

# REFORM- ATION TODAY '76



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# Correspondence

*On the subject of daily reading helps, mentioned in the last issue, we have had the following helpful information from Andrew Swanson, pastor of Geneva Road Baptist Church, Darlington. He writes:*

It was with some interest that I read the letter in the current issue of *Reformation Today* dealing with the subject of daily Bible reading notes. Your correspondent, and others of your readers, may be interested to hear of a venture to produce doctrinally sound notes that has now been in operation for almost a year.

The general opinion among ministers to whom I spoke, that their congregations needed material more reliable and with greater depth than Scripture Union notes, led to a venture to produce something more suitable. After a trial period of three months in 1974, the church here at Geneva Road, Darlington, undertook the production of notes on a more permanent basis at the beginning of this year. It has been very much a church based project, employing the gifts and time of many of the members in a variety of tasks, particularly as the circulation does not yet make printing viable.

The notes are written by myself and by the ministers of other churches, whose members also use them, thus fostering links between like-minded churches. Our aim is that the notes should be of help to the 'average' church member, and the response has been encouraging. Circulation has steadily increased from 100 for the trial run to 270 for the November issue.

The venture is not without its problems. Writing notes can be a very demanding extra on a minister's already full time-table and lack of

material has meant a very 'hand-to-mouth' existence. However, we have received encouragement in this project from various quarters, and we look forward to the time when the notes can be printed and when more ministers will be involved in regularly contributing to them.

Readers who remember the article 'The Whole Bible and Expository Preaching' by Stuart Olyott in the March-April '74 issue of your magazine, may like to consider the suggestion that notes of this kind may be one alternative to his 'ten-year plan'. Ministers who feel that they could not follow this, and yet who see the need for their people to get a grasp of the whole of scripture, might consider these notes as one way of seeking to achieve this end.

Yours sincerely, etc.

Readers interested should write to: Mr. A. Swanson at 105 Geneva Road, Darlington, Co. Durham.

*From Lancashire a correspondent writes:*

'You will not need to be reminded of our pastor's keenness on the doctrines of grace! Our church was greatly blessed during July and August 1974. We had more than a dozen conversions in quick succession. Some years ago our pastor was growing very concerned about the lack of believing young men coming into the church. So now that his prayers have been answered, he sensibly set about ensuring that they grow in grace. He decided that to get us a sound doctrinal basis it would be a good idea to study the Reformers and their theology. About a dozen young men are meeting regularly for this purpose.'

# Editorial

CHRISTMAS EVANS IS A STIRRING REMINDER OF THE POWER OF PREACHING. Why is it that conversions which endure occur regularly under some ministers of the Word and hardly ever, or not at all, under others? Why is it that even in the most barren places some preachers draw hearers and others do not? These questions are complex and reasons both natural and spiritual can be put forward. Uppermost in our reckoning must be the plain fact that God uses preaching which is thoroughly evangelistic in character not only in terms of content but in the arresting and stirring manner in which it appeals to the imaginations of all kinds of people; rich and poor, learned and unlearned, young and old. Evans' theology was that of John Owen but his preaching style was akin to that of John Bunyan. Six hundred converts were added to one church in two years. Later in another pastorate in a poor little village one hundred and forty converts were added in two years. When last did this kind of thing happen in the United Kingdom? Over the years we have visited from home to home in the villages round about. In one such village just visited containing about three hundred and fifty homes we have come across only four homes which could be described as evangelical. Translated into modern terms one hundred and forty converts would represent an approximate 800 per cent increase!

## Israel Today

*For if the casting away of them be the reconciling of the world, what shall the receiving of them be but life from the dead?* (Rom. 11:15). Says Robert Haldane: 'But if the casting away of the Jews was such a blessing to the world, their recall will be a blessing unspeakably greater. It will occasion a revival among the Gentile churches, from a dead and almost lifeless state, which will resemble a resurrection.' On the same verse Charles Hodge declares that, 'the conversion of the Jews will be attended with the most glorious consequences for the whole world'. Comments Professor John Murray, 'Life from the dead must denote a blessing far surpassing in its proportions anything that previously obtained in the unfolding of God's counsel'.

What of Israel today; that is Israel as represented by those Jews who have returned to their ancient land, Jews who in some ways represent Jewry at their most enthusiastic? Baruch Maoz gives us a fair and accurate report. As regards Christianity is not Israel a microcosm of the world as a whole? Does not the supine, confused and disintegrated Christendom in Israel reflect weak Christianity worldwide today?

*(continued on inside back cover)*

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*Front Cover. With a soaring crime rate and I.R.A. terrorism in addition, our police force carries very great responsibilities. In a poll carried out for The Daily Express (1.12.75) by a Louis Harris Poll, 84% of the British public expressed the wish for a return to the death penalty for the murder of a policeman and 88% for murder by political terrorists with bombs or guns. The poll was taken after the murder of anti-I.R.A. campaigner Ross McWhirter. A motion in Parliament on December, 1975, to restore hanging was defeated by 361 votes to 232. During 1974 the votes cast were 369 against restoration to 217 for.*



*This up-to-date report by Baruch Maoz expresses views which if quoted out of context could easily be misunderstood. We take the unusual precaution therefore of asserting the author's copyright and declaring on his behalf that no part may be produced in any form without previous permission in writing from him.*

# The Work of the Gospel in Israel



NEWS FROM ISRAEL IS VARIABLE BOTH IN MATTER OF INTEREST AND RELIABILITY. There has been so much wishful thinking and sensationalism, so much neglect of the exercise of proper care and so great a lack in Christian integrity associated with so many of the reports that come from Israel, that not a few have developed what could almost be described as an inbred suspicion towards any information purporting to describe the circumstances under which the work of the Gospel is conducted in Israel, or its visible results.

Others have reacted so strongly against the hyper-dispensationalism that has held the scene for so long in Jewish evangelism, that they have been reticent to show any interest in the salvation of the Jews lest they be branded with undesirable theological insignia.

While I would not but encourage Christians to exercise a disciplined caution with regard to reports coming from Israel (including this one!), it seems unfortunate that some of those who have the greatest potential contribution to make in the sphere of Jewish evangelism have over-reacted and have left off praying, giving, helping and labouring for the conversion of Israel. Among those who would follow in the footsteps of the British and American Puritans this is doubly strange, for many of the Puritans maintained a lively, heart-engaging interest in the spiritual welfare of the Jews, as Iain Murray's *The Puritan Hope* will ably testify.<sup>1</sup> Among those who prayed for and believingly expected the salvation of earthly Israel can be numbered Samuel Rutherford,<sup>2</sup> John Owen,<sup>3</sup> Jonathan Edwards<sup>4</sup> and many other outstanding Christian men of stature.

At least some of the lack of a practical interest in the work of the Gospel among the Jews is due to the fact that there has been no known agency engaged in such work with views of Christian truth and practice such as are represented by the men mentioned above. For the sake of such I offer the following general information. More may be had by writing either to the present writer<sup>5</sup> or to the Rev. Murdo M. MacLeod, M.A., Director and General Secretary of the International Society for the Evangelisation of the Jews, 44 Lubbock Road, Chislehurst, Kent BR6 5JK, England.

<sup>1</sup> *The Puritan Hope*. Banner of Truth Trust (1971), pp. 58-76. A paperback edition has just been printed. 300 pages. £1.

<sup>2</sup> *The Letters of Samuel Rutherford* (1891), edited by A. Bonar, Letter XV, p. 88.

<sup>3</sup> *The Works of John Owen*. Banner of Truth Trust (1968), Vol. IV, pp. 440-441.

<sup>4</sup> *The Works of Jonathan Edwards*. Banner of Truth Trust (1974), Vol. I, p. 607, paragraph 32.

<sup>5</sup> Rev. Baruch Maoz, POB 75, Rishon LeTzion, Israel.





## General Information

Israel has a population of three-and-a-half million. Of these almost three million are Jewish. The number of those who profess the Christian faith is approximately 75,000, among whom there is an unknown, although by no means large, number of professed evangelical believers. There are 2,500 protestants. The number of missionaries, if we include nuns, monks and priests from non-protestant and non-evangelical churches, is 3,000. Added to these is a significant number of individuals engaged in missionary activity who entered the country as students, long-term visitors, tourists, volunteers and the like, many of whom will not admit they are working as full-time missionaries during their stay in the country. It is difficult to estimate the number of these, but 200 is considered by all with whom I have consulted to be by no means exaggerated. Among these there is also quite a number of tourists and volunteers on kibbutzim, so that the figure I have quoted is really quite conservative. Approximately one third of the missionaries mentioned above are considered evangelical. Missionaries have been active in Israel for at least 150 years.

The number of indigenous local churches among the Jews does not exceed seven, with other Jewish believers scattered in various cities, without the benefit of a church fellowship. A further number of Jewish Christians are members or regular attenders of the denominational churches, which are not included in the indigenous churches mentioned above. The total number of Hebrew Christians in Israel does not exceed 1,000, and even that seems to be somewhat exaggerated. According to the book *Facts on Israel*, published by the Israel Government Press, there are 130 Christian denominations in Israel. This does not include the various inter-church, non-denominational and missionary organisations. Among these are churches in which the relative number of evangelicals is quite large, in some to the extent that they constitute the majority. As examples of such we can cite the (American Southern) Baptists, the Lutherans, Mennonites, Nazarenes, Anglicans, Plymouth Brethren, and a wide variety of Pentecostal Churches.

In the churches just mentioned there are many whose spiritual qualities and Christian education are not to be ignored. Many of them are also rich in the Christian experience accumulated in the churches overseas from which they came. Some of them have served as pastors, elders, teachers and leaders in their home countries. Their knowledge of Christian history, their acquaintance with the wider Christian world, their perception—gained in the school of experience—in matters practical and doctrinal, their command of New Testament Greek, their training in the study of Holy Scripture and their knowledge of the historical backgrounds in which the scriptural revelation was given all set them, from their shoulders up, higher than many of the members of local, indigenous churches, in which there are not to be found men so well equipped for the edification of the Church and for the spiritual good of the believers.

The indigenous churches tend to set themselves apart from the denominational and mission-based churches, although close contact exists between members of various churches and there are a number (although very limited) of activities in

which participants are drawn from both local and foreign-based churches. The denominations and missions from overseas, on the other hand, labour to set up churches on their own, bearing all the marks and habits of the mother churches overseas. These are patterned and governed in accordance with the accepted practice in the countries and churches from which the respective workers have come. The spoken language is usually not Hebrew, the hymns are imported and sometimes very poorly translated, the pastors are sent from the countries of origin. These churches are generally rich in material resources and equipped with all they need for their various activities. They rarely number more than sixty members and there are many instances in which the membership is much smaller—sometimes between five and ten. Most of the members are expatriate, the number of Jewish believers among them being quite small and of these not a few are living in almost complete isolation from the people and country in which they dwell. These churches celebrate Easter and Christmas, Sunday is the day of worship and, if possible, it is also the day of rest.

