

# REFORMATION ATION TODAY '74



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*An urgent letter to our readers (written on 15 January, 1974).*

A three day week for industry in Britain brought about through the coal-miners' dispute and the fuel crisis in general, has resulted in a hard row to hoe. If continued there will be calamity for many firms, hardship for millions of workers and incalculable damage inflicted on an already struggling economy.

There are, however, encouraging flickers of light in this dark time of winter. Some workers without demanding overtime pay have added ten or more hours to their normal working week in order to meet the peculiar demands of a crazy situation. Such is the diabolical side of the mass media that the greedy and the gripey get more space than they deserve but there have been some inspiring accounts in press and television of ingenuity and devoted toil exercised to save firms from disaster.

Most printing factories are affected. With machines running only three days a week delivery dates have become meaningless. The effect on a magazine like this is catastrophic. Consummate resourcefulness will be required if we are to fulfil the aims explained in the editorial. Almost all the material published in *Reformation Today* has been by living writers seeking to apply old truth to local churches today. From time to time we have come across material already in print which awaits wider circulation. This may be the time to present it by using the Litho (photographic) method, by producing double issues, and by relying on overseas firms (if that is practical) until things return to normal here. Observing Psalm 121:1, 2, we will do the best we can.

The Carey Conference, held at Leeds during the first week of January, proved no small strengthening and help, particularly for those persevering in difficult situations. A report must await the future. Material of first rate quality was forthcoming which is adequate for another paperback like *The Ideal Church*, which was published after the Carey Conference at Nottingham. Every effort should be made to prevent results of painstaking research from being lost. For example David Kingdon's labours in finding out and portraying the church disciplinary practices of former Baptist generations should be shared, as should Geoff Thomas' thesis on the necessity of diligent study for ministers. One of the highlights was the unveiling of hitherto neglected letters by John Calvin, letters to young pastors about to be executed for the Gospel's sake and other valuable correspondence illustrating Calvin's wonderful ministry of encouragement. A title borrowed from Herbert Carson's final address well sums up the content of the whole—*The Way Forward*. This makes a fitting title for a paperback. Many neglected aspects of Christianity which received attention at the Conference need recovery if we are to go forward.

Financial backing is sought for Carey Publications to produce this paperback. The South Africans are subsidising a similar paperback from their annual conference. Despite continued orders *Preaching, Yesterday and Today* has to go out of print. From an economic point of view such

*Continued on back inside cover.*

# Editorial

The need to have more regular contact with our readers has been felt for some time and the decision has now been made to move forward and produce six issues a year instead of four. Bi-monthly publication of the magazine has the advantage of providing greater flexibility, including the reduction of the number of pages from forty to thirty-two, by which a saving can be made in postal expenses (a forty page magazine just tips the scale over the two ounce rate). Those who have subscribed already on the old basis will receive the number of issues already paid for by their subscriptions plus an additional issue.

To celebrate the anticipation of more frequent contact, correspondence is included in this issue as well as news of a few churches, some of which have been established only recently.

Bill Carey and other agents (see back cover) have written expressing approval of the proposal. Bill speaks of an opportunity of retailing the magazine in a shop. We desire to use every such opportunity and are thankful for some Christian bookshops in the U.K. which retail *Reformation Today*. Martin Holdt, our agent in South Africa, writes, "I am delighted to hear of the impending bi-monthly production". He goes on to discuss the possible effects of raising the subscription. Some send more than the stipulated amount. Because of this generosity free copies can be sent to countries where there are monetary exchange problems, where there is poverty, or where readers are under Communist domination. We are glad to respond to cases of need. Also, where a number of copies are required for promotional purposes, reductions are offered. Encouraging letters, notes and the provision of gifts are acknowledged with warmest gratitude.

At the commencement of the magazine four years ago we were mindful that the work should spring wholly from a local church. This conviction has not changed and *Reformation Today* is church-based in every respect. It is the subject of constant prayer congregationally and from the pulpit. Continued publication is made possible because of cheerful voluntary work freely donated. We can only progress because of the grace and goodness of God. We look to him to supply all that is needed. The very first requisite is for the Word to come with authority and power which we experienced at the Carey Conference held at Leeds and which is referred to briefly in the letter opposite.

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*Front cover. A familiar sight in Britain—cars queuing for petrol. A train can be seen in the background. Disruption of the train services, a coal shortage, a crisis in the supply of power combined with the problems arising from a cut back in the supply of oil, made December a difficult month in the U.K. Darker times may lie ahead. Much of the trouble is self-inflicted.*

## **Andrew Fuller**

The biographical study by Jack Milner in this issue is warmly commended. It was difficult to read the proofs because the material was so gripping that one kept on reading ahead out of interest, rather than looking for typographical errors.

## **From the Golan Heights**

During the fourth Arab-Israeli war we have been deeply burdened in prayer for the handful of believers living in Israel. Word has just come (10th Dec.) from a Hebrew Christian stationed in the Golan Heights who reports, "Further opportunity has developed with my Commanding Officer, who has agreed to read *The God Who is There* by Francis Schaeffer in the Hebrew revised edition. One or two have dipped into the New Testament and asked questions. May the sovereign Lord and King use these poorly-sown seeds to redound to his own glory in the salvation of souls". Let us join in our brother in constant prayer for the Jews as well as for the cause of true Christianity among the Arab nations.

## **Persecution of Baptists in Russia**

One of the national newspapers reported a new wave of persecution and suppression by the Soviet Secret Police. A letter written from inside a prison in the Ukraine tells how two young women, unknown to each other, met in a cell before facing trial. They prayed and sang hymns through the night but this apparently, did not antagonise the other prisoners. One of the young Baptist girls wrote as follows:

"Dear friends, when I first fell into this strange world I was seized by a deathly terror. I was completely surrounded by murderers and thieves; the language was appalling, everybody smoked and fights were constantly breaking out. I thought I would die, not only spiritually but even physically. But I was deeply mistaken. The Lord sent me strength I had never felt before, enabling me to endure this and not squander any of my spiritual reserves. Then I began to experience a love for them I cannot describe.

I sang to them and recounted much of what I knew. Some listened with tears in their eyes. When I had to leave them. . . (and I already loved every one of them individually) many said that they would begin to live a new life".

Large congregations numbering as many as fifteen hundred have been attacked by the police. Information concerning these matters is available from C.S.R.C. 34, Lubbock Road, Chislehurst, Kent BR7 5JJ.

## **Bound volumes of Reformation Today**

Bound volumes (issues 1-12) are now available. There is no introduction and no index. The copies are bound in their original form including the coloured covers. The price including postage is £2.75 or \$6.50. The supply is limited.

*Some readers request the inclusion of exposition of Scripture that we might have samples of contemporary preaching. The following is by Herbert Carson.*

## Sanctification of the Spirit

*“Peter, an apostle of Jesus Christ, to the strangers scattered throughout Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia.*

*“Elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, through sanctification of the Spirit, unto obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ: Grace unto you, and peace, be multiplied” (1 Pet. 1.1 and 2).*

IN THIS STUDY I SHALL BE DEALING ESPECIALLY WITH THE PHRASE “THROUGH sanctification of the Spirit”. Peter is writing to Christians who are sorely tested, to call them to holiness of life and to stand firm. What he is doing in these opening verses is *going behind* their Christian experience. He is endeavouring to show them just what lies behind that which they have experienced of the power of God. They have come to know Jesus Christ as their Saviour. They have come to put their trust in Him. What, says Peter, lies behind all this? How did it come about that you have thus found your way to Calvary? How did it come about that you are now Christians? How did it come about that you turned from your sins and turned to the Lord Jesus Christ? He says in reply, *God has been at work*. The Trinity—Father, Son and Spirit—have all been at work in your salvation. Your Christian life is not something that depends merely on some choice that you made at one particular point. Your Christian life depends on the mighty and eternal working of God. If you are a believer, realise that behind all this, there lies the power of God himself. So Peter began by speaking of that which God the Father had done. He *chose* you, he said, you are God’s *elect*; God’s chosen ones. Behind each Christian experience there is that basic and primary fact of the eternal choice of God. Then he looks forward to that to which they were being drawn; in other words, *obedience*; the obedience of faith: faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. But here he deals with the *connecting link* between the two. God has chosen you, he says, and the purpose which he had in mind, was that he might bring you *to faith in Jesus Christ*.

### *The Link—the Holy Spirit*

Now what is the link between that eternal choice of God and this coming to Christ? It is surely this—the *working of the Holy Spirit*. It is the

Spirit who makes effective that which God purposes. God purposed to call you. Says Peter, it is *the Spirit of God* who has called you. God purposed to lead you to Christ and it is the Spirit of God who has so worked in your life that he has pointed you to the Saviour. In the history of Christian doctrine, when Christian men have thought about these great themes, they have used the phrase—"prevenient grace". Let us not be put off by the forbidding title. "Prevenient" means that which goes beforehand. When they spoke about "prevenient grace", they were simply emphasising this fact that the grace of God *goes before*, it *precedes*, our response. You see, my faith is indeed a response, a reply, an answer to the grace of God. God has taken the initiative. He has come to me through Christ. Faith is a response to that which God has already done, to that which he has already spoken. When the Bible speaks about creation, it begins with that majestic utterance "In the beginning God" (Gen. 1. 1). In the work of creation, God took the first step. In the new creation, when a man is remade and refashioned, it is still exactly on the same terms "In the beginning God". It is God who takes the first step. It is God who acts in grace and in mercy; and faith is indeed due to the grace of God; faith is our response to that initial step which God has taken in condescending to our need and in seeking and saving those who are lost. God, says Peter, has chosen you; God aimed that he might bring you to Christ, and in order that that might be accomplished, he has sanctified you through the Spirit.

### *Set Apart*

At first sight, we may find this a rather confusing order. We are accustomed to thinking of sanctification as being the progressive work of holiness in the life of a Christian. Quite clearly, sanctification in that sense, *follows after*. It is *after* we have come to Christ, *after* we have trusted in him as our Saviour, that we advance in holiness of life; and our advance in holiness only begins when we have been justified, when we have been accepted by God for Christ's sake. Here, Peter appears to reverse the order. He speaks, *first* of the sanctification of the Spirit and *then* of the blood of sprinkling of the Lord Jesus Christ. Furthermore, he does not only put them in that order, he makes one depend upon the other; it is sanctification of the Spirit, *with a view to* this sprinkling of the blood of Christ. What then does he mean by *sanctification* here? I believe he means "setting apart" for, after all, that is the basic meaning of the word. The word "sanctify" means to separate. God's sanctified ones are those who have been separated *from* the world, separated *from* sin, and separated *unto* God. They have been set apart. So when Peter speaks here of the sanctification of the Spirit, I believe he is speaking about this work of the Holy Spirit whereby he intervenes in humanity and sets apart those whom God has chosen. He sets them apart that he may lead them to faith in the Lord Jesus Christ.

We might ask, is this just some abstruse piece of doctrine? Is it important that we should study this? May I remind you again; Peter is not sitting in a study arm-chair formulating a scheme of doctrine for people *who are just going to exercise their minds*. He is writing to sorely tested Christians, Christians who are buffeted and tried; he is writing to very ordinary Christians; to *the whole cross-section of the Church*. Quite clearly, he considers this truth to be tremendously important. This is to be the very bedrock on which they will stand when the gales of persecution beat upon them. It is important for several reasons. We want to know (certainly we *ought* to want to know, if we are Christians) what has exactly happened to us. *How did we come to Christ?* What has taken place in our lives? It is only in so far as we realise what God has already done, that we are able to look forward and see the way in which God, we trust, will continue to work. What he has done for us already is a pledge to us of what he will continue to do. If we are very hazy as to what he has done for us already, if we are not at all clear in our minds as to how God has already worked, I suggest that we shall be equally hazy as to what we may be expecting God to do for us. And if we are hazy about what we expect God to do for us, is it any wonder if our times of prayer are a vague, formal routine, not leading in any clear direction? It is vitally important that we should realise what God has done in bringing us to Christ.

