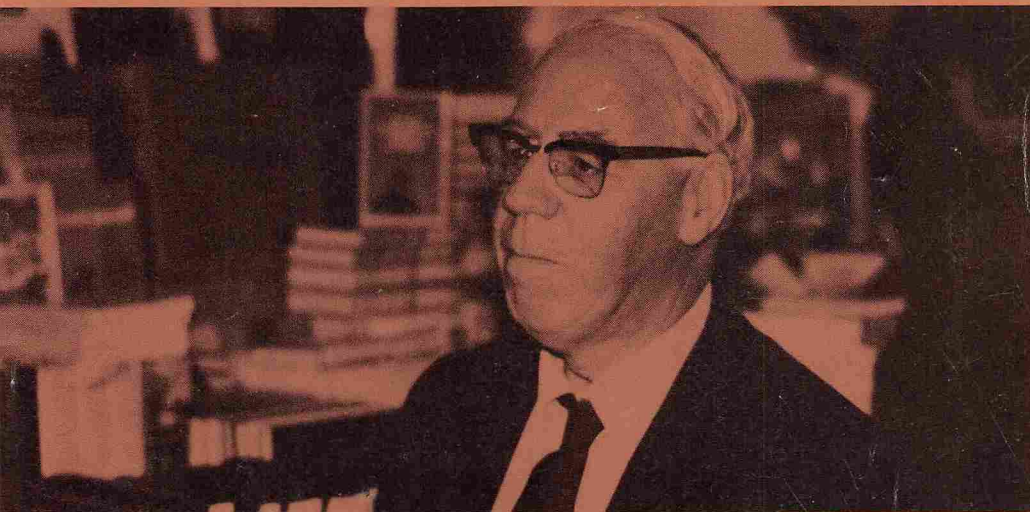


# REFORMATION TODAY '80



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*Children at the 1980 Carey Family Conference (see report page 16)*

Front Cover. At every Carey Conference Pastor John Eaton of Billericay, Essex, has provided a reliable and magnificent array of books for sale, a service which has required arduous labour which is deeply appreciated. All the latest Reformed treasures are displayed, and just about everything at present available for practical use in our churches.

# Editorial

## Sunday Market and the tracts

Encouraging progress has been made at the open air preaching at the Haywards Heath Sunday market. Samples of three tracts are enclosed in this issue. We have followed the ideas used by Alec Taylor and our friends at Chelmsley Wood, Birmingham. If any church (or group of churches) is interested in having their own printing overlaying our church addresses with their own we will be pleased to share the artwork with them. Please write to us about it. A printing would need to run to 2,000 or more to be worthwhile.

## Creation Article

Following response to the article in issue 57 on Evolution or Creation, Malcolm Bowden has pointed out that his book deals in particular with the subject of ape men rather than with evolution in general. However he has also studied the subject of 'A Young Earth' and collated his work for the Evolution protest movement. Mr. Bowden would be happy to supply a synopsis of his talks concerning the subject or an 'ape-man reconstruction sheet' to any readers who send an s.a.e. to the following address: M. Bowden, 92 Bromley Common, Bromley, Kent BR2 9PF. The Evolution protest movement is now headed by Professor Verna Wright who occupies the Chair of Rheumatology at Leeds University. The movement has a membership of over 760 in the United Kingdom and produces a periodical called *Creation*. Further information available from: A. Radcliffe-Smith, 13 Argyle Avenue, Hounslow, Middlesex TW3 2LE.

## Assistant editors

Ian and Janice Randall and their daughters Ailsa and Morag have moved to Maidenhead. This makes it much more difficult for Ian to assist in the preparation of the magazine. His contribution over the last decade has been very considerable for which we express very warm appreciation. David Kingdon's father-in-law, Mr. Evans, has just moved into the Aged Pilgrims' Home in Brighton. This has meant that David has been able to stay here on his way

through and at the same time give valuable editorial help. Sharon has also helped during the gap between graduation from Cambridge and a further year of study at Oxford. Among families having to move because of employment are Peter and Anja Bates, our missionary secretaries. They have settled in the Netherlands.

## The financial position of Reformation Today

Generous support has continued for which we express warmest appreciation. The response has been such that we have been able to keep the magazine from a drastic decline in quantity and quality. Also the help of readers has enabled us to prepare for changes from Letterpress to Litho which sounds easy but which procedures take time and must be properly organised. The recession is steadily worsening in Britain with many firms being liquidated and unemployment increasing. How long retrogression will continue and how many years it will be to recover it is impossible to calculate.

## Biographies

We thank readers for their concern that history and biography should not be neglected. We have managed to include a brief contribution in this issue and hope to include something more substantial next time.

## Unity, the Covenant and Baptism

'Jesus and the little children' is a further exposition on the above subject. The last exposition (RT55 p 23) showed the different views held by non-Baptists. Readers who wish to read Prof. Douma's book *Infant Baptism and regeneration* can obtain it from the Evangelical Bookshop, 15 College Square East, BELFAST, N. IRELAND. The cost which includes postage is £1.10. Rather than attempt a page by page answer to Prof. Douma, I sought in the RT55 contribution to put the subject into perspective by showing that Prof. Douma occupies one of a variety of opinions held on the subject all of which are based on an erroneous premise as far as we are concerned.

# Jesus and the Little Children

ECLIPSING ALL OTHER TEXTS BY WAY OF USE TO SUPPORT INFANT BAPTISM IS the account in the Gospels of the little children being brought to Jesus. The fullest account is that provided by Mark (10:13-16).

C. H. Spurgeon testified that this passage was employed against him more than any other in the great baptismal regeneration controversy which raged in 1864. That controversy began on Sunday morning June 5th when Spurgeon preached a sermon on Mark 16:15,16 showing that faith must of necessity precede baptism. At the same time he launched a devastating attack on the superstition of baptismal regeneration. He deplored the fact that Popery had made great strides in England. Such was the stir created by that sermon (no. 573) that eventually 350,000 copies were printed to satisfy the demand.

A few weeks later on 24th July, 1864, he preached on Mark 10:13-16 with the title, 'Children brought to Christ, not to the font.' It was in that sermon (no. 581) that he chose to expound on Mark 10:13-16 because of its usage against him. He showed that baptism has no place in that incident. It is our purpose to investigate the true meaning of the passage. There are three records of the incident, Mark 10:13-16, Matthew 19:13-15 and Luke 18:15-17. As already intimated the Marcan account is the most detailed. We will be assisted if the text is printed before our eyes:

People were bringing little children to Jesus to have him touch them, but the disciples rebuked them. When Jesus saw this, he was indignant. He said to them, "Let the little children come to me, and do not hinder them, for the kingdom of God belongs to such as these. I tell you the truth, anyone who will not receive the kingdom of God like a little child will never enter it." And he took the children in his arms, put his hands on them and blessed them (Mark 10:13-15).

I will adopt the following procedure in opening up the subject. Firstly we will observe what the scholars say. Then we will see what the text has to say. Finally we will discuss briefly what is involved in a theology for children. The reason why we need to look at the scholars first is because ninety per cent of our commentaries use the passages referred to above to assert infant baptism. They simply assert it without going into detail so we have to spend a little time acquainting ourselves with a thought pattern which has become dominant.

## 1. *What the scholars say about Mark 10:13-16*

With good reasons Bishop J. C. Ryle is the most popular among the commentaries on the Gospels. He writes simply and practically. On Mark 10:13-16 he declares 'let us learn from this passage, *how much encouragement there is to bring young children to be baptised*'. (The italics are his.)

Hendriksen declares that our Lord's action shows that 'he definitely did not view them as "little heathen" who were living outside of the realm of salvation until by an act of their own they would join the church.' He goes on to say that 'since the little children of believers belong to God's church and to his covenant, baptism, the sign and seal of such belonging, should not be withheld from them'.

Lenski is severe in his condemnation of those who withhold baptism from infants. 'Who will count the crimes,' he says, 'that were thus perpetrated against helpless babes, even in the very name of Christ, by denying them the one divine means by which they can be brought and can come to their glorified Lord?' Little wonder that Lenski is passionate for he believes in baptismal regeneration which heresy is avoided by other infant-baptist writers. Nevertheless we will need to be sure of our ground in order to escape so severe a condemnation as committing a crime.

Jamieson, Fausset and Brown in their excellent commentary on the whole Bible published in clear print by Zondervan and distributed in the U.K. by E.P. choose the Lucan passage for exposition. The argument employed is that if the children are accepted by Jesus then what man can forbid water? However the suggestion is qualified by this thought, namely, that 'the infants must have been *previously brought to Christ himself* for his benediction.' The idea suggests that only the infants of Christian parents warrant the sign and seal of the benediction, that is to say the Lord's blessing, a blessing now symbolised in infant baptism. Thus in the space of the briefest paragraph the whole doctrine of infant baptism is erected. Matthew Henry argues along the same lines in his exposition of the Lucan passage and on Mark 10: 13-16 declares:

It is true, we do not read that he baptised these children, baptism was not fully settled as the door of admission into the church, till after Christ's resurrection; but he asserted their visible church membership, and by another sign bestowed those blessings upon them, which are now appointed to be conveyed and conferred by baptism, the seal of the promise, which is *to us and to our children.* (His italics.)

Matthew Poole chooses to use the Matthean account for his comments and shows more caution than other expositors. Says he: 'We must take heed that we do not found infant baptism upon the example of Christ in this text, for it is certain he did not baptise these children. The argument is founded upon his words, not upon his practice.'

Our much esteemed non-Baptist readers will I am sure readily agree that I have been fair in my selection of quotes. Apart from Poole I have chosen statements which are most persuasive for infant-baptism.

Observation also must be made of those reasonings which employ the biblical theological approach (standing back and assessing revelation as it came progressively stage by stage) a procedure for which we have the warmest possible esteem and respect. However even that most enthralling

way of expounding scripture requires scrutiny as it can easily be abused as we will now see.

Beasley Murray has shown that Wohlenberg in his commentary on Mark (in German) and Jeremias and Cullman in their writings on this subject argue that the whole section, Mark 10:1-31, provides a catechism instructing us how we are to frame our attitudes towards marriage, children and possessions. And so it is claimed that 'The second catechetical item, by implication, lays upon Christian parents the task and responsibility of bringing their children to Jesus, and that not in a general way but for the purpose of their receiving baptism.'<sup>1</sup>

Basically this reasoning is the same as that used by Matthew Henry except that it is enhanced by this notion of a little catechism (Mark 10: 1-37). This is only an idea, albeit an attractive one. Even if we accept it, it proves no more than the fact that we are to accept little children. Accepting them or blessing them does not mean that we have to baptise them.

One further argument should be mentioned which belongs to the science of language or semantics. On Mark 10:13-16 Oscar Cullman observes that the verb *hinder* is the same in Acts 8:36 (said the eunuch what *hinders* me to be baptised) as in Mark 10:14 (and *hinder* them not). Cullman suggests that the phrase 'what does hinder' had acquired a certain liturgical character in the primitive church, therefore for the Gospel narrators to use it implies that baptism is inferred in the case of the children. But the word 'hinder' is used in all kinds of situations and it is surely desperate reasoning which resorts to find its warrant for infant baptism on the basis of the mere usage of an expression.