In comparison, most of the indigenous churches are much smaller. Their membership is composed largely of Jewish believers, although non-Jews are very welcome. The language spoken is Hebrew, their material resources are restricted and, at the time of writing, most of them are either lacking a permanent place for their public activities, worship and preaching, or are labouring under unfavourable circumstances. To some extent, the members of these churches are living among the people in a most practical sense, sharing the difficulties and the hopes, serving in the army, bearing the burden of the high rate of taxation, struggling with housing problems and reading the Hebrew daily newspapers. There are doubts among them as to whether or not Christmas should be celebrated, if the Jewish national and religious holidays should be ignored, how they are to act on the Day of Atonement and what day should be set apart for the celebration of the Lord's Table. Among the members of the indigenous churches there are many whose education, knowledge of the Holy Scriptures and understanding of the Christian faith is restricted to an extent that gives cause for grave concern.



### **Local and Expatriate Inter-Church Relations**

There is a great gap cleft between the hopes and aims of the local believers and those of the denominational churches and missions. There are practical difficulties that make cooperation between the local and 'foreign' believers difficult. Sometimes there is an evident willingness to try and overcome these difficulties, sometimes the unwillingness is quite pronounced—on both sides. Unfortunately, the latter is usually the case. There is, further, a high wall of partition over which only a very small number pass in either direction—between the manifold kinds of activity and evangelistic endeavours of the local believers and those of the expatriate workers. It is as if there are two sides vying with one another; as if two horses (or is it mules?) are harnessed to opposite sides of the Gospel wagon, which is making no headway because each is pulling in an opposite direction.

The local churches very much need the spiritual contribution that the members

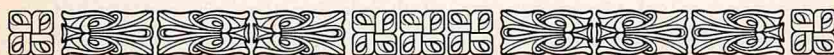


of the so-called 'foreign' churches can give them, and not a few of those endeavours which are commonly called 'local' are financed and supported to a very large extent from abroad. The expatriate Christians would very much like—with certain qualifications—to make a contribution towards the edification of the local churches and the strengthening of believers in Israel. Many of them have come to Israel after having forsaken pleasures, higher salaries and many other comforts. In other words, there are those whose presence in the country is a sacrifice of love: love for Christ, for the Gospel, for the glory of God and for the believers in Israel. They come here because they love us and wish to aid us in the building of our faith. Perhaps not all the missionaries are to be described in such terms, but it is certainly true of a significant number of them. Of these, not a few are presently greatly distressed with what has become to them a painful, searing problem. How can they make the contribution they so long to make? Were they mistaken in coming here? Is there any point in remaining? Are they wanted at all?

It is true that there are those who have accepted the situation as it is and who are now involved in all kinds of activities that bear no relation to the end for which they were originally commissioned, and for which they still draw their support. It is also true that there are those who have compromised. There are those who have come here to preach to the Jews, and now their time is taken up with non-Jewish tourists and students, with fellow-missionaries and foreign diplomats. Although it would be foolish not to recognise the legitimate needs of such, one cannot but help recall that it was not for these that the missionaries in question first came to this country. Nevertheless, not all have followed this course, and of those who have done so, the present writer is personally acquainted with a number who are deeply troubled about their predicament.

The number of missionaries who could conscientiously and understandably subscribe to the great statements of faith such as the Westminster or 1689 Baptist Confessions of faith or to the 39 Articles is almost nil and of these hardly any work among the Jews. The Neo-pentecostal movement is spreading, having almost completely swamped the majority of expatriate missionaries in the country.

There are those among the indigenous churches, some of the prominent leaders; who claim to have no relation—essential, cultural or spiritual—with the 'foreign' believers. According to these, their own spiritual history and that of the 'foreigners' (now increasingly taken to mean Gentiles) are two separate histories. The Reformation in Europe, in England and in Scotland, the attempt to establish a 'truly Christian society' in America—all these have no bearing on them whatsoever. Others identify completely with the 'foreigners'. They are members of their churches, they think in terms learnt there and they see their past, present and future in the ecclesiastical setting in which they are presently to be found, with hardly any consideration of their duties toward their own people. These are the two extremes. Between them are many shades of opinion, inclining in varying degrees to one of the two extremes.



### **The Local Churches**

My main consideration is the fledgling indigenous local churches. Here the



needs are many and deserve immediate and careful attention. These can be outlined as follows:

a. *Theological*. The spread of a mystical, anti-intellectual, anti-theological, and irrational brand of Christian attainment has done great damage to the spiritual welfare of those who profess the name of Christ in this country. There is little study of the Scriptures among the majority of church members, and what little is to be found is often emasculated by shallow, sloppy interpretation and the neglect of the basic rules of exegesis. Allegorical preaching has led many to treat the Scriptural account as if it had little to do with real history and as if its precepts were to be interpreted 'mystically'. The Word of God is not held in very high regard and its commandments and promises are often neglected, misunderstood or rationalised away.

The Sabbath is greatly neglected. Antinomianism is widespread. The true divinity of Christ is openly called into question. The centrality of the atonement and the need for repentance as the absolutely necessary factors in salvation are denied by some in prominent positions, and incipient universalism is slowly making its way into the mainstream of thought among many. The great doctrinal statements of the Church are neglected, sometimes even denied as being the product of 'a Gentile Christianity'. Judaistic tendencies are widespread and theological and moral relativism have begun to raise their ugly heads.

There are many other areas of theology that could be mentioned, many of which have to do with matters I have chosen to describe as 'ecclesiological' or 'practical' and which are, for this reason, treated under those headings.

b. *Ecclesiological*. There is almost no concept of church order. Little or no discipline is exercised. Churches are governed on the basis of personal loyalties, with no written constitution, no declaration of faith and no other objective standards to which to refer, often without eldership or a pastor. Backsliders abound. Visitation is neglected. Churches are torn asunder by personal animosities, the conflicting interests of various missionary societies and a widening gap between the younger and older generations. There is little co-operation between the various local churches.

The trends just described are evident in much of modern-day evangelicalism and are followed by some here as well. I would venture to say that one can meet here with more dangerous manifestations of the disease than might be found elsewhere. The laudable effort to go beyond the traditions of men, back to the very bone and marrow of Holy Scripture, has given way to a thoughtless rejection of the whole history of the Christian Church. It is as if God has been silent for these last 2,000 years or so. Basic issues relating to the very core of the Christian faith are being discussed in Israel. These discussions are, on the whole, being conducted in total, and sometimes wilful ignorance of similar discussions carried on by the Church for almost two millenia. Arianism, pseudo-Christian hedonism, modern versions of Montanism, Monarchianism and super-spiritual Gnosticism are all threatening the very existence of the young church in Israel.

An understandable desire to discover legitimate ways to express one's Jewishness in Christ has led to an 'I am holier than thou' attitude towards non-Jewish Christians, and to an aggressive effort on the part of some to dissociate them-

selves from what they consider to be 'Gentile Christianity'. This tendency has been further encouraged by certain Gentile Christians who have converted to Judaism and now conduct missionary work in the country. The recently-held 'Messiah '75' conference of Hebrew Christians in the USA has further added to this unfortunate tendency among certain American-Jewish Christians and is sure to have its baneful effect upon us in Israel. Among other things, it is leading in a direction completely contrary to the 'One New Man' created by our Saviour according to the letter to the Ephesians and to the destruction of the 'one flock' of which our Lord speaks in John chapter 10.

c. *Practical.* Literature: there is very little good Christian literature in Hebrew. Four agencies are engaged in this work. The first (and smallest) is run by the Southern Baptist Convention in Israel and is mainly concerned with the publication of books such as *The History of the Baptists*, Roland Bainton's short *A History of Christianity*, and C. S. Lewis's *Miracles*. They have not published a new title for some years now. The second agency belongs to the ecumenically-minded United Christian Council in Israel, which has published books by Emil Brunner, Dietrich Bonhoeffer, John Baillie and similar authors. The third agency is governed by three local believers. The publications include *The Cross and the Switchblade*, Paul Taine's *King of the Jews*, two books by Corrie Ten Boom and Hal Lindsay's *The Late Great Planet Earth*. They have also published Francis Schaeffer's *The God Who Is There* and R. E. D. Clarke's *Darwin Before and After* (both translated by the author of this report at his initiative) and J. R. W. Stott's *Men Made New* (under the auspices of the International Society for the Evangelisation of the Jews). The fourth publishing agency is just making its appearance. Among forthcoming titles are Walter Chantry's *Signs of The Apostles*, Leon Morris's *Glory in The Cross*, Marian Schooland's *Leading Little Ones to God* and a series of Bible study books based on IVF's *Search the Scriptures*. A quarterly magazine in Hebrew has also been published by this same agency, in which articles by writers such as Donald MacLeod, Al Martin, Martyn Lloyd-Jones, Paul Helm, John Stott, John Calvin, Herbert Carson, Erroll Hulse and John Flavel have been carried. This agency was established just recently by the International Society for the Evangelisation of the Jews.

Teaching: the lack of a regularly-instituted church oversight has led to a great dearth of regular, systematic, expository preaching and theological instruction in the churches. Comparatively little preparation is given to the study of the matter, manner and application of the public ministry of the Word. A faulty understanding of the doctrine of the priesthood of all believers has meant that the pulpit is sometimes occupied by men who have little understanding of the awesomeness of the calling and little ability to fulfil it worthily. Theology is cried down. The lively application of truth to the minds, hearts and consciences of men is rarely seen and the application of biblical precepts to the daily callings and experiences of Christians frequently neglected.

Christian stewardship: local Christians have not learnt to give of their material substance for the service of God and their fellow men. Not a few attend Conferences, receive literature, participate in various activities, even belong to a local church, without making the slightest effort to contribute towards the financial costs involved in the benefits they receive.

The hard pressures of life in Israel, created by frequent call-ups to military



service, high prices, low incomes and heavy taxation, have combined with the consumer-society mentality of keeping up with the Joneses, to keep many from giving of their time, talents or material substance to the service of the church or the society in which they live in the name of Christ. Very few choose employment or determine where they will live in the light of their duties to the church or even consider whether or not they will be able to participate in any measure in church life.

Evangelism: most of the evangelistic endeavour is carried out by expatriate Christians. Many, especially among the young, seem reticent about, one would say almost antagonistic towards evangelistic work. There is complete legal freedom in this respect in Israel and many opportunities await the courage, conviction and dedication of Christian men and women who will be willing to be lights in the world, holding forth the Word of Life. Distributing tracts, door-to-door work, regular preaching in the churches, home Bible studies, lectures in the kibbutzim, bookselling—these are only some of the avenues which lie open, awaiting the endeavours of the people of God in Israel.

