

REFORMATION TODAY '74



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ABOUT BOOKS

Recent books of the highest order from the Banner of Truth are *The Life and Letters of John Elias* (488 pp. £2·80), *Calvin's Sermons on Ephesians* (705 pp. £2·50), volume one of *The Works of Richard Sibbes* (445 pp. £1·95) and the fourth volume in the series of expositions on *Romans* by Dr. D. Martyn Lloyd-Jones (359 pp. £1·95). The latter volume is an exposition of chapter 7:1 to 8:4. *The Law: its functions and limits*. All these editions are of such excellence that one hesitates to mention shortcomings, but attention ought to be drawn to two, one doctrinal and one technical. Firstly, in work on *Romans* even the best expositors reveal differences somewhere along the line, and in our view this is very much the case in the exposition of "the wretched man" of *Romans* 7. Doctrinally, experimentally, and practically we prefer Hodge, Haldane and Murray, not because we want to lean on bastions of orthodoxy just for the sake of it, but because the way they expound the matter is clearer.

Lest some upstart think to tramp across this chapter with hobnail boots he had better be warned that he has the Doctor to contend with!

The technical question referred to concerns the inside dust-jackets of *The Works of Richard Sibbes*. Even if the intention now is not to proceed with all seven volumes why not match the other Puritan volumes, *Owen* and *Flavel*, by setting out the contents of the full works? Not only would this be very useful, but it could well serve to stimulate sufficient demand whereby, to the advantage of both public and publisher, the seven volume set could eventually be made available. The first volume of *Sibbes* contains his most sought-after expositions, namely *The Bruised Reed* and *The Soul's Conflict*.

Reformation for the Family (160 pp. paperback, 75p) distributed by Carey Publications and Henry E. Walter, contains a selection of articles from this magazine. So far it is having an encouraging reception. Support has been received towards the publication by "Carey" of the Leeds conference material reported in this issue, a substantial gift coming from a missionary. Warm gratitude is expressed to those who have sent contributions. *A Faith to Confess*, the 1689 Baptist Confession in modern English, should be ready for the printer soon. It is being designed to meet the needs of local churches and care continues to be devoted to its presentation.

Lion Publishing House is a young firm producing evangelical literature. *Lion Handbook to the Bible* (680 pp. £3·75) is colourful, informative and fascinating. Sketches or outlines with comments on the background and content of all the books of Scripture are provided with an abundance of diagrams, maps, photographs and illustrations. Most helpful indices presented in an imaginative way complete what has become a best seller. All this is credit. What about debit? There is a tendency to dodge supernaturalism—the creation for instance, and also some of the contributors show doctrinal weakness in areas in which we need to be strong and clear today, not wishy-washy. Apart from that, we value this *Lion Handbook*.

Editorial

AN URGENT LETTER TO OUR READERS IN THE LAST ISSUE OF *Reformation Today* described the three-day week for industry and the consequent delays and difficulties. Since then the crisis has led to a general election with an indecisive result inasmuch as Mr. Wilson's government is at the helm without a clear majority in Parliament. The coalminers have returned to work and industry is back to a five-day week. Will inflation now accelerate? Will leap-frogging wage claims result in the destruction of the export market upon which the country depends? Only time will tell.

How did we get here and where are we going?

While the politicians wrestle with inflation and other issues of civil administration we are responsible to give careful analysis to the state of the churches. John Owen thought deeply about the past, present and future. In a sermon on public sin (Works Vol. 9, p. 365 ff.) he made the claim that from the time of the Reformation there was progress for seventy years. Then for a further period of seventy years there was level-pegging and after that serious decline. The date of this sermon was probably about 1670. Owen turned out to be right and decline continued until the mid 1730's when God began to send the Great Awakening. 1520 to 1590, 1590 to 1660 and 1660 to 1730 approximately are the three periods. With regard to the period 1590-1660 Owen was perhaps pessimistic since looking back now we see that as an era of very rich blessing and achievement.

Finney and the disappearance of revival

How did we arrive in this age when we no longer have revival? In one of the most significant articles yet published in this magazine, Clive Tyler of South Africa provides us with an analysis and history of how we came to inherit our present situation of doctrinal chaos and spiritual weakness, a situation ripe for the Ecumenical movement. Unless there is reformation and revival we will be led by the apostles of man-centred religion into another dark age. We hope in a future issue to print an article by Herbert Carson in which he traces out the history of the Ecumenical movement and shows the implications of this for evangelicals.

(Continued on inside back cover.)

Front cover. Polling day in the U.K.! How soon will it be before there is another? It is said that in 1880 Spurgeon was instrumental in turning Southwark from Tory to Liberal. The non-conformist vote was a crucial factor in those days. The issues then were clear-cut. Today they are not. Evangelicals in the U.K. vote three ways. Whatever party the Christian supports he should encourage wherever possible the choice of candidates who respect the moral law of God. But it is rare in any party to find candidates who know what the ten commandments are let alone their significance for civil government.

Stuart Olyott, minister of a church in the centre of Liverpool, spoke recently to ministers in Sussex on the subject "Is an expository ministry realistic?" This address follows, with a title which more accurately describes the subject. Mr. Olyott sets himself to expound the whole Bible (Revelation excepted) in ten years. "Perhaps," he suggests, "we should sacrifice some depth for breadth". Not a few expository preachers will have reservations about that! To expound the whole Bible in an adequate way is as exacting as spending ten years expounding a crucial book such as Romans or Hebrews. The latter method is used and defended on the grounds that it takes in the rest of Scripture and embraces all the central doctrines in its course. Mr. Olyott himself would not want his method swallowed hook, line and sinker by anyone who might expire in the attempt to carry it out! Flexibility is very important. What pertains in one church and what suits one preacher does not suit another. The reservations of this introductory paragraph are designed to safeguard those who are not able to question Mr. Olyott or who may lack fellowship with ministers of like mind who appreciate the complexities of this subject. Needless to say, we are profoundly grateful for the thinking and analysis reflected in this contribution. How many teaching elders have thought through the implications of their responsibility to teach the whole counsel of God?

The Whole Bible and Expository Preaching

IN MY EXPERIENCE, BIBLICAL AND PRACTICAL CONSIDERATIONS HAVE dovetailed together to give me deep conviction on the subject of expository preaching. I have come to believe that I can be a faithful pastor only by seeking to expound *all* of God's Word to *all* of the people in my congregation.

Biblical Considerations

I have never sat under an expository ministry. In the church where I was converted, the order of the day was: 10.45 Sunday morning, Consecration preached; 6.30 in the evening, Conversion preached. The diet never changed! With unfailing consistency the endless army of "lay

preachers" held forth on these two themes. In themselves they are not unhealthy themes, but repeated *ad nauseam* fall pitifully short of Biblical requirements. If hearers wanted to know anything more of God and his ways they were expected to glean it from their personal Bible reading, which duty was constantly urged.

So it was that when I entered into my first pastorate in my early twenties, I found that there were two questions which I had never heard discussed, nor had I ever asked them. I was now the approved minister of a settled congregation, but never once had I enquired, "What is a minister?" or, "What is the task of a minister?" You may think it appalling that someone could be called to a pastorate without those questions being asked and answered. I agree with you, but those are the facts.

It was really quite ordinary things which made me begin to ask those questions. A rather eccentric old lady fell asleep in every single church service, but was always sufficiently awake afterwards to chide me for my refusal to wear a clerical collar. She told me that "proper ministers wear dog-collars" and wanted to know why I did not behave as a "proper minister". What is a "proper minister"? For the first time I found myself asking the question.

Besides this, I was finding regular sermon preparation very taxing and consequently was doing comparatively little visitation. Some other ladies told me that if I was a "real pastor" I would have been round to see them more often. This led to my seeking to define precisely what my task was. With the New Testament in my hand I tried to get to grips with both the questions which were causing me concern. Can you imagine the consternation of a young minister who reads the New Testament and finds no ministers (as he understands them) mentioned? I began to wonder what Biblical justification, if any, I had for the things that I was doing.

The New Testament spoke of elders. The passage which helped me the most was Acts 20. There Paul sent for the elders of the church at Ephesus and told them to "*pastor* the flock of God" (Acts 20:17, 28). Those same elders were called in verse 28 "overseers", or "bishops". No one had ever told me this before, but I discovered that New Testament churches had elders, that each elder was to pastor the local church, and to be a bishop over the local church. Numerous other passages, such as 1 Peter 5 and Titus 1, confirmed these findings. Nobody had ever told me that eldership existed, yet here it was. These elders were to teach and to rule. I had to ask myself whether I was such an elder and, if so, what justification I had for accepting financial support from the church. I was very relieved to discover 1 Timothy 5:17! Clearly then it was quite justifiable for some elders to be financially supported by the congregation. Elders who ruled well qualified for such support, so

that they could give themselves more fully and completely to labouring in the Word and doctrine. The two questions were thus beginning to be answered for me. "What is a minister?" He is a ruling, teaching elder, set aside to labour in the Word and doctrine. What is the task of a minister? It is to feed the flock with the Word. It is to rule the flock by bringing it into submission to the Word. So a minister is primarily a man of the Word. He labours in the Word and doctrine. He is a man whose time and talents are taken up with the Word and its application to the flock.

Having faced this, I was then confronted by the question: "How *much* of the Word am I to give to the congregation?" The apostle's ambition was "to present every man perfect", and I knew that mine was the same, for I now believed, from Ephesians 4, that God had given me to the church "for the perfecting of the saints". My thinking was directed to 2 Timothy 3:15-17. Holy Scriptures is the means by which the man of God becomes perfect. If I was to see saints perfected it meant teaching them the Scriptures and, as all Scripture is inspired and profitable in the way that passage shows, it meant teaching them *all* Scripture.

