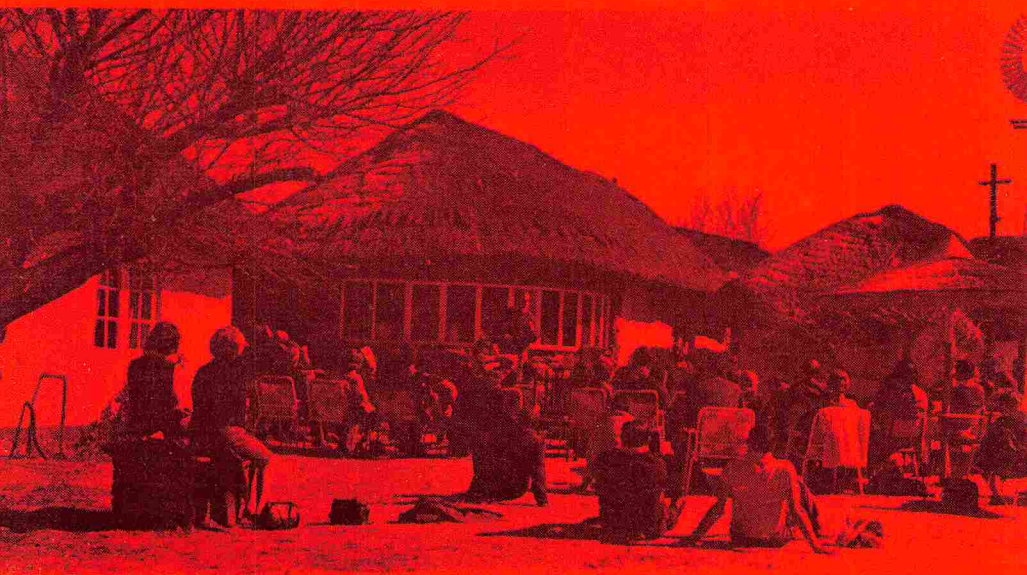


REFORMATION TODAY 79



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Editorial

THE COVER PICTURE ILLUSTRATES ONE OF THE EARLIER REFORMED STUDIES Conferences which took place in Dalmas in the Transvaal. The eighth Evangelical and Reformed Studies Conference is scheduled to take place at Skoegheim in Natal from 9th-13th July, 1979. Those wishing to attend should address their correspondence to Rev. Clive Tyler, PO Box 32, Fish Hoek 7975. David Cartledge and Martin Holdt will be preaching at the Conference and subjects to be presented during the week are: Clive Tyler on 'Andrew Murray', David Streater on 'John Wycliffe', Jim van Zyl on 'The Christian and Television', John Newby on 'The Christian's Experience in the Psalms', and a further paper by Jim van Zyl on 'Faith and Doubt'. 'The Believer's Experience' has become a subject of particular interest and by request of the organisers of the Skoegheim Conference I hope to develop that theme as follows, 1. Theology and its relationship to experience explained from Scripture and illustrated from the lives of such men as John Owen, 2. Experience as it relates to our prayer lives and illustrated from the example of such men as George Muller, 3. Experience as it relates to preaching, the baptism of fire, illustrated from revivals, 4. Experience as it relates to suffering as seen in the life of Job.

Canada

During a visit to Canada during February I came to appreciate the excellent ministry being carried on at Jarvis Street Baptist Church under the leadership of Dr. Eric Gurr who exercises a powerful preaching ministry not only to an increasing congregation but also through a weekly radio broadcast on one of the main channels at peak time. Jarvis Street is one of the largest Reformed Baptist churches in the heart of a major city with a vital ministry of evangelism. The Toronto Baptist Seminary is joined to the church at Jarvis Street. The students at the Seminary and members of the church join hands in evangelistic visitation. Principal of the Seminary is Dr. G. A. Adams who teaches Biblical Theology and other subjects. Correspondence courses are available for the subjects of Bible Survey and Biblical Theology. A prospectus describing the courses offered by the Seminary can be obtained by writing to the Toronto Baptist Seminary, 337 Jarvis Street, Toronto, Canada M5B 2C7.

Under the editorial leadership of Bill Payne the Canadians have launched a magazine with the title *Reformation Canada*. Those who wish to encourage our brethren in this venture can obtain copies which are published at irregular intervals from Pastor Bill Payne, 628 Kilburnie Place, BURLINGTON, Ontario L7L 2M4, Canada. The first issue of twenty-one pages contained a variety of interesting articles including a report on Reformed Baptist work in the Atlantic provinces of Canada. Bill Payne is minister of the Trinity Baptist Church which possesses an excellent building situated in the country at a point which serves Oakville, Burlington and Milton. A Saturday in February was devoted to a



Dr. Eric Gurr Minister of the Jarvis Street Baptist Church, Toronto (see editorial)

Pastor Don Cook of Thunder Bay travelled 800 miles to Toronto to be present at 'The Fellowship for Reformation and Pastoral Studies' day on 19th February which was attended by about 40 ministers mostly from the Toronto area

conference at 'Trinity' designed to meet the needs of local churches grappling with practical issues of reformation. Nine churches united in the effort at which the expositions were followed by discussion periods and a panel in which the pastors answered questions arising out of the subjects of the day, one of which was, 'How can I be an ideal church member?'

The Cost of 'Reformation Today'

We are able to report a gradual increase in the nett sales and subscriptions of the magazine but inflation is the monster which devours our resources and always demands more.

Donations have been a tremendous help in averting an increase in the subscriptions. We were particularly thrilled to receive word of promise of regular support from a newly-planted and small church in Australia. The enthusiasm thus represented and confidence ever places upon us a high degree of responsibility to maintain edifying contents. The main method to avert raising the subscription is to obtain more subscribers. We give early warning that the U.K. subscription will probably go up to £2.50 or £4.75 for 2 years as from July 1979. If we can avoid this we will. Also we must give an early warning that overseas subscriptions will almost certainly go up by one dollar from November-December 1979 and for South Africa a rise of one Rand.

NEW INTERNATIONAL VERSION

Hodder and Stoughton. £4.95.
Hardback.

THIS IS THE VERSION OF THE BIBLE THAT many evangelicals have been waiting for eagerly. It is beautifully produced with attractive binding and clear print. The pages are printed in double column with a minimum of footnotes and cross-references. Ease of reading is helped by the passage titles which break up the text at more appropriate places than the chapter divisions.

The preface provides six pages of relevant information telling us for instance that the NIV is a completely new translation, made by over a hundred scholars working from the best available Hebrew, Aramaic and Greek texts. It is 'trans-denominational'. The translators were united in their commitment to the authority and infallibility of the Bible as God's Word in written form.

As the average Bible reader, on the basis of the parts I have read, I would class this translation between the R.S.V. and Good News Bible. It is more modern than the R.S.V. in its language, but does retain many of the classical Authorised Version passages in basically their original form. Lovers of the familiar passages of the Psalms, Isaiah, Proverbs, etc., will find a lot to delight them here. On the other hand those who like the thoroughly contemporary style of the Good News Bible may be disappointed to find occasional archaic expressions and words retained in the N.I.V.

It would need a book to do justice to the details and these lines only give notice to the main facts about the N.I.V. All one can say is that we are extremely favoured in the English language in having several good Bible translations to choose from and for many people I am sure this new version will become their first choice. Because of its all-round merit, its dignity combined with modernity as well as its reliability and balance, it is likely to become the standard Bible for use in our churches. No translation will suit everyone yet because this work has less snags than its rivals it is likely to dominate in our circles for many years to come.

I.R.

OPERATION WORLD

by P. J. Johnstone
STL Publications. £1.50. Paperback.

THIS BOOK IS PACKED WITH USEFUL information about the work of the gospel in 190 different countries in the world.

The author is a missionary with the Dorothea Mission of South Africa but the missionary outlook of the book is essentially Catholic, in the evangelical sense! The vision for worldwide evangelisation which is in evidence cannot be too highly commended.

The countries dealt with are grouped into eight main areas—the Western World, comprising North America and western Europe, the Communist bloc, Asia, the Middle East, Africa, Caribbean area, Latin America and the Pacific. For each country there are statistics given about its size, population and religion, with details of its economy and politics, followed by a number of very detailed prayer pointers. We know of nothing in print which can come anywhere near to match all the detailed relevant material the book presents.

Operation World would be invaluable for use in a missionary, or even general prayer meeting, since so few of us have an intelligent concern for the whole of God's world. It really requires possibly a series of reviews on each area covered to bring out some of the startling matters brought before us—both encouraging and discouraging. We use the book two or three times a week at our prayer meetings and public services. Three or four minutes is all that is needed to spotlight attention on one country or another by someone who has carefully digested and analysed the information provided in *Operation World*.

A list is given at the beginning of 60 of the most significant interdenominational missionary societies. Of these I was surprised and thrilled to discover that the Wycliffe Bible Translators with 3,823 missionaries working worldwide, are by far the largest such society. But their goal is 8,000 translators. The challenge meets us fair and square.

The publishers have used cheap paper and a small print—showing good stewardship because in two or three years we will need another edition which is up dated.

One small point of reservation. I would be inclined to treat the comments on the economics and politics of some of the countries with caution. The author has a tendency to regard socialism as the cause of economic chaos, and conversely to be rather lenient with right wing dictatorships.

This is a book to broaden our Christian horizons and to enlarge our visions. And isn't that what most of us need?

I.R.

Part 2

Reaching the Working classes today In Darkest England . . .

