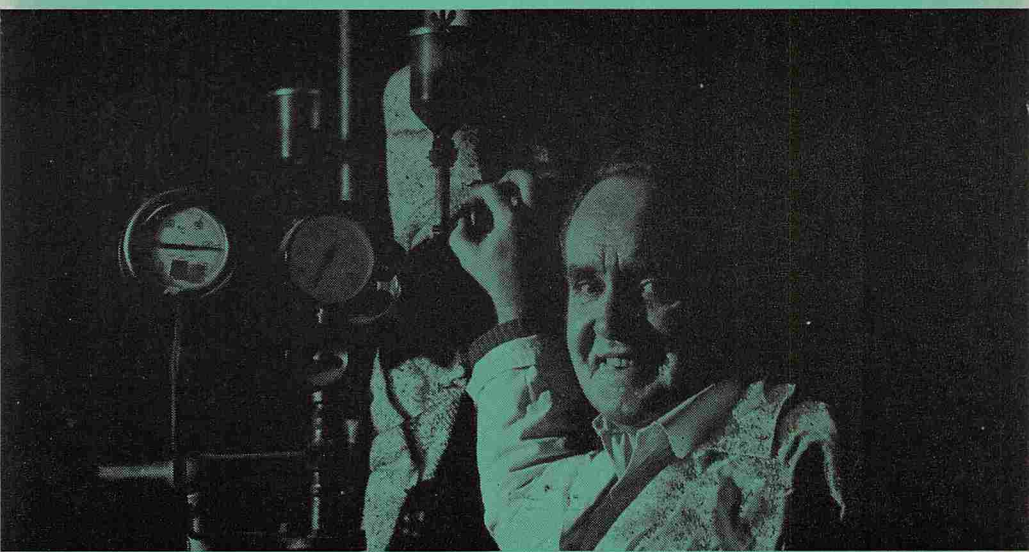


REFORMATION TODAY '78



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Editorial

Encouragement for weary ministers

NUMBERS ATTENDING THE ANNUAL LEICESTER CONFERENCE THIS YEAR WERE NOT far short of 250 which represents a steady increase of ministers of Reformed persuasion who are prepared to engage in the long term work of building up churches on the basis of teaching the whole counsel of Scripture. I spoke to a former Anglican who has a small church in Barton on Humber, South Humber-side where a Reformed ministry has been an unheard of thing for generations. Gradually such ministries have multiplied. It is now much easier to point to churches which can be wholeheartedly recommended. Some large cities are still desolate but others are well served. If a systematic check had to be made I believe it would reveal a tremendous improvement over the country as a whole which surpasses anything of a similar nature this century.

It is important to reflect on cases of disappointment against such a background. During the last year a number of ministers have been turned out of their churches for the crime of preaching the Gospel. Of course there is the suspicion that some may have deserved it! Dogmatic? Ungracious? Unwise? Doctrinaire?—all kinds of contributing factors enter the mind, yet how careful we should be in making judgments on the basis of imagination. There are examples in history of faithful men who, while rejected during some crisis or other, were vindicated afterwards. The gifted Jonathan Edwards was dismissed from his church by 230 votes to 23 in 1750 after a remarkable ministry which had lasted from 1727. The trouble was that he wished to confine the communion table to those who bore satisfactory evidence of being in union with Christ. This went against a cherished tradition which history has shown to be a bad one.

Churches which have been built up carefully over the years often enjoy a wonderful unity. I know of a church of fair proportions which at every annual meeting for fifteen years has enjoyed complete unanimity in all major matters and almost so in minor issues. But even strong churches can suffer testings such as are described in the articles in this issue of *Reformation Today*.

A fair proportion of churches now pastored by men of Reformed conviction are traditional to the core. All kinds of human traditions have accumulated. These are tenaciously held on to as though the prosperity of the kingdom of our Lord depended on them. Little wonder that ministers grow weary and distressed. Little wonder that the tedium involved in such cases tempts some men to give up preaching in preference for other forms of work which seem more rewarding. If some are distressed in the way described then we heartily recommend Herbert Carson's article *Compelled to Preach*.

But before leaving this subject, when we hear of Reformed men who have trouble in the churches because they are trying to introduce changes for the

Cover picture. *If you were to approach this gentleman would you think him to belong to the working class or to the artisan class? What difference, if any, would this make to the way in which you presented your case for believing the Gospel? See editorial comments.*

better and endeavouring to glorify God's grace by proclaiming a pure Gospel, let us not judge them too quickly or too harshly.

Allowance must be made in all denominations and in all evangelical groups for those who temporarily or permanently quit the ministry. The problems of health, family, finance, depression and faith by-pass *no* group. Reformed doctrine does not immunize against breakdown. Paul speaks of Demas who left him because of a love of the world. Demas was probably highly orthodox in doctrine. While all kinds of failures and defections can occur we need to be very careful to avoid false judgments and whatever genuine setbacks there may be, let us measure them against the backdrop of the overall movement. Let us also make generous allowance for those who are compelled to withdraw from the ministry temporarily for no other reason than physical or mental exhaustion. Let us pray for such and remember that Elijah went through such a time. Let us encourage those who might be in a crisis of such a kind. Very often when they return their experience makes them more useful than ever before.

Every situation is different and every pastorate far too complex to permit hasty judgments from outside. I will end these particular reflections by remembering Paul's inspired conclusion to his discourse on the resurrection, 'Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye steadfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord'.

The Church and the Working Class—Carey Conference 1979

At the Carey Conference in Liverpool during the first week of this year it was resolved in general terms that more attention should be given to the subject stated above.

Pastor Ray Joslin of London has devoted time to this important theme. He has agreed (health permitting) to contribute at the next conference which is planned to take place at York, 2nd-4th January next year.

Who are the working classes? 'Economic status is not a true indication of class. Its value as an accurate guide is no longer tenable' says Pastor Joslin, 'and nor can occupation be accepted as a sure indication of class.' 'What is a valid criterion of class? Roy Joslin quotes the writer T. H. Pear: 'Possibly, except where class is objectively signalled by rank and title, the term "class" is most suitably applicable to attitudes in the way in which people regard and treat other people, and are regarded and treated by them!'

This matter of attitude is a key to the subject for 'attitude' makes culture, moulds habits and affects beliefs. There are various types of working class to be found in different parts of the country.

Students of sociology would regard all this as basic. The issue which concerns us is to know more about the different working class groups and to understand how to grapple more effectively with entrenched attitudes in which large numbers of people are uninfluenced by the Gospel and indifferent to it. The problem is far from static. Attitudes are changing all the time, in many instances becoming more and more secular and materialistic and which regard the Gospel as totally irrelevant. Lessons can be learned from the efforts of denominations and movements of the past to solve the problem, but these are of limited value when we face up to the complexities of the challenge today. Of course more is always

achieved by actual experience within a living situation but sharing insights is a help. Not a few will be heartened by the prospect of tackling this subject, The Church and the Working Class, an issue of the utmost relevance in which so many of us showed our ignorance and were ready to confess our ignorance during the discussion period at the recent Carey Conference at Liverpool.

Encouragement from Dublin

A letter from Chris Robinson, pastor of Grace Baptist Church, Pearse Street, Dublin, tells of the provision of a need to which attention was drawn in this magazine and in other places recently. £25,000.00 was needed. Pastor Robinson says:

The Church here in Dublin has almost been bowled over by the generous response from God's people. Our faith was so weak, that really we were surprised by God's answer. People and Churches wrote to us from many places including France, Germany, Australia, U.S.A. and the U.K. We have had two anonymous gifts of two thousand pounds! We have been really challenged by the giving of very small Churches, like the one in Donegal with just about six members, who sent a hundred pounds! Praise God! Counting a bank loan of eight thousand pounds and an interest-free loan of one thousand pounds we have just reached the target of twenty-five thousand pounds. So we have written to the trustees asking if we can finalise things. To God alone be the glory! May the building be used for the exaltation of our blessed Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ! Our sincere thanks to all those who have helped: we greatly appreciate your fellowship in this way.

Barry Bible College Old Students Reunion

The editor was privileged to be the guest preacher at Barry Bible College recently when a record number of Old Students gathered by way of annual reunion. The College does not offer courses rewarded with degrees but aims solely at equipping men for the ministry. Psalm 127 declares that children are the heritage of the Lord and 'happy is the man that has his quiver full of them'. A principle can be applied here inasmuch as it can be suggested that the best recommendation of a Bible College is to observe the ministers and the ministries of those who have been trained there and note the expressions of gratitude and loyalty by the students of former days. Every college like every church is subject to constructive criticism. In positive assessment of worth the testimony of the Old Students is a telling one.

The Evangelical Press Missionary Trust

Under the leadership of Bill Clark encouraging progress continues to be made in the production of books in other languages. The work achieved in the Italian language is considerable. G. Appere's *Dialogue with God*, Walt Chantry's *Today's Gospel* and R. Kuiper's *The Bible Tells Me So*, have been made available while the translation of E. F. Kevan's *Salvation*, J. I. Packer's *Evangelism and the Sovereignty of God*, and Thomas Watson's, *A Divine Cordial* have been translated ready for press.

Six titles are under preparation in Portuguese. One of these is Ch. D. Maire's, *Knowing God to serve Him better*, which is expected from the printer shortly. Financial support for the E.P.M.T. overseas translation work is welcome. The address is, Evangelical Press Missionary Trust, 23a Woodside Road, Digswell, Welwyn, Herts. AL6 ODS.

Compelled to Preach

by Herbert Carson

It is possible to preach the gospel correctly and with much eloquence, and yet to do it for the wrong reasons. Paul quotes men in Rome who, he acknowledged, truly preached Christ but their motives were sadly astray for they were influenced by their personal hostility to him (Phil. 1:15). So it is possible for the preacher of the gospel to have his message clearly formulated, and persuasively presented, and yet to be impelled by inadequate or even unworthy motives.