This was confirmed to me by Matthew 4:4. Jesus did not say that man shall live by *most* of the words that proceed out of the mouth of God, but by *all* of them. John 17:17 also weighed heavily on my mind. "Sanctify them through thy truth," the Saviour prayed. What is the truth? "Thy word is truth." I could see then that the people of God needed to know the *whole* of inspired Scripture before they could be mature spiritually. If I was to present every man perfect, it was my responsibility before God to ensure that every boy, every girl, every young person, every man and woman, was taught every word of God. Nothing less would do. This gave a wholly new dimension to my understanding of the ministry. I could see that it could not be done without hard work, much concentration and thought, and the employment of all one's energies and faculties. It meant "*labour* in the word and doctrine".

Practical Considerations

While Scripture was moving me towards these conclusions, a number of practical considerations were propelling me in the same direction. On entering the ministry I had found, to my amazement, that I was preaching every week to a number of people who could not read, and a greater number of others who had immense difficulty in reading. This swamped my previous convictions about daily Bible reading. From conversion I had been schooled in "Quiet Time theology". I had been taught that "a chapter a day keeps the Devil away" and, therefore, it was my duty to read the Bible every day.

At this stage in my ministry two thoughts occurred to me. The first was this. The early Christians did not practise daily Bible reading.

How could they? Printing had not been invented and handwritten copies were beyond the reach of the normal person. The "Quiet Time", as currently advocated, was unknown to the New Testament Church. How, then, could I bind the consciences of my people to it?

The second thought concerned the practical question of what I was going to do with those people (of all ages) who could not read. How could I tell them to go home and do something which they most certainly could not do? Reading is a highly desirable skill and I would most certainly encourage people to take steps to learn, but it is possible to put so much pressure in this direction that you convey the impression that illiteracy, or reading-difficulty, is a sin. It isn't. Nor does the New Testament teach that the ability to read is an essential requirement for anyone wishing to grow in grace.

I came to the conclusion that the New Testament lays little emphasis on personal Bible reading, but rather stresses the gathering of the church to be instructed by Christ-appointed teachers. It teaches that new converts should be baptised and join a church, and that it is in the sphere of the local church that they are to hear the apostles' doctrine. With this in mind I knew that my ministry would have to change. I could no longer be content to preach from parts of the Bible and expect the people to go home and read up the parts that I did not cover. As a teaching elder with responsibility for that congregation, I felt that I must teach the whole congregation the whole Word *myself*. Whatever the value of personal Bible reading, it seemed clear to me that the ministry of teaching elders was the *God-appointed* means of bringing the church to spiritual maturity. I felt that I must henceforth labour as if the private means of personal Bible reading did not exist (as it did not, for so many). My public ministry *alone* would have to be of such a sort that every person came to know "every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God". So, by Biblical and practical considerations, I came to the conclusion that an expository ministry is the ministry God expects of us, and which pleases him. This being so, how could I labour any other way? Would it be realistic to seek to advance Christ's cause by means which he has not appointed? I did not feel I could sincerely ask God's blessing on anything other than an expository ministry. This is the greatest factor in my mind when I seek to advocate that an expository ministry is eminently realistic.

An Expository Ministry in Practice

How does such a ministry work out in practice? How do you go about seeking to teach every person the whole counsel of God? You might think this incredibly unrealistic, but the target which I have set myself in the ministry is to cover the whole of the Bible in ten years. I believe that this is not as unrealistic as it sounds. Perhaps we should sacrifice some depth for breadth. Most men's talents lie in this direction. Only

a very small number of men can expound at great depth. Most men in the ministry do not have such gifts. There are a few, and we thank God for them, but they are only a few. Hardly any of us is like the man who is said to have expounded the book of Job for forty years. I have heard it told that he started with eight hundred hearers, and ended with eight! If so, there is little doubt that the surviving eight knew the book of Job fairly well, but what else did they know? Did they know the gist of Ephesians, or the contents of Hebrews? Did they know the main drift of the prophecy of Ezekiel? Were they familiar with the particular distinctives of the book of Habbakuk? Did they have a good Biblical theology so that they could give a clear summary of each book of the Bible? Did they have a true, systematic theology so that they could relate the teachings of the Bible scattered throughout its parts into one consistent whole? I very much doubt it.

I believe that the overall results of sacrificing some depth for breadth are better than a very lengthy exposition of one or two books. Imagine a young man, born into a Christian family, who is brought along to hear expository preaching every week. If the Bible is expounded fully every ten years, by the time he is thirty he will have heard the whole of the Bible three times. He will have heard it when he was a child, then again in his formative 'teen years, and then again in his thinking twenties. There is a young man who will be well founded in the things of God. I have a friend who went into the ministry at the same time as I did, ten years ago. The first book he began to expound was Ezekiel. When I heard news of him, a couple of years back, he was still expounding Ezekiel! I love my friend, but do not think he is being very realistic. I believe his commission is to preach the whole counsel of God to all his people. Someone who has heard the whole Bible expounded three times in thirty years will be far better off than someone who hears only a very few books expounded over the same period.

Can it be done? Is this "ten-year plan" really feasible? I think it is basically realistic if we remember a few fundamental factors.

We must remember that the Bible was written in books. Our job is not only to expound verses or chapters, but books, because God gave us the Scriptures in books. Chapters and verses are man's inventions. They make it easy to find one's place, but many of the divisions are quite arbitrary and artificial. Take the epistle to the Romans. I do not believe that Paul intended one sentence of his letter to be read to the church one week, and another sentence the next week. The letter, when it arrived, was read to the church in one session. When the hearers came to the practical chapters of chapter 12 onwards they could still remember the doctrinal chapters of 1-11. When they came to the closing greetings, they could still remember the opening greetings. When the session had finished they had in their minds a *whole book* with its distinctive theology. They could summarise the gist of its argument and

the drift of its thinking. They could talk about its main features and emphases, for they had a whole book in their minds. When we expound Romans our hearers should be no different.

I do not mean that we should expound Romans in one sermon but I do mean that when *our* hearers come to the practical chapters, they too should still have the doctrinal chapters sounding clearly in their minds, just like the original hearers. When they come to the end of the letter they should still be crystal clear as to its beginning. When we have finished expounding, any person who has listened should be able to give a summary of the main theme, thread and argument, distinctive points and peculiar theology of that letter. He should have the *book* in his mind. Therefore, I am advocating that we should sacrifice some depth for breadth, so that we may accomplish this. In our own congregation we expounded Romans in six months. We started the letter on exactly the same day as another church, well-known to us. When we had finished the letter, that church was still on chapter 1 verse 8! Personally I think that this is unbalanced.

After we had been through Romans some of our young people went to help on a beach mission, where some team members were more than scornful of the fact that a church should attempt to get a serious understanding of so lofty an epistle in so short a time. These critics set our young people a sort of verbal exam to see if they had managed to learn anything useful from the book, and were astonished when they received a clear and correct answer to every question. I believe that incident speaks for itself. These young people had clearly in their minds the drift of the book, the main contents of the individual chapters, the distinctives of the book, and its practical implications. *Romans* was in their minds. Unless accompanied by a regular survey of the whole, verse-by-verse preaching does not have this effect. I maintain that if a book has been expounded successfully, those who heard the exposition should be able to give a résumé of the book.

The "ten-year plan" is entirely realistic if we vary our method. Some people have an expository ministry, but only one method. They start at verse 1 of the first chapter, and go on doggedly to the last verse of the last chapter. That is what exposition is generally reckoned to be. I have heard it called "expedition"!—and it can end in frigidity of the arctic!

I believe it is essential to vary the method. You cannot treat an epistle as you treat a prophetic book like Jeremiah, where the chapters are not chronological, and the "beginning-to-end" method is out of the question. For my own part, we were able to tackle Romans by expounding it straight through, keeping the main drift of the book in people's minds and sacrificing some depth. We did not spend eight weeks on the word "propitiation", but gave a brief summary of what the word means, then continued, so that the main force of the book was not lost.

Jeremiah was entirely different. First of all I gave a summary of the life of Jeremiah so that everybody had a clear mental picture of the prophet's life. Then I was able to show how different chapters fitted into the various times of his life, the changing experiences through which he was passing and the different kings under whom he was prophesying. We left out quite a few chapters, but when we had finished there was reason to believe that the people had a clear view of the total teaching of the prophet Jeremiah.

Job required yet another approach. We spent some time on the introduction, which is a narrative and easy to follow, and then pointed out the whole question of cycles of speeches. We expounded the main theme of each contributor in the first cycle of speeches. In the second and third cycles we gave a summary of all the parts not included initially, and chose the contribution of just one speaker to expound. The main points of Elihu's contribution were then studied, followed by two expositions of Jehovah's answer to Job, and an exposition of the conclusion to round off. Of course we left out much. But when we had finished I believe most of our people were clear as to the total force and overall message of the book of Job, were edified and able to retain what the book was about.

