

REFORM- ATION, TODAY'78

THE CENTRALITY OF THE CHURCH IN THE WORK OF THE GOSPEL

THE LOCAL CHURCH

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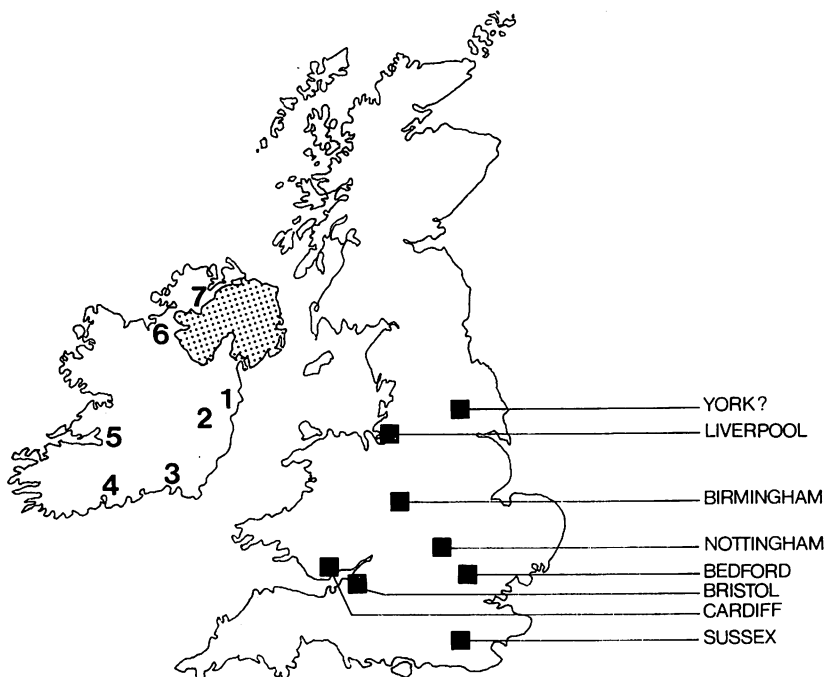
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Care for the Handicapped

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THE CAREY CONFERENCES

The above map points to cities formerly visited for the Carey Conference. Wilfred Kuhrt reports on the recent ministers' conference at Liverpool on page nine. The helpful proximity of Liverpool (which has twice been the venue) for the ministers from Northern and Southern Ireland is readily seen.

Some of the churches in Southern Ireland which have been represented at the Carey Conference are as follows. These are described briefly in the hope that they will be subject to remembrance in our prayers.

1. Grace Baptist Church, Dublin. Formed in 1968, now has 40 members. Chris Robinson is the Pastor.
2. Brannockstown Baptist Church, Co. Kildare. Formed in 1870, now has 26 members. Robert Dunlop is the Pastor.
3. Waterford Baptist Church. Formed in 1650, now has 10 members. Michael Grant is the Pastor.
4. Cork Baptist Church. Formed in 1650, now has 15 members. Ted Kelly is the Pastor.
5. Limerick Baptist Church. Formed in 1891, now has 21 members. Colin Law is the Pastor.
6. Bethany Church, Sligo. Formed in 1969, now has 14 members. Alan Barker is the Pastor.
7. Letterkenny Baptist Church. Formed, we believe, in 1976 with about 10 members. Clive Johnston is the Pastor.

The city of York has been marked with a question mark because a call has come urging that we should endeavour to make that city the venue next January.

The Family Conference in Sussex is temporarily suspended this year. We are concentrating on the two week Family Conference at Clarendon School in the Bedford area. Robert Dunlop of Northern Ireland is one of the guest speakers. If you are interested be sure to write as soon as you can for details to John Rubens, 36 Longden Close, Northwood End, Haynes, Beds. From April 4th, Mr. Rubens' address will be 23 Brickhill Drive, Bedford MK41 7QA.

Editorial

Persecution of Christians in Israel?

A NEW LAW IN ISRAEL WHICH FORBIDS 'ENTICING SOMEONE TO CHANGE RELIGION BY giving material benefits' has, because of the abuse to which it could lead, caused much anxiety. In the hands of a present day Caiaphas it could become a sinister weapon. The *Jerusalem Post* described it as 'the first real anti-missionary legislation ever attempted here'. The penalty for bribing someone to switch faiths will be five years' imprisonment. Wherever possible let us expose this outrageous legislation which is designed to intimidate Jewish people and which smears Christians as bribers. Who in the world would live and die for a cause that has to be built on bribing and corruption? Even a professor in the Hebrew University of Jerusalem (Prof. Werblowsky) has written in the *Jerusalem Post* to say that the legislation is merely the first ripple of a new (or not so new) wave of intolerance. Those in the Knesset who perhaps passed this bill without realizing its implications, need to look at lands like America or Britain where freedom to propagate one's faith is enjoyed by everyone. (Copies of this issue will be sent to the Jewish Embassy in London and to Jewish newspapers in the U.K.)

Theological Training and Pastor Al Martin

The interview with Charles Whitworth on Theological training will help keep the subject in mind. The new venture by way of a church-based Academy for ministerial training at Cedar Grove where Al Martin is the pastor is going well. Our readers may be interested to know that Pastor Martin is due to minister in New Zealand during May this year.

For some time now it has been our intention to publish material on Theological training but a variety of factors has hindered this intention.

Particular Redemption introduced by Hywel Roberts

Believers usually begin to appreciate the nature of what we call 'free grace' when they discover the impotence of natural man to believe and see that the initiative must come from God. He chooses. He calls. He renews. He justifies. The design or extent of the atonement is usually the last of the doctrines of grace to be considered and it is certainly the most difficult. The absolute efficacy of the atonement (Gal. 2:20) for the church is a most glorious and comforting truth. If you personally have problems with the subject or with the article then note how those Welsh leaders grappled with it, and be comforted. A clear grasp of the issues and implications of the doctrine is no small help in the Christian life.

South Africa and the Archbishops

A glance (and it is only a glance) into the extensive correspondence that is carried on may interest our readers. The first two letters concerning South Africa are virtually articles in themselves, full of principle and factual data. The last letter about the archbishops may have its humorous side but it also shows that more and more evangelicals are no longer willing to insist that evangelical Christianity alone is 'the truth of the Gospel'. On the one side of the scale we are confronted by comprehensiveness and on the other we sometimes have to contend with hyper-orthodox or exclusive people who mistake their peculiar brand of evangelicalism for the only valid one.

Cover picture. *The wording on the cover reminds us of the many activities which stem from, and are subject to, the local church. The ministry of C. H. Spurgeon as he was supported by the church at the Tabernacle is an example of widespread and diverse church-based activities. The Tabernacle encouraged and supported the planting of many churches at home and abroad. The words on the cover are not intended as a manifesto and are not intended for scrutiny. However, the word school has been deliberately omitted. A correspondent in America who is an astute observer of ecclesiastical affairs in his country made some terse remarks in his last letter to the effect that, 'the church-school combination has caused more churches and pastors to "bite the dust" than anything else apart perhaps from immorality!'*

The Centrality of the local church in the work of the Gospel

by Baruch Maoz

MANY TODAY ARE SEEKING TO RE-EXAMINE THE PRINCIPLES UPON WHICH they have been operating in various areas of Christian endeavour. This is a very healthy tendency, so long as we steer clear of extreme positions and fashion our new ones with due recourse to the Holy Scriptures. Nor may we ignore the actual circumstances in which they must be applied. The fact that we are questioning things does not necessarily mean that we are suspicious of them. Nor does our insisting that we bring every concept to the bar of Holy Scripture necessarily imply that we reject concepts and patterns hammered out by previous generations. Rather, it is simply another way of asserting that it is our highest desire to do whatever God commands, and that we recognise that God commands us authoritatively nowhere but in the Holy Scriptures.

The thoughts offered here are the fruit of some years of thinking, reading and looking into the Scriptures, coupled with personal observations made in the course of nine years of missionary endeavour. However, I do not presume to have all the answers and would be grateful for criticisms and suggestions made by any of the brethren.

1. The centrality of the church in God's purpose

Ours is a time when there is a growing re-awakening to the doctrine of the church and a natural, as well as a necessary, desire to discover what practical implications are demanded by a more biblical view of the church. The church is God's major tool for the accomplishment of his will on earth. It is 'by the church' that God is to have glory 'throughout all ages, world without end' (Eph. 3:21). Hence the epistles of the New Testament were written almost exclusively to churches. It is *the church* that is the pillar and ground of the truth—not individuals. The Scriptures relate all Gospel work to churches and describe it as issuing therefrom. New Testament Gospel preaching had, as its purpose, not so much the salvation of individual human beings, but the creation by grace of a holy 'people, zealous of good works'.

In this the New Testament is in harmony with the Old. It is true that in both testaments there are cases when the ordinary way through which God works was substituted by him for another—such as in the cases of prophetesses such as Deborah. But even these were always carried out

within the context of *a People* or *a Church*, either as their emissaries or on their behalf.

The church then, is the sphere of God's *evident* saving work. That is why the unity, welfare, purity and health of the church is so important. That is why Paul is so taken up by his concern for the church that he often seems quite literally carried away by it, ready to give his all if only the church might prosper. The examples of this are myriad and do not need proving.

2. The work of the gospel issues out of the church

Since the time in which the charismatic, extraordinary gifts ceased and the Apostles were taken from the church (they having heard the Word of God immediately, that is with no mediating instrument between them and God) it is to and through the church that God has granted his authority to teach, preach, comfort and rebuke men by the Gospel. Like the priesthood, none may legitimately take this office to himself unless it be given him by God—and God gives it through the church as his usual instrument of grace.

That is why Paul, after coming by the grace of God to know Jesus to be both Lord and Christ, returns to his own city until called to Antioch. That is why he does not depart from there until he is sent out by the church—and that is why it is to Antioch that he returns in order to render account. It is true that God had spoken to him through the mouth of Ananias (Acts 9:15-17) and also directly in a vision (Acts 22:21; 26:16-18). But Paul does not embark onto his divinely given calling until the Holy Spirit testifies to the truth of that calling by speaking to the church (Acts 13:2). Nor does Silas join him except with the approval and blessing of the church (*ibid*, 15:40).

It is clear from this that the Holy Scriptures teach that the source of every Gospel endeavour ought to be the church of God and not the desire or personal calling of individual men. Gospel work that follows the Scriptural pattern will issue out of the church, be subservient to its discipline and will be supported by its prayers and blessing.