He may preach simply from a sense of duty. This is a snare to which any man in the regular ministry of the Word is particularly liable. He is billed to preach morning and evening on the coming Sunday. The congregation which he pastors expects him to be there. It is his regular responsibility. But unless he is careful he can easily slip into a routine performance in which he may prepare thoroughly and attempt to preach well—yet it is no more than the act of any other professional who tries to do the job properly for which he is employed. He is after all a minister of the gospel and recognised as such by the church. Preaching can as a result become a dutiful justification of his own existence!

Then again there can be a very unworthy motive, and any preacher who is honest will readily admit that one of the recurring battles in the pulpit is with pride. When the words flow freely, when the arguments are lucidly presented, when the illustrations are appropriate and when clearly the congregation is moved—how subtly the devil works. From the humbling sense of wonder that God should use such a vessel for such a glorious purpose, the sorry decline is all too easy into a warm glow of self-congratulation. Instead of the longing to glorify God, to honour the Saviour and authenticate the gospel, the impelling motive can become a desire for excellence in one's task and a personal satisfaction in evident success. Pride lurks in every study and waits to link arms with us as we come down the pulpit steps.

In face of all this it is good to listen to the Apostle Paul as he speaks of his own motivation. Pride for him has no place at all. 'If I preach the gospel, that gives me no ground for boasting' (1 Cor. 9:16). How could a man think of boasting when as Paul writes elsewhere he has been put in trust with the gospel (1 Thess. 2:4). A bank cashier who boasted of all the money he had in his till would only make himself ridiculous, for it is not his money—he has simply been entrusted with it. So too the preacher is purely the trustee of the gospel, and while he has a solemn responsibility to discharge his trust, he is a fool if he becomes proud in doing so. 'God forbid that I should glory save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ' (Gal. 6:14).

Paul goes on in 1 Corinthians 9:16 to give the positive reason for his passionate gospel preaching. 'Necessity is laid upon me. Woe to me if I do not preach the gospel.' The compulsion which drives him on is not simply that of duty. It is the constraint of God which has been laid upon him, and in face of that he cannot do anything else but preach. He would have readily echoed Jeremiah's personal confession at a time when the prophet was tempted by the daunting hostility of men to mute his preaching. 'If I say, "I will not mention him, or speak any more in his name," there is in my heart as it were a burning fire shut up in my bones, and I am weary with holding it in, and I cannot' (20:9).

To speak of the necessity of God laid upon the preacher's soul, is of course to speak of God as he is revealed in Scripture. It is to speak of the Tri-une God, Father Son and Holy Spirit. So the constraint of the Father, the constraint of the Son, the constraint of the Holy Spirit—in the diversity of their personal activity and in the unity of their operation—are laid upon the preacher. This necessity thrusts talk of mere duty into the background and he is compelled to preach.

The necessity of God the Father is laid upon him by virtue of the divine purposes of election. It is the eternal purpose of God to reach into a rebel race and to call out his elect. With this purpose in view he sent the Son to accomplish redemption. For the same reason he was sent the Spirit to apply redemption. Some preachers have begun with these great truths, and then sadly have reached a totally wrong conclusion that it is not for us to plead with sinners and call them to repentance, for it is God's work. But what they fail to see is that while it certainly is God's work, he not only purposes the end which is the salvation of his elect, but he also purposes the means to the end which is the faithful preaching of the gospel. It is as the preacher issues the urgent demand 'God now commands all men everywhere to repent' (Acts 17:30), and when he pleads with men 'Come now and let us reason together saith the Lord' (Is. 1:18), 'Turn back, turn back from your evil ways for why will you die?' (Ezek. 33:11)—it is through this agency that God in sovereign mercy has chosen to apply his saving grace.

On the positive side this awareness of the electing grace of God, with the consequent realisation that all the elect will be gathered in, gives a great incentive to the preacher. Our labour is not in vain in the Lord. We are not engaged in a purely human enterprise which may ultimately founder. We are links in the chain of the predestinating purpose of the Almighty. To sense the wonder of this is to be raised to a new awareness of the glory of the preacher's task. This is what it means to have the necessity of God laid upon us.

Then again the necessity of God the Son is laid upon us. The preacher has been ordained by the crucified hands of the head of the Church. The constraint which drives him on in face of hostility or apathy, of opposition or indifference, is the compulsion of Christ himself. 'The love of Christ controls us' writes Paul (2 Cor. 5:14) and that may mean both our love for Christ, and his love shed abroad in our hearts and issuing in a concern for others. To love him is to desire to please him, and to please him is to carry out his desires. And what are they? Isaiah gives the answer 'He shall see the fruit of the travail of his soul and be satisfied' (53:11). Like the young mother-to-be looking beyond the blinding agony of labour to the birth of her first born, so the Lord 'for the joy set before him, endured the cross' (Heb. 12:2). And what was the fruit of this indescribable anguish of soul which he endured? Surely the ultimate gathering in of every one he died to redeem.

Here is a vision to transform the preacher's task. He is the divinely appointed agent to call in those who are the fruit of the travail of his Lord. Or to change the application of the metaphor he himself travails in birth, (Gal. 4:19), as the children purchased by the bloody travail of the Saviour are brought to saving faith, that first glad evidence of the new birth. Welcome then the fellowship of his sufferings! Away with the weariness of spirit which succumbs to the incessant toil of the preaching ministry! Away with the defeatist mentality which begins to flag in face of the magnitude of the task! Why should he give

way to discouragement or to the nagging suggestions of the devil that it is all in vain? The Saviour has called him. The Saviour looks forward to seeing the fruit of his travail. Each new foray into the pulpit is one more experience of communion with the suffering and rejoicing Christ.

Finally, the necessity which is laid upon him is the constraint of the Holy Spirit. The creed of Nicaea speaks of the double procession of the Spirit—'He proceedeth from the Father and the Son.' He comes to make our heavenly Father real to us. He comes that through him Christ may dwell in our hearts. So our awareness of being instruments of the electing grace of God, and of being Christ's servants to accomplish the goal of his travail—this is made a reality by the Spirit. Nor is this realisation of our calling simply given to us at the outset of our ministry. It is sustained by the Holy Spirit through all the testing days and years which follow.

The outpouring of the Spirit at Pentecost was closely linked with the Lord's marching orders to his church: 'You shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be my witnesses' (Acts 1:8). So too when Paul speaks of the ministry of the Word in Ephesians 4 he presents it as the gift of the ascended Lord. But every gift of the ascended Lord is linked with the supreme gift which he gave at Pentecost, the gift of the Holy Spirit.

The preacher will remind himself that he is not dependent on his own wisdom, his own eloquence, or his own powers of persuasion, for his ultimate resource is the indwelling Spirit of God. Indeed the very gifts which he seeks to exercise he recognises as having been graciously given to him by the Spirit—they are the charismata which he must stir up, as Paul urged Timothy to do, in order to fulfil his ministry. This will mean a disciplined watchfulness lest he grieve the Spirit by his own sinfulness, or lest he quench the Spirit by an obstinate refusal to acknowledge the sovereignty of the Spirit to act as and how he chooses. It will mean that when he comes to the Scriptures he will come, not as the experienced exegete to subject the word to his analytical powers, but as the humble disciple desperately needing the Spirit's enlightenment. He will aim to make the most careful preparation, and he will work hard beforehand to see that the sermon is well prepared. But, like Elijah, when the wood is laid and the sacrifice is on the altar he will look for the fire from heaven to set his cold heart ablaze with a new love for the souls of men.

One text which often recurs to the preacher is the query: 'Who is sufficient for these things?' How could any man measure up to such an assignment? To be the instrument of the everlasting purpose of God, to be a fellow worker with the Son of God, to be the mouthpiece of the Holy Spirit—what an impossible task it is! The preacher sadly knows himself—his human weakness, his sinful failings, his negligence, his sloth, his discouragements. But then he reflects on his commission. He has not embarked on this task by his own choice. He has been called by God. His commission is from heaven. So he cries out from the depths of his need: 'Our sufficiency is of God.' The going may be hard. There will be days when he is sorely tempted to quit the ministry and to turn in some other direction. But if he is truly called of God he will find himself driven back to the realisation that he cannot do anything else but preach. 'Necessity is laid upon me. Woe to me if I do not preach the gospel.' He is compelled to preach by none other than God Almighty.

The Strategy of Satan

(part 2)

by Jim van Zyl

We saw last time that there is more than one way of telling a lie. We examined the type of reasoning used by the Adversary which we call syllogism.

The following are further examples of such syllogisms as are the common experience of Christians. They are of necessity not exhaustive, but point the way in which Christians must direct their attention if they are to combat Satan's aggressive attacks upon them.

(a) Major premise:

A God of love cannot allow suffering.

Minor premise:

But all the world suffers, including yourself.

Conclusion:

Therefore a God of love cannot exist, or if He does exist He cannot be a God of love.

Such an argument is a powerful one with people who are sensitive to the suffering they see around them, and personally experience. But it ignores the factor of the Fall of Man and all the terrible consequences in human history. It also ignores the fact that when God chastens or disciplines his own children (Hebrews 12) it involves a measure of pain and suffering. It is therefore not a watertight syllogism.

(b) Major premise:

All murderers are excluded from possessing eternal life (1 John 3:15).

Minor premise:

But you have hated and hatred is murder.

Conclusion:

Therefore, as a murderer you do not have eternal life!

Here the logic may be true, but the argument false, for it ignores the fact (praise God!) that all the Christian's sins—past, present and future—are under the blood of Christ.

As C. L. Bancroft's hymn puts it:

*When Satan tempts me to despair,
And tells me of the guilt within,
Upward I look, and see Him there
Who made an end to all my sin.*

*Because the sinless Saviour died.
My sinful soul is counted free;
For God, the Just, is satisfied
To look on Him and pardon me.*

(c) Major premise:

All blasphemy is the mark of the anti-Christ.