There is another reason why this is an important study. You and I are called, if we are Christians, to be witnesses. *We are called to commend the gospel*. Our whole concern week by week should be that we are going out to men and women who are in darkness. We are going out with the message of salvation. As we go out we need to be clear, surely, in our minds as to that which we are longing to see. A man who has no clear sense of direction is hardly going to progress very well, and if we are not really clear in our own minds what we are seeking for in the lives of those to whom we witness, then our praying is going to be very uninstructed and our witnessing is going to be very inadequate. *I believe that we have got to see just what God does when he awakens a man, if we are going to go out with a powerful witness to men and women.*

In what way does the Holy Spirit *work* in bringing a man to Christ? Paul describes it in this way in Ephesians 2: he says, *You were dead in trespasses and sins and God has made you alive*; there is a very real sense in which, from the general standpoint, we may say that the Spirit brings a man to Christ when he *imparts* to that man *new life*. If we are dead in sin, we cannot understand the gospel; we cannot receive the gospel; we cannot turn; we are bound; we are dead. If therefore we are to turn, there must be a miracle, a miracle of the grace of God. There must be an imparting of new life, and the work of the Spirit in bringing a man to Christ is indeed miraculous for it is in terms of the imparting of the very life of God, so that the man who was dead in sins is now alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord.



But we ask in further detail, how does the Spirit *impart* this life? Clearly, in such a mighty working there is an element of mystery. The Lord put it like that in John 3: "The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh, and whither it goeth: so is everyone that is born of the Spirit". There is something supernatural, of course, and therefore there is something mysterious about the working of the Spirit. You cannot dissect the whole process, analyse it and carefully evaluate the whole thing. Yet having said that, I believe the Bible does reveal to us some important elements in the Spirit's working.

### *To Enlighten*

The Spirit, first of all, brings enlightenment. *He enlightens our minds.* Paul, speaking about how faith comes into being, says: "Faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the Word of God" (Rom. 10. 17). You cannot believe in a Saviour of whom you have never heard. You cannot receive a gospel of which you are ignorant. You must, first of all, hear and understand in order that you may believe. A typical call of Scripture is: "Come now, and let us reason together, saith the Lord" (Isa. 1. 18). *Use your mind*, says God. Listen to this word and understand this gospel, that you might believe.

At once we are in the midst of difficulties and problems. Why is it that men cannot understand the gospel? This is a very practical issue. You go to some and you speak to them of Christ; you speak to them of the gospel, and they simply cannot understand it, they cannot grasp it. Why? They seem perfectly capable of grasping other truths; their understandings are perfectly alert as far as other issues are concerned. Why, then, can they not understand this? The answer of Scripture is simply this: "The god of this world has blinded the minds of them that believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ should shine unto them" (II Cor. 4. 4). *Their minds are dark because of sin.* And this is precisely the condition in which men in general find themselves. Being sinners, out of touch with God, their minds are dark as far as spiritual issues are concerned. They may have brilliant intellects, they may be able to probe truths in many other fields, but as far as the things of God are concerned, naturally, in themselves, each one is a complete ignoramus. This, of course, is a humbling truth. Men do not like to receive it, but if we stand by the test of the New Testament, this is how God views us—spiritually blind, our minds darkened. That is why, if we are going to understand the gospel, there must be this working, this enlightening work of the Holy Spirit. The Lord must give sight to the blind. The Lord must open our understanding that we may understand the Scriptures. So the Spirit's working is in terms of enlightening us. May I emphasise again—*everyone must submit to this same discipline*; this same working of the Spirit. The don and the dustman, the intellectual and the illiterate, meet on the same level at this point. There is no superior way into the kingdom.



Unless you be converted, says the Lord, and become as little children, you shall not enter (Matt. 18. 3). We must come to have our minds enlightened by the Spirit otherwise we cannot even begin to understand the gospel.

### *To Apply the Truth to the Conscience*

The Spirit does not just impart information to our minds. It is true that he does that and I believe it is his first activity—enlightening our minds that we may see the truth of the gospel. He also does a work of exposure. *He applies these truths to our consciences.* He speaks, not in order that we might be puffed up because we have mastered some great truths, but in order that he *might humble us in the dust.* Why then, does he need to speak to our conscience? Surely our conscience is still alive and active? After all, you go out and talk to a man who has no knowledge of Christ and no interest in Christ and yet he still very often seeks to live according to his conscience. Why then do we say that the conscience needs to be dealt with by the Spirit?

Let me take you to a law court. There is a judge hearing a case; the witnesses are called; on the basis of the evidence offered, the judge makes his decision. Now the judge may employ a faultless logic in developing his argument and his conclusion may be perfectly well reached, but *if some of the witnesses have supplied the wrong information*, his conclusion will obviously be impaired *because it is based on false evidence.* So it is with the natural man, the man who has not Christ as his Saviour. Conscience sits as the judge to decide whether a thing is right or wrong and gives its verdict accordingly. Conscience declares—*this is the way in which you should walk—that is the way which you should avoid.* But if our minds are dark, if we do not really know the truth of God, *they will give the wrong information*; the witnesses will bring the wrong evidence into court. Is it any wonder then that conscience comes to a wrong conclusion?

Let me give you an illustration of how this works out. If you begin to talk to people about spiritual issues you find that very often (I am sure you have discovered this) when they start talking about sin, they think about this, that, or the other, sin, quoting specific examples; *they are only concerned about these particular sins.* The result is that their whole idea of repentance is expressed simply in terms of *tidying up* this, that, or the other, aspect of their lives; conscience is functioning defectively because *it has not got full information.* The full information would declare that not just murder and adultery and theft are sins, but that man in himself is a *rebel* against God; that man's whole being is corrupt and tainted. It is when that kind of information is supplied, and powerfully supplied, that the conscience begins to make correct deductions and to come to correct conclusions, because then the judge has the right information before him. That is why, you see, this working of the Holy Spirit in enlightening our minds, is not something separate from the working of

the Spirit in arousing our conscience. The Spirit brings in the information. He brings it in powerfully. He enlightens our minds to see the gospel and it is as that happens that the gospel comes with tremendous power to *humble* us.

### *To Reveal the Law of God*

How does the Spirit effect this humbling? How does the Spirit speak to our conscience? I believe he does it *by applying to us the law of God*. Most of us, in fact I think it is true to say *all* of us, are by nature incurable optimists as far as our own personal moral and spiritual condition is concerned. We think we are all right until the grace of God humbles us. So the Spirit brings us alongside what God's demands really are. We were measuring ourselves up to our *ideal* of what we thought was right; or we were measuring ourselves up to the standard of our *neighbour*; we looked at *his* attainments—that they were not anything to write home about—we came out rather well in comparison with him. The Spirit of God brings us alongside the searching demands of the law of God. The ten commandments stand as God's unchanging demands and we are humbled. But the Spirit then brings us alongside One *in whom those commands found a perfect fulfilment*; he brings us alongside the Righteous One. The man who formerly was quite sure of himself, quite content with his own attainments, when he stands alongside the Lord Jesus Christ, feels just as Peter did when he saw the miraculous works of Christ and fell at his feet and said, "Depart from me for I am a sinful man, O Lord" (Luke 5. 8). Lord, beside you, I am not fit; I am unclean; I am defiled. This is how the Spirit of God does this humbling work; *he brings us alongside Christ*.

### *He leads us to Christ as Saviour*

We must now move to the final stage in this working of the Spirit. He enlightens our minds, He exposes us to ourselves, he shows us what we really are and he enables us—the final and glorious working—*he enables us to lay hold upon Christ as our Saviour*. After all, it is not enough simply to see your sin; that can lead to despair. When you see Judas Iscariot going out into the darkness, you see a man who has certainly been made aware of his sin but he has no hope, he is in despair. We not only need to see our sin, we not only need to see the Saviour, we need to reach out our hand and to lay hold on the gift which he offers to us so freely. It is this that the Spirit does. He shows to us Christ as the Almighty Saviour. He excites in us new desires; no longer desires to go our own way but to follow Christ, to know him; and exciting those desires, he answers the cry of our hearts, with power that enables us to reach out and to receive this favour. You may have gone through this experience yourself, or you may have met with someone with whom you have been trying to deal spiritually, who has been going through it; the experience which is summed up by the attitude, "I want to believe, and I cannot believe". You know what it is like—a person has been stirred and moved,

he has begun to realise that this is the way, this is the answer; and yet somehow he seems bound. He wants to believe in Christ, he feels that Christ is the answer, he feels that Christ has the only word for his needs, but he cannot believe and he feels chained. *The Spirit of God sets men gloriously free.* It is the Spirit of God who enables us to reach out to Christ. It is the Spirit of God who enables us to lift the palsied hand and to reach out and to receive the blessing. The Spirit, in other words, who has already enlightened our minds and shown us Christ, the Spirit who has so mightily humbled us, is the Spirit who now gives us the power, the strength, to receive Christ as Saviour.

### *His Purpose—to Glorify Christ*

We see as we consider this, something of the *mighty power* of God that is manifest every time a man turns to Christ. We must never minimise how miraculous it all is. When a man turns to Christ, it is not just some decision on his part—of course it includes that, for he chooses that day whom he will serve—but above and beyond that, it is a *demonstration of the power of God*. Also, and this is so important for our Christian lives, what the Spirit has done now is not only a token of God's power, but it is *the pattern* of the way in which God works. How did the Spirit work in bringing us to Christ? It was *through the Word*. He took the Word of the Scripture and he applied it to our *minds*. He took the Word of God and he applied it to our *consciences*. He took the Word of God and he applied it to our *hearts*, drawing us out to Christ; and this is exactly the way in which he will work all the way through our Christian life. That is why if we neglect our daily reading of the Word, no amount of talking about the working of the Spirit is going to atone for that basic lack. It is through the Word that the Spirit works, and it is the Christian who is instructed in the Scriptures whom the Spirit leads on. When he enlightens our minds, when he shows us what we really were, what is his purpose? It is to lead us to Christ. *The whole function and working of the Spirit is to glorify Christ, and this is true, for the whole of the Christian life.*

### *What Should be Our Concern?*

Here it is, as far as Paul is concerned, "That I may know him" (Phil. 3 10). This should be your desire and mine, that we might *know* Christ. I know we take those words so lightly upon our lips but is this the consuming passion of our lives? Let us assess our Christian ways today before God. Are you *passionately concerned* to know Christ? Not just concerned to be a successful Christian; not just concerned even to be fruitful in your witness; are you concerned to know Christ, to know increasingly his love, to be taken up with Christ? Paul says, "For me to live is Christ, and to die is gain" (Phil. 1. 21). Here is a man who is simply taken up with the glory of his Saviour. When you read the life of any great man of God,

you find someone who is indeed taken up with the Lord Jesus Christ. This should be our concern, this should be our passionate concern; this should be the constant desire of our hearts.

How can it be realised? This is the problem of holiness of life. It is realised *only* through the One who first manifested Christ to us, the Spirit of God. It was the Holy Ghost who took the scales from our eyes and showed us the glory of the Saviour. If you and I are to go on to know Christ and to love him with all our hearts, it must be as *the Spirit constantly glorifies him before us*. So when we pray that God would fill us with his Spirit, we are praying that we may go on increasingly to know the love of Christ which passeth knowledge.

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## Charismatic Comeback

*The following letters have resulted from the article on Pentecostalism by Ken Haarhof in the last issue.*

1st November, 1973

Dear Mr. Hulse,

For some time now I have been challenged and stimulated by *Reformation Today* and especially by the wide ranging coverage of topics generally neglected by evangelical Christians today. I shall no doubt continue to derive much benefit from future issues, and fully support your efforts to urge a truly biblical reformation in local church life.

My own position is that I warmly endorse the Reformed faith, and rejoice in the God of grace. I am deeply concerned about the subjectivity and shallowness of much of our church life today, and am faced with the challenge of ministering in a situation which is largely "working class" (the church being surrounded by council estates), where folk just do not read books and where words of more than two syllables simply do not "get across".