In these modern days of heightened individualism, we must labour hard so as not to be influenced by the spirit of the age. Modern-day over-occupation with the individual is nothing short of an ungodly selfishness that sets itself over against the Holy Scriptures. We must constantly purge our minds from this kind of thinking if we are to live and to be according to God's good pleasure—and God's good pleasure is to raise up to himself Christian churches for the promotion of holiness, the spread of the Gospel, the encouragement and support of the weak, the rebuke of those that stray and the salvation of sinners to the glory of his own ever-blessed name. Even when John introduces us into heaven, we do not see every redeemed soul sitting on his private cloud singing his own

little song before God. They are all singing together one glorious song of grace. That is how we must learn to live and think and labour.

There might be those who would support individualistic Gospel work by referring to the case of Paul, who engaged in Christian witness almost as soon as he was converted (Acts 9:20 and others). Our reply is firstly, that Paul was undergoing a process in which the light of revelation was becoming more and more clear to him. His later action shows that he awaited the call of the church and then engaged in Gospel work on an official basis. Secondly, what I have said is not to be misconstrued as if to say that no-one should be engaged in active witness except those officially recognised as messengers of the Gospel by their local church. All Christians are to be as lights in the world, holding forth the Word of Life. Those that were scattered in the persecution went about everywhere, bearing witness to the Saviour. What we are speaking of here is the office of an evangelist. That is, of one who devotes the whole or most of his time to the work of the Gospel. However, it must be said, that there are times when local churches might forbid an individual to engage in Christian witness until certain shortcomings in his life are corrected. This, not so much as a disciplinary measure, but as a means of protecting God's name from being blasphemed because of the evident disparity between the personal life of the individual and his verbal profession.

What we then learn from Paul's example in Acts 9 is that we should be constantly engaged in reforming our work so that its pattern will be brought ever closer to that revealed to us in the Holy Scriptures. This means, among other things, that we shall have to look into our present organisational settings in order to see whether or not they are in accordance with the Biblical pattern, and if not, seek to reform or to dismantle them. The point I am stressing is this: our present approach to the work of the Gospel is unbiblical. There is no biblical basis for Missionary Societies as we have them today. According to the Scriptures, it is the local church which initiates, commissions and supervises the Gospel work. It is from and by the local church that such a work is supported. Modern day practice represents a serious departure from the biblical pattern and, as such, carries within itself the seed of error with regard to the whole question of church life and the relation of the individual Christian to the church. Such a situation should surely alarm any who believe that a departure from the Scriptural pattern is a departure from the only right one, and that Christians owe the Holy Scriptures their undivided and unqualified obedience. It is our duty then, to seek God for the grace and wisdom needed to correct the situation—and the sooner we start, the better.

3. Caution about dismantling societies

A word of caution, however, is needed lest we hot-headedly rush to dismantle what most of us have had no part in building and what, under

the hand of God, has served God for many years as a means of saving mercy to countless thousands in many parts of the world.

To start with, reformation does not necessarily have to be the work of a moment. Also we have to do some clear thinking as to what we intend to put in the place of the Missionary Organisations. We will do well to think some more on the subject before we take the axe to hand, lest, in cutting down the bad tree, we also damage that which is good.

I am not sure that the solution lies in leaving the Missions in order to join local churches (if we are not already members of such churches) even if they would thus become responsible for our work. In many cases the church in question does not really know us well, so that our joining is merely symbolic, void of any Scriptural content or substance. It is unlikely that such a church would be able to exercise true pastoral oversight over us. Nor will the church have necessarily commissioned us to the work which we have taken to hand; it is possible that we will have imposed upon them a situation not of their own choosing. For this reason, it seems that, in spite of all the appeal such a solution may hold, there are in it as many shortcomings as there are if we remain in the Missionary Societies and labour under their discipline for the establishment of local churches—to the which we may then submit our work. Either that or we must leave the work for a number of years, go to a country in which a church is to be found, join one, share in its life and labours, and then—if that church would separate us to the work of the Gospel, return to take up the work we left off, this time under the discipline and pastoral oversight of the church of which we have become members.

Perhaps there are cases in which it would be possible to formulate an 'adoption' of the individual by a church in such a way that the pastoral oversight would not be merely theoretical and the material support not the sole mode of support given. This could pertain until such a time when that work could be submitted to the oversight of a local church on the field itself. How this could be worked out in practice is something yet to be seen. I would be happy to have the opinions of others on this matter. It may be that there are no clear principles which may be applied here, and that the details will have to be worked out in the light of each particular case.

Nor is it any solution if we leave the Missionary Societies without joining a local church. We will have accomplished nothing by such a step. By no means would we get closer to the Scriptural pattern, for the Scriptures speak of Gospel work as subservient to the discipline of a local congregation; not of such a work free from Societies. Nor is it right to say that all forms of Missionary Societies are unbiblical, as I hope to show later. It is true that, as most Societies stand today, there is a conflict between conducting the work of the Gospel under *their* jurisdiction and under that of a church, but a situation in which we are not under the

discipline of either Society or church is even worse, because it serves as a fruitful field for all kinds of aberrations similar to the ones with which I have become acquainted in my own country. We are over-run by freelancers who owe account to none. This is a state that encourages the natural sinful inclination of man, and will often lead to men doing little more than living around themselves.

We have in Israel a man who 'felt led by the Holy Spirit to preach the Gospel in Israel'. He forsook his wife and children in New York, 'trusting them to the Lord' (as he described it) with the full assurance that God would provide for them while he ran about in Israel doing all kinds of things in which there was little sense or value. But who is there to call such a man to account? To whom will he listen? How can he be controlled or corrected—and does any of us dare to think that we ourselves will never stand in need of correction? Nor will it do to say that the solution is that Christians supporting free-lance missionaries should only support men whom they are sure they can trust. How can anyone find out how much truth there is in reports that come to them from over the seas? It is the system that is corrupt—and a corrupt system is likely to corrupt the best among us.

4. Co-operation among the churches

There is another important factor which we must now consider—that of cooperation between churches. Often there are churches that are too small to allow themselves to support a messenger of the Gospel beyond their own pastor, and even that might be too heavy a financial burden. There are other cases in which the kind of work is such that, because of the sums involved, no one church could bear the burden alone.

It is not difficult to show that cooperation between churches is a Scriptural practice. Inter-church cooperation was an accepted thing in the New Testament churches. We find Jerusalem sending Barnabas to visit the congregations between that city and Antioch in Syria with a view to encouraging them in the Way. We find Barnabas later settling in Antioch after having brought Saul over with him from Tarsus (Acts 11:22-26). So too, although Paul had been set aside for the work of the Gospel in Antioch, he received financial support from Philippi (Phil. 4:10-17) and Timothy joins him, although he himself is not from Antioch but from Derbe (Acts 15:1-3). Later on we find others from various churches joining themselves to Paul. Paul's band actually developed into a cooperative effort on the part of many of the Asian and European churches in the work of the Gospel. The churches also joined together in sending relief to the 'poor saints which are at Jerusalem', and the gift is brought there by Paul who was accompanied by a group of believers who represented churches in various parts of the Roman Empire.

Further development of the subject by Mr. Maoz is anticipated.

Charles Whitworth worked as an economist in Zambia and Australia before his present studies at the London Bible College. He is a member of the national executive of the Theological Students' Fellowship. He hopes to minister among the independent evangelical churches after his studies. Some pointed questions have been put to Charles by the editor. It is hoped that soon Reformation Today will be able to publish a review of training facilities available in the UK.

Theological Training Today

Why was it necessary for you to undertake college-based theological training?

Two reasons, I think. Having been encouraged by my local assembly to consider the call of God to pastoral ministry, I felt that I needed the discipline that systematic theological study would provide. I suppose that like many in the churches my Christian education had up to that point proved to be rather piecemeal. But I had a second and more personal reason in that I needed a recognised base from which to seek pastoral openings in this country. All my church experience in the previous 4 years had been outside Britain and it would have been very difficult to make direct contacts with British churches.

You study at an 'independent' college at present. There are also denominational colleges which evangelicals have used for training. What would be your assessment of their relative strengths and weaknesses?

Because I expect to work amongst the independent evangelical churches I considered it appropriate to train at an 'independent college'. However one of the strengths of the denominational colleges is their specific pastoral commitment—they exist to train men for their own church ministry. But that very commitment can make it difficult for the outsider who might find some of the denominational stresses irksome. However it is easy for the independents to lose sight of their responsibilities to train men for pastoral ministry. Many of them have quite varied student populations and only a small proportion of these may be heading for pastoral ministry.

One common need for all evangelical colleges is to withstand pressures to lessen their distinctive doctrinal stand. The denominational colleges are under pressure here because they are part of doctrinally comprehensive groupings. The independents may be more subtly influenced to keep in step with the prevailing evangelical consensus however far from biblical orthodoxy that consensus may now be.

What would you say are the main advantages of undertaking a course of formal theological study?

I would put the training of the mind to think carefully and systematically about contemporary theological issues, as the first task. An effective course of training should require to re-examine one's previous convictions within a biblical context and to develop clearcut ideas about the many issues that face us in the churches and in society. If teaching elders and pastors do not have definite convictions about contentious issues both doctrinal and practical then they cannot expect that the rest of the church membership will develop them either. The second task is to prepare men for effective expository preaching ministry. A good overall grasp in OT and NT theology is vital and this should be supplemented by sound exegesis of the text. Knowledge of the biblical languages is

helpful at this point and students need to be encouraged to persevere here. Formal study is necessary for this. Finally it is good to use the opportunity provided by the diverse background of one's fellow-students to learn to discuss constructively the issues that still divide conservative evangelicals. One of the best ways of curbing intra-evangelical polemics is to get men with differing views on secondary issues to train together.

What traps on a personal level does one need to avoid while studying in a collegiate set-up?

One of the main difficulties is presented by the weakening of one's links with the local church. In my case my sending assembly is 14,000 miles away. The demands of college training (Sunday preaching etc.) make integration into a local church fellowship difficult. The absence of these links can generate a sense of unreality and lead to real difficulties in the case of student indiscipline—to whom is the student answerable in such cases? This general sense of unreality can be worsened by the critical and academic context—not necessarily bad in itself—within which one studies. For in assessing alternative views one must be careful of reducing the whole activity to that of an intellectual game. It is easy to forget in such a context that error unchecked can do real damage in the churches. Further one can become adept at picking holes in others' positions yet never attempting any constructive restatement oneself.

Finally Charles what are the implications of some of these things for the leaders and members of the evangelical churches?

