable research has been done. I have read works which deal extensively with a close examination of alleged miracles of healing. There seems every reason to doubt whether the sincere Christian can accept as valid the many claims of miraculous healing.

"It seems to be the experience of every one who has made a serious attempt to sift the evidence for miraculous healing that this evidence melts away before his eyes. Many remarkable cures are wrought, but nothing which compels the inference of miraculous healing seems to be unambiguously established."

We have considered the Pentecostal view, which is that after an initial baptism with power all nine gifts are to be sought by and are available to believers today.

We have also considered the orthodox position, which is that absolutely extraordinary gifts such as miracles, healing and tongues were given to the apostolic age only.

Some contemporary Reformed writers hold a middle position. They believe that although the presumption against the occurrence of the miraculous is strong, we ought to give due consideration to reports and not rule them out altogether.

Many feel it is their right to expect something of the miraculous in their Christian experience. I say, "according to your faith so be it into you", but following twenty years of experience in these matters I commend caution and conclude by recommending the following statement by Warfield made in his book *Counterfeit Miracles* (p. 179) which is now available in paperback form from the Banner of Truth for only 50p (one Rand in South Africa).

"The Lord is rich in mercy to them that trust in Him, and it would be strange indeed if there were no visible and tangible fruits of this His mercy perceptible in our bodily life. There is a promise for this life as well as for that which is to come, and it is definitely said that to those who seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, all these things shall be added. Are not the providence and grace of God enough for us in this 'our little journey in the world?' Or, dissatisfied with these, are we to demand that the laws of nature be suspended in our case; that, though in the world, we shall, in this sense too, be not of it? What scriptural ground is there for expecting miraculous healings of the body through these ages of our earthly pilgrimage, in addition to that benefit which the body obtains from its animation by a renewed and sanctifying soul, from our Lord's watchfulness over it as His purchased possession, from the indwelling in it of the Holy Spirit as His Temple, from the Father's listening to the prayers of His saints for its keeping and healing, and from all God's goodness to it in fulfilment of His word that godliness has the promise of the life that now is as well as that which is to come? None has been pointed to, and we are constrained to believe none exists. For soul and body we are in the Lord's loving keeping. We trust in Him and He keeps us. There is no specific promise that He will keep us otherwise than by His providence and grace. Do not these suffice for all our needs?"

#### References

1. *Works*, vol 4, p. 481.
2. *The Puritans and Spiritual Gifts*—the Puritan Report 1967.
3. *Counterfeit Miracles*.
4. *The Doctrine of the Holy Spirit*, pp. 139-142.
5. *Charity and its Fruits*, pp. 317-319.
6. *The Office and Work of the Holy Spirit*, p. 74.

# Conferences Worldwide

MALACHI 3: 16 TELLS US THAT THOSE WHO FEARED THE LORD SPOKE OFTEN one with another. From this arose a book of remembrance kept by the Lord. Many are the testimonies of rich spiritual benefits received through such gatherings. The volumes of remembrance have filled up to the extent, possibly, of a few more pages, due to the opportunities of the past few months of 1973. The following reports reflect the edification felt by churches in different parts of the world.

## SOUTH AFRICA

*Herbert Carson, one of the prime movers behind the beginning of the Carey Conference in U.K., gave us a brief report of his African visit while at London airport.*

To speak about the months of July and August as summer when referring to South Africa and Rhodesia is misleading. It is mid-winter there. But the cloudless skies of a South African winter more than match the cloudy ones of many British summers, so perhaps the term is not so ambiguous after all.

Anyway, the first engagement of my trip to Africa this “summer”, was to speak at the Medical Students Christian Conference. This not only showed the great need which there is in South Africa’s mission hospitals—the conference was held at Thaba ’Nchu—but also the openness of young medics to serious doctrinal study. The tragic death of a University of Capetown student, killed in a car accident on his way home, soberly emphasised the urgency of our tasks.

Preaching in churches, visiting the Baptist Theological College, lecturing in connection with the Dutch Reformed church—these were some of the commitments. But of course the major item was the Reformed Studies Conference at Skoegheim. Presbyterians, Anglicans, Baptists and others united there in a common concern for the revival of the Reformed faith. It was encouraging to find that these truths were not only clarifying minds but also stirring hearts. It was good to see young Reformed men so aware of the main issues today and able to deal with them in a competent fashion.

An outstanding paper was Alf Nieuwoudt’s treatment of Karl Barth. Clive Tyler stimulated us greatly by his paper on Charles Finney. Robin Wells, in showing the relevance of God’s sovereignty today, was a living illustration that elders as well as full time ministers have a significant role. As for Jim van Zyl, the worth of his study on Calvin is a prelude

to his visit to the Carey Conference in January—he has much to contribute ! I will not comment on my own efforts or those of your editor.