But my purpose in writing just now is to say that I believe you have been less than fair to Messrs. Bridge and Phypers in your latest editorial. I share many misgivings about the charismatic movement. I myself have seen the harm that a false stress on the "Baptism of the Spirit" can do, and many of those I have seen in my pastoral work this year have been those who have had a charismatic experience which has backfired. But in my judgement it is simply not true that the work of Bridge and Phypers is "basically the same as other Pentecostal books. . ." They specifically repudiate the doctrine of the Baptism of the Spirit, and warn against the many harmful effects this can have. As those who have been very much involved in a local church situation, they must surely

be aware of the pastoral difficulties involved with the new Pentecostalism, and they deal at length with the whole issue of tongues speaking, giving due consideration to the possibility of psychological counterfeits.

To me, their book is an honest attempt to find a *biblical* way through the present morass of confused thinking on the subject. I for one was heartened by their work because, when I first came across it, I had just finished a lengthy series of studies in ministry on 1 Cor. 12-14, and I discovered that their conclusions (with some exceptions) were broadly similar to mine. I am convinced that those of us who are Reformed Baptists must examine the Scriptures, test (by the Scriptures) those who claim various experiences and be open to what the Lord wants to teach us afresh in these days. Of course we all know of the dangers, and the divisions, and the counterfeits, but in summarily dismissing the charismatic movement are we not in danger of throwing out the biblical baby with a good deal of admittedly rather murky bathwater? I know several brethren (in the ministry and outside it) who are thoroughly Reformed in their biblical convictions, but who do exercise various charismatic (and other) gifts in a quiet, humble way to the glory of the Lord. I myself have exercised two such gifts which were given me sovereignly by the Spirit in situations where their use was definitely required. I do not regard myself as "possessing" the gifts, because in this matter, as in all others, the Lord is sovereign and will not share his glory with another. I believe that spiritual gifts are available today—for biblical, historical, and practical reasons, and that their proper use, according to biblical safeguards, results in an increase of love, humility and worship; just those graces that you mention as needful in your editorial. The Spirit surely gives gifts (and not just the nine interpreted in a narrow Pentecostal sense in 1 Cor. 12) according to his own will; the Spirit is free and sovereign, but just as the fruit of the Spirit appears as we walk with the Lord, so the gifts of the Spirit will be given as situations arise when we need to use them. But if we deny, on flimsy biblical grounds, the possibility of such gifts, will we not be in danger of hindering the work of the Spirit?

I personally know of folk whose lives have been transformed by an experience of the Spirit resulting in love for the Lord, love for the brethren, and love for the unsaved. I disagree with the way in which they define it, and I doubt in many cases whether they were genuinely regenerate at the time of their "conversion". But there is no doubt at all that they have had a genuine experience of the Holy Spirit which has transformed them.

We love Reformed truth. We love the works of the men whom Ken Haarhof quotes in his article. But let us not be shackled by the past so that we feel the last word has been said on any subject. I've no doubt that you will probably have many letters on the subject—in fact I hope that this would be so, for it would be a shame if *Reformation Today* was only preaching to those who were already converted to the Reformed position, and to those who necessarily agree editorially with you!

I only write because I am concerned that what we write about others should be factually true, and written with that meekness that you yourself urge. It would be a pity if those who are Reformed should be expected to take a certain line on any issue such as this. There are enough "labels" and there is enough "pigeon holing" of evangelicals as it is today. But many thanks for *Reformation Today* and for the challenge it presents.

Warmly yours in Christ,  
Geoff Larcombe.

### *Reply to Rev. G. R. Larcombe of Torquay*

Thank you very much for your thoughtful and helpful letter of November 1st in which you challenge my editorial (*Reformation Today* No. 16) in respect of an assessment of the book by Bridge and Phypers published by the I.V.P.

There are four specific issues raised in your letter which call for reply.

The first concerns the aforementioned book, *Spiritual Gifts and the Church* by Donald Bridge and David Phypers. It is true that these brethren repudiate the doctrine commonly held and taught by the Pentecostals concerning the Baptism of the Spirit. It is also true that on the subject of tongues speaking they are much clearer and more helpful than most charismatic writers. Despite these considerable improvements they nevertheless remain Pentecostal in their fundamental position and, in my estimation, this only makes them more likely to misguide believers. Allow me to explain what I mean.

There can be no halfway house or half measures in regard to seeking the return of the gifts if they are meant to continue. This central issue is the second point which needs elaboration. If we are to believe that the supernatural apostolic gifts are meant to continue through this present dispensation, then every attempt ought to be made to regain their use. Reformed churches absolutely refuse to make this a priority because they take the position outlined by Jonathan Edwards, Warfield and others quoted by Haarhof in his article. The charismatics on the other hand insist that this matter is a priority and that due time and attention should be given to it. They reason that the blame for failure in respect of the gifts must be laid at the door of the churches and the reason for the disappearance of the gifts is lack of faith. Cleavage is inevitable where wholehearted Pentecostals come up against those who hold the orthodox position. Of course there are lukewarm charismatics who give only lip service to the idea that the gifts should continue and they generally use the argument that there is no text of Scripture to prove that the gifts have ceased. However, they do not make any fervent attempt to have special seeking meetings in order to bring back the gifts. Because they are quiet about it division is avoided in the church. However, the fact is inescapable that such brethren are basically inconsistent, for if they really believe that the gifts ought to continue, they would take radical steps for their re-introduction. Such consistent radical steps inevitably lead to division of the most serious kind. The orthodox are consistent in that they do believe that the biblical grounds fully support the belief that both the apostles and their gifts were unique. They are consistent in the conviction that there is adequate evidence to show that the use of these gifts did cease after the apostolic era and has never been restored in the same way subsequently.

The third issue raised in your letter is the distinction between charismatic and other gifts. Surely there is no middle ground. Either we have the charismatic gifts as the apostles had them or we do not. Either we have a gift to perform miracles constantly and infallibly or we do not. Either we have a gift of discernment as did Peter with Ananias and Sapphira or we do not. Of course we do not deny that as ministers of the gospel we are enabled by the Holy Spirit to deal with various situations or crises that may arise. We may well be enabled to deal with Satanic situations or, in peculiar circumstances, to be the means of healing or to have a remarkable ability to discern the spirits. But such supernatural enablings or abilities to expound the Word in a remarkably suitable and powerful way does not mean that we have the infallible, regular and constant use of a gift in the same way as the apostles had. We must distinguish clearly between divine enabling and a gift which is permanent and infallible. It is interesting that most of the controversy centres around tongues speaking, yet when real tests of linguistics are urged, invariably there is retraction and so far we have yet to find one verified case of genuine tongues speaking which would be regarded as supernatural, that is, which is not explicable from a natural point of view. Also, there is retraction when it comes to prophecy, for the Word of God is now complete and the only place that we can find for prophecy is in regard to forthcoming events. Here again, we would not deny that it may in very rare and unusual circumstances be given to God's people to foretell future events of importance, as was apparently the case of the Scottish Covenanters, but this ought not to be construed as prophecy in the sense that this was

given to the apostolic church, whereby the churches were edified constantly with spiritual nourishment and guidance by direct charisma from the Spirit in their assemblies.

The fourth issue raised in your letter concerns the blessing received by people who have enjoyed spiritual experiences. I am sure we agree that spiritual experiences are not to be confined to Pentecostals. Jonathan Edwards enjoyed spiritual experiences, and as I pointed out in my editorial, the greatest danger with the neo-Pentecostal movement is that it can cause reaction against experience, which can be very harmful. God forbid that we should speak against spiritual experience as such and we would not deny that there are blessings in the experiences of those who claim the gifts. However, we ought not to allow experience to endorse or promote false teaching. Because John Wesley experienced mighty blessings are we to believe that Arminianism is truth? The Holy Spirit blesses believers despite their shortcomings and the Holy Spirit certainly blesses those who seek him wholeheartedly and sincerely. The Spirit's blessings do not come to us on condition that we first be perfect in our understanding. People talk about the ages of man—infancy, childhood, adolescence, etc. Believers are taken by the Spirit through the process of sanctification. The effervescent joy and fiery zeal of new converts is not the same as the deeper joy and more steady, reliable and discerning zeal of mature believers. In short, it is not warranted to argue from experience to doctrine but rather we should argue from the standpoint of biblical doctrine and test all experience by that basis.

But now may I once more thank you most warmly for your letter and pray that our correspondence will be of profit.

Yours sincerely in Christ,

*Copy of letter from Dr. David Watts.*

*16th November 1973*

Dear Pastor Hulse,

Further to your editorial in the latest issue of *Reformation Today*, I am writing as an ex-Pentecostal to express my interest in a possible gathering of such Christians, with a view to developing valid generalisations about the movement, and the best possible answers to the charismatic challenge.

Briefly, my "testimony" is that I imbibed the Pentecostal viewpoint while a student at Aberystwyth. As a young and rather un-grounded Christian, I thought the movement to have the answers to the needs of Christians and the church today. Seven years later, after links with "Elim" and "Assemblies of God" I left the movement—worn out by revivalism, unconvinced by Arminianism and Dispensationalism, and starved of solid biblical exposition. During the time I spent in Pentecostal circles, I met most of the British leaders of the movement, and was a "Pentecostal preacher" myself. A growing conviction as to the truth of the doctrines of grace during this period, led me to realise the deficiencies of Pentecotalism.

The Lord has been merciful to me, and so I would like to help, where possible, in any venture to bring the truth to those who are yet confused by charismatic claims. The church I attend in Sale, near Manchester, is small in numbers and far from being "ideal", yet the fellowship has in recent years embraced evangelical Calvinism, and the Lord is at work in our midst.

My wife and I appreciate the magazine greatly, and it was a great joy to us to attend the Carey Conference this summer.

Thank you for your labours in the Word.

Yours sincerely in the bonds of Christ's Gospel  
(Dr.) David Watts

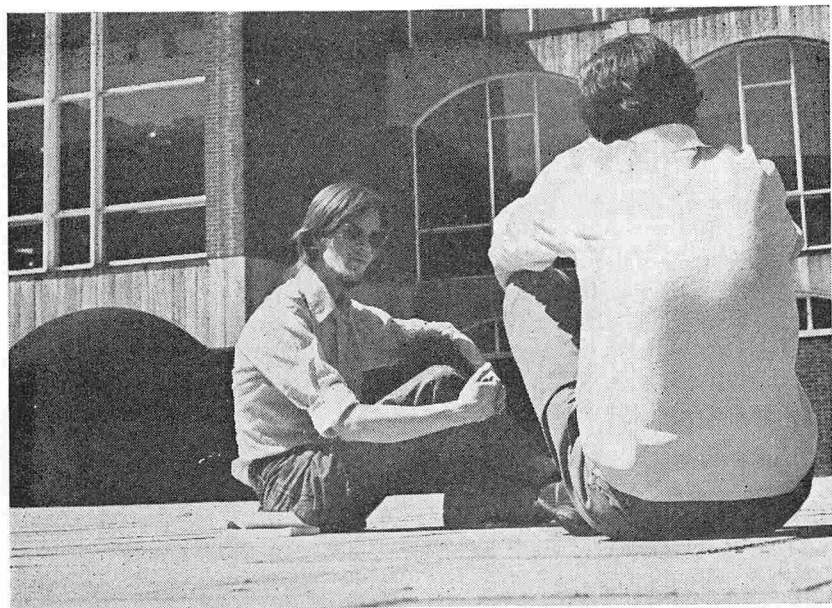


*University Christian Unions are a great help to students and comfort to their parents who are thankful for such circles of Gospel influence. But what about the local church? Which should be regarded as the priority? Ian Randall discusses this issue.*

## Students and the Local Church

ALTHOUGH STUDENTS CONSTITUTE A SMALL PART OF THE POPULATION, THEY tend to attract a disproportionate amount of attention. They are usually either loved or hated. Revolutionary political movements love them because they are idealistic and unshackled by a comfortable, materialistic way of life. Because of these qualities—good in themselves—they are ripe for recruitment into the latest cause. However, a large section of middle-class society regards the student body as a fairly unproductive lot, dedicated to a life of hedonism at the expense of the labouring, honest taxpayer. Evangelicals are to be found adopting both these attitudes towards students, but probably favour the more positive approach on the whole. Thus many types of evangelistic organisation, such as Campus Crusade for Christ, swoop with vulture-like rapacity on universities and colleges to find their main prey. Another aspect of evangelical life is the recruitment of students for Christian work overseas for short periods of time with, for example, Operation Mobilisation. Students have few permanent roots and sometimes seem to have plenty of spare time. The spiritual revolutionaries are as well aware of the potential of this as are their political counterparts!