First I think a note of rebuke. This is that many young folk are applying to Bible colleges to obtain a standard of teaching that they consider that they are not receiving in their own churches. This is a sad state of affairs and there is real need to raise the standard of ministry that is acceptable in our churches. Next there needs to be a more positive attitude to training in the churches. We do not want to create some sort of theological élite. But those with recognised potential for preaching and teaching should be encouraged towards some systematic theological study. Lastly I hope that the evangelical churches will take a more direct interest in what is taught and done in the colleges. After all if the colleges are not serving the churches they should not be in existence. So at this point the churches should be working to make their voice heard. Constructive criticism is both needed and appreciated.

(continued from page 18)

early nineteenth century that there are important lessons to be gained from the study of historical theology.

The theological issues and points of controversy in the present day are very similar to those of the past. In some cases they are identical.

The doctrine of particular redemption requires careful definition and articulation. 'For whom did Christ die?' is a pertinent question for theologian and preacher alike. The way in which the Calvinist answers this question will determine whether he has really understood his own doctrine. Particular redemption does not limit the inherent worth of Christ's sacrifice, nor does it inhibit the sincere and earnest proclamation of the gospel to all mankind.

Wilfred Kuhrt was born in 1912, baptised as a believer in 1925 and received into the membership at that time of the Gurney Road Baptist Church, Stratford, London. Called to the mission field he served as a missionary in India from 1934 to 1975. He is now co-pastor with his son Brian Kuhrt of the same church into which he was baptised way back in 1925. Here he gives a brief description of the recent Carey Conference for ministers. He then goes on to enlarge on just one matter that arose out of that gathering which proved an immense encouragement to many. The editor does not feel that Peter Lewis' paper was too radical. In his opinion it was long overdue and for some may already be too late. Also it was not possible for Peter Lewis to deal with all contemporary problems and the one raised by Mr. Kuhrt is just as 'hot' or controversial for some, as the issues dealt with by Peter.

The Eighth Carey Conference— Liverpool 1978

IT WOULD BE WRONG TO GIVE THE IMPRESSION THAT A LONG SOJOURN IN India involved complete isolation from profitable fellowship and ministry of the word. However, having viewed from afar and with mounting excitement the revival of interest in the doctrines of grace, one exhilarating aspect of living again in this country has been the opportunity to attend those conferences which are at the centre of this revival.

One of these, the Carey Conference is characterised by a concern for preaching, prayer and practice. The dominant impression left upon at least one person at this year's conference was of tremendous preaching. Each of the three evening sessions was given over to this exercise when Erroll Hulse, Harry Kilbride and Herbert Carson, in that order, were enabled to expound the word to congregations greatly enlarged by visitors from many churches in and around Liverpool. The preaching seemed to increase in power throughout the week so that the effect of the final sermon on 'Heaven or Hell?' (Psalm 1:6) was almost overwhelming. It was fascinating to observe how Geoff Thomas, who had been allotted a slot in the area of Practice, 'Catechism—its use and abuse,' while not neglecting to deal with his subject, succeeded in preaching a remarkable sermon. It would have been abundantly worthwhile for any minister to have been present for the preaching alone.

But the preaching was not alone. Meeting, conferring and praying with 120 brethren from all over the British Isles was another and most stimulating part of the total experience. Prayer sessions before breakfast each morning and at other times brought us into the presence of a sovereign God who delights to give liberally. If one avoids the temptation always to sit at meals alongside one's particular friends it is possible gradually to get to know many of the Lord's dear servants whom one would never

meet at any other time and to learn of their joys and sorrows. The list of names and addresses provided by the conference Secretary greatly assists in this widening of one's horizons. And at this point we must express our gratitude to John Rubens and to the committee that arranges the conference for all the behind-the-scenes industry that made things go so smoothly.

Before applying ourselves to contemporary problems, Frank Ellis in the opening session took us back 200 years with an admirable paper in which he introduced us to Andrew Fuller, for 23 years rope-holder in chief to William Carey. Unremitting toil and great faithfulness in the midst of great affliction were some of the salutary lessons learned from Fuller; it was a good way to begin our conference. The practical matters dealt with were entrusted to Chris Robinson of Dublin (The Nurture of Young Converts), Keith Davies of Camborne (Principles of Church-Planting), Geoff Thomas (Catechisms—their use and abuse) and Peter Lewis (The Reformation of the Reformed). This last subject proved rather too radical for the taste of some. However Peter Lewis's contention that a reformed church must always be reforming itself is undeniably true and most of us need to be disturbed at this point. Whether we needed to be provoked in so radical a manner may be doubted. But this controversial paper did provide an opportunity for the conference to face the challenge of Britain's inner-city and immigrant problems. It was asserted that the attitude of the average reformed baptist church to such matters needed reform. A lively and fruitful discussion followed and it seems probable that the next Carey Conference will include a serious consideration of our home mission task in our vast urban conurbations and amongst Asian and other immigrants.

Presumably most people cannot afford the time to attend all the conferences and consultations that have mushroomed in recent years but the writer, for one, would be very sorry to miss Carey. And if, as happened to me, your wife asks: 'Isn't there a conference I can go to?' why not go together to the Carey Family Conference in August?

I have been asked to enlarge upon an issue which I raised during the Conference. It concerns our immigrant population.

The issue of our multi-racial society

While thinking during the mid-day break over the eloquent paper 'Reformation of the Reformed' I became increasingly astonished at the fact that in all that magnificent rhetoric purporting to be concerned for contemporaneity no mention had been made of what seems our biggest contemporary problem. Indeed one might be forgiven after looking at the make-up of this conference and at its programme for supposing that England was still a comfortable homogeneous community untroubled by racial tensions and colour problems.

Many of our reformed churches and perhaps even this conference need reform in their attitude towards the large immigrant communities that now live with us in these islands and towards the inner city problem that threatens the peace and health of all our large urban areas.

For instance in the borough of Newham there were before the second world war 500,000 inhabitants. Today the population is about half that figure. But out of the present 250,000 not less than 50,000 are Asian immigrants (from India, Pakistan and Ceylon) and that figure, of course, does not include a large W. Indian population and smaller immigrant groups from other parts of the world. In 1945 there were 200 church buildings in the borough, many of them still with fairly good congregations. Today there are only 95 and of that number a good many must be at the point of closing their doors.

Whether we like it or not, our society is now a multi-racial society and we must take a positive attitude towards the missionary challenge that has been brought to our own doorsteps. There are many churches which because of their location hardly know that there are any problems. I would appeal to such congregations to take an interest in these matters and to help us as and when they can (Esther 4:13, 14).¹

Mr. Frank Ellis said that in his church at Greenwich 50% of the congregation is coloured, 25% of the church membership and 80% of the Sunday School. He has also said that he would not himself have chosen to live and exercise ministry in such an area but the Lord had left him no option.

These facts led to a lively and helpful discussion. Later on it was pointed out that generally speaking the church had failed to make any significant impact upon the working classes. Some were not sure whether they agreed that this was the case and several confessed themselves puzzled to know what exactly we meant by the expression 'working class'. Stuart Olyott supported the proposal that Carey Conference should tackle such problems at a later date.

¹ Many of the churches have made valiant efforts to help and to welcome coloured peoples into their congregations and some into their homes. The SB churches at Highbury, Homerton, East Ham (nearly 50% of congregation and 1 of their 4 deacons is W. Indian. A Hindu lady attends the Women's Meeting regularly), Leyton, Lewisham (a very high proportion of coloured people in congregation and S.S.). We in Stratford have not been all that successful in retaining coloured people in our congregation though we rarely have a service in which there are not one or two. We have only two coloured members, a mother and daughter but they are not very regular and I fear we may have trouble with the daughter. Two coloured families (one from Durban and one from W. Indies) stopped coming to our church because we have our S.S. in the afternoon. They wanted to attend church and S.S. in the morning and then spend the rest of the day in various forms of pleasure.

Our S.S. is almost 100% coloured and Homerton, I think, is 100%. Brian has a Bible Class on Sunday afternoon and a Teens' Meeting in his own home on Friday. All in the Bible Class and all in the Teens' Club are West Indian except two girls who are the children of a mixed marriage—an English woman (at least I think she is English) and an Indian father.

Particular Redemption in Perspective

By Hywel Roberts

1. Particular Redemption

THE CALVINISTIC DOCTRINE OF PARTICULAR REDEMPTION STATES THAT THE 'redemption that is in our Lord Jesus Christ' is designed to secure, and to secure infallibly, the salvation of God's elect. This redemption, wrought by the substitutionary sacrifice of Christ, is applied in saving grace through the operation of the Holy Spirit.'

This doctrine is based on numerous scriptural texts which relate the work of Christ as Redeemer to the purpose of God in election. For instance, 'Thou shalt call his name Jesus: for he shall save his people from their sins' (Matt. 1:21), 'The Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many' (Matt. 20:28), and 'All that the Father giveth me shall come to me; and him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out. For I came down from heaven, not to do mine own will, but the will of him that sent me. And this is the Father's will which hath sent me, that of all which he hath given me I should lose nothing, but should raise it up at the last day. And this is the will of him that sent me, that every one which seeth the Son, and believeth on him, may have everlasting life: and I will raise him up at the last day' (Jn. 6: 37-40).

Christ's redemptive work secures the salvation of God's elect. It is evident that this doctrine has far reaching implications concerning the nature and proclamation of the gospel. The Welsh Calvinists of the early nineteenth century, especially the Calvinistic Methodists, fully appreciated this and therefore attached considerable importance to a proper understanding of the doctrine.

2. The Calvinistic Methodists

The founding fathers of Welsh Calvinistic Methodism were Daniel Rowland of Llangeitho, Howell Harris of Trefecca and William Williams of Pantycelyn. Both Rowland and Harris were converted in the year 1735 within the Anglican church, though their subsequent ministry was largely exercised outside of Anglicanism.

Rowland was a powerful preacher who greatly influenced the progress of the Calvinistic Methodist movement in its formative period. Harris was a self styled exhorter who superintended the numerous religious societies which had been formed to nurture the new converts to Methodism. Williams was the theologian and hymn writer of the movement.

The second generation of leaders included Thomas Charles of Bala and Thomas Jones of Denbigh. These two men provided strong and stable leadership during this period of the movement's growth. Charles compiled a valuable Bible dictionary and in the year 1811 presided over the first ordination of Calvinistic Methodist ministers. Jones was an able theologian who entered into many of the theological debates of the time.

The third generation of leaders included John Elias of Anglesey. Elias was a great preacher and a dominant figure within Calvinistic Methodism. It was through his influence that the movement became a denomination in the year 1823. It was in that year that the Confession of Faith and Rules of Discipline were adopted.

Welsh Calvinistic Methodism was thoroughly orthodox in its theology and it breathed the spirit of experimental Calvinism.