In spite of all the problems an indigenous Church is emerging. Men and women are being converted and the churches are growing in size and number, slowly—but most surely. Israeli society is ripe for a declaration of the Gospel that will dare to be clear and practical, cutting near the bone of real life. Young people in the churches are open to a bold presentation of their duties and are asking for worthy Christian leadership. Prejudices are losing their grip in the minds of many both in the churches and without, and are giving way to new thinking. A willingness to learn and a desire to obey without compromise are evident among many. Churches are crying out for teachers, and church members for dedicated shepherds of their souls. This is a time of opportunity—and of great need. Whatever is done (or left undone) will, under God, determine the state and structure of the Church in Israel for many days to come. Tomorrow is being shaped by today.



### **What Can You Do?**

In all of this, what can you do? Firstly, you can pray. You can make an effort to familiarise yourself with the circumstances in Israel, to be kept informed of developments and to turn this information into fuel for your prayers on behalf of those here.

Secondly, you can support us. The International Society for the Evangelisation of the Jews is working in Israel with a specific aim in view. We do not want to establish our own separate work here or do anything apart from the local churches. Our desire is to strengthen, support and serve the churches and the believers in the country, and to help them in the service and worship of Christ to which they are called. For the achievement of these ends we work in close association with the local churches and, as much as possible, under their discipline. We are engaged in a medical work in Haifa, providing medical services to all and any who care to call upon us. This work, meant to express our practical concern for Israel, and our Christian love for them in the Gospel of Christ, engages our three doctors and six nurses in a full daily programme of



clinics, house visitation and medical consultation. Also, we are involved in the production of Christian literature. Our workers are available to the local churches for teaching, preaching or serving in any other capacity, in accordance with the wishes of each local church.

Thirdly, you can inform your churches of our work and encourage them to take an interest in what is being done. It is our hope that churches in the West, hitherto generally uninvolved in Jewish evangelism, will enlist themselves in this great work, and we would be happy if they saw in us a means for its accomplishment. Those who, for theological and practical reasons, have refrained from involvement, may be able to find in our Society a body engaged in that work and committed without reserve to the historic faith as outlined in the Belgic, Westminster and 1689 Baptist Confessions of Faith. We are strong believers in the centrality of the church, both as the source of Christian Gospel endeavour and as the end to which it should be directed. Hence, we wish to represent churches, rather than be supported only by individuals, although we are grateful for the help and support we have received over the years from many individual Christians.

Fourthly, you can put us in touch with Jewish Christian families or individuals who have proved the reality of the faith in consistent Christian living, faithful church attendance and solid growth in their understanding of Christian truth. Inform them of our work and encourage them to write to us. We value the fellowship of such and believe that they can render the work of evangelising their brethren according to the flesh an invaluable service by their prayers and interest.

While you are busy doing all we have suggested, do not neglect to pray and labour for your Jewish neighbour or colleague at work. What point is there in praying for Jews beyond the seas while neglecting those nearby? We will be happy to help in the provision of appropriate literature, or in any other way possible.

We, as a mission, are deeply conscious of our many failures and admit with shame our many faults. We are committed, however, to a great work to which great and precious promises are attached. Will you not help us? Remember, 'If the fall of them be the riches of the world, and the diminishing of them the riches of the Gentiles; how much more their fulness? . . . For if the casting away of them be the reconciling of the world, what shall the receiving of them be, but life from the dead?' 'For of him, and through him, and to him, are all things: to whom be glory forever. Amen.'

#### MAIN OFFICES:

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Dr. James C. Churcher, P.O. Box 206, Haifa, Israel

#### LITERATURE WORK:

Rev. Baruch Maoz, P.O. Box 75, Rishon LeTzion, Israel

# Gratitude to the Publishers

WHILE IT IS NOT POSSIBLE TO EXPRESS appreciation for all the fine books that are produced for the advantage of Christians, we can at least discuss and highlight some of the outstanding publishing feats of recent days. This is not to detract in any way from those who may not be mentioned for the simple reason that it is impossible to keep everything in view when so much is being done.

In our general survey we begin with the publication of the complete works of Thomas Manton, referred to in the last issue of *Reformation Today*. Subsequent correspondence has revealed that these valuable sets are available to readers outside America by writing to Maranatha Publications, P.O. Box 338, Worthington, Pa. 16262. The paperback set is selling at seventy-five dollars, while the cloth bound set of twenty-two volumes costs one hundred and twenty-five dollars. Volumes 16 and 17 are due from the press during December, volumes 18-20 during January and volumes 21-22 in February. Readers are advised to negotiate directly with the publishers in America to procure this most valuable set of Manton's works. Alternatively those who are members of the Puritan Reformed Discount Book Service Inc., 1319 Newport, Gap Pike, Plaza 41, Wilmington, Delaware, 19804 might procure the set as members of that book service. Needless to say the vision and capital needed to undertake such a publishing venture is of a very high order. Evangelist R. E. Rhoades is responsible for this enterprise and as soon as he has completed the provision of this particular set of Puritan writings he is planning to set up a Reformed School of Theology at Interlaken in Switzerland. He has been an evangelist for seventeen years, is a great lover of the Puritan writings and now feels a call to serve in Europe, making theological studies available to French, German and Italian speaking people. Those interested might

like to write to him c/o the Maranatha address given above.

Also in America we continue to be amazed by the extraordinary publishing activity of Pilgrim Publications, P.O. Box 66, Pasadena, Texas 77501. Bob L. Ross is the dynamo behind the republication of the sermons of C. H. Spurgeon, thirty-eight volumes now being available, that is right up to the *Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit* of 1892! The whole set of the *New Park Street Pulpit* is also included and is available. Pilgrim Publications intend to sail straight on and reach port with the last volume in the set, a volume for every year, 1855 to 1916 complete! Bravo!

In the meantime here in the UK we continue to be supplied with a stream of magnificent volumes from the Banner of Truth Trust.

Apart from providing our spiritual stores with huge stocks of healthy vitamins such as extended commentaries they also have produced books of a very vital nature to man strategic posts on the spiritual battlefield.

Samples of the full expository books for our nourishment are *Psalms* by W. S. Plumer, 1211 pages at £5.50. The pages are large and the material is valuable throughout. W. S. Plumer was a writer of the last century who graduated from the Princeton School. Another example of such helpful expository material is two volumes on 1 Peter by John Brown, volume 1. 577 pages, volume 2. 650 pages—£5.50 for the set. More than a decade ago this work was published in America but there must be many who do not have these volumes. The price is extremely reasonable and the production quality of the usual high standard maintained by the Banner.

Concerning the books which are of a crucial nature we refer in the first place to *The Life and Labours of Asahel Nettleton*, 454 pages priced at £2.10. History can be very unfair with regard to church leaders and while the name



of Charles Finney has become a household word, whoever has heard of Asahel Nettleton? Yet he was one of the most outstanding evangelists of the last century and one whose ministry was blessed with revivals particularly during a period of ten years from 1812 onwards. This volume is very significant inasmuch as it portrays Nettleton's methods of church-based evangelism, which methods are in stark contrast to the crusade type of evangelism so familiar today. Nettleton was himself subject to a deep law work (p. 29) and the place of the law as a schoolmaster to lead to Christ permeated his ministry. He stressed much the value of a settled ministry and lamented the damage done by 'short-cut' evangelists (p. 56ff.). His spiritual discernment with regard to the work of the Spirit in the hearts of men was of an unusual order. Some of the revivals he witnessed were of a similar intensity to those in the ministry of George Whitefield. Nettleton regarded as calamitous the practice of calling people to an immediate public profession of faith. The information provided in this volume concerning Nettleton's controversy with Finney is important.

Another vital volume produced by the Banner is *Biblical Theology* by Geerhardus Vos. The subject can be described as follows: 'Biblical theology is that branch of exegetical theology which deals with the process of the self revelation of God deposited in the Bible. The important word in this definition is 'process'. God disclosed or revealed the truth in a progressive manner until it reached its climax in the coming of Jesus Christ. Biblical theology deals with the development of truth as it has been revealed progressively. I do not hesitate to say that the contents of this volume could have a revolutionary effect upon preachers who have not before given serious attention to this subject. It is slightly technical in its style which is a drawback. Our Presbyterian friends who have so much to offer often lack the gift of imagination and illustration but let that not deter us from the spiritual gains to be had.

If you want a complete set of Manton's Works read these columns and write to Dusty Rhoades soon—who says, 'allow 25 cents per volume for postage'!

It has been observed that most books produced by the Banner have been reprints of works from former days. Is there not an end to the process and will not the quality deteriorate? The Puritan gold mine is rich with seams yet to be dug out and there must surely be a few treasures left from other periods. But let us not forget that the Banner publish works by living authors—Dr. Lloyd-Jones for a start, six volumes on Romans so far and one on Ephesians! And what about the erudite commentaries by William Hendriksen?

The Evangelical Press, P.O. Box 5, Welwyn, Herts AL6 9NU is making excellent progress. One of the most helpful books produced by EP lately is Spurgeon's *Devotional Bible*, 784 pages, price £3.95. This volume is designed for those who wish to read through the Bible in a year with one period of family devotion in the morning and one in the evening. Alternatively the book can be used for two years with one reading a day. The text of Scripture is interspersed with comments by C. H. Spurgeon which are pithy and to the point. In using this book the leader in family worship will do well if he can inflex his voice so that it is clear when he is reading the Word and when Spurgeon's comment! Many families are delighted with this acquisition. However an obvious reservation must be expressed, which is that some other plan or system should be used after the first reading as no selection can be an adequate substitute for the whole.

An outstanding book from EP is that of a new biography of John Newton by Brian H. Edwards, a pastor at Surbiton in Surrey. A review follows by Harry Kilbride, who leaves Chessington to take up his new pastorate at the famous Lansdowne Baptist Church in Bournemouth in January this year.



There is a great need for stirring biographies of this kind and this volume about Newton well deserves special attention.

An extended review of the New International Dictionary of the Christian Church (editor J. D. Douglas, produced by Paternoster Press) was included in a recent issue of *Reformation Today*. This volume has defects to which attention was drawn but as a publishing achievement it is a superb work. Now Paternosters have produced the beginning of another *magnum opus* in the form of *The New International Dictionary of New Testament Theology*, volume one. There are to be three volumes in all. We are grateful to Terry Hemming formerly a journalist but now the minister of a church at Bournemouth, for his review.

