

REFORMATION TODAY '81



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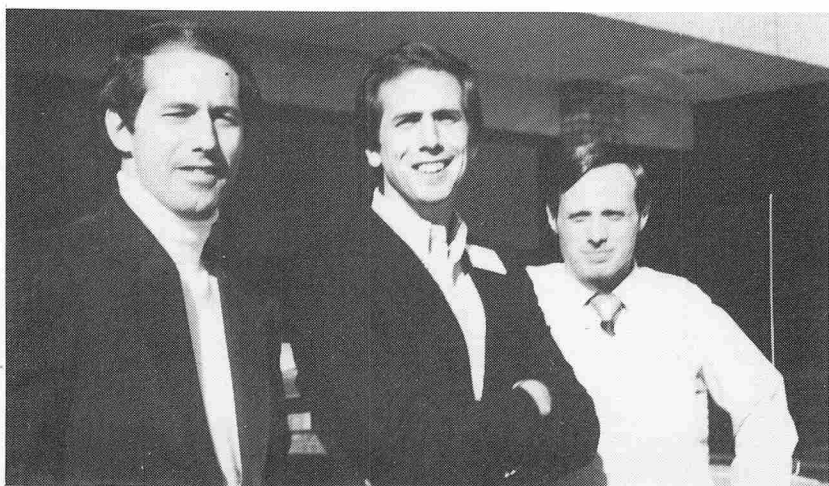
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Indianapolis and Rochester, NY — inside covers



Pastors Tom Lutz of Anderson, Indiana, Andy Hamilton of Dallas, Texas, and Robert Strong of Media, Pennsylvania. The photo was taken at the Banner of Truth Conference in Indianapolis. Tom Lutz's gift for shepherding pastors was used not only to organise a missionary conference at Anderson and to lend support to the Banner conference but also to organise the editor's tour of North America. A growing number of Reformed Baptist churches are to be found in Indiana. One of these is a newly planted work at Noblesville under the leadership of Wayne McAllester (below left). With pastor McAllester in the photo is John de Witt, one of the leaders and tutors at the Presbyterian Seminary, Jackson, Mississippi.



Editorial

North American journeys

When Arnold Dallimore returned last January to Canada after a month of ministry in England he declared that it was one of the happiest he had ever spent. We much enjoyed his ministry and fellowship. I can also say that a month spent in America (Oct-Nov 1980) was one of the most encouraging seasons I have ever experienced and certainly more full of opportunity than ever before.

To begin with it was my first visit to the Maritime Provinces of Canada. An opportunity is needed to change gear and this was possible through the hospitality of Professor Hugh Flemming and his wife and fellow believers who meet as a Fellowship in St. John, New Brunswick. A visit was made to Oromocto where David Bugden recently settled as pastor.

The United States itinerary included Rochester, NY, Owensboro in Kentucky, Anderson, Edgwood, Carmel and Noblesville in Indiana, the Banner of Truth Ministers' Conference in Indianapolis, Chicago, Tacoma in Washington State, San Diego and Long Beach, California.

Instead of attempting a detailed report some spotlights focusing on some of the church situations are provided in this issue: Anderson in Indiana, Rochester, NY, Chicago, and San Diego. Further spotlights with photos and comments are planned for *RT60* and maybe *61*.

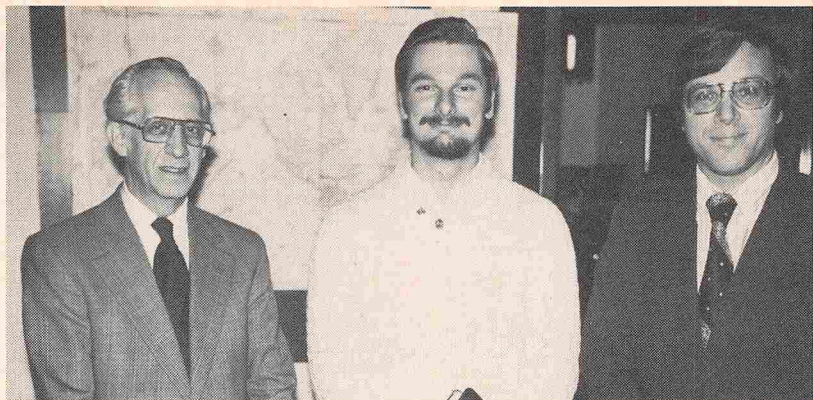
Overall impression of America

Jonathan Edwards (see his *History of Redemption*) was right in contending for the important role of America in the world. The possession of such great natural resources and

talents puts her in the foremost rank to influence the rest of the world. The main problem however is that Bible Christianity in the United States is suffering from the cancer of autosoterism (self-salvation). Lost is the vision of a sovereign God who saves whom he wills and when and how he pleases. Autosoterism it would seem has taken over as completely as it did in the pre-Reformation era. Salvation was more costly then because at least there was a judgment of hell or purgatory and you had to buy indulgences at a price to reduce purgatorial agonies. Now God is packaged out as quickly and as easily as one can get hamburgers or doughnuts. You pay and the goods are shuttled out at speed. Many American Christians cannot see the difference between Finney and Nettleton, or between present day decisionism and the preaching of the New England Fathers and Jonathan Edwards.

Pastor John Armstrong of Wheaton, Chicago, insisted that I be subjected to a course of education in TV religion making sure of an adequate cross-section of programmes. It seems always the same with those who have gained the monopoly in American television. Man is in the centre. He decides. Easy believism which is stressed at the cost of genuine heart repentance. As in pre-Reformation times many do have true experiences. Precisely because God is sovereign the Holy Spirit does not hold up his work of salvation. In spite of shallowness and confusion the drama of redemption moves forward. The Holy Spirit does not confine himself to orthodoxy. He works in spite of defects. Inescapable however is the evidence that multitudes are deceived

Front Cover: *Dave Sanford and his son Micah with pastors Jim McDowell, Ron Edmonds and Bill Downing. The photo was taken at San Diego where David Sanford together with Dan Wagner leads the Reformed Baptist Fellowship. An annual Bible Conference in the church is a means of enrichment and encouragement to many in the area and some who travel from other parts of the West Coast.*



From left to right: *Richard Owen Roberts the publisher, David Taylor, violinist in the Chicago Symphony Orchestra, and John Armstrong, pastor of the Church of the Open Door in Wheaton, Chicago. The work of Brother Roberts is referred to in the editorial together with impressions of Chicago which is the hub of the United States. We look forward to seeing David Taylor when the Chicago Symphony Orchestra visits the Festival Hall in London in September, 1981. Further reference is made to Pastor Armstrong in the editorial.*

by superficial religion. They base their hopes for eternity on a commitment or resolution made at some time or other but sadly lack the evidence that they are born again. Being born again has become a popular idea in America. But being born again means we are born into the spiritual world, love spiritual truth, spiritual people and a spiritually disciplined life. Unless we have the fruit of the Holy Spirit we should not claim the new birth.

But there are encouraging signs that the historic Protestant Gospel is being recovered in America by individuals who are now looking for churches where the whole counsel of truth is proclaimed. Most heartening is the fact that such churches are increasing in number and beginning to spring up in most of the 50 states which make up the richest and most powerful nation in the world today.

The history of Romanism

Although, as Mr. Houghton rightly points out that the Roman Catholic Church is not yet a member church of the WCC, at all recent conferences of the WCC Roman Catholic observers have been present. There are also

some Roman Catholics on the headquarters staff of the WCC in Geneva.

The Roman Catholic Church is represented on local and in some cases national Councils of churches.

Recently Roman Catholic observers have been present at the meetings of the European Evangelical Alliance and the conference organised by the Lausanne Continuation Committee at Pattaya, Thailand in June 1980.

It can readily be seen then that the Roman Catholic Church is increasingly active in the Ecumenical Movement.

Mr. S. M. Houghton's 'Sketches from Church History'

This is good opportunity to thank Mr. Houghton, not only for this article, but for his prolific literary and editing labours. We congratulate him most warmly on the appearance of *Sketches from Church History*, 250 pages, double paperback size illustrated throughout in magnificent style. We have been longing for a book like this which provides a survey of 20 centuries of Christ's power on

Practical methods of reaching outsiders

by J. K. Davies, pastor of the Tuckingmill Reformed Baptist church, Cornwall

The New Testament is not silent about the different ways we are to approach people with the Gospel. It does not assume that one method is sufficient to cover the tremendous range of human personality or need. It has much to say about different legitimate approaches to be adopted in seeking to present the Gospel in the variety of circumstances that confront us.

But when we start talking about methods, we can easily fall into the trap of allowing the end (the saving of the lost) to justify any and all means or methods. Merely to go for results can easily lead into ways of working which bring dishonour upon the Lord and his Gospel, and compromise its effect upon the ungodly. Methods of Gospel presentation must be subordinate to the Gospel message.

To allow methods to dominate our thinking leads us into the error of concentrating on results, and therefore of thinking of evangelism in terms of results. We must never define evangelism in terms of its results. What I mean by that is to think of evangelism as that activity which produces conversions, and anything that fails to produce conversions is therefore not evangelism. This idea of evangelism sees results as the all important factor. Failure to produce results becomes a failure to evangelise, and it is therefore suggested that the Gospel has not been properly proclaimed. Results then control the means of evangelism and to some degree the message. Anything that produces results

earth. The production is superlative – both Mr. Houghton and the Banner at their best!

Sermons at Seven or the Morning Exercises

While in Chicago I met Richard Owen Roberts who has recently published the complete works of Thomas Boston in twelve sturdy volumes. The bindings are exceptionally strong and the whole work is highly commended. In addition there are volumes of various shapes and sizes on Revival. All the details are as follows:

Boston – 12 volumes	\$225.00
Bradley, Joshua – <i>Accounts of religious revivals</i>	\$12.00
MacFarlane, Duncan – <i>Revivals of the 18th Century</i>	\$12.00
Ministers of the Church of Scotland – <i>Lectures on the Revivals of Religion</i>	\$15.00

Moore, Martin – <i>Boston Revival, 1842</i>	\$9.00
Reid, Wm. – <i>Authentic records of Revival . . . UK</i>	\$15.00
Tyler, Bennet – <i>New England Revivals</i>	\$12.50

When ordered directly as a set from Mr. Roberts the 6 volume revival library can be obtained for \$60.00 plus postage.

Our trade terms are retail price less 40% on orders for five or more copies per title, shipped to one address. The 40% discount applies to the retail prices of the revival books and not the special package price of \$60.00.