I believe this "ten-year plan" is realistic if we are not afraid of repetition, because, after ten years (if we are labouring according to schedule), we will have covered the Bible. We should not be embarrassed to go over it again. Why should we be embarrassed by repetition? Jesus felt no embarrassment. It is quite clear that he said many things on more than one occasion and both Peter and Paul admit to saying things for the second time. If we ourselves are growing in grace and in the knowledge of the Lord Jesus Christ, we will never go over the same ground with the same light, but always with brighter, fuller light. Besides this, after ten years, the average congregation changes a lot. Johnny, who was two, is now twelve. The new convert of a week's standing then, has now been a Christian for a decade. There will be folk who have been saved recently and others who have moved to the area, as well as new people. We ought not therefore to be afraid or ashamed of repetition. I know some pastors who have preached through Romans early on in their pastorate and have no intention of ever preaching through it again in the same pastorate. But why deprive their congregation of a book of the Bible? Why deprive the new people I have mentioned of such a treasure house?

My "Liverpudlian" Method

The method which I use in Liverpool is that on Sunday mornings, after the opening act of worship, I spend ten minutes telling a Bible story, in a plain and unadorned manner. I am working through the Biblical

narrative consecutively, and the intention is to cover all the main high-roads of Scripture every five years. Two factors have caused me to do this. The first is that God is adding people who have no background of Biblical knowledge. I know that even under the sort of expository ministry that I am advocating, they are going to have vast tracts of Biblical ignorance for a long time to come. This is a useful way of bringing before them parts of Scripture with which they may be completely unacquainted. In addition, there is a second factor. It is that the vast majority of the Christian public lacks any appreciable understanding of Biblical chronology, and this ten-minute session is a useful way of constructing it in people's minds and cementing it in as the different stones in an arch are each placed in correct position.

Later in the morning service we have forty minutes exposition of a particular Bible book. I alternate between the Testaments to keep the teaching balanced, so that a series of sermons from a New Testament book is always followed by a series from an Old Testament book. I am aware that the Old Testament is composed of history, poetry and prophecy, and therefore, in my Old Testament series, I usually preach from each type of literature in turn. I usually do much the same in my New Testament series, preaching in turn from the Gospels and Acts, the Pauline epistles and the general epistles. I have not yet had the courage to expound Revelation!

On Monday nights we gather for church prayer, and we read a chapter (or part of a chapter) of a book consecutively. I seek to explain any difficult allusions, and then to bring out one or two straightforward doctrinal and practical points; all in less than fifteen minutes. I would have great difficulty in preaching a series of forty-minute sermons from 1 Samuel. Nonetheless, I can keep the teachings of that particular book before the congregation by such a method as this.

On Wednesday evenings we gather for a Bible exposition, where the atmosphere is much more relaxed and there is less sensitivity concerning the time factor. At the end we always have a time of questions and discussion. I usually seek to put some questions to the congregation, mostly on the application of the things we have studied. They also put questions, which have led to some stimulating and helpful discussions, and have often greatly increased my own understanding of the passage in hand. I believe this sort of "come-back" is very profitable and entirely consistent with our commission to teach the people thoroughly.

Despite what I have said about the exposition of books, I do not believe that an expository ministry is *only* the exposition of books. On Sunday nights I preach what Pastor Al Martin calls "topical expository sermons". I do not mean that they are topical in the sense that today's news is, but rather that I preach through particular topics or themes. The sermons are expository by nature, because they are expositions of

texts of Scripture, but rather than expounding just one passage, several passages and texts which bear on the theme are opened up. We duplicate the sermon outline so that people can read it before the service starts, follow it during the preaching, and review it afterwards. This has been particularly useful to those members of our congregation who are not used to formal teaching, for it greatly helps their concentration and ability to follow. Many people keep the outlines and now have quite a stock of them. In this way they have built up a brief compendium of Biblical teaching on a host of subjects.

Another justification for the topical expository method arises from the pastor's ministry of counselling. He finds that again and again people ask the same sort of question. There are certain questions which are of more than usual concern. Inner Liverpool is multi-racial and those of our congregation who come from there have repeatedly asked pointed questions on the Biblical teaching concerning race. One (lengthy) topical expository sermon settled most of their problems. In other sermons we have dealt with work, leisure, ambition, the Devil, the gifts of the Spirit and dozens of other topics which people have raised in pastoral visitation and counselling. It is right that they should hear what the Word of God has to say on these subjects, and that the pastor should draw from every part of Scripture to make God's mind clear. I am not convinced that people who restrict themselves to verse by verse, book by book preaching meet these needs. Most people do not have the ability to search the Scriptures and to draw out the principles and teachings of each part to see what the total message of Scripture is on a particular subject. It is not the task of a sheep to feed himself and to find his own pasture. The feeding and protection of the sheep is the duty, responsibility and delight of the undershepherd.

What I am advocating, then, is a combination of "ten-year plan" book-by-book exposition and topical expository preaching. For me this is the most realistic way for a minister to fulfil his responsibility to teach *all* the people *all* the Bible.

Two or three times a year evangelical ministers in the mid-Sussex area gather at 5 Fairford Close, Haywards Heath. The aim is for guest speakers to provide two one-hour sessions of highly relevant and edifying material. Between the sessions lady members of the Cuckfield church use their talents to spread a table of delectable refreshment. Herbert Carson has agreed to provide the ministry for the next occasion, May 2nd, D.V. The subjects: morning on, how can our worship be pleasing to God?—afternoon on, how can our preaching be pleasing to God?

"The Full Harvest" is a revised edition of the biographical sketches compiled originally by Mrs. Susannah Spurgeon and Joseph Harrald, Spurgeon's secretary. New material has been added from the "Sword and Trowel", G. H. Pike's "The Life and Work" and other sources. Published by Banner of Truth Trust, 1973, 520 pages, £2.10. The following review is by Ray Gaydon and Ian Randall.

The Full Harvest

C. H. Spurgeon

THOSE WHO READ AND ENJOYED THE FIRST HALF OF SPURGEON'S Autobiography, *The Early Years*, and who have waited expectantly over the subsequent eleven years for the second half, may now feast upon *The Full Harvest*. The amazing story of Spurgeon's meteoric rise to fame is well known. The teenaged, raw, shabbily-dressed Victorian preacher of Calvinism became, within the space of a few months of coming from the country, the talk of London town. His sermons and congregations were the subject of comment by friend and, more particularly, foe, especially in the press. Those blessed, glorious, hectic, hair-raising, cataclysmic days culminated in the construction of the magnificent Metropolitan Tabernacle in 1861.

It is at this point that *The Full Harvest* takes up the narrative. The three decades at the Elephant and Castle were years of consolidation and further enterprise. The team of workers at the Metropolitan Tabernacle is the subject of one chapter. Spurgeon was affectionately known among them as the "Governor" (or perhaps Guv'ner). His introduction of elders into the church and the description of the work of his "best deacon"—Mrs. Bartlett!—are but two examples of scintillating and absorbing narrative. These were the years of the founding of the Pastors' College (note the position of the possessive apostrophe!), Spurgeon commented thus on the relation between the College and the Tabernacle:

It is a grand assistance to our College that it is connected with an active and vigorous Christian church. If union to such a church does not quicken the student's spiritual pulse, it is his own fault. It is a serious strain upon a man's spirituality to be disassociated, during his student-life, from actual Christian work, and from fellowship with more experienced believers. At the Pastors' College, our brethren can not only meet, as they do every day, for prayer by themselves, but they can unite daily in the prayer-meetings of the church, and can assist in earnest efforts of all sorts. Through living in the midst of a church which, despite its faults, is a truly living, intensely zealous, working organisation, they gain enlarged ideas, and form practical habits. Even to see church-management and church-work upon an extensive scale, and to share in the prayers and sympathies of a large community of Christian people, must be a stimulus to rightminded men.

Spurgeon was the President of the College and lectured once a week. A former student, who became a pastor in the U.S.A., describes the scene. Friday afternoon came at last. The old, familiar clock pointed to three: the door opened on the stroke of the hour, the beloved President appeared, and walked up to the desk—Dr. Gill's pulpit—while hands clapped, feet stamped, and voices cheered, till he had to hold up his hand and say, "Now gentlemen, do you not think that is enough? The floor is weak, the ceiling is not very high, and, I am sure, you need all the strength you have for your labours".

The President established warm and hearty bonds with many of the students, as the following short note to one of them indicates:

Three cheers for you, my true-hearted comrade! The story of your East London gathering of the clans fills me with delight. The Lord be with thee, thou mighty man of valour! Whether, in striking the Spiritualists, you are hitting a devil or a donkey, does not matter much; you have evidently hit hard, or they would not be so fierce. I am not able to take much credit for bringing you up, but I am about as proud of you as I dare to be.

I hope you will have a good meeting on Friday week. It is oil to my bones to see you all.

Yours always lovingly, C. H. Spurgeon.

After students completed their training, Spurgeon was often involved in advising about their being placed in pastoral situations. Occasionally he felt that blunt speaking was necessary, as in one recorded case:

The officers of a small church in the country applied to me for a minister; but the salary they were prepared to pay was so small that, in reply to their request, I wrote: "The only individual I know, who could exist on such a stipend, is the angel Gabriel. He would need neither cash nor clothes; and he would come down from heaven every Sunday morning, and go back at night, so I advise you to invite him".

The maturity and wisdom of his wit and plain speaking is seen in that many such letters produced instant reformation!

Another important aspect of the outreach of the Tabernacle was the Orphanage. Mrs. Hillyard, the wife of a Church of England minister, wrote to Spurgeon to say that she had £20,000 which she would like to devote to the training and education of a few orphan boys. Spurgeon had felt that some new work was going to be given to the Tabernacle by God, but was cautious. With a friend, William Higgs, he went to see the lady, and began: "We have called, Madam, about the £200 you mentioned in your letter". "£200! did I write? I meant to have said £20,000." "Oh yes!" replied the Pastor, "you did put £20,000; but I was not sure whether a naught or two had slipped in by mistake, and thought I would be on the safe side." They then discussed the whole question from various points of view, Spurgeon being specially anxious to ascertain whether the money ought to go to any relatives, and even

suggesting that it might be handed over to Mr. Muller for his Orphan Homes. The lady, however, adhered to her determination to entrust the £20,000 to Spurgeon, and to him alone.