Minor premise:

And you have blasphemed God.

Conclusion:

Therefore you have the spirit of the anti-Christ.

In this instance the Christian must consider three possibilities.

(i) If he was guilty of blasphemy before he became a Christian, then it has been forgiven him: 'Therefore I tell you, every sin and blasphemy will be forgiven men, . . . and whoever says a word against the Son of man will be forgiven; . . .' (Matt. 12:31).

(ii) If he was guilty of blasphemous thoughts after he became a Christian, then he must remind himself of the wonderful promise of 1 John 1:9, 'If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just, and will forgive our sins and cleanse us from all unrighteousness'. This is an absolute and categorical truth, covering every conceivable sin a believer might fall into. John does not suggest that there are any exceptions.

(iii) The Christian should also carefully scrutinize his heart to make sure whether such blasphemous thoughts were not thrust upon his mind willy-nilly. Many Christians are appalled and distressed at sudden streams of blasphemy that pour through their minds in an unprovoked manner. They struggle against such thoughts, but they just increase. This is clearly an action of Satan. All such blasphemies originate with him, and he forces them upon the mind of the child of God. However, his action is so subtle that the Christian believes them to be his own!

(d) Major premise:

The Bible states that God always answers prayer.

Minor premise:

But he has often not answered your prayers.

Conclusion:

Therefore, the Bible is unreliable (or else God is not a prayer-answering God!).

Here again, Satan has blithely ignored the following (about which the believer may be equally ignorant!): (i) The Bible always qualifies such a statement by adding that he answers according to his will, not ours. (ii) God *does* answer prayer, but always when and where and how he wills. The Christian can rest assured that our Heavenly Father *always* hears us. His answers, however, may be quite different from what we expect. (iii) Prolonged petitions may only indicate that the answer is delayed, not refused. Satan's syllogism suggests that it has been refused, which may not be the case at all.

(e) Major premise:

The Bible everywhere claims to be trustworthy.

Minor premise:

But the Bible contains numerous contradictions.

Conclusion:

Therefore the Bible is in fact untrustworthy.

The argument is invariably a problem with Christians who are young in the

faith. The flaw lies in the minor premise, viz. that the Bible contains numerous contradictions. The Christian should remind himself: (i) That such a bland statement is a gross overstatement, particularly the use of the word 'numerous'. (ii) That so-called 'contradictions' are very, very often due to textual misunderstandings, incorrect translations or exegesis, and unknown factors which archaeology has the happy habit of clearing up. (iii) That in view of the many 'contradictions' which broader knowledge has cleared up, it is far wiser to delay judgement in a difficult case, than to jump to the conclusion that it is a contradiction.

(iv) That some problems we may never clear up this side of glory, for we are after all dealing with the revelation of God's mind, which is infinitely exalted above our own. If most of us cannot follow the mysteries of mathematics and physics, which are so clear to a mind like Einstein's, we must not be surprised if we are sometimes baffled by a Mind of Infinite proportions!

IV **Combatting Satan's Syllogisms**

The most crucial principle here is the following: Never attempt to argue with Satan on *his* grounds or from his premises.

A classic example of the wrong method is Satan's seduction of Eve in Genesis 3. Verse 4 contains an inherent syllogism directed against Eve:

Major premise:

God knows good and evil, and therefore knows all wisdom.

Minor premise:

If you eat of the fruit of this tree you will know good and evil, therefore all wisdom.

Conclusion:

Therefore you will be like God!

It is apparent from verse 6, that Eve had already (albeit silently) accepted the arguments of Satan, for she began to consider the tree in a new light. Indeed 'the woman saw . . . that the tree was to be desired to make one wise . . .

Eve had therefore moved down to the level of Satan's arguments and thinking, and was reasoning from *that* level. She was considering her next move from the basis of Satan's suggestions. Thus, having conceded that there was a measure of truth in his syllogism, she was already on her way to complete capitulation. In fact she had already capitulated in her heart. It only needed the outward action to confirm that inner decision.

In powerful and exemplary contrast is our Lord's attitude when confronted by Satan's arguments in the wilderness temptations, recorded in Matt. 4:1-11.

Taking the second temptation, Satan's syllogism ran something like this:

Major premise:

God will, according to Scripture, order his angels to protect all who make him their Refuge (Ps. 91: 9-12).

Minor premise:

As the Son of God you have pre-eminently made God your Refuge.

Conclusion:

Therefore, you can throw yourself down from the pinnacle of the Temple with confidence, and he will protect you!

Jesus' reaction to Satan's syllogism is a vital lesson for all Christians. Unlike Eve, Jesus does not shift his position to that of Satan's premises and seek to argue against Satan from the position of Satan's stance or suggested premises. He does not take up Satan's arguments and try to turn them against him, revealing their weaknesses (although he no doubt could have done so).

What our Lord does is to answer Satan on other grounds altogether, that of God's Word. His position is therefore entirely different from Eve's. She tacitly concede's Satan's arguments; she shifts her grounds. Our Lord concedes nothing; he does not enter into a long argument about the truth of falsity of Satan's syllogism. He ignores such a possibility, and con-

fronts Satan with an authority before which he *must* irrevocably bow; an authority that brooks no argumentation, viz. 'Thus it is written . . .'.

Here is a great lesson for all Christians. No Christian can out-argue or out-wit Satan on his own ground, or from his own premises. He has far too powerful and subtle an intellect and enemy for that. We can never hope to match his shrewdness. Counter-arguments are naturally vital, but not from his premises, nor from our own puny resources or intellect.

The Christian's one position of safety is the immediate employment of the 'sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God' (Eph. 6:17).

Does this rule out of court the use of Apologetics or Archaeology, or similar disciplines such as philosophy etc.? Certainly not. The Christian employs all genuine truth, knowing that 'true truth' always finds its origin in God, the source of all true Wisdom. However, it does mean that he is careful not to approach such a subject *neutrally*, or wield it in a neutral manner. He pursues a study of such subjects as well as the apologetical use of them always firmly anchored to the propositional and directional truth of the Revelation of God in Christ and the written Word.

Christian, your solace, comfort and protection lies in the citadel of the Word! In the refuge not only of the great covenantal promises of the Psalms, but also in the great Biblical doctrines of the person of God, the work of Christ, the justification of sinners, the sanctification of believers, the everlasting, fatherly love of God and the final perseverance of the saints!

*Lord, Thy Word abideth,
And our footsteps guideth;
Who its truth believeth
Light and joy receiveth.*

*When our foes are near us,
Then Thy Word doth cheer us,
Word of consolation,
Message of salvation.*

The typography used for the cover of the last issue is reprinted here as an illustration in words of the basic message brought to us by Baruch Maoz in this article.

The Centrality of the local church in the work of the Gospel (part 2)

by Baruch Maoz

In the last article I expounded the following points:

1. The centrality of the church in God's purpose.
2. The work of the gospel issues out of the church.
3. Caution about dismantling societies.
4. Cooperation among the churches.

Continuing from the aforementioned we now go on to consider the nature of that cooperation.

The Nature of Inter-church cooperation

THE HOLY SCRIPTURES CLEARLY SPEAK OF INTER-CHURCH COOPERATION. It should also be obvious that circumstances may arise in which such cooperation would be necessary. The question is, what is the Essential Nature of such cooperation? It is not denominational. There is no case in the New Testament in which denominations in any sense of the term are considered. The very concept of denominational church organisations is totally devoid of Scriptural support and should therefore be called into question. The term Church (ekklesia) refers in the New Testament to one of two realities: either a local organised body of Christians or the invisible universal Body of Christ in which all the regenerate take part from all generations and in every place in the universe, whether dead or living.

The only Scriptural reference to the term Church which may be claimed to denote a gathering of organised churches is found in Acts 9:31. However, as this text must be understood in the light of all others which bear upon the subject, denominationalists would be hard pressed to fit a whole denomination into this single, slender reference. The passage seems rather to speak of either the universal church (cf. Acts 9:4) or of the church of Jerusalem now scattered but still conceived of in terms of an organisational unity.

Inter-church cooperation in the New Testament is always described in terms of cooperation between local churches. Hence, any kind of organisation that would be determined upon in order to facilitate cooperation between churches must give adequate expression to the separate identi-

ty and independence of each local, organised church. Many such forms of organisation are possible, each having their strong and weak points. One such organisational form is that each individual church would be responsible for work in a certain area of the world or for a certain kind of work (such as publishing, radio broadcasts, loaning and selling recordings of sermons, theological education by extension and such like). All other churches would share in these various efforts by giving of their people or their financial resources to the work through that church.

Another possibility is to establish a representative body composed of member churches X, Y and Z. This body would be responsible for all types of work, including works X, Y, Z in which, under the other system, the respective churches would be engaged. Finances would be transferred through the representative body and decisions made through it—but these would first be hammered out in the local churches cooperating. If a problem arose, members of the representative body would confer, providing each other with the relevant information. They would then go back to their churches and lay the problem before them, where, depending on the nature of the problem, it would be discussed by the elders and deacons, or in the presence of the whole church body. Decisions would then be made in the representative body by the majority, just as if the question was dealt with by a single church.

In both cases outlined, the workers remain under the pastoral oversight of their respective mother churches, while the work itself is conducted by various churches being responsible for various fields of activity, or with overall responsibility through a representative body. Existing societies do not then have to dismantle, but merely to re-organise so that they become instruments of churches rather than the supra-church organisations of the contemporary christian scene.