The address is Richard Owen Roberts, Booksellers, 205 East Kehoe Blvd., WHEATON, Illinois 60187, USA. ☐

becomes legitimate. The slick, high-powered, costly, gaudy, entertainment-centred, gigantic crusade becomes evangelism *par excellence* because it produces results. But the full-orbed Gospel which demands repentance and faith and which presents salvation as the sovereign gift of God's grace has to take a back seat.

Evangelism is to proclaim the Gospel in conformity to God's Word in terms that are understood by the hearer. In this proclamation we are to be governed by certain biblically derived principles. They must determine our procedures and not our plans mould the Gospel we declare.

The *message* we proclaim is to do with the doctrine of God and the grace of God. We declare who God is and what he requires. It is not a subject for debate. Men are not to pass judgment on God — he passes judgment on men. God is almighty, not a friendly old man who just wants to be our friend. The Gospel is first of all about God. But it is also centred in God's grace. Grace speaks of the undeserving receiving favour, so no one is to be left out of the evangelistic concern of the Church. Grace realistically exposes the plight of the sinner as helpless and hopeless. The Gospel of God's grace brings hope and life eternal. For God saves to the uttermost those who come to him through Christ Jesus.

When the message does not present God as sovereign in grace, then men will be manipulated by all means possible in order to achieve the result required. The reasoning behind this would be that God can only do so much and men must do the rest. This idea should alarm us for it is exactly what passes for evangelism in many places today.

The *motive* for evangelism we have will likewise govern the method we use. What moves us to proclaim the Gospel to unbelievers will control our efforts in reaching them. First of all we are commanded to proclaim the Gospel. In this work there are no volunteers. We are all required to obey the command of the Lord Jesus Christ to his Church. But we are also moved by the example of the Lord Jesus in his compassion for the lost. He saw them as sheep without a shepherd, and we can see them in no different light. Compassion is Christlike, but like him it is not simply a sensitivity of heart — it leads to action. Similarly the concern aroused in the hearts of sinful people by the ministry of the Holy Spirit will require of us the giving of careful answers to enquiry and desire to hear about salvation in Jesus Christ.

Two things need saying about *method* before we come to more specific practical considerations. The God ordained method is preaching, which appears to men to be utterly foolish. But the foolishness of God is wiser than men, for this is how men come to faith. By the simplicity and directness of preaching God has chosen to ignore man's ways of getting a hearing. But we also rely upon God to do his work in his own way and time. For the method we use is the way of faith. We trust God to save his people. This he does. We can be confident of that.

Now, we must be more specific and put some detail into this area of method. In these few thoughts we shall leave out the normal and regular meetings of the Church for worship and the exposition of the Word of God, although obviously they have a most important place in evangelistic outreach, for it is to hear the preaching of the Word that members of the Church will invite men and women.

1. *Explanation*

It is clear from 1 Peter 2:15 and 3:15, and from what Peter did on the Day of Pentecost in explaining what had happened, that there is a very important place in reaching outsiders with the Gospel for efforts to be made to inform them as to what the Christian faith is all about. Being 'outsiders' unbelievers do not have the 'inside' knowledge that believers have, so in proclaiming the Gospel we must seek to pass on information about the truth. Although the natural man cannot receive the things of the Spirit of God (1 Cor. 2:14) unless he is first dealt with by the Spirit in regenerating grace, that is no justification for leaving misunderstanding, misconception and downright error in his mind. The appalling ignorance of Christian things in our present generation is a good place to start our consideration of practical methods. So, we have good biblical warrant for passing on *information about the Christian faith*. This includes making clear what a Christian is, and explaining what the Word of God teaches on all manner of subjects. It means explaining the Christian biblical attitude and answer to the needs and problems of our present age.

Every encouragement needs to be given to the members of the Church to be aware of these things for themselves so as to be able to explain things to other people whom they meet in the ordinary course of their lives. But more particularly *meetings* might be usefully arranged to do it, to inform people of the truth and relevance of the Word of God and the Gospel. Those with whom there is already some contact would perhaps be the first to be invited to such meetings, but outsiders in the more general sense could be invited too. A variety of subjects come to mind — evolution and création, industrial relations, moral issues such as abortion and euthanasia, honesty in business, the Bible, the Family, the State, death, pain and suffering, and so on. The list could be a very long one indeed once you start thinking about what concerns people today.

The meetings could be publicly advertised or by invitation, on Church premises or in someone's home. If a subject of this kind is chosen it is useful to have a speaker to open up the matter before discussion takes place. Firm leadership of such a discussion is essential, for the aim is to inform the people present about Christ and his Gospel, and not simply to have a pleasant (or unpleasant) discussion. Trivia must be avoided on one hand and wrangling on the other.

Literature is another method of informing the ignorant, and in the long term can be of lasting usefulness, for books stay with a man long after a conversation with a believer has finished. Every Church should seek to maintain a

stock of useful books on a wide range of subjects that are of concern to outsiders. The Bible is not silent on the issues of life, so we have no need to fear that there is nothing to say from a Christian point of view. All the time we are informing people about the biblical position on some facet of human life we must always be aware that our great responsibility is to bear testimony to the Lord Jesus Christ. He is the one, the only one, who can do helpless sinners good.

The question that immediately arises in my mind at this point, however, is why there are so few books written from a Reformed standpoint for unbelievers. Is it because we have no authors? Or is it because publishers will not publish them? We have authors, but publishers are reluctant to publish what will not sell. But who buys Christian books written for unbelievers? Not the unbelievers themselves, and you can't expect them to either. Christians must buy them and give them away. But Christians tend to buy books with a view to their own needs and not with a view to those of unbelievers. So, what attracts Christians will sell, and books written for unbelievers often, therefore, do not.

Certain *films* can be useful in supporting this aspect of outreach, but care must be exercised. There are many so-called Christian films which are not out to impart information as such, they are more concerned with winning a decision, and so they sink into emotional and pseudo-psychological attempts to influence the audience. Bearing that particular danger in mind not all Fact and Faith Films are suitable. Here is an area crying out for a Reformed Baptist contribution. We could score heavily too, if only we had someone able to make good, informative and biblical films. How we can praise God for the work of the Schaeffers in this field! Film meetings can make a considerable impact in an area, and can stir up considerable discussion on relevant topics, which can easily lead to testimony concerning the Lord Jesus Christ and the preaching of the Gospel.

In certain circumstances *discussions* can be arranged on particular topics, without a speaker. There is great need here, however, for firm control by a gifted well taught chairman as a belligerent person could easily ruin the meeting. A definite sense of direction should be evident. Although all may be allowed to speak, not all opinions are equally true.

This brings us to the very tricky area of *public debates*. A debate can be a most effective way of informing the minds of the ignorant. It does two things: it enables the debater to state positively what is the Christian faith, and it also enables him to refute the arguments of those who oppose it. It is vital in certain circumstances to reveal to men and women the great weaknesses in arguments opposed to the Word of God and the Christian faith. The Christian Church need fear nothing in the realm of truth, reason and logic. The problem, however, is that of vulnerability. In a debate you lay yourself open to public attack. So, you need to be a good debater, you must know your subject thoroughly, you must have a quick and ready mind, able to pick

up the weak argument of your opponent and use it in demolishing his position. A debate has the particular value of showing that the Christian faith can stand up to attack from any quarter. The manner in which a debate is conducted is important too. Every Christian who enters into a debate should do so prayerfully, graciously, kindly and with an open heart to his opponent. Abrasiveness, sarcasm and rudeness should have no place.

So, explaining what the Christian faith is and what it involves is a most important aspect of reaching outsiders. Perhaps we might include here for the sake of completeness the informing of the people of the world in a general way what the Church is doing and why. *Newspaper reports* should always tell the truth! *Posters*, and indeed all forms of *advertising* (e.g. Notices in Hotels and Guest Houses giving times of Services etc.) should be restrained, informative, clear and truthful. To make boastful claims is to lie!

2. *Reaching Out*

I put this aspect of things in this way because we have been thinking so far of providing opportunities for explaining the faith, and the giving of invitations to hear that explanation. In this section what we have in mind is the adopting of a deliberate policy of *reaching out* by a Church, where the members go out into the surrounding area with the intention of speaking to men and women about the Lord Jesus Christ. We do not know how the Church in Thessalonica reached out (1 Thess. 1:8), but their ministry was certainly effective. The Church at Antioch reached out too, as the Holy Spirit led them (Acts 13:1-3), but there the work was done further afield. Here we are not thinking of Church Planting as such, for that is a subject on its own, but what a Church does within its locality once it has been planted.

It is clear that *house-to-house visitation* fits into this category. This is where members of the Church go to call on householders in the neighbourhood of the usual meeting place of the Church to speak to them of the Lord Jesus Christ. Invitations are usually given to the meetings of the Church, appropriate literature is left, enquiry is made concerning any situations of need that can be met by the Church through its members living in the vicinity, but above all testimony is given to the truth and reality of the Christian faith and life. A question and answer approach has often been found useful in stirring conversation on spiritual matters. Those who indicate any interest should not be forgotten, but subsequent visits should be arranged to continue the contact. All questions asked should be answered honestly, and where the answer is unknown at the time, it should be discovered. Interest and concern should be reflected by the careful way that information gleaned is remembered (some record might be kept), and points of need are dealt with speedily.

Each Church that is capable of it should engage in this kind of activity if at all possible. It is perhaps the most obvious and is certainly the simplest work of outreach that a Church can engage in, apart from the personal testimony of each member in the course of his daily living. The fact that

Jehovah's Witnesses and Mormons do this work and antagonise people should not deter us. It should make it all the more necessary to approach people politely and kindly.

Coupled with this work of visitation might go *colportage work*. This is the sale of Christian literature on a house to house basis. It is direct selling at its hardest, but it can be very rewarding. Christmas-time is often a useful time to engage in this work, as children's books are popular for presents and other books often then catch a person's eye.

The general *distribution of leaflets and tracts* can go on any time, but it must be remembered that there is no such thing as the truly general tract covering all cases. Various publishing houses produce tracts so there is no want of material. In this kind of work care must be exercised in choosing suitable material. For general distribution perhaps the 'Contact' leaflets produced by Grace Publications might prove helpful. Church Bulletins and Magazines if used for evangelistic purposes must be geared to non-Christian and non-Church attenders.