THE Old Testament prophet Ezekiel received his call and commission from God in unusual circumstances. As a young man of twenty five, in training for the priesthood, he was taken along with 10,000 others into exile in the plains of Babylonia. In the early days, away from their beloved Jerusalem, the exiles would lift one another's morale by speaking of the time when the captivity would end and they would return home. Rumour and gossip could always hope and see their return to the homeland 'just around the corner'. After several years, doubts and questionings about the imminent return began to seep into their thinking. When was God going to do something? When was God going to say something? How long could this state of affairs go on? Then, in the fifth year of the exile, God did speak. The thirty year old Ezekiel, among the exiles by the Kebar river, experienced 'the heavens opened', and 'saw visions of God'.¹ What did God have to say? Had he fixed the date of the return? He had. But to Ezekiel's consternation the people's optimism had been unfounded. They had got it all wrong. There wasn't going to be any immediate return. The exile was going to go on and on and on. They would be in bondage for the rest of their lives. They would live there and they would die there. They would not see Jerusalem again. Before Ezekiel could bring himself to open his mouth and proclaim this unwelcome news, he had to let the awful facts sink deep down into his sensitive soul. He says, 'I came to the exiles who lived at Tel Aviv near the Kebar River. And there, where they were living, I sat among them for seven days—overwhelmed.'² Too emotionally stunned to speak, Ezekiel just sat and stared and pondered the misery and despair which God's message would bring to his fellow countrymen. It took a whole

week for the reality to sink in. He was 'overwhelmed'.

Any Christian who is at all concerned to reach the working classes with the gospel must come prepared to understand the situation with head and with heart. An academic and detached study of the problem is bound to come up with superficial answers. An ignorance of the real conditions in these areas together with a shallow grasp of Biblical principles can be yet another recipe for discouragement. Ezekiel could speak to his fellow-exiles, with authority and understanding, precisely because he came 'where they were living' and 'sat among them for seven days—overwhelmed'. The complexity and the magnitude of the church's missionary task in working class areas cannot be understood and appreciated, with feeling, from outside. The saving word of the gospel does not come to man in some kind of spiritual vacuum. It confronts him in his own particular circumstances and at a particular point in his earthly pilgrimage. The setting in which the gospel is addressed to a person's need is something we must examine. The Apostle Paul's adherence to this Scriptural principle is something he spells out clearly.³ To disregard this requirement because it is 'not part of the gospel itself' is to fly in the face of Scripture. Further, it is to reduce man to the level of a 'soul-computer' which merely needs to be 'programmed' with the right 'salvation formula'! The working man is already subject to many dehumanising influences in his daily life. The good news of Jesus Christ should reverse, rather than reinforce, this trend. The working man needs to know that a Personal God, who can be personally known, loves him as an individual, knows his name, and fully appreciates the situation in which his life is set. The purpose of this part of our study is to provide a brief survey, historical and sociological, of the people for whom we are concerned. If we take time to ponder the way of life of working class folk, past and present, and to appreciate their desperate spiritual and social needs, we shall, like Ezekiel, be overwhelmed. To the clear eye and the compassionate heart such a reaction is unavoidable.

(a) *The legacy of history: an unbridgeable gulf?*

(i) *The general picture.* One of the major works of historical research in our subject is the book written by Bishop E. R. Wickham 'Church and People in an Industrial City' (1957). Although the title of his work contains the word 'city', and much of his research relates to his immediate situation in Sheffield, his study also encompasses the national picture. A few selected references from his book will indicate the general picture from the onset of the Industrial Revolution to the present century.

Writing of the religious conditions in this country in the latter part

of the 18th century, and also more particularly as they applied to Sheffield, Wickham says, 'We see also the artisan group with its own identity politically unformed but no longer aptly described as "the begging poor", and capable of an ugly mood towards the more privileged groups when prodded by adversity. Their *general estrangement from all the religious bodies* will become more apparent as we trace their expansion into the 19th century.'⁴

Concerning the situation in the mid-19th century, he writes, 'The national picture at the mid-19th century, painted as it must be with a large brush, is quite clear in outline—a return to the church on the part of the Upper classes, not unrelated to the strict example in morality, social etiquette and evangelical piety set by the Queen and her Court; continued religious habits of the growing middle classes with some of the superior, or respectable, and individualistic of the artisan class, although different denominations correspond to different shades in this middling section of the social spectrum; and *the labouring class, itself capable of cultural sub-division, generally outside all the religious institutions.*'⁵

During the second half of the 19th century the churches passed through years of religious boom, but in spite of this it had to be admitted that '*in respect to the working-class population the churches had made negligible gain*'.⁶ By the turn of the century trends began to change and boom passed into decline. Apart from the first few years of the 20th century the trend has been unrelieved decline.

Wickham's assessment of the entire period he has researched is that, 'From the 18th century and progressively through the 19th century, since the emergence of the industrial towns the working classes, the labouring poor, the artisan class, as a class and as adults, have been outside the churches.'⁷

(ii) *A man for the masses*. An accurate historical assessment of the relationship between the Christian Church and the working classes must necessarily take into account the life and work of John Wesley. Bishop Wickham appears anxious not to over-credit the impact of the 18th century Evangelical Awakening and its influence on the working classes. He speaks of early Methodism as a 'purely religious-revival movement' and goes on to say that, 'the contempt in which the early Methodists were held, both by those who were well-to-do and by the masses of the common folk, is sufficient evidence of the social insignificance of their body.'⁸ Over against this rather belittling estimate we need to set the findings of Robert Wearmouth who has produced several volumes on the history of Methodism with particular reference to its impact on the working classes.

Writing of the century in which Methodism was born, Wearmouth says, 'Methodism gained its greatest successes among the socially distressed and ostracized among the labouring masses. Never claiming to be a class or partisan movement, always emphasising the universal love of God, its most urgent appeals were addressed to the common people, to the multitudes who were as sheep without a shepherd. Methodist preachers and evangelists went out into the high-ways and byways to minister to the forsaken and the destitute, the poor and the neglected. The higher classes in English society were scarcely touched by Methodist influence but *the working men and women were profoundly affected.*'⁹

Even after the death of John Wesley in 1791 Methodism continued to go from strength to strength. By the middle of the next century it could be claimed that 'in spite of conflict and division within, together with opposition from various sources without, the *registered members of 1850 were six times greater than in 1800.* No other movement at the time showed such a continuous success. While it had practically no effect upon the upper portions of the community, its influence on the lower sections was almost phenomenal.'¹⁰

After the mid-19th century the story is one of declining influence. 'From the middle years of the century, according to a Wesleyan historian, Wesleyan Methodism entered its mahogany age.' A rise in the wealth and social standing of many Methodists tended to carry the movement away from those among whom it had experienced its earlier successes.

We may justly use the word 'success' to describe the achievements of early Methodism. That is not exaggeration. These major advances in the work of the gospel were due to the sovereign power of God working in revival and also to the Scriptural policies adopted by those human instruments through whom God chose to manifest his power. Any attempt to overcome the enduring alienation of the working classes from the Christian church must take careful note of the principles upon which John Wesley founded and directed the church life of the early Methodists. We shall return to John Wesley later in our study.

(iii) *What about the Baptists?* Of particular interest to the writer is the question, Where do the Baptists stand in the league table of concern for the working classes?

In her book 'Evangelicals in Action' (an appraisal of the social work of Evangelicals in the Victorian era), Kathleen Heasman credits Baptists with no small achievement. She says, 'In a very general way the different Evangelical denominations tended to appeal to certain social classes. The Evangelical Church, of

England, and probably also the Plymouth Brethren though their numbers were very small in comparison, consisted mostly of middle-class people. Both the Congregationalists and the Presbyterians, with their intellectual approach, attracted people who had been successful in trade or industry and the lower ranks of the professions. . . . *Only the Baptists*, whose 'tabernacles were to be found in the leading thoroughfares of the poorer districts, and the *Methodists* who appealed largely to newcomers to the industrial areas, *attracted large numbers of the working class*'.¹²

Before we devour these crumbs of comfort too quickly we need to set alongside that the estimate of C. F. G. Masterman a Fellow of Christ's College Cambridge. He was given the task of interpreting the statistics obtained through the Religious Census of 1903, and particularly as they applied to South London. His assessment was that 'the working man does not come to church. A few communities of Primitive Methodists, Baptists and Salvationists, and similar bodies, as a general rule represent his contribution to the religious life of the nation. . . . the tradesmen and the middle class of the poorer boroughs exhibit an active religious life mainly gathered in larger Non-conformist bodies, especially the Baptists. . . .'¹³

Since the Metropolitan Tabernacle church is located within that part of London which Masterman was analysing, it might be wondered how far C. H. Spurgeon was effective in reaching the working classes. Without doubt among his regular congregation of over 5,000 'large numbers of the working class' were present. And yet, in spite of this, Spurgeon is reputed to have said of Walworth, a densely populated and wholly working class community within the immediate catchment area of the Tabernacle, that it was 'breaking his heart'.¹⁴

What conclusion may we draw if we gather these observations together? At the turn of the century Baptist influence was considerable. Numerically, the 1903 census showed them to be the strongest of all the Free Churches both in inner London and Greater London.¹⁵ Even so, the general alienation of the working classes was not significantly affected by Baptist work and witness.

Notes

- ¹ Ezekiel 1:1. ² Ezekiel 3:15. ³ 1 Corinthians 9:19-23. ⁴ E. R. Wickham Church and People in an Industrial City. (Lutterworth 1957) p. 69. ⁵ Ibid. p. 119. ⁶ Ibid. p. 150. ⁷ Ibid. p. 215. ⁸ Ibid. p. 56. ⁹ Robert Wearmouth, Methodism and the Common People of the 18th Century. (Epworth Press) p. 263. ¹⁰ Robert Wearmouth, Methodism and the Working Class Movements of England (1800-1850). (Epworth Press) p. 223. ¹¹ K. S. Inglis, Churches and the Working Classes in Victorian England. (Routledge and Kegan Paul 1963) p. 85. ¹² Kathleen Heasman, Evangelicals in Action. (Bles 1962) p. 17. ¹³ R. Mudie-Smith, The Religious Life of London. (Hodder and Stoughton 1904.) p. 201. ¹⁴ Ibid. p. 199. ¹⁵ W. C. Johnson, Encounter in London. (Carey Kingsgate Press 1965.) p. 58.

