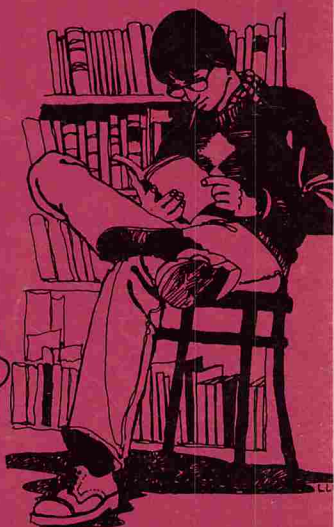


# REFORMATION TODAY'81

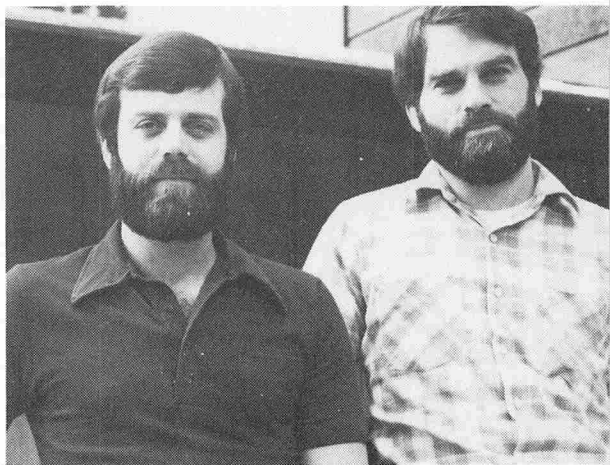


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*Betty and Alex Graham of St. John, New Brunswick, Canada, where a Reformed church is in the making. Prof. Hugh Flemming has been leading a fellowship. Now about 16 are ready to covenant together.*

*Mike Densham and Tom Lyon, elders of the newly planted Reformed Baptist Church, Tacoma, Washington State.*



*Pastors Ernest Reisinger, David Straub and Ted Christman at the Banner of Truth Conference, Indianapolis, Oct. 1980.*



# Editorial

At the recent British Evangelical Council meetings, Peter Lewis made an appeal for unity between the Reformed and Charismatic groupings. I have been asked what I think about it. In concurring with Donald MacLeod's response I would note that his article is ideal for Scotland where the river Jordan does not flow. In England it is necessary to note our unity with those conservative Pentecostals who are zealous for the doctrines of grace, expository preaching and church discipline. Some of them read *Reformation Today* not because it is a Pentecostal paper but for the matters just mentioned.

Conservative Pentecostals are of a different hue to the mainline Charismatics, and fear them as we do because they are excitement and drama centred. For that reason it has been our observation that as individuals have been taken up with their sensations, so in proportion their enthusiasm has waned for the interests that lie at our hearts. There seems to be no more appetite for the difficult and exacting work required to maintain a rich Reformed ministry.

We have observed that these friends are impressionable. The crowds and the enthusiasm they see contrasts with our small and often struggling churches. Surely we should know by now that pragmatism is an unsound principle. A success and failure rate is observed in all families of churches and also the cults. We too can point to our success stories. Mike Harris, contributor of the biography of Cesar Malan, now leads a thriving church of 250 as well as a newly planted work which has grown rapidly from 30 to 80. Harry Kilbride reports that Lansdowne Baptist, Bournemouth,

have just experienced their best ever year, 70 added by baptism.

The hinge upon which everything turns is miracles. I believe John Owen puts his finger on that hinge when he shows that all the gifts of 1 Corinthians 12:7-12 were of an extraordinary category (Works vol. 3, p. 35ff). They all belonged to the transitional period. If you do not believe that then to be consistent you should never be content with anything less than a total commitment to the presence, all the time, of all those supernatural gifts. If we believe on the other hand that the apostolic period was distinct and the special gifts temporary then instead of criticising the shortcomings of books like Walt Chantry's *Signs of an Apostle* and B. B. Warfield's *Counterfeit Miracles* let us read them and strengthen the Biblical Theological structure that undergirds them, for that structure is essentially sound. All attempts throughout history to restore miracles have ended in abject failure. The world will be converted through Gospel preaching not spectaculars (Jn. 16:8-11). During 1917 three children aged 7, 9 and 10 supposedly saw and heard the Virgin Mary at Fatima in Portugal. Now 300,000 people gather every May to commemorate those visions but the spiritual darkness that surrounds the activities involved is demonic. All extra-revelatory phenomena is to be shunned (Rev. 22:18-19). It is because of the revelatory powers claimed by some of the Charismatic leaders and because of their blatant compromise with Rome and the Ecumenical Movement that I regard them as false prophets. Unless they repent both they and the followings created by the artificial euphoria which is the Charismatic Movement will end in the same night as did the Irvingism of the last century.