Open Air preaching can be another effective reaching-out activity from the local Church. This is not to be confused with having a service in the open air which some people do, it is the public proclamation of the Christian Gospel in a public place to those who pass by. Members of the Church can be involved in this work, not only by prayerful support, but by being present as part of the 'crowd' listening to the preaching. Their personal testimony to others standing by can make this method a most effective way of reaching outsiders. Open air preaching is a most biblical method of evangelistic outreach in which we have the example of the Lord Jesus and the Apostles to follow. The preaching should be biblical, relevant, simple and direct. Questions may be answered if those preaching are competent to answer them. This is not a work for novices. Preaching experience should be gained first in the fellowship of the Lord's people before ever a man attempts to preach in the open air. The question of singing is a matter for debate, although personally I have no serious objection to it unless, that is, some false worshipping activity is tried before the gaze of the world. I believe the singing of hymns in those circumstances is wrong, as is the leading in prayer. Worship is not an activity to be used as an exhibition before others. Prayers should never be a public parade, they should be offered beforehand, or if during the meeting should be silent and private. Preaching should be extempore as much as possible, or if not, with as few notes as possible. This is so the preacher can adjust to the circumstances around him — they do not remain static in the open air in the way they do in a Church service.

Literature work in the open air is also possible. A book-stall or a book-trailer such as those supplied by the Good News Trailer Missionary Fellowship can be a most useful ministry.

Still thinking about reaching out, there are activities which are somewhat

more specialised, and so Churches thinking of these things would need to weigh up a number of considerations. I refer here to those things which require capital expenditure and a constant and continuing ministry throughout the year. Such things as a *Christian bookshop*, a *Cafe* which gives opportunity for Christian witness in conversation and counsel, a *Telephone answer service* for those who feel they are in urgent need, a *Telephone message service* which allows a caller to hear a short pre-recorded message; they all require careful thought and the commitment of considerable amounts of time, money and energy.

Finally under this section, it is often possible to place a short, simple, and direct message in the *local newspaper* paid for as an advertisement. In this way you have control over what is printed. Some editors will even allow a regular 'comment' column as part of the paper's regular feature material.

3. Where people gather

In the New Testament the apostles went where people gathered (e.g. Acts 17:17). There is therefore a place for us to do the same and go where people gather together to 'dispute' with them and to speak to them of Christ. We have already spoken of open air meetings where there is the preaching of the Gospel, but there are many other open air opportunities. There are many *public gatherings* which lend themselves to some form of Christian evangelistic activity. *Tract distribution* comes readily to mind, but we must remember what has already been said about general tract and leaflet distribution. It can easily lose any impact it might have by virtue of its so general character.

However, at *Agricultural Shows, Carnivals, Fairs, Fetes and the like*, if there is the opportunity for some kind of stall or stand it should be prayerfully considered. People are often more ready on such occasions to stand and chat as they walk around aimlessly. This presents us with just the opportunity we can profitably use.

But people also gather in other places somewhat *less public*. This means that if opportunity for speaking of Christ is to be had it has to come by permission of those in charge. *Youth Clubs, Social Clubs* and *Public Houses* come into this category, but clearly they might present difficulties because of the surroundings and environment. The Gospel message can easily be compromised if the matter is handled in the wrong way.

It is also possible *with permission* to visit *Prisons, Borstals* and *Day Schools*. As with so much else that has been mentioned so far, those who are involved in such work will require suitable gifts and abilities. *Hospital visitation* comes in here too. The Gideons organisation gives Bibles and Testaments to Hotels, Hospitals, Prisons and Schools, but there are some situations which they do not cover. It may be possible in those circumstances for a local Church to give a *gift of Bibles*, or in the case of individuals in need to give a Bible as an expression of love and concern.

From time to time an opportunity to speak on Radio or appear on Television may come our way. As with open air preaching, what is said must have biblical content and be relevant, simple and direct. We of all people are not there to entertain. In some towns local Radio is making it more and more possible for us to use this medium of communication. *Hospital Radio* can be an effective ministry to those who are often at a time of considerable need in their lives. The use of *Cassettes* is becoming more widespread now, and the use of *flimsy recorded discs* is growing because of the low cost of production. The work of the Strict Baptist Mission in this field is worth supporting and using.

4. 'Bait' and its dangers

The mention of entertainment raises the important question of using 'bait' to attract people to hear the Gospel. It is important that we who believe in the primacy of preaching and the honour of God's Name should not indulge in deceit or underhandedness. We should be honest enough to tell people what we are inviting them to, before they assume that a meeting is convened for some other 'non religious' purpose. Music, games for young people, even cups of tea, can fall into this category. (Although an informal atmosphere in a home will usually include a cup of tea, but that is natural and need not be bait.) We are to be upright, honest and direct in our dealings with outsiders. Any method we use is subservient to the message we bring, and of that we should not be ashamed (Rom. 1:16). This is not to say that we simply ram the message down people's throats, we approach each person and each situation differently, and always prayerfully. In some cases we have to earn the right to speak. For some people we must live as a friend or a neighbour for a long time before they will listen to us. There is a time to speak and a time to keep silent — may God show us which is which.

5. *The lives of Christians*

Although this is not a 'method' as such, the godly living of the members of the Church has always been the most effective means of reaching outsiders with the Gospel. Much of New Testament evangelism seems to have been the unconscious expression of the individual Christian's life in Christ making its impact on the lives of others around and in society in general (Acts 4:13; 5:13). Also we read of the natural spreading of the good news by persecuted Christians (Acts 8:4; 11:19-21). The godly living of believers is still the most effective method of reaching this generation. We need to encourage it more and more in our day. No other method can ever be a substitute for it. History is full of examples of the mighty use the Lord makes of godly men and women. May we be godly before we are anything else. ☐☐☐

William Tyndale

by Ian Randall

Tyndale was probably born in 1494, in Gloucestershire. He came to Magdalen Hall, Oxford, in 1508 at about the age of 14. This seems to us very young, but the education he received there was probably equivalent to that of a grammar school. From Oxford he was attracted to Cambridge after obtaining a BA and subsequently a master's degree, in 1515.

At Cambridge Tyndale was able to pursue his growing interest in the writings and views of Erasmus. In 1516 Erasmus published his Greek New Testament and Tyndale set himself to master Greek and to study the Scriptures. There is no record of Tyndale's conversion but it is presumed that this had happened at Oxford. While at Cambridge Tyndale also had the opportunity to discuss the Scriptures with men like Thomas Bilney. These discussions apparently took place in the unlikely context of drinking small beer at the White Horse Inn!

However, Tyndale wanted more than just debate. He wanted to think through his faith as his own, and as God's provision for this to happen he was appointed by Sir John Walsh as tutor to his two small sons. Here in the quiet Gloucestershire countryside at Little Sodbury Manor (reminiscent of a scene from P. G. Wodehouse!). Tyndale found ample time for study, and was also engaged in a little preaching and in translating into English *The Manual of the Christian Soldier* by Erasmus. Languages were a great fascination to him and he mastered during his life-time at least seven.

For the first time Tyndale became a controversial figure. He visited Bristol and expounded from the New Testament to some preaching friars who were so offended that they brought him before the Bishop's Chancellor to accuse him of heresy. Surprisingly he was let off with only a warning, but it was an indication of the way the wind was blowing. Friends from University were in hiding because of their espousal of the beliefs of the Reformation. Churchmen also came to the Manor house and talked to Tyndale, found his views quite objectionable and told his employers so. When Tyndale always managed to prove his point from Scripture they were especially irritated! The Walshes themselves had a high regard for Tyndale, and this says much for his tact, grace and general manner of life. But a point of no return was reached when during one of the debates Tyndale came out with his famous statement: 'I defy the pope and all his laws; if God spare my life, ere many years I will cause a boy that driveth a plough shall know more of that Scripture than thou dost.' The learned man to whom this was addressed, who had said he preferred the Pope's law to God's, could make a lot of trouble and accordingly Tyndale started on the run; and there was to be little stopping for the next ten years or more.

It is evident that Tyndale had already formulated his plan to translate the Bible into English and his first thought was that if he went to London he

might be able to obtain the protection of the Bishop of London, Bishop Tunstall, who was reckoned to be a man of liberal views. The patronage he looked for was refused and in fact Tunstall reappears in the story later as one who publically burnt Tyndale's New Testament. Though, later still, he was happy to put his name to the first official English Bible, which was largely the work of Tyndale!

After this disappointment, Tyndale disappeared to the Continent in 1524. First he made for Wittenberg where he met Luther, though unfortunately no record of the meeting exists. From Wittenberg he moved to Hamburg, since although he admired Luther he did not want to become a Lutheran. Within about a year of going to the Continent, Tyndale had finished his first translation into English of the New Testament. This must have involved extremely hard work. Cologne was chosen as the place for publication as there was good access to England via merchants who would take copies of the Bibles. However, Tyndale had been followed by a spy, a man named Cochlaeus, who asked the authorities to prohibit publication. Tyndale took what had been printed and went to Worms, where the printing work started again.

In 1526 the first printed New Testament was on the market. It represented a translation made from the Greek and with reference to Jerome's Vulgate and Luther's German Bible (Tyndale had learned German specifically for the purpose of using Luther's Bible!). Tyndale's translation has been described as free and colloquial, but in no way was it slipshod. It was masterly in its scholarliness and combined this with a simple, vigorous style full of richness and variety. With his knowledge of the original languages (later to include Hebrew) Tyndale was as good a scholar as any of his day. Despite this, as the copies of the Bible were shipped to England and sold there, they aroused the hostility of the official church. Bishop Tunstall claimed to have found 3000 errors in it! Tyndale's comment was that if a letter 'i' was undotted this would be regarded as heresy!

As the influence of the new Bibles spread, efforts to wipe them out intensified. Couriers who smuggled the Bibles (nothing new in this!) were captured and imprisoned and it was a crime to be found with one. Yet people of all kinds bought the Word of God -- poor men would offer a load of hay for a New Testament, we are told! Tyndale's vision was being fulfilled. All sorts of people, intellectuals and working men and women, now had the Bible in their own language.

Tyndale stayed in Worms until 1527, then moved to Marburg, 100 miles north of Frankfurt. Opposers of the Reformation had spies out continually scouring the country to find Tyndale but failed again and again. He was able to carry on his work even in the most difficult circumstances and completed a second edition of the New Testament with careful corrections. Also he wrote and published books to defend the faith of the Reformation. These included *The Parable of the Wicked Mammon*, an exposition of justification by faith; *The Obedience of a Christian Man*, a book on the civil authority which at



Little Sodbury Manor, Gloucestershire, the scene of Tyndale's labours in 1522-23. The story of William Tyndale is told by J. H. Merle d'Aubigne in a scintillating style in The Reformation in England, volume 1, The Banner of Truth, 1962, with an introduction by S. M. Houghton who has been the chief literary and editorial adviser to the Banner of Truth since 1960.

first delighted King Henry, though he later denounced it; and *The Practice of Prelates* — the contents are self-explanatory! In all, he published about a dozen titles in ten years. His views of Scripture and its exposition was that the plain, or literal, meaning should be taken and he attacked the allegorical method used by the Roman Catholic theologians. He is rightly regarded as one of the leaders of modern biblical exegesis, though he was always careful to stress that Scripture could not be properly understood without the illumination of the Spirit of God.