Favourite Hymns

Sung by the
Huddersfield Choral Society

conductor, Wyn Morris

WE SHOULD ALL LAY CLAIM TO BEING able to recognise a hymn when we see one. Of course we can: it is a strophic poem of spiritual content, set to a tune that is repeated as many times as there are stanzas. Its *raison d'être* is the enhancement of spiritual experience; it is most fervently performed when the theme or the words fall within the singers' personal experience; it is a collective undertaking as distinct from a solo song. When it is sung to the glory of God as it should be, the singers respond to the meaning of the words, and each successive stanza is different from the other in an utterly honest worshipful manner.

This is not the time nor the place to discuss the ethical problems of making recordings at all, let alone those of hymns. The practice is well established by now: what we may deal with is the manner in which recordings are made. The most obvious way is to record a congregation during its worship; in practice such a recording is most valuable as a reminder or souvenir of a specific event. The problems of achieving an adequate standard of recorded sound are such that most hymn records commercially available are those made in sessions at an appropriate recording studio.

What frequently happens as a result of so doing is a lack of atmosphere; certainly, recording engineers and performers often attempt to compensate for a diminished spiritual response by what I term 'synthetic emotion'. The

effects of a natural response to the words are *added* to the performance. Consider the use of vibrato. A piano note remains constant in pitch from the moment it is struck until it is silenced; the notes of the human voice and many instruments waver slightly in pitch during the length of the note, an effect that is lively, un-mechanical and indicative of emotional response: that is vibrato. Vibrato is possible on the organ only by a mechanism. The use of this mechanism lends the appearance of emotion, but it is not true emotion, and may be considered contrary to the nature of the instrument, and consequently objectionable.

Another objectionable habit is that of exaggeration: sudden hushes at certain words or outbursts at others, melodramatic speedings-up or slowings-down—in short, any virtuostic device that neglects or denies the basic simplicity of the strophic hymn.

We look for a performance that responds to the words without sentimentalising them; for an accompaniment that leads and guides but neither obtrudes nor drives; for a performance that is honestly in the praise of God. Can one make a commercial venture of a spiritual experience?

The Huddersfield Choral Society entitles their record 'Favourite Hymns'. They are all very well-known indeed; one is tempted to suggest a competition for the titles! 'Abide with me,' 'When I survey,' 'Onward Christian soldiers,' 'Guide me' to 'Cwm Rhonda'—all make their predictable appearance. There is a comforting familiarity about all but one; yet the tune by the Society's conductor, Wyn Morris, is firmly rooted in the English church and choral tradition which determines the style of performance on this record.

(continued on page 22)

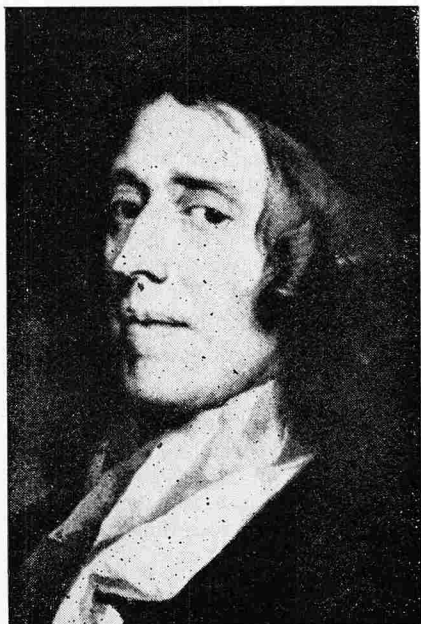
What the Elephant is to the jungle John Owen is to the Puritan era from 1558 to the Great Ejection of 1662 and beyond. Large, powerful, ponderous, fearless, wise—these are some of the adjectives we can derive from our animal parallel. Exceptional talent appeared early. At the age of twelve he was so advanced in his abilities that he was sent to Queen's College, Oxford. For several years at Oxford he set about his studies with such zeal that he allowed himself only four hours sleep a night. This was injurious and he later regretted it. He was no mere book-worm, or sissy, but indulged at the same time in the most robust athletic exercises such as hurling the javelin and himself through the air in long jump competitions. The reference to the elephant is limited in its application!

With the demise of interest in the Puritans and in Puritan theology from about the time of Spurgeon's death until the 1960's John Owen and the value of his works was lost. In 1965 the Banner of Truth published sixteen volumes of Owen's writings. In 1969 his seven volumes on Hebrews were produced in four in America. Pater-noster Press published a biographical work on Owen by Peter Toon in 1971 with the title God's Statesman. There are other valuable materials by Owen set to be made available, studies of penetration and insight which are of intense interest and value to ministers. While his elephantine style is formidable for the average layman, his life as told here is full of interest with many practical lessons. The violence and uncertainty of those times are similar to the upheavals going on in many countries today. That Christian ministers become involved in politics is unwise, and while we observe Owen's example with fascination, we would not follow him in all things.

John Owen

1616-1683

Pastor and Theologian supreme



JOHN OWEN, 'THE PRINCE OF THE PURITANS,' DESERVES THAT TITLE. He went further than most of his fellow Puritans in the practice of the gathered

church. His writings mark him out as the greatest theologian Britain has ever produced. The depths to which he explored the believer's experience and secrets of the heart are evidenced in his treatises on Indwelling sin, the Mortification of sin, Communion with God, Temptation, The nature and causes of apostasy, and The Work of the Holy Spirit in prayer. From his pen came expository theses of magisterial quality, gems on the Person of Christ, Justification by Faith and the doctrine of the Church. He knew what it was to suffer for the truth. Throughout his life he experienced the pressures and trials involved in maintaining a pure conscience for the Gospel's sake. For instance it is difficult to ascertain exactly where he and his family lived from 1663 to 1670 as they found it necessary to move from one place to another in order to preserve their safety and security.

Early studies and experience

John Owen's grandfather, a Welshman of noble background, was father of fifteen sons in a row. The youngest of the fifteen was Henry Owen who became the minister of Stadham in Oxfordshire. He became one branded as a Puritan because of his uncompromising Reformed views and practice. His second son John was born in 1616. Of precocious intellect he had advanced so far as to be ready for university at the age of twelve. The preparations for his life's work at Oxford were thorough and protracted, lasting for ten years from 1628 to 1637.

During this time, two basic areas of divinity attracted his attention:

1. The continuing controversy between Protestants and Roman Catholics.
2. The growth of Arminian doctrine in Holland and in the Church of England.

Owen was especially concerned about the latter because such a position necessarily 'reduced the need to stress The Sovereign, Free Grace of God, and put greater emphasis on man's part within the process of salvation'. The Arminian influence of the Church of England was strong in Owen's own College, as indeed was the High-Church influence, under the inspiration of the infamous William Laud. The Calvinists quickly opposed both Arminian theology and High-Church ecclesiology. Owen soon perceived that the central point at issue was the doctrine of predestination. For the Calvinist this doctrine guaranteed the free, unmerited grace of God, eliminated all human merit in salvation, and ensured the preservation of a reformed attitude to both the ministry and the sacraments. In 1643 Owen's first book was a defence of predestination. Three years later, in a sermon he preached to the House of Commons, he severely criticised the innovations of Laud. In it he accused the High-Churches of 'tending to a total subversion of the sacred state by introducing in worship, their paintings, crossings, crucifixes, bowings, cringings, altars, tapers, wafers, organs, anthems, litanies, rails, images, capes, and vestments'.¹

Toon believes that although Arminianism triumphed in most parishes, 'Calvinism and Puritanism remained ascendant in most Colleges.' Soon after this, Owen became a chaplain for Lord Lovelace; but with the Civil War looming, and Lovelace's open support for the King, Owen left his services and moved to London. He had wholeheartedly accepted the doctrines of orthodox Calvinism and knew how and why these differed from the doctrines of Lutheranism, Arminianism and Roman Catholicism, nevertheless, he had not yet experienced that personal, spiritual assurance that he was a child of God.

Everyday he read the works of his Puritan brothers concerning the reality of this assurance of personal salvation. Then one day in St. Mary's Church, Aldermanbury, under the sermon of a country preacher replacing the famous Edmund Calamy, God spoke to Owen in a personal way. The text was Matthew 8:26, 'Why are ye fearful, O ye of little faith.' His companion on seeing the absence of the famous Calamy suggested they skip out and find a better preacher, but Owen was too tired. This reminds us that we must look not at men but look to Christ in his Word!

'Owen's doubts and fears and worries as to whether he was truly regenerate and born anew of the Holy Spirit were removed as he felt himself liberated and knew that he was an adopted son of God. This spiritual experience gave Owen the inward conviction that he was a true child of God, chosen in Christ before the foundation of the world, that God loved him and had a loving purpose for him, and that his God was the living God. In practical terms this meant that he would now see everything that happened to him and to the Church of Christ in terms of the providence and predestination of God. It also meant that he would strive to ensure that the church people received both the doctrines of the Gospel and the presence of the Holy Spirit in their hearts. So began his great interest in the work of the Holy Spirit. This came to fruition thirty years later in his monumental study of the Holy Spirit entitled, *A Discourse Concerning the Holy Spirit*.'² It is important to observe the way in which Owen's personal spiritual experience is related to his theological treatises.

First pastorates

In 1643 Parliament offered Owen the pastorate at Fordham, a village some five miles from Colchester in Essex, and he accepted it. 'A note at the top of a page in the parish register reads: "John Owen, Pastor, Anno. Dom. July 16, 1643." The word "pastor" is significant; it suggested that Owen did not think of his calling as that of a "vicar" or a "rector", but rather as a pastor of the faithful in the parish, and an evangelist to the rest.'⁴ Soon after this Owen married a Miss Rooke. We do not have much information of this union, except that his wife bore eleven children, all of whom except one daughter died in early youth. Nevertheless, this period of his early pastorate appears to have been the happiest of his life. 'The good Puritan practice of visiting and catechising from house to

house gave him a large place in the affections of his people, as well as revealed to him the measure of their Christian intelligence; while his solid preaching soon gathered around him the inhabitants of his own parish, and even allured multitudes across the borders of the neighbouring parishes to listen to his weighty words.'