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Front Cover: *The Evangelical Library, 78A Chiltern Street, London, is not in fact for sale as is suggested by the sketch. The Library premises are being purchased by The Library from the Westminster City Council. The needs of The Library are constant and numerous. We should not take such a valuable Puritan Library for granted but get our deacons to include it in the budget.*

*The Carey conference for church officers is organised by an ad hoc committee of six or seven Baptist ministers. Some churches are generous in their support of men who have long distances to travel. The stronger supporting the weaker has been a feature of these gatherings which began in 1970.*

## The Carey Conference

Swanwick 1981

*A brief outline by Bill Edwards*

The words of Psalm 133, 'Behold how good and pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity,' sums up the recently concluded conference for ministers at Swanwick in Derbyshire. The warm fellowship which prevailed throughout was in contrast to the snow and freezing conditions outside, a contrast too with the milder climate which we enjoy in the Channel Islands. The biographical subject of William Williams presented by Stephen Turner of New Zealand was the kind of heartwarming subject to quicken the spiritual affections. Such biographical studies are appropriate for the opening of the conference.

Robert Amiss of Ipswich preached movingly in the evening on the Fatherhood of God illustrating his subject from his own personal experience.

It must ever be our aim to raise our standards of exposition and to enrich our people with exposition which is thoroughly researched and accurate. John Waite, the principal of the Barry Bible College, fulfilled this role in two enriching and analytical expositions of the book of Psalms. The value of his material should be immediately evident when it is presented in printed form (I understand that he has promised this for *Reformation Today*). David Kingdon likewise reminded us of the care that is needed to exegete Scripture. In a very closely reasoned paper he explained the meaning of those passages in which little children were brought to Jesus and he placed his hands on them and blessed them. I was personally convicted of the need to be more specific and clear when engaged in services of infant dedication.

A wider perspective was given to us all through the valuable time of prayer and sharing which has become a feature of the Carey conference. It is beneficial to realise that others experience the same difficulties as ourselves. In an exposition on what it means to receive the gift of the person of the Holy Spirit from Acts 2:38 Erroll Hulse outlined the difference between



*Peter Gallaher and Bill Edwards, two of the three elders of the Quennevais Evangelical Church, St. Brelade, Jersey. Peter Gallaher is an architect. Before entering the ministry Bill Edwards was a shop steward.*

the supernatural gifts of the Spirit and explained seven gifts which all believers receive. He appealed for a powerful and positive doctrine of the Holy Spirit and pointed out that it is totally inadequate simply to refute those with whom we disagree on this subject. Our spirits were certainly refreshed by this stirring address and our brother fanned into flame any dying embers of spiritual zeal within us.

Richard Brooks, formerly a curate in Sheffield, but now the pastor of Send Evangelical Church in Surrey spoke on 'Keeping the vineyards'. He outlined the responsibilities of the minister to keep his own heart and then went on to press home the importance of personal and pastoral care of our wives. Our brother has a thorough approach similar to that of Richard Baxter whose 'Reformed Pastor' was often quoted. Wilfred Kuhrt, a missionary of forty years' experience in India, brought before the conference the challenge of work among Asians in London. He illustrated his presentation with slides and described his visits to Tamil speaking Indians now living in London. The advantage of being fluent in the Tamil language was very evident. Our brother suggested that Christians ought to consider moving into the inner city areas for the sake of evangelism. Fleeting visits from those living in the more comfortable suburban areas does not really get to grips with the situation. Herbert Carson brought the conference to a fitting close with a convicting exposition of Romans 12:3. The importance of humility was strongly emphasised in the unfolding of the necessity for a sober and realistic judgment of our own personal gifts.