Having learned Hebrew, Tyndale was able to press ahead with translating parts of the Old Testament and in 1528 had the Pentateuch ready for printing. Tragedy struck when he was on his way to Hamburg to the printers as his ship was wrecked and the manuscript lost. It was dangerous to stay out of hiding but Tyndale was encouraged by Miles Coverdale to carry out his work again and publication took place.

Events in England were always very near to Tyndale's heart. Some caused him acute sadness, such as the burning, for heresy, of his friend John Frith. He was one of many to give their lives in this period. Tyndale engaged in written debate with Thomas More, at the latter's instigation, and was continually able to prove his doctrines from Scripture against this formidable champion of the Roman Catholic cause. At one time it seemed as if Tyndale might be able to return safely to England, and an agent from the king who was sympathetic to Tyndale conducted some negotiations. Tyndale was, however, too wary to place his work in jeopardy.

In 1534 he settled in Antwerp in the home of Thomas Poyntz, an English merchant who loved the Gospel. It was a wonderful period of rest from the life he had led, which might seem exciting to us with its secret coded messages, agents being met under cover, and movements in the dark side streets, but which must have taken its toll.

Yet it was this very respite which allowed Tyndale's enemies to find him. He met with other merchants for fellowship and worship in homes, and a man named Henry Phillips, probably employed by some English bishops, infiltrated the company, eventually succeeding in trapping Tyndale and having him arrested. This traitor seems to have received little thanks for his efforts but once arrested Tyndale was never to be free again. His friend and host did everything he could to secure his release and in the process lost all his own wealth, family and home. Freedom was not to be. In 1536, after 16 months

Review

Jonathan Edwards on Heaven and Hell

Edited by John Gerstner
Baker, Grand Rapids, USA
pp. 93

John Gerstner, professor of church history at Pittsburg Theological Seminary, has performed a great service to the church of Christ generally and preachers of the Gospel particularly, by making available within a brief compass the major themes of Jonathan Edwards' preaching on heaven and hell. Many of the quotations which Professor Gerstner cites are, he points out, 'from unpublished manuscripts not easily available to the general reader and rarely cited in secondary works' (Preface).

Gerstner's work is timely because it counteracts two extremely serious tendencies discernible within contemporary evangelicalism. Firstly there is the tendency, arising from a laudible desire to arouse social concern, to deny (or at least imagine) a legitimate 'other-worldliness', that is to say to desire to enter into the blessedness of heaven. The late Alexander Dru said not long before he died, to the annoyance of liberal social activists and many evangelicals, that the older he became the less he thought about the third world and the more he thought about the next. Edwards would have supported Dru because he maintained that only in the final heaven, after the consummation of all things will, 'God . . . fully have glorified himself, and glorified his Son, and his elect' (quoted p. 43). He adds, most beautifully: 'This will see the wedding day between Christ and the church, and this wedding day will never end. The feast, and pomp, and entertainments, and holy mirth,

and joys of the wedding will be continued to all eternity' (quoted pp. 43-44).

The second reason why Gerstner's work is timely is that the preaching of the doctrine of hell has disappeared from many pulpits. Either annihilationism takes the eternity out of hell (so hell effectively disappears), or God is assumed to be *only* love, so hell cannot exist since there will be no God-condemned persons to people it. Two posthumously published works by the late H. E. Guilleband and Dr. B. F. C. Atkinson have done much to spread annihilationism, while two recent articles in *Crusade* by Philip Crowe demonstrate how easy it is today to deny the existence of hell and still be regarded as a Bible believing Christian. Edwards answers both false positions more than adequately.

But those of us who still believe that God does justly condemn sinners to everlasting punishment need to ask ourselves how often we warn sinners to flee from the wrath to come. I personally was greatly challenged by Gerstner's observation on page 52. 'As a rough sample check we found among the 140 sermons on Matthew, 13 devoted explicitly to heaven, 23 to hell. Of the 43 sermons on Mark there were 7 on heaven and 4 on hell. Luke's 111 had 10 on heaven and 13 on hell.'

It is only as the preaching of hell is reinstated to its proper place that sin will be seen in its true dimension as infinite transgression against the infinite God and we shall admire anew the grace that turns our hell to heaven and 'from the worlds of the desert, shall flee to the land of the blest' (David Charles).

Gerstner's book meditated upon would do more for the good of our souls and the spiritual health of our churches than almost any work I know. Buy it, read it and be blessed as I have been. D.P.K.

of illness and persecution in the dungeons of Vilvorde Castle, this brave servant of Jesus was strangled and then burned.

His achievements during his life-time only came to full fruition after his death. In 1538 a Bible was placed in every church in England, by order of the King and these Bibles were based entirely on the work of Tyndale. Later when the Authorised Version was produced, 90% of it was based on Tyndale's version and through this, for the first time, the Bible and the gospel message became clearly known throughout our land. Tyndale never lived to see this but his part was a glorious one which we should never allow to be forgotten.

This summary of Tyndale's work is based on an unpublished manuscript by Ben Elford of Hove and the book *God's Outlaw* by Brian Edwards which is published by Evangelical Press.



Psalms for Today

by David G. Preston

The absence of psalm-singing is a serious defect in much evangelical worship in this country. What is so special about the Psalms? In the first place, they constitute the only hymn-book which is, in the biblical sense, inspired by God. Secondly, they have occupied a prime place in the worship of God's people for centuries, under both Old and New Covenants. Thirdly, they convey a note of praise and awe before the glory and power of God in both his being and his works which is rarely found now in evangelical life and worship. Fourthly, they give vivid and consistently biblical expression to the whole range of spiritual conditions: exaltation, joy, thanksgiving, dryness, despair, contrition, and many others; such states of soul, common to God's people in every generation, receive scant attention in our services and hymn-books. Is there any aspect of spiritual experience which is not expressed in the Psalms?

Psalms yesterday

The Reformation gave many of the people of Europe metrical psalms in their own language for popular worship. Authors included Luther, Coverdale, Theodore de Beze, and Knox's son-in-law, Robert Pont. Calvin's Geneva sang the metrical psalms of the French poet, Clement Marot.

The three centuries which followed the appearance of the first Prayer Book in English (1549) saw at least seventy English verse translations of the whole Psalter, and another seventy of just some of the Psalms. Some decades brought a sudden spate, such

as the 1630's, 1640's and 1830's. The overall average for those centuries is the astonishing figure of one collection, complete or partial, every two years.

Who wrote these English versions? Some were by accomplished poets: Wyatt, Sidney, Donne, Herbert, Milton, Crashaw, Cowley, Addison, Cowper. Other writers are better known to us by their preaching or their hymns: Baxter, Keach, Cotton Mather, Watts, Doddridge, Charles Wesley, Anne Steele, Toplady, John Ryland, Montgomery Conder, Lyte, and Spurgeon.

The translation by Sternhold and Hopkins (1562) was incorporated into the Geneva Bible and became a great favourite with the Puritans. More than 200 years later William Romaine clung to it, lamenting the fading of modern versions. Tate and Brady's complete version of 1696 also gained wide popularity; their Psalm 34 and Psalm 42 survive to this day.

The real father of English hymns, Isaac Watts, versified all but twelve of the Psalms. He called his collection 'The Psalms of David imitated in the language of the New Testament and applied to the Christian state and worship'. That means that he wrote Christian interpretation and application into his verse, thereby radically changing the character of metrical psalms. Some say, perhaps rather sweepingly, that Watts created the English hymn and killed the English psalm.

The Methodist revival gave new

impetus to metrical psalms. The Wesley brothers wrote typically vigorous stanzas, following Watts' Christianising principle. *Wesley's Hymns* of 1876 contains 102 items grouped as "Select Psalms". In the century following the Wesleys, young Spurgeon treated the Psalms with his customary flair. The first 150 numbers of *Our Own Hymn-Book* were metrical versions of each Psalm. Where more than one good candidate was on offer (as, obviously, in the case of Psalm 23), Spurgeon simply placed two or three versions under the same number. Where none was available, he wrote one himself.

Psalms today

Outside the Church of England, Psalm singing in this century has been generally confined to smaller Presbyterian groups. Had Herbert Carson when he seceded from the Established Church inadvertently landed on the Hebrides, he would have missed the hymns instead. In America the Christian Reformed Church produced *The Psalter Hymnal* in 1959, devoting the first 310 numbers to metrical psalms. Their neighbours, the Reformed Presbyterians, have published a number of editions of their *Book of Psalms for Singing*. Until recently at least, Grove Chapel in London used an Irish revision of the Scottish metrical psalter.

The year 1973 saw a dramatic development. Evangelicals in the Church of England shook off their Victorian incubus with a remarkable new collection, *Psalm Praise*. If the paraphrases have not all worn equally well with constant use, there is no denying the importance and challenge of this pioneering enterprise. It is an open secret that a number of Free Churches welcomed the book; some

of the best items found their way into *Grace Hymns*.

In other evangelical circles today there is a growing awareness of the need for a good modern metrical psalter. The need stems from two quite distinct factors.

First, there is a desire to restore congregational Psalm singing, because of the spiritual riches of the Psalter. This would not be at the expense of the rich heritage of evangelical hymns; there is no question of an either/or.

Second, we cannot go on much longer worshipping God in increasingly archaic language. That was precisely what hindered vernacular worship in the medieval church. The New International Version has provided an acceptable modern Bible; contemporary language is more and more common in preaching and in public prayer. Within a decade we risk finding ourselves lumbered with hymn-books written in a language no longer used, even in evangelical churches.

What then of the rich heritage of hymns I was stoutly defending ten seconds ago? This is a desperately bewildering problem. The pitiful remnant that have escaped the scythe of 20th century hymn-books must not be allowed to vanish into oblivion with the march of language; but how they will be authentically preserved is far from apparent. Meanwhile the need for modern hymn writers dynamic, biblical and prolific as Watts and C. Wesley is paramount, and blindingly clear.