Of the many books that Owen wrote during this period, the outstanding works were *The Duty of Pastors and People Distinguished*,⁵ and *The Principles of the Doctrine of Christ Unfolded in Two Short Catechisms*. At the same time as he was both preaching and writing, he was also called on several occasions to preach before Parliament.

The day came when Owen's pastoral connection with Fordham terminated because of the ecclesiastical system which then pertained. He very quickly received an invitation from the people of Coggeshall, some five miles away, to become their pastor. At Coggeshall he discovered a people well acquainted with the doctrines of free grace, so that his work was not so much to lay foundations as to build. We are informed that as many as 2,000 people crowded into the Church each Lord's day to hear the young divine expound the Bible.

Along with these outward changes in Owen's position, considerable changes also took place in his theology on church government. His move to Coggeshall is generally accepted as the time when he renounced Presbytery; and the order of his church there was brought into a closer conformity with the Independent or Congregational way.

While at Coggeshall Owen continued to write, and in addition, to preach to Parliament. At the same time, the long struggle between royal prerogative and popular right continued until, eventually, war broke out almost at Owen's door. The friends of Charles rose in Essex, seized Colchester, and imprisoned a committee of Parliament. Lord Fairfax, the leader of the Parliament's forces was sent to Colchester to recover the city and deliver the committee. Coggeshall was chosen as the headquarters of the general and the siege lasted nearly ten weeks. The general met Owen, and a lasting friendship between the two of them commenced. When the siege was over, Owen preached two sermons; one to the army at Colchester in thanksgiving for its surrender, and the other to the Parliamentary committee at Rumford in thanksgiving for its deliverance. These were afterwards published as one discourse on Habakkuk 3:1-9.

Preacher before Parliament

But in the course of a few months, Owen was called to preach in rather dread circumstances. Charles I had been brought to trial before the High Court of Justice, charged with treachery, tyranny and murder. He was found guilty on all counts and according to Toon 'executed by the will of a small minority of powerful men without the general consent of the nation at large . . . people everywhere were amazed'.⁶ On the day

following the public execution of the King, Owen preached by command before Parliament. The sermon was entitled *Righteous Zeal Encouraged by Divine Protection*, and was based on Jeremiah 15:19,20. Owen saw the execution of the King as part of God's righteous judgment on the nation for disobedience. His subsequent actions and sermons make it clear that he believed God had condemned the house of Stuart (not kingship as such) for its support of false religion and tyranny.

When this sermon was printed, an important tract entitled *Of Toleration: on the Duty of the Magistrate about Religion* was attached to it. In this tract Owen pleaded for religious toleration maintaining that it was the duty of magistrates and churches to preserve the truth of God, to oppose error by the spiritual sword and hammer of the Word of God, and by the proper use of church discipline. He even went as far as to say that the punishment of heretics is not required by God's Word unless they cause civil disorder—a real innovation for those times!

Owen was by now a popular preacher and Parliament often sought him. On the 19th of April 1647, he preached to the Commons on *The Shaking and Translating of Heaven and Earth*, based on Hebrews 12:27. In this sermon he preached that the overthrow of the political and religious power of the papacy was certain because it was clearly prophesied in Revelation 17. It was after this sermon that Owen was introduced to Oliver Cromwell, who, along with other officers, was deeply impressed with the message. Cromwell was preparing to go to Ireland, and procured the appointment of Owen to accompany him, in order that the affairs of Trinity College in Dublin might be adjusted and placed on a proper footing.

With the Army

Before they set off, the Army was involved in the mutiny of the Levellers. After the suppression of the mutiny, Owen preached on Psalm 76:5. The views he expressed in the sermon were consonant with those of the army leaders, and showed little sympathetic understanding of the motives or the aims of the Levellers, many of whom were highly idealistic.⁷ In the sermon Owen discussed one interesting and revealing question which gives us fascinating insights into his mind. It was: 'Now, because these are the days wherein the Lord will shake heaven and earth, beat the nations with a rod of iron, and break much of the power of the world, some may ask how shall it be known that any authority is such that the Lord will not destroy and overturn it, but rather own it as a way of his own?' Owen's answer is given in what he calls six 'Scriptural Principles'. He said that God will not overthrow a government if:

1. He has honoured its undertakings for him with success;
2. If its members devote themselves wholly to his cause;
3. If they subject their power to the power of Christ;
4. If they are supported by the prayers of God's elect saints;

5. If they courageously and sincerely fulfill the work of Christian magistracy;
6. If they have not the 'qualifications of that power (Roman Catholicism) which in the latter days God hath promised to destroy'.

In July-August of 1649, Owen moved with Cromwell's army to Ireland. After a triumphal arrival in the country, a dreadful massacre occurred at Drogheda. Owen was working in Dublin Castle at the time so that he did not witness this event. We have no record of Owen's reaction to the news of the massacre, and so, as Toon points out, we must assume that he interpreted it in much the same way as Cromwell. The latter's policy in Ireland finds its explanation in two circumstances; the impression that he had come as the instrument of a just God to avenge the innocent blood of more than a hundred thousand Protestants: and the conviction that, in repressing a rebellion which threatened the existence of the infant Commonwealth, the iron hand though the least amiable, was the most merciful, and would preclude the necessity of wider and more prolonged vengeance.

Owen spent his time in Ireland preaching, rebuilding the Trinity College of Dublin, and writing a short book, *Of the Death of Christ*, this was in reply to Richard Baxter's criticism of his earlier work, *Salus Electorum*. Toon comments on this, 'the fact that Owen felt it was a right use of his time to defend the doctrine of the limited atonement of Christ when there were so many things to do in the troubled country of Ireland reveals just how important to him was the preservation of orthodox Calvinism'. On December the 20th, 1649, he wrote of his life in Ireland: 'For the present, by God's providence removed for a season from my native soil, I am attended with more than ordinary weaknesses and infirmities, separated from my library, burdened with manifold employments, and with constant preaching to a numerous multitude of people as thirsting after the gospel as ever yet I conversed withal. . . .'

After nine months, Owen returned to England to find preachers to go to Ireland. He preached a passionate and pleading sermon before the House of Commons on February 28th, 1650, entitled *The Steadfastness of the Promises and the Sinfulness of Staggering*. This was not the first time that Owen had stood up to plead for the publishing of the Gospel in the dark corners of the world. Four years before he had pleaded with Parliament for preachers for parts of England and Wales. 'This great concern that people should hear of Christ and receive Him reveals the true spirituality of Owen. At the height of military victory, his first thoughts were to insure that the enlargement of the kingdom of Christ was not ignored.'⁸ Probably as a direct result of this plea, Parliament passed a Bill just eight days later entitled, *Act for the better advancement of the Gospel and Learning in Ireland*. For a short while Owen was able to return to his beloved pastorate at Coggeshall. But then he was called to accompany Cromwell to Scotland, where he personally witnessed

actions, preached sermons, and wrote letters that revealed the close bond of fellowship he shared with Cromwell. However before Cromwell's campaign in Scotland was over, Owen was permitted to return to his quiet pastorate and his books in Essex. It was however only for a short time. He was appointed Dean of Christ's Church Oxford, and his connection with Coggeshall ended.

References

¹ *The Works of John Owen*, Vol. 8, p. 28. ² Peter Toon, *God's Statesman*, p. 13.

³ The term Calvinism is used in this article to describe the theology of the Reformed Churches as expressed and systematised in the Westminster Confession of Faith of 1647, and later by the British Baptists in the 1689 Confession.

⁴ *God's Statesman*, p. 17.

⁵ It is a rewarding exercise to read and compare this work which is found in Vol. 13 in *The Works of John Owen* with Richard Baxter's *The Reformed Pastor*. Baxter's work is an excellent guide and counsellor for pastors; Owen's work might well be placed beside it as a hand-book for the people.

⁶ *God's Statesman*, p. 33. ⁷ The sermon is found in *The Works*, Vol. 9, pp. 197-217.

⁸ *God's Statesman*, p. 41.

Introduced by the editor this article was written by Pastor David Horner of Australia. It is to be completed in the next issue by Ven Evans of Canada.

The controversy about homosexuality in Australia

IT IS WITH VERY MUCH REGRET THAT WE INFORM OUR READERS THAT STUART Fowler of Australia has produced material on the subject of homosexuality which we regard as totally incompatible with the teachings of Scripture as understood by the editor, associate editors and agents of this magazine. It is pleaded that the written materials were circulated privately and were not for a wider public. We insist on our part however that that matter is not really relevant to the main issue which is that our friend has put his name to written materials which we repudiate totally. It is not that he has condoned this evil but he has consistently sought to lessen the unqualified condemnation which Scripture asserts concerning all homosexual practices.

This note is inserted in *Reformation Today* following the advice and unanimous approval of the Macquarie and Newcastle Reformed Baptist Church elders who have devoted very patient and careful attention to this matter. In other words we have followed what we believe to be the correct procedure which is to rely upon the existing local church elders to sort out matters of this kind.

Also it is noted that three Reformed Baptist churches, Macquarie, Newcastle and Womeral have issued a public statement in which they disassociate from the Reformed Baptist Church Macleod, Victoria, 'Due to serious differences of doctrinal and practical nature which emanate from Mr. Fowler the ministering elder at Macleod.'

This subject is as relevant in the U.K. as it is in Australia. A report appears in *The Witness* (Brethren) magazine this year reporting that 'the shadow of Sodom and Gomorrah gets closer as the Campaign for Homosexual Equality grows increasingly bold. It has now prepared a film for use in schools, designed to justify this kind of behaviour and to encourage it through sex education lessons. Children are told what agencies to contact to learn more. Already some local education authorities and colleges of education are reported to have obtained it. We hope that it will not only be Christian people who will view this move with disgust and do all in their power to prevent the use of the film in schools. Parents, church leaders, teachers and others concerned must be alert to guard children from corruption. Attempts have also been made to demonstrate that the Bible condemnation of homosexual behaviour is now out-dated by modern knowledge and insights. Against this approach also we need to be on guard.'