## 2. *What the passage teaches*

The prominent elements of Mark 10:13-16 are:

- (a) Here is an example of parents desiring the best for their children.
- (b) Our Lord sets his seal upon such desires by blessing the children.
- (c) As on other occasions (Matt. 18:1-9) our Lord did not hesitate to use children as an illustration of salvation.

### (a) *Here is an example of parents desiring the best for their children*

Recounting a similar instance Luke says that the parents brought their babies to Jesus (Luke 18:15—*brephos*: infants) but in Mark speaks of little children (*paedia*: little children). It seems obvious that little ones from babies in arms to small children are included.

The desire of obtaining the best for our children is universal. Our Lord adverted to the fact that we being evil give good gifts to our children. These people were of Hebrew stock who following the custom of that time which was to seek the blessing of the synagogue rulers for their children. Apparently the synagogue ruler would lay his hands on the

child's brow and pray. These parents sought such a blessing from the Prince of Peace who was illustrious among them for his powerful signs and wonders.

But these parents met with some strong resistance! The disciples were jealous for our Lord's time and did not regard these requests for children as worthy enough to break in upon more important work. They therefore requested the parents to move on. When there was reluctance on their part to get moving, the disciples like the world famous English police, resorted not to physical force but to authority by way of verbal command. They rebuked these parents for being a nuisance.

*(b) Our Lord sets his seal upon the desires of such parents*

When our Lord saw the parents and children being turned away he was indignant. The Greek word translated 'indignant' is a strong one meaning to be incensed, to be angry, or to be much weighed down. Our Lord corrected his disciples positively. Let them come to me; and negatively, do not hinder them. He added a reason: the kingdom of heaven belongs to such. He then proceeded to enfold the infants or children in his arms one by one. He put his hands upon them. He blessed them by which we understand that he prayed for them or by prayer invoked the Father's favour upon them.

Observe that our Lord did not baptise them. There is no water or moisture in this passage, no, not so much as one solitary drop. As Spurgeon put it you might as well prove that he vaccinated them as prove that he applied water to them (sermon 581). In any case it is expressly declared that our Lord did not baptise (John 4:2).

Our Lord was himself a baptised person who confirmed the mission and authority of John the Baptist. He had joined the penitent sinners in going down into and coming up out of the waters of the river Jordan. In this way he identified himself with his people and united himself to them. In so doing he voluntarily took upon himself the role of substitute who would subsequently be immersed in a baptism of suffering. This identification of himself publicly as a sin-bearer received the audible approbation of the Father and the visible approval of the Spirit.

Baptism essentially involved cooperation. The person concerned is taken up with understanding, coming to, and submitting to the action of the baptiser in a sincere profession of 'turning to the Lord'. In the case of the little children and infants the ethos or scene is entirely different. They were brought to Jesus in the arms of the parents or guardians to be blessed. The concept of baptising therefore does not enter at all. The question was not one of baptism but of blessing. Baptism had its origins in the ablutions or washings of the Levitical order (Exod. 30: 17-21, Is. 1: 16ff., Jer. 4: 14, Ezek. 36: 25 and Zech. 13: 1), in proselyte baptisms and finally in the unique baptisms of John which were preparatory and basic

to Christian baptism. Blessing little ones had its origin in the custom of the times. Nor should this custom be confused with circumcision which took place for males only eight days after birth.

The practice then was *not* one pertaining to circumcision for male infants eight days old or of dipping and washing of repentant sinners but of blessing.

We know that John's baptism was an immersion signifying repentance and that Christian baptism is an immersion into water signifying union of the candidate with the Father, Son and Holy Spirit symbolising his regeneration thereunto and the washing away of his sins henceforth to walk in newness of life. But what then was this blessing of the babes? We find the answer in the synagogue custom of those times. The synagogue rulers prayed for and laid their hands upon the children brought to them.<sup>2</sup> This is documented by H. L. Strack and P. Billerbeck.<sup>3</sup>

Looming in our minds is the question, what did this blessing mean? What did it procure for the little ones? The Greek word used in Mark 10: 18 (*eulogeo*) is the common word meaning simply to speak well of. It is found some 450 times in the Septuagint (the Greek translation of the Old Testament). In most cases the translation is of the Hebrew word *barak* (bless) which means to invoke or to seek God's favour for others.

It would appear that there are two types of blessing.

Firstly there is the instance of a blessing being unconditional and irrevocable which was the case when blind Isaac conferred the blessing on Jacob who deceived him and stole the blessing from his first born brother Esau. In that case there was only one inheritance to bestow and only one line by which the Messiah could come. We can see therefore why the blessing was irrevocable.

Secondly there was a general blessing which can be defined as the desire to grasp hold of the means of grace and make them effectual. The question concerning the Lord and the little children is whether he simply prayed for their wellbeing or whether he actually dispensed blessing in an infallible and irrevocable sense? Could those parents then go home with the absolute assurance that their children would be saved because Jesus had blessed them? There is nothing to support that view. The little ones were not being blessed in the sense that Jacob was blessed by Isaac. Rather the sense is the same as that of Numbers 6:24-26 which was blessing invoked by the priests upon the people in general which blessing was a reminder to them that through submission of themselves to the Lord such blessings would be secured. It would appear that this was the case with the parents and the children. By coming to Jesus they were coming to the right and only source of blessing and salvation. As we have seen the custom of the times was for parents to secure benedictions for their children from the rabbis.



The word 'he blesses them' is linear rather than punctiliar. It is not a blessing once and for all, which is punctiliar like a fullstop. Rather it is linear or ongoing. If they came again the next year he would bless them again. People tend to think of having their children 'done' and that's it! Fullstop! That is the reason why some parents, if they do not have their children 'done' in infant baptism like to have them 'done' in infant dedication in a church service. Millions have had their children 'done' who have never thought to bless those children with the true blessing of ongoing constant Gospel nurture and instruction.

The merits or demerits of having a service of dedication for Christian parents who want their children to be blessed would need further discussion. The point is not as shown in the last paragraph one of getting something 'done' which in and of itself secures salvation. Mankind is very superstitious by nature. The sacramental rigmaroles of the Roman Church illustrate that. We are never encouraged either in the Old Testament or New to believe that a ritual or an action or a service or a sacrament saves anyone. It can be argued from Mark 10:14 that the Greek word for 'of such' (*toiouton*) means that our Lord is saying that those very children being brought to him were in the kingdom of God. The inference can then be made that it was the blessing he conferred at that time is what put them in the kingdom. However the sense of the verses and of the context and parallel passages is that children are 'of the kingdom of God' in the general sense, and not in the particular. A parallel usage of *toiouton* is John 4:23. He is strongly asserting the necessity of a right attitude toward little children, *not those children only but all children everywhere*. He is *not* saying that those children or that all children are infallibly saved. He is *not* saying that children are automatically saved by birth because of birth into believing families. Nor is he setting up a new sacrament or ritual of blessing. Such teaching would contradict all other Scriptures on this subject. A verse of Scripture which sums up what the Bible has to say about the correct attitude to children is Proverbs 22:6 'Train a child in the way he should go, and when he is old he will not turn from it.'

Everywhere, whether we look into Deuteronomy six or Ephesians six, the stress is upon parental responsibility to bring their children up in the full nurture of instruction backed by constant prayer and godly living and example. Never are parents encouraged to put their trust in anything else for their children but the grace of God as he may be pleased to use the means of grace. John the Baptist stressed that in no way at all are we to look to or rely upon blood descent for salvation. '*Do not even begin to think to yourselves we have Abraham as our Father*' (Matt. 3:9. Note the aorist subjunctive *dozēte* 'do not even let it enter your mind').

To summarise then our Lord vindicates all parents who bring their children to him for he is the only source of salvation. The blessing is not

a once and for all thing but rather we are taught by the passage that we must never cease to bring our children to Jesus. If these parents or guardians returned the very next day the disciples would not be allowed to chase them away. We too must be ready to receive children always. We must attend to their needs and guide them. However young they may be they should be included in our prayers. At all stages of their upbringing they are to be nurtured by their parents and by the church and ministry. Preachers do best who always remember the young ones in the congregation and instruct and exhort them simultaneously with the adult hearers.

(c) *Our Lord did not hesitate to use children as an illustration of salvation* 'I tell you the truth,' said Jesus, 'anyone who will not receive the kingdom of God like a little child will never enter it' (Mark 10:15).

The emphasis here is on receiving the kingdom of God like a little child. Children are as full of sin as adults only the potential for that sin has not had time to develop. Children are also proud. Even tiny children will pout and sulk if their pride is hurt. Our Lord in no way nullifies the emphatic Biblical doctrine of original sin. He is drawing our attention to something which is true of all children throughout the world. What is that? It is that children are naturally receptive. They are not intellectually sophisticated. For instance they do not stumble at accounts of the supernatural and of miracles. Children will accept the account of creation in six days without problems.

How immensely difficult it is to gather a congregation of adult hearers—how easy to gather a group of little ones. This does not mean that the conveying of a Biblical truth to a receptive child regenerates that child. How easy it would be for us all if that was the case! But nobody will deny the natural receptivity of little ones is great compared to adults who will invent a thousand and one excuses and fabrications to condone their unbelief. I contend then that it is the intellectual simplicity and humility of a little child that our Lord refers to. This is a humility which knows nothing of the ambitious scheming of the worldly-wise who plot and plan for their own aggrandisement. It is the humility of simplicity which knows nothing of ambitious self seeking. This surely is the characteristic recommended by our Lord. H. B. Swete says, 'it is not so much the innocence of young children that is in view, as their spirit of trustful simplicity'.<sup>4</sup>

Let us look at the incident recorded in Matthew:

At that time the disciples came to Jesus and asked, 'Who is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven?' He called a little child and had him stand among them. And he said: 'I tell you the truth, unless you change and become like little children, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven. Therefore, whoever humbles himself like this child is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven. And whoever welcomes a little child like this in my name welcomes me.'

The outstanding feature of the passage cited is the absolute necessity of receptivity and faith. It is intellectual pride that prevents people from hearing or obeying. We regularly observe this in open air preaching. Adults are ashamed to listen. If they are drawn then they prefer to listen in some secluded spot where they are unlikely to be detected by others. Note also the concluding sentence about welcoming little children which endorses the substance of Mark 10:13-16 that we are to receive children, instruct them in the Gospel and guide them to Christ.

### *A theology of children*

This is a large subject which we will only look at briefly.

To be born into a Christian family is to be born into an environment of blessing. To be born into or to be adopted into such a family is to be sanctified in the basic meaning of that term. To be sanctified simply means to be set aside or apart. Hence the unconverted partner in a marriage is set apart. He is sanctified only in the sense that God takes into account the fact that he or she is joined in life to a believer. That does not mean that that person is holy in the converted sense. 1 Corinthians 7:14 expressly states the case of the unbelieving partners, 'they are holy'. Their lives are the very opposite of holiness. It is their position of being set apart that is acknowledged. Now the same applies to all children born into a Christian family. To be born into the arena of New Covenant living (an expression to be enlarged on presently) is to be privileged indeed. That is why the word sanctified or holy is used in 1 Corinthians 7: 14. As baptism is not warranted in the case of the unbelieving partner so it is not warranted with unbelieving children.