3. The Calvinistic Methodists and Particular Redemption

The commonly held view of the early Calvinistic Methodists regarding the atonement was that the sacrifice of Christ was of infinite worth, and that this was the proper ground of the sinner's hope of salvation. The general call was to be given to all men without distinction, that they should draw near and partake of that salvation, notwithstanding the particular covenant relationship that exists between Christ and his elect. This is how Dr. Owen Thomas described their position with regard to the nature and the extent of the atonement.

At the beginning of the 19th century, the English Wesleyan or Arminian Methodists were extending their influence into North Wales. They formed preaching circuits and they militantly opposed the prevailing Calvinistic ministry of the Welsh churches. This in turn led the Calvinists of the Calvinistic Methodist movement and the Baptist and Congregational churches to take a defensive position, in particular with regard to the nature and the extent of the atonement. This resulted in a debate of considerable interest in which three views were held by equally convinced Calvinists. We are here considering a debate that took place not between the Calvinists and the Arminians. It was occasioned by and given a certain importance and significance by reason of the ministry and preaching of the Arminian Methodists. However, this was a debate that took place exclusively amongst the Calvinists of the early 19th century. In the second decade of the century we find these views being represented by three men, great preachers in the several denominations, Christmas Evans, the Baptist minister, John Roberts of Llanbryn-mair, the Congregationalist, and Thomas Jones of Denbigh, the Calvinistic Methodist.

A brief summary of the three views are as follows: Firstly, the view held by Christmas Evans—The nature of the atonement is dependent upon its application to the elect and is therefore not of infinite worth but is a satisfaction exactly equivalent to the sins of the elect and that understood

in a commercial sense. Then the view held by John Roberts—The nature of the atonement is such that there is general benefit to the whole of mankind arising out of the sacrifice of Christ, together with a particular benefit to the elect with regard to their salvation. Then thirdly and lastly, the view held by Thomas Jones—The nature of the atonement is such that the sacrifice of Christ is of infinite intrinsic worth by reason of the fact that he, Christ, is the propitiation for the sins of men, a sacrifice which was purposed in eternity with regard to the salvation of the elect. The position that Thomas Jones held was not far removed from that of Andrew Fuller, the English Baptist, and in these debates Jones was defending the old and established view of the Reformers and the Puritans and in particular the leaders of Calvinistic Methodism, Daniel Rowland, Howell Harris and William Williams of Pantycelyn.

The view held by Christmas Evans

In 1811 Christmas Evans published a book with the title *Particular Redemption*. His intention was to examine what is 'particular' about the redemption that is in our Lord Jesus Christ. He came to the conclusion that there was no Scriptural warrant for stating that Christ died for all men indiscriminately. He declared that the atonement is to be understood in commercial terms, in such terms as you might imagine to be found in 1 Corinthians 6:19,20 '... know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own? For ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body . . .'. That phrase, 'you are bought with a price' is the important one.

Examining this book and the words contained in the Preface, I find these quotations: 'I see that the terms of commercial transactions such as purchase with money and payment of debt as used by the Holy Spirit to set forth the atonement are suitable to convey right views of the matter.' And again, 'Our bills were taken by Jesus to be paid, not something less, not something more, but that which we owe, Jesus has paid'. And thirdly, 'It is necessary that the payment for suffering should be equivalent to the debt of those sins according to their number and magnitude'. These extracts from the Preface present the main theme of the book. Now Christ's satisfaction, according to Christmas Evans, was commensurate with the sins of the elect. The atonement was sufficient to fulfil all the requirements of the Covenant of Grace with regard to the elect. The sufficiency of the atonement does not arise out of its intrinsic or inherent worth but out of its design, out of its application. That is the position that was held by Christmas Evans.

The view held by John Roberts

In 1814 John Roberts published his *General and Particular Purpose of the Sufferings of Jesus Christ*. The argument is developed as was the custom

of the time in a series of questions and answers. John Roberts in this book deals with the matter in the first question, 'Was there any purpose to the death of Christ apart from the salvation of the elect?' This is the answer that he gives, 'The Scriptures teach that there are temporal blessings and these are conveyed generally and indiscriminately to sinners through the sufferings of Jesus Christ: and that only on account of the death of Jesus Christ does God present a general and sincere offer of eternal salvation in the gospel; and that there is the same relation between the blood of Christ and sin as there is between the gospel call and sinners. And apart from this, it is not suitable that sinners should reject Christ and his salvation'.

Then going on to the second question: 'Did not Jesus Christ die for the elect more particularly than for others?' This is his answer, 'The Scriptures declare that as many sinners as are kept to eternal life are kept according to the election of grace and that there is a particular relationship between the elect and Christ's mediatorial work: and that the elect belong to Christ as the whole of fallen mankind belong to Adam: and that Christ, in his sufferings, looked upon his elect as the particular fruit of his labour. However, the worth of the sufferings of Christ should not be divided, it is a one unique and valuable suffering, the basis of all blessings at all times and throughout eternity that God is pleased to bestow upon men'. Roberts goes on in his book to deal with certain other questions in much the same fashion and finally deals with the question, 'How are the general and particular ends of the death of Jesus Christ consistent with each other?' John Roberts admits that he cannot reconcile them, and he declares that this is a scriptural paradox, the general and the particular. There is nothing extreme in this book and it was written in the most moderate language. John Roberts, however, did lay himself open to criticism in many of the phrases and in the terminology that he used. For instance, and I quote this in order to illustrate this point, 'Jesus Christ shall see the travail of his soul not only in the salvation of the elect but in the way that God's glorious government shall shine forth in the punishment of those who disobey the gospel'. This is not what the Scripture text is saying in that context.

The view held by Thomas Jones

We now come to the Calvinistic Methodist. We have considered the Baptist and the Congregationalist, both of them Calvinists, concerning this whole matter of the nature and the extent of the atonement. Now we turn to the views of Thomas Jones of Denbigh. In 1816 Thomas Jones published a book with the title, *Discussions on Redemption*, and the second edition was issued in the year 1819. In this second edition Jones includes his observations on the views of John Roberts and Christmas Evans; namely, ascribing a general application to the work of Christ in redemption by John Roberts; limiting the worth of Christ's sacrifice by

Christmas Evans. This is a masterly theological treatise. Again it is in terms of questions, answers and discussions, and the argument is led on in that way. The discussions begin with a presentation of the different views held by Calvinists on the atonement. He states in cautious terms what he understands to be the doctrine of particular redemption. In this, he follows the teaching of the Reformers and the Puritans.

His argument rests on three points: Firstly, the infinite worth of Christ's sacrifice. He begins there and in a sense he never departs from that point. The way in which he emphasises this is to speak of *Christ* as the propitiation. *He* is the propitiation, and such verses as 1 John 2:2 give substance to this where we are told by the apostle, 'He is the propitiation for our sins: and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world'. And then again in Romans 3:25, in the classic statement with regard to the atonement, 'Whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God; To declare, I say, at this time his righteousness: that he might be just, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus'. Thomas Jones stresses the infinite worth of Christ's sacrifice.

Then his argument rests, secondly, on the fact of a general call to the ungodly. He finds clearly set forth in Scripture the warrant for the general call. For example, you find the apostle Paul, as recorded in Acts 17, in the city of Athens, speaking in this fashion as he addresses himself to the intelligentsia of the city. He says that God 'hath appointed a day, in the which he will judge the world in righteousness by that man whom he hath ordained: whereof he hath given assurance unto all men, in that he hath raised him from the dead'. And in the light of that, 'God commandeth all men everywhere to repent'. There, and in many other passages of Scripture, we find the warrant for the general call, the presentation and proclamation of the gospel to all men indiscriminately.

Then the third part of his argument rests on the responsibility and the guilt of those who reject the gospel. A passage which will help us here on this point is John, chapter 3, following the great statement of verse 16 that 'God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life. For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through him might be saved'. The apostle John then goes on to develop this when he says, 'He that believeth on him is not condemned: but he that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God'. Again in verse 36, 'He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life: and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him'. The argument rests upon these three statements.

Now he develops the argument and he does so by asserting that there is

a sufficiency in the sacrifice of Christ which derives from his person, and that this extends to the whole of mankind, though in the counsel of redemption this sacrifice was intended on the behalf of those for whom Christ had engaged to become their surety. This is very familiar to us.

Summarising the Differences

Further on in the *Discussions on Redemption*, we find that Thomas Jones takes up the argument of John Roberts and then that of Christmas Evans and deals with these positions in turn. Firstly, Thomas Jones with regard to the Congregationalist John Roberts. Dealing with Roberts's assertion that there are general benefits that derive from the atonement, Thomas Jones declares that Christ, through his obedience, merited a mediatorial kingship and not simply a restraining influence upon sin in terms of the providential government of mankind. This shows a certain difference in understanding of the benefits of the atonement between these two men. Then dealing with Roberts's assertion that the sacrifice of Christ would be vindicated even in the righteous judgment of unbelievers, Thomas Jones declares that this view does not take into consideration the difference between God as a righteous judge, taking vengeance upon his enemies, and the work of the divine person incarnate giving himself for sinners to save them from their plight. These examples are sufficient to show that there was no very great disagreement between these two men; it was largely a matter of words and a difference in emphasis.

It was different, however, with regard to the views of Christmas Evans on the nature and extent of the atonement. It evidently grieved Thomas Jones that such a popular and outstanding preacher as Christmas Evans should hold such strange notions regarding the atonement. He objects to his pecuniary or commercial view of the atonement, that Christ's sufferings correspond exactly to the sins of the elect in such a way that if the sins of the elect had been greater, then Christ's sufferings would of necessity have been correspondingly greater. Evans based his argument to some extent upon Leviticus 16:21, 'Aaron shall lay both his hands upon the head of the live goat, and confess over him all the iniquities of the children of Israel, and all their transgressions in all their sins, putting them upon the head of the goat, and shall send him away by the hand of a fit man into the wilderness: And the goat shall bear upon him all their iniquities unto a land not inhabited . . .'. That is part of Evans's case, and it demonstrates some of his weakness with regard to theological argumentation.

In Thomas Jones's discussion, a number of Christmas Evans's assertions are dealt with in turn. In the first of the assertions, Evans declares that 'No doubt no one less than God could purchase a single sinner, and it is necessary that a perfectly pure human nature in union with God should die to buy that one. But it is debatable whether it was necessary that there should have been suffering, such suffering, if only one sinner were to be

saved, for the ransom payment should correspond to the degree of sin according to its nature and magnitude'. Then Thomas Jones answers, 'By this the substance of the teaching is that if Christ bought but one sinner through his death, which death was necessary even for one; if many millions of sinners were to be bought, as must surely be the case, surely Christ could not therefore have multiplied his sufferings correspondingly'. Thomas Jones continues, 'Is there not in this whole concept the indication of a foolish and extravagant imagination?'