That another paperback of the quality of *Preaching Yesterday and Today* is contemplated is testimony in itself to the standard of material produced. Jannie du Preez's paper in particular reflected the greatest care in preparation.

My last call was at Bulawayo, where Brian Russell ministers in the Baptist church. Free Presbyterian missionaries drove about 70 miles each evening from a tribal reserve to hear the Word—an example to some of the lukewarm who can scarcely stir themselves to go a mile.

Another bright light for me was that the conferences were multi-racial. The mixture of Afrikaans, English, Indian and African participating in the discussions and together at the meal tables was truly encouraging. It is good to see an increasing possibility of our brethren of other races enjoying the advantages of our Christian heritage.

## AUSTRALIA—MELBOURNE

*Norman Porter might remind the literary among us of a line in Shakespeare: "Why, man, he doth bestride the narrow world like a Colossus . . .". One reason is that he is a very large man, and the other is that his achievements have been remarkable. At one time he was an M.P. in Northern Ireland! He was also president of the Irish Baptist Union! More recently he has been pastoring a church in Adelaide, Australia. He helped to make the Conference which he reports as follows.*

To give impressions of a Reformed Studies Conference in Melbourne, or any other part of Australia, would necessitate a knowledge of religious life in this vast country, but neither time nor space will permit this. Consequently much will have to be assumed by the reader. To help in this assumption, it is important to know that there has been a real dearth of Reformed preaching throughout the great majority of Australian pulpits. It is really amazing to find so many Christians who have not the slightest idea of the meaning of the doctrines of grace, and some who have never heard of them. Students in many theological colleges are completely ignorant of the five points of Calvinism. Consequently, when they are first confronted with them there is often opposition and resentment. Personal, practical experience has proved this on more than one occasion.

In view of the foregoing it is thrilling to be able to report that at last there has been a real emphasis on the Reformed Faith at a special conference, lasting three full days and a part of the fourth in Glenn College, La Trobe University, Melbourne. The surroundings, accommodation and hospitality were all that one could desire for such an event except for the fact that La Trobe is not centrally situated. The organisation of

the whole conference, in the efficient hands of Stuart Fowler supported admirably by the Macleod Baptist Reformed Church, Melbourne, was excellent. The theme of the conference was *The Church—Yesterday and Tomorrow—Semper Reformanda*.

The first address was given by Erroll Hulse, and was entitled *The Church as a confessing community—defining the issues*.

James Cox of Smithfield Particular Baptist Church, Sydney, was the second speaker. He had as his subject *The Church and its Government—the local Church*. This message had a Baptist emphasis but the influence of the Reformation was clear and its strong character was obviously acceptable to all present.

For the evening subject we had *The Church and Evangelism—where did we go astray?* and this was beautifully defined by John Coleman. John, a Londoner, has ministered in Ulster, Perth, Adelaide and is now minister of the Camberwell Baptist Church, Melbourne, Victoria. He has worked closely with evangelists such as Tom Rees and having considerable experience of modern evangelism was well equipped to deal both negatively and positively with his subject.

Our next day included four main addresses, the first of which was by Stuart Fowler, entitled *The Church and Society—the Gospel and the Renewal of Society*. In this address we were presented with what one might term the academic approach, with a strong philosophical line running through it. It was a well prepared paper, and most unusual in character for many present. Jim Cox gave his second message *The Church and its Government—Membership and Discipline*.

After lunch John Coleman's second paper, *The Church and Evangelism—the Way Ahead*, was presented. This time we were faced with the great urgency to evangelise using methods which are directly in keeping with the New Testament pattern. The local church was advocated as the agent of an evangelistic ministry at all times.

In the evening we had a most inspiring time as Erroll Hulse brought us his second paper, *The Primacy of Preaching*. No one was left in any doubt in regard to this solemn and vital matter which was well documented from Scripture, the Reformation and Puritan history.

Time passed only too quickly. The third day had arrived, and it was Jim Cox who began with *The Church and its Government—Synods*. This message made us all feel as if we were Presbyterians! However, it certainly gave all present much food for thought. Erroll Hulse followed with *The Church as Confessing Community—the Relevance of the Confession*. He emphasised the important work done by the Westminster Divines and stressed the strength of the Puritan movement in such a way that we could appreciate the importance of sound doctrine and the place



*Ministers at Melbourne. From left to right, Cliff Heller, missionary to New Guinea, W. R. McEwen, Norman Porter and John Coleman.*

of statements such as the Westminster Confession of Faith (and of course the improved edition—The Baptist Confession of Faith of 1689 !).