The overall impact of the conference was to send us back to our various pastoral pastures with renewed spirits and a zeal to reach those who persist in placing themselves outside the immeasurable blessings of the Gospel. □ □ □



*Pastor J. K. Davies of Tuckingmill Reformed Baptist Church explains from Scripture those standards of commitment that are required of all church officers.*

## Reformation for elders and deacons

An office bearer in a local Church must be a committed man. The work of the Lord in his Church is no hobby. It is service rendered to the King of Kings. So, as we approach this subject and seek to learn what the Scriptures teach we must constantly keep in mind the high calling and great responsibility the Lord lays upon his servants in the work of ministry in the Church.

We will consider this matter under various headings: Commitment to . . . the Lord, the Word, the Church, the family, hospitality and consistent Christian living.

The term 'officer' (or 'office holder') refers primarily to elders (including Pastors) and deacons, although what I have to say in this article will often be applicable to any who have tasks and responsibilities in the Church. In fact much of what we shall consider here will have an application to all the members of a church. Yet we must limit ourselves somewhere, and the New Testament seems to limit its particular directions and qualifications to these offices, so we shall do the same.

But what is an elder? There are various definitions, and the New Testament in various places gives us direction as to who should occupy the office and what he is to do. Much has been written about the office during the last fifteen years, not least in this magazine, as it seems in Reformed Baptist circles its

rediscovery is as recent as that. For our purposes, however, the following must suffice: an elder (or bishop, or overseer, or presbyter) is a man called of God, recognised and set apart by a church to rule, teach and shepherd the flock of God by the Word of God. I am not making a distinction in this article between the Pastor with his personal responsibility in these things and the other elders with their collective responsibility in them.

So, what is a deacon? For many years this office was viewed as being that of a kind of 'director' of the local Church. Deacons occupied the permanent office in a church while the minister was only temporary, since he moved from one church to another during the course of his 'career'. This is not how the New Testament regards the office of deacon (nor the work of the ministry either). From what we learn there, a deacon is one appointed by the local Church to assist the elders in a particular sphere of responsibility regarding the common life and property of the Church. A deacon relieves the elders of work they would otherwise have to do themselves. From the appointment of the first deacons (Acts 6:1ff.) it would appear that the whole idea was to free the apostles to attend to prayer and preaching. A deacon therefore should always be sympathetic and sensitive to assist in every way to relieve the pressures placed on elders. Full time teaching elders inevitably find themselves spending much time

in administration and correspondence a considerable proportion of which could be efficiently done by deacons or helpers who are entirely trustworthy and suitable.

One other matter requires clarification here in order to clear it out of the way. What is a 'lay preacher'? This is not a New Testament idea at all. A preacher in the New Testament sense is not an itinerant supply preacher. (Churches that rely on them to fulfil all the ministry they need tend to get weaker and weaker, even though many such preachers are godly and faithful in their labours.) A New Testament preacher is devoted to the Word, for his first responsibility in Christian things lies in this ministry — he labours in the Word (cf. 1 Tim. 5:17). In other words he is an elder, a potential elder, or at least a duly recognised preacher who is commended by his Church for this work.

So, let us now turn to matters of commitment. We begin with,

### *1. Commitment to the Lord*

Commitment to the Lord is clearly required of every Christian — '... ye are not your own; for ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's' (1 Cor. 6:19-20). 'Ye cannot drink the cup of the Lord, and the cup of devils: ye cannot be partakers of the Lord's table and the table of devils' (1 Cor. 10:21). See also 2 Corinthians 8:5. The Christian life is a wholehearted, God-devoted life. It is not a part-time or now-and-again thing. This is particularly so of those who hold office in a church. For they, in leading the church, set an example of holy living which the other members of the church will inevitably follow — 'Neither as being lords over

God's heritage, but being ensamples to the flock' (1 Pet. 5:3). 'Remember them which have the rule over you, who have spoken unto you the word of God: whose faith follow, considering the end of their conversation' (Heb. 13:7). The service rendered in the Church is first of all rendered to the Lord, and this colours its quality and determines its character — 'Whether therefore ye eat, or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God' (1 Cor. 10:31). See also Ephesians 6:6-7; and Colossians 3:22-23.