*The Genius of Puritanism* by Peter Lewis, 144 pages, is now available from Carey Publications at £1.50. Those who wonder why we appreciate the Puritans may find the answer here. The book is a helpful introduction to the Puritans with a description of the period plus seventeen short biographies. The book describes in detail the essential place in the ministry of preaching, hearing with profit and the application of the truth by way of counselling, particularly the counselling of troubled souls. The engravings have been printed attractively and those who have an artistic flair and like company by way of portraits in their studies, will doubtless be looking for suitable frames for these reproductions in sepia! (Critics please note that some of us believe in contemporary art as well as old engravings!)

Also by Carey Publications a volume by Spurgeon called the *Mourner's Comforter*, 224 pages, 96 pence. With a master touch of tenderness Spurgeon applies the balm of Gilead by expounding Isaiah 6:1-3. We do not know of a more suitable book from a comprehensive point of view on the subject of mourning. It is ideal for bereaved people inasmuch as that sensitive matter is handled obliquely and not head-on.

### Through Many Dangers

Evangelical Press £1.95

I HAVE JUST ENJOYED READING THIS excellent biography. It is the story of the life and work of John Newton and it is by our friend and fellow-labourer Pastor Brian Edwards, minister of our sister church at Hook.

John Newton wrote his own epitaph which is still to be seen on a wall plaque in St. Mary Woolnoth, in the City of London, where he ministered as Rector from 1779 until his death in 1807, at the age of eighty two. It reads 'John Newton, clerk, once an infidel and libertine, a servant of slaves in Africa, was, by the rich mercy of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, preserved, restored, pardoned and appointed to preach the faith he had long laboured to destroy'.

What a story is Newton's! It is a wonder that there are not scores of biographies, especially as his famous hymn 'Amazing Grace' has become so well known. However, at last we have an account worthy of the subject. Some biographers are rather long and technical, full of footnotes and with an eye to satisfying the professional historian; others are short and racy, intended to be read between Clapham Junction and Waterloo. *Through Many Dangers* is in-between and just right. The author has managed to do the (almost) impossible and give us a valuable reference book and a gripping story. It is full and satisfying and yet has not lost the excitement of the subject. The author has resisted the trap into which some Christian biographers fall of giving us a regular two or three page sermon (especially after a 'juicy' detail, as if to ease the conscience); yet woven into the colourful story is the pre-eminence of Jesus Christ and the wonder of God's amazing grace, that saved a wretch like Newton.

Mr. Edwards has researched the background well and vividly portrays the terrible and cruel life of a sailor, particularly on a naval warship; the horrors of the Press Gang; the unspeakably bestial treatment of slaves

and the filth and misery of eighteenth century London. He describes for us the abject poverty of the masses whether in the country or the big city, and the appalling level of infant mortality—indeed, of mortality in general. Did you know that ‘in 1770, of every one thousand children born, and seventeen thousand were, five hundred and fifty three were dead before the age of five’? Entertainment included visits to Tyburn to watch the frequent public hangings, to Bridewell Prison to watch the women prisoners flogged and to Bedlam to watch the insane in cages behaving like animals. As I have read this book, I have often paused to thank almighty God that my family and I have the blessing of being born in this century and not in Newton’s.

As you read you will learn not only about John Newton, but about William Wilberforce, William Cowper, Hannah More, and many others.

The author has revealed a valuable talent. He has given us a book to instruct the mind, edify the soul, thrill the heart and cause every believer to sing praise to an almighty and gracious God. You can give it to your children to read, to your neighbours, to your work colleagues—to anyone. Do not be put off by the price. It contains good illustrations, is well bound and most attractively printed. At £1.95 it costs less than many pay for one meal out, and this is a meal which can be taken by many, and over and over again at that. If necessary fast for a day to get it! Reading it will whet the appetites of some for other Christian literature. Recommend it whenever you can.

In short—this is a brilliant book. I am sure that it will be the ‘standard’ biography for the general reader. May it please God to give it wide circulation quickly and may the author be much helped as he works on another biography, this time the life of William Tyndale which is much needed.

*Harry Kilbride*

**The New International Dictionary of New Testament Theology. Volume 1.** Paternoster Press. Details described in review.

THERE IS A HAPPY MISPRINT IN ONE OF John Stott’s books (*The Mission of the Church in the Modern World*, p. 62) where reference is made to Kittel’s ‘Technological’ Dictionary. Of course it should be *The Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*. This type of word study does indeed provide technology for the preacher in the preparation of his sermons, enabling him to be accurate and to preach according to the true meaning and the words of his text. Wise preachers use ‘Kittel’. But wealth is needed as well as wisdom because the cost for the set of nine ‘Kittel’ volumes published by Eerdmans is over £100 (postage extra). Upon the decease of Kittel, Gerhard Friedrich became the editor. Geoffrey Bromiley completed the herculean task of translation from German into English.

And that is why the book we now turn to for review is so important. Whereas few can afford the massive ‘Kittel’ many will be interested in the above described volume, the beginning of a set of three. Paternosters provide a generous introductory offer of £10.00 which applies up until April 30, 1976, when the book will be selling at £14.00. Volume one covers the letters A-F. The second volume is due in 1976 and the third promised for 1977. The editor is Colin Brown. This work is more conservative than ‘Kittel’ and builds on the information available in that work.

This new dictionary is based on the *Theologisches Begriffslexicon zum Neuen Testament* but is no mere translation, having extra articles by English language scholars. Following the English alphabet (so that a knowledge of Greek and Hebrew is not essential), this volume has 125 major articles and 275 key terms in its 822 pages. Each word is examined in the context of classical Greek, its Old Testament and Rabbinic and New Testament contexts. Most of the names of the contributors (like their articles) have a German



flavour; Bietenhard, Finkenrath, Brandenburger, Battensweiler, etc., but J. I. Packer and J. A. Motyer feature strongly among the English contributors most of whom are colleagues of Colin Brown at Trinity College (Anglican) Bristol. G. R. Beasley-Murray has written on baptism and R. T. Beckwith on infant baptism. Vital issues lying at the very roots of our understanding about such subjects as apostleship, wrath, conversion, divorce, and a host of other subjects are affected by a volume like this which discusses and contends for word meanings in depth.

In his article on 'explain', A. C. Thiselton says, 'In practice the task of hermeneutics is first to recognise and accept the problems of the "distance" between the interpreter and the text, and allow him to disentangle what the text actually says from his own pre-suppositions about what at first it merely *seems* to say in the absence of due critical reflection.' To achieve that, one must understand how the writer intended his words to be understood and as the editor, Colin Brown, comments, 'In order to understand the meaning and significance of Scripture, it is necessary to understand the meaning and use of its language against the background of its history and social structures.' This is not to exalt etymology (the history of the meaning of a word) to be the dictator of a word's meaning, for we read, 'the meaning of any given word in any given context depends at least as much upon the place and use of the word in that context as upon any supposed derivation.'

The volume brings the reader into contact with a wide group of scholars. A great deal of learning is distilled into each article from rabbinic sources, gnostic writings, the latest in the Dead Sea Scroll research as well as Hebrew, Aramaic and Greek studies. Its references to the scholarly works of the German and English-speaking world will stimulate thinking. Much of the discussion is based on exegesis of particular texts and says more than

many commentaries. It will help in the understanding of the flow of biblical theology, for it is a dictionary of the theological ideas of the New Testament. Allowing for the usefulness of a dictionary like this we must ask, How successful is this particular volume? A vital query is the problem of modernism. This book is much more conservative than Kittel, and Colin Brown has added notes whenever he feels the original contributor does not offer the best explanation. There are also notes by the translators and F. F. Bruce. References to J and E sources stick like fishbones in our throats, especially when they come from a lecturer in the Anglican evangelical Trinity College. Even though the work is mostly technical readers ought always to be on the alert and exercise discernment when reading material written by those who do not believe the Scriptures to be 'God breathed' in the way that we do.

The title includes the word 'International'. Is it really international, when the bulk of the contributors are either German or British? Of the 95 contributors and consultants in volume 1, only one Dutchman and one Canadian (studying at Cambridge) were noticed. The only American address was that of an ex-patriate Englishman! This bias is reflected also in the bibliographies. These are divided into two sections, the first being works in the English language and the second, other works. They are up-to-date and provide useful pointers for further investigation but there is little from the Princeton/Westminster tradition and hardly anything from the Dutch-speaking world. It was good to note A. W. Pink and John Owen mentioned in bibliographies when they are often excluded by academic snobbishness!

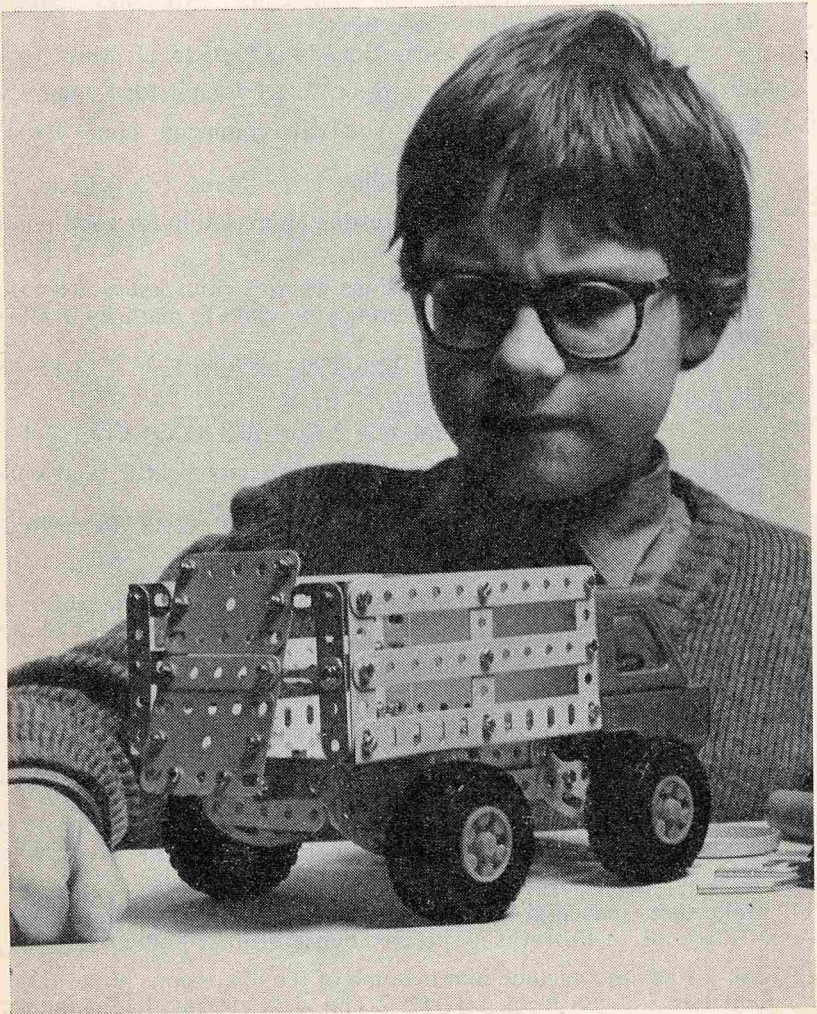
The layout as a whole is highly commended and the binding is well above standard. This is important as such volumes have to stand up to wear long after the dust jacket is discarded. Publishers do well who insist on a sturdy finish to their books and avoid skimping, which is one of the scourges of our age.