Participation in the New Covenant is by regeneration only. It is sheer presumption to conclude that children born to Christian partners are regenerate on that account. We have seen in a previous article that it is a blatant denial of original sin and of the necessity of regeneration (see R.T. 55, p. 28). To be born into the arena of New Covenant living is to be born into a sphere of spiritual blessing. From the beginning the child so born is surrounded by the activity, nurture and protection of the church. Biblical teaching in the family and church circle is the norm at every stage of development.

Prayer and teaching are the means used by the Holy Spirit to bring about regeneration but such means do not automatically guarantee regeneration. To bless children therefore is consistent with the privileges already surrounding them. Such prayers or blessings endorse and strengthen those privileges. Such blessing of the means of grace is in order that the grand object of baptism into the Trinity becomes a living reality and when that is accomplished by grace then follows the appropriate season for rejoicing in water baptism.

Reference has been made to being born into the arena of New Covenant living. The Dutch scholar J. Geertsema in a theological address in 1978 put forward a thesis that the Sermon on the Mount was the proclamation of the King or the Messenger of the New Covenant. His reasons are convincing. He points out that the structure of the Sermon on the Mount is covenantal in character being similar in some structural features to the Mosaic covenant as expressed in Exodus chapters 19-24 or in the book of Deuteronomy. I do not want to digress now with details why I believe that this approach has a great deal to commend it but simply point out that it raises that oration of Christ to the fitting height of majesty and kingship that it deserves far above the grovelling moralising that has characterised so much teaching on the Sermon on the Mount. This is the proclamation of the King of kings to *his disciples* who alone have the power to understand and practise the laws which God writes on their hearts. He alone as king has the power to confer the new earth to his citizens. The second clauses in the beatitudes so often left unexplained are seen in a new light when related to the mediator of the new covenant.

Now children born into Christian families are born into the arena of Covenant living. Their parents are heirs of the kingdom of heaven, love the truth of God, are pure in heart and are peacemakers. They are the salt of the earth and the light of the world (Matt. 5:1-16). They understand and reflect the spiritual inward demands of God's holy law as explained by our Lord (Matt. 5:17-36). They appreciate that the purpose of Christ in the new covenant is to make his people children of our heavenly Father and that all new covenant life is lived with the motive of pleasing the Father because we are his children (Matt. 6).

Into such an arena children of believers are born. To understand that spiritual world into which they are born they themselves must be born again. Such new birth is not by blood nor by ritual, nor by sprinkling, nor by 'being done' either in a dedication or by a washing. We are born again by the word of truth. The blessing is the blessing of nurture which on an average lasts for twenty years. That tremendous responsibility, the responsibility of securing the true blessing that is in Christ for our children is what is being stressed in the incident of the little ones being brought to him.

Such a conclusion is consistent with the entire Biblical testimony. Matthew Poole was right to show caution about infant baptism and Mark 10:13-15. William L. Lane in his scholarly commentary on Mark<sup>5</sup> repudiates any basis for seeing infant baptism in the incident of Jesus and the little children.

Let us bring our children to Jesus at all times that through his blessing of the practical means appointed, they may be established in the Faith. ■

<sup>1</sup> *Baptism in the New Testament*, G. R. Beasley Murray, p. 322.

<sup>2</sup> *Commentary on Mark*, H. B. Swete, p. 220. Swete cites Hastings, D. B., iii, p. 84ff. to document benedictions obtained from rabbis. <sup>3</sup> Vol. 1, pp. 807f., vol 2, p. 138.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 221. <sup>5</sup> *Mark*, New London Commentary, M. M & S. 1974, p. 360.

*A recent, and very distorted TV programme on the life of William Cowper, reminded us of the rich heritage enjoyed of hymns in the English language. Hymnology is a comparatively recent development in English Church History – the use in worship of any metrical compositions apart from the Psalms was not easily recognised until well after the Reformation. At that time metrical versions of the Psalms became increasingly popular; the well established medium of religious poetry was also continued by such as Herbert, Vaughan and Milton. However it was Isaac Watts, the 'orthodox dissenter' who firmly established hymnology as an accepted form of worship, he had to apologise for himself as a 'bold and determined innovator', when he published his first hymns in 1707. Charles Wesley's first collection of hymns was published in 1739, and by his death he had produced seven thousand hymns. Among the hymn writers who followed in the eighteenth century were William Cowper, and Philip Doddridge who wrote nearly four thousand hymns. Cowper was a friend of John Newton, who himself recorded deep spiritual experiences in the form of hymns. By permission we reproduce here two brief biographies of those hymnwriters who have so far appeared in the Encyclopaedia of Christianity.*

## Cowper and Doddridge

### William Cowper (1731-1800)

Christian poet and hymn-writer, Cowper descended from John Cooper, alderman of London (d. 1609). His mother, Anne Donne, belonged to the family of the poet John Donne. His father was chaplain to George II and rector of the parish of Great Berkhamstead, Hertfordshire, where William was born. Upon the death of his wife his father sent William, age six, to a boarding school. Later he was sent to Westminster School, where Warren Hastings was a school-mate. Cowper was called to the bar in 1754. A crisis occurred when Cowper was nominated to a clerkship in the House of Lords. Anxiety over the preliminary examination drove him to attempt suicide. When friends learned of his attempts, he was committed to a private asylum, where he was gloriously converted to Christ through the visits of his brother John. Upon his release he went to reside with the Morley Unwin family,

till Morley was thrown from his horse and killed. After this tragedy, he moved with Unwin's widow Mary to the village of Olney at the request of John Newton, where Mary faithfully cared for him. Here he spent many years assisting his friend Newton in parish work until 1773, when he again descended into despair and once more attempted to kill himself. After recovery he made his first appearance as an author with his *Olney Hymns* in 1779, written in conjunction with Newton and signed with a 'C'. At the suggestion of Lady Austen and Mrs. Unwin, he now began to write secular verse. His second volume, *The Task: A Poem in Six Books*, immediately caught fire, along with his frolicking *The Diverting History of John Gilpin*, his *On the Loss of the Royal George*, and his personal correspondence. He has been heralded as bringing a new spirit to English verse and pioneering the way for the poetry of Burns, Shelley, Wordsworth,

and Byron. A third attack of melancholy and depression overtook the poet in 1787 and another in 1794. He died 25th April, 1800, and was buried near Mrs. Unwin, who had passed away before him.

His greatest hymn, commonly known by the opening lines, 'God moves in a mysterious way, his wonders to perform,' was published in the *Olney Hymns*. It was the last hymn he ever composed, written after the breakdown of 1773. He also wrote the hymn, 'There Is a Fountain Filled with Blood'. Other fine hymns still sung are 'O For a Closer Walk with God' and 'Sometimes a Light Surprises'.

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S. Brooke, *Theology in the English Poets* (London, 1874), 40-54.

#### Philip Doddridge (1702-1751)

A nonconformist preacher Doddridge was born in London, the son of an oil merchant who had been driven from Bohemia by religious persecution. In his boyhood his mother, a devout Christian, gave him a thorough religious training. Declining an offer for education in the Anglican Church, he went to the nonconformist school in Kibworth and became a Congregationalist pastor at the age of 21. In 1729, when only 27, he was recognised as a rising young preacher and was called to head a newly established non-conformist seminary at Market Harborough. In the same year he accepted a call from a congregation in Northampton, where he laboured as a pastor along with his seminary responsibilities for the next 22 years.

Some 200 young men (mostly Dissenters) were trained for the ministry under his tutelage. He was compelled by tuberculosis to give up his work in

1750. A friend and supporter of George Whitefield, Doddridge, as a staunch Calvinist with a catholic spirit, gained the confidence of the Countess of Huntingdon (Whitefield's patroness), who made it possible for him to go to Portugal for his health. 'I can as well go to heaven from Lisbon,' he told her, 'as from my own study in Northampton'. He died in Lisbon and was buried near the novelist Henry Fielding in the English cemetery there.

In connection with his youthful interests in founding a nonconformist academy prior to his call to Northampton, he visited Isaac Watts, with whom he became a close friend and at whose flame, to use his own words, he 'kindled his torch'. He followed the example of Watts in writing hymns to go with his sermons. Their posthumous publication is the chief reason for his fame. Of the several hundred hymns which he wrote, a dozen or so are still sung. Perhaps the best-known is 'Awake My Soul, Stretch Every Nerve', which was written in 1755 to conclude a sermon on the text Philippians 3:12-14. In this hymn we see Doddridge at his best. The poet uses, in places almost paraphrases, the Scripture and captures its spirit in true poetic beauty.

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# News

## Israel

Pastor Baruch Maoz of Rehovot has written to notify us of escalating anti-Christian persecution in Israel. The organisation Yad Le'Achim mounted a campaign of harassment and intimidation against the Rehovot church during late July and August. Demonstrators gathered round the hall during meeting times and Pastor Maoz's own home and person have been violently attacked. Elsewhere in the country 'Houses and places of worship are smeared with paint, tyres cut, windows broken; threatening telephone calls are made. Christians are spat upon in the streets and efforts are made to rouse their neighbours against them.' Prayer is urgently needed against these persecuting activities of Yad Le'Achim. It will help if you as a friend of Israel can write to any source of Israeli influence deploring the fact that the Israeli government subsidises the Yad Le'Achim and this violates the principles of freedom. It is the lack of that very privilege that has caused untold suffering to the Jewish people and the Yad Le'Achim is the worst possible advert for the modern state of Israel.

## Tour of Israel

Ministers interested in a tour of Israel tailored to their needs including lectures in the University of Jerusalem and a visit to Baruch Maoz in relation to his work, should write to Ray Johnson, Christian Witness to Israel, 44 Lubbock Road, Chislehurst, Kent BR7 5JX.

## India

Herbert Carson has been touring India and is due to return on 20th September. The engagements include BANGALORE – 30th August-1st September preaching. 2nd and 3rd September Pastors' conference. MADRAS 4th-7th September Union of Evangelical Students of India – meetings for students and graduates. BANGALORE 9th-11th Leaders' conference of the Evangelical Fellowship of India. HYDERABAD 12th-13th Pastors' conference. BOMBAY 15th-18th Pastors' conference.

## Lancashire – church planting

For the prayerful interest of those in similar situations we have details of a new work starting in Caton, Lancaster. Based upon the 1689 Confession and with a nucleus of four families and a total support of about sixteen to twenty people Sunday meetings are planned to commence in September. There are three young men competent to preach but help is anticipated from visiting preachers. This information comes from Michael and Glenys Pearce who have laboured long and patiently in the area. They used to work for the Banner of Truth when their offices were at Chiltern Street in London. There is reason to believe that the horizons in the north – once so dark – are brightening. Gareth Crossley, pastor of the Little Hill Church in Leicester has moved to Ripon where he is to pastor. Michael Pearce's address is 25 Greenfields, Caton, Lancashire (phone Caton 770327).

## The Pope to visit his flock in Britain

On 1st September the Press announced that the Pope is to visit Britain probably in the summer of 1982. The formal invitation was made by the Roman Catholic bishops. The visit is to be a pastoral one. However it is obvious that great capital will be made out of the visit for the Ecumenical Movement. In accepting the invitation the Pope has stressed that he will attach much importance to the Ecumenical aspect of the visit. The new Archbishop of Canterbury Dr. Robert Runcie has assured the Pope that he would be welcomed with real affection by Anglicans.