In the eighth assertion, Christmas Evans declares that 'It is necessary that the sufficiency of Christ's sacrifice should depend on something apart from its inherent worth'. 'Now,' says Thomas Jones, 'It is on His inherent worth that the sufficiency of the atonement rests, completely and utterly and on nothing else: whereas its efficacy to the church of the elect depends on the Trinitarian Covenant, the Grace of God and the operation of the Holy Spirit.' Thomas Jones continues further on this eighth point, 'It is certain that there is an all sufficiency attached to the atoning sacrifice of Christ according to its greatness and its inherent worth'.

Now you see that the Calvinistic Methodist contributed to this debate in a most significant manner. The debate itself was of great practical importance in the consideration of the doctrine of particular redemption. The Calvinistic Methodists after 1823 became a denomination, and they had a theological college in the town of Bala. Lewis Edwards, first principal of the college had this to say in his appraisal of the contribution of Calvinistic Methodism to Welsh theology, 'In a word the effect of Calvinistic Methodism on Welsh theology was to raise it to a freer, broader, and more evangelical level. A thorough division had taken place among the non-conformists in Wales as in England; one party leaned towards Neonomianism, then to Arminianism, to Arianism and finally to Socinianism. Now in order to keep sufficiently far from this soggy terrain, the other party moved to the dry and arid ground of Hypercalvinism, and some went so far as to limit the worth of the atonement, and to deny the obligation of the ungodly to believe in Christ. Not only that, they argued that the gospel should only be preached to the elect and that the elect are not in a lost condition before they believe. It must be admitted that there is a great broadness in the gospel doctrines as they were developed by Daniel Rowland, Howell Harris, Williams of Pantycelyn, Thomas Charles of Bala, and Thomas Jones of Denbigh. It would be difficult to cite any author who has given a more excellent and complete view of the way of salvation than that which is found in the compositions of William Williams, the great theologian and hymn writer of the Welsh Calvinistic movement'.

4. Conclusion

It is evident from this account of the Welsh Calvinist debates of the

The Strategy of Satan

by Jim van Zyl

There is more than one way of telling a lie. A lie is very effective if it is made to look like the truth!

Satan, whom Jesus calls 'a liar and the father of lies' (John 8:44), is particularly adept at making lies look like truth. In the wilderness temptation (Matt. 4), Satan even used the truths of the Word of God in order to gain a certain end.

The Puritans, so it is commonly confessed today by both Christian and secular scholars, were pastors of the soul *par excellence*. This pastoral insight extended also to the subtle attacks of Satan upon believers. They therefore went to great lengths to outline just how, when and where he attacks believers as well as unbelievers. John Bunyan's *The Holy War* is an excellent example of this kind of writing. But the Puritans, true pastors that they were, went further and expounded in detail the different parts of the Christian armour to be worn in the unceasing battle against Satan. Only the constant wearing of this armour would secure victory!

William Gurnall (*The Christian in Complete Armour*) and Thomas Brooks (*Precious Remedies against Satan's Devices*) describe one of the most subtle of Satan's attacks upon believers, namely, the use of logical but untruthful syllogisms.

If anyone is not sure of the meaning of a syllogism (a way of logical reasoning) this will very soon become clear as we proceed to take one example from Gurnall and one from Brooks.

Am I a hypocrite after all?

In his exposition of the first piece of armour, which Paul outlines in Ephesians 6:14, 'Having your loins girt about with truth,' Gurnall discusses the 'heart sincerity of the true believer' in contrast to the 'hypocrisy of the unbeliever'.

Touching on the words of Psalm 32:2, 'Blessed is the man unto whom the Lord imputes not iniquity, and in whose spirit there is no guile,' Gurnall points out that Satan, having confronted the Christian with this verse, will then get him to reason as follows:

Major premise:

All persons full of guile cannot be sincere and upright.

Minor premise:

But I am someone in whom I constantly discover guile.

Conclusion:

Therefore, I cannot be sincere and cannot be a Christian.

The next step in this agonising process of reasoning, which Satan has skilfully initiated (without the believer being aware of it), is for the Christian to conclude that he has all along been what the Puritans called 'a gospel hypocrite'. That is, a person who has heard the gospel and even made an outward profession of faith in Christ, but in fact is still unregenerate.

At this stage, Satan, having employed a logical-sounding syllogism to which the Christian has responded, has in fact argued the Christian into a spiritual and mental cul-de-sac. And if the Christian happens to be going through a shaky spiritual patch, the consequences can be disastrous. Believing this reasoning to be true (and believing it to be his own reasoning) he ends up in total despair.

The answer is of course the Biblical teaching of sanctification. That is, that when a man becomes a Christian his sin is not eradicated. The remains of the old nature are still with him. Against the tug of old sinful dispositions he will have to struggle till his dying day.

It is precisely here that Holiness move-

ments, which believe in 'sinless perfection' or in 'the eradication of sin' play straight into Satan's hands. What happens? A Christian holding fast to this position suddenly discovers a hitherto unrealised and sinful impulse or even sin. On the heels of this discovery comes Satan's syllogism, as outlined above. Such a Christian can be shattered by such an experience. He can only conclude that he was never a believer in the first place or that he is hopelessly backslidden and in danger of being eternally lost. And at the root lies an ignorance of the true Biblical doctrine of sanctification.

I cannot be a Christian because I have no joy

Brooks suggests a further Satanic syllogism when dealing with the problem of the Christian's lost joy. This is a frequent spiritual experience. The syllogism runs as follows:

Major premise:

All true Christians should know continual joy.

Minor premise:

You do not know such continual joy.

Conclusion:

Therefore you cannot possibly be a Christian!

Brooks' answer to this ploy of Satan is as follows: We must make a clear distinction between *God's grace*, which is of the essence of a regenerate life and therefore indestructible, and *Christian comforts*, which affect a Christian's *sense of well-being*, but no more.

It is unbiblical, Brooks maintains, to argue: 'I have no comfort, therefore I have no grace.' Or, to put it differently: 'I have no present and immediate joy, therefore I am graceless!' This is putting the cart before the horse, putting that which is peripheral in the centre.

The Christian man, Brooks says, must argue thus: 'Though my comfort is gone, yet the God of my comfort abides; though my joy is lost, yet the seeds of grace remain. There may be true grace . . . where there is not a drop of comfort, nor a dram of joy.'



The exposition reminds us of Paul's command that we wear the whole armour of God.

1. The girdle of truth
2. The breastplate of righteousness
3. The Gospel shoes
4. The shield of faith
5. The helmet of salvation
6. The sword of the Spirit

One is reminded of Hudson Taylor when he was recuperating in Switzerland, after an exhausting missionary stint in China. Confiding in his wife, he said, that he could not think, he could not read his Bible, he could not even pray—he could only trust in God's Fatherly love and care.

*A study of the life and teachings of the foremost Anabaptist leader by
Victor Budgen*

Menno Simons (1496-1561)

IN THE CONFUSED RELIGIOUS SCENE OF REFORMATION EUROPE, MENNO Simons is one figure who is now beginning to be seen to be of major significance. At the close of his own account of his conversion and call to the ministry, this former priest who became an Anabaptist preacher describes his life's aim as 'to till the vineyard of the Lord with my little talent, to build up his holy city and to repair the tumble-down walls'. By the grace of God much of this aim was achieved, as I hope we will see in this study.

'Little talent' is Menno's own description of his gifts. In a way this is true and not wholly false modesty. For a start even his appearance was against him. At the age of fifty a friend described him as a 'thick, fat, and heavy man with a wry facial expression and a brown beard who had difficulty walking'. Later in life Menno often signed his letters 'Menno the cripple' or 'one who is lame'. Some authorities have thought he had probably suffered from a stroke.

Also, when Menno crosses swords with such great Reformation figures as Luther, Bullinger, Bucer and Zwingli, he is very much aware of his own lack of learning. About his call to the ministry he writes, '... I was sensible of my limited talents, my unlearnedness....' On several occasions he refers to the views of Martin Luther and acknowledges that the Reformer is 'well gifted with learning, eloquence, subtlety, languages and science'. By his side Menno feels that he is 'less than a fly is to an elephant'. He also feels that he has a 'dull pen and awkward speech'. Menno is certainly no Calvin, with all the writings of the Fathers at his finger-tips. Nor has he the imaginative flair, the soaring flights, the almost poetic quality of Luther. Yet within his limits he is well-read. He can argue a case well. As a tract writer for the common man he is superb. Most important of all, in his wrestling with the biblical texts in their contexts he is thorough, painstaking and often far more accurate than are his better known and more highly lauded contemporaries. I will attempt to prove this.

The call to minister

It was his contact with some Anabaptists who held extreme Munsterite views which finally impelled Menno to leave the Roman Catholic priesthood. Yet it was not to join the revolutionaries that he left, but rather to teach them a better way. One of these revolutionaries, Jan van Geel, travelled from Münster seeking to rouse groups to take up arms in other

localities. He succeeded in Bolsward Frisia where a group of three hundred men accompanied by women occupied the Old Cloister. When the defenders were captured and put to death, van Geel escaped and lived to fight another day. A certain Peter Simons was less fortunate. He was killed. This was Menno's own brother. Later on in a debate with the Reformed theologian Gellius Faber, Menno referred to the 'bitter thrust' when his opponent taunted him with his brother's manner of death. Menno made it clear that he never shared his brother's views.

The immediate response of Menno to the disaster of the Old Cloister was to refute the Münsterite ideas by writing *The Blasphemy of John of Leiden*. In this he makes it clear that there is no other King in the Church apart from Christ, that the new Jerusalem is not a place somewhere in Europe, and that the only sword the church is commanded to wield is the 'spiritual sword', the Word of God.

Menno had no immediate contact with the Münsterite branch of Anabaptism. Indeed, seventeen years after all this he affirms that 'from the beginning until the present moment' he had opposed the Münsterites and all their views. This should be sufficient to show the ignorance of many historians who lump all Anabaptists together. He adds: 'I have pointed and returned several of them to the true way by the grace, assistance and power of the Lord'. Elsewhere, in a work entitled, *The Cross of the Saints* he declares: 'Even as the papists and the Lutherans are not alike, but different, so are we basically different—even more so—from the Münsterites and certain other sects which sprang from them'.