Terry Hemming



# How to grow a child for God

*by Wayne Mack*



### *34 Suggestions to parents on how to grow a child for God*

Some of the texts quoted in support of the suggestions which follow will be seen to be relevant if the analogy is borne in mind of the relationship that Christians have as God's children to their heavenly father, see Hebrews 12:5-10.

1. Pray for your child before it is born, and continue to pray for it afterwards. 1 Sam. 1:11,27,28; Psalm 71:6; Gal. 1:15; 2 Tim. 1:5.
2. Examine your expectations for your child. Are they realistic? Evaluate them in the light of the Bible.  
Gen. 33:12-14; 1 Cor. 13:11; Matt. 18:10.
3. Love him unconditionally. Deut. 7:7; 1 John 4:19; 1 John 4:10.
4. Look for opportunities when you can commend him. Express appreciation to him frequently.  
Phil. 1:3; 1 Thess. 1:2; 2 Thess. 1:3.
5. Seldom criticize without first expressing appreciation for good points.  
1 Cor. 1:3-13.
6. Give him freedom to make decisions where serious issues are not at stake. Your goal should be to bring your child to maturity in Christ and not to dependence on you.  
Prov. 22:6; Col. 1:27-28; Eph. 4:13-15; 6:4.
7. Do not compare him with others.  
Gal. 6:4; 2 Cor. 10:12-13; 1 Cor. 12:4-11.
8. Never mock him or make fun of him. Do not belittle your child. Beware of calling him dumb or clumsy or stupid.  
Matt. 7:12; Eph. 4:29-30; Col. 4:6; Prov. 12:18; Prov. 16:24.
9. Do not scold him unnecessarily in front of others. Matt. 18:15.
10. Never make threats or promises that you do not intend to keep.  
Matt. 5:37; Jas. 5:12; Col. 3:9.
11. Don't be afraid to say 'no' and when you say it, mean it.  
Gen. 18:19; Prov. 29:15; Prov. 22:15; 1 Sam. 3:13.
12. When your child has problems or is a problem, do not over-react, or lose control of yourself. Do not yell or shout or scream at him.  
Eph. 4:26-27; 1 Cor. 16:14; 2 Tim. 2:24-25.
13. Communicate optimism and expectancy. Do not communicate by word or action that you have given up on your child and are resigned to his being a failure.  
Philem. 21; 2 Cor. 9:1-2; 1 Cor. 13:7.
14. Make sure your child knows exactly what is expected of him. Most of the book of Proverbs is specific counsel from a Father to his son.
15. Ask his advice—include him in some of the discussions about family activities.  
Rom. 1:11-12; 2 Tim. 4:11; 1 Tim. 4:12; John 6:5.





16. When you make a mistake with your child admit it and ask your child for forgiveness. Matt. 5:23-24; Jas. 5:16.
17. Have family conferences where you discuss:
 

a. Aims of the family	b. Family projects
c. Vacations	d. Devotions
e. Chores	f. Discipline
g. Complaints	h. Suggestions
i. Problems	

Welcome contributions from your child. Ps. 128; Jas. 1:19.
18. Assess his areas of strength and then encourage him to develop them. Begin with one and encourage him really to develop in this area. 2 Tim. 1:6; 2 Tim. 4:5; 1 Pet. 4:10.
19. Give him much tender loving care. Be free in your expression of love by word and deed. 1 Cor. 13:1-8; 1 Cor. 16:14; John 13:34-35; 1 Thess. 2:7-8.
20. When your child does something well, commend him. Especially let him know when his attitude and effort are what they should be. 1 Thess. 1:3-10; Phil. 1:3-5; Col. 1:3-4; Eph. 1:15.
21. Be more concerned about Christian attitudes and character than you are about performance or athletic skill or clothing or external beauty or intelligence. 1 Sam. 16:7; Gal. 5:22-23; 1 Pet. 3:4-5; Prov. 4:23; Matt. 23:25-28.

22. Have a lot of enjoyment with your child. Plan to have many times of fun and many special events with your children. Make a list of things your family can enjoy together.  
Prov. 5:15-18; Eph. 6:4; Col. 3:21; Eccles. 3:4; Luke 15:22-24; Prov. 15:13; Prov. 17:22.
23. Help your child to learn responsibility by administering discipline fairly consistently, lovingly and promptly.  
Prov. 13:24; 1 Sam. 3:13; Prov. 19:18; Prov. 22:15.
24. Look upon your child as a person growing and developing as well as already a human being. Look upon the task of raising children as a process which takes many years to complete.  
Eph. 6:4; Prov. 22:6; Gal. 6:9; 1 Cor. 15:58; Isa. 28:9-10.
25. Live your convictions consistently. Your children will learn more by observing your example than they will by listening to your words.  
Deut. 6:4-9; 1 Thess. 2:10-12; Phil. 4:9; 2 Tim. 1:5-7.
26. Recognize that you are responsible to prepare your child for life in this world and in the world to come.  
Eph. 6:4; Deut. 6:4-9; Ps. 78:5-7; 2 Tim. 3:15-17.
27. Be very sensitive to the needs, feelings and fears and opinions of your child.  
Matt. 18:10; Col. 3:21.
28. Treat the child as though he is important to you and accepted by you.  
Matt. 18:5-6.
29. Avoid the use of angry or exasperated words.  
Prov. 15:1; Eph. 4:31-32.
30. Maintain the practice of daily Bible reading, discussions and prayer.  
Deut. 6:4-9; 2 Tim. 3:15; Eph. 6:4; Ps. 78:5-8; Ps. 1:1-30; Ps. 119:9-11.
31. Become thoroughly involved as a family in a Biblical church.  
Heb. 10:24-25; Eph. 4:11-16.
32. Make your home a centre of Christian hospitality where your child will be brought into frequent contact with many Christians.  
Rom. 12:13; Heb. 13:1-2; 2 Kings 4:8-37.
33. Make it easy for your child to approach you with problems, difficulties and concerns. Learn to be a good listener. When he needs you give your child your undivided attention. Avoid being a mind reader or an interrupter or a critic. Show an interest in whatever interests your child but seek to guide those interests aright. Make yourself available when your child needs you—even if you are busy.  
Jas. 1:19-20; Jas. 3:13-18; Isa. 3:16-18; 1 Cor. 9:19-23; Phil. 2:3-4.
34. Seek to bring your child to a saving knowledge of Jesus Christ. Labour to bring your child to Christ. Become all things to your child that you might win your child for Christ. God of course must do the saving, bring conviction, give repentance and faith. You however may provide the environment in which God saves by your prayers, godly speech and example, daily devotions and involvement in a sound Biblical church.  
2 Tim. 3:14-17; 2 Tim. 1:5-7; Eph. 6:4; Deut. 6:4-9; Mark 10:13-14; Rom. 10:13-17; 1 Cor. 1:18-21.



*In the first part of his exposition David Kingdon gave the following reasons why the Christian must expect suffering:*

1. *He lives in a world which groans in travail.*
2. *He is identified with Christ.*
3. *Suffering is God's means of chastising the Christian*
4. *Through suffering the Christian is refined*
5. *By suffering the Christian is prepared for glory.*

*How the Christian may prepare for suffering and how he may glorify God in suffering are the practical aspects of the subject now opened up for us.*

## **The Christian in Suffering**

### **part 2**

#### **How The Christian Must Prepare For Suffering**

It is seldom, though not unknown, that a Christian experiences continual suffering. It therefore follows that in times when a Christian is *not* suffering he should be preparing himself against the day when he will suffer, for otherwise he will be caught unprepared spiritually when suffering comes upon him.

How then should the Christian prepare for suffering? In what ways should he strengthen his soul to meet its challenge?

#### *Imitation of Christ*

Firstly, the Christian should prepare himself for suffering by the conscious imitation of Christ. In the first Epistle of Peter we are especially directed to the example of our Lord in suffering as something which is worthy of our imitation. Doubtless the reason for this was that Peter was writing to offer counsel to those who were being severely tried by persecution (1:6,7). He therefore directs his readers' attention to the suffering of our Lord when he was wrongfully persecuted and shamefully ill-treated.

We are not to complain when we are unjustly treated, because our Lord likewise suffered injustice. Rather we are to 'take it patiently (for) this is acceptable with God' (1 Pet. 2:20). To give power to his counsel Peter appeals to the example of the Saviour in his suffering. 'For even hereunto were ye called: because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that ye should follow his steps: Who did no sin, neither was guile found in his mouth' (Isa. 53:9) i.e. he did not sin by reacting to injustice in a wrong way. 'Who, when he was reviled, reviled not again; when he suffered, he threatened not; but committed himself to him that judgeth righteously' (1 Pet. 2:21-23). So, Peter says, we are called—it is our vocation—to accept suffering even when it is undeserved and unjust, because in doing so we shall be imitating Christ's example—we shall be following in his steps. One fears that in our zeal against works as meriting salvation, we have neglected the necessity of imitating our Lord in the

Christian life. But he has left us his suffering as an example to be copied, and copied as faithfully as saved sinners can copy it by the power of the Holy Spirit.

Specifically, our Lord, when he suffered, did not retaliate either with physical force or with words. He was not the revolutionary Christ of modern theology who sanctifies terrorist atrocities provided only that they are committed in the name of justice! He did not act out of a sense of outraged justice when he suffered, nor must we, but he did commit his cause into the hands of his Father, the Judge of all the earth. He was not indifferent to injustice. Rather he waited for vindication, committing himself to him 'that judgeth righteously'. His confidence was amply justified, for on the third day he was 'declared to be the Son of God with power, according to the spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead' (Rom. 1:4). Likewise we must commit ourselves into God's hands for our vindication, which will come on the day of our resurrection from the dead. Meanwhile we are never to strive to vindicate ourselves. That would be to arrogate to ourselves what is the sole prerogative of the God of perfect justice. How many quarrels and how much resentment would be avoided if we as Christians practised this principle!