On the evening of 1st September the main television channels devoted time in their news reports to a delegation to No. 10 Downing Street consisting of seven Protestant organisations, led by Rev. David Samuel who was interviewed by the media. He presented his case extremely well by pointing out that the claims of the Pope at his installation are **Father of Princes and Kings, Ruler of the World, and Vicar of our Saviour Jesus Christ**. Such claims are repugnant to scripture yet it is the purpose of the Roman Church to promote them.

How are we to view the visit? The principle of freedom is to be upheld. Our belief is religious liberty for all including Roman Catholics. However if claims to have dominion over us are held these must be repudiated. It is interesting that the National Press chose to ignore this aspect. In an editorial comment *The Guardian* drew attention to the fact that only the subject of contraception holds many Anglicans back. 'The great debates today are not transubstantiation, the Immaculate Conception, the reservation of the Sacrament, or the validity of Anglican orders. They are not about the veneration of the Virgin Mary or even about the Pope's infallibility when speaking *ex cathedra*. They are about birth control, divorce, the celibacy of the clergy and women priests.'

For us who do put eternal salvation in the first place and insist on Justification by Faith, alone, the history of how the Gospel has been usurped by human traditions in the church of Rome is very important.

We must seize every occasion and every opportunity to draw attention to the great central truths. We have no influence to affect the Pope's coming one way or the other but we can employ the interest generated to draw attention to the enormous contrast between the Roman System with all its idolatry and superstition and the glorious Gospel of a free justification for all who repent and believe.

By way of postscript, it may be worthwhile for someone to research and document the constant bias reflected in *The Times* and *Daily Telegraph* (both have Roman Catholic editors) toward Roman Catholicism and the Pope.

### **Grace – Gurney Baptist Church**

27th July 1980 was 'the wedding day' of Gurney Road Baptist Church, Stratford, and Grace Baptist Church, Leyton. Gurney Church, pastored by Wilfred Kuhrt, had a large building, but a small congregation. Grace Church, pastored by Achille Blaize enjoyed large congregations, but earlier this year were struggling to raise a large sum with which to purchase a redundant church in which to meet. After a period of prayerful consideration both congregations voted unanimously to merge, and clearly both will benefit from the new arrangement. Both pastors can now enjoy enlarged congregations and improved premises, and the happy integration gives cause for thanksgiving.

### **Eric Olson at Cuckfield**

The Send Evangelical Church in Surrey has grown since its inception about seven years ago. Richard Brooks, formerly a curate at an evangelical Anglican Church in Sheffield has settled well at Send having begun as pastor in March this year. This move was designed to free Eric Olson for his wider ministry – the continent of Europe. While the editor is away in Canada and the USA (14th October to 12th November) Eric Olson will be preaching at Cuckfield. The American tour includes New Brunswick, Rochester NY State, Indiana, Wheaton Illinois, and the annual West Coast Conference at San Diego. John Marshall is due to lead the Whitefield Fraternal in Haywards Heath on 13th November.

### **London Seminar**

Wednesday, 12th November 1980 11 a.m. St. John's Wood Baptist Church, St. John's Wood Road. Geoff Thomas will be speaking on Divorce: The exceptive clause, at 2 p.m. Robert Oliver on the Sandemanian Menace (!), at 5 p.m. Peter Misselbrook on the Nature of Prophecy. Drinks will be provided although folk must bring their own food. A donation of £2 on the day from those attending will help to cover expenses.



# Called to a Better Church?

Many of our readers are ministers and ministers are sometimes perplexed as to whether they should accept a call to another church. There are many plausible reasons to encourage change. The following letter which deals with this subject is from a pastor who wishes to remain anonymous. It shows that God's ways and thoughts are higher than ours.

'Not long ago I decided to stay in Omega which is small rather than accept a call to Alpha where there is a much larger congregation. I was drawn to Alpha by a variety of strong impulses. I loved the late minister there, a man of deep piety and a very able preacher (this daunted me too, of course). I loved the spirituality of the congregation as a whole, as I knew a fair number of the people and had evidence of their Calvinism and their prayerfulness. I loved the thought of preaching to a full church of something (I suppose) like 300 persons. The figure is not exact but is my own estimate. I felt the congregation had taken me to heart and that an inexplicable bond of spiritual love had drawn us together. What a warmth there is in spiritual love!

Not that I did not have some affectionate and spiritual hearers at Omega. I certainly did have and still do. But this has always been a small congregation and this is an area more barren and indifferent than your part of the country.

Distrusting my own wisdom, however, I sought to find and to do the naked will of God. I became absolutely certain I should not leave Omega. This has been confirmed in two ways.

Alpha are flourishing under their new minister and here at Omega we have been blessed with a number of

complete outsiders, some of whom profess to have been converted by the grace of God. I did not find it easy to part company with Alpha, but I am certain I did what was my duty and I have never been so happy and encouraged here at Omega as I am now. The love of the young converts is matched only by their zeal to bring others to hear the Gospel. It is a thrilling experience I would not have missed for anything. The Lord's way is so much better than our own!

If I were to single out one thing that has helped me particularly in my ministry here it is this. I have found it a great blessing to have regular seasons of "special prayer". I do not make these long — usually not more than half an hour. But I try to stir myself up to a sense of the seriousness of the times and to pray out aloud on my knees. One doesn't always melt with tears but sometimes one does. It is a heavenly, a sublime experience which more than compensates in some ways for the general deadness in the churches. I have come to prize these secret times with God as the richest privileges earth allows.

Personally I think we are on the threshold of a great new chapter in the purposes of God — especially the conversion of Israel and consequent glory among Gentile nations. The days we live in are days of change. Surely they have to be. God is, I believe, setting the stage for this new and still more wonderful act in the drama of his providence. This helps me to be optimistic in spite of the fog all around us.

I can summarise my outlook in an epigram: God has given us the books; we must now pray for the Spirit to come down.'



From left to right: Keith Harbron of Bedford, Don and Mrs. McKinney of Lake Charles, Louisiana, Peter Solesbury (treasurer and co-administrator), pastor Richard Chester, pastor Konstanty Wiazowski of Warsaw, Poland, and pastor Achille Blaize.

## The Carey Family Conferences

### The 1979 Conference

Chris Robinson has been used to build up a Reformed Baptist Church in Dublin. From very small beginnings the church has increased steadily. Perseverance in the face of tremendous odds has been rewarded. There is abounding hope that a number of churches of similar character in the Republic of Ireland, now small, will also prosper in due time.

Chris and Helen Robinson, Benjamin and Priscilla attended the annual Carey Family Conference last year for the whole fortnight. The family unanimously acclaimed it as a great holiday which they would like repeated in the future. The rolling grasslands and woods, excellent amenities for all ages, warm indoor swimming pool, well equipped gymnasium, organised sports tournaments, games and competitions all contribute.

Last year Anton Hoffman of South Africa gave a series of expositions during the first week and Kingsley Coomber during the second. Other speakers were Bernard Honeysett, John J. Murray (ex Banner of Truth and now Free Church minister at

Oban, Scotland), Charles Lawrence and Chris Robinson. While the adults have two morning sessions, a full programme of Bible teaching, singing and activities are provided for the children, the 4-6 and 7-11 year olds.

When John Rubens, the Carey Conference Secretary, moved from Cuckfield to Bedford the family conference transferred from Sussex to Clarendon School six miles outside Bedford. Wonderful providence is to be seen in this because a much larger centre was needed and costs needed to be much reduced. The Clarendon School has had new attractive wings of accommodation built on which has helped, but this year every available place was taken. This raises a question mark about adequate future accommodation. A further providence is seen in the capabilities among the members of the Bedford Evangelical Church. Many local churches seem to have special areas of service. The whole Family Conference is generously and enthusiastically serviced or deaconed by the Bedford church where Colin Richards is pastor. There are caterers, administrators, domestic helpers and even a gym

instructor who organises the sports with professional ability. While the conference is administered by Bedford the responsibility for arranging the teaching ministry lies with several men who bear in mind the vision of the Carey conference and also the responsibility toward the pastors and churches which support the conference. Much blessed is the trust that has developed that the ministry provided will be reliable. Each year groups arrive from a variety of churches from Liverpool in the north to Crawley, Cuckfield and Tenterden in the south. Stapleford and Bradford-on-Avon have been particularly well represented.

### The 1980 Conference

The speakers for the first week were Bob Sheehan on communion with God, Colin Richards on evangelism and a biographical study of Billy Bray, Roy Clements (Eden Chapel, Cambridge) on The Good Samaritan. Pastor Clements closely reasoned expository style was appreciated as he drew much practical application from the passage. Erroll Hulse spoke on the subject of 'Help from the Puritans' (designed as an introduction for beginners) the Covenants, and then preached at the closing session on Heaven and Hell.

The guest speaker for the second week was Don McKinney of Lake Charles, Louisiana. Very appropriately and attractively he expounded on the two comings of Christ and then on the general and effectual call of the Gospel. Achille Blaize preached on Nabal and Abigail with a fire which burned away a lot of the ugly Nabal that remains in us menfolk and with a sweetness to encourage the womenfolk to emulate the wisdom and gentleness of Abigail.

Trevor Routley, missionary from Argentina, described conditions in that country. Martyn Hallett introduced the subject of rich Christians in an age of hunger. The discussions which followed showed divided opinions. Humphrey Mildred of the Banner of Truth says there is literature available which shows that this world

could support eight times its present population if it were not for ineptitude and corruption. A highlight of the second week was a series of four very practical expositions on the local church and the responsibility of the individual members. These papers were given by Richard Chester, pastor of Caterham Baptist Church, and are very highly commended. You can get all details of the cassette recordings available by writing to Mr. S. D. Hogwood, 13 Lucastes Avenue, Haywards Heath, Sussex.

Many came from the surrounding areas for the evening preaching sessions. In the discussion which followed the exposition on the Puritans, Trevor Baxter of the Railway Mission, Brighton testified to the fact that Puritan books are being appreciated by believers from Sri Lanka, Singapore and Fiji which shows that 'Puritan English' need be no stumbling block. He cited the case of one overseas man being converted recently through reading *The Mystery of Providence* by John Flavel.

There are some themes, such as biblical teaching about family life which will never wear out because they are the subject of daily responsibility. This is also true concerning evangelism, as the discussion which followed Colin Richards' exposition on that responsibility showed. The idea of breaking up into Bible study groups to study a section of Scripture and then returning to share the findings can be useful very occasionally as it prompts everyone to revive thinking processes which may have become dormant, but there are drawbacks. One thoroughly proficient opening-up of a passage is infinitely better than a whirl of sudden, unprepared thought. However variety is helpful and the opportunity for open discussion was appreciated throughout the fortnight.

If you desire to attend next year be sure to write early for details to John Rubens, 23 Brickhill Drive, Bedford.

# The Pale Horse riding through Africa

The continent of Africa occupies one fifth of the world's land surface. It is well known that the church in Africa has been growing at a rate hardly conceivable in the West, and that over 50% of the population of Black Africa would now claim to be Christian. Some areas have experienced a powerful work of revival, notably East Africa, and in general we can be grateful for the comparative strength of evangelicals. The many open doors make Africa a continual challenge for our prayers and missionary vision. However our prayerful attention is demanded now as never before by the magnitude of the present African disaster. The gravity of the plight of millions of displaced peoples whose farming land may never again be viable has only been gradually communicated through the media.