6. The nature of control exercised over the work.

It is important to clarify the kind of control exercised in the cases outlined. As a matter of fact, it is not so much control as cooperation, with the onus of responsibility and authority laid upon the shoulders of the individual worker on the field. It is high time churches sent their *best* men to the work of the Gospel, men whom they can trust and upon whose judgement they can rely. That is the Biblical pattern. Paul and Barnabas, and later Paul and his other co-workers, themselves decided where they should go, how long they should stay, what they should do and where they should go next. There is not the slightest hint that they leaned upon decisions made by the elders of sending churches. Theirs was the duty of faithfulness and of accounting for the work—*after* it had been carried out. That is not to say that there is no room for a missionary to seek advice or for a church to offer it, but the final decision must rest with the man on the field. This Biblical pattern is eminently practical because the man on the field is the only one who is thoroughly acquainted with the circumstances and

with those finer details of the work that cannot be described in a letter or comprehended during a brief periodic visit. Too many decisions are being made today with regard to missionary work by people who have little vital knowledge of the facts involved.

7. Financial support

Financial support would naturally come first from the sending church, although the New Testament shows other churches sharing that responsibility. Phillipi is one such case. We see Timothy and others joining a worker sent out by another church. This also probably implies a sharing of the financial responsibility. It unfortunately needs to be said that financial support is not enough. A deep, practical and personal involvement on the part of the sending or supporting churches is vital. The tendency to send a few dollars here and there, all over the world, borders on irresponsibility and might, in fact, indicate a lack of real concern for the holy work of the Gospel. It obviously lacks the heart-involvement that a real concern would breed. Nor is the habit of sending the missionary only used clothes, or giving him the *old* car necessarily indicative of a real concern for the work. Financial support must be accompanied by continuous, specific and consistent prayer, by moral support through correspondence, the sending of books, clothing and the such like and by sharing as much as is humanly possible in the work of the labourers on every human level as well as by prayer.

Missionaries should be supported so as to enable them to live honourably in the countries of their labour—not above the average of those among whom they work, nor below it. Standards and costs of living in each country are factors which should be taken into consideration when determining the monthly salary. There are messengers of the Gospel who are living very poorly because basic commodities cost a great deal more in the countries where they are labouring, or because the sending church is unwilling to make any real sacrifice. Why must sacrifice be limited to those on the field? A labourer is worthy of his hire. God has ordained that those who preach the Gospel should live by the Gospel. This is another area in which reformation is needed. It must also be said that there are some missionaries who live far above the average level of the countries in which they work. *This* is no better a witness to the Gospel than the other extreme. It is possible that it will be necessary to settle upon a salary that is much higher, or much lower, than that acceptable in the sending country. All depends on the country to which the missionary is being sent. Salaries must be revised periodically in the light of changes in rates of exchange. But they should always be ample. There is no reason why those who labour in the Word and in doctrine should be dependent upon the mercies of special help every time they need to buy the children shoes, go to the dentist or purchase another piece of furniture. Since the members of sending churches are not similarly dependent, there

is no conceivable reason why such limitations should be imposed upon missionaries. Missionaries should be paid so that they are able to put aside some money for rainy days while still meeting all the needs of their families. After all, one who does not care for his own household is worse than an infidel: he has denied the faith. The best situation is probably one in which adequate salaries are paid and personal gifts beyond that forbidden—except on rare occasions or from close family and friends. Until then, it will, unfortunately be necessary to supplement the salaries of missionaries with periodic personal gifts.

In addition to regular monthly income, thought should be given to life and health insurance and to pension schemes. Account should also be taken of the fact that most missionary families usually have larger than normal expenses due to the fact that they are called upon to extend frequent hospitality and to share their material substance with others. Attention should also be given to their needs by way of books and cassettes. (This is equally relevant to the support of Pastors and ministers in the home countries, who often labour in adverse financial circumstances for which there is little justification.) The system of 'living by faith', as it is called, is nothing else but living by the faithfulness of others. It has nothing to commend it. It is a denial of the biblical principle that a labourer is worthy of his hire. It lacks any means whereby account can be made of what is done with the money and it encourages either embarrassment in talking about financial matters, or the need to try and make one's needs known without anyone noticing what you are doing, so long as they get the message. There is nothing in such a system that is good, or that is honouring to God. There are very few people in such a situation who have learned to be natural about financial and material matters.

8. The Work of the Gospel and its Objective

We have thought about the work of the Gospel in relation to the sending church and of some related practical issues. We must now consider the work of the Gospel with regard to its objective.

The end of all Gospel endeavour is not the salvation of men's souls; it is, the glory of God by raising up to him a 'people zealous of good works'. Gospel work must have the establishment of local churches as its goal. It is worthy of note that all too often radio, recording and correspondence ministries have become substitutes for proper church membership. This is especially common in the United States of America, where tape ministries and radio or TV broadcasts or setting up of Christian schools has taken the place of the church in many people's lives.

The purpose of our labours must be the establishment, edification and enlargement in grace of local Christian churches organised according to the Biblical pattern. Because that pattern includes the independence of churches from each other, the time must come when sending churches encourage the receiving church to stand on its own—and the sooner the

better. I fear that there is real substance in Ronald Allan's charge (*The Spontaneous Expansion of the Church and the causes which hinder it*) that the main reason for the evident reticence to carry this principle out into practice has, as its root, not a concern for the faith, but for *our version of it*; as if the truth has no effect of its own, or as if the Holy Spirit can work only through the instrumentality of the sending church.

Spiritual maturity and independent responsibility are two sides of the same coin and can by no means ever be separated. The New Testament teaches us that Paul and the other preachers of the Gospel of whose work we hear in the Scriptures committed their churches to the Holy Spirit and to the Word of God's grace in the confidence that he was indeed able to establish them in the truth and to ensure that they would partake of their inheritance together with all the saints. This they did in spite of their clear awareness of the dangers that hovered over the churches (Acts 20:1-36).

True, the severance was not immediate, nor ever absolute. We find Paul advising, comforting, rebuking and teaching the churches, even returning to visit them. Nevertheless (as the case in Corinth proves), their independence was very real and it undoubtedly served in the hand of God as an important tool to strengthen them in faith and in grace.

The process must, then, be gradual. It might not proceed with the same speed on all levels. Financial independence may well come before or after independence in other areas. In fact, if we conduct our work aright, it seems likely that one of the first responsibilities a new church should be able to bear is the financial—provided we have not encumbered them with commitments which they are not able to bear.

In closing I wish to make two short remarks.

First, the New Testament gives us at least one example of what is called today occupational missionary work. By this is meant missionaries who remove to another area or country with the primary view of labouring for the establishment of a local church, and who support themselves primarily or altogether by working in a secular profession. We will do well to give more attention to this efficient method of spreading the Gospel. It should be noted that, according to the Scriptures, this method is also to be subject to the pastoral oversight of a local church and to the call of the individual by the Holy Spirit through the church.

Secondly, the allergy that some of us have developed to deputational work is not necessarily an indication of spiritual health. It is difficult to conceive of any other way by which cooperating or supporting churches could be made effectively cognisant of the details of the work.

May God give us grace, and may it please him to use these thoughts in order to help us test our ways by the light of Holy Scriptures—and, if need be, to reform our ways so that they will accord with that good and perfect and acceptable will of God.

Menno Simons (1496-1561)

(part 2)

By Victor Budgen

The baptismal issue

A VISIT TO A LUTHERAN AND A BAPTIST BAPTISMAL SERVICE DURING THE times of Martin Luther and Menno Simons would have revealed a rather odd and unexpected contrast. In the former you would have witnessed the minister submerging a naked baby beneath the water. Although Luther would have not made the mode of baptism a matter for absolute rules, he did write, 'For the Greek word baptizo means "immerse" or "plunge" . . .' and again 'it is permissible to regard baptism as a washing away of sin, but this meaning is too slight and mild to express the full meaning of baptism, which is, rather, symbolical of death and resurrection . . . without doubt it was so instituted by Christ in the form of total immersion. A sinner requires, not so much to be washed, as to die.'

Imagine then our surprise on observing a sixteenth century Baptist service to see the candidate kneel and have water poured over him! This is how the first baptismal service at Zurich seems to have taken place. Sometimes there is a reference to the pail of water used by the baptiser, and in one of his few references to the actual mode, Menno Simons speaks of the 'handful of water' that sufficed. Here we must say that the Lutherans saw further into the significance of the symbolism!

In 1522 Luther wrote to his colleague Philip Melanchthon and said with regard to the doctrine of infant baptism, 'I have always expected that the devil would touch this sore point . . . we ourselves are in great conflict concerning it.' Ultimately, Luther was to become one of the most zealous and consistent advocates of infant baptism among all the Reformers. He strenuously affirms, in opposition to Roman Catholic teaching, that it is not sufficient that a child imposes no obstacle or objection. Faith lies at the heart of the sacrament and therefore the baby must exercise positive, definite faith. This leads him to refer to them as heathen before baptism and as Christians afterwards. It would also seem from his correspondence that he believed that unbaptised infants were not saved. One of the very dangerous consequences of the Reformers' viewpoint was that it was often felt that all the baptised should be treated as Christians. We must be aware of this fact when we read the very strong language which Menno uses against the whole concept of infant baptism. The fact that he speaks of 'idolatrous infant baptism' is due to his conviction that the whole practice cuts the very nerve of

evangelism and gives people a spurious security. Luther himself admitted, 'If one should baptise only the grown up and old I am certain that the tenth part would not get baptised.'

With regard to his attitude to infant baptism, Luther went back on all that he had said previously. At the beginning he had constantly opposed the traditions of men when they obscured the plain meaning of scripture. How strenuously and fervently he debates this matter with Rome in his early writings. Yet here is the same writer replying to Baptist arguments. '... But so much is evident that no one may venture with a good conscience to reject or abandon infant baptism, which has for so long a time been practised.' Immediately prior to this he had conceded that there was no direct evidence of the practice of infant baptism in the early period of the church.