Our suffering as Christians is perhaps most keenly felt when we suffer for doing good. We feel it deeply when our motives are impugned and our actions are either misunderstood or deliberately misrepresented. The unfairness of it all grips our hearts. But again we are brought back by Peter to the example of Christ, who 'went about doing good' (Acts 10:38) yet he was slain and hanged on a tree (v. 39). Peter lays down the principle that we must willingly accept even unjust and undeserved suffering, and again he gives force to the principle by appealing to the example of Christ our Saviour. 'It is better, if the will of God be so, that ye suffer for well doing, than for evil doing. For Christ also hath once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God' (1 Pet. 3:17,18). None of our Lord's suffering was deserved, for he did no sin (2:22). So, he has left a perfect example of the acceptance of undeserved suffering. 'Therefore,' says Peter, 'since Christ suffered in his body, arm yourselves also with the same attitude . . .' (4:1 NIV).

When we examine how it was that our Lord as perfect man accepted undeserved suffering, we find that he did do so because of his concern to do his Father's will. There can be no doubt that when the sufferings of Calvary wrapped themselves round him in the agony in the garden, our Lord shrank back in horror, and the cry of dereliction makes us understand why—'My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?' (Matt. 27:46). But what carried our Lord through the agony and took him to the cross was his concern to do his Father's will, even if it meant that he could not escape the suffering of death. 'Nevertheless not my will, but thine, be done' (Luke 22:42). Likewise, our acceptance of suffering which is undeserved must be, if we are to follow our Lord's example, in terms of our willingness to submit ourselves to God's will, not grudgingly, but



gladly: 'It is better, *if the will of God be so*, that ye suffer for well doing, than for evil doing' (1 Pet. 3:17).

### *Submission to God's will*

Secondly, we should prepare for suffering by learning at all times to submit to God's will in all things.

We live, as believers, under the sovereignty of the God who works all things after the counsel of his own will (Eph. 1:11) and who 'in all things . . . works for the good of those who love him' (Rom. 8:28, NIV). Unless we are careful the sovereignty of God can be merely a theoretical principle, an intellectual concept, which we forget when the strange providences of God shadow our pleasant pathway. But if day by day we are learning to submit to God's will in all things then we shall not balk at accepting suffering, for this will be seen as included by the will of God in the 'all things' by which God works for the good of his children. Undoubtedly Paul saw suffering as included in the sovereign purpose of God for his children, for it is one of the four marks he gives of our sonship (Rom. 8:14-17). We are God's children if indeed we share in Christ's sufferings (v. 17).

So, then, if we are to be prepared for suffering we must learn that the will of our sovereign God for his children includes suffering. It is a constant item on the agenda. If we take this to heart we shall be less inclined to ask 'Why me?' when suffering comes, and more disposed to say with John Newton:

Since all that I meet  
Shall work for my good,  
The bitter is sweet,  
The medicine is food.

Furthermore, since God as our sovereign Father has the right, which is surely exercised, to chasten each one of his children, suffering must be accepted as included in his will for us. Let us appreciate this: God's right to shape the clay is not confined to his election of some to glory, but is his to exercise throughout our life here on earth. He is still fashioning the pot like a skilled master potter. Paul's words should encourage us to learn submission. 'O man, who art thou that repliest against God? Shall the thing formed say to him that formed it, Why hast thou made me thus? Hath not the potter power over the clay? . . .' (Rom. 9:20,21a). If we are to prepare for suffering, then the sovereignty of God must become much more than a principle around which we organise our theology, it must be truth we live by and truth in which we hope to die.

### *The Glory to be*

Thirdly, we should prepare for suffering by constantly fixing our gaze on the glory which is to be.

This perhaps sounds strange, for the glory which is to be lies beyond the sufferings of this present life. How, then, can we prepare for the suf-

ferings of 'this present time' (Rom. 8:18) by looking beyond them to future glory? The answer is because gazing on glory sets our present sufferings in the right context—that of eternity—and it provides us with the right perspective with which to regard them. If, on the other hand we are time-centred, and earth-bound, then our sufferings will loom larger in our thinking than they should do.

The apostle Paul constantly set his sufferings in the context of eternity, and thus his evaluation of them was markedly different from what ours tends so often to be. He said that 'our present sufferings are not worth comparing with the glory that will be revealed in us' (Rom. 8:18, NIV). They were as nothing when set in the light of eternal glory. And he regarded his trials as a 'light affliction, which is but for a moment', and yet they would bring unsurpassed blessings in their train, 'a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory' (2 Cor. 4:17). It is because so many Christians lack today an eternal perspective upon their sufferings that pain is for them a 'problem' much more than 'a light affliction'. Thus, the only way forward is to cultivate in advance of suffering a spiritual-mindedness which sees this life as always opening out onto the glories of eternity.

### **How The Christian May Glorify God In Suffering**

Suffering can, of course, prove profitless to us if we have the wrong attitude toward it. Just as the children of Israel were not profited by their trials in the wilderness wanderings, so we may refuse to learn from the sufferings we are called upon to pass through on our way to heaven. In fact we may bring much dishonour to the Father's name and much harm to the cause of Christ if our reaction to suffering is no different from that of the worldling.

We shall glorify God if we accept our suffering with resignation. I do not mean by this the resignation of the Stoics, a gritting of the teeth when assailed by the blows of fate. I mean a resignation to the holy, good and wise will of God. I mean a resignation to the mysterious working of his providence. This was the attitude exhibited by Job when he said 'The Lord hath given; the Lord hath taken away. Blessed be the name of the Lord.' Resignation such as this takes the bitterness out of suffering. It makes 'the medicine food'. It saves us from the frustration of trying to escape suffering which God intends for our good. It enables us to follow Murray McCheyne's counsel 'Use afflictions while you have them' (*Lectures*, p. 14, Covenanter Press Edition).

I think the most moving example of this I have come across is in the life of William Carey. On Wednesday, March 11, 1812 disaster struck the Serampore mission. The printing house was burned down by a fire which started accidentally. The loss to the missionaries was immense. Beside their stock of paper, the recently cast Tamil type and the new Chinese metal type (for Marshman's translation) were reduced to a molten mass. More vital still, manuscripts were destroyed which no money



could replace. Carey himself was the chief sufferer. 'Portions of nearly all his Indian Scripture versions; all his Kinarese New Testament; two whole large Old Testament books in Sanskrit; many pages of his Bengali Dictionary; all his Teley Grammar, and much of his Punjabi; a year's work of Marshman and himself on the 'Ramayana', and every vestige of his well-advanced 'Dictionary of Sanskrit and its Indian Cognates'—the magnum opus of his linguistic life—an overwhelming disaster' (Pearce Carey, p. 288). Carey stood amid the ruins and said to Thomason, the Anglican chaplain of the East India Company who came to console him, 'In one night the labours of years are consumed. How unsearchable are the divine ways. I had lately brought some things to the utmost perfection I could, and contemplated the Mission with, perhaps, too much self-congratulation. The Lord has laid me low, that I might look more simply to him.' The following Sunday, Carey preached on Psalm 46, verse 10 'Be still and know that I am God.' He divided the text thus. First, God's right to dispose of us as he pleases. Second, man's duty to acquiesce in his will. Here is practical resignation to the will of God which glorifies him because it bows to his sovereignty.

We shall also glorify God if we accept our suffering with faith. Faith sees the hand of God in the circumstances of suffering. Faith rests on God's wisdom. It reposes in his sovereign purposes. It looks beyond the seen to the unseen. Faith reasons from what God has revealed himself to be to the goodness of his design for his children. Rutherford showed such faith when he said 'All our troubles come to us through Christ's fingers.'

Linked with this is the fact that we shall glorify God in our suffering as we exercise hope. Suffering, in fact, produces hope (Rom. 5:3). Suffering in body increases the hope of resurrection, reminding us that one day our mortal bodies will be raised to be like unto our Saviour's glorious body (Phil. 3:21).

Finally, we glorify God by rejoicing in suffering. Hope and rejoicing are linked together by Paul (Rom. 5:2-5). 'We rejoice in the hope of the glory of God. Not only so, but we also rejoice in our sufferings, because we know that suffering produces perseverance: perseverance, character; and character, hope. And hope does not disappoint us, because God has poured out his love into our hearts by the Holy Spirit, whom he has given us.' When trials, with their attendant suffering, come upon us, James tells us that we are to rejoice (Jas. 1:2). When we have to suffer for the name of Christ we are to be glad (Acts 5:41). When we are persecuted we are to be full of joy (Matt. 5:10-12). When death lays its icy fingers upon us we are to exult because we are going to be with Christ which is far better (Phil. 1:23). And we are to rejoice because the same God who leads us into suffering will release us from it, for from the eyes of his people he shall wipe away every tear, 'and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain' (Rev. 21:4).

*Christmas Evans is an example of a preacher who, having experienced extraordinary power and revival in his ministry, went right off course in doctrine and, inevitably in practice. Robert Oliver brings out many lessons in this biography but the dramatic and sudden recovery of Evans from the crippling error of Sandemanianism is unforgettable. How great is the power of God!*

## Christmas Evans

IN THE EARLY 1790s (WE CANNOT BE CERTAIN OF THE YEAR) A GREAT congregation gathered near Llanelli, in Wales, for a Baptist Association meeting. No meeting-house would hold the vast numbers. Gatherings took place in the fields and a platform was erected from which the ministers could preach. Outstanding ministers were to speak and there was an air of expectancy. But alas, when the time came for the beginning of the meetings the great men had not arrived. Some delay had taken place. The local pastor, who was responsible for the arrangements, was in despair. What should he do?

In his anxiety, he approached Rev. Timothy Thomas, a local minister and an acceptable preacher and begged him to stand in. Thomas refused, but pointed out a young man standing on the edge of the crowd. This individual was tall, haggard, poorly-dressed and had only one eye. A scar marked the place where the other eye had once been. The pastor went up to him and begged him to take the place on the platform and begin to address the people. Members of the congregation were amazed to see the minister beseeching a young, unknown man in this way. Some started to drift away. Others hoped that if the stranger did speak he would have the good sense to keep it short! Despite the doubts, this unlikely character mounted the platform and turned to his Bible, at Colossians, chapter one, verses twenty-one and twenty-two. This he read and began to preach, at first awkwardly and slowly. As he began to open up his text, however, he warmed to the theme of reconciliation. There was such power in his preaching, the Holy Spirit of God being so evidently with him, that the congregation was broken down in worship and in praise to God. When he came to the end of his sermon the people united in a great doxology in which weeping and praising blended in worship. The preachers who were present confessed that God had raised a great man among them. Questions began to be asked by the crowd. Who is he? Where has he come from? How is it we have never heard of him? As they returned home that which was uppermost in all minds was the preaching by the one-eyed minister, Christmas Evans.