A recent *Times* editorial reminded us that the underlying problem is not confined to the famine struck areas. The whole of Africa cannot support a population which overall is increasing more rapidly than in any other area of the world. Elsewhere food production has increased more nearly in proportion to population, but in Africa there has been a decline in per capita food production. Almost all African countries have to import basic foodstuffs. About a dozen states in the sub-Sahara band suffer starvation because of actual famine exacerbated by war. There are also food shortages in Zaire, Zambia, parts of Mozambique and Angola, Tanzania and Burundi. The U.N. food Council lists 26 countries as facing food crises and 17 of these are African. At least 60 million people throughout the continent are affected. African

states are seemingly unable to find any export potential. South Africa is the outstanding exception but also Zimbabwe if it remains stable, Kenya is also an exception. The prevailing problem in Africa is that of primitive African agricultural techniques. Subsistence agriculture must change dramatically, not only to feed the growing concentrations of Africans in urban areas, but because of the escalating number of people displaced from those countries struck by drought and political upheaval.

Change is very difficult to achieve. One of our correspondents commenting on the present famine in Kwazulu testifies that after forty years of effort on a wide scale there has been failure to persuade the Black people to change their ideas about farming. In the past food production has been violently disturbed by natural and man-made disasters. But it is to be feared that Africa is facing a decade worse than ever before. The destruction of cattle and grazing areas by drought this year in the Sahel and East Africa has been compounded with social upheaval. Some experts fear that large areas will never again be capable of sustaining human life. Therefore the more general food crisis in the whole of Africa means that for millions displaced there will be nowhere to be transplanted, and no future.

In Revelation we read of a pale horse ridden by the rider called Death. This rider has power to kill with sword and hunger. As Africa is convulsed with civil wars and famine we must surely be moved with compassion to urgent intercession for God's mercy.

# The New Initiative

*The following is the text published by The Times, July 28, 1980*

## Theologians united on Christian message

The Nationwide Initiative in Evangelism was set up as an ambitious scheme to stimulate a united and coordinated effort involving all the mainstream Christian traditions, inspired by the vision of a grand campaign to make 1980 the year that Christianity was taken to the very doorsteps of the unconverted millions in Britain.

Entirely predictably, the reluctance of the two largest churches to commit themselves all the way has watered down the NIE to the status of a publicity campaign.

It is as true in religion as elsewhere that the things which happen accidentally are often more significant than those which happen intentionally. Fifteen theologians from all the main traditions, from Free Church and Conservative Evangelical to Roman Catholic, were brought together to see to what extent they could agree on the basic message to be preached, should the opportunity come to preach it.

They invited each other to say what they thought the heart of the Christian message was that had to be preached. And they were delighted and surprised to discover enormous areas of agreement.

The text of the document which they agreed is as follows:

### GOD

**The Living God is Creator, Lord and Father.**

The God we worship is the God and Father of Jesus Christ. He is the living God who created the universe, and made man male and female to share his likeness and his life, and to exercise a responsible creativity. As Lord of nature he sustains what he has made. As Lord of history he is ceaselessly active in all human affairs, both in blessing and in judgment. Nothing is beyond his rule. Through Jesus Christ we know him as our Father.

*Gen. 1:1-2:3; Ps. 104; Is. 40:12-31; Amos 1:3-2:16; Matt. 6:25-33; John 5:17; Col. 1:15-20.*

### JESUS CHRIST

**In Jesus Christ God has conquered sin and death.**

God loves the world and all its people, however far they may have gone from him. The tragedy of the human situation is that we, who were made by God and for God, are now in rebellion against him and under his judgment. Sin is misdirected love, the wilful assertion of ourselves against God and others. It permeates the structures of society and lies at the root of human alienation. God wants everybody to come to know him and plans to restore the whole creation to himself.

He revealed his love and taught his way in Jesus Christ his son, who lived a human life on earth. Jesus's perfect love and obedience were most clearly seen on the cross. For there he willingly bore the brunt of society's hostility to his goodness. Although sinless he identified himself with us in our sins, in order to reconcile us to his Father. Then God raised him from the dead in vindication of all that he had taught and done, and as the first fruit of the new creation.

*Gen. 3; Ps. 14; Hosea 11:1-9; Luke 15; John 3:16-21; Rom. 7:7-8, 17; 2 Cor. 5:11-21; 1 Tim. 2:3-6.*

### THE BIBLE

**The Bible is the irreplaceable witness to God's saving purposes.**

The Bible tells the story of God's dealings with mankind through his covenant people Israel. Above all it bears witness to Jesus Christ, so that people will believe in him. Its message has a unique authority. God spoke and speaks through it. Yet we have to struggle to reinterpret it sensitively in every culture including our own. This process is costly. For unless we are willing to be radically confronted by the word of God ourselves, we cannot with integrity wrestle with the task of communicating it in intelligible terms to others.

*Deut. 8:1-3; Ps. 19:7-14, 136; Luke 1:1-4, 4:16-21, 24:27; John 20:30-31; Acts 10:34-43; Rom. 15:4.*

### THE CHURCH

**The Christian Church is called to be sign**

### and foretaste of God's Kingdom.

The good news expects a response. The Church is the community of those who are called by the Holy Spirit. Turning in penitence to Christ from the prevailing values of the fallen world, we receive from him a new life and enter his new society. Yet the Church does not exist primarily for its own sake but for those who are not its members. Christ sends his people into the world as his servants and witnesses of his transforming purposes. To be a Christian is not a mark of superiority but of solidarity. We are still sinners, but we live and grow in God's grace.

*Ex. 19:3-6; Ps. 87; Matt. 28:18-20; Mark 3:13-19; John 15:16, 20:9-23; 1 Cor. 6:11; Eph. 2:11; 1 Pet. 2:9-10.*

### THE HOLY SPIRIT

**The Holy Spirit enables men and women to do the work of God.**

As in creation and in the birth of Jesus, so in evangelism and all the work attempted by the Church, the power that matters is that of God's Holy Spirit. His strength and guidance are promised to the Church, but he is sovereign and not at our command. He brought Christ's Church into being at Pentecost and is forever teaching it new lessons. It is his work to challenge and convert, to heal and renew.

*Gen. 1:1-2; Ps. 104:27-30; Is. 42:1-4; John 15:24-27, 16:4-15; Acts 2:1-21; Rom. 8:12-27; 1 Cor. 12-14.*

### THE KINGDOM OF GOD

**God reigns; his rule is present in Jesus; he will bring all creation in the end to its perfection in him.**

Jesus claimed that in his life the Day of God had dawned, the Day for which Israel hoped, when God would be seen to take charge of human history. Down the centuries Christians have served that Kingdom on earth in a mixture of faithfulness and disobedience. As mankind in our time faces new and vast challenges, God will give new levels of wisdom, generosity and courage. Even our failures

do not cancel out the promise inherent in the resurrection of Jesus. This remains the pledge of God's final triumph, and the source of living hope.

*Is. 11-12, 25-27; Ps. 97; Matt. 10:1-17, 11:2-6; Eph. 1:3-10; Rev. 21:1-4.*

### EVANGELISM

**'Evangelism is like one beggar telling another where to find bread' (D. T. Niles).** Christ still sends all his followers into the world as his witnesses. Christians commend not themselves but the love of God as known in Jesus. What we are and do is no less important in this than what we say.

As we humbly but joyfully reflect God's reconciling love for all humanity, in friendship and mutual respect, the Holy Spirit uses our witness and service to make God known. The joy of sharing good news simply because it is good is the common joy of all Christians. God has exalted Jesus to his right hand, that every knee should bow to him and every tongue confess that he is Lord (Phil. 2:9-11).

*Is. 52:7-10; Ps. 96; Acts 4:13-21, 26:24-29; 1 Cor. 9:16-27; 2 Cor. 4-5; Phil. 1:12-21; 1 Thess. 2:1-8; 2 Tim. 1:8-14, 4:1-5.*

Right Rev. Lesslie Newbigin (chairman), United Reformed Church (URC)

Rev. John Stott (vice-chairman),

Evangelical Anglican

Right Rev. David Brown, Bishop of Guildford

Rev. Prof. George Caird, URC

Mr. Martin Conway (secretary), Anglican

Rev. Donald English, Methodist

Rev. John Gaine, Roman Catholic

Rev. Richard Jones, Methodist

Rev. R. Tudor Jones, Congregational

Miss Margaret Kane, Anglican

Miss Myrtle Langley, Anglican

Rev. Prof. Ian Pitt-Watson, Church of Scotland

Rev. John Redford, Roman Catholic

Rev. Tom Smail, Anglican (Charismatic)

Rev. Derek Tidball, Baptist.

### Comment by David Kingdon

Earlier this year *The Times* published an Islamic manifesto of belief, but it must surely have been many years since anything like the above text has appeared which, apart from four introductory paragraphs by Clifford Longley, Religious Affairs correspon-

dent for *The Times*, is a statement of theology. It is the text of an agreed statement by fifteen theologians who had 'invited each other to say what they thought the *heart* (my italics) of the Christian message was that had to be preached'. Note that the list of

signatories includes Roman Catholics, Anglicans (including the Rev. John Stott), Methodists, Presbyterians, a Welsh Congregationalist and the Rev. Tom Smail, a Presbyterian minister (not Anglican as stated) who is a well-known Charismatic leader.

We must say that the signatories are to be commended for believing (unfashionably) that theology is important – that there ought to be a common agreement as to what the Gospel is before an attempt is made to preach it. In this they set themselves apart from all who say whether explicitly or not: 'Let's not bother with theology. Let's get on with evangelism.'

But the serious question has to be raised as to whether the heart of the Gospel is properly defined in the joint statement. As we examine each of its paragraphs in turn it seems all too clear, alas, that essential elements are missing and vital issues are either ignored or fudged (obscured).

The paragraph on God speaks of him as the God and Father of the Lord Jesus Christ, the Creator of all things, the Lord of history who is ceaselessly active in all human affairs, both in blessing and judgment. But nowhere in the statement is there any mention of final judgment, of heaven and hell. Indeed at one point the statement seems to lean in the direction of universalism, for in the section headed 'Jesus Christ' we are told that 'God wants everybody to come to know him and plans to restore the whole creation to himself'. Is everybody then to be saved? We are not definitely told so but then neither is universalism denied. So, it seems to me the door is left open.

The second paragraph on the work of Christ defines sin as 'misdirected

love, the wilful assertion of ourselves against God and others'. But this is hardly an adequate definition since a man may sinfully hate himself even to the extent of committing suicide. In Scripture sin is defined in terms of God – falling short of his glory (Rom. 3:23), lawlessness (1 John 3:4), and ungodliness (Rom. 1:18). Sin is to be viewed theologically in the first place, not anthropologically as in terms of it being against God even before it is against man (compare Ps. 51:4). It is its being against God that gives to sin its peculiar offensiveness and loathsomeness, and it is this that must be brought home in 'the preaching of the bad news which is the essential preparation for the declaration of the good news'.

The doctrine of atonement contained in this section is very weak indeed.

'Although sinless he identified himself with us in our sins, in order to reconcile us to his Father.' Now apart from not spelling out *how* by identifying himself with us in our sins our Lord did reconcile us to God, a vital element of the biblical doctrine of the atonement is missing. Our Lord so identified himself with sinners that he bore the *wrath* of God to which they are most deservedly exposed. Thus propitiation – the removing of God's wrath – is the basis of reconciliation, first from God's side, and then from ours as we respond in faith to the message of reconciliation (2 Cor. 5:18-21).