This article is a modest attempt to open up a difficult and delicate subject. It does not purport to be an exhaustive treatment and is of necessity written against the limited background of the author's own experience. Readers are therefore invited to contribute to the discussion, so that all may benefit from a wider range of thought on a complex issue.

Helping the Struggling Causes

by Derek Bigg

DOTTED AROUND THE COUNTRY, MAINLY IN RURAL AREAS, ARE SMALL congregations which in today's hostile anti-religious atmosphere are barely surviving. They are often without effective leadership or sense of purpose; their diet of spiritual food tends to be devoid of real substance. Not surprisingly, their impact on the surrounding neighbourhood is as powerful as an extinct volcano. How could it be otherwise? These are all, for one reason or another, struggling causes. In the words of the seer on Patmos (Rev. 3:2), they are 'ready to die'.

At the other end of the spectrum are thriving urban churches. Many of them enjoy strong leadership, wise pastoral counselling and a solid biblical ministry. Under that ministry and with appropriate training, the 'good deposit' of the gospel can be entrusted to 'faithful men . . . able to teach others also'. Prayer and mutual encouragement enable such churches to maintain a virile witness. In some measure at least, they are fulfilling their God-given function in society.

Poverty and riches. The weak and the strong. How are they related to each other?

Today's situation

Over the years a certain pattern has emerged—a pattern which bears silent witness to the answer generally given to this question. Few will be unfamiliar with it. Sunday by Sunday the struggling causes receive visiting preachers. Preacher and people are in living contact for a few hours at the most. Words of appreciation are then briefly exchanged—"We have enjoyed your visit"; "Thank you for the invitation"—before the preacher disappears into the night!

This tenuous link is perhaps re-forged some months or even a year later, only to be dissolved again until the next visit. Meanwhile, other 'links' come and go. They do not form a recognisable chain, since they are not connected to each other. And the links vary considerably in quality. Some are perfectly sound, others are decidedly brittle.

As we reflect on the long-term results of this ministry in situations known

to us personally, do we have any cause for satisfaction? Can we point to signs of growth? Has there been a steady increase in spiritual vitality and maturity? We can be grateful if this has occurred, but all too often it seems that we have succeeded in doing little more than keeping the existing rusty machinery ticking over. If this is all we have accomplished in the past, can we in all honesty hope to achieve more in the future? Let us not live simply for the next preaching engagement. Let us consider seriously before God the ultimate outcome of our whole approach. What fruit is it likely to yield in five years' time?

Our inter-dependence

Perhaps some would counsel total withdrawal from such situations. Leave them to stew in their own juice! But can we allow our fellow-Christians to flounder? Would such an attitude express brotherly love? Would it be honouring to the Lord? Contrary to popular belief, we are not independent churches. That is not the biblical picture. Autonomous, yes, but never independent. We need one another. As the New Testament clearly shows, our relationship is one of *inter-dependence*, and the practical expression of that relationship between local congregations will depend to a large extent on their relative strengths and weaknesses.

How, then, should help be given to struggling causes? Pragmatic solutions, based on expediency and geared to quick results, are unlikely to stand the test of time. We must surely return to first principles and build from there. What are these principles?

According to the New Testament, a local church is a worshipping, witnessing community of believers whose sole allegiance is to Jesus Christ through his Word. Such a community enjoys the gracious presence of the Lord through the Holy Spirit. He is the one who inspires worship and witness, and leads into all truth.

A primary task in these critical days must be to help struggling causes to recognise these facts *and to act upon them*. To borrow a familiar Pauline emphasis, we must encourage them to be what they are in Christ.

The Christian's spiritual resources

Even if only a few gather in the Saviour's name, the possibilities are certainly not to be despised. They are as great as God's promises. Every group has an open Bible, freedom to pray, fellowship at the deepest level through the blood of the cross, and the assurance of the Spirit's guidance at every point. If these are sufficient for isolated groups in Cuba, Albania and China, who sometimes have to rely on memory for spiritual food from Scripture, can we say with any semblance of plausibility that the same means of grace are inadequate for believers in this country?

Similarly, it might be asked whether the Holy Spirit bypasses struggling causes when it comes to the distribution of spiritual gifts. It would be

hard to maintain such a point of view in the light of Peter's explicit statement on this subject (1 Peter 4:10-11).

The doctrine of spiritual gifts may be distorted or over-emphasised in some circles, but it is seriously neglected in others. An essential aspect of ministry is involved here. Every Christian has received a gift of grace which may be in one of two broad categories: speaking or serving. The one will be intellectually inclined, the other of a more practical nature. As Peter says, we are to 'minister the same one to another, as good stewards of the manifold grace of God'. This is part of the meaning of fellowship and it can be a source of great strength to struggling groups. Will not the Holy Spirit be grieved if his gifts lie dormant and in effect despised?

Looking to God alone

The underlying problem with the visiting-preacher syndrome is that it teaches people to depend on resources other than the Holy Spirit. The preaching may be powerful and relevant but, so long as Christians are looking to man rather than God, they will not be in the right frame of mind to receive the message. The one lesson that needs to be learned—utter reliance on the living God through a vibrant faith nourished on his Word—is the very lesson which will be constantly undermined by a succession of visiting preachers. Perhaps it should not have this effect but in practice it is all too often the case.

Missionary history abounds with examples of Christian communities whose spiritual development has been stifled by paternalism. On the other hand, remarkable growth has frequently been experienced after missionaries have withdrawn. The message is plain. The Holy Spirit must have room to work in the Anglo-Saxon missionary situation too!

The apostle Paul could correctly describe himself as a father in Christ to the young churches (1 Cor. 4:14-15) but his attitude was by no means paternalistic. He corresponded, visited and sent evangelists like Timothy and Titus to 'set in order the things that are wanting' (Titus 1:5). However, he did not thereby destroy the autonomy of the churches or their sense of responsibility before God (e.g. 1 Cor. 5). It is easy to forget that the exhortation to 'work out your own salvation with fear and trembling' (Phil. 2:12) is addressed to a local *church*. What incentive is given? 'For it is *God* which worketh in you . . .' (the word 'God' is emphatic in the Greek). When churches acknowledge the presence and power of God in this way, it is a natural by-product that they 'shine as lights in the world' (Phil. 2:15).

Many struggling causes behave like spiritual paupers. They beg for help when they should be rejoicing in their riches in Christ. The tragedy is that, by acceding to their requests, we encourage them in effect to continue in their abject state. 'Awake thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead, and *Christ* shall give thee light' (Eph. 5:14).

Strength out of weakness

It is certainly not unknown for a tiny remnant of believers to become a flourishing church—not through weekly parachute drops but by prevailing prayer and mutual encouragement around the Scriptures. It is a spiritual principle that divine strength comes through human weakness (2 Cor. 12:9-10). God delights to choose the weak things of the world to display his own glory (1 Cor. 1:26-29). But if we concentrate too much on the 'earthen vessels', we are apt to forget that they do contain great treasure (2 Cor. 4:6-7). The only reason for having this spiritual treasure in a fragile human frame is 'that the excellency of the power may be of God, and not of us'. The power is there if we will but avail ourselves of it through the means of grace which God himself has provided.

What a challenge to our faith! Can we rise to it? It would be fatally easy to point out these simple yet basic truths to struggling groups of believers in a smug and superior manner. But that would do more harm than good. The need is for grace to come alongside such groups in a spirit of love, humility and understanding. We may well be able to impart something of spiritual value, but it is at least as important to find encouragement *together* through our mutual faith. Paul is our example here (Romans 1:11-12).

Sunday ministry and . . .

To help the struggling causes in a meaningful way will entail more than spasmodic Sunday visits. Something more coherent and systematic is called for. Resources may be limited, but that is no excuse for failing to use them to the best advantage. Strategic deployment of preaching and teaching abilities will mean concentration of effort designed to build up God's people in their most holy faith. Half a dozen successive expositions by one preacher on a single theme are likely to prove more beneficial than six unconnected lucky dips. Systematic teaching gives a sense of direction and purpose. It also helps to create a spirit of prayerful expectancy as the hearers progressively grasp the significance and relevance of a particular doctrine or passage of Scripture. There is nothing like solid biblical exposition to stir up the dying embers of spiritual life.

A more ordered and disciplined approach to Sunday ministry would certainly be a step forward. But could it stop at that point? There is more to the week than Sunday. Can we treat struggling causes as if they do not exist from Monday to Saturday? What about mid-week fellowship?

. . . mid-week fellowship

We all have our own legitimate concerns and time is always at a premium, but is it impossible to make room for groups whose very existence as a church is at stake? This need not entail hours of study for the purpose of presenting a formal Bible study with every i dotted and every t crossed.

Why not discuss the practical implications of the previous Sunday's message? Or read together a few pages from a book like Packer's *Knowing God*, with or without the accompanying Study Guide? Or listen to an Al Martin cassette on the family? These are just three among several possibilities which would not be intolerably time-consuming in terms of prior preparation. It hardly needs to be added that prayer and mutual encouragement requires no preparation at all—only hearts that are ready to share and give.

Who knows what blessing may flow from such joining of the hands in brotherly love? Imagine a dozen believers meeting informally in a Christian home. Some have 'hands which hang down, and . . . feeble knees'. Others are 'strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might'. Boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus is an immediately uniting factor. Scripture is the focal point—the spiritual catalyst which provokes change and reaction in the body of Christ. The change may not be instantaneous and the reaction may initially be half-hearted, but we rest on the Lord's promise concerning his Word: 'it shall not return unto me void, but it shall accomplish that which I please' (Isa. 55:11).

Problems to be overcome

What about the problems? To be realistic, they are legion. Some of the major obstacles must now be considered.

1. SPIRITUAL BULLDOZERS

First, we have to face squarely the problem of the spiritual bulldozer. Does it need to be emphasised that we approach fellow-Christians as equals before God? We may feel that our understanding is greater and our experience deeper; but if by word, deed or attitude we convey the slightest hint of superiority to those we seek to help, the battle will be lost before we start. What we conceive as help may be construed by others as interference. Knowledge puffs up, but love builds up.