Over two years ago *Reformation Today* voiced the need for a contemporary psalter. A few people are working at it, with the aim of producing a substantial number of

modern metrical psalms for public worship. Samples will, we hope, be printed in future issues for experimental use. Readers are invited to support the project with their prayers, criticism, encouragement, and even

their own compositions. May the Lord give us grace to reform our worship and to serve him acceptably in our own times, as did Luther, Baxter, Watts, the Wesleys, and Spurgeon in theirs. □□□

Editorial note

David Preston has submitted a number of samples, three of which have been chosen as space allows in this issue as follows:

CROSS 7 6 . 7 6 Irish folk melody

Psalm 6

- 1 O LORD do not rebuke me,
Nor in your wrath chastise;
In mercy spare my body.
My soul in anguish cries.
- 2 LORD, intervene to save me;
Your steadfast love I claim.
If in your wrath you slay me,
How shall I praise your name ?
- 3 I'm weary with depression;
My eyes with tears are blind,
For pressures mount around me
And overwhelm my mind.
- 4 Away, you powers of evil !
The LORD knows my despair.
The LORD has heard my pleading;
The LORD accepts my prayer.
- 5 My enemies frustrated,
Ashamed at their defeat,
Shall turn back in confusion
And suddenly retreat.

- D.G.Preston

Psalm 50

- 1 God the LORD, the King almighty,
Calls the earth from east to west:
Shining out from Zion's splendour,
City loveliest and best,
Comes our God ! He breaks the silence,
Robed in burning majesty:
"Gather all my covenant people,
Bound by sacrifice to me.
- 2 "Hear me testify against you:
Listen, Israel, as I speak.
I do not require your offerings,
Sacrifice I do not seek.
Mountain birds and meadow creatures,
Cattle on a thousand hills,
All the beasts are my possession,
Moving as their Maker wills."
- 3 God who owns the whole creation
Needs no gift, no food, no house,
Bring to him your hearts' thanksgiving -
God Most High will hear your vows.
Trust him in the day of trouble,
Call to him who will redeem;
He will be your strong deliverer,
His renown your daily theme.
- 4 Lies increase and evil prospers;
God is silent while men say,
"He has gone - let us forget him",
Thinking he is false as they.
But his word will judge or save us:
Let us come before his throne,
Giving thanks, receiving mercy -
God's salvation now made known.

- C.M.Idle

Suggested tune: In Memoriam 8.7.8.7.D Caradog Roberts, 1878-1935

Psalm 121

- 1 Up to the hills I lift my eyes and ponder:
Whence shall my help arise ?
From God the LORD, who made the mountains yonder,
And all the earth and skies.
- 2 Firm in his grasp, secure in his safe keeping,
His people are at peace.
His eyes don't close in slumber or in sleeping:
God's care shall never cease.
- 3 He keeps you all; the LORD's unseen resources
Shelter you, everyone.
He shades you from the moon's mysterious forces,
And from the noonday sun.
- 4 The LORD will keep from every harm and danger,
And guard you with his power
In all your ways, at home or when a stranger,
Henceforth, for evermore.

- D.G.Preston

Suggested tune: Berwyn 116.116 Caradog Roberts, 1878-1935

Eldership in the Old Testament

by Maurice Redmill

The origins of eldership are easy to see, when we remember that the basic unit of primitive society was always the family. Each family was closely linked and the head of the family was respected as the eldest and most experienced member of the family. In times of dispute and critical decisions amongst the larger grouping of families responsibility lay with the heads of the families.

We see this structure not only in Hebrew families and later, in the Hebrew nation but also in other nations, such as Midian (Num. 22:4) Moab (Num. 22:7) Succoth (Judg. 8:14) Gilead (Judg. 11:5) Jabesh (1 Sam. 11:2) Gebel (Ez. 27:9). The first reference in the Old Testament is to an elder of Pharaoh's Egyptian court in Genesis 50:7. This is the record of how Joseph buried his father Jacob in Palestine as he had pledged before his death. The Pharaoh agreed to Joseph's request and sent back to Palestine his own servants and elders together with Joseph's party for the burial.

In the Old Testament there are over a hundred and twenty references to elders. In one hundred and fifteen of these the word *zaqen* is used, being translated in the King James Version by 'elder' one hundred and ten times and 'ancient' five times. The word *sab* is used in the Book of Ezra five times. *Zaqen* comes from *zaqan* which means beard or chin and so 'elder' means one who is old and therefore implies one who is experienced. *Sab* means grey-headed.

The emphasis the Bible places upon respect and honour for the aged has a direct bearing upon eldership. Leviticus 19:32 instructs, 'You shall rise up before the hoary head and honour the face of an old man, and you shall fear your God: I am the Lord.' Here we see the great emphasis which the Scriptures place upon respect for the aged in that it is linked in a direct way with fearing the Lord. Thus we can see that what is binding in the relationship of the child to the parent in that he must honour his parents (i.e. the fifth commandment, Ex. 20:12) is binding in the wider family of the people of God in their relationship to the elders.

This is important to our understanding of eldership. There is a clear connection between honouring God and honouring the aged. Isaiah chapter 3 describes the chaos of the young in rebellion (verse 5) children and women in government (verse 4 and 12). All this is a judgment of the Lord because of sin. The elders are shown no respect (Lam. 5:12).

We observe that respect for the aged is a most fundamental aspect of community life and one which God demands. This has great significance in regard to the elder in the Old Testament context.

There is no clear indication of how these elders were appointed to office but we may safely assume that the people recognised amongst the older members of the community those men who possessed wisdom and clear thinking and respected them and honoured them as God's gifts to them.

1. The Authority of the Elders:

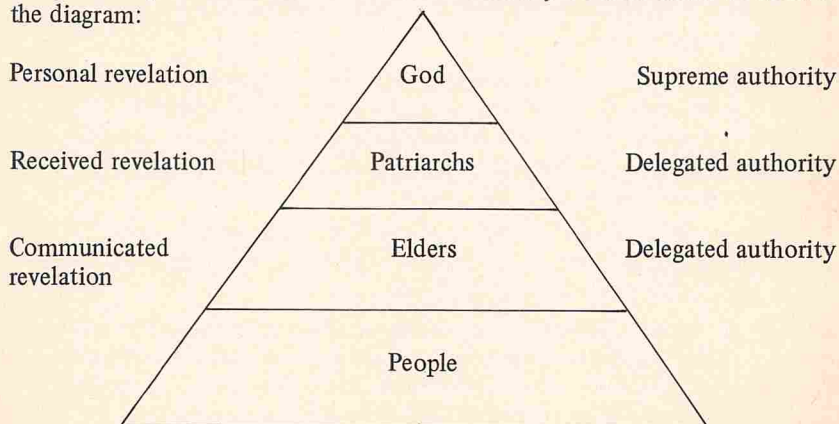
The Hebrew people in the early Old Testament days were under a patriarchal constitution. That is, there were clearly recognised 'fathers' of the nation. God called out these men to lead the nation and to keep the people in the way of his will. These men are called 'patriarchs' Acts 2:29, Romans 9:5; 'forefathers' Romans 9:10 and 'fathers' Genesis 48:13, Deuteronomy 1:11, Luke 1:55.

The great distinguishing feature of these patriarchs is that to each one of them God had appeared and revealed his will and nature. God had called each patriarch and promised to bless him which gave rise to the familiar title being applied to God — 'The God of Abraham, the God of Isaac and the God of Jacob.' In each case God revealed himself as a personal God who comes to protect, save and bless not only the patriarch but his family and descendents too. Thus we can see that the patriarch was in a special relationship with God and was readily acknowledged as a leader and an authority in religious matters.

The authority of the patriarch was derived from the Sovereign God. They acknowledged that they were utterly dependent upon him and acknowledged one solemn responsibility to obey him. It was their prior acknowledgement of the sovereignty of God and their obedience to him in responding to his call that gave these men authority over the people. They were men known by God, who themselves knew God and who laboured so that the people might know God.

It is in connection with these patriarchs that the elders of Israel are first mentioned in the Bible. Exodus 3:13 tells us how the Lord God revealed himself first to Moses. Then Moses is told to pass on this revelation to the elders. In verse 14 God revealed his nature to Moses by telling him his Name: 'I am that I am'. This was a revelation of God's character stressing his power and eternal being. This revelation was to be communicated to the people and to the elders in particular (Ex. 3:16).

The authority of the elders can now more readily be seen when we look at the diagram:



God, possessing supreme authority revealed himself to the patriarchs. These patriarchs received the revelation and with it the authority to declare it to the elders. This means they had a two-fold responsibility: firstly they are to obey God perfectly and secondly, to give wise and sound leadership in the exercise of their authority. The personal revelation received by the patriarchs was then communicated to the elders (Ex. 3:16) who like them similarly were responsible for obeying God and giving good leadership to those under them. That this authority of the elders is both God given and real and is seen in Exodus 3:18 where God tells Moses to go with the elders to Pharaoh as the people's representatives possessing authority from him. This authority of the elders comes via the patriarchs and so the authoritative message to Pharaoh begins, 'The Lord God of the Hebrews...' (denoting God's supreme authority) 'has met with us...' (denoting God's revelation to his servants by which they are endued with his authority).

What is true of the elders during the era of the patriarchs is also true of the subsequent history of the Hebrews. The elders held positions of authority and this is clearly seen in the functions of eldership in the Old Testament to which we now turn.

2. The Function of the Old Testament Elders:

We may divide the functions into three main classifications and will deal with each in turn, Executive, Advisory and Judicial.

Within these three classifications there were elders who exercised their ministry within the local sphere, rural, town or city. Elders who exercised their ministry within the nation and are referred to as 'elders of Israel', 'elders of the congregation' or 'elders of the people'.

(a) Executive

The elders understood God's revelation.

The first main function of the elders in the Old Testament was to understand the will of God and interpret this applying it to themselves and to the people. (Ex. 4:27; Ex. 18:12; Ex. 24; 2 Sam. 3:17; 2 Sam. 5:1; Ez. 8; Ez. 33:30.)

The elders represented the people.

The elders represented the people before foreign rulers; in times of national guilt arising from sin; in times of national mourning; in maintaining peace amongst the people and as leaders together with the priest and prophet. (Ex. 3:18; Lev. 5; Josh. 7; 1 Sam. 8; 1 Sam. 16; 1 Kgs. 8:1; Jer. 19:1; Jer. 29:1.)

The elders exercised leadership as heads of families.

The elders possessed authority which was exercised over the families in matters of salvation from death and extinction, and as such were respected by the people because of their influence and leadership. (Ex. 12:21; Judg. 21; 2 Sam. 12:17; 1 Kgs. 21:8; 2 Kgs. 10.)