The afternoon session was taken up with the second paper by Stuart Fowler on *The Church and Society—a life-encompassing Community*. For some this was perhaps out of reach, and others found they disagreed. Nevertheless, it was the presentation of a point of view held in some Reformed circles.

A change was scheduled for the evening session. I acted as chairman to a symposium consisting of the four speakers. The subject for consideration was *The Selection and Training of the Ministry—Any Alternatives?* The chairman introduced the topic and then invited each speaker to give briefly his own point of view. Then followed questions from the chair. The foundations of present day theological training institutions were attacked most vigorously as being far removed from biblical principles but, despite wide differences of view, there was no rancour or ill-feeling.

One aspect of the conference, which I have deliberately reserved to the last, was that of general participation. After each address the chairman, a different delegate each time, invited the audience to ask questions or make any comments relative to the subject, as they desired. This was most helpful. In fact it really made the Conference “tick”.



A healthy place was given to prayer throughout and devotional addresses at some of these were appreciated. I hope I may be forgiven if I single out the last morning devotion. It was given by Geoff Paxton. He spoke on justification and it was most inspiring; original in its presentation and gripping in its effect.

## **FAMILY CONFERENCE, SYDNEY**

*Report by Ray Levick*

August 27-31 saw the first Baptist Reformed Family Conference held in Australia at Moore Theological College in Sydney. The day sessions were attended by families, the evening meetings drawing others with well over a hundred at each session.

It was a pleasure to have fellowship with the interstate visitors who were mainly from our sister church at MacLeod, together with several subscribers to the magazine whom I had not previously met.

Care was taken by the organisers and the speakers to avoid the danger of "conferencitis". This occurs where people get lifted up in the clouds spiritually at the Conference and then become disillusioned when back in the daily routine. As such they can hardly wait for the next Conference to get another spiritual "uplift". This type of complaint has been prevalent at deeper life type meetings over the last eighty years or so.

The Bible and its implications were prominent, with papers given on Scripture, Reason, Tradition and the Charismatic Movement. The practical outcome of this theme was shown in papers dealing with Sovereignty of God in Evangelism, Approaches to Prayer, Knowing the Will of God and Reformation in Family Life. To challenge and humble us these were balanced by two studies of what the Lord could do in the lives of believers (Spurgeon and Whitefield) and in the Church (Revival and Reformation). The time for questions at the end of the sessions was a help to many and gave us a sense of being involved in the message.

An interesting meeting was the Panel Discussion on Church Unity. Dr. D. B. Knox, Principal of Moore College, was the Chairman and proved himself to be a "stirrer" of a high order. His thought-provoking questions (such as whether John 17: 21 had anything at all to do with visible unity) to the panel (Erroll Hulse, Stuart Fowler, John Coleman and Jim Cox) tested them in no uncertain way, quickening interest among the audience. Despite the differences in opinion a true spirit of unity prevailed!

A bookstall reported vigorous business mainly with Carey and Banner lines. The demand exceeded our expectations and we sold out of most titles.

The recreational side was not forgotten and the highlight was a bus trip to Bobbin Head where everyone enjoyed the break in the tranquil setting.

Squash was the main sporting activity where we at last found a youthful member who could defeat Erroll Hulse (or was it travel fatigue?) who had previously beaten all comers.

Comments received from friends who attended the Conference were that they were inspired to spend more time in private prayer and Bible study and to make a more determined effort to reach the unsaved in their area. From these comments I feel that the Lord truly blessed us and revealed Himself to us.

## AUCKLAND, NEW ZEALAND

*Report by the editor*

*The conference in New Zealand was the climax of the editor's seven week tour, or missionary journey as the Cuckfield church call it.*

The chief landmarks in the city of Auckland, which spreads out over a length of forty miles, are extinct volcanoes, each of which has left its own miniature mountain. Some of these can be ascended by a winding road and at the top one usually gazes down at sheep grazing peacefully in the crater.

Interest in the Reformed faith in New Zealand seems for many years to have been as dormant as these volcanoes—no rumble, shake or tremor to disturb the reign of non-doctrinal, liberal-prone Christianity. However, through the initiative of an infant Reformed Baptist Church, a one-day Conference was convened which took place on September 1st this year. It proved to be a most exciting and profitable event, a day of reviving, a day like those feast days of Old Testament times, in which we ate the fat and drank the sweet, and industriously sent portions (by way of expository outlines) to those for whom nothing was prepared (Neh. 8:10). While we wish Auckland's volcanoes permanent extinction, we do well to desire stirrings of the kind that led those young men of Auckland to plan as generously as they did. Logan Park Motel—the largest in the country—was the venue, being adequately equipped for the ambitious and exceedingly well attended programme of that memorable day of September 1st, which began at 10.00 a.m. and finished twelve happy hours later.