We all stand as guilty sinners in the sight of God. What do we have that we did not receive? When we have done all that is required of us, we are no more than unprofitable servants. In the light of these humbling facts, our offer of help to struggling causes can never be: 'You are getting nowhere in your present rut, so let us teach you a better way.' Such talk smacks of the very paternalism we are trying to eliminate. It represents a subtle attempt to bulldoze others into our way of thinking. Whether 'our way' is biblical or not, an approach of this kind is sure to be counter-productive.

Is it possible to discuss the whole question openly on the basis of our oneness in Christ? With this in mind, could invitations be sent to all those groups with whom we have had regular contact for some time? The offer of help would then be: 'We have been trying to assist in a small way over the years, but is there more we can do?'

In the case of isolated groups not in the immediate vicinity of a thriving church, this seems the right way to start. And it is after all the question of how to get started that presents the real problem on the practical level. Our perspective, as in all matters of guidance, should be that of divine providence. Are contacts already established with certain groups? Do preachers from our church visit them every week? once a fortnight? once a month? God himself has ordained such circumstances. Our responsibility is to acknowledge this fact and to take appropriate action in a prayerful spirit of faith.

Whether the invitations to discuss the position should be made by letter, through a personal visit, or in some other manner, must depend on local factors. Every situation is unique. Consequently, there is a point beyond which practical suggestions in an article of this kind will be both futile and irrelevant. For detailed application of the principles to our corner of the vineyard we are compelled to rely on the Spirit's leading. That is God's way. Ultimately we must look to him alone.

The forthcoming July August issue (no. 50)

Most of the material for the next issue has been typeset and it is our intention to send this out earlier than usual in order that the articles begun in these pages may be complete soon. Held over for no. 50 is an article describing the 18th Leicester Conference attended this year by 270 ministers together with an historical survey showing the significance and role of Leicester for the Reformed movement today.

FAVOURITE HYMNS *(continued from page 9)*

Technically the performance is admirable: the acoustic is clear, the sound well balanced and crisp; each part is lively, vibrant, and distinct—shaped and sung with intelligent musicality. The organ accompaniment is distinguished but never forces itself; it remains part of the collective effect, essential but subordinate to the whole. The words are well enunciated. Each hymn is interpreted in a consistent way. The choir responds to each hymn as a whole, and all the response is determined by the character of each hymn. This is no tame

reaction or reflex, it is very much alive.

It would not be unfair to suggest that the speeds are on the fast side. That seems to be the only virtuoso touch of which the choir might be accused. There is one near-sentimentality in the use of a solo voice over a hummed accompaniment, but the soloist belongs to the choir and is not an import for the recording. Otherwise, the record is an excellent example of the English hymn in its traditional manner.

Peter Bates.

An experience meeting described

SINCE CLOSE BONDS OF FELLOWSHIP have been developed with churches in other countries *Reformation Today* concentrates mainly on expository, practical and biographical subjects which are of wider and more general interest, but always with the aim of encouraging local churches, especially newly planted churches. It may be appropriate by way of change to report some local church news and then go on to describe a recent experience meeting. Such meetings are not without their hazards and may not work in all churches. We find them helpful once or twice a year.

As a local church we have experienced the usual number of disappointments and problems. But we also have encouragements. All those who apply for baptism and church membership are required to give a testimony before the church. This is not an iron rule. The practice has been very helpful and over the last year we have been favoured in hearing testimonies of conversion and of the work of the Holy Spirit which have been a great inspiration to us all.

Our experience of Sunday School work may be similar to that of others in the country. We find that this form of work a battle. Despite tremendous efforts the work does not advance but tends to shrink. On the other hand a work among youth who have no religious background arrive in large numbers (minimum of 70) on a Friday evening for constructive organised activities followed by half an hour of Bible instruction.

We hope to build a hall to accommodate this work although we have not yet fully paid for the valuable

property recently purchased which is adjacent to the church and which is ideal for extensions.

Re-arranged seating

To facilitate a more intimate atmosphere the seating was re-arranged with as many facing each other as possible—almost like the Houses of Parliament at Westminster! A variety of contributions by way of experiences were related as follows.

A whole family saved

One member who was originally introduced to the church through house-to-house visiting is now able to praise God for his conversion, the subsequent conversion of his wife and very recently the salvation of his teenage son and daughter, thus uniting the whole family in Christ. Thanksgiving was expressed by this brother for the way God used the instrumentality of preaching and loving day-to-day concern of the church members.

A remarkable deliverance

The over-ruling hand of God in political affairs had to this non-Christian conformed the witness of another member fellow director in his firm. When financial disaster of terrible proportions involving millions of pounds faced them all, this brother was enabled to affirm with confidence before his board of directors that his faith assured him that in spite of the fact that the disaster seemed utterly certain with no possibility of escape, deliverance would be provided. Prayer at the time was fervent by those who knew the facts. Quite unexpectedly the Government produced legislation, and that only in the nick of time, to

prevent the unfair exploitation to which the firm in question was formerly legally subject. Thus ruin was averted and deliverance brought about.

Expressions of gratitude

Such an occasion can draw the church together as gratitude is expressed towards God and towards each other. Recently the church had shown its very warm esteem and affection for the pastor and his wife on the occasion of their Silver Wedding and gratitude was expressed by one of the pastor's daughters for the enjoyable dinner party attended by church members and old friends, including Iain and Jean Murray all the way from Scotland, John and Pat Rubens from Bedford (John was formerly an elder at Cuckfield) and Danny and Marion Harding, former members, all the way from Cornwall. Especial praise was expressed to the Lord for the recent conversion of her young brother and thankfulness for support by the church for a venture in which a group of young enthusiasts cycled from Lands End to John O'Groats in two weeks raising £3,500 for well-drilling in Southern India.

Cultural integration

Over the years the church has been greatly blessed by Chinese converts or additions from Chinese churches. A young Chinese nurse expressed how God had helped her in many different ways to adjust to what seemed insurmountable cultural differences on her arrival in England. We were amused when we heard that English food was totally loathsome at first and she could not bear to touch it. But we could appreciate the way the Holy Spirit has integrated her into our fellowship and rejoiced to hear of her account of her union with Christ and

deepening appreciation of his attributes.

A testimony of guidance

A young member involved in the business world experienced horrible pangs of conscience because of the distasteful methods used by his employers. This was a constant source of sorrow and frustration. Then the opening verses of Psalm 37 were used to encourage him to launch out in faith with his own business in spite of formidable obstacles and risks. The Lord opened many doors and provided urgent needs with the result that excellent progress has subsequently been made.

A conversion experience

'The Master is come and calleth for thee' was the call to the heart of one sister when she was only 14. The call was disregarded. The same member rejoiced in the longsuffering mercy of God in repeating the call 14 years later in exactly the same words—this time resulting in her being well and truly grounded in Christ and his Word.

Church unity

An occasional time of sharing can contribute well to church unity which as we can see from passages like John 17 and Ephesians 4 is something which has to be carefully and thoughtfully maintained and not taken for granted. There is always the need for newer members to get to know and integrate with older members. Experiences old and new can be most refreshing to the life of the Church. Barriers and prejudices can be broken down and appreciation increased for the work of the Holy Spirit who not only regenerates but works powerfully to keep and build up all Christ's redeemed people in love.

As promised in 'Reformation Today' 47, David Samuel and his colleagues continue, going on to discuss the relevant issue of contemporaneity.

The Holy Spirit and the Gospel Today

part 2

The Signs of the Apostles

Now when we come to the signs of the apostles (2 Corinthians 12:12) we find the same principle controls the significance of what they did. The miracles that accompanied their ministry, whether it was speaking in other languages, healing the sick, or raising the dead, were meant to authenticate the divine message they preached, which is that Jesus is the Christ.

The testimony and word of apostles and prophets, corroborated by works of divine power, have been committed and preserved for us in the sacred Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments. We may only expect a continuation of the miracles of the apostles if we also expect further divine revelations. But everything in the New Testament points to the revelation that God has given in Christ being final and complete. 'God who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets, hath in these last days spoken unto us by his Son.' Here the full, final, and definitive revelation of God is contrasted with the partial and incomplete revelation of him given before. This is the vein in which Scripture consistently speaks of the revelation of Christ. It cannot be supplemented or improved or superseded. It is final and complete. The testimony of the apostles is not a separate revelation, it is an integral part of the final revelation that God has given in Christ. It is the Holy Spirit's testimony through chosen men associated with Christ, to the true significance of the Christ event—to the revelation God has given once and for all in him. How, therefore, can we speak of the events and happenings of the apostolic age of the church being normative for the church in every age? To do that is to ignore completely the special character of the apostles' ministry and work, and the fact that they were chosen to be the instruments of revelation.

It will no doubt be urged that the extraordinary gifts of the Holy Ghost were not confined to the apostles themselves, since members of the churches exercised them. But we must bear two things in mind. First, these gifts were always associated with the apostles in the church. The title of the book itself is indicative of this, 'The Acts of the Apostles'. They are the principal characters. It is not the 'Acts of the Church'. What happens finds its point of reference and significance in them; it is their ministry which the miraculous gifts given to their hearers attest. Secondly, the exercise of extraordinary gifts in the church of the apostolic age was necessary before the completion of the New Testament Scriptures, and God made special provision for the edification of the church in the absence of the latter.