The elders were leaders in the worship of God and taught the people.

The Elders had the divinely appointed duty of communicating God's laws and instructions to the people regarding their behaviour and worship. As such they did not overlook sinful behaviour (such as that of King Saul) but rather in addition to verbal instruction of the people, were to set them a good example as leaders under God. (Ex. 19:7; Deut. 27; Josh. 23; 1 Sam. 15; 2 Kgs. 23; 1 Chron. 15:25; 2 Chron. 34:39; Ps. 107; Lam. 1:19; Lam. 4:16; Ez. 7:26.)

(b) Advisory

The Elders gave counsel to the leaders of the Hebrew people before engaging in war, examined the outcome of such wars and were clearly recognised as counsellors. (Josh. 8:10; 1 Sam. 4:3; 1 Sam. 30:26; 2 Sam. 19:11; 1 Kgs. 20:7.)

(c) Judicial

The Old Testament elders possessed a God-given authority to discipline his people.

This discipline was exercised when the people murmured against God; in the instruction of the people in the Divine commandments; in supporting God-given authority to the leaders of the people generally (Moses) and specifically (parents). They exercised discipline in a local sphere and in the power of God so that the people might be brought back to God. (Ex. 17; Num. 11; Num. 16:25; Deut. 19; Deut. 21; Josh. 20; Judg. 2:7; 2 Kgs. 6; Ezra.)

The elders exercised judgment.

This judgment was exercised usually in the gate of the city to ensure justice was done to all parties concerned; to ensure a wrongly accused wife had her name cleared and a guilty wife was punished; in ensuring a man acted in accordance with his duty to his dead brother's wife. (Deut. 22:13; Deut. 25:5; Ruth 4:2; Prov. 31:23; Lam. 5:14.)

3. The Significance of the Synagogue:

We cannot be absolutely sure when the synagogues were first formed, but we do know from Ezekiel 8, 14 and 20 that the elders gathered together during the exile in Babylonia. We also read in Ezekiel 33:30 that the people gathered together to hear the Word of God and such congregations or comings-together (Greek = 'synagogue') were essential for worshipping God, hearing his Word and reforming the people's lives. The importance of the elders in these synagogue-congregations is seen in four directions.

(i) Under the reformation of the people, *the elders were to be restored to their proper function.* Ezekiel had to rebuke the elders (chapter 14) because they had set their hearts (their wills and their love) upon idols. They had forsaken God. Isaiah earlier had exposed the wicked treatment of the poor by the elders and the princes (Is. 3:14). Now these sins were being exposed and dealt with. Jeremiah in his Lamentations had reproved the people for

lack of respect for the elders and now with the exposition of the law the people were beginning to recognise the Divinely-ordained position of their elders. This leads us to teaching.

(ii) *The elders resumed teaching the families.* We know from Jeremiah's letter to the exiles that false prophets were beginning to arise and mislead the people. Now that the law was being read and applied the elders would have resumed their responsibilities in teaching the people and directing their worship.

(iii) *The elders were influential leaders of the Hebrew community.* In Ezekiel's prophecy recorded in chapter 7:26 there were three sources of guidance available to the Hebrews. There was God's will communicated directly through the prophet; there was instruction or 'torah' of the law concerned with right relationships of man to God and to fellow men given by the priests and there was the counsel of the elders in giving judgments in local administration. Part of the reason why God allowed his people to go into exile was that each of these three sources of guidance had ceased because the leaders had gone away from God, but now that the reforming process had begun these three groups of leaders began to exert their proper and godly influence upon the people.

(iv) *The elders became once more men who understood God's revelation* and could apply it to the people. In chapters 14 and 20 of Ezekiel, the prophet is told to rebuke the elders for their idolatry. In both cases God refused to allow men to inquire of him regarding his will. Thus we see conversely that when the elders truly followed God they were men to whom was entrusted the teaching of God's Word which came through the prophets.

In the post-exilic period the synagogue-meeting was of great importance in the community life of the Jews. Its instruction in the Law bound them together and its existence gave opportunity for decisions and judgments to be made. Before the exile the elders had given religious guidance to the people and guidance in civic and social matters. Since such matters were now dealt with at the synagogue-meetings, it was natural that the elders should once more exercise this God-given ministry.

As time passed the synagogue-meeting developed in two ways: firstly the elders became the official officers of the synagogue and secondly, buildings were erected to house the synagogue-meetings. The importance of the synagogue in the life of the people both religiously and socially led to the elders superintending the assemblies. Thus each synagogue had its board of elders. They were led by the head of the assembly (called in the New Testament the ruler of the synagogue). This board had power to excommunicate and controlled the activities of the synagogue. The head of the assembly superintended the services and determined who was to be called upon to read the Scripture, who was to act as the messenger (the Sheliah Zibber) who would pray and to deliver the sermon. He was taken from

Mr. S. M. Houghton reminds us of some of the highlights in the History of Romanism from the Reformation to the 20th Century

The history of Romanism

It is not our intention to write a history of the God-blessed Reformation of the 16th Century, but we must at least indicate the chief results of the Reformation, for they have proved momentous. In the first place the Reformation emphasised the principle of the priesthood of all believers. This in its turn helped to introduce the doctrine of Scripture and stressed the tremendous value of the possession by believers of the very Word of God translated into their own languages. Our possession of the 'living oracles', however, makes it difficult for us to understand the older position of professing Christians whose only knowledge of the will and doctrine of God was dependent upon the ministrations of a priest much of whose services was rendered in Latin, a tongue which was not 'understanded' of the people. The Reformers claimed that every man and woman born into the world should be provided with 'God's Word written'. We cannot suppose that the poet William Cowper had the Reformation specially in mind when he wrote the hymn commencing 'The Spirit breathes upon the Word and brings the truth to light', but he certainly had earth's nations in view:

*Its truths upon the nations rise —
They rise but never set.*

*Let everlasting thanks be Thine
For such a bright display
As makes a world of darkness shine
With beams of heavenly day.*

Again, the Reformation gave tremendous emphasis to the doctrine of Justification by Faith without works. Rome was grievously at fault in this all-important matter. Absolution spoken by a priest was declared to be essential; also that absolution must be preceded by a mechanically complete confession in which every sin to be pardoned must be named, and accompanied by such acts of contrition as the saying of many prayers and the engaging in such works as the priest might prescribe. In place of the priest the Reformers preached Christ and His finished work; the confession of sin direct to God took the place of the words uttered in the confessional-box; the good works which were essentially the fruit of the Holy Spirit, and came after and not before justification, demonstrated the reality of salvation by the sheer grace of God. Immense stress was therefore placed in Reformation days on such texts as 'By grace are ye saved through faith, and that not of yourself; it is the gift of God; not of works least any man should boast.' The Reformers certainly stressed the sovereign and efficient grace of God.

amongst the local people possibly for a limited time or in some cases for life. Such men were to be versed in the law. They were to be mature in years and experience. In later times they were set apart by the laying on of hands.

It was from this Old Testament background that Christian eldership in the New Testament emerged. This background assists and enables us to understand the two central passages on eldership in Titus 1 and 1 Timothy 3 where the qualifications for eldership are stipulated. □□□

Some of the additions to the Church of Rome

Prayers for the dead	300	The Rosary	1090
Veneration of angels and saints	375	The Inquisition	1184
The use of images	375	Sale of Indulgences	1190
Exalting Mary as 'Mother of God'	431	Transubstantiation	1215
The doctrine of Purgatory	593	Auricular Confession	1215
Prayers directed to Mary, dead saints and angels	600	Adoration of the wafer	1220
Kissing the Pope's foot	709	Bible forbidden to laymen	1229
Worship of the cross and images	786	Jesuit order founded	1534
Holy water	850	Tradition equal to Scripture	1545
Worship of St. Joseph	890	Apocryphal books added to Bible	1546
Fasting on Fridays and during Lent	998	Immaculate Conception of Mary	1854
The mass developed and made obligatory	1075	Infallibility of Pope	1870
Celibacy	1079	Assumption of Mary	1950
		Mary proclaimed mother of Church	1965

n.b. some of the dates are approximate as traditions developed gradually

In such ways as these the Reformation flooded the world of the 16th century with light. Unhappily, however, the Church of Rome, angered by the loss of its monopoly of salvation, repudiated the return of the Reformers to the primitive doctrine of Scripture and determined by every possible means to counter and overthrow the teachings of the Protestants.

The Inquisition

One such means was the Inquisition. Not that the Inquisition was the product of the 16th Century; it had been introduced as early as the 13th Century and had carried out its various forms of torture in order to induce 'heretics' to recant and return to the doctrine of 'holy mother church'. The Spanish Inquisition was especially notorious, and responsible for the putting to death of thousands of the 'lapsed'. The Auto-da-Fe (Act of Faith), that is, the punishment of heretics, by burning, was of common occurrence in the Iberian Peninsula. Tudor burnings in England were but few in comparison.

The Jesuits

A second instrument of the Roman Counter-Reformation was the Society of Jesus, the members of which came to be known as Jesuits. Founded in

1534 by Ignatius Loyola, a Spanish knight, and accepted by Pope Paul III in 1540, Jesuits pledged themselves to render service to Church and Papacy with unrestrained devotion. Intensely hostile to the teachings of the Reformers, they formed a kind of shock troops in the religious war. The education of Catholic youth received their special attention, as also did the art of private personal ministry to kings and to men and women of high influence and authority. Rigorous discipline was applied to every member of the Order and the development of blind obedience to superiors inculcated. The aim of the long and severe course of training was the entire subjection of the whole man to the will of superiors: 'Let every man be well persuaded that he who lives under obedience ought, under the providence of God, sincerely to be governed and to behave exactly as if he were a corpse which suffers itself to be turned in all directions and dragged everywhere; or as if he were an old man's staff to be used wheresoever and in whatsoever he wishes who holds it in his hand.' If a Jesuit was told that an object was white, whereas his own eyes assured him that it was black, he must not only affirm that it was white but believe whole-heartedly that it was

white. The Protestant faith has never had antagonists of greater resolution and deep-seated enmity than members of the Order of Jesus.

Index of Prohibited books

Thirdly, the Roman Church published the *Index Librorum Prohibitorum*, a catalogue of authors and works which it wholly condemned and which it forbade its members, except in special circumstances, to read or possess. The first Index was issued during the pontificate of Pius IV in 1557 and had a particular connection with the Inquisition. Fourteen years later Pius V established the Congregation of the Index which survived until 1917 when its duties were transferred to The Holy Office.