Five hundred extra copies of the brochure advertising the Conference had to be printed. A vigorous tractarian statement, forming part of the brochure, made plain the purpose of the gathering: "to encourage Christians to re-examine the central foundations of thinking concerning revival, and to re-focus attention away from man as the centre and focal point towards a gracious all sufficient God; to set forth again the biblical foundations of God's sovereign grace as they were rediscovered in the Reformation".

Looking to that God of our fathers it was my privilege to open both the morning and afternoon sessions, and to conclude in the evening. Preach-

ing on the subject of *The necessity of personal holiness in reformation*, I began by reporting on the reformation of the sixties and the more recent development of Reformed church planting in different countries since 1970; going on to illustrate the continuing need of powerful, comprehensive holiness and quality of personal life as fundamental, if the Reformed movement is to be a real force in the world. Our times seem more confused than any period since the 16th century Reformation and hence there is all the more need to return to the foundation of the sovereignty of God and the authority of his Word, which has been lost sight of in all the major denominations.

Slick, short-cut formulae for holiness have done more harm than good and we must build upon nothing less than the great solid principles for holiness laid down for us in Scripture, namely, the moral law and justification by faith only, together with an experimental understanding of the Trinitarian basis of progressive sanctification: union with Christ, the indwelling of the Holy Spirit, and adoption by the Father.

Wynford Davies, who, as his name suggests, originates from Wales, expounded the relevance of the book of Jonah. Among other valuable illustrations, he likened Jonah's call to Nineveh to the call today to preach *repentance*, in the great secular cities of the twentieth century, cities as idolatrous and as wicked as Nineveh. Will we, like Jonah, shirk the call? Only those truths clothed with the authority of a sovereign God are of any use in our contemporary Ninevehs, and as our brother reminded us, what God did for Nineveh long ago, he can do today. Do we believe that?

In my second sermon I sought to develop the relationship of reformation to revival, explaining the work of the Holy Spirit in both; the prophecies of Zechariah forming the basis of the exposition. Traditionalism and Arminianism have worked like a cancer upon the internal organs of evangelical churches. We have turned full circle. The foundations have been removed. Hence reformation is a priority. More often than not in the history of the Church, we see that God, by his Holy Spirit, sends reformation first, so that there may be order and teaching by which the many souls brought in through the revivals following can be nurtured and built up. While pursuing reformation we must never lose sight of the ultimate aim, which is the outpouring of the Holy Spirit in revival. When revival comes the following order from Zech. 12:10-13:2 is to be observed: (i) The Spirit grants grace and supplication; enlivened, urgent prayer. (ii) The Spirit gives powerful preaching. (iii) The Spirit reveals Christ crucified as central and as overwhelmingly personal and vital. (iv) The Spirit gives personal repentance, so much so that you would think hearts would break for grief, because of sin *against God*. (v) The Spirit opens up a fountain for cleansing which spells the joy of assurance, for cleansing means iustification. (vi) The Spirit causes

reformation of life, idols being cut off. Revival worthy of the name must lead to reformation. This test, applied to many claims of revival today, shows them to be spurious. Society remains as abominably corrupt and unaffected as ever. A revival worthy of the name will have a powerful salting effect on whole communities and even affect civil governments.

Ken Campbell, who studied at Westminster Theological Seminary and who is now the minister of the Reformed Church at Hamilton, introduced a discussion period in the afternoon. The subject: Christian responsibility in the world. He defined this as "living out the Word of God in every life situation". Bryan Drake (Anglican), Arthur Palmer (Reformed Presbyterian) and Arthur Gunn (Presbyterian) contributed from the panel during a lively debate. An outstanding feature was Ken Campbell's chairmanship through which we were reminded that the natural man is never neutral, he is anti-God in all his presuppositions and attitudes. Our thinking, therefore, as believers, must be geared to deal with the natural man as he really is.

There is nothing stiff, starched or stilted about Geoff Duffy, a brother hailing from "The Brethren". In the first of the two evening sessions he laid before us the meaning of the Gospel. Well! Well! If the Brethren continue to have men of such drive and determination raised up among them the famine of hearing doctrinally nourishing material will soon end.

What a lively day it was. When things are man-centred fatigue soon creeps over weary frames. After twelve hours we felt strong to run the race of life, rejoicing in the Lord, who is our strength. We believe it was a day of days that will be looked back upon as marking the beginning of a new impetus for truth across New Zealand.