In this way a wonderful work of social concern was born.

Literature also was widely used in spreading the Word of God from the Tabernacle. Spurgeon expended a great deal of effort in perfecting sermons for publication and these were distributed in large quantities in dozens of countries. To take one example, a million copies were published in Russia by the good offices of a wealthy Russian, approved and licensed by the Orthodox Church! Spurgeon said that hardly a day passed but he received letters from all parts of the world declaring the salvation of souls by means of the printed sermons. Besides the editing of sermons, Spurgeon wrote his commentary on the Psalms, *The Treasury of David*, which, by the time of his death, had sold 120,000 volumes. Also flowing from his pen were various daily readings, and, in some ways most notably, the John Ploughman series. These first appeared anonymously in the *Sword and Trowel*. Since no one at first knew who the author of these unusual tales in "pure Saxon" was, amusing things occurred. One attached friend of Spurgeon said: "Why do you put those papers of that ploughman in the magazine?" The answer was, "Well, they are lively, and have a good moral; what is the matter with them?" "Yes," replied the unsuspecting critic, "they are rather good for a poor uneducated person like the writer, but they are too coarse for the magazine." "You think so?" said the Editor, and with a smile on his face, he went his way.

The *Sword and Trowel* which was, of course, the magazine of the Tabernacle, began with the stated policy of reporting the efforts of churches associated with the Tabernacle, and to "advocate the views of doctrine and church-order which are most certainly received among us". On one occasion it was referred to in the House of Lords as a lively newspaper!

Time would fail to tell of the many other Tabernacle works—the Alms-houses, Colportage Association, Tract Society, Evangelists' Association, Country Mission, etc. Spurgeon once said that if all the institutions and societies connected with the Tabernacle were annually remembered, then there would be an anniversary every week of the year!

We often hear today that preaching is "played-out" and that we should concentrate on dialogue and discussion. The antidote to that vain notion is to read *The Full Harvest*. Several chapters are devoted to the preaching of Spurgeon. There were controversial sermons, such as *Baptismal Regeneration*, sermons much used in awakening, sermons preached in the open air, lectures (*The Gorilla*, for example), and sermons delivered on preaching tours or abroad. The visits to Scotland were notable, though the first time Spurgeon preached to the dour Scottish Calvinists he found them "lumps of ice" and tried to move them in vain! One

memorable engagement was in Calvin's church in Geneva, a visit arranged through D'Aubigné. Spurgeon says:

I preached in the cathedral at Geneva; and I thought it a great honour to be allowed to stand in the pulpit of John Calvin. I do not think half the people understood me; but they were very glad to see and join *in heart* . . . I did not feel very happy when I came out in full canonicals, but the request was put to me in such a beautiful way that I could have worn the Pope's tiara, if by so doing I could have preached the gospel more freely . . . It was John Calvin's gown and that reconciled me to it very much.

Returning to London in the midst of the grey, Victorian, urban populace proletariat was a man filled with the Spirit, preaching the unsearchable riches of Christ in a frank and highly communicative vernacular that went directly home to the thousands of hearers. When he was once invited to visit the Archbishop of Canterbury, Spurgeon discovered that the latter's coachman and others of the entourage were members of the huge Tabernacle congregation.

Above all, the autobiography reveals the man himself. We enter into his study and make acquaintance with his library. We relax with him in the garden of the two houses owned by the Spurgeons, we appreciate his love for his wife and family, we are amazed at his breadth of interest and discover his views on such subjects as the employment of women in industry, evangelical preaching in the Roman Catholic Church and even that sometimes taboo subject with evangelicals—politics. During one election, when the walls of his house had been painted the colours of the local Conservative party, Spurgeon declared that it was *notorious*, that he was no *Tory*! He also delighted to tell the following story:

He had gone to preach for his friend, John Offord, and quite unavoidably was a little late in arriving. He explained that there had been a block on the road, which had delayed him; and, in addition, he had stopped on the way to vote. "To vote!" exclaimed the good man; "but my dear brother, I thought you were a citizen of the New Jerusalem!" "So I am," replied Spurgeon, "but my 'old man' is a citizen of this world." "Ah! but you should mortify your 'old man'." "That is exactly what I did; for my 'old man' is a Tory, and I made him vote for the Liberals!"

Ill health dogged Spurgeon in these later years. Almost every winter was spent in Mentone in the South of France, and it was there he died. Even there he had a ministry among men like Shaftesbury whom he knew and counselled. Depression dogged him particularly when he was away from the pulpit. The down-grade (a chapter is devoted to this controversy) he found to be heartbreaking.

Spurgeon emerges, if we might so put it, as "a man's man". There was nothing effeminate about him, no false piety or self-effacement. If you laughed and cried through the first part of his life, this second will inspire you further. It is undoubtedly one of the finest Christian biographies to appear during the last 100 years. It is well produced and attractive, containing nearly forty fascinating illustrations and photographs. At £2.10, it is an excellent buy.

The Brethren Downgrade?

IN TWO SEPARATE ISSUES OF THIS MAGAZINE, ARTICLES HAVE BEEN devoted to the Christian Brethren movement, and favourable comments have been made as to the possibilities of reformation in their ranks. We have admiration for the witness of the Brethren to evangelical doctrine and the principles of the gathered church. But it is disturbing to discover that one of the leading magazines, *The Harvester*, contains an article by Clive Rawlins, "Honour, Where Honour is Due", which departs radically from the evangelical position that we expect from the Brethren. In the article, Mr. Rawlins praises the arch-priest of Modernism, C. H. Dodd, in an unqualified way, as he does also Manson and Peake. In almost any other major denomination, the statements he makes would not be surprising, but coming from a group still maintaining the infallibility of scripture, it is surely right to appeal to their own standards. These are the very standards which men like Dodd have eroded. It is our duty to contend for the faith against any who give honour to those who despise the Word of God. Those who honour Christ, he will honour, but those who despise him will be lightly esteemed (1 Samuel 2:30). The following extracts are from a letter written to the editor of *The Harvester*, Roy Coad, from the editor of *Reformation Today*:

"Evangelical believers of different denominations believe that the fearful judgments that are falling upon us at this time are due to the unfaithfulness of the churches. How is it that Christian Assemblies, Bible Seminaries and Colleges which were once evangelical are now given over to Modernism? The explanation is that men like C. H. Dodd, who have vigorously opposed, and even scorned, such basic truths as the substitutionary atonement by the blood of Jesus Christ, have been praised on account of their scholarship and their learning. In this way their pernicious unbelief has been tolerated, and their insidious doctrines allowed to spread among God's people. What Mr. Rawlins is declaring, together with *The Harvester*, and yourself as editor, is in effect that so long as a man is a scholar, then he ought to be honoured, even though he contradicts and nullifies the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

"The article by Mr. Rawlins contains some appalling untruths such as: 'there can be no doubting that Peake was also responsible for making respectable to very many people a reformed, evangelical understanding of the Faith'. Peake was neither evangelical nor reformed. Peake, together with Dodd and Manson, are clearly Modernist in their writings, and the undiscerning ought to be warned about this."

Mr. Coad was kind enough to reply to this letter, but indicated that there was no intention to take any action about it. However there are believers among *The Brethren* who do care about serious compromise of this nature. This page may serve to alert more of those who will resist the movement down toward Modernism. The first downward step is to adopt a so-called neutral stance, and to appear not to care (this would seem to be Mr. Coad's position). The second is to praise and promote Modernistic writings, which is what Mr. Rawlins is doing blatantly. The third is to openly espouse teachings of men like Peake.

It would be unfair to blame a man or a group of men for the disappearance of revival. In this article Clive Tyler does not blame Finney but rather describes how Finney's theology and methods mark a turning point in Church history. Today we are battling to recover the theology and practice which pertained during the age of revivals, that is before revivals turned into revivalism. Clive Tyler studied at London Bible College. He was well acquainted with the Banner of Truth in its pioneering days but in the early sixties was called to tutor at the Kalk Bay Bible Institute, Cape, South Africa. He has played a leading role in the promotion of the annual Reformed Conference in South Africa.

Charles Finney and the Disappearance of Revival

SOME TWENTY YEARS AGO, PROGRESSIVE ENGLISH CHURCHMEN WERE horrified to discover that mass evangelism was again raising its head! They had assumed that its effective life had died out with Moody and Sankey, Torrey and Alexander. Evangelicals, on the other hand, hailed the crusades as a sign of renewed life and blessing for the Church; with a heightening of interest generally, considerable numbers were converted. Many saw the movement as the answer to the churches' apathy and to the increasing godlessness of Britain. At the same time a prominent preacher who had himself experienced revival viewed the crusades with some misgivings, suggesting that the resultant blessing would effectively mask the depth of the real problem. It was suggested that genuine revival would be delayed for at least ten years. It was replied that evangelism could supply the solution as well as old fashioned revival.

At this distance in time we can assess more easily the true situation, and we can see clearly that for all the apparent blessing received, mass evangelism—or "revivalism"—has been quite unable to stem the increasing tide of unbelief, secularism and the wickedness and evil arising in the Western world. Some still continue to see the answer as more efficient mass evangelism of the crusade type; others look to renewal through the baptism of the Holy Spirit and the Charismatic movement, and yet a third group claims that nothing less than a "Holy Ghost Revival" in the historic mould will meet the need. While agreeing with the necessity of true revival a fourth group (including the editors of *Reformation Today*) increasingly see the necessity of reformation in doctrine, practice and experience.