In pursuing reformation in all departments, what should our attitude be to the student and the local church? Often the attachment of students to churches of any kind is tenuous. This is perhaps partly due to the fact that they spend one half of the year at home and the other away. Surely, however, the time during which they are at college or university is sufficient for them to become involved in a responsible way in a local church? One great hindrance in achieving this involvement can be the multifarious Christian organisations which call for student loyalty. The Inter Varsity Fellowship has, of course, a long history of student work and is much more cautious in its approach than most modern variants, but because it has built up into a minor empire, it can become a serious obstacle to students who wish to pursue church based Christian living. With their many meetings for prayer, study, talks and discussion, the



*Phil Wells talking to Ian Randall on the Sussex University Campus.*

Christian Unions may seem to provide the fellowship and teaching required by the Christian student.

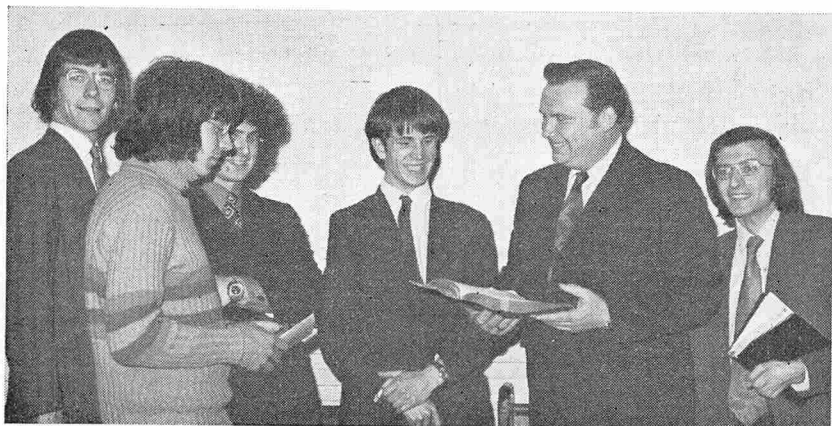
In view of this, it was interesting for me recently to have the opinion of Philip Wells, current president of the Sussex University Christian Union. As a member of a church where the doctrines of grace are preached, he regards church membership as a priority. I am indebted to Philip and to his pastor, Les Hill, for the substance of the following points concerning the necessity of church involvement by students.

1. The local church has been ordained by God, which is not true of any student or other specialist organisations, however long their pedigree.
2. By far the greater part of the life of all who are at present students will be spent outside the rarefied intellectual atmosphere. The local church provides a preparation for this post-student existence.
3. Without local church discipline, a Christian student can easily misuse the Lord's day, and even if he hears preaching he may flit from one preaching centre to another and so dishonour the Lord.
4. Because God has ordained elders to shepherd his people, it is important to have this counsel and oversight. It is also beneficial to have fellowship with Christians who are more mature in experience of life and who are in very different circumstances. To mix mainly in a group confined

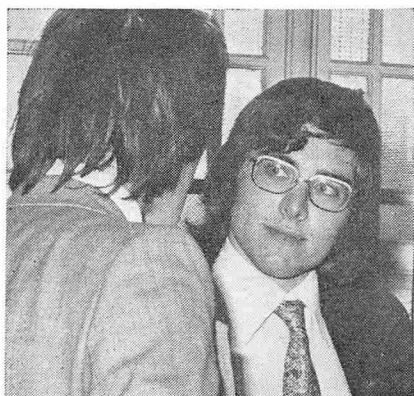
to those who are young and all in the same occupation is constricting and unhealthy.

5. Systematic and consistent ministry of the Word from teaching elders is to be found only in a biblical church. Even the best Christian Unions have a rather mixed rota of speakers, while the worst resemble a theological rag-bag. It is rare to find the books of Scripture taken and opened up at length. Even if this is true in one academic year, the next year a totally different group of people may arrive as first year students, and in a short time the whole character of the Christian Union may be altered. In the New Testament the teaching office is always linked with personal pastoral application and discipline and this is impossible in most Christian Unions where speakers have to be found from outside each week.

If the local church, when it is reforming according to the Word, provides all this which the Christian Unions cannot, the question might be raised whether the latter could be disbanded. Certainly there are great responsibilities laid on some Christian Union presidents which should be laid only on elders of churches. The president may have 200 people in the Christian Union and regard them as his pastoral responsibility. I have known cases where the strain involved has led to nervous breakdown. Also, Christian Union members tend to keep together, whether at lunch and coffee in the canteen, or in the church they attend. The major problems faced when one begins work in a place where there are few, if any, Christians, may be one of the reasons for the infamous fall-out rate of former Christian Union members once they leave university. In the church context, Christian



*Les Hill, pastor of the Brighton Railway Mission, is fifth from the left.*



*Ben Elford is now in charge  
of the publication side of  
The Mission work.*

Unions tend to produce 'student' churches, in that all attend a local church—usually without becoming members or ever attending the prayer meetings. In most cases these churches have a reputation for having clergymen who are popular with students. Other local churches are neglected as a result.

However, the situation in the Brighton area is typical of many other places and does perhaps point to a better time ahead. The Railway Mission in Brighton, of which Les Hill is pastor, has now had some years of experience of students being converted, baptised and coming into membership. They are not given any special associate membership and do not function as a separate group within the church. For membership they must pass the doctrinal requirements and have attended the services regularly for at least two terms. It is significant to note that some (like Ben, see photo) have settled in the area on graduating to continue in the work of the church, and three young men, including Phil Wells, have been noted as being gifted in the ministry of the Word and have been trained by Les Hill in this direction.

For my own part, I was helped a great deal while at university through the teaching in the Christian Union, which was predominantly Calvinistic. But I remain convinced that good though such an influence can be, it cannot really be compared to the benefits to be derived from a church where one finds powerful and regular exposition, oversight, observation of the ordinances, discipline, evangelistic opportunities among all kinds of people and similarly diverse fellowship. I hope that these comments may help student readers to see that to find such a church and to support it wholeheartedly should be a top priority.

*From the pen of Jack Milner this inspiring and edifying biography of the man who stood behind William Carey.*

# Andrew Fuller

ANDREW FULLER WAS BORN ON FEBRUARY 6TH, 1754, AT WICKEN IN Cambridgeshire. He was the youngest son of Robert and Philippa Fuller who were farmers. His two older brothers, Robert and John, followed their father's profession: Andrew was the only one who eventually entered the ministry. Andrew's parents were believers, it seems, and all three sons eventually came to know the Lord. Andrew was outlived by his two older brothers and at the time of his death they had been "for many years pious and respectable deacons of Baptist churches".

Andrew Fuller seems to have been a normal, healthy, young boy, enjoying football, wrestling and climbing trees for birds' eggs. He was also full of the sins of youth, lying, cursing and swearing. When he was fourteen years of age the Lord began to trouble him about his sins. He says: "The preaching which I attended was not adapted to awaken my conscience, as the minister had seldom anything to say except to believers, and what believing was I neither knew, nor was I greatly concerned to know. I remember about this time, as I was walking alone, I put the question to myself, 'What is faith? There is much made of it. What is it?' I could not tell, but satisfied myself in thinking it was not of immediate concern, and I should understand it as I grew older.

## *Conviction and Conversion*

"At times conviction laid fast hold of me, and rendered me extremely unhappy. The light I had received, I know not how, would not suffer me to go into sin with that ease which I observed in other lads. One winter evening, I remember going with a number of other boys into a smith's shop, to warm myself by his fire. Presently they began to sing vain songs. This appeared to me so much like revelling that I felt something within me which would not suffer me to join them, and while I sat silently, in rather an unpleasant muse, those words sunk into my mind like a dagger, 'What doest thou here, Elijah?' I immediately left the company; yet, shocking to reflect upon, I walked home, murmuring in my heart against

God, that I could not be let alone, and be suffered to take my pleasure like other young people!"

At the time in which Fuller lived there had developed a practice among the Baptists and other Dissenters of regarding any text of Scripture strongly impressed upon the mind as a promise direct from God, a view still held in many quarters. This practice was the means of lulling young Fuller into a false sense of security for almost a year before he was truly converted. Here is his description of the dangerous nature of the practice. He had already been "assured" of God's love to him by the impression of the text "Sin shall not have dominion over you; for ye are not under the law, but under grace". However this impression produced no change of life. Fuller then says, "Some time in the following year I was again walking by myself, and began to reflect upon my course of life, particularly upon my former hopes and affections, and how I had since forgotten them all, and returned to all my wicked ways. Instead of sin having no more dominion over me I perceived that its dominion had been increased. Yet I still thought that must have been a promise from God to me, and that I must have been a converted person, but in a backsliding state; and this persuasion was confirmed by another sudden impression, which dispelled my dejection, in these words: 'I have blotted out as a thick cloud thy transgressions, and as a cloud thy sins'." He then describes how he wept many tears of joy, but it was all transient for he continued to live in entire neglect of prayer and after a few days was as eagerly playing with his ungodly companions as ever before.

However, we find his convictions increasing until they would not let him go. He meditated more and more on the way of salvation through Christ and we find him describing the day of his new birth as follows:—

"I was determined to cast myself upon Christ, thinking peradventure he would save my soul; and, if not, I could but be lost. In this way I continued above an hour, weeping and supplicating mercy for the Saviour's sake; and as the eye of the mind was more and more fixed upon him, my guilt and fears were gradually and insensibly removed. I now found rest for my troubled soul; and I reckon that I should have found it sooner, if I had not entertained the notion of my having no warrant to come to Christ without some previous qualification". This occurred in 1769 when he was 15!

His conversion, now genuine, immediately began to bear fruit. At once he felt estranged from his former companions. The sinful ways which once were irresistible now had no attraction. He had always respected good people but now he felt a love towards them. His father employed a thrasher who was a Christian and Fuller opened his heart to him. There is a delightful passage in Fuller's account of his conversion where he says he used to prevent the poor fellow from doing his work and would make

it up for him by helping him. This man, no doubt, told others about Fuller because he was soon invited to Christian gatherings and, before long, was taking part in prayer-meetings. The new convert, although weaned from the world, was only a boy and very much felt the pull of worldly amusements. At the advice of the thrasher he adopted a practice which I find amazingly single-minded in a boy of only 15. Here it is in his own words: "I found at times boyish inclinations and strong struggles of mind respecting youthful follies. At Shrove-tide in particular, when the young men met together, and practised various athletic exercises, their shouts, which were within my hearing, would throw me into agitations which rendered me very unhappy. But my good friend, the thrasher, warned me tenderly and solemnly to keep out of the way of temptation, and I was enabled though with some difficulty, to follow his counsel." He then goes on to describe how public holidays were a particular snare and temptation to him, the temptation not being actual participation in the games but simply *mental* participation by wanting to watch. Only four months after his conversion, in the spring of 1770, he describes how he avoided temptation in the following words:

"I began a practice which I continued with great peace and comfort for several years. Whenever a feast or holiday occurred, instead of sitting at home by myself, I went to a neighbouring village to visit some Christian friends, and returned when all was over. By this step I was delivered from those mental participations in folly which had given me so much uneasiness. Thus the seasons of temptation became to me times of refreshing from the presence of the Lord."

Whenever I read episodes like this, I am amazed and almost conclude that these earlier Christians were of an altogether superior race to ourselves. There is a similar passage in Dallimore's 'life of Whitefield' where Whitefield condemns his youthful pleasure in play acting as terribly sinful. What advice would we give to a young 15-year-old convert troubled about such matters? I think we might be inclined to tell him to "get stuck in and not be so stand-offish and that he would never have any influence if he did not mix with people". Yet these other-worldly non-mixers were the very ones whom God used and who did have a great influence.

### *Early church life and ministry*

About this time he witnessed his first ever baptismal service which, having had a great effect on him, led to his being baptised in April 1770 and being joined to the church at Soham, a few miles from his birthplace.