## **2ND CAREY FAMILY CONFERENCE, 30th JULY—4th AUGUST**

*Report by Carson Boggs of the Netherlands*

Pilgrim Hall was again the setting for the conference and our enjoyment of it was increased both by the facilities provided and the kindness of the staff.

The conference programme itself was varied and interesting. "The Implications of the Doctrines of Grace" was the subject of two lectures by David Kingdon, Principal of the Irish Baptist College in Belfast. The doctrines of election and adoption were expounded and the effects that they should have in our lives shown. The presentation of these doctrines and the call to a life of humility before God who chose us, and of love toward all his children, proved to be among the most impressive and challenging parts of the conference.

The story of Christmas Evans and his struggle in establishing and pastoring some twenty Christian churches while living in the most primitive conditions was told by Robert Oliver, pastor of a Strict Baptist church in Bradford-on-Avon. Evans' thankfulness to God for provisions which to us would seem so meagre, provides a continuing rebuke to the unthankful attitudes which so many of us adopt in the affluence of today. Jack Milner, of Castlefields chapel in Derby, also gave a paper in a biographical vein, his subject being Andrew Fuller. The section on Fuller's book "The Gospel Worthy of All Acceptation" and the relationship of his work to the missionary ventures of William Carey were of particular interest.

Biography was also a high-note for the children attending the conference. In addition to sharing in the sessions on Fuller and Christmas Evans, they had their own talks on William Carey, Robert Moffat and Howell Harris. The attention given to the children throughout the conference evidenced much thoughtful preparation and consideration.

Four of the morning conference sessions were taken up with the subject of marriage. Douglas Jones, minister of Trinity Baptist Church, Gloucester, gave two addresses, one on preparation for marriage, the other concerning the continuing and growing responsibilities within marriage. The talks, which were illustrated by examples from the speaker's experience, as a husband, father and grandfather and also as a pastor, provided the basis for two discussion sessions in which a variety of opinions and experiences was shared.

On the first evening of the conference, Bernard Honeysett, pastor of Trinity Baptist Church, Tenterden, introduced the theme of revival, which was to be the topic for the four subsequent evening sessions. Each of these sessions was open to visitors, and a considerable number of people from nearby came to join in fellowship with the conference residents, and to listen to the messages brought by Martin Holdt of South Africa. Mr. Holdt spoke on the subjects "Wholeheartedness", "Overcoming the World", "Recognising the Need for Revival" and "Seeking the Blessing of Revival". The simplicity and disturbing directness with which he declared what God required of his people searched and challenged the hearts of his hearers.

A conference is more than the sum-total of its sessions. The most interesting discussions were carried on outside the conference room. In spite of the fact that nearly all the guests shared deep doctrinal convictions, opinions were by no means unanimous on the wide variety of subjects raised at the lunch-table, at the swimming-pool, on the croquet lawn, and even on the cricket field ! The differences did not bring any discord; rather, the most lasting impression of the conference was one of harmonious fellowship.

*The substance of the final address given by the editor at a one day Conference held in Logan Park Motel, Auckland, New Zealand, on September 1st, 1973.*

# **The Place and Importance of the Local Church in Reformation**

REFORMATION CONSISTS OF THE CONFORMING OF CHURCHES TO THE biblical pattern, from which pattern there is a constant tendency to move away. To reform is to form anew. Such renewal almost always begins with those who lead, and affects the whole church, root, trunk and branches. The powers arrayed against reformation are so formidable that it is impossible to conceive of progress being made unless it proceeds from Jesus Christ, who exercises supreme power and authority from heaven and who, with the Father, sends the Holy Spirit to reform the churches.

Reformation is the ever-present responsibility of the church: revival the sovereign prerogative of God. We should never lose sight of, or cease to pray for, revival. For our encouragement we observe that the invariable pattern in Scripture is for foundation laying, or reformation, to precede revival. Think of the ministries of Moses, Samuel and Nehemiah. The apostles, with the disciples, were first prepared and then the Spirit was poured out. Likewise note Hosea 10: 12; 2 Chronicles 7: 14; Isaiah 58; Acts 19; Malachi 3.

The agent for reformation is the local church, there being no other place in which God has vested spiritual authority. A church re-formed and renewed becomes the base from which reformation can extend to other churches.

In opening the subject we will proceed as follows:

## **1. An examination of local churches in the book of Acts**

(a) *Jerusalem.* In the initial stage the church at Jerusalem consisted, more or less, of one hundred and twenty disciples. From this nucleus the church was to grow very rapidly. Let us remember that baptism was required before one could be added to the Jerusalem church, and continuance in the apostles' doctrine, fellowship, breaking of bread and prayers was characteristic of all the members (Acts 2: 42). Pastoral and administrative matters were delegated and thoroughly attended to (Acts 6: 1-7). It was through persecution that the believers were thrust out far and wide, to become nuclei to which others would be added, the multiplication of churches thereby being brought about.