Basic in the errors of these groups was the view that the gospel age was over and a new age had begun. Rothman of Münster specifically wrote on this theme and Joris made such claims. In direct antithesis, Menno announces his commission in this way. 'Brethren, I tell you the truth and lie not. I am no Enoch, I am no Elias, I am not one who sees visions, I am no prophet who can teach and prophesy otherwise that what is written in the Word of God and understood in the Spirit . . . I have no visions nor angelic inspirations. . . . Nor am I a third David.' Consistent with this, as well as telling his readers to test all preachers by the Bible, Menno also urges them to apply the same test to his own writings.

However, at this stage of his life (immediately after the death of his brother) there was a basic inconsistency. He was drawing people from the errors of Münster to a more biblical way, but as Roman Catholic priest was he consistently upholding truth? Had not he himself come to see the unscriptural nature of the Roman Catholic Church? And yet he had done nothing about it. In his conscience he was terribly distressed. He was a renowned champion against the Münsterites. 'The report spread that I could silence these persons beautifully. Everyone defended himself by reference to me, no matter who.' He had done all this but he himself still practised 'hypocritical doctrine and idolatry' and would not

make a stand for truth. By this time, greatly helped by the writings of Luther, Menno had seen the error of the mass. Also, in opposition to the teachings of Luther he had ceased to believe in the rightness of infant baptism.

In many respects he had become a biblical preacher. In the months after the Old Cloister incident he became an Evangelical preacher in a Roman Catholic Church. This was a position that could not be maintained for long. He was greatly challenged by the position of the Münsterites and he himself put it like this. 'I saw that these zealous children, although in error, willingly gave their lives and their estates for their doctrine and their faith. And I was one of those who had disclosed to some of them the abominations of the papal system. But I myself continued in my comfortable life and acknowledged abominations simply in order that I might enjoy physical comfort and escape the cross of Christ.'

Eventually the issue boiled down to this—was he willing to take up the cross of Christ? In answer to this question let Menno speak for himself. 'Then I, without constraint, of a sudden, renounced all my worldly reputation, name and fame, my unchristian abominations, my masses, infant baptism, and my easy life and I willingly submitted to distress and poverty under the heavy cross of Christ. In my weakness I feared God; I sought out the pious and though they were few in number I found some who were zealous and maintained the truth.'

This was to be his life's vocation. For the next twenty-five years of his life he was to pastor and ultimately emerge as the leader of many of the scattered Anabaptist groups. The break with Rome occurred in April, 1535, although he ministered Evangelical truth from within for a further nine months. This break was no snap decision. It was in 1528 that he earnestly began to study the scriptures and by 1531 he disbelieved both in the mass and in infant baptism. As a leader in the hated Anabaptist communities in West Friesland, Menno was a prime subject of attack. At one stage a plan was proposed to Mary of the Netherlands to offer a pardon to certain followers if they would betray their leader. They would not! A year later the emperor himself Charles V intervened. He placed a price of 100 gold guilders on Menno's head. Once again the plot failed. His followers rated him more highly than this!

Throughout his writings Menno makes repeated pleas to authorities and magistrates to deal with him and others fairly and to cease persecution. In one plea directly addressed to the powers that be, *Supplication to All Magistrates* he says, 'how very sadly your unhappy subjects . . . are given to the fowls of the air, are (as was also our Captain Christ) attached to wheels and stakes, so that some of us, and not a few, must naked and plundered wander in foreign lands with our poor, weak wives and little children, bereft of the fatherland, our inheritance, and the fruit of our

heavy toil'. He names many lands where they are 'inhumanly martyred' and states that no kingdom is open to them.

As he reviews eighteen years of ministry among the despised Baptist (I will tend to use this word rather than Anabaptist) groups, Menno contrasts the lot of his family with that of those who so readily mock him. 'At the peril of my life I have been compelled everywhere to drag out an existence in fear. Yes, when the preachers repose on easy beds and soft pillows, we generally have to hide ourselves in out-of-the-way corners. When they at weddings and baptismal banquets revel with pipe, trumpet and lute we have to be on our guard when a dog barks for fear the arresting officer has arrived. When they are greeted as doctors, lords, and teachers by everyone, we have to hear that we are Anabaptists, bootleg preachers, deceivers, and heretics, and be saluted in the devil's name.' How well advised was Menno to weigh the prospects carefully as he contemplated joining the despised Baptist groups!

Towards a biblical religion

Menno's unswerving obedience to the Word of God is beyond dispute. In statement after statement, he avows his allegiance to the scriptures as his sole rule. Christ is the great prophet to whom other prophets look forward. Any one who preaches another Word is cursed. For anyone to set himself up above scripture, the 'revealed and infallible Word' is he says 'horrible blasphemy'. Because Christ is the centre of Scripture, Menno speaks of the 'infallible truth of Jesus Christ' to which we must not add. While the doctrine of Christ and his apostles is central and basic, the Old Testament is important. 'All Scripture both of the Old and New Testament rightly explained according to the intent of Christ Jesus and His holy apostles is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness,' aptly sums up his emphasis.

Therefore, time and time again Menno asserts that councils and great figures of the past or present have no weight with him if they contradict the scriptures. Readers are advised to go to the Old and New Testament not to the 'glosses and opinions of the learned'. 'For against God's Word, neither emperors nor kings, nor doctors, nor licentiates, nor councils, nor proscriptions matter.' On infant baptism Menno tells his readers that since the 'experts, ancient as well as modern' all disagree with one another, 'put your trust in Christ alone and in His Word, and in the sure instruction and practise of His holy apostles'.

In the day of judgement all appeals save those based on scripture will be futile. With words of ringing challenge, Menno appeals to his contemporaries: 'Quote all the councils, authors, and learned teachers there have been for centuries. Appeal to every lord and prince, every emperor, king and mighty one on the earth. Use all the force, power, art and cunning there is; it will avail you nothing.' For himself he prefers above all the

doctors of his day, 'the oldest, most pious, most upright, truest, and most able doctors of the church of Jesus Christ namely Moses, Isaiah, Jeremiah, David, Matthew, Mark, Paul and all the others.' Throughout his writings, he makes incessant appeals to Scripture. Scripture seems to flow from him naturally. Moreover, he never fails to call for obedience. Holiness of conduct is a recurring theme.

What is true for the individual is also true for the church. God's people as a whole are under the directive of God's Word. He argues that the Old and New Testaments are the 'true sceptre and rule by which the Lord's kingdom, house, church, and congregations must be ruled and governed. Everything contrary to Scripture, therefore, whether it be in doctrines, beliefs, sacraments, worship, or life, should be measured by this infallible rule and demolished by this just and divine sceptre, and destroyed without any respect of persons.'

In this connection we must note his balanced attitude to the Old Testament. To the sects who wanted to establish the literal New Jerusalem or who still sought a literal David, Menno's reply was simple. 'If you want to appeal to the literal understanding and transactions of Moses and the prophets, then must you also become Jews, accept circumcision, possess the land of Canaan literally, . . . And you must declare that Christ the promised Saviour has not yet come, He who has changed the literal and sensual ceremonies into new, spiritual and abiding realities.'

However, in this area Menno did not merely combat the Münsterites and their ilk. He constantly carried the battle into the territory of the Reformers, many of whom justified persecution, torture and execution 'with a reference to Moses, Joshua, etc.' as Menno puts it. He adds, 'But they do not reflect that Moses and his successors have served their day with their sword of iron, and that Christ has now given us a new commandment and has girded us with another sword. . . .' He links the Münsterites with the Reformers, since they both fail to see that violence is no part of the church's weapons!

The influence of his life

For his resolute adherence to what he considered clear biblical teaching, Menno became a hunted man. Let us briefly survey where his journeys took him. Following his resignation from the priesthood he laboured for four years in the church at Groningen and in 1541 moved to Amsterdam. Almost immediately, since the government put a price on his head, he had to move rapidly from place to place, a constant fugitive. During his travels, he went to Cologne, Friesland, North Germany, Holstein, Mecklenburg, West and East Prussia. In many places he founded small churches.

Wherever possible he tried to have his books printed and on certain

occasions he had opportunity to engage in debate with men of Reformed persuasion. For these meetings he was promised a safe-conduct and the Reformed group gave a pledge that they would not reveal his residence to the magistracy. Menno was rarely allowed to remain long in the areas mentioned. The days must have been full of hazards and cares.

In one rather uncharacteristic passage, where he is answering the Reformed writer Martin Micron, Menno tells a series of remarkable stories about how those who opposed himself and his followers, came to untimely deaths or disasters. One man had just threatened to destroy Menno when he suddenly slumped down dead at the table. Another who had planned to trap him, died within eight days of announcing it. Menno narrates several more incidents in this vein. He bids Micron take warning!

In the light of certain scriptural passages it may be said that these incidents are neither unlikely nor far-fetched. God can act speedily as judge when men blaspheme his Name, though he does not always do so. It would seem remarkable that Menno survived as he did—remarkable, that is, unless we take into account the protecting hand of God. This is the only explanation.

In 1554, Menno found refuge in the area of Wustenfledt (in Holstein) where a nobleman had been permitting Anabaptist refugees to settle. With the influx of more and more refugees, the king of Denmark tried to persuade Baron von Ahldefeldt to stop his policy of toleration and get rid of them. However, their protector, who had been very impressed with their steadfastness under persecution and who no doubt found them good workmen, refused to change. This was a prolific period for the publication of Menno's works since at least ten books and pamphlets were printed at this time.

It was on this estate that Menno died on 31st January, 1561, twenty-five years after his departure from Rome. One daughter survived him. Much of his work remained, in good, homely, simple writings which had established Menno as the most influential Anabaptist thinker. Above all, a lifetime of heart-breaking endeavour for the Church of Christ left many surviving testimonials in lives both transformed and encouraged. The major group descending from the Anabaptist era is that of the Mennonites. In view of this we may ask why Menno is so little known.

The main reason may be that in so many ways he opposed the Reformers. Writers who have felt a loyalty to them may hesitate to support someone from a group of Christians who sometimes emphasised free-will in an unbalanced way. Most of what follows in this sketch is an endeavour to query whether on the issues under dispute, we should in fact support the Reformers in their opposition to the Baptists. Such loyalty may be misguided. On the issue of free-will for instance, a proper study of Menno's writings shows that he had an overwhelming conviction that it was the grace of God that had saved him. His statements in this connec-

tion are orthodox, personal, devotional and moving. Here is just one sample of a prayer of Menno. 'Blind I am, do thou enlighten me; naked I am, do thou clothe me; wounded, do thou heal me; dead, do thou quicken me. I know of no light, no physician, no life except Thee.' On the doctrine of original sin he is fully biblical. In one of the few hymns he wrote he says:

I, born of Adam's seed
Am sinful-born indeed.