The first few months of his membership at Soham were some of the happiest of his life until an incident occurred which led to the departure of the pastor of the church and which caused Fuller's thinking to be set on



the lines it would follow for the rest of his life. Fuller knew that one of the members had been drunk and he went to reprove him for his evil conduct. The man said he was unable to help himself and that Fuller was a young man, ignorant of the deceitfulness of his own heart. Fuller was indignant at this and regarded the pleading of inability as a base excuse.

The man was reported to the pastor and the church was unanimous in excommunicating the offender. In the discussions, however, the general topic of "the power of sinful men to do the will of God, and to keep themselves from sin" caused considerable dissension. The pastor had said that a man had no power to do things spiritually good but could obey and disobey the will of God in outward acts. The rest of the church maintained, more scripturally, that although men were guilty for their evil desires yet if these desires were in any way prevented from breaking out into open sin it must be due to the restraining hand of God. Of themselves men would soon be as bad as the devils. The pastor became estranged from his people and had to leave them. Fuller had sided with him at first but soon had to change his views. The disputes were to Fuller, to use his own words, "the wormwood and the gall of his youth". However, they started young Fuller thinking in the way which was to characterise his whole ministry for he began to see that men are still accountable to God even though unable to do his will.

The pastor left in October 1771 and thereafter a deacon, Mr. Joseph Diver, expounded the Scriptures some part of each Lord's Day. Mr. Diver was considerably older than Fuller yet they became great friends, much to Fuller's advantage. In November 1771 Diver was ill and the fellowship had Fuller to preach to them—he was 17—and, eventually, recognising his gifts, they set him apart to the ministry in January 1774 just before he was 20. Then, in the spring of 1775 when he was 21 they called him to be their pastor. He remained at Soham for almost 8 years, until in 1782, in his 29th year, he removed to Kettering where he ministered for the rest of his life.

Many of the Baptist churches had fallen into what Fuller described as "false Calvinism". The essence of this doctrine is to be found in the assertion that it is not the duty of men who hear the gospel preached to them to repent and believe in Christ. The ramifications of this were considerable. For example, in preaching, no commands and exhortations were addressed to the ungodly. Preaching had tended to become a mere statement of the truths of the gospel and a description of God's dealings with the elect soul. Faith then tended to become a realisation that one was personally of the elect. This realisation came as a revelation during the preaching and as a result men became preoccupied with their feelings and with the strong impression of isolated texts on the mind. The whole idea of duty receded into the background and sinners were not commanded to repent of their sins, neither were believers exhorted to obey the will of

God. These ideas all stemmed from a false rationalisation of inability and accountability. Calvinists had fallen into the same trap as the Arminians. The Arminians believed that responsibility implied ability and, knowing that man was responsible, concluded therefore that he must be able to respond to God's commands. The Calvinists started knowing that man was unable to obey God and concluded therefore that he could not be responsible! In this way Calvinism became "false Calvinism". It was in this atmosphere that Fuller lived and it explains his own difficulties in coming to Christ. It also explains the source of the dissension that led to the departure of the pastor from Soham. Fuller instinctively knew that it was the duty of the drunkard to keep himself sober and, in the face of his inability, to cry to God for help to overcome the temptation. Over the years Fuller became more and more aware of men's *duty* to obey God's commands and I find that a very strong sense of duty characterised his whole life and enabled him to hold fast to God in the most trying circumstances.

### *His work of writing*

It was while he was pastor at Soham that he gradually rejected "false Calvinism" and returned to the older Calvinism of the reformers. He began to appeal to the consciences of his hearers and the more searching and practical tone of his ministry led to strained relationships with the church at Soham. A further problem was their unwillingness to secure a larger chapel to accommodate the larger number of people who showed a desire to come and hear the preaching. These two things, together with financial hardship, led, after much heart-searching on Fuller's part, to his removal to Kettering in 1782. It took the church at Kettering 2½ years to secure Fuller as their pastor. Removals from one church to another were not altogether approved of in those days and the reasons for a removal had to be very good ones. It was in his last year at Soham that he wrote "The Gospel Worthy of All Acceptation; or the Duty of Sinners to believe in Jesus Christ", the book for which he is most well-known. This was for his own use and was not printed until 1784, after he had removed to Kettering.

We can gain some understanding of his frame of mind while engaged in the writing of this book from the following diary entry for August 30th 1780:—

"I found my soul drawn out in love to poor souls, while reading Millar's account of Eliot's labours among the North American Indians, and their effect upon those poor barbarous savages. I found also a suspicion, that we shackle ourselves too much in our addresses to sinners; that we have bewildered and lost ourselves, by taking the decrees of God as rules of action. Surely Peter and Paul never felt such scruples in their addresses

as we do. They addressed their hearers as *men*—fallen men; as we should warn and admonish persons who were blind, and on the brink of some dreadful precipice. Their work seemed plain before them. O that mine might be so before me!”

The publication of this book involved Fuller in controversy for the rest of his life and it is worth noting how he hated controversy for its own sake. His diary shows how he shrank from publishing “The Gospel Worthy of All Acceptation” and had to be urged to do so by his friends. I will be reconsidering the effects of the publication of this book later on but I hope, for now, that I have given some indication of the circumstances which led to its being written.

### *Church Building*

As already stated, Fuller moved from Soham to Kettering in October 1782 when he was 28 years of age. The years at Soham were a preparation for the many activities which filled his life after his removal to Kettering. The circumstances surrounding his settling at Kettering are very interesting and in marked contrast to the practice of today, for, although he moved there in October 1782, he was not received into membership at Kettering until August 1783 and was not settled as pastor until October 1783.

The letter sent by the friends at Soham for the transfer of his membership shows how his qualities were appreciated; although they had to lose him they exhorted the church at Kettering to value him as they should. They said: “With regard to Mr. Fuller’s conduct, as a Christian, while among us, we have nothing to lay to his charge. It was, in many respects, very amiable. Relative to his ministerial character—his faithfulness, wisdom, tenderness, and freeness with his friends, were things which captivated our hearts, and united our affections to him, which make our parting the more trying. But we wish that our loss may be your gain. We therefore consent to grant your request; and hereby dismiss him to you, as a church of the living God, of the same faith and order with ourselves.”

The next ten years, 1783 to 1793, were great years in the history of the Particular Baptists and were years full of activity and trial for Fuller. On moving to Kettering he came into much closer contact with some other ministers in the Northamptonshire Association of Churches. These men were to be his closest friends and they were to be a constant source of help and encouragement to him—as he was to them. These men were John Ryland Jr. of Northampton, John Sutcliffe of Olney, then a little later Samuel Pearce of Birmingham and William Carey of Leicester. Through the Association, monthly meetings of “prayer for the revival of real religion and the extension of Christ’s kingdom in the world” were held both by the ministers from place to place and in the churches. These led to a great concern among the churches and during the course of the years that followed there were several ingatherings in various places. At Birming-

ham, under the preaching of Samuel Pearce, there were as many as 100 baptisms in one year. In Fuller's church, the work was more modest but just as real and lasting. This great concern for the prosperity of the church was a direct result of the deliverance of many of the churches from false Calvinism. Some have attributed it to the hope of the "latter-day glory" but I think this is only part of the tale and, I think, a not too important one at that, because even when in the grip of false Calvinism many believed in the "latter-day glory". This millennial expectation, however, was not in itself sufficient to awaken the churches from their slumber. Only a strong sense of obligation to God was able to do that. Fuller's views on the *duty* of sinners to believe in Christ led to the *duty* of ministers to declare the gospel to them. As a result the idea of duty to God came back into the thinking of God's people and stirred them to serve him as they had not done for many years.

### *Missionary Vision*

These years were the ones which led to the formation of the Particular Baptist Society for the Propagation of the Gospel Among the Heathen, in 1792. Carey's name is always associated with the missionary enterprise and quite rightly so. It was he who showed his companions so clearly that the Great Commission was still in force and it was the duty of God's people to obey it. It was he who overcame the reluctance of his friends. Yet his ideas were only the logical outcome of Fuller's teaching. Also, it was only after Fuller himself had been persuaded by Carey that the mission was finally formed. Carey was a younger man and Fuller, now about 38, was greatly respected and a man of much influence. It was Fuller who became the secretary of the mission and from the year Carey sailed to India, 1793, to his death in 1815 Fuller laboured on its behalf. He spent three months of almost every year travelling and preaching for the mission and raising funds. His letters to the missionaries also must have cost him a great deal of effort for they were in no way perfunctory and showed a great concern for the welfare of his friends abroad.

In 1779 he toured Scotland for the first time, a visit repeated in 1802, 1805, 1808 and 1813. During these visits he wrote long letters to his wife and they are full of interest and give insight into the church life in Scotland. In addition to his frequent travelling and his work for the mission, he was also a prolific writer and published many works during these years. Most of these are now forgotten yet many are of value—especially his "Expository Discourses on the Book of Genesis" published in 1806.

In order to appreciate the labours of the man these words written by Fuller's wife just after his death in 1815 are most revealing:— "But to so great a degree was he absorbed in his work, as scarcely to allow himself any leisure, or relaxation from the severest application; especially since, of late years, his work so accumulated on his hands. I sometimes used to

remark, how much we were occupied (for, indeed, I had no small share of care devolved upon me, in consequence); his reply usually was, 'Ah, my dear, the way for us to have any joy is to rejoice in all our labour, and then we shall have plenty of joy'. If I complained, that he allowed himself no time for recreation, he would answer, 'O, no: all my recreation is a change of work'. If I expressed an apprehension that he would soon wear himself out, he would reply, 'I cannot be worn out in a better cause. We must work while it is day' or, 'Whatever thy hand findeth to do, do it with all thy might'."

### *Pastoral Affairs*

His labours so increased that we find him lamenting the fact that he feels he is neglecting his pastoral duties among his people. As early as 1794 he writes "I feel weary of journeys, on account of their interfering so much with my work at home. I long to visit my congregation; that I may know more of their spiritual concerns, and be able to preach to their cases." In 1811 or thereabouts, the church called an assistant pastor to relieve Fuller of some of the pressure. Yet it must not be supposed that he was negligent in his work for he was noted for being diligent in all that he did. There were several seasons of awakening during his ministry and the membership at Kettering increased from 88 in 1792 to 174 when he died in 1815. The actual congregations, though, numbered about 1000 and even allowing for the many visitors from villages around Kettering this is an amazing attendance for a town of 3500 containing also an Independent church, it too having a congregation of 1000 and a gifted minister, Mr. Toller, who was a firm friend of Fuller. Fuller preached morning and afternoon to his own people and on Lord's Day evenings he had a circuit of eight to ten neighbouring villages in which he preached to gatherings varying from 50 to 500 hearers. Fuller delighted to see the Lord at work in calling sinners to himself. In a letter to Carey in 1808 he wrote:

"During the past year we had a female member die. She had for the last twenty-five years been a useful, good woman, but her husband was a perfect sot. She by her industry nearly maintained her husband and brought up four children. She lived to see her daughter married and her sons settled in business. Her eldest son has been baptized, the second son a hopeful character. Her daughter's husband was about a year ago a wicked Antinomian; but God has met with him, and he has become a little child. I baptized him lately.

"Soon after his baptism the mother died. Her poor old sot of a husband then remembered her counsels and prayers, and even he is a new man. He weeps like a child and wonders at himself. He never understood the Gospel before, he says, though he has heard it many years. And now the married daughter weeps and says, 'I can see the change in my husband and in my father, but what am I?'