### **Early background and conversion**

To answer the questions of the congregation we go back to Christmas day 1766, when a son was born to Samuel and Joanna Evans, who lived in Cardiganshire. He was named Christmas. Samuel was a poor shoe-



maker who died when Christmas was only eight years old. The boy then passed into the care of his uncle, James Lewis, who was a drunkard, without concern for morality, far less for spiritual things. Christmas was utterly neglected, receiving no education. He had worked at various occupations but had no understanding of reading.

Life with his uncle became unbearable, and at seventeen he left home to take a job on a farm. It is from this point that we begin to see a definite work of the Holy Spirit in his heart. He told his friends later that he had been in constant fear of death from his ninth year. Some time after leaving his uncle in 1782 or '83, he began to associate with a Presbyterian church, under the pastorate of David Davies. David Davies, an eminent minister and an outstanding bard, seems to have been a man of standing in Wales at this time. But he was an Arminian and an Arian. He denied that Christ is co-equal and co-eternal with God the Father. Not surprisingly, this Presbyterian church later became a Unitarian church. The process of degeneration had already begun.

Yet, strangely, revival seems to have broken out among the people of the church. Little is known about the source of this awakening, but one of the converts was Christmas Evans. He later wrote: 'What became of the majority of these converts I have never known, but I hope God's grace followed them as it did me, the meanest of the whole.' Later, Evans began to prove that the preaching to which he was listening was decidedly defective. He felt that the whole tenor of David Davies' ministry was to build up the congregation in self-righteousness. At the same time, however, he himself was experiencing a deepening sense of his own wretchedness, corruption and guilt in the sight of a holy God. This made the preaching he was hearing even more unsuitable and useless. He was, however, greatly helped by the preaching of some itinerant Calvinistic Methodists who came into the district, and he began to hear the gospel preached as he had never heard it preached by his own pastor.

One of the immediate results of Christmas Evans's conversion was a deep desire to be able to read and study for himself. With a group of friends, he took steps to this end. He wrote: 'We bought Bibles and candles, and were accustomed to meet together in the evening in the barn of Penyralltawr and thus in about one month I was able to read the Bible in my mother tongue.' What zeal conversion imparts to a man when he wants to read! 'I was vastly delighted with so much learning. This, however, did not satisfy me, but I borrowed books and learned a little English. Mr. Davies, my pastor, understood that I thirsted for knowledge and took me to his school where I stayed for six months. There I went through the Latin grammar. But so low were my circumstances that I could stay there no longer.'

It was at this time that Christmas Evans lost his eye. Because of his conversion, he began to part company with his old friends. Inevitably tensions arose. His drinking companions were furious at the rebuke to

themselves in Evans' changed life. So they decided to way-lay him one evening. He was returning to his lodgings one night when six of them set on him in the dark and beat him with sticks. A blow across one eye deprived it of its sight. Thus when he emerged as a minister he was known as the one-eyed Welsh Baptist minister.

### **Preaching efforts and Baptist convictions**

Evans soon became aware of a concern to preach. Probably he was not yet enjoying the full liberty of the gospel but he was burdened to spread abroad what he knew. The Presbyterian church, of which he was a member, would not allow anyone to preach except those who had received an academic training. Despite this, he began to speak at cottage meetings and among the Independents.

About this time, one of his fellow Presbyterian members became a Baptist and joined the Baptist church at Aberdare. He began to talk to Christmas Evans of the reason for his change. Evans resisted the whole idea of believers' baptism and argued strongly against it. He said: 'I went home and I therefore fully examined the Scriptures to mark down every passage that mentioned infant baptism, for I believed there were hundreds of such there. But after careful perusal I was terribly disappointed to find none of that character there. I met with about forty passages, all giving their suffrages in favour of baptism on a profession of repentance and faith.' The consequence of this was that Christmas Evans himself applied to the Baptist Church in which his friend, Amos, was now a member and was baptised by Timothy Thomas (the minister referred to earlier), in 1787, at the age of twenty. It appears that this was a time of revival in this Baptist Church. He says that 'scores were added to the church and there was much excitement in the public services'. Christmas Evans found the meetings a great contrast to the staid Presbyterian worship which he had known earlier.

During the night after the loss of his eye, he was deeply impressed by a dream of the judgment day. This awakened in him a great sense of urgency to preach the word of God. His first attempt at a cottage meeting was not particularly successful. He was guilty of plagiarism. The sermon he recited was unfortunately recognised by one of his hearers! This hearer pointed out afterwards what had been done, but said he thought there was hope for the young man—he enjoyed his prayer. Christmas Evans had to confess that it too was borrowed! It was taken from a volume of prayers by Bishop Beveridge. After this timely warning, Evans continued his labours, though with very little success in the early stages. He preached under a great sense of discouragement, with much heaviness of spirit, but felt he must press on.

### **Call to North Wales**

In 1790, Christmas Evans attended a Baptist Association meeting in Brecknock. At this meeting there was a group of ministers from North



Wales who pleaded for men to come to that area. They described the terrible destitution and barrenness which existed in the northerly parts where there was a great shortage of gospel ministers. After some persuasion, Evans agreed to go north to work in Caernarvonshire. He was ordained as a missionary to labour in a very remote hamlet, a place called Llen. His going there seems to have been the occasion of a wonderful change in his ministry. He enjoyed much confidence in prayer and preaching now proved to be a delight to him. He says: 'I felt the three great things of the kingdom of heaven—righteousness, and peace and joy in the Holy Ghost.'

While in this hamlet, he knew many conversions. The church was established and built up. He married Catherine Jones, a member of the church there. She proved to be an excellent help-meet to him. It was not long, however, before Christmas Evans began to feel the burden and pressure of his pastoral responsibilities together with a very heavy programme of preaching in the areas round about. Friends began to fear he was developing consumption, the scourge of the day. Therefore, he decided to take a holiday and visit the south. He was too poor to own a horse, and so he walked, preaching as he went. This seems to have been a most remarkable tour down into Pembrokeshire. We are told that often the congregations would follow him from one village to the next, some being in this way able to hear fifteen or twenty sermons. He wrote himself, 'I frequently preached out of doors until nightfall, and the praising and singing would continue until daybreak.' Churches received large additions as a result.

After the tour, Evans returned, refreshed, to his work in Caernarvonshire and threw himself into it again. Sometimes he was preaching five times on the Lord's Day, and walking twenty miles to do so. Yet the success of the first year did not continue. Many who were converted joined the Calvinistic Methodists rather than the Baptists. Christmas Evans suggested that there were three reasons for God's displeasure. He was convinced that God was not displeased with his doctrine of baptism. It was scriptural. But the Spirit of God, he maintained, was grieved at the dogmatic, angry and unevangelical manner in which the Baptists defended their distinctive principles. It is not clear whether he believed he was guilty of this himself or whether the fault lay with the church as a whole. The second reason for God's displeasure was the lack of practical godliness in some preachers. Thirdly, he mentioned the defects of character in some of the leading members.

### **Experiences in Anglesey**

Evans became very depressed at this stage, and accepted a call from the churches in the island of Anglesey to serve them for seventeen pounds per year, not a noble sum, even then. Crossing the Menai Straits on Christmas Day 1792, his birthday, he made his home on a corner of the island where there was a cottage and a chapel, on a bleak, exposed piece of

land. There were ten Baptist communities altogether which he was to serve. The cottage was exceedingly dilapidated. There was a stable for the pony under the same roof, the door was rotten, the ceiling too low to allow Evans to stand up, and the broken-down bed was supported by stone slabs.

The churches themselves presented a dismal picture. Baptists had been established on the island only a few years, but were sadly divided. A previous minister had fallen into open disgrace and the reputation of the communities had suffered terribly. In view of this situation, Christmas Evans called a day of fasting and prayer, and he noted: 'Then it pleased the Lord to bless us.' Having waited upon God in this way, he divided the island into four districts. By visiting three places each Sabbath he found that he could give each group a service once a month. In the week he held church meetings and carried out his pastoral activities. As the work prospered, so new chapels had to be built. In two years the ten congregations increased to twenty. Six hundred converts were added to the church. Other preachers emerged, but Evans himself was the pastor and the other preachers functioned under his supervision.

Each year of his stay in Anglesey he made two visits south. The first, in the late spring, would be for the Association meetings and in the winter to plead for funds for the chapel debts. He would go off on a preaching tour to collect money. At that time this was not an uncommon practice when new chapels were being built in England and in Wales. On one occasion he went to a district where there had been sheep-stealers and said he hoped none of these would put ill-gotten money in the offering. It was said that people borrowed money to give! At times his tours were criticised but he said the wealthier south must help the poorer north. His own income was meagre and he wrote pamphlets to eke out his stipend, continuing to live in his poor cottage.

One is impressed at this period with Christmas Evans' serious study. He acquired a fair knowledge of Hebrew and became proficient in Greek. His theology was that of John Owen, whose works he loved, and his commentary was John Gill. Part of this he translated into Welsh. But his preaching was entirely his own. He has been described as the Welsh Bunyan, because he developed a remarkable pictorial method. Like Bunyan, he was unique. I take one example from a sermon in which he refers to Saul of Tarsus before his conversion:

Saul of Tarsus was once a thriving merchant and an extensive ship owner. He had seven vessels of his own, the names of which were, (1) circumcised the eighth day. (2) of the stock of Israel. (3) of the tribe of Benjamin. (4) a Hebrew of the Hebrews. (5) as touching the law, a Pharisee. (6) concerning zeal, persecuting the church. The seventh was a man of war, with which he once set out from the port of Jerusalem, well supplied with ammunition from the arsenal of the chief priests, with a view to destroy a small port at Damascus. He was wonderfully confident, and breathed out threatenings and slaughter. But he had not got far from



port before the Gospel Ship, with Jesus himself as commander on board, hove in sight, and threw such a shell among the merchant fleet that all his ships were instantly on fire. The commotion was tremendous and there was such a volume of smoke that Paul could not see the sun at noon. While the ships were fast sinking, the Gospel commander gave orders that the merchant should be taken on board. 'Saul, Saul, what has become of all thy ships?' 'They are all on fire.' 'What will you do now?' 'Oh, that I may be found in him, not having mine own righteousness which is of the law, but through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith.'

It should be remembered that Evans was preaching against the background of the Napoleonic wars. You will agree that the method is unique.