Undoubtedly, Luther was a man with a bad conscience. This is indicated in the violent and abusive language he reserved for the Baptists. Here is just one sample. It is from his commentary on Galatians. Rather significantly, his comment has relevance neither to the text he is expounding nor to the people to whom he refers. 'Who cannot see here in the Anabaptists, not men possessed by demons, but demons themselves possessed by worse demons?' he asks.

With such factors in mind, we must judge the reaction of Menno and others like him. In plain-spoken language he reminds Luther that formerly he asserted the supremacy of scripture above all tradition. 'If the Scriptures do not tolerate it and we find nowhere a word in Scripture commanding infant baptism, as Luther himself admits in his *Contra Anabaptists*, then I would leave it to the impartial judgement of all who have understanding, whether infant baptism is not thereby prohibited.'

Throughout the discussion, Menno shows a fair grasp of early church history, referring to Tertullian, Origen and others. He also displays a thorough knowledge of the writers of his own day. Luther is the main writer he mentions, but he also refers to arguments and publications of Erasmus, Zwingli, Bullinger, Bucer, Oecolampadius and several other Reformers who wrote on this theme.

Everywhere Menno says that he found chaos. One group proved infant baptism by one argument, and others by quite different ones. His own comments are pointed and cogent. '... if we consider the confession and the doctrine of the learned ones touching infant baptism, we find it to be such a confused Babel that we must acknowledge that it cannot be of God. . . . Some have formerly baptised, and still baptise, to wash away original sin; others, because they are children of the covenant. Some baptised them upon the faith of the church; others upon the faith of their parents. Some upon the faith of the godparents; others upon their own faith. And still others, in order that they may be more piously

reared in the Word of God. Behold, thus are the advocates of infant baptism divided among themselves.'

Menno is utterly convinced that there are very evil effects attached to the doctrine of 'baptismal regeneration'. With true evangelistic and pastoral concern, he presses home the charge, '... it is a vain comfort and boast to all the unrighteous. For although they do not understand the Word of God, do not know the truth, but lead a wilful, carnal life, yet they boast themselves to be baptised Christians.'

In contrast to the teaching of Luther, in his simple, yet powerful and deeply instructive way, Menno does what the reformer never attempts—he expounds Scripture in its context. He analyses the passages in which the household baptisms occur, grapples with the New Testament texts which deal with circumcision, and discusses the significance of silences in Scripture. In various tracts and articles he explains the doctrine positively. Here is his threefold proof. 'Since Christ Jesus had commanded baptism upon the confession of faith, and since the apostles have so taught and practised it, and since the meaning of baptism according to Romans 6:3; Colossians 2:12; Titus 3:5; Galatians 3:27; 1 Corinthians 12:13 and 1 Peter 3:21, cannot be construed except of believers. ...'

For Menno the doctrine of infant baptism was so blasphemous and idolatrous that any church which practised such must be shunned by true Christians. Before we throw up our arms in horror let us remember the context in which he wrote. Infant baptism was practised indiscriminately. Further than that—those who believed in believer's baptism often suffered the terrible indignity of seeing their children forcibly baptised. They were vilified, hunted, tortured and often executed. Their views were ridiculed. If the authorities and Reformers could have had their way, their deeply-held biblical convictions would have been entirely outlawed and squashed. In the light of all this, the surprising thing is not that Menno said what he did but that he did not say more and say it more violently. It was by the grace of God that he did not.

The ban

One further doctrine formed a great bone of contention between the Reformers and the Baptists and it was the 'ban' or excommunication. The importance of the Scriptural teaching on this issue to the Baptist vision is captured in these words of Menno written one year before his death. '... it is evident that the congregation or church cannot continue in the saving doctrine, in an unblamable and pious life, without the proper use of excommunication. For as a city without walls and gates, or a field without trenches and fences, and a house without walls and doors, so is also a church which has not the true apostolic exclusion or ban.'

As do the Scriptures themselves, Menno took this matter with utter

seriousness and wrote on this theme on countless occasions. In reply to the charges of opponents he states that they 'sorrowfully expel' the 'scabby sheep' so that they might not affect others. Faced with accusations of harshness, he asserts that he has always taught that sins which are repented of will be forgiven and on numerous occasions he admits that the church should 'bear with the weak' since 'it is a matter fraught with great danger'. He insists that the main aim of the gospel is to build up and not to break down.

Quite rightly, Menno simply argues that the Scripture does give the power of the keys to the church. This is not something to be trifled with or neglected for 'it is a valid declaration of the eternal death of our soul, announced by the faithful servants of Christ on the basis of Scripture against all offensive, carnal sinners and confirmed schismatics'.

From the above we learn that they took action in this way against grave moral offenders and also against heretics. When the Reformed writer Gellius Faber says that the ban tends more to destruction than edification, Menno gives a full rejoinder and describes benefits as he sees them. 'First, that we thereby follow and obey God's Word. Second, that we thereby rid the congregation of false doctrine, discord, and offensiveness as has been said. Third, that the disobedient are thereby admonished to reflect, return, and repent. Fourth, that we thereby testify that we do not consent or agree with the Münsterites and other rebellious sects. Fifth, that we thereby admonish all preachers and their churches that they are also in this matter outside the ordinance and Word of God. Sixth, that thereby the whole world may learn from us that the counsel, doctrine, ordinance and command of God are to be maintained and obeyed.'

In many ways Menno feels that the Reformers are more or less saying to him, 'Heads I win and tails you lose.' For, if they had not taken firm measures against false teachers in their midst, their critics would instantly have cried out that they were knowingly harbouring 'seditionists and Arians'. By the use of the ban they have made it abundantly clear that they disassociate themselves from false teachers.

Very powerfully and very biblically, Menno defends himself by summarising the position in the apostolic church. 'Yes, if they could find a single one who, although now excommunicated, was previously one with the people of God and now fallen into some reproach, they judge all the godly by this one. See, they say, what sort of people they are! For they seek nothing so much as to find occasion for reviling. Therefore, they look only at Judas. But Peter, Andrew and John they do not see.'

It seems that in the life-time of Menno there were in fact very few excommunications for unorthodoxy. In most cases the banning occurred for moral misconduct. It was in this realm that Menno and his close associates had their greatest heartache and made their greatest mistakes.

The trouble occurred especially in cases where one marriage partner had been banned and the other was still in the church. Some adopted the view that the shunning must be complete. Menno went along with this to some extent, though he never seems to have been happy with it. His correspondence reveals the anxieties which the application of the ban caused him in his later years. He believed firmly in church discipline but was unsure about the marriage consequences.

We can learn from Menno's mistakes. It would appear that he attempted too much of a centralised control of the churches. But because he had firmly grounded them in the Scriptures, they questioned even his views in the light of Scripture. It is this which is surely his greatest achievement, and which is his finest legacy for us in our individual and church life today, as we wrestle with many of the issues he wrestled with.

Further lessons may be learned from this brief sketch of the life of Menno Simons.

In some measure Menno's own description of himself as a man of 'little talent' is true. He must have felt that there were some very powerful Goliaths lined up against him. Yet there is a great gospel promise of Christ that 'he who is faithful in a very little is faithful also in much' (Luke 16:10) and this was amply fulfilled in his own life.

From his pen we have many tracts and booklets but no great classics, no powerful flow of rhetoric, no stirring or poetic cadences. This is perhaps one reason why his works are little read today. Yet evidence from contemporary trials of Baptists show that in his own time they were widely read and deeply influential. As well as writers for posterity we do need those who will write simply and plainly for the common man, deliberately setting aside the desire to write enduring literary masterpieces.

Menno had to learn the necessity for true consistency between the word in the pulpit and daily practice. From his lips came evangelical truth but in his church practice and associations there was compromise and error. The break was costly. It may be that he never again had the large congregation and the comfortable parsonage. But he did have a clean conscience and the consciousness that God was continuing to use him.

Despite his strong desire to see New Testament churches established there were many heartaches, defections and sorrows en route. In the matter of excommunication there were genuine mistakes in discerning God's will. Yet basically his aim was correct and much was positively achieved. Nevertheless there is a reminder to all that this side of heaven there is no final release from what Paul described so well when he said, 'There is the daily pressure upon me of my anxiety for all the churches' (2 Cor. 11:28).

Central to his vision was zeal for evangelism. This was why he desired a church that truly shone and did not darken the Gospel. Alongside

clearcut biblical conviction, this desire to see the gospel plainly proclaimed determined his attitude to infant baptism. Centuries later the various pamphlets still roll off the press. Luther has been succeeded by Stibbs, Hughes, Colquhoun and others. Yet for biblical simplicity and simple exposition of texts in their context Menno can still scarcely be bettered.

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continued from page 28

Spirit who is our guide. We do not rely upon or require theophany or special vision, nor should we crave signs.

How is the church to live? How is she to practice? By hearing and by heeding! The churches are to live by hearing the Word and keeping it. The sentimentally inclined think in terms of people and events that have made them important or interesting, like the woman who cried, "Blessed is the womb that bare thee". The emotionally inclined think in terms of hugs and kisses and bodily expressions of ecstasy. The hyper-Calvinists think in terms of hearing and debating without sacrifice, and without the involvement of going in to all the world. The intellectually inclined think in terms of head knowledge and learning. But Christ tells us who are the truly happy ones, the ones who have his approbation, "Yea rather blessed are they that hear the word of God, and keep it!" (Luke 11:28). A living church is a church which loves the preaching of the Word, loves the God of that Word, loves the people born of that Word, loves the fellowship of the people who base their lives on that Word and love the good works commanded by that Word.

Kingsley Coomber of the Haywards Heath Evangelical Church recently treated his people to two lectures on early Church history. Some ministers think that such work belongs strictly to the experts. Unfortunately the experts are often so highbrow that only other experts can appreciate what they are saying. The practicality and relevance of the following extract from one of Pastor Coomber's lectures will surely commend itself to our readers.