The Council of Trent

Fourthly, the Romanists, having come to realize that in contrast with the clear-cut doctrine of the Protestants, their Church was seriously deficient, it was decided by Paul III to convene a Council which might give clear definition to the doctrine of the Roman Catholic Church. It met at Trent, 76 miles north-west of Venice, and held a number of sessions from 1545 to 1563. It formulated doctrines which had previously lacked clarity and authority. The theologians of the Roman Church reckon it to be the 19th Ecumenical Council. It gave the Roman Catholics their first firm code of doctrine. Tradition was declared to be equal with Scripture as a source of religious truth. It was asserted that the Roman Church had the sole right to interpret Scripture. The text of the Vulgate, it was claimed, was supreme over all the other versions. Transubstantiation, the denial of the cup to the laity, purgatory, the celibacy of the clergy, the invocation of saints, the veneration of relics and images, and very much else were among the subjects

defined at Trent. The findings of the Council were certainly a landmark in the history of the Church of Rome. A summary of the Council's work was published by the Pope in 1564 and became known as the Creed of Pius IV. By this time it was clear to the whole of Christendom that Roman Catholicism and Protestantism were poles apart, and that their respective doctrines were irreconcilable.

Burnings in England

In England the burnings of Protestants carried out during the reign of Queen Mary Tudor (1553-8) — almost 300 in all — meant that the nation became increasingly alienated from a church which was prepared to use thumbscrew and stake to secure adherents, an outlook enormously strengthened by the publication in 1564 of the first English edition of Foxe's *Book of Martyrs*. A copy of the book was placed in every parish church in the country; it exerted an influence which long remained.

Queen Elizabeth excommunicated

The Elizabethan Church Settlement of 1559 (under Archbishop Parker) placed Romanists in a difficult position. The Acts of Supremacy and Uniformity were followed by the publication in 1563 of the 39 Articles which made it plain for all to see that 'the Bishop of Rome hath no jurisdiction in this Realm of England', and that the doctrines of the English Church were in many respects flatly contrary to those promulgated by the Council of Trent. What then were the Pope's adherents to do? Those who failed to attend Church on Sundays and holy days were fined one shilling for each offence. Elizabeth had no intention of making men's thoughts criminal but she insisted on outward compliance with her religious requirements. The position for

Romanists became decidedly worse when, in 1571, Pope Pius V excommunicated Elizabeth, declared her deposed, and freed all her subjects from their allegiance. At the same time he forbade his followers to attend services in the national Church. In consequence, Jesuit agents and all other active Romanists were made subjects to severe penalties for after all, they were rebels against the throne. A crisis came in 1588 when King Philip II of Spain (formerly husband of Mary Tudor and now the political champion of the Counter-Reformation) sent the Armada to win back the British realm to Rome. He met with signal defeat and Rome's influence in England further declined.

The writings of the Reformers

It is worthy of mention that in the mid-19th Century the writings of all the English Reformers were republished by the Parker Society. They make it crystal-clear that the Reformation in England was clear-cut in respect to the doctrine of salvation. The (approx.) 50 volumes of Works show the erudition and the Protestantism of the men who, under God, brought England from under the yoke of Rome. On the other hand, to counter such teachings, William Allen, a Fellow of Oriel College, Oxford, founded in 1568 a seminary at Douai (Belgium) in which his fellows could be trained in the strict Tridentine theology and sent surreptitiously into England to minister to those who held to the unreformed faith. North of the 'Border' Scotland on her part became thoroughly reformed after the pattern of Geneva.

The massacre of St. Bartholomew

Meanwhile in France a war of Catholics v. Protestants (Huguenots) had broken out. It raged for some 30 years. One event in the period is

particularly outstanding. It shook France to its centre and horrified all the Protestant States. The Massacre of St. Bartholomew (24th August) took place in 1572. Organised by Queen Catherine de Medici, her son Henry of Anjou, and the Family of the Guises, it aimed at exterminating the entire Huguenot population of France. In Paris alone some 10,000 were slain, in the Provinces as many as 70,000 may have fallen. The Papacy celebrated the massacre by illuminating Rome and issuing a commemorative medal. Philip II of Spain is said to have smiled for the first and last time in his life when the news reached him. The Civil War continued, however, until finally the Protestant leader in matters military and political, Henry of Navarre (later Henry IV), decided that 'Paris is worth a mass' and came to terms with his foes. Peace was concluded by the Edict of Nantes (1598) which arranged for surviving Huguenots to have guaranteed liberties in certain strongholds, La Rochelle in particular.

Rome and the French Revolution of 1789

The so-called 'enlightenment' that came to France in the later 18th Century led to one of the greatest events of modern history — the French Revolution of 1789. By it the Roman Catholic Church in France was overwhelmed, and in Notre Dame Cathedral an actress was enthroned as the Goddess of Liberty. Hymns were sung to her. The torch of Truth burned before her. White-robed maidens attended her. Atheism was proclaimed as the sole belief worthy of man's regard, although not a few of the rebels held to a vague belief in a Supreme Being. Not that the millions of French peasants embraced the new ideas. Catholicism was too deeply engrained in their hearts for such a thing to occur. But

in 1789 the Church of Rome received a blow from which it never fully recovered.

Napoleon and the Pope

Napoleon found it expedient to come to terms with the Papacy. In 1801, three years before he became Emperor, he concluded a Concordat with Pope Pius VII. The Roman Church and its clergy returned to France, but not with their former powers. The Pope condoned those who had acquired confiscated Church property and, by way of compensation, the bishops and clergy were henceforth to be paid their salaries by the State. Trickery and intimidation marked Napoleon's later conduct towards the Pope. The Papal States were seized and the Pope himself was kept a prisoner for a time.

After Napoleon's downfall the Roman Church naturally endeavoured to reassert itself and its claims to spiritual domination, but on its own ground — Italy — before the century closed it found itself imperilled by the new force of nationalism. Italy, long divided, aspired to nationhood. But this could not be achieved as long as its central States remained subject to the direct rule of the Pope. Mazzini, Cavour, Victor Emmanuel of Piedmont, and Garibaldi all contributed to the overthrow of the Pope's temporal power during the 1860s, and by 1870 the Pope had become 'the prisoner in the Vatican'. He held on to his spiritual claims the more tenaciously as he found himself the loser in the territorial realm.

Papal infallibility

The decree of papal infallibility promulgated in 1870 is as mischievous a doctrine as ever proceeded from the Vatican. It looked backward as well as forward, for it claimed that all the

Popes, when pronouncing on matters of faith and morals, had never erred. It pronounced the Pope to be virtually a god upon earth; some indeed have actually accorded him that blasphemous title.

Mariolatry

The declaration of the Immaculate Conception was followed almost a century later (1854) by the promulgation of the dogma of the Assumption of Mary. It was asserted that Mary's body was resurrected shortly after her death, reunited with her soul, and that she was taken to glory and enthroned as Queen of Heaven. Thenceforth belief in this dogma was required of every member of the Roman Catholic Church. Prayer to Mary was further encouraged and to masses of Romanists she has become a more glorious person than the Son to whom she gave birth. It is also clear that the present Pope John Paul is fully set upon encouraging the Marian superstition to the utmost of his ability, his power, and his popularity. This in itself is sufficient to denote the Roman Catholic Church as apostate.

The Tractarian Movement

During the 19th Century the Roman Church made great attempts to recover its prestige and authority in England. It was encouraged in this by the Oxford Movement beginning in the early 1830s. In the Church of England at this period there were several parties, including the Evangelicals who were in decline, the High Churchmen who belonged to the 17th Century Laudian tradition and the Liberals or Broad Churchmen who tended towards a 'social gospel'. Some of the last-mentioned entertained very loose ideas about matters spiritual, about the nature of the Church, and about the inspiration of the Scriptures. The Oxford

Movement represented the effort of certain of the High Churchmen to show that the Church of England, although linked with the State, was actually independent of the State, with rights and title-deeds of its own. Their claims were publicised by Tracts written by Oxford scholars and framed with scholarly skill, and before long it became clear that the Tractarians were proclaiming that the Anglican Church was 'the local presence in England of the Catholic Church'. Naturally, before many years had passed, the relation of such a Church to the Roman Church became an acute issue. The famous Tract XC (1841), written by J. H. Newman, brought the matter to a burning focus. Before long an exodus to Rome had commenced. Newman, Faber (hymn-writer), and others of lesser fame, joined the Roman Church. Pusey and Keble were the most prominent of those who remained in the Anglican Church. In the second half of the century Puseyism spread extensively and encouraged the Church of Rome to think that, by wise and patient encouragement, the entire Church of England might turn its back on the past, confess its faults, return from its wanderings, and seek reunion with Rome. Meanwhile Pope Pius IX reorganised England as a province of the Roman Catholic Church and appointed territorial bishops who settled themselves in dioceses roughly the same as those of the Anglican Church. Monastic and similar settlements multiplied. During the present century the penetration by Romanists of every branch of national life has continued apace. Rome claims that she stands for stability and security in regard to the fundamentals of existence. 'Semper eadem' is her motto — changelessness in a world of change! In Church and State, in matters material and moral, in all that

pertains to marriage and the family, to education, to commercial relationships, to relationships between nations, she makes her views known.

Rome and the WCC

In regard to Ecumenism, Rome has thus far refused to become a member of the World Council of Churches, doubtless because she is only prepared to participate in religious get-togethers when her own claimed supremacy and uniqueness as the only true Church of Christ is acknowledged. She is prepared to bide her time until the moment when control of the WCC is within her grasp. Meanwhile in religious and secular quarters alike we are informed time and again that this and that has happened 'for the first time since the Reformation'. The Common Market has wonderfully encouraged Rome, for the majority of its member States and personal participants are her adherents. One of her leading spokesmen has pronounced it to be 'the Reformation in reverse'. Rome certainly keeps the Reformation in mind and is set upon cancelling out its distinctive doctrines and blessings. To her its light is accounted darkness.

The Second Vatican Council

The Second Vatican Council (1962) was called by Pope John XXIII, but despite all that seemed to indicate a change of attitude towards 'separated brethren' (the new name for Protestant 'heretics') the 'semper eadem' outlook undoubtedly prevailed. Fresh stress was given to 'the institution, the perpetuity, the power and the nature of the sacred primacy of the Roman Pontiff, and of his infallible magisterium'. Purgatory, Prayers for the dead and to the saints, Mariolatry, transubstantiation, and all else that is a part of Roman dogma, were to continue unchanged. Today's Pope, John Paul has made it very clear that

Reviews

Hallelujah

By Herbert Carson

Evangelical Press

pp. 158. Paperback. £1.95.