Strangely, the first three emphases come into focus in the figure of Charles Finney and many in each of these three groups look to him as the mentor. "The Father of Modern Evangelism," "The Father of the Modern Soul Saving Movement". Popularly it is claimed that he saved American church life and evangelism from the dead orthodoxy of the early nineteenth century and that his approach can save the twentieth century Church from its present malaise. His official biographer, Miller, wrote: "*His Lectures on Revivals of Religion* have been to the blessing of millions and constitute the hope for the present day". He goes on: "his was a marvellous life to the converting of half a million souls," and he speaks of the blessing received during his ministry as, "unparalleled since the days of the apostles". The prominent place that Finney holds is undoubtedly deserved and though many of the assessments made of his work are grossly overstated and superficial we soon realise, when we come to grips with him, what a profound effect he has had upon the Church worldwide. It should be stressed therefore that this subject is of more than academic interest. Finney's teaching and methodology are all-pervasive. In some ways he is a far greater influence in practice than Karl Barth. Moreover few lives in history show more clearly the interrelation between theology and practice, and how a theological idea may radically change the evangelistic methods of the Church throughout the earth.

Finney's Life Marks a Watershed in Church History

A man of tremendous personality, force, and perhaps genius, Finney represents in belief and practice a bridge between the old religious world and the new. The great changes working themselves out in nineteenth century history became embodied in his life and experiences. He was a symptom of the changing times.

Theologically the old world of Reformed historical Christianity was behind him: the world where the Bible was the word from the mouth of the living God, infallible and inerrant in which was to be found the sole authority for the beliefs and practices of Christians. Before him lay the new world with its modern approach to Scripture, an approach in which man is the judge of the Bible's trustworthiness and value: a world of criticism and rationalism where the plain teaching of Scripture can be rejected if it cuts across enlightened reason! This critical and rationalistic spirit can be clearly seen in embryo in the young Finney. It is no accident, but rather significant and symptomatic that in his major work, *Lectures on Systematic Theology*, the first two hundred pages are largely philosophical discussion with a mere handful of references to Scripture. It is as unlike the older biblically based systematic theologies as it is like the philosophical theologies of the modern church. Finney is the turning point. Behind him are the doctrines of historic Christianity, before him the world of liberalism and the autonomy of man. Preceding him are the evangelical and Reformed doctrines of the

faith embodied in the Canons of Dort, the Thirty-Nine Articles, the Westminster Confession and the other, great credal confessions. These Finney rejected. For him they misunderstood Scripture. What was already beginning to be called the New Divinity, New School Theology, or Taylorism was adopted and propagated by Finney as Gospel truth. To this extent he made common cause with Liberalism and Modernism and led the way to the undoctinal and untheological evangelism of the latter part of the last century, which in this present century has become much more accentuated.

This severance with the old doctrine led inevitably to a change in practice. The practice before Finney was of Biblical evangelism, where the Church's methods were controlled by and subjected to the dictates of Scripture. It is significant, surely, that the modern Church is largely ignorant of the history of evangelism before Moody and Sankey. The pragmatic approach, rampant in American life, where anything that got results was commended, was applied to evangelistic endeavour. It is universally admitted that the pioneer in the new methods was Charles Finney. Says his biographer Miller: "He was the innovator, he was the bringer in of the new measures". He led the van for Moody and Sankey, Billy Sunday and even for the aberrations of Amy Semple MacPherson and Marjoe. These are his lineal descendants. Quantity becomes the great mark of success. We are told, for example, that whereas certain skilful evangelists can expect in America to lead a soul to Christ in 35 minutes, it takes two or three hours in Britain! The old methods of evangelism so blessed by God appear to have suffered the same fate as craftsmanship, being driven out by mass production. Nowadays the old ways are hardly recognised to be evangelism at all, and those who speak out for love of truth against pragmatic and psychological evangelism are likely to be pilloried as opponents of God and salvation. This is exactly how Finney reacted to those who criticised his new measures in the nineteenth century. He claimed they were hyper-Calvinists, spiritually dead and unconcerned for men's souls whereas the ministries and testimonies of these men bore eloquent proof to the contrary.

The confusion as to what evangelism and the Gospel ought to be is due not only to ignorance of Church history, but, more seriously, to a dislike of Biblical exposition and doctrine of apostolic evangelism.

To put the whole matter in perspective it will help us to examine Finney's early life and experience and see how it was interwoven with his theology.

Finney's Early Life and Christian Experience

Born in 1792, Charles Finney was brought up in the centre of New York State. The prevailing theological view of the churches in the area seems to have been Princetonian Calvinism. Finney suggests in his auto-

biography that he grew up with little opportunity to hear the Gospel, but this seems unlikely. In a paper on Finney (to which I am much indebted) given at the Puritan Conference, Paul Cook maintains that we are to treat Finney's comments about this with caution. Finney's account was written late in life and seems to be an interpretation of the facts in the light of his later theological position. Finney claims, for example, that the churches were almost all hyper-Calvinistic and that there was little evidence of spiritual life and zeal until he commenced his labours. This is far from the truth. There had been many revivals before Finney's day and those involved were invariably distinctively Reformed in their doctrinal position. These revivals were still in evidence prior to Finney's conversion. There is no doubt whatsoever that Jefferson County near the St. Lawrence River, where Finney came as a newly qualified young lawyer, had seen successive revivals for years. Gale, the young pastor of the church which Finney began to attend out of "professional interest", had seen 65 people converted in the early months of his ministry there.

Charles Finney was converted two years after this in 1821 and he interprets the experience as being due almost wholly to an effort of his own will and resolution. "I made up my mind that I would settle the question of my soul's salvation at once."² This is in accord with his later theological position, as though the experience were divorced from any external influences and due only to his own willingness. Yet in spite of Finney's interpretation the sovereignty of God seems marked indeed. "My conscience was awakened, I had a great shame for sin, my mind was enlightened, I had a vision of Christ and I was broken down under an outpouring of the Spirit." That certainly does not sound like a purely subjective experience but rather God at work in power. Despite the impression he gives, it would appear that the prayers of his mother and his sweetheart, as well as the preaching of Pastor Gale and the prayer meetings he attended, were all instruments in the hands of God leading to his conversion.

His friend, A. T. Pierson, described Finney as ". . . a born reformer, impassioned to the borders of impetuosity, positive to the borders of bigotry and original to the borders of heresy."³

With this temperament, a legal training, acute mental ability and the physical energy of the backwoodsman, he commenced his Christian life. A novice in theological understanding, he soon came into conflict with the Biblical and Reformed theology of George Gale, the minister. To Finney, Gale's was a false theology. As a lawyer he objected to it on rational and pragmatic grounds. He felt it to be inhibiting in practice.

The classic Westminster Confession of Faith he arrogantly dismissed. "Dogmas . . . sustained for the most part by passages of Scripture that were totally irrelevant, and not in a single instance sustained by passages

which, in a court of law, would have been considered at all conclusive.”⁴ Here we see a novice, self-opinionated and puffed up. He refused to accept Gale’s views on the atonement, regeneration, faith, repentance, and the slavery of the will. When it is remembered that these are the historic evangelical doctrines, not peripheral matters, but central, pivotal fundamentals of the faith, we realise how serious a division there was.

Paul Cook points out that the key to the situation is that Finney attributes infallibility to the human reason: “. . . there can be no error in the *a priori* intuitions of reason”⁵ even in matters of religion. This is the crux of his whole theology.

Finney’s Theology

It is not easy to set out Finney’s early views with exactness, for his systematic treatment came later in life. Nevertheless, the essential characteristics of his Pelagianism were clearly present in his disputation with Gale and were to be developed later with logical precision in his

Lectures on Systematic Theology.

Like modern theologians such as Karl Barth he uses scriptural terms and classic phraseology, but gives them new meanings. He speaks of “justification”, “repentance” and “faith”, but the words are devalued and debased in content.

Sin

In his view of sin, Finney assumes, firstly, that moral qualities attach only to *deliberate* acts. Men are not sinners by nature, they are sinners because they commit sins. He refused to accept that dispositions and states of nature may be in themselves sinful. For him it followed that love, malice, hatred, etc., are non moral, neither good nor bad in themselves.

A second assumption is that there is no depravity attached to the human constitution as such. Pure will and external temptations are the only real factors in sinfulness. Finney could not fail to recognise the universal moral depravity of the world however, and he suggests that this is due to the effect of the world on the weak human physical (not moral) constitution of man. Children, when they come into the world, are like little animals. They are neutral with a non-moral nature. (Thus, a child dying in infancy has no need of the grace of God or the atoning work of Christ.) Only when they are old enough to make moral judgments, to deliberately will, do they become moral beings and at that point they become morally depraved.⁶

The fact that all children exhibit moral depravity is attributed to their weakened physical constitution received from their parents, it is this that makes them prone to self-gratification, though in itself not sinful. Finney believed that a few generations on a correct diet (he was a strong

advocate of a Grahamic diet—no meat, tea, coffee or other injurious substances) would remove these physical defects from mankind. Clearly for Finney there is no place for the doctrine of original sin, of the imputation of Adam's guilt to all his progeny or of the corruption of the human heart from birth onwards. There is, in fact, no "heart" at all in this view of things, for he gives it a sense only equivalent to *will*.⁷ Man, then, is good or bad only insofar as his actions are unselfish or not; he is not sinful in his own being. We do well to note a most serious divergence from Scripture here, for in Scripture holiness and unholiness attach to the person himself as an intelligent moral creature.