Persecutions and Heresies in the Early Church

THE APOSTLES LIVED IN A TIME WHEN THERE WAS A GENERAL DECAY IN THE classical world. The great philosophies were in decline and this left a spiritual vacuum. The Jews were divided and fragmented. They had no word to give to the seeker. Then Christianity emerged. We should not be surprised that the jealousy of the Jews was aroused which led to persecution. But opposition was to come from other quarters as well.

Jewish persecution. Acts chapter four records early persecution. Peter and John were brought before the rulers, elders and scribes. Opposition gathered strength and reached a peak as recorded in Acts chapter eight where we read of Saul's commission to stamp out the new religion. Acts 8:31 records the subsiding of the persecuting force.

Pagan persecution. One result of the Jewish persecution was that the Gospel was taken to the Gentiles. Acts 10:44-48 records a Gentile pentecost. Now the Gospel went to the pagans, and when they were saved the effect was overwhelming.

Turning from the service of idols involved a revolution as we see in the case of the city of Ephesus when the whole place was in uproar (Acts 19: 21-41). The pagan people were easily stirred up to opposition. Paul was stoned by them at one stage but survived the ordeal (Acts 14:19,20). Pagan persecution tended to be spasmodic and disorganised. Of a much more sinister kind was that which was to come from Civil government.

Roman persecution. At first the Romans took a neutral stand concerning the Church. That was soon to change. The earliest persecution from the State came with the death of James as recorded in Acts 12:1. Herod who was responsible for this injustice was himself suddenly removed (Acts 12:23). Persecutions of appalling dimensions came through the Emperor Nero. He was a psychopathic killer. It was Nero who watched Rome burn and then blamed it upon the Christians. One of Nero's delights was to light up his gardens with burning Christians. It is probable that Peter and Paul were both executed during Nero's reign.

Many and extensive were the persecutions which followed in the second and third centuries. It is said of the persecution under Trajan (ruled 249-251) that this was the most systematic attempt ever to stamp out the faith. It was during his reign that it was made a crime to be a Christian. There were mass arrests and executions. The Romans sought out the leaders and killed them. Then there was the 'great persecution' under Diocletian (ruled 284-305). An early Church historian Eusebius of Caesarea recorded that thousands died in Egypt alone, sometimes as many as two hundred a day being executed. A monument was erected to Diocletian and it says that he was the Emperor who abolished the superstition of Christ.

Yet the Church did not just survive: it enlarged like a spreading flame that all the powers of hell could not quench. The whole world saw a new power the like of which they had never seen before.

Satan, the malevolent enemy of Christ, tries to destroy the Church by persecution from without as well as by heresy from within. If truth is twisted or pressed out of proportion or shape even slightly, then it becomes ugly. This can cause Christians tremendous problems. Most of the letters in the New Testament were written to combat error or heresy. I want to look at four particular main heresies which disturbed the early Church. In my opinion these heresies caused the most damage.

The first was *Judaism*. This came to light early in the history of the Church. We read in Acts 15 how this thing was thrashed out. The early Christians were being encouraged to return to the old legalisms. Even Peter compromised over this matter, albeit for a very short time (Gal. 2:11-21). The letter to the Galatians and the Hebrews are so conclusive and powerful that it is not hard to see them as the main means of destroying the heresies of Judaism.

Secondly we consider *Gnosticism*. The word means knowledge. The Gnostics claimed that they had something extra. They claimed to possess a special and superior knowledge. It was difficult to pin them down because their ideas were complex. The epistle to the Colossians and John's first letter deal indirectly yet effectively in combatting the main principles of Gnosticism. Since matter is evil then Christ cannot have been a real man. Therefore there could not have been a resurrection. Hence there can be no resurrection for us. They concluded that you could therefore sin as much as you like with your body. Others went to another extreme and abused their bodies with extreme practices of discipline.

One of the most famous Gnostics was a man called Marcion (second century). He was an early biblical critic. He rejected all of the Old Testament. He cut out from the New Testament all the references to the Old Testament, to the incarnation, and to the resurrection.

Marcion was like the Modernists today who deny the main doctrines. One writer said of the period, that the Church had never passed through such peril. This heresy was very popular and did much damage. One good result was that it made the Church think very deeply about these issues in order to defend the Faith.

Thirdly we recall the heresy known as *Montanism*, so called because of the founder Montanus. It was started almost as a protest against the Gnostics. Illustrated here is the principle that we must not be knocked off balance in matters of controversy by going from one extreme to another. Montanus was a converted pagan priest. He came to notoriety in about 150. He claimed immediate inspiration from God. In this way he wanted people to obey him. He claimed at that time the immediate return of Christ to earth. He said that Christ was about to set up the millennium. The new Jerusalem was to be in Phrygia. He had two women prophetess helpers, Prisca and Maximilla. Women played a very important part in this heresy. Montanus had a vast following. Many gave up their employment and belongings to follow him. The heresies of Montanus were very serious. He denied that there was any forgiveness of sins after baptism. He also claimed for himself sinless perfection. Much stress was put upon trances, dreams, tongues and the ecstatic. His claim to direct inspiration from God put him and his followers on a par with the New Testament. The result was that the utterings of the group displaced the authority of the New Testament. The zeal and fervour of the Montanists impressed many who were carried away with their ideas.

In due time the whole thing burned out like fireworks burn out.

The modern counterpart of Montanism is so obvious that it is hardly necessary for me to refer to it. We ought nevertheless to take the warning very seriously. Enthusiasm for true religion is essential but that must never be allowed to displace detailed study of and obedience to the Bible in its entirety. Whenever enthusiasm leads to the neglect of serious Bible exposition and 'Bible living' (living carefully in obedience to the Scriptures as our only authority) then the red light of warning is flashing! All the time people are carrying on with their enthusiasms and the Bible remains closed we are in danger.

The fourth heresy is *Arianism*. This was a direct attack upon the person of Christ and his deity. Arius (d.336) was a very powerful and persuasive man. He made bold attacks upon the Trinity. This swept through the Church and shook many Christians. They knew that this was a fatal error but did not know how to deal with it. Eventually a council was called at Nicaea in 325. The issue proved most complex for no fully conclusive answer was given to Arianism. Eventually a champion emerged in the person of Athanasius (296-373). He stood as it were

against the whole world. In the debate he came up with the inspired phrase 'of one substance' which helped clarify the main issue in a wonderful way. My reference to these matters has been brief but it will give you an idea of the testings and trials to which the early Church was subject. We ourselves are living in a period of crisis. This century has seen the persecution and martyrdom of large numbers of Christians. Communism as a system is able to change its policies as expediency requires. I believe that in retrospect historians will one day show that that system has been used in a way just as fierce and sinister as was the case with the Roman Emperors. In the meantime Modernism as a heresy has destroyed whole denominations and continues to destroy souls by means of institutions of learning so called. Like the Gnostics the Modernists claim to have a higher and more sophisticated knowledge. The Modernists believe they can explain the supernatural and the miraculous. They turn the Bible from being a divine and perfect book into a human book which according to them is full of errors. These mistakes need to be put right by their superior knowledge. According to the Modernists the Bible can only be understood through the keys of knowledge which they alone possess.

And then when so many churches are either dead or just struggling to survive we should not be surprised to discover 'the new Montanists' or charismatics arising, some of them claiming that they know how to lead us into a new millennium of restored gifts and specialities. In my opinion they are just as dangerous as the old Montanists. They lack a proper biblical foundation like their predecessors. They are doctrinally weak and their claim to special gifts and direct revelations must be resisted. We must learn from Church history. We will be very foolish if we allow old mistakes to be repeated.

The best way to ensure advance and prosperity and avoidance of being blown about with the ever recurring winds of heresy is to follow the instructions of Paul in Ephesians 4:7-16. We must be built up in a balanced way. The matter of balance is so important because if the old Serpent cannot get at us through the 'head-heretics' like the Modernists or the 'heart-heretics' like the new Montanists then he will attempt subtle distortions of truth like Arius and his crew. It is not surprising to find that when truth is revived that some will arise who put on a special show saying that they have necessary refinements which other lesser mortals missed and so try and draw disciples after them. But it is an imbalance. It is a grotesque distortion like a person who instead of having ears about three inches long has a pair twelve inches each in size. These people are 'ear-heretics' always ready to sound out, hear about and discuss details which might support their twist of things.

May the Lord give us many balanced and powerful preachers. May he establish many strong churches in which the lessons of Scripture and history are heeded.

Most of the eleven chapters to be included in the book Local Church Practice have now been set by the printer. A considerable effort has been made to make the volume as useful as possible. For instance John Davison's article on the architecture of the local church proved to be one of the most popular ever published in Reformation Today. That issue was sold out very quickly and inconvenience has been caused by its unavailability ever since. The following extract is taken from one of the sections on the subject of preserving a church's glory. Objectively considered only God can preserve any church. Nevertheless the Scriptures emphasise human responsibility. Four matters in this connection are expounded, (a) The importance of doctrinal instruction, (b) The necessity of constant and genuine evangelistic enterprise, (c) Surviving an attack of heresy, (d) Building a membership according to the biblical pattern. The question of heresy is reproduced here not only because of the number of churches at present affected by this in one way or another but also because it complements Kingsley Coomber's article, 'Persecution and Heresies in the Early Church.'

Heresy and the glory of a church

THIS IS VERY COMMON. HENCE IT IS PRACTICAL. IT IS RELEVANT. HOW does a church deal with it?

Paul suggested that the heresies at Corinth were permitted by God in order that the church might be purified. The word (*hairesis*) means a self-chosen opinion (1 Cor. 11:19). The root of the word is *I choose*. The emphasis is on self-disposition or self-choice—pleasing oneself rather than the body. One's opinions are given the priority and the result is refusal to submit to the common interest. The word is not used very often in the New Testament but the way Peter employs the term (1 Pet. 2:1) has disposed the view that heresy is that self-opinion which denies the Gospel in a fatal way whereas error while being wrong does not actually destroy the Gospel. A heretic is an opinionative or factious person. After two admonitions such a person is to be rejected (Titus 3:10), and Paul exhorts that those who cause divisions should be marked and avoided (Rom. 16:17).