The resurrection is seen as a vindication of all that our Lord thought and did, and there is scriptural support for this (Acts 2:24, 30) but it is not made clear that our Lord was raised out of the grip of death. His was not a 'spiritual' resurrection but a physical one. His *flesh* did not see corruption (Acts 2:31), from which it follows

that his resurrection defeats death and is the pledge of the resurrection of the body (1 Cor. 15:12-20). It is precisely this that many theologians and ministers deny. The statement does no service to the Gospel by obscuring this issue.

In the third section the Bible is seen as 'the irreplaceable witness to God's saving purpose'. But irreplaceable in what sense? Because it 'tells the story of God's dealings with mankind through his covenant people Israel?' Because 'it bears witness to Jesus Christ, so that people will believe in him'? But an irreplaceable witness may simply be the best witness we have in the circumstances with no guarantee whatsoever as to its complete trustworthiness. Is it not significant that passages such as 2 Timothy 3:15-17 and 2 Peter 1:19-21 are omitted from the list of supporting Scriptures? They speak of God inspiring the authors of Scripture with the clear implication that what they wrote God spoke and when God speaks he speaks infallibly.

In the same section a switch is made from the Bible to 'the word of God' but as even a first year student of theology knows modern theology drives a wedge between the two with such formulas as 'The Bible is not but contains the word of God'. To leave undefined the relationship between the Bible and the word of God is to introduce ambiguity into an area where clarity is vital.

The paragraph on the church manages to say nothing about baptism and the Lord's Supper yet these are crucial matters in the whole debate as to the way in which salvation is appropriated.

The next section on the Holy Spirit

says very finely that the Holy Spirit 'is sovereign and not at our command'. But if so what becomes of apostolic succession and the *ex opere operato* of the sacraments? In Roman Catholic theology does not the priest have power to make God at the altar when the host is consecrated?

The paragraph headed 'The Kingdom of God' manages to omit any reference to the return of our Lord Jesus Christ and refrains from spelling out what God's final triumph means. Does it mean the final overthrow of Satan and the eternal punishment of the wicked? It does in my understanding of the Gospel.

The final paragraph on evangelism sees it as commending 'the love of God as known in Jesus'. But this falls far short of New Testament preaching which called upon men to repent of sin and believe in the Lord Jesus Christ (Acts 20:21). And central to evangelism in the New Testament is justification by faith *alone* (Eph. 2:8-9). Not once in the whole statement is justification mentioned yet this *is* the heart of the Gospel and the only hope of sinners. God justifies the ungodly (Rom. 4:5). This is the article of a standing or falling church as Martin Luther saw. Sadly I have to say that these theologians may be united but not, alas, on the Gospel of the grace of God. The Reformation keynotes do not sound out from this ecumenical trumpet – but we must continue to proclaim the whole Gospel by grace alone, through faith alone, in Christ alone. *Soli deo gloria*.



*Before presenting part 3 of 'Principles for Bible Translators' we will benefit by a resume of the previous articles, and by noting two errors in what has been published so far.*

*In the first article (RT 55) we noted four theological principles that need careful consideration in making and assessing translations. They were: (i) that God gave us the Scriptures intending that we should understand him. Our translations must not make his meaning obscure. (ii) that in giving the Scriptures the extent of the Holy Spirit's superintendence was down to the very words and so we must ensure that our words convey his meaning exactly. (iii) that the New Testament use of the Old Testament must be carefully observed and, (iv) the Gospel writers reporting of the teaching of our Lord demonstrate that the Biblical concern is for precision in conveying God's meaning rather than a slavish, obscuring literalism in translation.*

*In the second article (RT 56) we saw that it is impossible to translate without interpreting, but that this fact meant that the translator had to take great care to avoid certain pit-falls. Through our enthusiasm for communication it is easy to go beyond the bounds of translating and to give a running commentary on the original text, and especially to impose a theology on God's Word. The praiseworthy desire to be understood can lead to such a simplicity that an idea that is complex can be evacuated of its meaning, or a Scripture portion that is ambiguous be given a dogmatic form.*

*Dr. R. Dillard was reported in the first article as not recognizing such principles. In fact he has written to point out his agreement with them, and so please take note that my original assessment of his position was made on the basis of a misreading of one of his articles. In the second article (RT 56) line 35 on page 22 should read 'have not the avoidance of technical terms . . .'. Let us now conclude.*

# Principles of Bible Translators

## *The language used in Bible Versions*

I HAVE ALREADY COMMENTED ON THE LANGUAGE TO BE USED IN BIBLE VERSIONS by drawing attention to the need for precision and a willingness to tolerate a reasonable level of technical terms rather than sacrificing everything for the sake of simplicity. As we have no reason to believe that God limited his penmen to 'basic Hebrew' and 'basic Greek', we have no reason to limit our versions to 'basic English'.

However, we do need to take note of the type of Hebrew and Greek that God caused his penmen to use. Needless to say, it varies from author to author, and sometimes one author in one book can vary his style to such a degree that the modernists have a great opportunity to discern their much-loved sources behind the books. This variation of writing style and form should, as far as is possible, be reflected in translating. The more formal prose sections should read as such and the poetic sections should follow poetic rhythm.

Much has been written on the vocabulary of the New Testament. Until

this century it was generally assumed that the New Testament was full of new words which did not appear in other literature, and people used to speak of 'Biblical Greek' as opposed to the classical Greek of other writers. However, as more literature of the secular sort has become available this concept has decreased in power. Whereas J. H. Thayer could list 767 words in the New Testament with no secular parallel in 1886, there are now less than 50.<sup>30</sup>

The discovery of a good number of secular writings from the Biblical period at the end of the Nineteenth and the beginning of the Twentieth centuries together with the work of A. T. Robinson, C. A. Dissmann and J. H. Moulton has demonstrated that the New Testament is written not in literary Greek, but in the vernacular koine Greek—the greek of the market place. The New Testament was evidently written in the style and vocabulary of the people. It was not written as a work of art but as a work of communication.

Even while acknowledging this, we need to check ourselves against going overboard into what Dr. C. E. Mason Junior calls 'slanguage'.<sup>31</sup>

The New Testament is indeed written in the Greek of everyday man, but such a statement must be rightly understood. The everyday man uses technical terms and reflects his culture, and he certainly does not speak and think in newspaper English. He also understands many terms he does not use. A translation is not to be so simple as to be an insult to the average man implying that he is stupid.

It must also be remembered that the vocabulary and form of the New Testament writings did not only reflect the man in the street. They also reflected the varied backgrounds of their writers, the Old Testament age and the Septuagint. These factors alone will prevent the Scriptures from reading 'like today's newspaper'.<sup>32</sup> There will be a flavour to the English that indicates its dependence on the Hebrew, Aramaic and Greek Scriptures. This flavour will not dominate the English but it will be observable. Indeed, those versions that sink to the level of today's newspaper end up being treated like it. Dr. J. B. Payne refers to those university students in Kentucky who enthused over the Good News Bible when they first read it but who had no interest in returning to read it again. Like today's newspaper it was soon discarded.<sup>33</sup>

The AV is excellent literary English but it is not contemporary. Some scholars of English claim that it never was.<sup>34</sup> They see it as traditional Anglican English rather than as the true vernacular of its day.

The RSV is revised literary English but less wooden than that of the NASV and nowhere near the English of the NEB which has all the marks of scholars who knew Hebrew and Greek but who had not a clue about English!

The GNB and LB both exhibit 'newspaper' English, which is bettered in many ways by the NIV, although even that with its 'can't, won't' etc. borders on the over-modern.

### *Conclusion*

The aim of the translator is unattainable but each is to strive towards it. For the aim of the (English) translator is to give us in English words and grammar precisely what God gave his people in Hebrew, Aramaic and Greek words and grammar. In so far as exactly the same meaning is not conveyed, he has failed; in so far as he conveys more or less than the original, he has failed. If any translation is to be properly assessed, then the fundamental question to be asked of every part of it, is: Does this say to me precisely what God intended it should say? It is this precision, this accuracy, that we must look for above everything else.

### *What conclusions may be drawn from these statements?*

Firstly, for various reasons three of the seven versions are in my view undesirable and I would discourage their use. They are the New English Bible, the Good News Bible and the Living Bible.

Secondly the other four may be divided into two groups. On the one hand there is the Authorised Version, the Revised Standard Version and the New American Standard Version which, as we would expect from historically related versions, are similar in many ways, sharing common virtues and vices. These are versions in traditional literary English which exhibit a basic conservatism in language and practice.

On the other hand, there is the New International Version which reflects the modern and laudable desire for communication and liveliness of expression but which, perhaps as a consequence of its determination that God should be understood, tends to be less precise than we might wish. In my opinion, if we could wed the virtues of the New American Standard Version and its fellows to the virtues of the New International Version we would be very near achieving an excellent version. Not that I am advocating yet another translation!

Of course, there are those who tell us that the desire of the people in the churches for a version that they can understand is a carnal desire. Such brethren would have made good Romish priests in Wycliff's day. The fact is that when the Bible was only available in Latin the people who pressed for versions in the vernacular were not the pastors of the flock but the godly in the pew who longed to understand what God was saying and for his words not to be hid. Increasingly, I am finding that those who in my church have adopted modern versions are reading and studying more Scripture than ever before, and they are discovering the riches of the Old Testament which before was covered in seventeenth century obscurity.

When people cry out for a Bible they can understand it is a grievous thing for the pastors of God's flock to accuse them of unorthodoxy and carnality.

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### References

<sup>30</sup> See Carson D. A. (1979) Baker. *The King James Version Debate* p. 95. <sup>31</sup> Skilton J. H. (1978) *op. cit.* p. 54. <sup>32</sup> Cliff Richard quoted on the back page of my copy of the Living Bible. <sup>33</sup> Skilton J. H. (1978) *op. cit.* p. 115. <sup>34</sup> Partridge A. C. (1973) Andre Deutsch. English Bible Translations.



*In our previous article we looked at the Biblical significance of death. There we argued that death—physical death, the dissolution of the body—was the result of Adam's sin. Even for the Christian believer, death remains an enemy, part of the world of sin and corruption from which he awaits deliverance. In this article we complete our study on the Resurrection of the Body and the Life Everlasting as we look more closely at the redemption which is promised to Christian believers. In this we wish to make three points: Firstly, as death came through sin, so redemption from sin must include victory over death—it must include resurrection. Secondly, this resurrection-redemption which is promised to believers is accomplished through the death and resurrection of Christ. Thirdly, the resurrection of our bodies is only part of the larger regeneration of creation which God shall at last accomplish through the Lord Jesus Christ.*

## ... And The Life Everlasting

by Peter Misselbrook

WHAT IS REDEMPTION? REDEMPTION DOES OF COURSE MEAN THE FORGIVENESS of sins (Eph. 1:7), but redemption also includes an undoing of the results of sin, a recreation or regeneration. In particular, the death and curse which resulted from Adam's sin must be overthrown if man is to be redeemed. Death, the dissolution of the body, is the result of Adam's sin. Consequently, while the body lies in the earth sin still has some dominion in the world, it has brought God's creation to the dust. The body returned to the dust is the powerful symbol of God's judgment upon sin, the consummation of a life under curse. Only when the body rises

from the dust will sin's work be completely undone and our redemption perfected. Only 'when the perishable has been clothed with the imperishable, and the mortal with immortality', shall our victory over sin be complete (1 Cor. 15:54-57).