“The youngest son, seeing his father weep, asks what is the matter. ‘Oh, James,’ replies the poor old man, ‘come to Christ! Come to Christ!’ ”

I find, as I read records of this kind, a great longing to see such things in our own day. What a joy it would be to see sinners weeping over their sins—but we do not even weep much over our own, I fear. However there are some encouragements as we look at the work which went on at Kettering. There is a tendency in us to romanticise history and think of the past as somehow being ideal with all the little things which irritate us being absent. We think of all our strange customs and how they dishonour God and how it could not have been like that in the past. Well, listen to this description of a Kettering service by Andrew Fuller’s son:—

“The precentor announced the hymn, read several verses, and then with due regard for the natural obfuscation of the people’s intellects, would parcel it out two lines at a time. The singers itched for a class of tunes with fugues and endless repetitions, which were applied indiscriminately to all kinds of words: repetitions of two lines, one line, half a line, half a word, repetitions of such words as ‘blast them in everlasting death’, without any apparent thought of their awful meaning”. There was one prayer during the service and the people stood with their backs turned to the preacher. Fuller’s son says that this had “the serious disadvantage of diverting the attention of the worshippers” but possibly had “the disciplinary merit of inflicting on late-comers general observation”. Also, on either side of the pulpit was a twenty foot high window which, as you can imagine, used to cause discomfort to the congregation and even obscure the preacher by the glare. As I said, these are all examples of the kinds of thing which irritate us and which seem to draw our attention so often. Yet the blessing of God on such an outwardly odd set-up shows how the Lord does not, in fact, look on outward things. It is the preaching which God has promised to bless, not our having things just so, and it is the preaching which we must pray to God for these days—just as the Kettering people did then.

### *Difficulties and trials*

It must not be thought, however, that the years of his Kettering pastorate were free from anxiety and care—far from it. Not only was it necessary to administer church discipline to erring members from time to time, but also his family life was subject to several severe trials. I want to mention some of these, for Fuller’s reaction to them revealed most clearly what kind of man he was.

In 1786 he lost his daughter Sarah after a fairly prolonged illness. She was only 6 when she died and Fuller’s greatest concern for her was, not so much that she should get better, but that she should be ready to meet the Lord should he take her. Such was his parental love for his daughter that his anxiety made him ill. He writes: “I am sure I was affected to excess and in a way that I ought not to have been and, I believe, should not have

been, if I had loved God better. About this time, I threw myself prostrate on the floor, and wept exceedingly, yet pleading with God for her. The agony of my spirit produced a most violent bilious complaint, which laid me aside for several days. I then reflected that I had sinned, in being so inordinately anxious. From this time, I felt a degree of calmness and resignation to God. On the morning of 30th May (1786), I heard a whispering in an adjoining room . . . and found the child had expired about six o'clock . . . I called the family to me, and, as well as I was able, attempted to bless a taking as well as a giving God". Note here that there is not a trace of the stoicism one finds in the world, nor the fatalism of the pagans, but a conscious submission to the will of God together with a most honest confession of sin and weakness.

In 1792 he lost his first wife under the most distressing circumstances. She was ill while expecting a child and, for a while, lost her reason. The whole episode is rather too moving for me to deal with it in any detail, but I simply emphasise here that 1792 was also the year of the foundation of the missionary society and a time of ingathering in his own church. Mrs. Fuller was a godly woman and her illness is instructive and a source of consolation for, although she lost her reason for a time, Fuller said that she never uttered any bad things. This illustrates how the Lord keeps his people even in the most unfavourable circumstances. A month before her death he wrote to his friend Ryland how great his trial was and how he himself had become ill under it, yet he was able to testify to a calmness of spirit so that he could say, "Now is the time for me to bear witness for Him. Dear brother, we have each of us, at this time, our peculiar trials. O that we may be found unto praise".

In 1793 the labour involved in sending Carey to India brought on a slight paralytic stroke from which Fuller recovered, though it left him with a tendency to severe headaches for the rest of his life. In 1794 Fuller remarried and his second wife became a great comfort to him. However, his domestic trials were not over, for, from 1796 till his death in 1809, Fuller's eldest son was a great distress to his father. He had a restless disposition and would not settle in any occupation. He ended up a sailor and died at sea aged 27. However there were hopeful signs in him of sorrow for his waywardness towards the end.

In all of these trials, Fuller reacted in a most Christian way. This is revealed by his diary and letters and prove him to have been a true man of God.

Fuller died in 1815, aged 61, after a long and painful illness. The complaint, which was some disease of the liver, was of the kind which tended to produce great depression of the spirits and so it is no surprise to find that he did not depart with great joy as some of God's people have done. He would frequently say during his last illness: "My mind is calm—no



raptures—no despondency,” and, once, to his medical attendant, “I never before recollect to have had such depression of animal spirits, accompanied with such calmness of mind”. He regarded it as an evidence of the power of the truth to support his soul in this way, for he had known many sink almost to despair in similar circumstances. It was in this calm frame of mind that he departed to be with the Lord on a Lord’s Day morning while his people were at worship. It would take too long to give an account of all that was said of him by his friends after his death, but he was greatly lamented.

### *Theological position*

Before bringing my sketch of Fuller to a close I want to clear him of a misrepresentation which dogged him from the time he published “The Gospel Worthy of All Acceptation” and persists to this very day. Fuller has been charged with being half-Arminian in two different ways. The false Calvinists meant it as a term of reproach and the Arminians meant to claim him as one of them. One modern writer, W. L. Lumpkin, in his book, “Baptist Confessions of Faith” says that Fuller, in his thinking, kept to the Calvinistic framework but added to it the General Baptist doctrine of a General Atonement. The General Atonement idea, of course, was according to Lumpkin directly responsible for the missionary enterprise. It seems to me that such writers have little understanding of the issues involved and regard Calvinism and Arminianism as two “emphases” with the “truth” somewhere between. However the charge of believing in General Atonement has stuck and the descendants of the false Calvinists (or hyper-calvinists) still insist that this is so; a book by W. Rushton, recently reprinted in USA and circulated over here, brings evidence of this. In answer to the charge of forsaking Calvinism, let me first of all record his attitude to the Arminian Baptists. He says to his friend Ryland: “Mr. Baxter (i.e. Richard Baxter) considers Calvinists and Arminians as reconcilable, making the difference between them of but small amount. I have no such idea; and if, on account of what I have here and elsewhere avowed, I were disowned by my present connexions, I should rather choose to go through the world alone than be connected with them”.

Concerning the atonement of Christ, Fuller used to teach that the death of Christ was of infinite worth and, had God so desired, the whole race of men could have been saved by it. However the limit in the atonement or the particularity of redemption was to be found rather in the fact that God designed to apply the benefits of Christ’s death to the elect only. In this sense Christ is said to have died for his people in that his sacrifice was intended to be applied only to them but there was no limit at all to the intrinsic worth of what he did. It was this which caused people like Rushton to affirm that he taught an “indefinite atonement”. Suffice it to say that, if Fuller was not a Calvinist, neither was Owen and neither were the men of the Synod of Dort. Owen was practically Fuller’s favourite

writer and, concerning the findings of the Synod of Dort, Fuller said to Ryland: "The Calvinists who met at the Synod of Dort have expressed their judgment on redemption in nine propositions. Were they not too long for transcription I would insert the whole". Then after a few extracts, he concludes, "I could not wish for words more appropriate than the above to express my sentiments". However, in fairness to Fuller's opponents, I think I ought to say that Fuller's writings on the Atonement are very difficult to follow. Fuller was very conscious of the fact that many in his day taught the doctrine of Particular Redemption *as if* Christ's sufferings were quantitative. By this I mean that the impression was given that all the sins of the elect were added together and Christ suffered for just that much sin. If there had been one more elect sinner than Christ would have had more sin to atone for.

It was against this impression Fuller was guarding when he said that Christ's death was sufficient for the whole world to be saved had God so designed it—a phrase also used by the men of Dort and John Owen. However *no one explicitly taught that Christ's sufferings were quantitative* and I feel that Fuller was guilty, in places, of erecting a man of straw. Personally, I do not find such statements as Christ's death being "sufficient for the whole world" particularly helpful, for the Bible does not deal in hypothetical possibilities. Christ's death is of infinite worth for he is the God-man but, even so, he died only for his people. Having said this, I think it is still clear that Fuller was a true Calvinist of the type of Calvin and Owen and it is, therefore, unjust to accuse him of being half-Arminian.

I hope this sketch of a great servant of Christ has whetted your appetite to find out more about him. His life was richer than I could adequately express, and certainly not in a few pages. In conclusion, then, what sort of a man was he? Listen to the assessment of Mr. Coles, Baptist minister at Ampthill, whose daughter became Fuller's second wife.

"Mr. Fuller is a person who possesses such an high sense of honour, that you may place an entire confidence in him; he is exceedingly respected, both by his own people, and by those of the other congregations, who do not attend on his ministry. One of Mr. Fuller's friends, with whom I have been on terms of friendship, for the space of thirty-four years, says of him, that he knows of no man in the world of greater respectability, or more worthy of esteem in every view. Indeed, he seemed to have a good report of all men; and it is a very great satisfaction to me, to be fully persuaded of this, as it affords a pleasing prospect of happiness for my daughter, and for us all, in a nearer connection with him. I feel an entire confidence in the worthy man who is designed, by Divine Providence to be the companion of my daughter's life. I love him; and the more I know of him, the more I confide in him, as a good man and a favourite of God. I believe his heart is right with God, and that it will be well with him, in life, in death and for ever".

*Information concerning the progress and needs of some of the young churches with which we maintain regular contact may serve as a guide for prayer which is much desired by those involved.*

## Churches being planted

### *Auckland, New Zealand*

Owen Griffiths and Michael Drake (we apologise for the mixing of their names for the cover of the last issue) describe the present situation in Auckland with the following details. "Recently there was a simple but memorable service early one Sunday morning when two fairly young converts were baptized in the sea. About sixteen assemble for worship, beginning with communion at 10 a.m. on Sundays, followed by Family Worship at 11 a.m. A further meeting follows during the evening. These all take place in a private home." Details can be obtained by writing to Michael Drake (see back cover for address). Typical of many newly planted churches, the pressing need is for accommodation and the church, consisting mostly of young believers, are looking out for a building even though their funds are limited. The group is characterised by fervent zeal and there is a strong desire to make progress with the work of contacting people in the surrounding areas with the gospel. However, the lack of suitable premises is a severe handicap in this respect.

### *Candlestick Baptist Church, Spring, Texas*

During May 1972 Pastor J. W. Baker wrote to us expressing the conflict which he had endured for six years. He said, "I have reached the place where I find it impossible to continue in the Southern Baptist Convention. The power structure and the commitment of most of the people to the programme rather than fidelity to the Word of God makes it almost unbearable." He continued, "Lately I have been praying and entertaining the possibility of beginning a new work from the ground up. . . I began pastoring at the age of eighteen years and had never done anything else. I am now thirty-four years of age. However, I am convinced that this is about the only solution left. I would like to hear from you as to any comment or helpful advice in such an undertaking. Reading *Reformation Today* seems to indicate that several have done this in England."

In September 1972 our brother wrote to say, "God has opened the doors for the beginning of a new work just out of Houston, Texas. I met with three additional families all of whom embrace the doctrines of grace and they are going to be part of the work, bringing the total to twelve families."

Writing in April 1973 brother Baker reported, "Our attendance is very good and there seems to be a spirit of revival among our people. A testimony from our church is beginning to make an impact on many and I look for many tremendous things from the Lord in the days ahead. We have only been established five months and already have six thousand dollars toward the purchase of some property."

He continued, "My heart is encouraged over what the Lord is doing in the revival of the doctrines of grace. I had a man call me long distance from the State of Missouri and talk for thirty minutes on the depravity of man. I had preached in his church on the attributes of God. He had never heard of the doctrines of grace. The Lord has revealed them to him and now he is beginning to preach them."

Pastor Baker and Pastor Dallas Balma, both believing in free grace and a plurality of elders, united in August, their two churches becoming one. Writing on 12th December Pastor Baker says, "Since that time we have enjoyed unusual blessing. We alternate in the Pulpit and I must say it has been one of the most rewarding experiences." Conversions continue under this combined ministry.

### *Perth, Scotland*

John Davison, our associate editor in Scotland, continues to be of much help to us by way of editing, correcting, and suggesting improvements in regard to the articles. He also keeps a vigilant eye upon the scene in Scotland. Recently there have been additions to the church in Perth. A profound change has taken place in the life of one lady in Perth who came under conviction of sin for six weeks following an open air meeting which was held right outside her living room window. She was unknown to the preachers. She has now given up spending large sums of money on bingo and is catechising and teaching her five children.