Further Arguments from Scripture

Finally, there are some further arguments from Scripture which support this interpretation of the place and significance of extraordinary gifts of the Holy

Spirit. Apart from the Acts of the Apostles, where, as we have seen, the miracles of the Holy Ghost have a special place and function in authenticating the testimony of the apostles, the predominant emphasis in the New Testament is upon the inward work of the Holy Spirit in regeneration and sanctification. The teaching epistles make only passing reference to the gifts of tongues and miracles, and where they are mentioned it is to direct the attention of the readers to grace in the heart. The pastoral epistles make no mention of them at all, and here we might expect much to be said if they were to be a feature of the ongoing life of the church in every age. Rather the emphasis is upon the regular ministry of the Word and the character of those to be ordained to this work. Surely, if gifts of this kind marked a man out from his fellow Christians, and were to be an important part of the church's life, we might expect them to be required of future leaders of the Christian community. On the contrary, we find that they are not mentioned. Ministers are to be blameless, the husband of one wife, vigilant, sober, of good behaviour, given to hospitality, apt to teach and so on; but nothing is said about being endowed with the gifts of tongues, miracles, etc. This fact is, as Ryle said of another matter, of great significance, and we depart from the analogy of Scripture if we change this emphasis.

The Cessation of Extraordinary Gifts

But more than this, it is clear from the whole rationale of miracles in Scripture, that they were confined to a particular period and manifested for the purpose of authenticating revelation. When that revelation was complete, as it is in Scripture, then we might expect to find that such miraculous powers ceased to be exercised by men. Scripture itself might also be expected to speak to this effect of the cessation of tongues and miracles, which were given to the apostles for a specific purpose; and this, indeed, it does do. It would appear that 1 Corinthians 13 is written for this purpose. Its significance can only be that tongues and prophecy (i.e. in the sense of special revelations exercised in the church) and knowledge (i.e. miraculous knowledge for the instruction of the church before the completion of Scripture) will cease in the church. They were gifts given at its inception, for the infant church, but when the maturity or perfection of revelation is arrived at, then that which is partial shall be done away. The contrast, which is so often assumed to apply to this passage, between the condition of the church now and afterwards in heaven, when we shall see face to face, is not the one that is intended; and such an assumption robs the passage of its true meaning. The contrast is between the partial nature of the charismatic ministry, given to the church at that time, and the full maturity of Scriptural teaching, which was to come shortly when the exercise of such gifts would be unnecessary. This is borne out by verse 13, which speaks of faith and hope and love continuing when miraculous gifts have ceased. This cannot refer to heaven, since in heaven there will be no faith or hope. Faith will be turned to sight, and 'what a man seeth, why doth he yet hope for?' The contrast, therefore, is between the condition of the church then, in its infancy, when such gifts were necessary, and afterwards when their exercise will have ceased and have been replaced by the mature and full teaching of Scripture.

Summary of the exposition so far

We have observed, then, in Scripture itself a due proportion with regard to the work of the Holy Spirit, an analogy that we do well to follow in the church today. The permanent and paramount work of the Holy Spirit in all ages of

the church is the regeneration and sanctification of God's elect, by which they are joined to their Redeemer and Head to become his mystical body, and share in all the benefits of their redemption by him, and hereafter in the glory of his kingdom. That, we see, is the fulfilment of God's eternal plan, and the work of the Holy Spirit is absolutely essential to it, for without that work there is no bond of union between Christ and his people. But the work of the Holy Spirit in the writing of Scripture by inspiring the prophets and apostles; in establishing the infant church; and authenticating the witness of the apostles by signs and wonders; is, as we have seen, by its very nature a temporary work, confined to a particular period, and not therefore to be regarded as normative for the life of the church in all ages.

Special Marks of Charismatic Movements

We may summarise the principal marks of such charismatic movements in all ages of the church under the following heads:

First, we see that such movements are frequently, almost invariably, associated with the giving of *new revelations*, which in course of time are considered to be additional, or even superior to, those of Scripture, thus impugning the sufficiency and authority of the Word of God in all matters of faith.

Secondly, this leads in practice to *the neglect of Scripture*. This is bound to happen. It was true of the 'spiritual' movements of the Reformation period, of Quakerism in the Seventeenth Century, and there is evidence of this today in Neo-Pentecostalism. The excitement and novelty of prophecies and revelations is such that they tend to take over from Scripture. As gifts increase exposition of God's Word decreases. Meetings are filled with sharing experiences, but with only occasional reference to the Word of God.

Thirdly, there is throughout them all an *insistence upon joy and ecstasy and euphoria*. We know that this kind of language features prominently in the vocabulary of Neo-Pentecostalism. Thrills, joy, gladness, happiness, satisfaction, peace, contentment, exciting experience. Some even cheapen the coming of the Holy Spirit by likening it to having a good trip on drugs, 'turning on with Jesus'. All this suggests that there is a certain imbalance both emotionally and doctrinally. It may be objected that 'peace' and 'joy' are words that appear often in the New Testament in connection with the work of the Holy Spirit. This is true; but they are always held in tension with suffering, cross-bearing, personal infirmity, weakness, and consciousness of sin; so that we are never led to rest in our experiences, or to glory in them, but always in Christ and the grace of God. St. Paul said on this very point, 'If I must needs glory, I will glory in the things which concern mine infirmities'. That is, God forbid that I should glory in anything in myself. My only glory is in that which is outside myself, in the cross of Christ and his redeeming grace. But if you compel me to refer to things in myself, then I will glory in my weakness and infirmity, not in my visions, revelations and experiences. Luther again, sums this up very well when he says that in the New Testament the Christian's rejoicing is always in the Lord, not in himself. One of Luther's sayings was, 'In mourning joy; in joy mourning. Joyful in the Lord; mourning in ourselves.'

Fourthly, *all these movements in the past have been deviations from the mainstream of church history and from orthodoxy*. Even if they have not always shown themselves to be heterodox immediately, this characteristic has manifested itself

very quickly. Montanism, the Fraticelli, Spirituals, Anabaptists, Quakers, and Irvingites—all have claimed fresh outpourings of the Holy Spirit and a renewal of Apostolic gifts, yet all have been heterodox parentheses in the life of the church. Therefore, however large and important a contemporary movement may be, if it stands in line with such a pedigree, it should immediately alert us to the danger.

Fifthly, *women usually play a prominent role* in all movements of this kind. Women and men are not interchangeable units in society, even though this seems to be the modern notion of equality of the sexes. It would appear to be against reason and common sense, as well as against Scripture, which states that in the beginning God made them male and female. A woman's nature and temperament are more susceptible to subjectivism and emotionalism than a man's, and this should make us suspicious of religious movements in which women have played a leading role.

The Rationale of Pentecostalism—Contemporaneity

We must now consider the rationale of Pentecostalism. What is it that gives rise to such movements and makes them significant for people? What is it that makes Pentecostalism tick? I think the answer can be given in one word, contemporaneity. I will try to explain what is meant by that.

The desire of the Christian is to know Christ with an immediacy and reality that makes the intervening centuries vanish. Of course, Christ has promised that he will be in and with his church, 'Where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them'. 'Lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world.' But he makes it abundantly clear that he will be present in his church through the power of the Holy Spirit. We are warned against wrong ways of seeking contemporaneity. We must not cling to the earthly period of Christ's life and ministry as something that is to be continued in the church. There can be no 'extension of the incarnation'. Christ's bodily presence on earth was for a limited period, to accomplish a particular work, the work of redemption and atonement. With the ascension that work was completed and Christ's bodily presence withdrawn. The Holy Spirit came to be *another* Comforter, i.e., to take the place of Christ, who is present in his church now, not by virtue of the Incarnation, but by virtue of the Holy Spirit. It is he who takes and applies the work of Christ in redemption to the hearts of believers, and makes real to them their redemption, adoption, and inheritance, which is theirs in Christ; so that they are fully joined to him and made one with him. This is the immediacy, or contemporaneity of Christ with his people, through the Spirit, of which the Bible speaks.

Some Wrong Ways of Seeking Contemporaneity

However, because the natural man does not understand the things of the Spirit of God, if he is interested in religion, he is continually seeking other ways of realizing the presence of Christ in the church. This unscriptural approach can influence Christians in their thinking too, so that they become carnal in their apprehension of the matter. They are not satisfied with the realization of Christ's presence through faith and by the Holy Ghost in the way that Scripture indicates, and seek out other methods of contemporaneity. The words of St. Paul are forgotten, 'Yea, though we have known Christ after the flesh, yet now henceforth know we him no more' (2 Corinthians 5:16). In other words, what

is important for the believer in his knowledge of Christ is not the outward factual history of Jesus of Nazareth (though no-one is denying the importance of history and facts in the Gospels), but the spiritual significance of these things for the individual believer; and this understanding of, and trust in, the person and work of Christ is given to the believer by the Holy Spirit in regeneration. But where this knowledge of Christ is lacking, there is the tendency to try to make up for it in other ways; to substitute, for the immediacy or contemporaneity of Christ through the Spirit and the Word, other things, which, on the plane of history or objective knowledge, might seem to make Christ real and present.

In *Roman Catholicism*, for example, and what may be regarded as Catholicism generally, this takes several different forms. The principal one is to insist upon the corporal or local presence of Christ in the sacrament, guaranteed by a priesthood in tactual line of succession from the time of Christ. Christ is conceived of as being present in a gross and spatial manner in the bread and wine. Another expression of this same misunderstanding is the preservation of relics, bits of the 'true cross', the holy shroud, etc. This concept is carried further with pilgrimages to the Holy Land, visits to the places where Jesus was born, fed the multitude, carried his cross, etc. All this is supposed to make Christ more real and vivid. In fact it is to remove oneself further and further away from the true apprehension of Christ through the Spirit and the Word; for the more one believes that immediacy or contemporaneity with Christ can be achieved along the plane of history and outward reality, the further one departs from the apprehension of Christ in the Spirit, for the two are mutually exclusive of each other. There are many other facets of this basic misunderstanding in Catholicism: the three hours devotion, the Easter vigil, and so on, are all attempts to recreate and give contemporary character to the historical events of the life of Christ; indeed, nearly all the devotional aids of Catholicism are carnal in this respect and not spiritual, and reveal a total ignorance of the New Testament teaching about the work of the Holy Spirit in relation to Christ and the believer.