The glory of a local church is affected in an adverse way by heresies particularly when espoused by groups within churches who then operate

within the body in the interests of their self-chosen opinions. Yet we are to understand that God has expressly permitted such a thing in order that the body may be purified either by the repentance or the removal of those who cause the schism.

Heresy is often thought of as something external to the churches—Jehovah's Witnesses, Mormons etcetera. But Paul warned the elders of Ephesus of heresies arising from within (Acts 20:30). The testing occurs within the churches and the answer is clearly provided as to why God permits that which can cause much pain to a local church. 'That those who are approved may be manifest.' Faithfulness to the truth is tested. The temptation to follow a persuasive person (it may even be a close blood relation) can be tremendous. Not only is faithfulness to the truth put to the test but character is also subjected to trial. Someone who nurses grudges, discontents or resentments may be tempted to join hands with those who may be agitating and disturbing the church with their special views or opinions. They may join the heretics (I use the word as I have defined it from 1 Cor. 11:19) not because they agree with those views but because this gives them the opportunity of expressing their dissatisfaction because of their resentments. They may be sympathetic only with some points stressed by the heretics and side with them for personal reasons more than anything else. Nevertheless they are being weighed in God's balances and will be judged by him.

The time arrives when God in his providence provides an opportunity for true loyalty to be tested. Those who are not really in harmony with the church of which they are members are carried away. On the other hand those who may seem to lack strength of personality or mind, whom some would think to be the easiest prey to the factious party which in the hour of trial looks for as much support as possible, often surprise everyone by being faithful, true and firm. Their loyalty to the body of Christ and thus to Christ himself is gloriously manifested.

Faithfulness to the truth is put to the test as well as loyalty. But there is a further test for which we need to be approved. That test is the test of humility and submission. Church membership involves this aspect which is of major importance. It is all very well talking about serving God but all service involves submission to the Master. If we do not see submission within the body of God's people then where can we expect to see it? An enormous amount of activity goes on today which is totally devoid of any discipline by way of submission to gathered churches. It would seem that there are some characters who in this earthly life are completely unable to submit to others. They operate therefore in their own right and create their own following. There are so many agencies run by autocrats who use *their own* prestige or *their own* finance to operate *their own* work independent of any local church. This is important to note because sometimes the heresy or self-chosen opinion may not be of

damning character. It may be a distortion merely of some practice, or some truth exaggerated or pressed out of proportion. It is made a matter of contention and used as an issue by which a group leader is able to carry off some of the malcontents in a church. Thus a new following is formed around the group leader who himself has never been able to submit to others.

In all this it would seem that the important lesson is that one should encourage and strengthen loyalty within our own hearts—loyalty to God's people and to God's church. It cannot be stressed enough that the testing that God allows is not a testing merely of assent to correct doctrines, but a testing of the whole person, a testing of obedience, of submission, of love to Christ and to his people. Those who love their own self-made opinions or emphases more than what God requires will fail. They will be disapproved. Unless they repent they will be found false in the day of judgment. Those who hold fast and are not carried away will be approved in this life and in the next.

Such testings are real and relevant today. During the last two or three years the writer has come across instances of this. Some can be cited as examples. In one case 29 went out of a church for charismatic opinions and in another case 10 for similar reasons, in another 25 because of hyper-Calvinistic opinions and in another 10 for similar ideas—in another five families with self-formed opinions accompanied by discontent and resistance to much needed reformation. In one traumatic case about half the membership (70) departed because of self-chosen views insisted upon. In the last named instance all have been replaced in a most remarkable fashion mostly by conversions. The pastor and people have been wonderfully vindicated for their firm stand. In most cases the churches are strengthened and emerge humbled, purified and more ready to rely upon God than upon their own abilities and gifts. It is only right to say however that in some (albeit rare instances) there is terrible tragedy which simply cannot be explained. One church known to us of over 60 members has been utterly shattered and now no longer exists. It is likely that the name of Christ and the cause of the Gospel in that town will not be recovered for a generation.

Those scattered abroad by such a devastating affair may through the lessons learned be used and contribute helpfully in other churches.

The main lesson learned from 1 Corinthians 11:19 and from the outworking of that express declaration of God's permissive will, is that the glory of any local church is enhanced when those who resist the heresy in question emerge approved and strengthened. Because all things are possible with God individuals who have been carried away may be retrieved and in their recovery they may live to serve God and enhance the glory of Christ their redeemer by humble and submissive service in his body called the church local.

How are the churches to live?

An extract from the book *Local Church Practice*.

How then are we to live? The answer is by "every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God" (Matt. 4:4). The emphasis of the New Testament is consistent. The Word is to be preached in all seasons (2 Tim. 4:2). The flock is to be fed (Acts 20:28, 1 Pet. 5:2). The doctrine is designed to save preachers and hearers alike (1 Tim. 4:16). The purpose of the ministry is to ground and establish all believers in the truth so that they will be built up and not be blown about by every wind of doctrine (Eph. 4:7-16, Col 1:28).

The principle of the truth being written down is stressed (Rev. 1:11,19, 2:1,8 etc.). The written word is to be expounded and applied. All other means of life are secondary to this and supplementary. Nothing must be allowed to supplant the primacy of preaching. Some hanker after signs, others long for eloquence, and some exalt human wisdom, but God's way of saving men is by preaching (1 Cor. 3:21-23). We cannot return to an age of theophany or of vision. We do not anticipate having Christ back in the flesh by way of incarnation. Nor can we expect to repeat again the special and extraordinary witness of the apostolic age.

It is not by going back to any constituent part of the revelation that we are to live, but by understanding the relation of the constituent parts to each other, and the relevance of the whole as it applies to us in our experience today.

It does not help to try to supplement our way of life or worship by looking for direct inspirations, or prophecies, or interpretation of tongues. All kinds of problems arise if we are in doubt as to the motive, origin and substance of a new prophecy. It may be argued that the material in a prophecy is of a personal nature only without reference to any doctrine. If that is the case, then we are still left in doubt about the motives behind the direct message and also whether it is truly of divine origin or whether merely human. In any case it is the work of the person of the Holy Spirit to make personal application and give direction and guidance through Scripture. Now that he has come to indwell believers and give them understanding of what he has written in Scripture his work is capacious in a way which it never was before.

The conclusion is reached that we should resist the temptation to think that because we live by Scripture alone without any attempt to return to former times of inspiration that our life, worship or service is dull and boring. If it becomes boring the error lies not with the fulness of our provision but in the defects and shortcomings of human nature. This is the era of the Word which is our treasure and the fulness of the Holy

Continued on page 20

Book Reviews

About being positive and negative and about different types of review.

In issue 41 about 26 books were recommended in general. Some volumes by their nature lend themselves to a more extended review. One of these is the *Collected Writings of John Murray Vol 2* (Systematic Theology) a detailed review of which is due in the next issue. Another volume recommended briefly for usefulness was 'Paul—Apostle of the Free Spirit' by F. F. Bruce. While acknowledging erudite and exact scholarship in matters historical and geographical W. John Cook (a tutor at Barry Bible College) in an extended review in *The Evangelical Times* (April 1978) draws attention to theological defects which he considers so serious that he concluded by not recommending the book. Mistakenly perhaps I would take it for granted that most of our readers would know that Professor Bruce is noted for the qualities already mentioned rather than theological stature. It requires someone like John Cook working constantly on a subject to keep us informed and to prove for instance that F. F. Bruce has followed a liberal scholar Baur in the destructive idea (the bankruptcy of which was thoroughly exposed by J. G. Machen) that a major difference of opinion existed between Paul and the leaders at Jerusalem. This theory undermines the unity of the New Testament. Also the minimising of the miraculous by F. F. Bruce is not easily detected until all the omissions of such are added up. We then find the total alarming.

It is possible to work upon an evangelical basis oneself and yet to be so compromised at different points as to lead others astray by introducing them to writings which undermine their faith. Once confidence in the inspiration and authority of the Bible is destroyed it is almost impossible to avoid shipwreck on the jagged rocks of infidelity of one's Faith. A ministry of recommendation must be balanced with a ministry of warning and for this reason close attention should be

given to the review by Brian Freer in which he exposes the fact that Prof. Ralph Martin's presuppositions with regard to Scripture are liberal rather than evangelical. Pastor Freer is mild in his conclusion. I would go further and say that I have never recommended Prof. Martin's books for the reasons stated.

An illustration of the need for detailed reviews is seen in the confessions of a well known lady missionary, Anne Townsend, whose books such as *Prayer without Pretending* and *Marriage without Pretending* have become well known. In a long interview article published in *Crusade* (February 1978) she tells of the shattering effects of the book *Fundamentalism* by Professor James Barr. She went to see Professor Barr at Oxford and was deeply impressed by him.

Donald MacLeod reviewing *Fundamentalism* in the December issue of *The Monthly Record of the Free Church of Scotland* says, 'The book is less a treatise than an outburst; as if some dam were breached and all the frustrations of a life-time released in an awe-inspiring flood. Major criticisms occur at the rate of about a dozen per page and even on page 344 he is still in full flow'.

I had thought of having Professor Barr's book reviewed in these columns and was urged to do so by some ministers who insist on its importance. However I felt that our readers would be thoroughly bored by detailed refutations of someone who 'hates fundamentalists with a perfect hate'.