Thirdly, Finney assumes that man is always neutral—everywhere and always he has a plenary and inalienable ability to obey God in everything he demands, that is, obligation implies ability. Here we are led to the very core of Finney's theological system. It actually arose out of an espousal of the philosophical theories of the German, Dr. Immanuel Kant. Paul Cook pertinently describes the first lecture in the *Systematic Theology* as a "hotch-potch" of Kantian philosophy, particularly in this emphasis on "I ought, therefore I can". In its exact theological form, Finney's theological system appears to be very close to the New School Divinity of N. W. Taylor, which was the old heresy of Pelagius, in modern dress. Pelagius is the true father of all these children. Jerome described Pelagianism as the first organised system of self salvation taught in the Church.

Regeneration

Finney's doctrine of salvation is built up on the foundation of obligation implying ability. We are commanded to be born again, therefore we must be able to do this.⁸ Regeneration, in his thinking (and how modern is this emphasis), becomes no more than a radical change of intention. There is no real change of heart or nature. No renewal and revival of the depraved constitution, merely a change of will and this is wholly within man's natural power. He says in one passage: "We are saved by free grace drawing and securing the concurrence of the will" (John 6:44). On examination, we discover with B. B. Warfield that "drawing" is simply illumination or teaching, nothing more than better motivation or argument to move the sinner's will. God's power is limited to persuasion. Using Finney's own illustration, God's ability to draw men is akin to a statesman swaying the Senate by argument, or an advocate addressing the jury.⁹ (He describes the evangelist's task in the same terms!) The only power available to God is the power to motivate. This is a far cry from the sovereign act of an omnipotent God, which constitutes Biblical regeneration. It is also a far cry from the dragging in of the net which is the point of John 6:44: "No man can come to me except the Father drag (draw A.V.) him". In Finney's teaching there is no divine transforming energy, merely better communication! God speaks continually in the hope that man will consent, he

can do no more. Finney reasons that in any case we need nothing more, for all are able to repent and, when sufficiently motivated, will do so. There is no barrier whatsoever except selfish desires. "At any moment man can put these away," he says, "and turn to Christ." Salvation becomes, therefore, little more than a change of purpose, or commitment to a new way—it is a human action. This is plainly contrary to Scripture where the new birth, or regeneration, is wholly the work of God, and this is why Finney and those who follow his views speak of consecration, or commitment, or surrender rather than of regeneration. In contemporary fashion he confuses regeneration and conversion. "We regenerate ourselves"—only the man can alter his choice.¹⁰ "Sinners can go to hell," he says, "in spite of God, neither God nor any other being can regenerate him if he will not turn."¹¹ How great a divergence this is from the Biblical approach where repentance and faith are gifts of God, and where men cry to God to turn them that they might turn to Him. Finney fails to see that conversion is the outward effect of the inward, imparted, divine life, for his view is that the work of the Holy Spirit is external and limited.

Justification

So far as justification is concerned, Finney could not logically have such a doctrine, since he had no doctrine of depravity. If there is no imputed guilt, there is no need of Christ's imputed righteousness. He rejects the Reformation view that justification is a forensic act on the grounds of Christ's atoning work upon the cross. He says quite plainly: "The doctrine of an imputed righteousness, or that Christ's obedience to the law was accounted as our obedience, is founded on a most false and nonsensical assumption." In his view the sinner is not declared just but is treated as just by amnesty. Finney was well aware that he contradicted Augustinian soteriology at almost every point, and that his doctrine of depravity led him to deny and ignore classic Reformed teaching. For him, Christ's death shows us what God is like as a moral governor. The death of Christ becomes more a means of legal satisfaction than a vicarious atonement. One searches in vain for emphasis on expiation, or propitiation. Moreover, it is interesting to see that his modern disciples take his theology to its logical conclusion, and in so doing make common cause with liberal views of salvation, in refusing to speak of the wrath of God against depravity and sin, while proclaiming an all-loving God unable to do more for sinners than plead that they use their will aright. Such theology is man-centred rather than God-centred.

Sanctification

Moving on to sanctification, he argues somewhat along these lines: if a man comes to God in repentance and faith—that is, he turns his will, or changes his choice, for these terms hold no other meaning for Finney than this—God freely pardons all his past sin. This act of "regenera-

tion" he regards as "an entire present change . . . from entire sinfulness to entire holiness . . . (leading to) . . . full obedience for the time being, after which it is only a question of maintenance."¹² That is, regeneration brings one into a state of present sinlessness or, if you will, perfect sanctification. This change is a single act, because repentance involves a total change of choice. Thus his first righteous act is also his last, for he becomes entirely holy.¹³ For Finney, the moment a man was converted he ceased to be a sinner—all his sinful acts were forgiven. As there was no sinful nature, and therefore no basis from which sin could spring, the man must be perfect. "At this point," says Benjamin Warfield, "we are astonished to discover that this perfect Christian, according to Finney, can backslide!" This, however, is logical because if the man has the natural ability, when he wills, to turn to Christ, then he may also reject Christ at will. He becomes a religious yo-yo—up and down, in and out of the Kingdom of Heaven at will. When Finney speaks of "backsliding" it has the real significance of apostasy, since it is a total act. Man must begin all over again; there is the coming out at the second meeting, the third, fourth and so on. In his actual practice we discover that this was the effect of the preaching of his gospel. His converts fell continually. It is no accident that they knew little peace, stability and assurance. These cannot be known outside of a true grasp and experience of justification by faith. How can there be assurance of salvation, if all depends on capricious, human choice rather than the sovereign will and work of God? As J. C. Ryle put it, "There can be no assurance for Arminians," and we may add even less for the products of Finney's Pelagian gospel. Again, the effects of his man-centred approach are everywhere to be seen in the modern evangelistic scene, where his ideas and methods prevail. There is little stability, peace and assurance and despite "total surrender", "total availability", etc., there is little evidence of solid, Biblical, holy living either.

His Ministry and Revival Methods

Soon after his conversion experience he began to exercise a powerful influence in the locality, and he was soon to be found within the bounds of the Christian ministry. He approached the elders of the local presbytery, knowing full well that much of what he believed flatly contradicted the stated constitutional beliefs of the Presbyterian Church. The elders, nevertheless, accepted him, since his obvious zeal and energy for Christ's cause, coupled with his remarkable conversion experience, led them to fear to deny him entrance lest they should hinder God's work; and, says Finney, because they were confused over the New School Divinity which was coming into fashion, they refused to ask him questions about his theology. It may be that they were timid in the face of his personal force and precocity. In this way he entered into his ministerial vows. Someone, commenting later, said that it is interesting that he should regard coffee drinking as a serious sin, and yet be so unconcerned about

dishonesty and broken ministerial vows. (There are, of course, modern parallels.)

Immediately after his ordination in 1823 he began itinerant preaching, causing division and schism wherever he went for the next two years. This was due in part at least, to his own attitude and spirit, which were so severely critical and censorious of all efforts to evangelise but his own. He set up a reaction amongst the ministers of churches, whom he then dubbed dead and hyper-Calvinistic. At the same time, he was working during a season of unusual blessing as a result of the Holy Spirit's work and we must not overlook or discount the fact that he with others enjoyed the blessings of rains from heaven and fruitful harvests of an order that has not been witnessed for over a hundred years. He laboured in the context of revival. It appears to me that the problems arose when Finney endeavoured to impose his own ideas and methods on God's work, instead of following the leading of Scripture and the Holy Spirit. He believed that his work as an evangelist involved stirring up men to choice and action—this was the distinctive characteristic of his ministry and the most significant element for the future. He moved to the west of New York State and immediately commenced a remarkable work known today as the Western Revivals.¹⁴ He deliberately set out to promote excitement, to stir the area by impassioned preaching, for which he had great ability. It appears that Finney took the expertise of a talented lawyer, unsubdued by Christian experience and immediately pressed into service in the headstrong manner of the novice. We find today that the new convert, who is an expert in some field—Freudian psychology, business tycoon, pop star, opera-singing, weight-lifting, ballet teaching—on being converted is encouraged to use all and every technique for witness. Whether it be Pop or Rock music, or modern high pressure salesmanship, it is used uncritically and rashly, out of harmony with the Gospel it desires to promote. Finney's approach was without doubt one of force,¹⁵ his method being denunciation of the most violent kind, bordering on defamation. It is strange that Finney, who argued so strongly that God could only work by love and persuasion and not coercion, should find it necessary to exert pressure which God could not. The explanation lies in his understanding of the work of the advocate. It is the advocate's task to turn the jury's mind, to sway the jury in his client's favour. The members of the jury are free to choose as they will, and they must come to their decision before the case is over. This approach was brought in to serve gospel ends. It was Finney's deliberate policy to break down the will of his hearers. Since they could turn if they would, a battle resulted between the preacher and the will to make it turn. To that end he used every possible means—coarse and violent language, the anxious seat, suitable music, the protracted appeal, and many other means which came to be regarded as the "new measures". This met with considerable opposition, naturally, since the approach was almost wholly novel in the history of

evangelism, and Finney engaged in powerful polemics against the opposition, claiming that they were fighting God.