There are problems at Perth but they have to do with the growth and inclusion in the church of converts from the world. The question of accommodation continues to be desperate. There is need for constant prayer that a provision will be made. The Perth assembly was recently brought to the brink of what seemed an ideal provision but this fell through. The justified must live by their faith and endure such setbacks and trials. We are sure that other churches reading this will join us in prayer that this urgent need of accommodation for the people will be met.

### *Newcastle, Australia*

A hundred miles north of Sydney is the industrial city of Newcastle where a group of believers have been meeting in homes on the Lord's Day. Don McMurray and Jack Natrass, the two elders, between them sustain an expository ministry. The mid-week prayer meeting is well attended and there is considerable zeal and vision in this assembly. A strong emphasis on evangelism is maintained. House-to-house visiting is regularly undertaken. The church is at present considering the formulation of a constitution. Assistance is given to the group from time to time from the Macquarrie church in Sydney. During the editor's recent tour of Australia a meeting was held in Newcastle with the subject, "How to plant a local church". The meeting was well attended and several relevant questions asked.

### *Roleystone, Western Australia*

Western Australia represents a vast area of scattered communities. In contrast to the aforementioned Newcastle, Roleystone faces the problem of isolation. The work is led by Malcolm Stuart who hails from Strict Baptist background in England. The editor spent a day with him during his recent tour and discovered that Malcolm was converted through the Billy Graham Harringay crusade. Suppression of the free offers of the gospel had led Malcolm to a severe state of introspection. He was greatly moved the first time he heard the gospel proclaimed in a free way, addressed to all sinners without exception. Subsequently he has come to the Reformed and Puritan outlook in regard to evangelism. In other words he believes in free and unfettered

offers of the gospel to all men but that they should be proclaimed in a manner consistent with total depravity, human inability and particular redemption. He is also acutely aware, as are many other evangelical Baptists in Western Australia, of the dangers of ecumenism. The group led by Malcolm is a small one but is worthy of our prayers and support. It has sometimes transpired that isolated churches have nevertheless had a profound influence as this one may well do in Western Australia. We need only think of Thomas Boston of Ettrick in Scotland and the influence exerted from that isolated country place. Let us remember Malcolm Stuart as he faces many difficulties and problems.

### *Franklin, Tennessee, U.S.A.*

Moving from one country area to another we now think of a recently formed church with twenty members, meeting at Franklin, Tennessee. In January 1972 a young pastor in his late twenties was called to this church and more recently he has been able to give up secular work to devote all his time to the ministry. He is a man of great energy and determination; with a real grasp of the gospel and a gift to preach. The church is strong in its evangelistic emphasis as it is in its teaching in the doctrines of grace. Among the members of this church is Norbert Ward who has a gift in editing and literature. He edits a magazine with the title, "Baptist Reformation Review" and we find that we have wholehearted unity with our brother in his work. One of the works undertaken by Norbert Ward is to publish an American edition of "The Free Offer of the Gospel". Unlike some of the other churches mentioned in this report the assembly at Franklin have their own church building. The structure is small but is not hard to find and is less than two miles from a major express way exit and about nineteen miles from downtown Nashville.

### *Long Beach, California*

The young church at Long Beach under the leadership of Ron Edmonds has experienced many trials of faith. It may well be that the fuel shortage which is affecting most countries will have an adverse effect on the group of about twenty believers that meets in the Y.M.C.A. building. One of the tests of endurance through which Ron has passed is the fact that so many in the community are migrant. This means that the number of families that can form a solid foundation is limited. The need for a building is urgent but with minimal resources the group is truly cast upon the Lord. The role which Ron has played is that of a pioneer, not only in respect of the formation of the church, but also in the encouragement of brethren far and wide. He has purposed to find out and locate others of Reformed conviction and has travelled hundreds of miles to establish contact with them. For instance, he is now in close contact with Pastor Edsall Roberts who is pastor of a church just outside San Francisco. Besides the distribution of expository literature in which Ron has had considerable experience he is able to strengthen the hands and encourage the spirits of others who are experiencing difficult times. Three other churches are now being planted in California in areas where a famine of free grace preaching has long prevailed. One of these churches reports the sad loss of five families to an Arminian cause offering "a bright programme". The obstacles blocking the pathway back to worship, which is spiritual rather than natural, are formidable.

It has been wonderfully encouraging to see the increase of those in various part of the world who assemble together to form churches based upon the New Testament pattern. Just a few churches have been mentioned and there are many more both abroad and at home. For instance, in the last issue we mentioned the work at Birmingham which is now under way with reports of gradual increase. Many other new churches could be mentioned both abroad and in the U.K. and we hope that it may be possible to do this in future issues.

*Pastor Keith Davies of the Tuckingmill Reformed Baptist Church, Camborne, Cornwall, has set out some suggestions for the formation of a fellowship of churches which adhere to the 1689 Baptist Confession of Faith. The latter Confession has been drafted by Mr. S. M. Houghton into modern English and we hope to publish this shortly together with an introduction and various notes, all of which should make it a useful publication for churches of Reformed Baptist conviction, by which we mean churches which hold the doctrines of grace together with believers' baptism, the gathered church and expository preaching.*

## A Fellowship of Churches

Mr. Davies lists his suggestions as follows:

1. A fellowship of churches subscribing to the 1689 Confession of Faith and free from denominational and other associations which involved compromise of the Evangelical Faith be formed.
2. Fellowship to be expressed by meetings of Pastors and Elders of the Churches, by Conferences and meetings for the exposition of the Scripture. Where geographical considerations make this difficult attempts will be made to ensure that Pastors from long distances will meet once every two years.
3. No council, executive or committee will be formed, and no power or authority can be exerted over any local Church.
4. At each meeting of pastors and elders a chairman will be appointed for that meeting and a convenor will be chosen to call and organise the next meeting.
5. A list of churches in fellowship will be published each year.
6. Material of a profitable nature will be circulated and shared with the other Churches.

Since Herbert Carson acts as chairman of the annual Carey Conference we suggested that Mr. Davies wrote to him with his suggestions. This was his response:

Dear Mr. Davies,

Obviously your suggestions raise very wide issues. May I say straight away that, like you, I am increasingly dubious about ecclesiastical structures. It seems to me that the structure always seems to grow and Parkinsons Law comes vigorously into operation so that offices are created and then tasks are found to justify the offices. There is also the constant tendency for a central authority to take to itself powers which Scriptures do not justify.

At the same time isolation is certainly not a New Testament characteristic. We not only belong together in the local church. Churches belong the one to the other. The question is how to realize this oneness.

Naturally we go back to the New Testament for our pattern and here the problem is that in the apostolic period there is a situation which is not exactly with us today. The churches of the Acts of the Apostles had the actual presence of the apostles. Hence in Acts chapter 15 while the elders and the church gathered they also had Peter and Paul. Similarly in the situation envisaged in the Pastoral Epistles we have a direct apostolic authority—or if not direct then mediated in a personal way through the evangelists who were appointed to ordain elders in the churches.

Now we have neither the living presence of the apostles nor of apostolic delegates like Timothy and Titus. We have however the continuing witness of the apostles in the New Testament which is the apostolic testimony to Christ. This means that our life within the local church and our relationship with other local churches must be subject to that apostolic authority.

The problem is always to hold in tension the autonomy of the local church under the lordship of Christ and the relationship of such autonomous churches. Clearly the basis for such fellowship is the apostolic word, namely the Scriptures. It is their testimony which binds us together and they provide the only basis on which we can have fellowship.

The difficulty of course is that one must then decide what is the area of Scripture upon which we must take our stand. To take the Strict Baptists on the one side or the F.I.E.C. on the other one gets different understandings of what the basis for fellowship is. I would feel that some Strict Baptists narrow the ground of fellowship too much because we cannot really be said to have fellowship unless members of one church can sit down at the Lord's table in another. I believe that Spurgeon drew the analogy of ships and said that one gospel ship could drop anchor alongside any other gospel ship. In other words fellowship should be in terms of mutual sympathy, mutual support, mutual love but without any structure or organization.

This of course does not answer the question of discipline. But neither does a structured organization. You have a denomination but it seems inevitably to be the case that someone who is disciplined in one church may go and find a haven in a church of the same denomination without any questions being asked. So the application of discipline does not depend on a shared ecclesiastical structure but rather on common convictions concerning the truth of the gospel and those common convictions can be shared without the structure.

One other factor in the present situation ought to be borne in mind. It is that we live in a day when organizations and societies proliferate. We have got the F.I.E.C., the B.E.C., the F.E.B.E., and so it goes on. I

confess that I would be very dubious about producing another set up. The Carey Conference is essentially an ad hoc gathering of ministers and elders. We would not envisage it as being the forerunner of another organization or even another "list"!

I appreciate that this will be far from giving you the answers and will probably only indicate the need for personal encounter with men of like convictions who can thrash out these issues which confront us at the present time.

With Christian greetings and good wishes,

Herbert Carson.

This matter of a fellowship or association, perhaps on an international basis, for Reformed Baptist Churches was discussed at the last Carey Conference held at Liverpool and may well be raised again. Whatever our convictions may be on the subject it is right that fervent prayer should be offered for those churches which are struggling in adverse conditions and in this issue details are provided of some churches for which prayer is requested. The medium of the Carey Conferences, other local conferences, and this magazine are designed to help fulfil the need of fellowship among like-minded churches.

*A letter from the editor to Keith Davies reads as follows:*

Dear Keith,

My view and David Kingdon's in regard to the question of an Association accords with that expressed by Wayne Mack in his study of this matter published in "The Ideal Church". I welcome an association of like-minded Reformed churches and do not see that the existence of other bodies affects this in the least. My vote would be for an Association of the kind you envisage which would support the B.E.C., foster good relationships with the F.I.E.C. and encourage the F.E.B.E. to develop their fellowship, common sense taking into account geographic considerations, existing bonds, etc.

There is one over-riding factor as far as I am concerned and that is that an Association be the result of a revival in which the growth of newly planted churches is such that we have no other alternative but to render service as directed by the Spirit and by practical considerations. I am absolutely against organizing anything in the flesh just for the sake of having something of our own. The paper work involved in such a project is in itself repugnant. Labour coming our way because it is thrust upon us from without as a result of the mighty work of the Spirit is one thing, organizing something man-centred is another. Hence Herbert Carson's letter is timely.

With warm greetings in Christ,

Erroll Hulse.

N.B. For overseas readers, B.E.C. stands for British Evangelical Council; F.I.E.C., The Fellowship of Independent Evangelical Churches; and F.E.B.E., The Fellowship of Evangelical Baptist Churches in Europe.



# The Great "Amen" Conference

*A report by the editor*

From November 5th-9th 1973 an International Baptist Congress, sponsored by the fundamentalist Baptists of U.S.A., was held in Spurgeon's Metropolitan Tabernacle, London. We cannot tell the whole story for it would be too long in the telling, but several highlights will interest our readers.

First a few words about those who attended. There were four Jumbo jets full of American brethren ( $4 \times 450 = 1800$ )! To recognise them was no problem. Their gay clothing showed up the "Puritans" though there were a few exceptions such as Eric Gurr (responsible for a fine address to some two thousand five hundred on the opening evening). He sported a bright pink tie, which may have been a friendly gesture toward some visitors who, in their bright pink suits, were more than visible even in the dark network of underground tunnels which characterises the Elephant and Castle. Nowhere does the Bible promote either dullness of dress or character. These and other details are mentioned not in disapproval but to convey something of the feeling of the gatherings which the great majority enjoyed. British support was very sparse.

Noteworthy is the fact that the aura of the Prince of Preachers is still pervasive. American ministers queued to let their wives take photographs of them in the very spot where Spurgeon preached. Unfortunately (fortunately?) the actual pulpit was burnt down a long time ago. Plaster cast busts of Spurgeon were being advertised at \$65 in the entrance hall. Perhaps significantly no British price was shown, but a helpful official informed us that this was £26. We do not imagine that any would bow down before the image so any criticism would be confined to the aesthetic merits of the casting and the price set for so restricted a likeness. One wife, a great lover of Spurgeon's Sermons, thinks that Spurgeon had nothing to commend his looks and would not have countenanced the presence of the image under any circumstances!