The *Crusade* article proves that it is important to show that the basic presuppositions upon which men like Professor Barr proceed are erroneous. It is surprising that a well known missionary's espousal of the very worst kind of modernism is reported like a fairy story in *Crusade*, as though nothing was wrong. Anne Townsend describes how she gave up her faith in inerrancy declaring, 'Christianity does *not* rest on

the Bible as much as I assumed it did. As far as I am concerned, it rests much more on the massive security that we have in Jesus as a person'. This is a typical illustration of the doctrinal poverty of evangelicalism today. Were it not for the Reformed constituency within evangelicalism there would be little resistance of any significant kind to modernism. The walkover would be as complete as if Russia went to war with India!

A trio of recommendations by Peter Lewis

PAUL—AN OUTLINE OF HIS THEOLOGY

S.P.C.K. £8.95

HEBREWS

by Philip Edgcumbe Hughes—U.S.A. Eerdmans \$15.95

**CHRIST IN HIS SUFFERING
CHRIST ON TRIAL
CHRIST CRUCIFIED**

Klaus Schilder

—Klock and Klock U.S.A.

(Limited edition) \$28.00.

Available from Puritan and Reformed Discount Books, 1319 Newport Gap Pike, Plaza 41, Wilmington, Delaware 19804.

1977 may or may not have been a good year for connoisseurs; it was however a very good year indeed for books. Space forbids me giving more than the most general impressions 'C.H.S. style'!

First among the first was published (believe it or not) by S.P.C.K.. It was the truly great work of Herman Ridderhos, *Paul, an outline of his theology*: a massive work full of deep and often original insights, wide-ranging erudition and faithful, evangelical understanding of the great apostle. True, the author is less than Reformed in his understanding of election (he rejects pre-temporal decrees) and is controversial here and there, but his magnum opus is a theological adventure and a spiritual experience to read. I do not hesitate to say that it is one of the most significant conservative works of the post-war period—and I notice that critics as diverse as Kasemann and Dr. Lloyd Jones seem to regard it so also. Do not be put off by

the price (do without a dozen books this year for this one); you will certainly get your money's worth, it is a big book, packed with lucid and sincerely-written thought, it will take you long to read and provide you with a more profound understanding (and preaching) of Paul's doctrine.

If that were not enough for one year (and one does not expect more than one summer per season), 1977 also brought us what I believe to be the finest exegetical commentary on Hebrews to date. It is by Philip Edgcumbe Hughes, well known to us for his splendid commentary on 2 Corinthians in the New London Commentary series. Hughes' work is, again, a very large book, full of detail and devotion: of detail well-digested from every conceivable source by an impeccable scholar and of devotion by a warm-hearted and thorough-going evangelical. It surpasses Bruce of this century, Brown of the last, and, exegetically speaking even the great Owen of the seventeenth. It gives serious and satisfactory attention to every possible difficulty encountered in the Greek text, circumstances and doctrine of the epistle and the reader is guaranteed to forget the book's price as he discovers its worth. Get it—and forget the mortgage!

The last of my trio of recommendations is the republication in the U.S.A. of Klaus Schilder's celebrated three-volume work on the Passion of our Lord. Schilder (who died in the early 1950's) was one of the truly original minds in our ranks in the twentieth century. The combination of Dutch thoroughness, Reformed theology, and brilliant originality is most potent. His insights into all the events from the so-called 'triumphant entry' through Gethsemane and the trial of the cross itself are absolutely breathtaking. His concept of Christ as the 'ex-les' is nothing short of stunning and greatly affected me. For preachers Schilder is a discovery indeed. Himself an orator of the first water, he writes in a compelling and inspiring manner and his insights are very 'preachable'—I have known these volumes for some years and I have preached them all!

NEW TESTAMENT FOUNDATIONS A GUIDE FOR CHRISTIAN STUDENTS

Prof. R. P. Martin

Harold Lindsell has highlighted the departure of some evangelicals from belief in the inerrancy of the Bible. The debate has centred around the split in the faculty of Fuller Theological Seminary, previously regarded as a bastion of Fundamentalism. In the light of this readers may be interested to know of a new book being introduced into schools. *New Testament Foundations—A Guide for Christian Students* has been written by Professor R. P. Martin of Fuller (late of Manchester University and previously London Bible College), and widely regarded as an evangelical scholar.

In a book for students one expects a certain amount of consideration of introductory matter which will not be in line with a conservative evangelical view of the Inspiration of Scripture. Scholars treat the New Testament as any other book. Professor Martin seems in this book to have adopted a position seriously damaging to his evangelical reputation. Reference to one section of the book should be enough to demonstrate this.

The literary discipline of Form Criticism has been applied to the New Testament now for some fifty years. The book devotes a chapter to this. Form Criticism tries to analyse stories in the gospels according to their 'form' and then place them accordingly into a real life historical situation. For instance the present stories in the gospels are originally received into a local community of believers, handed down orally by that community and thus appear in their present form 'coloured' by that community which has given the story its present form. This happened in the period of the early church prior to the writing down of the gospels—between say A.D. 30 and A.D. 60. By this colouration the original life situation of the community can be identified. The stories thus give us a picture, not of what actually happened in the life of the Lord, but of the 'belief' of the early Church. They are no longer to be regarded as historical records, but expressions of the 'living Faith' of the community which

modified and 'formed' them. This living faith of the community is said to be more valuable than a 'mere' historical interest. These early Christians were not interested in looking back to what really happened, but gave expression to their faith in a living Saviour!

The gospels thus become a record of the experience of the early Church, and not historical accounts of the life of our Lord. It was not the message of the gospel which produced the Church but the Church which produced the gospels! Clearly all historical, factual reality vanishes. It is interesting to see how Prof. Martin treats such a subject.

He regards it as having made a 'number of positive contributions to our understanding of primitive Christianity', and how 'its documents came to be recognised'. 'It shows that early Christian witness was not orientated to the past, as though the Church were continually harking back to some golden age when Jesus lived on earth. Quite the contrary: they were conscious of his living presence.' (Ed. presence—his italics.) 'The first believers did not understand Jesus as a "museum piece".' 'Form Criticism is a timely recall of the living link between what Jesus had said and done long ago and what he was saying and doing in the ongoing life of the Church.' It is however difficult to see how we can profit from such a comparison or examine the nature of the 'link', for what we have in the N.T. is only the expression of the ongoing life of the Church. What Jesus originally said and did is not thus available to us. We are reduced to the rather mystical 'ongoing' sayings and doings of the Lord as our guide to faith! Again Prof. Martin says, 'The gospels are religious documents, most appreciated when we bring to them a faith like that of the writers and the community in which they worked'. Professor Martin does sound some cautionary notes regarding the historical scepticism which will arise and he wished to assert the eyewitness nature of the original stories asking whether those early communities would dare have tampered with them. He also raises the whole question whether a literary form first applied to German folk-

lore is at all suitable to apply to the N.T. literature, an altogether different type of literature. However several doubts are left in the reader's mind despite these reservations.

Does Dr. Martin regard the gospels as historical accounts or not? Do they represent the mysterious 'living Jesus' of the early Church's experience or the real history of what happened when Jesus was here on earth as they purport? Even if the germ of the stories comes from eyewitness accounts, how can we be sure that they have not been modified out of sight during the period in which the story was developed? Perhaps the most vital question would be—Which is more vital, to have an actual history of Jesus which is true whether we believe it or not, or the Jesus of the faith of others who becomes of value when we imitate their faith? Does Prof. Martin own this latter view?

If the latter is said to be more important than the former then we have arrived at a Barthian view of inspiration. The Bible 'becomes' the Word of God to me only when I bring to it a real faith. We are shut up to a Gospel and a Jesus of subjective experience, with no real historical data at all.

The question is not mischievous for the following reason. Prof. Martin wishes to defend a doctrine of inspiration whilst denying the idea of inerrancy. If the stories of the Gospels are valuable expressions of the faith of the early

Church, inspiring faith in us, then clearly historicity and inerrancy are not of major significance. They can on those grounds be dispensed with! Only if we wish to believe in the actual reality of the stories and to ground our faith on facts do historicity and inerrancy become vital. Professor Martin does not believe that inerrancy is vital. Upon what grounds?

If the grounds are a Barthian view of inspiration then not only does inerrancy become redundant, but our view of inspiration itself is seriously modified. We are told that the Gospels give us the 'Jesus of the living experience' of the early Church. This may be inspiring to us and may inspire us to a living experience which we may choose to call faith in Christ. But inspiration then is removed properly from the scriptures to us. It is not the scriptures which are inspired but we who are inspired by them. This inspiration is experimental not verbal, and certainly not the plenary, verbal inspiration of Scripture that evangelicals own.

Many of his friends and old students would be relieved if Prof. Martin could demonstrate to us that his denial of inerrancy and his treatment of the question of form criticism is in keeping with an evangelical rather than a Barthian view of the inspiration of Scripture. Until then teachers and students of R.E. ought to reserve their judgement as to whether Prof. Martin's works can still be recommended as examples of evangelical scholarship.

THE CAREY FAMILY CONFERENCE

Only a few places remain for the first week and bookings are coming in fast to fill all the places for the second week at Clarendon School, near Bedford, 14th-26th August this year.

The main speaker for the two weeks is Robert Dunlop of Brannockstown, Eire. Probable speakers for the first week are Douglas Jones of Gloucester, Malcolm MacGregor of Accrington and Colin Richards who is also available for the second week together with Richard Chester of Caterham and Erroll Hulse.

John Rubens is the secretary. His address is 23 Brickhill Drive, Bedford MK41 7OA.

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Subscribers in the U.S.A. who choose to do so can now send their subscriptions to Puritan Reformed Discount Book Service using the abbreviated address shown on the back cover. Walt Hibbard the president of *Puritan Reformed* has kindly agreed to act on the same basis as the other agents. The work of *Puritan Reformed* has grown tremendously over the last few years.

Ron Edmonds whose experience in literature work continues to be of much value to the cause we serve is moving to a new address the details of which have yet to be confirmed. We hope he will find a home ideal for his work and domestic needs.

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