(b) *Antioch.* From the description of some of the members given in Acts 13: 1 we gather that some men of outstanding ability were included

in the membership. As the whole church gave herself to prayer, Paul and Barnabas were called and sent out, not to reform existing churches, but to evangelize and gather souls to form new churches. Note that God causes gifts to cluster together in a local church, providing that which is needful when a special work is to be undertaken. The exercise of these gifts wonderfully provided and blended together by the Lord brings a far greater power and influence to bear in the world than that which might come from a single believer. Churches built around one individual often decline when he leaves. This was not the case with Paul at Antioch. We ought to think far more in terms of corporate effort and far less in terms of single personalities. Churches should not be dominated by one person.

(c) *Ephesus*. Of all the churches in the New Testament, none seems to have exercised a greater outreach than that of Ephesus, from which the word sounded out to the whole of Asia Minor (Acts 19: 10). The reformation of individuals and of society as a whole at Ephesus was far reaching. Harmful books to the value of fifty thousand pieces of silver were consumed in the flames of one burning (Acts 19: 19). The church of Ephesus stands at the head of the seven churches addressed in Revelation 2 and 3, reminding us of its role as the base from which the other six were founded.

A study of churches in the time spanning from these early years to our day would undoubtedly produce valuable and enriching information. Think, for instance, of the church at Geneva. The reformation wrought by Calvin in that city has had profound effects upon whole nations. From Geneva preachers were sent out far and wide. The effect on countries like France and Scotland was great and Calvin's Geneva exercises a powerful influence to this day. Think too of New Park Street and the Tabernacle, pastored by C. H. Spurgeon. We tend to think in terms of the one man, but it was the church as a whole that was instrumental in the tremendous amount achieved—the College, the Orphanage, the Alms Houses, the Colportage Association and, especially, the planting of hundreds of other churches. The prayers and work of the actual church await true assessment at the coming of Christ. Surely this concept of what a church can achieve is an exciting one which has yet to be fully explored.

## **2. A description of the marks of true churches, illustrating what they ought to be**

Undoubtedly powerful, authoritative preaching was the chief weapon in the armoury of the apostles. For example, the Thessalonian church was created by gospel preaching, which came to the people with power sent down from heaven. It was proclamation endued with the might of the Holy Spirit. God himself was in it. Nothing can compare to preaching. It is God's power to transform the souls of men. The reviving of such

preaching is the first and greatest need of our churches as they seek to reach a lost world.

Observe, however, that the apostles did not stop with preaching. Those gathered by the preachers were to be shepherded, cared for and disciplined. I was speaking to a well known Anglican leader in Sydney, which with good reason is regarded as the strongest evangelical diocese in the Anglican world, a diocese in which the doctrines of grace are widely and clearly proclaimed. This gifted brother stated very plainly that he could not see eldership in the New Testament. Surely it is not a case of "could not", but a case of "do not wish to"! Moreover, it is patently obvious that a true doctrine of the church is impossible if a system is submitted to in which the whole concept of eldership is overridden by an episcopal hierarchy. Elders equal in authority were set over all the New Testament churches (Acts 14: 23; Phil. 1: 1).

Spiritual rule is fundamental and is found, as we would expect, in most of the epistles. Can we see eldership in the New Testament? The following are a few references: Acts 20: 17-28; Romans 12: 8; 1 Corinthians 12: 28; Ephesians 4: 11; 1 Thessalonians 5: 12; 1 Timothy 3: 1-7 and 5: 17-19; Titus 1: 1-9; Hebrews 13: 17; James 5: 14 and 1 Peter 5: 1-4.

Preaching and oversight are the principal means by which the churches are to be built up, together with the sacraments of baptism and the Lord's Supper. Other marks of a true church are the maintenance of good works, brotherly love, spiritual worship and evangelism.

The importance of the local church is highlighted in the event of a Christian having to move from one area to another. A church then has to be found which will minister to the needs of the whole man. Where will there be expository preaching, God-centred worship, holiness of life and genuine brotherly love? Is the local church ideal for the whole family? Will it be a place of conversion and spiritual nurture for the children? Will it be a constant source of biblical instruction, revival and encouragement for the parents?