What about the nature and purpose of the whole Congress? The advertised purpose was that, under the chairmanship of British pastors, all was intended to be of practical help to pastors and Christian workers. Dr. Henry Morris, author of well-known books on creation, certainly was of

considerable help, as were most of the speakers. There was, however, a basic cleavage which, in a way, reminded one of American baseball. The difference was one of doctrine; the British contributors, with their small percentage of followers, being clearly Calvinistic while the Americans, for the most part, were fundamentalist in a non-Calvinistic way and, if pressed, in an anti-Calvinistic way. Both sides tended to support their own speakers and miss the others. One Jumbo jet set off for Paris on the second day and there were excursions to other parts such as Edinburgh for the American brethren. So drastic was the reduction in attendance that one of the smallest congregations gathered on the final afternoon to hear one of the best addresses—Geoffrey Thomas on the subject “Revival and Revivalism”.

In regard to the Calvinistic issue, it was a matter of a home run for you and one for us, running neck and neck, until the final rally when the score was six all—Gurr, Fountain, Dallimore, Seaton, Buhler, Thomas on the one side and on the other Stowell, Zimmerman, Munroe Parker, H. C. Slade, Drs. Vick and Lightner. Six all! What about Morris and Jennings? Well, some, by the very nature of their subjects, did not figure in the tussle although Jennings was so clear and forthright on the shortcomings of modern evangelism that he almost came home for Britain! Six all for the final evening with Masters to go—but before we report the final address a few words about some of the other papers, and also qualify the above as an illustration. For instance Dr Slade is a Canadian, is A-mill., is decisionist in practice but Calvinist in conviction.

In a helpful address David Fountain suggested that there are about fifty churches in Britain which have survived for three hundred years. The reason for this, he declared, has been their Calvinistic doctrine. He made the claim that there has been a misrepresentation of the Baptists during the period 1660-1760. The general idea has been propounded and come to be widely held that the situation was altogether bleak before the Great Awakening of the eighteenth century. This picture, so dark and black, said Mr. Fountain, was not altogether true. During this time there were many Baptist churches that were prospering and growing. Some documentation was provided and this contribution may help to bring many to a more balanced view of what actually did exist before the Great Awakening. The Baptists very often have been neglected, and perhaps an injustice done to them, in regard to the rôle that they have played in evangelical history.

Dr. Joseph Stowell, leader of the American Regular Baptists, loudly affirmed the importance of the local church. He held that the remaining faithful groups (especially his own) are the true remnant in this, the final last great apostasy. It was his opinion that we were drawing near to the time of secret rapture. Forthrightly he denounced ecumenical evangelism, mentioning Dr. Graham by name. With thunders he proclaimed the fundamentals of his faith, receiving loud amens through the Tabernacle.

Question time which followed was not up to the standard to which we are accustomed in this country. One young man asked whether it was ethical to try to plant Baptist churches where true evangelical churches already existed. This problem was simply evaded. So we will answer it ourselves by saying that wholehearted respect and consideration ought to be given to all evangelical churches whether they are Baptist or not and we should concentrate on the many areas where there is no witness.

In one session Dr. Lightner expounded on the subject of miraculous gifts. In dogmatic fashion he asserted that I Cor. 13:8 referred to the completion of the canon and he equated neo-Pentecostalism with 2 Thess. 2:12, i.e. lying wonders and the man of sin, indicating that the rapture was near. When Geoff Thomas challenged these views some seemed surprised. In other words dispensationalism is a primary article of faith with many in America. This threatens to divide unnecessarily.

Loud amens were a feature of the Congress. We are all for saying amen. It is dismal to preach with all one's heart and get no response at the end of the sermon, or pray similarly only to end in an icy, polar silence!

Long ago a Puritan by the name of Thomas Woodcock preached a sermon on "Whether it is expedient and how the congregation may say Amen in Public worship". His text was: "And all the people answered, Amen, Amen", Neh. 8:6. It would seem that we are in need of another such instructive sermon, both to encourage Amens where these are neglected, and also, perhaps, to bring moderation where concentration is more in keeping. To illustrate the point as to how the Amens can backfire, we think of Jack Seaton who, in the opinion of many, preached very well at the Congress. That Apollos of Inverness, Scotland, carried the great congregation with him in a resounding fashion, until his point became as clear as the cliffs of Dover under a bright sky—that he, Jack Seaton, was actually preaching particular redemption! The silence was the silence of anguish and perplexity. The small remnant of Englishmen, though in full agreement with him, were far too shy to say Amen!

Arnold Dallimore, communicated very well to the congregation in his paper on Whitefield. He brought out unmistakably the doctrinal beliefs of that mighty preacher. Mr. Dallimore has retired from the pastoral oversight of the Baptist Church, Cottam, Ontario, in order to concentrate on the writing of the second volume on the life of Whitefield to which we look forward with relish.

Not all the Americans were in ignorance of the fundamentals of the Reformed faith or of the extremes to which modern evangelicalism has gone. Indeed this was one of the most encouraging features of the great gathering, namely the evidence that things Reformed are taking root among the fundamentalist American churches. One brother, who doubted whether the revival of the doctrines of grace in other places could ever have meaning for highly organized, prosperous, self-sufficient

dispensationalist Arminian orientated American churches, felt himself reproved by tangible evidence that the truth of free grace is spreading in such quarters, the great conventicle in itself serving to quicken such interest. Many and various were the conversations about Calvinism. Some Americans enquired about what form the appeals to "come forward" take at the Tabernacle. On being told that there were no such appeals, the question was asked in amazement: "then how do you get people saved?" We may add the question: how did Spurgeon, who never made an altar call, get people saved? In some churches in Canada and the U.S.A. before ministers are called they are asked whether they give altar calls (make appeals for decisions) at the end of their sermons. If they do not the rule is that they may not be called. Thus Spurgeon would be debarred from the church today.

In regard to the bookstall one has sympathies with the problems faced by the organisers. Once the door is open to any Baptist literature where does it end, especially in view of some extreme dispensational views of many Baptists in the U.S.A.? It would be interesting to know what attempt has been made to contribute to an understanding of Baptist history in recent years on either side of the Atlantic. Two omissions in particular should receive serious criticism. One is the omission of David Kingdon's book, *Children of Abraham*, which, to the best of our knowledge, is the first of its kind and quality on the subject of baptism and the covenant by any Baptist since Abraham Booth. How is it that an *International Baptist Congress* should overlook such a contribution? Secondly Iain Murray's masterpiece, *The Forgotten Spurgeon* was also conspicuous by its absence. The absence of this book, in particular, surely deserves censure, since of the very few titles displayed there were some which bore little if any relevance to an International Baptist Congress other than the fact of the speakers' names. But how encouraging, nevertheless, to see a hundred copies of Dallimore's *Whitefield* snapped up: they could have sold a hundred more.

But now to the climax of the week's events and the final address. Peter Masters, minister of the Tabernacle, found, like some of his predecessors, full vocal support for many of the points which he made on Spurgeon. He argued that if Spurgeon was alive today he could not be aligned with present day Calvinists and in this sense he was not a Calvinist, in that his stress on human responsibility showed what might be termed his Arminianism. This was greeted with great enthusiasm. The American brethren, after a week in which the awful suspicion was increasing that Spurgeon had actually been a Calvinist, were obviously delighted and relieved to be told that he was no such dreadful thing! He then went on to describe evangelism of a very different sort from Spurgeon's. He spoke about one Conference member who went to the supermarket across the road from the Tabernacle and in the space of five minutes said that he had led seventeen souls to Christ! Amen! Amen!! For a moment the speaker

was nonplussed at this undesirable reaction but then bravely forged ahead to condemn such superficial approaches to conversion which, he claimed, smacked of Liberalism.

However this rearguard action was too little and too late, for the case had been lost, and the match: seven-six to the American fundamentalists.

The first words of C. H. Spurgeon at the Tabernacle included the statement, "I am never ashamed to avow myself a Calvinist". We are sure that Spurgeon knew exactly and precisely what was meant by that and we are equally sure that the vast majority at the Congress had no idea. As for the liberal use of the word "hyper-Calvinist", that means to most, "someone who is more Calvinistic than I am!" In any case it is not a matter of degrees or of some Biblical texts being in conflict with others. Since the Reformation and certainly since the Synod of Dort the Calvinistic position has been clearly and definitively stated. Either one accepts that or one rejects it.

But we will not end our report on a negative note. The Congress should result in a great deal more study being done and we are sure that many of the visitors from abroad, and perhaps some from Britain, were instructed and enlightened. And lest we be too hard upon Peter Masters and his final address let it be said that, though we may feel that we all fall far short of grasping the Puritan character and extraordinary discernment that lay behind Spurgeon's preaching, we ought to be generous in regard to his motives which may well have included the desire not to have our American brothers go away thoroughly disgruntled, thinking that the British were a "rum" lot. Also Masters' emphasis on evangelism and present day Calvinists following Spurgeon's example in this respect is needed and well taken. But as far as the Americans were concerned here at least was one in the Congress taking a middle position to form a bridge of contact. No point is gained in Baptists becoming "cultish" and there is a danger of this. The Americans won the match seven-six but this very fact in itself may ensure the circumvention of this sort of ding-dong battle over Calvinism at the next such Congress which may, we are informed, be repeated in three years time. A full and thorough exposition of Spurgeon's Calvinism will surely do much to solve the problem.

Through personal fellowship with several American delegates and with others who attended (who have carefully checked this report) much more could be described. An insipid report without colour is worthless. One with savour may offend. Hence I would like to affirm a personal view that despite her problems America is still by far the most important nation in the world as far as resources to spread the Gospel is concerned. The repercussions of a reformation and revival there are beyond computation. Reaffirmed, then, is the need for brotherly relationships. Spurgeon's example in not making eschatology a cardinal feature for unity and his example in urging a return to Puritanism are worthy of emulation.

*Continued from front inside cover.*

titles are not viable and will not survive without subsidy. Publishers, unless they are subsidised or endowed, must bow to popular demand for the glossy and the sensational. This largely accounts for the deplorably shallow character of popular evangelical literature today.

Inspiration to press forward has come from reading an account of the initiative behind the republication of John Gill's commentary in six massive volumes. This was achieved by a country curate living on a pittance in a Popish village in Southern Ireland during the 1840's. Obstacles as daunting as those we face in the gigantic industrial chaos of today pertained then. An added woe was the terrible potato famine and the time needed to try and alleviate the sufferings of starving people. Yet this country bumpkin of a curate, Doudney by name, achieved his objective within one week of the promised date of completion! How did he do it? He made no bones about sharing the need with others. Thus help was forthcoming. The work was shared and the objective accomplished. We will follow this example. We have worthy material. The church at Cuckfield provides many hours of editorial assistance free of charge as well as other help one way and another, but cannot alone attain the peaks of inflationary costs which have to be faced in the world of printing. Those who desire to help from their tithing accounts should direct the support to Cuckfield Baptist Chapel specifying its use for the publication of the Leeds Carey material.

In the meantime we await from the printer *Reformation for the Family* which contains 160 pages and will retail at 75 pence. *Reformation for the Family* is a paperback containing twenty-two articles selected from this magazine. Included are a number on the subject of reformation: business, church order, ministerial training and missionary thinking. Matters which aroused interest and response such as, "Women in the Church" and "The Relevance of Theology", by Herbert Carson, "The Problem of Educating our Children" by Robert Oliver and "What it is to be Reformed" by the editor, are included.

Mr. S. M. Houghton has completed his work on the 1689 Confession in modern English. Care is being taken to make this a very attractive production for use among the increasing number of churches adopting the 1689 Baptist Confession of Faith.

#### **Newton Scientific Association**

The Bible cannot be disproved by scientific arguments for science cannot pronounce upon supernaturalism. We are not afraid of science but we do acknowledge the constant misuse of it as a weapon in the hands of infidels to encourage unbelief. It does help when scientists themselves expose the abuse to which science is put, especially with regard to evolution. Graduates interested in this subject might like to write for information to: The Secretary, Newton Scientific Association, 2, Westoe, Edmonton, London N9 0SH.

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