As to the results of his work, there are two sides to the picture. "Flood tides of revival glory," said his biographer, Miller, were seen in the Rochester revivals, 10,000 were converted in one meeting, the whole city converted by 1832 and hundreds of thousands were gathered in the complete series of Western Revivals (1825-32). One finds other writers lauding the success in similar terms, but there is serious misrepresentation, for they fail to stress the situation as it was a few years after! Dr. A. B. Dod writing in 1835 said: "It is now generally understood that the numerous converts of the new measures have been in most cases like the morning cloud and the early dew. In some places, not a fifth or even a tenth part of them remain."¹⁶ Those who did remain were a constant source of trouble in the churches, being fanatical, discontented and censorious. Dod was decidedly against Finney and his work. He was of the Princetonian School and he found many pastors, evangelists and revival leaders to stand with him against the new measures. This then might well be dismissed as a biased judgement. B. B. Warfield gives, however, a number of comments from Finney's close friends and fellow labourers. James Boyle writing to Finney in 1834: "I have revisited many of these fields (where we laboured) and groaned in spirit to see the sad, frigid, casual, contentious state into which the churches had fallen"¹⁷—this written three months after Finney had left. Asa Mahan, Finney's fellow worker and close friend for the whole of his life, tells us that everyone who was concerned in these revivals suffered a sad, subsequent lapse; the people were left like a dead coal which could not be reignited; the pastors were shorn of all their spiritual power and all of the evangelists, with the exception of brother Finney and father Nash, became quite unfit to be evangelists and pastors. Finney himself said, "I was able to bring many to temporary repentance and faith!" He said again in 1835, "They soon relapse into their former state". In his *Systematic Theology* he confesses that the greater number of his "converts" were a disgrace to religion. As for the lasting aspect the results in the churches were disastrous.

If it is true that there were genuine revivals up to 1832, then after 1832 there were none. Churches burned up with false fire had become terrified of the true fire of the Spirit, and his work was quenched. In 1832 the opposition was so fierce that Finney moved to a New York City Church where he began to set out his *Lectures on Revivals of Religion* as an apologia for his novel methods. Through this work his personal fame and the methods he employed spread throughout the evangelical world.

The immediate effects of this Pelagian gospel ran true to type, with temporary excitement, and temporary decisions which tended to fade when the external stimulus was withdrawn. A more lasting effect was

in the area of sanctification, the creation of a whole new class of religious people who now made their appearance in Church history as the "carnal" Christians. They had made a profession and there had been an external change, but they now bore all the marks of the worldly man. Finney claims that the reason for this state of affairs was that he did not preach sanctification enough. Though some attempt has been made to comment on Finney's doctrine of sanctification, it is not at all clear what he really believed on the matter. He says quite properly that all good in man is due to the indwelling Christ; from first to last it is the Spirit's work and it is not by works of the law. (He was too good a Pelagian however to admit quietism and he leaves a large place for human endeavour, even to the point, in practice, of legalism.) It does appear that *enlightenment* by the indwelling Christ and not divine power was the means of sanctification. He says that we do not need Christ's strength, as we have sufficient of our own,¹⁸ but what we do need is inducement. At the end of his life he flirted for a time with Oberlin perfectionism of Mahan's type; "perfection" being "complete righteousness which is adjusted to fluctuating ability". Mahan, his fellow worker at Oberlin, published his views on the baptism of the Holy Spirit, and for a time Finney espoused similar views and his letters on this subject were published in a popular and influential book, *Power from on High*, in which he defines the baptism of power as the ability to fasten saving impressions on the minds of men, as did the apostles at Pentecost. He is thinking here of his early experiences in the Revivals, when a single look from the evangelist was sufficient to break down souls and to lead them to conversion. In modern terms, Finney had charisma.

Warfield's comment is pertinent here. "If it is not the Word but the preacher that is the power of God unto Salvation, the evangelist has become a Sacrament." The evangelist, not the word preached, is now the key to the situation. It is not so much the clarity of the message as the personality of the messenger which counts. "It is interesting," says Warfield again, "that the God who cannot work alone is now aided by the supernatural evangelist." It may well be that Finney, at the end of his long life tragically was looking for some such power as had been lost in 1832, when the Spirit departed.

The Legacy of his Teaching and Methods

The long term effects were immense. Due to the widespread acceptance of his ideas, religion became increasingly man-centred, for his gospel was anthropocentric even though he began in the midst of genuine religious revival. The age in which we live is almost wholly man-centred and God appears strangely unwilling to work with us. It is no accident that the popular liberal and progressive theologies are also humanistic, for here again there is a basic Pelagian tendency. In consequence, preaching is persuasion, not teaching, and often degenerates into scolding. Men can turn by their own ability and they won't! In some of

the worst forms of preaching Christ is reduced to the level of a beggar pleading pathetically to get into a man's house. By losing sight of Christ's power to reveal himself to whomsoever he will (Matt. 11:27) and of sinners' inability and spiritual impotence, the true nature of the free offers of the Gospel is destroyed. It is no longer a question of salvation by God's power but rather, "I will save myself when I feel like it."

More serious still is the effect upon revivals of religion. In the time of Jonathan Edwards, a revival was regarded as a supernatural and miraculous work of the sovereign Holy Spirit, to be prayed down from heaven. By the time Finney's lectures had leavened their way into the Church, revival had become something for man to promote and work up. It is significant that his apologia for his methods of promoting revivals is based on his psychology of man rather than on the teaching of Scripture.

Finney began in revival and ended with organised "revivalism". He began in revival and he ended up with modern evangelism. For the most part the Church has continued in that line ever since. Today one reads in American literature: "Don't have your revival until you have seen samples of our colour posters." Or, more dramatically: "Revivals arranged, results guaranteed; terms moderate!" It is possible to subscribe to a correspondence course on Finney's methods, at the end of which one is qualified to have a revival!

We have come in the twentieth century to think automatically in terms of new methods and new measures, instead of a new, wholehearted turning to God in repentance and faith with a genuine recognition of our total inability as sinners to do God's work for him. The absence of revival from God is a matter of grief. Is it true that so long as we continue to rely on man we continue to grieve the Spirit and hinder the return of revival? Is it true that we neglect the urgent need of reformation at our peril? Surely this whole subject is of momentous importance for us today.

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Leeds, 1974

THE FOURTH CAREY CONFERENCE, HELD AT LEEDS UNIVERSITY FROM January 1-3, 1974, was centred on the theme, *Helps and Hindrances in Church planting*, a subject particularly dear to the hearts of truly Biblical Baptists. Reflecting upon this conference and, indeed, upon previous ones, a conviction emerges that such a theme would provide a suitable motto for all Carey conferences. William Carey's own missionary objective was one of extension and outreach and it obviously remains in the blood of his spiritual descendants. Those attending the conference came with a real concern to form gathered churches made up of true saints, and not merely to discuss the creation of denominational machinery, to propound fancy evangelistic techniques, or to testify about individual subjective spiritual experiences.

The local church factor became very obvious during the informal discussions between sessions and over the well stocked meal tables (Yorkshiremen lack neither humour nor appetite!). More than ninety men were present and most are responsible for the oversight of churches. Some of these churches have only a two-figure membership, others only a one-figure membership, and yet others are still in the process of gathering any membership at all. To some this might appear to represent a rather feeble section of the Christian church. Yet we do well to remember that ten or fifteen years ago such a conference of elders, convinced about the doctrines of grace and the importance of a gathered church, would have been virtually impossible. There is evidence that the Lord is raising up once again a testimony to these things, not only in our own islands, but to the ends of the earth. The sceptics may scoff, the individualists may ridicule, and the liberal Baptists dismiss what is undeniably a movement of the Lord amongst the churches, but as Erroll Hulse pointed out on the first evening, in his exposition of Isaiah 2:1-4 entitled, "Our vision for the future", we should encourage ourselves with such verses as Psalm 72:11, Daniel 2:35 and Isaiah 11:1-9, for the day is coming when "the mountain of the Lord's house shall be established" above all rivals. Far from discoursing merely on eschatological conjecture there was a practical call for a recovery of Biblical evangelism, for a solid doctrine of heart experience, for reformation in ministerial training, for inspired expository preaching and pastoral oversight.

The organisers of the Carey Conference clearly believe in shock tactics, for, in a totally uncompromising manner, our minds, benumbed by hundreds of miles of travel, were jolted into hard thinking by the opening session when David Kingdon, principal of the Irish Baptist College, gave a most informative and controversial paper on *Church planting in the*

New Testament. He showed how Paul concentrated primarily on establishing churches in the cities and leaving these churches to establish others in the surrounding areas (I Thess. 1:8). He also pointed out that Paul concentrated on that section of the community which was most approachable with the gospel—in his case the Jews, but today this might be young people. He emphasised Paul's method of seeking household conversion as the right way in which to build up a local church.

Mr. Kingdon then went on to examine who was engaged in this church planting work and showed how the method of team working was adopted, with its advantages of avoiding loneliness, utilising the gifts available, providing "on job training", creating flexibility and avoiding individualism and the personality cult. The most controversial part of the paper challenged the adequacy of present thinking on eldership. Are elders the only office or has provision been made for evangelists or messengers with authority for the needs which arise in a travelling or pioneering context? Naturally the ensuing battle was closely contested, as Erroll Hulse and others tested and probed the thesis with questions, asking in particular for New Testament qualifications for the appointment of such officers. But David Kingdon was not easily subdued, reasoning that the pastors who signed the 1689 Baptist Confession are therein clearly distinguished from "messengers". Such stimulation with chapters, contexts and references quoted in profusion by numerals Eph. 4:11, Rom. 12:6-9, I Pet. 5:1-5, etc., was almost too much for slower mortals from the celtic fringe who, in their mountain strongholds, will no doubt chew over these matters for many years to come.