He writes frequently on the doctrine of original sin in a perfectly orthodox vein.

Since most of the Reformers were committed to the belief that everyone in the community belonged to the church, they put a heavy and constant stress on the parable of the wheat and the tares and the Old Testament doctrine of the remnant. Misinterpreting quite deliberately the Baptist viewpoint, they jeered at the concept of the necessity of holiness of life, evangelical works and a 'pure church'. 'Hidden is the church, concealed are the saints,' is the emphasis of Luther.

Never does Menno infer that the church reaches total purity. He acknowledges that Christians still sin. This is obviously reflected in the life of the Christian community: 'We do not boast at all but of the grace of our God through Jesus Christ. Our frailty is great, our stumblings manifold, and we feel with Paul that nothing good dwells in our flesh. Notwithstanding, all true members of the church of Christ strive after the irreproachable, holy existence which is in Christ. . . .' Menno freely admits also that hypocrites may creep into the church undetected. Nevertheless, he is quick to point out that the 'evangelical parable' of the wheat and the tares is interpreted by Christ himself to the disciples and he applies it to the world, not to the church.

'The holy Scriptures and our common faith teach us that the holy, Christian church is an assembly of the righteous and a communion of saints' is the simple verdict of Menno in an early work written about a year after his departure from Rome. Some seventeen years later, he describes in a much longer work the six marks by which the true church is known. They are 1. pure doctrine, 2. the New Testament sacraments, 3. obedience to God's Word, 4. sincere brotherly love, 5. an open confession of God and Christ and 6. bearing the cross of Christ. Against the emphasis of the Reformers that whole populations can be embraced within the church, Menno writes that the number of the elect is always small and 'could never be counted by many hundreds of thousands in any country or city'. Amazed at the excuse which Gellius Faber gives for not practising discipline (he did not know all his people), Menno feels sure that a true shepherd would know all the sheep. With this in mind we can see why Menno disagreed with the Reformers on the doctrines of baptism and church discipline.

We hope to conclude this article in a later issue.

Correspondence

SOUTH AFRICA

*In response to material published in the last issue Pastor Clayton Coles writes to suggest that since the editor no longer lives in South Africa it is inevitable that he is out of touch. That point is conceded. It is incumbent upon any commentator to make doubly sure that he makes up for a deficiency. This I have sought to do by reading books and journals and by maintaining correspondence. Books such as W. A. de Klerk's *The Puritans in Africa*, telling the story by an inside man who has known intimately the Afrikaans leaders of the last forty years, are important. My copy is heavily underlined. I have just completed Oliver Ransford's *The Great Trek*. His treatment of Robert Moffatt and other missionaries is lamentably superficial but his portrayal of men such as Potgieter, Treghardt, Retrief and Pretorius is excellent. In my view commentators who do not reckon adequately with the formative influences upon the Afrikaaner mentality are not worth their salt.*

Jim van Zyl rightly raises the question, 'If we enter into politics where do we draw the line?' The answer to that surely is that we view all life situations, church, home and civil, as subject to Scripture. The difficulty is to establish a right balance and discern correctly how much time should be devoted to particular issues. If the Gospel is affected in a radical way by a civil or political matter then it is important that we apply principles derived from Scripture.

Wilfred Kuhrt (see page 10) shows that racial issues are very much alive in the U.K. Indeed the subject is international. Moreover it cannot be put neatly into the political category for it is a deeply personal and moral matter and this explains why emotions run so deeply about it.

*Two letters in particular regarding South Africa have been so helpful that they ought to be shared. The first is by Jan van Rooyen who is a professor of law at Cape Town University. Until his move to Cape Town recently he was a much valued and esteemed elder of the Reformed Baptist Church at Lynnwood, Pretoria. The letter was addressed to that Church and published in their Church magazine. It is titled *Where Shall we Stand?**

As the year is rushing to its close, our thoughts naturally turn to some of the

challenges of 1978. In many respects, 1977 has been a year of crisis for South Africa. We have suffered increasing economic severity, social tension and upheavals, and political polarisation. The flame of Christian witness in these areas seems to be burning low, flickering dangerously in the winds of conformity and expedience. Humanly speaking, there are indications that we are facing an even tougher future. Where shall we stand? There is space only to touch upon a few areas of challenge.

In the economic area, we are tempted to trim our giving and our hospitality. Yet the words of James 5:3 are clear: 'Your gold and silver have rusted (i.e., it is not being used profitably to the glory of God); and their rust will be a witness against you and will consume your flesh like fire. It is in the Last Days that you have stored up your treasure!' The truth is that, no matter what the economic situation, the tithe principle, the example of the widow and her mite, and the commandment of hospitality remain applicable. This is the time to meet the challenge of being faithful, of remaining true to one's commitments, of making sacrifices, of heeding James 2:14-17.

In the social area, it is essential to remember that while the gospel is not a 'social gospel', it nevertheless has tremendous social implications. In many ways, the Church has fallen behind the State, instead of providing light for the way ahead. Our love for and association with our non-white brothers and sisters should be consistent and open. The message of Acts 10 is quite clear, as is the challenge of Paul's rebuke of Peter in Galatians 2:11-13ff. The prime target (outside of the local fellowship) for our love, support, comfort and prayer should be our suffering Black and Brown brethren in our urban townships, and only thereafter those suffering in other African states, in Russia, China and other countries. 'Charity begins at home.' In addition, we must strive to uphold and propound the dignity of all men as bearers of the image of God.

It is often said Christians should stay out of the political area. If by this is meant that this area falls outside the judgment

of God's Word, or outside the liberating message of the gospel, it is wrong. We must pray for all those in authority—Black, Brown and White. We may not opt for the easy way of uncritical acceptance of or support for all things done by those in authority. Nor may we opt for the easy way of pietistic 'cop-out'. We must instead choose the vastly more difficult way of being the salt of the earth. We must point out that those in authority, too, are fallen and fallible. We must state categorically that we cannot entrust absolute powers to fallen man. We must make it clear that we cannot accept that the authorities can do no wrong or speak no untruth. We may never accept that the end justifies the means. We may never allow that a man be put out of the reach of the law. We must maintain a fearless witness—speaking the truth in love, being willing to suffer persecution if needs be, yet seeking peace with all men if possible.

In these days we must seek to propagate Biblical standards in the economic, social and political fields. We must seek to be true to Christ and His gospel, we must not slip into convenient relativism or expediency. 'If I were trying to please men, I would not be a bond-servant of Christ' (Gal. 1:10).

When Alexander Solzhenitsyn was asked in his 1976 B.B.C. interview what the central point was in all that he said, he responded: 'That between good and evil there is an irreconcilable contradiction ... that one cannot build one's life without regard to this distinction.' It is our task to work this distinction out in the economic, social and political spheres. As the decade of seventy moves into its last stages, we must ask ourselves whether our witness has made an impact upon our children, our friends, our neighbours, our church, our city, our country. May we, by His grace, be true to our calling.

Jan and Anna van Rooyen
Cape Town
November 1977

The second letter is from Vic Leibbrandt who until his retirement was chief native commissioner and chief magistrate to the Transkei, now an independent state of some two million people. Mr. Leibbrandt now devotes his energies to welfare work among Black people. He can speak from a life-

time of experience and from the point of view of direct, present, personal contact with a wide range of Black people. Mr. Leibbrandt sounds out a strong warning about ignorance of South Africa's internal affairs. Outsiders do well to heed this.

When you state that the Blacks in South Africa have been alienated and are not as easy to reach as in other parts of Africa this is partly true as the very rigid laws of our country preclude to a large extent any guidance from outside our boundaries.

Knowing South Africa as you do you will appreciate that White survival is the dominant factor that sways the electorate.

In the recent election many of my English friends voted Nat. purely for this reason i.e., their own security. Even in a predominately English area like the Marine Parade there is no love or even respect for the Black man. Let me quote my own experience.

Until last year I was a member of the local Ratepayers Association looking after the interests of the ratepayers in this more or less select English suburb of Durban. As you know our block of flats is adjacent to the Carpendale Park and in this park a 'White only' sign was removed by the Corporation. The very indignant White ratepayers signed a thousand strong petition to have the sign replaced.

Our Ratepayers Association called for a public meeting to discuss this and other matters and at this meeting I spoke fairly strongly about human relations and the need for all South Africans to break down the horrible barriers that make our country so hated and which in my opinion are neither Christian nor human.

My appeal was rejected outright. The next day I resigned from the Ratepayers Association as I refused to represent citizens who felt like the people who signed the petition. My resignation was given a fair amount of publicity in the *Daily News* and was followed by an editorial in large black letters V. P. Leibbrandt giving me credit for the stand that I had taken. I can assure you that I did not want the publicity but this will serve to show you what the average South African Englishman feels about the Black.

I am happy to say that I do not include the average Afrikaans intellectual in this category but they are indeed a small percentage of the population.

I do not think that I would be far wrong when I state that a large percentage of the White population are anti-Black.

My comments on the South African situation are briefly as follows:

There is an appalling ignorance throughout the Western Democracies of South Africa that includes misconceptions concerning the people, institutions and their existing economic realities.

The vast majority of overseas people have only a superficial knowledge of South Africa. This knowledge has been fostered by a liberal media that gives the impression that Whites deliberately suppress and kill Blacks for their own selfish ends and that all forms of racial discrimination are practised.

Generally these myths and fallacies are regarded as being true as there is little organised opposition to them.

The liberal world is emphatic that we can only settle for one man one vote. No other type of development is acceptable.

In actual fact far more is being done in South Africa to help the Blacks than in most other parts of the continent. Vast amounts are being spent on social services such as housing for all the racial groups, education and general welfare. It would take me too long to illustrate all these services. As you know I am a member of several welfare organisations and I really feel that we have made tremendous progress in helping the Black man. To achieve success this help will have to be intensified tenfold to obtain positive results. 'Love thy neighbour' is a commandment which we as Christians should all obey. How many of us in whatever land we are situated would be prepared to sacrifice ourselves for this purpose? Remember we have approximately 18 million Blacks, 4 million Whites, 2 million Coloureds and 1 million Indians in South Africa. Little wonder that the great majority of the Whites feel that the present Government offers the greatest security.

There can be little doubt that South Africa will have to accept the fact that she will have to go it alone and work out her own salvation.

It would seem that some elements in the world outside South Africa are not really so much concerned in obtaining democ-

racy for the Blacks but rather the total destruction of the White power that rules them.

I think that you will agree that no country would be prepared to agree to these demands.

What then are we to do?