In twelve chapters Herbert Carson gives a thorough exposition of the subject of Christian worship. He covers the development from OT to NT worship; God and our response to him; sermons and collections (interesting to read a chapter devoted to the latter!); baptism and the Lord's Supper; concluding with two chapters simply headed 'Amen!' and 'Hallelujah!'

The first chapter on OT worship, takes us through the character of God, and the attitude in which he should be approached. Sections are devoted to the major feasts and the significance, the place of the temple worship and the role of the synagogue in preparing the way for NT worship.

This subject is covered in the second chap-

ter, beginning with the outpouring of the Holy Spirit, and carrying on into a description of the order of early church worship. Particular attention is paid to the Lord's Day, the place of prayer, praise and preaching the word and the chapter concludes with some interesting comments on participation by the congregation in worship.

The next chapter takes us through the theology of the Trinity and the way in which the Father, Son and Holy Spirit have a part in worship. There are helpful comments about the relationship between the worship of the local church and the communion worldwide.

From the consideration of God, we move in chapter four to look at our response which should be intellectual, moral, emotional, aesthetic, and physical. There is good balanced teaching for us all here. All of us stress some of these areas of response to the detriment of others. Some shy away from the intellectual, others from the emotional. I found the consideration of the aesthetic most stimulating was also interested in the exposition of the raising

age-old Roman traditions are deemed an essential part of the Roman system.

The powerful personality and leadership of Pope John Paul II has resulted in a new worldwide revival of interest in the Roman Catholic Church. Many have wondered whether the new Pope, young in comparison with the long line of aged Italian predecessors, and with the strong backing of his home country of Poland, will bring a great change. True to his orthodox Polish background, he has endorsed all the major unbiblical traditions of Rome and especially asserted an extreme Mariolatry and the propitiatory sacrifice of the mass. He has also called for the Jesuits to return to their traditional ways.

What is our duty?

What then is demanded of faithful Protestants, the 'separated brethren' who cannot accept the Jesuitical principle of assenting to beliefs which are blatantly opposed to Scripture

and to conscience? We answer that we are to continue without cessation to contend earnestly for the faith once delivered to the saints. If Rome claims antiquity for her beliefs, we assert that the true faith is even more ancient. If Rome claims supreme authority in respect of creed and conscience, we assert that the claims of truth provable by Scripture possess greater authority. If Roman Pontiffs assert their infallibility, we point to the more sure prophetic Word to which we do well to take heed. The fact is that Roman Catholicism has so intermingled error with truth in the course of the long centuries that her affidavits are completely invalid. Saving truth, eternal truth, must be sought elsewhere. Thank God for the infallible Scriptures of truth.

This article first appeared in *Peace and Truth* (Pastor Charles Sleeman, editor, 115 Kings Road, Haslemere, Surrey GU27 2QQ). With the author's approval slightly abridged and adapted for *Reformation Today*. □□□

of hands in worship, a practice which seems to have only lately been re-discovered.

Chapter five is devoted to the place of the sermon, with both preacher and hearer being analysed, and as previously mentioned a useful chapter is given over to the subject of giving.

Four chapters (seven to ten) consider in depth the sacraments of baptism and the Lord's Supper. There is much here to edify and warm the heart as well as instruct the mind. The position taken on baptism is of course baptistic but this is not done in a controversial manner. That would be outside the spirit of the book. And finally the headings of the last two chapters, given above, speak for themselves.

As ever with Herbert Carson's writings, the exposition is thorough and balanced. There are many fine points here which will help anyone who wishes to know the Lord more fully in worship. In particular I will select a few comments which seem to be relevant to many of our churches.

On the question of participation by the congregation in worship there is argument from the New Testament for 'sharing together in praise and testimony' in smaller groups, and also to an extent in larger congregations, such as in Acts chapter 2, where it is inconceivable that those same converts who had responded openly to the first preaching of Peter by asking the question: 'Brothers what shall we do?' would later lapse into a numbed silence which would preclude even an interjected 'Amen' and 'Hallelujah' (p. 31). What a thought indeed!

Towards the end of the book (p. 152) there is this superb anecdote on the same theme: 'Jerome in the fourth century described the worship of the church of his day. The "Amen" of the congregation sounded, he said, like thunder.'

I also found helpful the treatment of the Lord's Supper, with the idea that it is a meal, and the object of a meal is to feed the guests, not to give a cookery demonstration! Therefore at the Lord's Supper we are not spectators, but rather we thus receive the benefits procured by the Saviour and are nourished and strengthened. It would have been valuable to have additional practical suggestions about the conduct of the Supper, particularly from someone with such a wealth of experience in both Anglican and Free

Church practise! I recently had the experience for the first time of a whole mid-week church meeting given over to communion, and found this most refreshing. In the course of it we sang several hymns and choruses, had periods of open prayer, and as a break from normal Baptist tradition(!) went forward to take the wine from a central table. Many other such experiments could doubtless be cited and would prove valuable for those leading worship meetings.

However, the purpose of the book is rather to provide Biblical teaching and to draw from the finest tradition of the church. The great hymns of the past are often quoted though it would also have been good to see some acknowledgement of the many fine hymns and choruses being written such as are found in *Psalm Praise* or in *Sounds of Living Waters*. But what book can cover everything? In its overall thrust it will give inspiration and help to many. I.R.

Add to your Faith

By Sinclair Ferguson
Pickering and Inglis
pp. 171. £2.50.

As the sub-title tells us, this book covers biblical teaching on Christian maturity. In some ways it compliments the smaller work *Christian Maturity* by James Philip (IVP) and for those who haven't read that marvellous treatment of the subject, I recommend the reading of the two together. So there you have two reviews in the space of one!

Add to your Faith concentrates on exposition of major passages of Scripture to press home such matters as abiding in Christ, full assurance, clear guidance, overcoming temptation, coping with suffering and so on. The four major divisions, each divided further into chapters, sections and sub-sections (do we detect the influence of John Owen here?) make the book easy to grasp as a whole and in parts. I would suggest reading in short bursts rather than at a marathon session! The approach is highly concentrated with lots of doctrine and spiritual application. However there are helpful illustrations interspersed, and lovers of the Puritan tradition will find a

continued on inside back cover

What's in a Name?

Shown in the photo are some friends at Oromocto, Canada, where David Bugden is pastor. On the left are Bill and Isabel Burke of St. Johns, NB. Observe the sign: First Calvinist Baptist Church. Further details read: evangelical, missionary, biblical, and then in bigger letters; Jesus Christ is the answer. This extended title is very unusual and may be unique in Canada if not America. These details illustrate the problem facing newly planted churches. Every church must solve its own problem of describing its character in the wisest way for the sake of the people in that geographical area. The question is how will the title be interpreted? Many new churches all over the world are using the very simple title; 'Reformed Baptist'. This is not because of some sinister plan to create yet another denomination. Nor is it designed to encourage a new form of cultishness. The reason is very simple. Firstly, nobody disputes the meaning of *Baptist*. It stands for the gathered church principle. Secondly, in environments which are exceedingly hostile to Calvinism it is better to use the designation 'Reformed' which is designed to convey the fact that the church upholds the doctrines and values recovered by the 16th century Reformation and wishes to promote the best aspects of our Reformation inheritance.

It is sometimes necessary to change the name of a church. Some Reformed Baptist Churches used to be called 'Strict and Particular'. That title in former generations did mean something to the community. Now the name is incomprehensible to our society. The average person thinks it has something to do with strict behaviour and particular dress or clothing.

In most areas the word Reformed has a fuller and richer meaning than Calvinistic. In Britain however the word Reformed has been used to describe a denominational re-forming. We now have a denomination called 'The United Reformed Church' which is an amalgamation of Congregational and Presbyterian churches, most of which are liberal and very far removed from the Reformed truths which we associate with the historic Gospel of the Protestant Reformation. We would be accurate to say that the new denomination is the United Presbyterian-Congregational Church. Obviously that title is too cumbersome and the word Reformed has been used instead although it has no reference to what we know as the doctrines of grace.



Some argue that we could drop names altogether. But that does not provide a solution. People will ask and they have a right to know what kind of church it is. The simple title 'Baptist Church' is suitable providing that faithfulness to the Biblical testimony is conveyed by it. The Baptists like other denominations have suffered from the inroads of Modernism. No historian as far as we know has attempted to continue the story of the General Baptists from the time of Spurgeon and the Downgrade controversy of 1887-1892.

Much can be said for titles which are completely original and independent from any denomination. One such is mentioned in these pages: 'the Church of the Open Door'. Such a friendly title unlikely to put anyone off!

Common sense dictates that nothing, political or religious, can pass through this world without a name. Common sense dictates that every church is compelled to choose some title which best suits that membership and the environment. The measure of unity enjoyed between the churches depends on the extent of truth and practice held in common. Those who are mature have no difficulty with this problem of names, but much care has to be exercised not to offend little ones. We must use names with caution. A use of names to laud it over others, or any boastful use of names should be avoided like the plague. Pride or superiority must be anathema. Let us remember that churches powerful in doctrine are not necessarily strong in love for God or in dedication and zeal. The seven churches addressed in Asia Minor were all very different in character. It is not the name but the inward state of the members that is important. □□□



New York state stretches from New York City to the great lakes and the cities of Rochester and Buffalo, an area one and a half times larger than England. Centrally situated in Rochester City is the meeting place of Trinity Baptist Church. David Seefried (centre above) is the pastor. With him are some of his supporters – Willy, Dominic and Rick. Pastor Seefried enjoys terrific opportunities. He broadcasts by radio almost daily to a wide area that reaches across the lakes to Canada as well. Bad health compelled Brother Seefried to return from Germany but a door wide and effectual opened to him in Rochester. Internally the church is very attractive with sloping floors and a splendidly structured centrally-placed pulpit. Even the stained glass windows seem right when there is joy and zeal! The building is shared with a Congregational Church group. David's hobby is weightlifting which he needs to keep up because the demands of a growing church could be overwhelming. Spiritual health is a priority which cannot do without an earthly tabernacle. David's address: PO Box 23962, Rochester, NY, 14692.

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good number – or goodly array! – of appropriate quotations.

The author will be known to some as assistant editor of the *Banner of Truth*

magazine and is involved in the ministry of St. George's – Tron Church of Scotland in the centre of Glasgow, as well as in a wider preaching ministry. No doubt we will be seeing more useful material like this from his pen in the future. I.R.

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