### **In and out of Sandemanianism**

While Christmas Evans was on Anglesey, he became involved in Sandemanianism. This heresy had developed in Scotland in the earlier eighteenth century. It originated in the Church of Scotland but took hold upon the Scottish Baptists. According to this teaching faith is simply intellectual credence. 'Faith is no more than a belief of the Word of God as true.' There is no idea of trust in this. There was also a concern among the Sandemanians to return to apostolic simplicity. They believed in weekly communion, footwashing, the kiss of peace, and the love-feast. But these things became for them the terms of fellowship and the effect was a bitter exclusiveness. These views spread to Wales in the late eighteenth century. John Richard Jones, of Ramoth, read the works of men like M'Lean and accepted the Sandemanian position. Jones was the ablest Baptist theologian in the north of Wales, but he now denounced his fellow Baptist ministers as being of Babylon, and separated himself from the Welsh Baptists. Through his influence, Christmas Evans accepted these teachings by November 1796. The effect was disastrous. This is what he later said:

The Sandemanian heresy affected me so far as to quench the spirit of prayer for the conversion of sinners, and it induced in my mind a greater regard for the smaller things of the kingdom of heaven than for the greater. I lost the strength which clothed my mind with zeal, confidence and earnestness in the pulpit for the conversion of souls to Christ. My heart retrograded in a manner and I could not realise the testimony of a good conscience. On Sabbath nights after having been in the day exposing and vilifying with all bitterness the errors that prevailed, my conscience felt displeased and reproached me that I had lost nearness to, and walking with God. It had disastrous results among the churches. I lost in Anglesey nearly all my old hearers and we thus almost entirely took down what had taken fifteen years to raise.

Christmas Evans continued in this state for some years and then was confronted with the writings of Andrew Fuller on this subject. Fuller had first written a tract against Sandemanianism entitled *The Great Question*, and later a more detailed exposure of the system, called *Strictures on Sandemanianism*. Then Christmas Evans heard a sermon against it

by Thomas Jones, one of the northern ministers who had not been infected with this heresy. After hearing the sermon, Evans had a remarkable experience, travelling home, when he was delivered from the spell of this system. He says:

I was weary of a cold heart towards Christ and his sacrifice and the work of his Spirit; of a cold heart in the pulpit, in secret and in the study. For fifteen years previously I had felt my heart burning within as if going to Emmaus with Jesus. On a day ever to be remembered by me, as I was going from Dolgellau to Machynlleth, climbing up towards Cader Idris, I considered it to be incumbent upon me to pray, however hard I felt in my heart and however worldly the frame of my spirit was. Having begun in the name of Jesus, I soon felt as it were, the fetters loosening and the old hardness of heart softening, and, as I thought, mountains of frost and snow dissolving and melting within me. This engendered confidence in my soul in the promise of the Holy Ghost. I felt my whole mind relieved from some great bondage. Tears flowed copiously and I was constrained to cry out for the gracious visits of God, by restoring to my soul the joys of his salvation and to visit the churches in Anglesey that were under my care. I embraced in my supplications all the churches of the saints and nearly all the ministries in the principality by their names. This struggle lasted for three hours. It rose again and again, like one wave after another, or a high, flowing tide driven by a strong wind, till my nature became faint by weeping and crying. I resigned myself to Christ, body and soul, gifts and labours, every hour of every day that remained for me and all my cares I committed to Christ. The road was mountainous and lonely and I was wholly alone and suffered no interruption in my wrestling with God.

After this he made a covenant with God pledging himself to renew devotion to his service. The first indication he received of improvement was a new kind of prayer by two of the deacons—a new earnestness for prosperity. Large numbers began to be added to the churches again. In the two succeeding years six hundred persons were added.

### **Move to the South**

In all, Christmas Evans spent nearly thirty-four years as a Baptist minister in Anglesey. In 1823 his wife Catherine died. She had been a faithful and spiritual wife. In the same year serious eye trouble necessitated Evans spending several months at Aberystwyth for treatment. The churches in the island were meanwhile growing and wanted their own pastors. But the other pastors who were appointed were all co-pastors, with Christmas Evans over the whole group. He may have adopted this procedure because he was fascinated with the success of the Calvinistic Methodist system and was reluctant to proceed to complete independency for the churches, even though he did regard that as the ultimate aim. At the same time he was being threatened by legal prosecution for some chapel debts. These difficulties came to a head in 1825. In that year William Morgan was settled as pastor of one of the churches at Holyhead. This proved to be satisfactory and the other churches pressed



even more to move to the same position of independence. They did not always accept the advice of Christmas Evans over this point and he seems to have felt very hurt about it. At this stage he was also accused of being too free in his invitations of the gospel. He had never been a formal hyper-calvinist, but from the beginning preached man's responsibility together with God's sovereignty, and offered the gospel to every creature. It is difficult to see, therefore, why objections arose at this particular time. A number of false accusations convinced some old ministers that his usefulness in Anglesey was over. So, in 1826, he accepted an invitation from the Baptist church in Caerphilly, South Wales. He remained as pastor there for two years.

The news that the mighty preacher, Christmas Evans, was coming south caused great excitement. He was in his sixtieth year and everybody had believed he was wedded to the north. Caerphilly was a poor little village. The Baptist church there had not had a resident minister for some time. How would Christmas Evans fare as a regular pastor to one congregation? There were doubts expressed at the time, but it is now reckoned that some of his greatest sermons belong to this period. From miles around crowds flocked in to hear him. Many conversions took place, and one hundred and forty new members were added to the Baptist church in the two-year pastorate.

Despite this revival, or perhaps because of it, difficulties arose in the church. Over the years when there had been no pastoral supervision, control had been in the hands of the deacons, who wanted to keep it there. Possibly Christmas Evans was too autocratic in his approach to this problem. He certainly did not have much success in solving the problem, and he came to the conclusion that he should leave. A call was received from the Tabernacle Welsh Baptist church in Cardiff, and this he accepted. Several friends felt this was an unwise move, but the end of 1828 saw Evans in Cardiff, accompanied by his second wife, an old friend from the north whom he had married while in Caerphilly.

### **Last pastorate and death**

Though there was not the same abundance of blessing at Cardiff, eighty converts were received into church membership. He had good fellowship with and encouragement from the English Baptist minister who came to visit him every day. Christmas Evans was by this time nearly blind, but he managed to prepare two hundred sermons for publication. He continued to be pressed with calls from the other churches and appeals to go back to Anglesey. Finally he felt it right to move to Caernarvon in 1832. This was his last pastorate. He arrived to find a chapel deeply in debt to the tune of £800, a poor congregation, divided and infected with Sandemanianism. However, his last years here were generally happy ones. Under his ministry the congregations grew, the doctrinal problems seem to have been resolved, good relations were established with Christians of other denominations, particularly the local Independent minister,

William Williams. Christmas Evans was also able to visit his old friends in Anglesey, where he was received with great joy, and it was good to see that the differences of opinion had now subsided. This period was also marked by a campaign which he waged against drink and drunkenness. However, he became concerned that the Temperance movement used the testimonies of former drunkards and attempted to give the movement a religious character.

By 1838 he had been able to raise £400 to pay off the chapel debt. In that year he was faced with a demand for £300 and determined to make a final attempt to collect this money in the south. He realised that this would probably be his last trip and he wrote to the Welsh Baptist magazine to that effect. On April 10th Christmas Evans, his wife and a young minister set off in a gig from Caernarvon; not this time on the pony which had been his means of travel over so much of Wales, but in a little more comfort. He came down into the south, preaching his last Association sermon at Argoed, in Monmouthshire, on the subject, 'For by grace are ye saved'. He went on to preach at several towns and cities, arriving in Swansea on Saturday, July 14th, 1838. He preached twice the following day in the Welsh chapel, and Monday in English at Mount Pleasant chapel he preached a vivid sermon, despite being very weak physically. As he left the pulpit he said, 'This is my last sermon'. He was taken ill that night, died the following Thursday and was buried in Swansea.

### Conclusions

An account of revival inevitably stirs our hearts as we are reminded again of the scale on which God works. The ministry of Christmas Evans should give us fresh hope and a new earnestness in prayer as we read of vast numbers being converted, old churches being revived and new ones springing up.

There is perhaps some danger of imagining that revival makes work easier for Christians. The story of Christmas Evans shows that in one sense this is not so. He was called to endure deep poverty and many personal hardships for the cause of Christ. His self-sacrificing zeal reminds us of the demands revival may make upon us and also rebukes our tendency to slackness.

As well as being an indefatigable evangelist, Evans was also an orthodox Calvinist. He was an admirer of Owen and Gill, although he did not follow the latter into Hyper-Calvinism. Writing to a young minister, he urged, 'Preach the gospel of the grace of God, intelligibly, affectionately and without shame—all the contents of the great book from predestination to glorification'.

As a preacher Evans was unique. It would be wrong to imitate his method, although some tried to do so and made themselves look foolish. We can, however, learn from him. We should note his care to make the truth relevant and vital. He used vivid illustrations to fix doctrine in the



minds of his hearers. His preaching was always earnest. Eternal issues were too serious for him to waste men's time by seeking to entertain them. He was concerned to be affected by the truth himself before he preached. Warning against the danger of a man allowing his method to become divorced from his message, he wrote, 'The blacksmith . . . does not beat the iron to make it hot. . . . Equally vain is the hammer of vociferation unless the matter is brought home with warmth into our hearts'.

We must never forget that great men have their faults. Christmas Evans seems to have been unwilling to share authority. His views on church government were probably not fully worked out. The troubles in Anglesey arose, in part, from his reluctance to allow the full development of the separate local churches. Whilst his concern for immature churches is understandable, a proper system of elders would have provided oversight. Later in Caerphilly there were difficulties with deacons. These events remind us that churches should not neglect the Scriptural teaching on church government while they have comparative leisure. The problems that accompany a revival may make that an unsuitable time to consider the work of reformation.

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*(Continued from page 1)*

### **The Question of Association**

The possibility of a new Association of Reformed Baptist churches was discussed in the editorial of issue 27, the intention there being to highlight the dangers and difficulties confronting us here in the UK. That editorial was a comment, not an exposition, and negative in order that complexities be faced. Letters for and against have been received. To be fair to those in favour news of subsequent developments as well as an exposition in favour of Association by Ken Matranola are due to appear in the next issue.

### **Why Preach to the Dead in Sin?**

*Make you a new heart and a new spirit!* (Ezek. 18:31). The preacher's task is to drive home and apply the Word of the Lord, not explain away that Word. A few have expressed doubt as to whether regeneration is man's responsibility but not one word does the editor recant from the article in the last issue! If Ezekiel was provocative in stressing accountability we ought not to be one whit less so in exposition. Regeneration in its execution is altogether of God. Yet it is man's total responsibility to become regenerate. No man will be able to accuse or blame God for not regenerating him. That is what Ezekiel chapter 18 is all about. The Jews in captivity were putting the blame on God and He would have nothing of it. If a man does not use his legs to carry him to the sanctuary and his ears to hear the Word (which is the instrument of regeneration) then he will be damned for not exercising his legs and his ears. His neglect of the means of grace will be his destruction. *Make you a new heart!* (see also Proverbs 1:20-33).

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