We will have to watch very closely the process of self-determination that is at present being worked out in Rhodesia and South West Africa. How far will White security be maintained and how long will the Whites be prepared to live with the Blacks in a multi-racial society. Elsewhere in Africa this has not worked out and the Whites in this country will require a lot of convincing that it will work here.

My own considered opinion is that our only solution is a really concerted effort to win over all the racial groups and nationalities in South Africa. I believe that this can be done if the Government and the White population show a genuine interest and desire to improve the lot of the Blacks, housing, education, welfare and all the other aspects of administration must be given priority. Job opportunities must be made available and the wretched master and servant complex that pervades our society must disappear.

Equal rights and economic well being should ultimately be obtained for all racial groups but not by the destruction of one of these groups.

What a wealth of power we would have if only we could use all the material, manpower and economic potential of this country for the mutual benefit of all who live here.

Whites and Blacks have roots here that go back for hundreds of years and we should all be proud of our heritage.

I really feel that the true South Africans must accept a more positive and optimistic outlook in order that we can succeed and will succeed in bringing peace and prosperity to all who live here.

I shall always remember the greatness of Britain in the last war. Despite tremendous odds, with God's help and the will to succeed they overcame their problems. I can only hope and pray that we can do the same.

Vic Leibbrandt,
Durban,
February 1978.

GUITARS IN WORSHIP?

From a correspondent abroad

Having read your book on experience I am anxious to know if you are advocating the use of guitar accompaniment and modern hymns, rather than the traditional hymns and the organ?

In reply to your question about guitars. I am an idealist in the matter of music. Unless there is a revival of the most extraordinary kind we will probably never live to see what I would prefer. This is the singing of the psalms in modern language to music which is modern but not jangling or copied from pop artists or imposed upon us by Charismatics. I greatly regret that the Reformed movement has not created a music and culture of its own. Perhaps that will come. The idea of having to copy the world is horrible but we have to accept that in many cases tunes have been taken from the world and adapted. With the passing of time their source is forgotten. The most blatant case of copying I have come across was during the time the Beatles were at the apex of their popularity. I was invited to preach at a meeting where a quartet lined up and performed as though they had spent a year in a Beatle Academy. My personal taste is not for the guitar. I have enjoyed the way in which the trumpet is used in the Ref. Baptist church at Media, Pennsylvania. Whatever instrument is used we can inadvertently lay the foundation for future abuse, because very soon these forms can turn into entertainment in which the centre is no longer God but rather the entertainer and his or her arts.

I hear reports that people in a large city Church in England are complaining because their magnificent orchestra has displaced preaching as the main source of attraction and now consumes a major portion of their time at the expense of that which is more edifying.

I heartily endorse the sentiments expressed by Peter Lewis at the recent Carey Conference on the urgent need for contemporaneity. But everything we do should in my view be subject to three tests. 1. Does it pass the test of Scripture? 2. Does it pass the test of Philippians 4:8 (see exposition by Rookmaaker)? 3. Does it please the majority of the participants? The matter is both congregational and cultural. Europeans are not likely to take to Tom-Toms and

most congregations in Zaire are unlikely to like or have a pipe organ. If a sizeable proportion of the congregation was made up of another culture would we be prepared to sing a proportion of our songs in their idiom? That is a very different matter from a handful of radicals trying to force their peculiar musical tastes upon everyone else just because they are absorbed with the latest 'in thing'. We should attempt to have variety so that in the content and style the congregation as a whole is edified. Heavy hymn incantations of doctrine (sometimes in doggerel language) are just as baneful as the light, contentless stuff which is shallow. Both extremes are repugnant to those who appreciate the quality and content of the great heritage of hymns we have in English, which we love, and which we want our children to know and love as well.

This subject is not my forte. Others may come forward who can give very helpful and constructive advice.

PERSEVERING AND FAITHFUL CHURCH MEMBERSHIP!

Before moving to Kidderminster Dr. Tim Bruton and his wife Margaret used to organise the dispatch of Reformation Today. Tim sends news as follows:

'We are a small church, a total of seven families. A number have come and gone in the time we have been in the church. However these have been the ones of Charismatic inclinations and those who remain are single minded and accept Calvinistic teaching. The area around the church is very working class and it has been widely visited in the past and we are resuming door to door visitation again. But the response has been poor. The most encouraging area is the children's work. We have a Sunday School in which Margaret and I help. Margaret has a Bible class of about six teenage girls who have no family links with the church but have come very regularly at an age when most children drift away. We have a children's meeting on a Monday evening and get about 25 children of all sorts with no other church connections. So at least we feel we as a church do have a witness in the area. I think it would be easy for those of us who go the church to give up the struggle and join other churches where it would be less demanding. But we feel that we

must persevere through our difficulties until the Lord grants us reformation and revival.'

Tim Bruton,
106 Abberley Avenue,
Areley Kings,
Stourport-on-Severn,
Worcestershire DY13 0LU.
January 1978.

BOOKS AND COMMENTARIES

From Iain Murray of the Banner of Truth

Many thanks indeed for The Believer's Experience. I read it at once and like it very much. I hope it will do much good and believe that it will.

I winced at some of your comments on recent books (R.T. 41 p. 27). Is it really the case that Blanchard is better for ideas on James than Johnstone? I think you are undervaluing Johnstone: the only way to test a commentary is to use it for preaching. In some ways Johnstone is much better than Manton—at least worth using alongside.

I am involved at the present time in preaching through James and must endorse the views already expressed about Johnstone's commentary. Certainly it is comforting on verses like James 4:5 (unintelligible in the K.J.V.) to find oneself in agreement with one so thorough as Johnstone. But we must remember that for most of us the most difficult aspect of preaching is not ascertaining the meaning of the text or the doctrine (there are so many aids for that) but the presentation of the material in a relevant, arresting and stimulating manner. Also the application of the material to our contemporary situation is essential. While Blanchard is not as robust as Johnstone in the scholarly sense his illustrations are up to date whereas Johnstone hardly illustrates at all. Blanchard's doctrine is sound. His approach is balanced and there is that liveliness which some of the heavier artillery could well do with more of! You have expressed the need for this yourself from time to time. It is not a matter of Blanchard or Johnstone or Blanchard versus Johnstone. I am very glad to have both.

With regard to detail I have just made a random test using James 4:7. Blanchard suggests four helpful reasoned outlines. He brings feeling with two excellent hymn verses: he describes the temper of

our generation: he quotes present-day Bible translations: he cites a contemporary preacher and by way of illustration he refers to a conversation he had with Czechoslovakian pastors. By comparison Johnstone explains the text in a rather pedestrian way and has one helpful illustration.

APPRECIATION OF ARTICLES

Since we receive many letters expressing appreciation we will dare to publish one and at the same time thank those who have written in similar vein.

I have just sent off my subscription for a further two years for *Reformation Today* and this has prompted me to write and say how much I appreciate the magazine. I read half a dozen magazines including —, but none of them compare with *Reformation Today* for really practical helpfulness. I found Walter Chantry's article this month on God's love to the non-elect really helpful in some areas and the articles on Biblical accommodation I found were balanced. May the Lord continue to prosper your ministry.

Pastor F. J. Harris

WHAT VERSION?

Dear Rev. Hulse,

Concerning the subject of modern Bible translations dealt with in your September/October Reformation Today, perhaps attention should be drawn to the fact that many evangelical churches have been using a modern translation, the Revised Standard Version, for several years.

Why has it steadily become so popular as to begin to replace the K.J.V.? Here are a few suggestions.

Firstly, it is regarded by evangelical scholars as accurate. While no translation is perfect (nor was the Septuagint—which the early disciples used!) the limitations of the R.S.V. are not such that render it unsound. Secondly, it is easily readable, being produced in good quality English which makes you aware that it is the Word of God that you are reading.

Thirdly, for the most part our churches consist largely of 'senior citizens' for whom the Bible is still the K.J.V. Young ministers see the need for a modern translation, yet are reluctant to disregard the wishes and needs of those who have been faithfully

supporting the church for some fifty years or more. The R.S.V. meets this need. Its closeness in rendering to the K.J.V. means that it can be followed easily by readers of the K.J.V. who are not made to feel that they are on unfamiliar ground or having unwarranted novelties imposed upon them.

In reply to your comments on the R.S.V. I must frankly confess to prejudice against that translation because of unreliability in places which I esteem as crucial. The best known of these is the substitution of the word expiation for propitiation in Romans 3:25, 1 John 2:2 and 4:10. The word propitiation preserves a principle which is central to our faith, namely, that God is injured in his person by sin. Expiation conveys the idea that a debt has been paid in the same way as restitution made for money stolen. But such restitution does not appease an affronted, injured and angry God. Propitiation means that the personal wrath of God appeased. I feel I cannot compromise about that. It is not a question of defending the K.J.V. My preference is for a modern faithful version which greatly improves on the K.J.V. and is faithful where the R.S.V. is

not. I would like to see the verb in Hebrews 2:17 translated as, 'to make propitiation'. These may seem minor issues to some but I believe they are important.

AMONG THE ARCHBISHOPS!

A report from one of our Carey Publications representatives visiting an evangelical (Anglican Evangelical?) bookshop in a large city.

Having looked in vain through the appropriate shelves for the new title *The Believer's Experience* I determined [to approach the management to redress the matter, but as I did so I spied the familiar cover and there it was in the place of prominence with three other new titles! I examined the other new books to ensure that our author was in appropriate company! Who were these authors to share this exalted position? Cardinal Basil Hume (Roman Catholic archbishop of Westminster) and Anglican archbishops Michael Ramsey and Donald Coggan. Does this mean that E.H. has become an archbishop?!

THE CAREY CONFERENCES ON CASSETTE OR TAPE

THE CAREY CONFERENCES AND WHITEFIELD FELLOWSHIP (WHICH CONSISTS of a fraternity of ministers meeting in Sussex) through Carey Recording Studios, offer on cassette or tape, a wide range of expository and biographical material. The preparation involved for special occasions has ensured a standard which is above average. Given adequate financial support a tremendous ministry could be developed by way of service to ministers in other countries. From its inception *Reformation Today* has been sustained by the generosity of subscribers. Cuckfield Baptist Church is able to meet some of the expense involved for the Carey Conference cassettes which tend to be very much in demand after each conference. But this ministry, if it is to reach anything like its true potential, needs a wider support than than provided by just one church.

Up-to-date lists have just been printed for (1) The Carey Conferences and Whitefield Fellowship, (2) The Cuckfield Pulpit, and (3) Visiting preachers to Cuckfield. When writing to 'The controller' Mr S. D. Hogwood, 13 Lucastes Avenue, Haywards Heath, please specify which list or lists you require.

N.B. A controller is not a new office but one who correlates requests!—and sometimes deciphers them!

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