### **3. Suggestions as to ways and means of reformation**

Does our own local church measure up to the standards just described? Can reformation be attempted? There are many obstacles. Apathy, traditionalism, prejudice and error often bar the way. Where can a start be made? To begin with, a quickening is required by which vision and zeal for the local church as such is restored. When believers view the Church as that which is most precious to Jesus Christ, the Father's gift to him, that which he purchased with his own blood, the home for the Holy Spirit for eternity, and begin to see their local church in this way, there will be readiness to seek conformity to the biblical pattern that the church may be pleasing to the Lord. The Church is described and illustrated by over



eighty different images in the New Testament—a body, a building, a vine, a flock, a bride—which demonstrates the importance and prominence of the subject. To many evangelicals, however, the local church means little, they would not think in terms of labouring and sacrificing for her, or of giving her their energies, resources, time, strength and devotion. Too often some Christian organisation which has no warrant from Scripture receives the affectionate devotion of the believer, while the local church is regarded as second rate and tawdry, a bore and something to be criticised.

If there is to be reformation in the local church it needs to begin with the preaching. The words of our Lord are spirit and life and by his word (the Scriptures) his body, the Church, is nourished and strengthened (Eph. 4: 11-16). Preaching, if adequate, ought to be expository, systematic, doctrinal, evangelical, applicatory, powerful and inspiring. Where the way of salvation is reduced to a simplistic, unbiblical formula, we can hardly expect the people to be realistic about other areas of truth, least of all discipline and church government. The latter is intrinsically related to expository, systematic preaching, for where there is thoroughness in exposition, attention will be given to the order God has ordained for his people and from that order will stem concern for reformation and improvement in all departments.

A church built up, expanding and strong in the Lord is able to send out teaching elders as well as gifted members who, carrying clearly formulated biblical principles to other areas, are instrumental in planting new churches. It has been our privilege to see this happening from our village church in Sussex. Recently we have been alerted to see that there is, basically, little difference between the so called mission fields and English speaking areas. The same principles apply everywhere.

#### **4. Some knotty questions considered**

##### *(a) Under what circumstances should a believer leave his local church?*

If the preaching in a church becomes Liberal and the glorious truths of the Gospel are publicly contradicted and denied, it is sinful for a believer to continue in that church. Moreover, if there is no exercise of discipline and no distinction is made between believers and unbelievers (and there is no realistic possibility of reversing such a situation), then it is time to move.

In some areas there may be no alternative place of worship, which reminds us quite forcibly of the appalling conditions which are common today. If the situation is genuinely impossible in the existing local church, or churches, it is better to make a new start in one of the homes. The teaching purveyed in some evangelical groups that it is more “spiritual” to remain in a “modernist” church is like counselling people to breathe in carbon monoxide to prove the soundness of their lungs.

*(b) Is it right to belong to a church which is in the Ecumenical movement?*

Some evangelical churches with evangelical ministers are in the ecumenical movement because their trust deeds tie them to a denomination within the Ecumenical movement. The minister of the church may loathe the compromise involved, but finds that the majority of his deacons are against secession. Forcing the issue could bring schism and damage the believers. Resignation would tear the minister from the flock. Taking out some believers to start again may not be practical or feasible under such circumstances. The best thing is to work patiently towards a situation in which the church can be freed from compromise. Not a few ministers in England have had success in this way, particularly men who have taken their churches out of the Baptist Union. With state churches it is generally impossible to take a whole church out of the Establishment. Take the Church of England as an example. Two thousand ministers were ejected from the Anglican ministry in 1662. In that action the best hope of reforming the Anglican Church died. If subsequent history has proved anything it has proved reformation within that sacral system to be impossible, and more so today than ever before.

*(c) What is the minimum required before a church can be recognised as such?*

The Catechism for Boys and Girls answers the question, "What is the church?" as follows: "A church is an assembly of believers met together under the Word of God". Even though elders may not yet be formally recognised and discipline not yet a reality, providing these matters are agreed to in principle and await fulfilment because of a developing situation, then undoubtedly that group ought to be regarded as a church. I suggest that there needs to be a minimum of ten adults to make the assembly a reality. In most suburbs or built up areas, to have less than ten would constitute a danger of being splinter-like. We are speaking, of course, in very general terms and each situation would need its own careful appraisal. In some country areas where farm homesteads are far apart, ten might be considered quite a substantial number. The point I am trying to make is that we should avoid, where at all possible, needless splintering of the evangelical force. Where in large areas there is no Reformed witness it is highly desirable that such should be established and this is no small factor when considering the planting of a new church.

Returning to the matter of the eldership, it would be wise, while acknowledging the principle of plurality and equality in eldership, for the small group that is gathering for the first time to recognise a temporary leader (if one is outstanding). As long as there is a general agreement as to a Confessional basis, it is then possible to work steadily towards a situation in which the leadership of the church and its gifts can be reconsidered. The premature appointment of officers can prove detrimental. "Proving" is necessary, the testing of stress and strain to prove whether a man has the endurance and stamina to fulfil an office.