Let us turn now to look at what Paul has to say about the way in which God accomplishes our redemption. Again, this summed up in verses 21-22 of 1 Corinthians 15: 'Since death came through a man, the resurrection of the dead comes also through a man. For as in Adam all die, so in Christ all will be made alive.' The presupposition of Paul's argument here is the unity of Christ and his people. Christ is so identified with his people that their sin is laid to his charge. In consequence, the Lord Jesus Christ came under the penalty of sin; he became subject to death. Jesus' death, his physical death, the dissolution of his body, was a demonstration that he suffers the judgment which God pronounced upon sinful man. His burial (a central part of the Christian confession) was the return of his body to the dust in accordance with God's judgment upon sinful man in Genesis 3.

But now, Christ is raised from the dead by the power of God. God's wrath against our sin is satisfied. Our sin is forgiven and death, the power of sin, is overthrown. Here we must stress that Christ rose *bodily* from the dead. It was not simply that his spirit returned to the Father while his body remained in the dust. If this were the case then sin would still have some dominion over him, it would have held the second Adam in the dust of death. It was vital if Christ should be victorious over sin and all its powers that he should rise bodily from the grave. This is why Paul can argue so strongly that, 'If Christ has not been raised, our preaching is useless and so is your faith . . . you are still in your sins' (1 Cor. 15:14, 17). There is no redemption without the overthrowing of sin's consequences, no redemption without the resurrection of the body.

We have seen above that the presupposition of Paul's argument is the unity of Christ and his people. This is as true of Christ's resurrection as it is of his death. Paul expresses the matter thus: 'Christ has been raised from the dead, the firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep' (1 Cor. 15:20). The firstfruits, as the name suggests, were the first of the ripened fruit of tree or field, a token of the harvest to come. So also the resurrection of Christ is a token and guarantee of the future resurrection life of all God's people. At the return of Christ, when (and only when) our redemption will be complete, then our bodies will be raised, bodies like the glorious body of Christ (Phil. 3:20-21). Only then shall sin and its results be known no more. Redemption is not complete, sin is not completely vanquished, until our bodies, laid in the dust through sin, are raised in incorruption.

Before we conclude I would like to set the doctrine of the resurrection of the body in its broader Biblical context. Adam's sin brought the judgment

of God upon the whole universe. The curse of God rests not simply upon man, making him subject to death, but upon the whole creation, making it subject to decay and vanity (Gen. 3 and Rom. 8:20). If the redemptive work of God in Christ includes the undoing of all of the results of sin, then it must involve not simply the resurrection of our bodies but the regeneration of the entire creation. The resurrection of the body is simply part of the doctrine of the new creation. Sin brought death and decay into the world, redemption means resurrection life both for our bodies and for this sin-torn world (see Rom. 8:19-23 and the quotation from Martyn Lloyd-Jones at the beginning of this article).

To sum up what we have been saying: The sin of man results in his death, the dissolution of the body. The redemption of man, if it is to be a perfect redemption, must include the resurrection of the body. If the body remains in the ground then the effects of sin continue. Redemption is not complete with the return of our spirit to God at death, but only when the body is raised in incorruption to inhabit the new creation where righteousness dwells. This redemption is accomplished in Christ's death and resurrection. Sin brought God's creation to the dust and Christ to the grave, but the bodily resurrection of Christ is the ground and earnest of the new creation.

In closing, we should perhaps note that the doctrine of the resurrection of the body is not a piece of speculative and abstract dogma but a profoundly practical truth. At the end of a lengthy treatment of this doctrine Paul closes with a word of exhortation: 'Therefore, my dear brothers, stand firm. Let nothing move you. Always give yourselves fully to the work of the Lord, because you know that your labour in the Lord is not in vain' (1 Cor. 15:58). The 'therefore' makes it evident that the basis for this exhortation to steadfast godliness is the doctrine of bodily resurrection! The doctrine of bodily resurrection is part of the doctrine of the new creation. This doctrine in turn assures us that there is a rich inheritance in store for God's people; they will have a share in the Kingdom of God. This in turn assures us that our present labour for the Lord will be richly rewarded (see 1 Cor. 15:32, 2 Cor. 4:16-18). Let us therefore spend ourselves in labour for the Lord, for, though all the work of fallen man is but a vanity ending in the dust of death, we have the hope of resurrection life and know that our labour is not in vain in the Lord.

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### **Ministerial Conferences**

The Carey Conference next year is scheduled for Swanwick at a better time – 13th-16th January – and we hope a better price. Details are obtainable from John Rubens, 23 Brickhill Drive, Bedford.

The Annual British Evangelical Conference is to take place at Carlisle on the 4th and 5th November. The speakers are J. W. MacMillan, Peter Jeffery, R. T. Kendall, Peter Lewis and Paul Bassett. The conference secretary from whom details can be obtained is Mr. Philip Slater, 23 Liddle Close, Lowry Hill, Carlisle CA3 0DT.

# Reviews and Notices

## Perspectives On Pentecost

By Richard B. Gaffin, Junior  
Baker Book House. 127 pp.  
Paperback

This is not just another book on the Holy Spirit. Although small in size it is a major contribution to the subject of the gift and the gifts of the Holy Spirit and is certainly the most satisfying that the reviewer has read on this complex area of debate among Christians. Its particular value lies in three features characteristic of the book. Firstly the 'Zoom-lens' technique is employed. At each point Gaffin sets the scene before delving into the details of exposition. All too often the literature on this subject gets hopelessly muddled because the wider context is ignored. Secondly the emphasis is upon the biblical theological perspective. God's revelation to men is enshrined within a sacred history of salvation, each part being related to the rest and together forming the whole. Gaffin stresses that what is said about the gift or gifts of the Holy Spirit must be viewed against the whole background of biblical revelation. Thirdly the insistence that the Spirit mediated through the Word is the source of all Christian knowledge and doctrine. Biblical interpretation and not experience is the standard for all genuinely Christian experience.

Having explained these basic principles Gaffin in the second chapter considers the gift of the Holy Spirit. Looking at the New Testament in perspective he points out that the Gospels look forward to and anticipate the coming gift of the Spirit while the Acts and epistles emphasise the present reality of the Holy Spirit in the life of the Church. The hinge or turning point is Pentecost. If we look upon the whole of the New Testament we see that the central events are the death, resurrection and ascension of Christ followed by Pentecost and if we are to understand the place of the person and work of the Holy Spirit then Pentecost is the pivotal event. That event marked the beginning of a new epoch—the age of the New Testament. It is helpful if we grasp that the Holy Spirit was given then, for following that we can with the help of the epistles outline and understand the various works of the Holy Spirit.

But what exactly happened at Pentecost? Gaffin answers this by expounding three dimensions.

1. *The Christological dimension.* 'At Pentecost it is Jesus who baptises with the Holy Spirit. In fact the work of Christ in its entirety may be said to consist in the securing and communicating to the church at Pentecost the gift (baptism) of the Holy Spirit' (p. 14). In other words Pentecost is the completion of the once-for-all work of Christ in redemption, resurrection and ascension—without Pentecost the work of Christ's death and resurrection would be unfinished, incomplete (p. 20). This fact is best grasped by noticing that the events described by Luke in his gospel and then in Acts reveal a clear theological structure. They are not a random collection of stories about Jesus and the early Church.

2. *The Ecclesiological Dimension.* In the light of the foregoing discussion Gaffin states 'Pentecost is nothing less than the establishment of the Church as the new covenant people of God, as the body of Christ' (p. 21).

3. *The Experimental Dimension.* In this section our author points out that Pentecost is to be understood first of all as part of the once-for-all accomplishment of redemption (*historia salutis*) rather than as part of it ongoing, continual application (*ordo Salutis*) (p. 22). He spells this out when he says 'Pentecost is a unique event of epochal significance in the history of redemption. Therefore it is no more capable of being repeated or serving as a model for individual Christian experience than are the death, resurrection and ascension of Christ with which it is integrally compounded as part of a simple complex of events' (p. 22).

This is a vital point (and of wider application)—Acts is to be read with a careful eye for its overall composition and not primarily as more or less random samplings of earliest Christian piety and practice. Consequently Acts 1:8 is to be seen as the verse which connects the interpretation of Acts 8, 10 (11), 19 which thus appear as 'Elements in the initial foundational spread of the Gospel and so correlate with the events of Acts 2 as parts of a unique non-repeatable (i.e.

non-typical) complex of events' (p. 24). This is a principle markedly absent in most discussion on the Holy Spirit and its use in Gaffin sets this work well above many of the contemporary offerings on the subject of the gifts of the Holy Spirit.

Building on this framework the author proceeds to identify the baptism of (or with) the Holy Spirit as that original event, once-for-all accomplished at Pentecost and which, experimentally becomes the experience of all Christians at their point of identification with the body of Christ. Gaffin notes that there are seven occurrences in the New Testament of the phrase 'baptism in (by) the (Holy) Spirit'. Six clearly refer to the once-for-all Pentecost event. The seventh is 1 Corinthians 12:13 which relates that event to their present experience. He notes that all Paul says in 1 Corinthians 12 is rooted in the fact that the Church, as the body of Christ, is the place where the Spirit is present in his variety of workings. Consequently, verse 13 does not describe the incorporating activity of the Spirit at baptism but emphasises (as the context requires) the necessary share in the one spirit of all the body. The Spirit is in view here not as the creator of the body but as the gift granted to all by virtue of their being in the body (p. 29). Properly he notes this 'is not to exclude subsequent growth and individual variation in each believer's experience of the Spirit's work, nor to deny that subsequently some may have an experience (or experiences) of the Spirit's transforming power which may make a more remarkable impact than conversion' (p. 32). This he identifies with the 'filling' or 'fulness' of the Holy Spirit. Gaffin's position, which at this point seems irrefutably biblical is that Pentecost (=the baptism of the Spirit) is the unique event in redemption history in which the work of redemption is brought to completion by Christ coming to dwell among his people by the Holy Spirit, thus constituting them the children of the New Covenant. The individual Christian's participation in this experience is at the point of conversion.

With this conclusion thus reached Gaffin believes that he is in a position to deal more specifically with the gifts of the Holy Spirit. In his more general discussion in chapter 3 he makes at least five important points:

1. The work of the Holy Spirit experienced by *all* (1 Cor. 12:13) is to be

distinguished from these workings of the Spirit (the gifts) which are *variously* distributed within the church.

2. The gift is eschatological (i.e. it is the first stage in the incorporation of the child of God into the kingdom of God which is yet to be fully revealed): the various gifts are provisional and un-eschatological (i.e. they have, at the best, reference to this present age). This has considerable bearing upon their relative importance.

3. 'Charisma' is a flexible term used by Paul in which it refers to any manifestation of grace (all the gifts mentioned in Romans chapter 12 including deaconing are charismatic). The meaning of this word is, therefore, unbiblically restricted (and impoverishing to the church) when it is applied only to exciting or dramatic gifts.

4. The gifts of the Spirit are a Trinitarian distribution. Any isolation of the Holy Spirit in this context (often almost in opposition to the other members of the Trinity) is one-sided and unbiblical.