One great value of such conferences is the opportunity for informal discussion with like-minded and sometimes not so like-minded brethren. This is particularly helpful to those who minister in areas of spiritual drought. However, such discussions have their dangers, especially in relation to personal discipline, and this was felt by many who had burned the oil well past midnight when, in the opening session of the second day, Geoff Thomas speedily thrust us back into gear with a searching and exhaustive analysis of *The Minister and the Discipline of Study*. He showed in a powerful way the great importance of study in view of the fact that men are made by God as rational, thinking beings. He stressed the necessity of the preacher approaching men with ideas from the Word of God; ideas which need to be carefully studied in order that application may be made to men's minds with accuracy and relevance. To be ignorant, he declared, was to be like a beast (Psa. 73:22). Therefore the preacher must be well acquainted with the Scriptures in the original tongues, a telling point, which evidently went home to many, as the ensuing discussion showed.

After a short breather, David Kingdon returned with another of the highlights of the conference, a paper on *Church Discipline among the Anabaptists*. After giving us a perspective view of the life and beliefs

of Menno Simons, he emphasised that the outlook amongst the Anabaptists of the 16th Century was that "the true test of Christianity was not faith, but discipleship"—that is, an obedient following of the commands of God as seen in the practice of one's life. Union with Christ is evidenced by conformity to Christ! This is very pertinent for, today, virtually anything from dramatic experiences to intellectual speculation passes as faith, and many Baptist churches, desperate to stem the tide of falling numbers, due to feeble or heretical preaching, are only too willing to accept any sort of profession of faith, regardless of its practical outworking in the life of the "convert". The Anabaptists regarded baptism as a covenant, not merely of a past, but of a present discipleship. It was a covenant of body, goods, indeed of life, not just a matter of following the Lord through the waters of baptism. Candidates in the Hutterite section of the brotherhood were asked if they would dedicate all their goods for the benefit of any in need among the brotherhood—a question of similar penetrating significance to that asked today of baptismal candidates in Russia, who are baptised only if they covenant to witness to Christ's saving power in every situation and on every occasion. Such questions would soon thin out our already small number of candidates, but perhaps with healthy results. The same would also be true of another baptismal question: "Will you submit yourself to the first and second disciplines of the brotherhood?" This referred to the Lord's command recorded in Matthew 18:15-17. It was against this sense of belonging to a strict, covenanted brotherhood, where the corporate and individual life of each member was of such paramount importance, that discipline was exercised. Menno himself declared that a church without discipline was like "a city without walls". The ultimate sanction in discipline was the "Ban" exercised by the brotherhood, and not the death penalty exercised by the civil magistrate as among the Genevan and Lutheran Reformers. This ban, when taken to its final conclusion of excommunication, was regarded as delivering the soul of the offender to Satan, for "those outside the church of Christ are in the church of Antichrist". However, the Anabaptists were quick to point out that "none were expelled from the church unless they had first expelled themselves by heresy or bad conduct". Shunning was practised on the basis of Matt. 18:17 and I Cor. 5:11 but this often created great problems in divided families where shunning was taken to include "bed and board". The system suffered misuse by ambitious leaders, and ran the danger of slipping either into legalism on the one hand or laxity on the other. Menno, himself, later came to the position of classifying sins. Nevertheless, said Mr. Kingdon, today we can learn much from these early pioneers who had to dig into the Scriptures themselves, with no baptist traditions to lean upon or to shackle them. Primarily, he said, we must get rid of the idea of the church merely as a "spiritual filling station" and rediscover the concept of "brotherhood". The church is a society of people who care for one another and discipline is an essential part of this love. The ban was primarily restorative, not punitive.

During the afternoon session many of us had our eyes opened to the causes and progress of the modern charismatic movement, with its emphasis on subjective experience and its Romeward leanings. Alec Taylor, who is pioneering an infant church in Birmingham, spoke in most illuminating and yet gracious terms of the movement and its effects, and the way in which many, having pinned all their hopes on the movement, are becoming disillusioned and turning back to the theology of the Reformers. Particularly noteworthy is the fact that the pursuit of the "gifts" leads neo-pentecostals to disregard the Bible as God's one great revelation. Herbert Carson followed with an analysis of the progress of the Charismatic movement in the Roman camp within the past eight years, showing clearly how this had beguiled evangelicals to support false ecumenism and thus betray the truth of God.

Erroll Hulse gave a paper entitled "The Local Church and Evangelism", under the headings: Power in the Pulpit, A Dynamic Church, Meaningful Outreach. He showed how evangelism is not a technique, as many much publicised programmes would lead one to believe, but a way of life. It is through preaching that converts are made. The church must be alive, particularly as regards the prayer meeting. Especially should we have faith in the Word of God as such and week by week expect the Holy Ghost to come down with mighty power upon the preaching. Both preachers and people are involved in this vital matter of expectancy of blessing.

Ian Tait's paper on *John Calvin and his ministry of encouragement* could clearly have filled a whole conference. What a mine of help is to be found in Calvin's voluminous published correspondence! Furthermore, Calvin was not some ivory tower writer but his example, especially in his suffering, was also a great encouragement to the persecuted saints of the Reformation. Mr. Tait brought out with telling force the true pastoral concern of Calvin as seen in his letters to the young pastors whom he trained in Geneva and who almost invariably faced prison and martyrdom when they returned to France to preach the gospel. Apparently, Calvin steadfastly refused to compose any defence or confession for the imprisoned pastors, leaving it to them to produce, although he showed a marvellous discernment as to individual theological needs which he sought to meet in his letters.

The first part of each afternoon was left free and on the first day, for some inexplicable reason, a coachload of ministers, including some Ulstermen, set out for Bolton Abbey! According to hearsay, this was not to have an audience with the Abbot, nor to "do" the place with tracts, nor to distribute the works of Martin Luther, for the place is in ruins. Other conference members engaged in less dubious, but more arduous, activities in the gym, where Peter Parkinson of Leeds was both football coach and player. Some testified to a sense of exhilaration in having escaped unscathed in playing against the combined might of

Peter Parkinson and Joe Wieland who nobly upheld the football fame of Leeds! On the second afternoon two car loads of those with a keen sense of history headed towards the old Puritan meeting house at Bramwell where, ultimately, access was gained to the glories of Commonwealth worship in the form of high box pews and a two-decker pulpit with a John Knox-type sounding board above. The guide book recorded that Oliver Heywood, the northern Puritan, once preached a four and a half hour sermon from this piece of furniture! So overcome and engrossed with these associations was one of our America-Scottish brethren, David Straub, that he was left behind and locked in while taking photographs. He has been rescued subsequently!

As with last year's conference, the evening sessions were given over to preaching, which was held in a nearby school and was open to the public. Erroll Hulse preached in his usual rousing manner on *Our Vision for the Future*, whilst Herbert Carson dealt with *Breaking the Chains of Traditionalism*, and *The way forward*. In liberating fashion he set about loosing the chains of man-made tradition and, to give visual weight to his arguments wore a bright red shirt, a contrast no doubt with the clerical attire of former Anglican days. His closing address was first rate. He showed that those who know their God will do exploits. This knowing is first doctrinal then experimental, a knowledge of Biblical content. Certainly most of us came away determined to examine practices which do not have scriptural warrant.

At last the time came to return to the harvest fields. Brethren had come from as far away as Sri Lanka, the Seychelles, Canada and South Africa and, during the conference, we had heard brief summaries of the work of the Biblical churches in these places. Some men had come from lonely, isolated situations and such a conference could not but have encouraged them to persevere in their pioneering labours. Many problems due to the fuel crisis were overcome largely through the administrative gifts of John Rubens, of Cuckfield, who did much to aid the smooth running of the conference. One of the Scottish cars broke down right on the border—an event blamed in humour by some on a sacralist plot to hinder the application of all that had been learned in the land once second to none for Reformed practice!

One thing always becomes very evident at Carey Conferences. The number of issues requiring attention is perpetually increasing and subject matter for years ahead awaits to be dealt with. It will be difficult to beat the high standard set by the 1974 conference but doubtless there are many who look forward with prayerful anticipation to January, 1975, when it is hoped to meet in Cardiff.



An internal view of Bramhope Puritan Chapel founded in 1649. Graham Weeks, of Nigeria, surveys the chapel from the pulpit, while others look around.

Carey Family Conference

INTEREST IN THE FAMILY CONFERENCE, TO BE HELD AGAIN AT PILGRIM Hall, Uckfield, Sussex, (D.V.) from the 12th to 17th August, 1974, is already very high, and those wishing to attend are advised to apply without delay. It may be that some will have to be disappointed, but it is hoped to accommodate families from as many churches as possible.

The costs are not yet finalised, but are expected to be £15 per adult (12 years and above), £11.25 (2-11 years inc.), and £3.75 under 2 years.

The subject matter will be essentially practical dealing with family life in the home and in the Church. As previously, the evening sessions will be given to preaching, and visitors will be welcome. Day visitors must book in advance. Malcolm Watts and David Straub to be the evening speakers.

Further details and application form from John Rubens, "Mattaniah", Ditchling Road, Wivelsfield, Sussex. Phone Wivelsfield Green 240 (STD 044 484).

(Continued from page 1.)

Alan Wilson of Canada

Warm gratitude is expressed to Alan Wilson for his agency work. He has suffered ill health and hands over to Max Latchford. The warm encouragement we receive from these brethren and others throughout the world is an inspiration and we will under the Lord seek to produce edifying and timely articles.

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