# Leeds, Yorkshire, 1974

*Fourth Carey Conference 1st-4th January 1974*

WHAT ARE CONTRIBUTORY FACTORS INVOLVED IN THE PLANTING AND BUILDING up of local churches? What can we learn about this from the New Testament? Have we faith that God can do great things for us today? Have we a living, pulsating passion for the Lord and His work? Is there any way out of the bondage of traditionalism for those imprisoned? What about higher standards of preaching and the study essential in attaining that foremost need? And what of the power of the Spirit? In rejecting false subjectivism it is at the same time certain that a true anointing of the Holy Spirit must be ours. Practical, persevering, church based evangelism, intelligently adapted to local needs is essential. Standards for church membership and discipline are likewise imperative.

Already there are indications of those attending from far and particularly from Yorkshire itself, where planting of churches has been in progress. Indeed the situation in Yorkshire has given the cue for the subjects for the next conference. New churches are being established and from one just born in Birmingham (September 1973) comes Alec Taylor, an ex-Pentecostal, to contribute. He knows the Conference and his subject well. Geoff Cook from the Seychelles is coming and others from further afield who will be asked to tell us of their work so that we can share in it by way of prayer. The north of England has for the most part been bereft of a free grace witness for a long time and it is now encouraging to hear of a number of churches emerging where the whole counsel of God is preached. The fourth Carey Conference will be an opportunity for those from nearby to share their vision with those from afar and vice-versa.

Oxley Hall is one of the halls of residence of Leeds University and is situated at Far Headingley on the north side of Leeds. The Conference is primarily intended for those holding office in the church and being held from 1st to 4th January will give opportunity to those in the teaching profession. There is accommodation for eighty delegates and while we encourage any actively engaged in the work of the church to join with us, priority will be given to those holding office. Early booking is advised.

## **Cost**

In days of high inflation, costs have to be carefully examined. Through the generosity of friends, the fees have been subsidised and will be £8.00 for the full period (inclusive of VAT). For those only able to join for one or two nights the cost is £2.80 per night (including VAT) for full board, *but this must be booked in advance.*

For those who have high costs in travelling, assistance can be given. Further help with the accommodation fee is also possible. We hope that no one will be barred from coming due to financial reasons. To help meet these costs we would appeal to established churches to share the costs.

## **Booking**

A booking will be secured by sending a £2.00 deposit to the conference secretary, John Rubens at "Mattaniah", Ditchling Road, Wivelsfield, Sussex. Telephone: Wivelsfield Green (STD 044 484) 240.

The Conference assembles for tea at 4 p.m. on Tuesday 1st January 1974 and concludes after breakfast on Friday 4th January.

# NUMBER 16

# OCT-DEC 1973

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

## Editor

ERROLL HULSE.

*5 Fairford Close, Haywards Heath, Sussex,  
RH16 3EF.*

## Assistant Editor

IAN RANDALL.

*69 Pasture Hill, Haywards Heath, Sussex.*

## Associate Editors

DAVID KINGDON, N. Ireland.

*67 Sandown Road, Belfast 5.*

JOHN DAVISON, Scotland.

*23 Muircroft Terrace, Perth.*

JIM VAN ZYL, South Africa.

*P.O. Box 225, Hill Crest, Natal.*

STUART FOWLER, Australia.

*58 Adam Crescent, Montmorency, Victoria 3094,  
Australia.*

WAYNE MACK, U.S.A.

*110 State Road, Media, Penna 19063, U.S.A.*

## Agents

Agents to whom subscriptions should be sent.

### GREAT BRITAIN

*Tim Bruton,  
P.O. Box 106, Haywards Heath, Sussex,  
RH16 1QL.*

### AUSTRALIA

*Ray Levick,  
25 Amaroo Avenue, Mt. Colah, N.S.W. 2079.*

### NEW ZEALAND

*Michael Drake,  
P.O. Box 18,080, Glen Innes, Auckland 6.*

### U.S.A.

*Bill Carey,  
205 Victoria Avenue, Wilmington, Delaware 19804  
Ron Edmonds,  
4443 Linden Avenue 3, Long Beach, California  
90807.*

### CANADA

*Alan Wilson,  
1 Donlea Drive, Galt, Cambridge, Ontario.*

### SOUTH AFRICA

*Martin Holdt,  
7 Hebbes Street, Cambridge, East London.*

## Subscriptions

### GREAT BRITAIN

50p per annum

### AUSTRALIA

A \$ 1.10

### U.S.A.

U.S. \$ 1.50

### CANADA

C \$ 1.50

### SOUTH AFRICA

R 1.00

Single copies one quarter the above in each case which includes postage.

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