5. The gifts are given without exception for ministry among the people of God. There are no 'personal' gifts: tongues for private edification could only be a secondary spin-off of the gift.

Again building on what has gone before Gaffin turns in chapter 4 to prophecy and tongues. He makes the following points:

1. Tongues is a subform of prophecy. He bases this on a study of 1 Corinthians 14.

2. New Testament prophecy as a whole (and without exception) is a function given to some members of the church as a revelatory gift. Gaffin says 'it brings to the church the words of God in the primary and original sense' (p. 57). The Bible, therefore, has no place for non-revelatory tongues. Romans 8:22 does not say tongues are the secret of effective prayer, but that the Spirit interpreting the deepest yearnings of the heart is.

3. New Testament prophecy is linked with the apostolic office as together constituting a foundational work in the New Testament church. Like apostleship it is a sign of the apostolic age (Eph. 2:20).

This last point leads Gaffin directly into the discussion of the cessation of gifts in chapter 5. On this he says firstly that



the apostolic gifts was foundational and is recognised as such in the New Testament and regarded as temporary. Consequently the distinction apostolic/post-apostolic is biblical. Secondly he says that the prophetic gift is also foundational. This is predictable since biblical prophecy is revelation and revelation covenantal. Once the final covenant was revealed, therefore, prophecy ceased along with the other foundational gift. Naturally, prophetic tongues (i.e. Biblical tongues) ceased at the same time as the 'greater' prophetic gift.

**Conclusion.** A review cannot possibly give adequate coverage to the detailed exegetical work conducted by Gaffin, and it is obviously there that his work stands or falls. Moreover, many fruitful discussions not central to his thesis have been omitted such as chapter six on the quenching the Spirit. However, it is at the point of exegesis that his argument conducted against the background of redemption-history is effectively Biblical. We have therefore a book that cannot be ignored by any student of the Pentecostal movement past or present. It should be one of the well-digested volumes owned by every pastor.

#### *Editorial note.*

While in America the editor had the opportunity to discuss the above review with a graduate from Westminster Seminary who had attended Professor Gaffin's classes on the subject. Some of the students observed an inadequacy in doing justice to the persons of the Trinity in their respective roles in the salvation of men. Nowhere is this more evident than in Professor Gaffin's handling of 1 Corinthians 12:13.

#### **Asians in Britain: A Christian Understanding**

Patrick Sookhdeo. Paternoster Press.  
pp. 64. 80p.

British Christians are challenged in this book as to whether we regard the arrival of Asians in Britain as a threat to our own way of life, or as an opportunity of sharing the love of Christ. Commenting on the book of Hebrews F. F. Bruce writes 'The extension of the Gentile mission called for outward-looking Christians, whereas many religious people are by temperament and preference inward-looking. In a closed fellowship they can worship God in estab-

lished and congenial forms, but the extension of its boundaries and the large-scale incorporation of people with different backgrounds from their own must bring unwelcome changes.' Reading *Asians in Britain* shows how much this applies to us. If we are to communicate the Gospel with the growing number of Muslims, Sikhs, Hindus and Buddhists in Britain, we have to try to understand their beliefs and assumptions.

The variety of belief and practice to be found in the Asian community, and the difficulties faced on moving into an urban industrial society are two of the areas explored in this book. The concept of the extended family and attitudes towards men, women, children, marriage, health and work are also examined. If we are to show compassion towards those experiencing the traumatic effects of rapid social and cultural change we have to take account of those things in our own society that can cause misunderstanding. One fairly general problem is the moral conflict caused when conservative Asian attitudes are confronted with western permissiveness. But more particular cultural considerations are pointed out – for instance teachers should remember that children from Muslim and Hindu families have to carry out religious fasts which can obviously cause tiredness and irritability.

Christians have not only to take account of the cultural practices of the Asian community, but to understand something of the different religious beliefs. Brief outlines are given of the origins, sacred literature, beliefs and worship of Hinduism, Islam, Sikhism and Buddhism. Especially valuable are the tables of comparison between each of these four religions and Christianity. Such things as views of God, man, sin, salvation and the after-life are compared. These comparisons are not intended to encourage a negative approach of demolishing the other person's religion. We are encouraged to be positive, presenting Christ from motives of compassion not argument, and to proceed from an understanding of the other person's point of view. In each case there is a section on the Christian approach towards individual believers of each religion. Particular aspects of Christianity and parts of Scripture which will appeal more readily to each of the religious groups are pointed out. Even more practical hints are provided for consideration when visiting Asian homes, concerning attitudes, dress, eating and drinking, etc. For instance it is pointed

out that offence may be caused when unmarried mixed couples even talk to each other in public, or when holy books are not treated with respect – don't place the Bible on the floor! A list of the principle festivals of the Eastern religions is provided and ways of helping immigrants on an individual and church level are suggested. Patrick Sookhdeo thus provides an invaluable introduction to the beliefs and practices of Asians in Britain. Himself born of Hindu/Muslim parents and now a convinced Christian, his book shows how we can communicate the Gospel more effectively, and learn ourselves from sympathetic contact with believers in other faiths.

S.H.

### **The Prophets of Israel**

by Leon J. Wood

Baker Book House, Grand Rapids. pp. 405. Hardback. 11.95 dollars.

Leon J. Wood (1918-1977) was Professor of Old Testament at the Grand Rapids Baptist Seminary from 1945 to 1976. This book is a comprehensive study of the Old Testament prophets. The first part of the book is a helpful discussion of what prophetism was. The second part deals with all the individual prophets in some detail and is divided down into the Pre-Monarchy prophets, the Monarchy prophets and the Writing prophets. This is an outstanding work of scholarship, which will be of real value to students of theology. It is not a book for the general reader who wants to have the word of the prophets applied to his heart.

**The Existence and Attributes of God**  
2 vols. Total of 1149 pages. Baker Book House.

Baker reprinted Charnock's *Attributes* in two beautifully produced volumes in 1979. Most readers will be familiar with this definitive work of Puritan divinity. I cannot claim to have read it through but over the years have dipped into it with profit. There are fourteen discourses in all, which cover such massive themes as God's Eternity, Immutability, Omnipresence, Knowledge, Wisdom, Power, Holiness, Goodness, Dominion and Patience. Let me quote from the introduction to the book, which puts it much better than I can: '... for weight of matter, for energy of thought, for copiousness of improving reflection, for grandeur and force of illustration, and for accuracy and felicitousness of expression, Charnock is equalled by few, and surpassed by none of the writers of the age to which he belonged.'

### **Mary Mother of Jesus Gideon Soldier of God**

by Carine Mackenzie

Christian Focus Publications. 70p each.

These are imaginative children's books of the highest quality in terms of content and presentation. They are part of a series of four, the other two being Ruth and Peter. There are tasteful colour illustrations on almost every page and the story has plenty of application for children. My eldest daughter who is six was most impressed! Ideal for use as bed-time reading.

I.R.

### **Westminster Conference**

The 1980 conference, entitled 'Diversities of Gifts' is to take place at Westminster Chapel on the 16th and 17th of December. The first day is devoted to three papers on Thomas Goodwin, given by Brian Freer, Graham Harrison and Paul Cook. 'The Puritan view of Children', the 'Origins of Sunday School', and 'Ebenezer Erskine and Secession' will be studied by Philip Roberts, John Caiger, and David Boorman respectively on the second day. Full details are available from the new conference secretary, Rev. Brian Freer, 12 Pasture Road, Stapleford, Nottingham N49 84G. The former secretary, David Bugden, has accepted a call to a church in Oromocto, a town in the Maritime Provinces of Canada.

# Fares up Food up Rent up



It's always in the news! We are reminded of it by politicians, and feel it when we go shopping. Inflation is one of the greatest problems of our time, bringing unrest, unemployment and hardship. It is not, however, a new problem. Over 2,500 years ago, the Old Testament writer Haggai described it vividly. The people of that time had forgotten God and Haggai reminded them that there were more important things in life than money. His message from God was, 'Give careful thought to your ways.... You eat, but never have enough. You drink, but never have your fill. You put on clothes, but are not warm. You earn your wages, only to put them in a purse with holes in it.' (Haggai, Chapter 1, v.6).

God's message to us all is still the same, 'Give careful thought to your ways': Is your life-style pleasing to God? Have you given a thought to God's Day of Judgement? Are you prepared to die?

Such serious questions should drive us to search for God. Our sin keeps us from knowing God. It can take many forms:- wickedness; rebellion against God; living as though God didn't exist, or just failing to meet his standards.

The Lord Jesus Christ is the only way to God (See John's Gospel, Ch.4, v.6). He alone can forgive sin, change lives and make us right with God. Are you giving careful thought to your ways?

Evangelical Free Church, New England Road, Haywards Heath  
Pastor: Kingsley Goomber • Sundays 11:00 am - 6:30 pm. Tuesdays 8:00 pm.  
Cuckfield Baptist Church, London Road, Cuckfield • Pastor: Erroll Hulse  
Sundays 11:00 am - 6:30 pm. Wednesday 8:00 pm.

## Promises, Promises.

When a government is elected, we expect to see it fulfil the promises made in its manifesto - or do we?

Politicians are often quite sincere when making promises, and yet frequently fail to keep them. Why? - The simple answer is that like us they are only human. When unexpected problems arise, they cannot do what they promised.

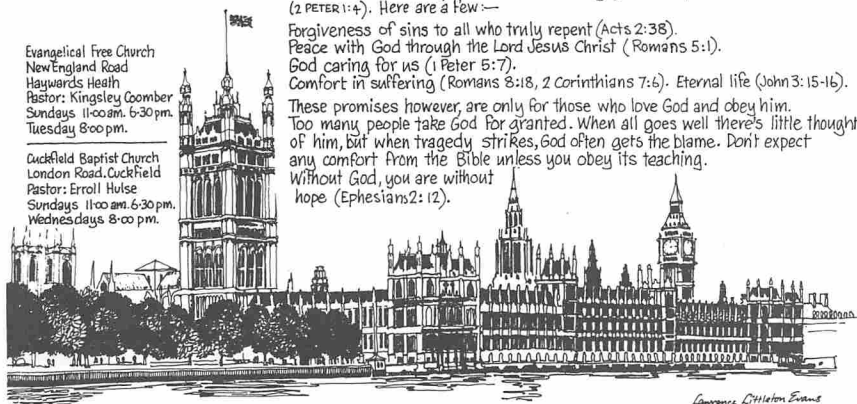
How different is God! He is so powerful and wise that nothing whatever can frustrate his plans. His promises are written in the Bible and Christians in all ages have found them wonderfully true. The apostle Peter described God's promises as 'exceeding great and precious' (2 Peter 1:4). Here are a few:-

Forgiveness of sins to all who truly repent (Acts 2:38).  
Peace with God through the Lord Jesus Christ (Romans 5:1).  
God caring for us (1 Peter 5:7).  
Comfort in suffering (Romans 8:18, 2 Corinthians 7:6). Eternal life (John 3:15-16).

These promises however, are only for those who love God and obey him. Too many people take God for granted. When all goes well there's little thought of him, but when tragedy strikes, God often gets the blame. Don't expect any comfort from the Bible unless you obey its teaching. Without God, you are without hope (Ephesians 2:12).

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Lawrence Littleton Evans

For information about the above tracts see editorial

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