But then, if we turn to *Liberal Protestantism*, we find precisely the same confusion of categories, but expressed in a different way. Liberal Protestantism has been preoccupied for the last two hundred years with the reconstruction of the historical Jesus. It now seems to have come to the end of the road, or perhaps it has not. But the whole *raison d'être* of that movement was, that by painstaking historical research a portrait of the *real* Jesus would emerge. We would get behind the facade of the Gospels and encounter the real Jesus: here would be true contemporaneity! But 'the Jesus of history' has proved an elusive quarry. Every age and every scholar produces his own 'Jesus of history'. The truth is we have no Jesus, other than the one to whom the Evangelists and the Apostles bear witness, and whose reality and truth the Holy Spirit inscribes upon the hearts of believers. The Apostle's warning about 'another Jesus', 'another Spirit', and 'another gospel' are very clear (2 Cor. 11:4).

I now come to the last of these mistaken attempts to achieve contemporaneity, and that paradoxically is *Pentecostalism*. You may say, Well, it is very strange that a movement which claims to be chiefly concerned with the Holy Spirit should be guilty of this misunderstanding, and be concerned with establishing the contemporaneity of Christ along the outward, objective, and historical plane, rather than that of the inward operation of the Spirit. But it is in fact

true. Pentecostalism seeks to make the history of the apostolic church of the New Testament a 'now' event. Pentecost is now, through the re-enactment of the signs and wonders of the apostolic age. Its rationale is exactly the same as that of Catholicism and Liberal Protestantism. You can know the truth of the Christian Faith through witnessing and participating in the objective phenomena of the New Testament church. Just as Catholicism seeks to reconstruct the externals of the historical events of the life of Christ in order to assure itself of its apprehension of Christ—to point to these phenomena and the possession of them as signs that it is the true church and holds the true faith; so the Pentecostal movements seek to reconstruct the life and phenomena of the apostolic age and to point to the possession of these things as a sure indication that they have the true faith and the full Gospel. But in both cases it is an apprehension of the Christian Faith from outside, and a setting aside of the true work of the Holy Spirit.

I know it is said by some apologists of the Pentecostal movement that they do not wish to make tongues and prophecies and extraordinary gifts generally a test of the true Christian and the true church. But if this is really so then it makes a nonsense of Pentecostalism, for these are its *raison d'être*. These are the things to which it turns for proof of the reality of its faith, not to the Scripture or the inward work of the Spirit in regeneration and effectual calling. If they appealed to the latter, the former things would immediately lose their significance. (Just as the man who has once grasped the meaning of justification by faith no longer has any need of the paraphernalia and machinery of the Roman Church.) One is acquainted with Pentecostals who have experienced this, and are in consequence in a painful dilemma, because their understanding of the doctrines of grace has made redundant their Pentecostal stance.

I think this analysis also explains another feature of Pentecostalism and the charismatic movement which is puzzling to many people, viz., that the claim to extraordinary gifts and experiences of the Holy Spirit traverses denominational boundaries and particularly the divide between Roman Catholicism and Protestantism, for many priests, nuns, and Roman Catholic lay people claim the gifts of the Spirit, without any sense of compulsion to leave the Roman Church. On the contrary, they say that they feel a greater loyalty to the Pope and greater devotion to Mary and the mass as a result of their experiences. But, in fact, this is no true bridging of the differences between Protestantism and Roman Catholicism, because Pentecostalism does not stand in a truly Reformed position. It is, as we have seen, of the same genre as Catholicism itself. That is why there is common ground between them. They both appeal to certain external signs and phenomena for their apprehension of Christ and the Gospel. The Ecumenical movement has not been slow to exploit this, nor the Roman Church to see the advantage that accrues to it from this popular perversion of Protestantism.

Selected Psalms for Singing

Key to tune and word sources

C.H. Christian Hymns

H.O.F. Hymns of Faith

Alex. Alexander's Hymns No. 3

Y.P. Youth Praise

Ps.P. Psalm Praise

G. Grace Hymns

G.H. Gospel Hymns

S.O.P. Songs of Praise

G.B. Golden Bells

Comp. Companion Tune Book

Psalm No.	Words	Metre	Tune Name	Tune Source
95	G. 109	S.M.	From Strength to Strength	H.O.F. 383 S.M.D.
95	C.H. 18	C.M.	Denfield	Comp 127
100	G. 1	L.M.	Old 100th	H.O.F. 20
100	Ps.P. 20			Ps.P. 20
103	C.H. 104	S.M.	Carlisle	H.O.F. 3
103	C.H. 108	C.M.	Stracathro	C.H. 108
103	Ps.P. 114			Ps.P. 114
106	C.H. 14	C.M.	Bishophthorpe	H.O.F. 436
115	G. 562	8.7.8.7. D.	Abbots Leigh	H.O.F. 515
115	Ps.P. 122		Lux Eoi	H.O.F. 20
119	G. 346	C.M.	Belmont	H.O.F. 183
119	G. 349	L.M.D.	Deep Harmony L.M.	H.O.F. 59
119	C.H. 692	C.M.	Sheffield	C.H. 692 split verse
119	C.H. 786	C.M.	Saltzburg	H.O.F. 47
121	G. 116	C.M.	Metzlers Redhead	H.O.F. 118
121	G. 581	10.4.10.4.10.10	Sandon	G.B. 295
121	C.H. 90	C.M.	Albano	H.O.F. 614
126	G. 558	66.66.88	Darwells 148th	H.O.F. 23
130	C.H. 518	87.87.88.7	Golden Chain	H.O.F. 77
133	C.H. 354	66.66.88	St. John	H.O.F. 164
133	G.H. 772	77.77.77	Ashburton	H.O.F. 405
133	G.H. 822	S.M.	Huddersfield	H.O.F. 53
133	Ps.P. 137	S.M.	Day of Praise	H.O.F. 55
133	G. 533	S.M.	Trentham	H.O.F. 179
136	C.H. 7	L.M.	Galilee	C.H. 7
136	G.H. 1132	77.77	Llanfair with Allelujah	H.O.F. 193
136	C.H. 24	77.77	OR Festus Bonn	H.O.F. 64
139	G. 6	L.M.	Monkland	H.O.F. 35
139	Ps.P. 141	87.87	Arizona	H.O.F. 474
145	G. 96	87.87	There's a light upon the mountains	H.O.F. 228
145	C.H. 16	C.M.	Love Divine	H.O.F. 76
146	G. 21	888D	Richmond	H.O.F. 12
148	G. 35	87.87D	Monmouth	H.O.F. 52
148	Ps.P. 146	65.65D	Austria	H.O.F. 515
149&150	Ps.P. 151	D.L.M.	Camberwell	H.O.F. 115
			Jerusalem	S.O.P. 446

These suggestions complete those made for the Psalms in *Reformation Today* no. 46.

Correspondence

The letter below from a Pentecostal subscriber is welcomed heartily. He will not agree with the concluding article by David Samuel and his colleagues which was promised in No. 48, but we desire a brotherly understanding with those who differ with us about it. The more extravagant opponents of the historic Reformed viewpoint claim that those who do not accept their view of The Spirit blaspheme the Holy Spirit. But this is to set oneself up as God as though to assert that anyone not subscribing to a particular interpretation of Christian teaching is blaspheming God! By this specious reasoning we could become the subjects of any charlatan coming along and claiming Godhood for his opinions and activities!

4 Hangleton Gardens,
Hove,
East Sussex.
25th March.

Dear Mr. Hulse,
I feel I have hardly ever read a single edition of any magazine that stimulates so much thought as does the latest issue of *Reformation Today* (no. 48). As a Pentecostal who came to embrace the doctrines of grace eight years ago, I heartily endorse the wish expressed in your editorial, with regard to such Pentecostals as shall read Dr. Lloyd-Jones' latest book. As I have mentioned in previous letters, there is already a fair number—though still very much a minority—of Pentecostal and Charismatic believers who do embrace the doctrines of grace.

There are also a minority including myself, who do not think in terms of a second blessing. For me the Holy Spirit's work of regeneration is so paramount that nothing can be placed alongside it and described as a second blessing, or by any analogous term. But while there are no second blessings there are numerous *secondary* blessings in a believer's experience. Many of these might well be expected to be more manifest in times of revival than at other times, and several would seem from the Scriptures to involve being filled with the Holy Spirit. In studying the Biblical instances of this term, I personally conclude that it cannot be equated simply with regeneration, nor with any one subsequent experience. Rather, it seems to be applicable to various differing experiences in believers' lives.

It is quite conceivable that one such secondary experience or another might revolutionise the life of an individual believer or group; but this would by no means mean that this should be so for all Christians, or that the experience is therefore to be construed as a second blessing. It is easy to see how such a misinterpretation can arise, and I think such a mistake has been made by the majority of my Pentecostal brethren. It is therefore not surprising that many others having had a similar experience, have been disappointed in the revolutionary effect they were led to expect.

I am convinced that the majority of those who claim to have been filled with the Spirit in connection with Charismatic phenomena are correct. But then I am also prepared to accept that the majority who would make an analogous claim in other connections, especially in seasons of revival, are correct also. This does not make any such experience into 'the second blessing', nor make it constitute the sealing of the Spirit. The language of Scripture makes this sealing consequent upon, but not subsequent to (i.e. after an interval) our believing.

Yours, etc.,

Peter Chalkley.

K.C., M.O., U.S.A.

Dear Editor,

I am a 30 year old Christian employed in a residential hotel in a major American city ghetto. I was converted at the age of 23 and have floundered in the sea of subjectivism so rampant in my country—Pentecostalism, Dispensationalism, Arminianism. I have subsequently come to swim against the tide and now appreciate the practical implications of the Reformed faith. I constantly mix with those of contrary ideas and need to locate others in Kansas City who will be a strength to me. Can you be of help?

Yours truly, etc.,

Michael.

Unfortunately we are deprived of Michael's address. We exhort our much esteemed American cousins to follow the example of their great Motherland and place all the address details clearly at the top of page one of their letters and to be certain to include the correct zip code insisted upon by the American postal authorities.

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