An elder is appointed by God (Acts 20:28), and gives an account to him (Heb. 13:17). He is God's servant before he is anything else. This must never be forgotten, although it often is. He is not merely an employee!

Why is this so important? It is because there will be times when this is all that is left — when problems occur and people fail, for even the best of men fail, the man of God will continue to labour because he is first of all committed to the Lord (see John 21:22; and Acts 20:29-31). Similarly a deacon is to be a godly man before ever he is an efficient administrator, for otherwise efficiency and the smooth running of a church becomes of greater importance than the spiritual issues that undergird it. This applies to all who have some responsibility in a church — they are also to be godly men first of all (see 2 Tim. 2:2).

### *2. Commitment to the Word*

This may very well appear to be a statement of the obvious as with the previous section, but it still needs saying, and emphasising. It is easy enough to be under the authority of God's Word as far as making claims



for it is concerned, and still fail to obey it and apply its teaching to Church life and to personal living. The application of the *implications* of God's Word is also of great importance in the life of a church. The statements, commands and precepts of God's Word carry with them implications in terms of principles that are equally necessary to adhere to if we would be obedient to God's Word in the twentieth century. So, those who rule, teach and serve in the Church must always be under the authority of God's Word and must be committed to it – not grudgingly, but with delight – with commitment.

See such verses as 1 Timothy 3:2 'apt to teach', 5:17 '... labour in the word and doctrine', Titus 1:9 'holding fast the faithful word', Hebrews 13:7 '... who have spoken unto you the word of God', Acts 20:32 'I commend you to God and to the word of his grace which is able to build you up.'

Commitment to the Lord involves commitment to his Word. It is what makes us wise unto salvation (2 Tim. 3:15) and its preaching is God's means of blessing to all men. Deacons are similarly to be under its authority (1 Tim. 3:9).

Now, why is this so important? The Word is our authority because it is not the word of mere men – it is God's Word, and so never fails or alters. The words, ideas and opinions of men do alter, and that sometimes violently. But God's Word is sure and reliable. It is the food decreed by the Lord for the feeding of the flock (Acts 20:32).

Beware of the man who is full of new ideas, but who knows little of Scrip-

ture and its teaching. Isolated texts are no substitute for a thorough knowledge of the Bible, and are no evidence of submission to what the Bible teaches.

### 3. *Commitment to the Church*

On the face of it commitment to the Church might appear to be a contradiction to all we have so far said. But in fact it is vitally connected. The Church is Christ's Body and so commitment to the Lord will inevitably involve commitment to his Church. In our consideration here we are thinking of the local Church. It is not enough to talk of commitment to the Church as the Body of Christ in a vague 'only to be seen in heaven' fashion when it comes down to particulars. The Body of Christ is the local Church too. 'Now ye (the Christians in the Church in Corinth) are the body of Christ, and members in particular' (1 Cor. 12:27). Commitment to Christ and his Church means commitment to the local Church. For far too long has the Lord's work been weakened by indisciplined free-lancing and self-centred so-called Christian activity. The local Church is to be the centre of our Christian life, and those who lead it are to set an example to the other members in loyalty and service. In the service we render in the kingdom of God it is important to have a sense of serving something bigger than yourself, rather than your own self interest, and the Church is bigger than any individual.

The local Church is where the believer worships with his fellow Christians, there he enjoys Christian fellowship with a body of people to which he belongs, there he is taught and built up in his faith, and with the local Church he evangelises. All in leadership in the local Church must be committed to it, and to be constantly

away doing other things is a complete denial of this.

The man who is to take care of the Church of God (1 Tim. 3:5) must be committed to it. As a shepherd he should be with his sheep. He is not free to go wandering from church to church without explanation. Any outside preaching engagements should be shared and whenever he preaches elsewhere it should be with the full prayer support of the local church. He is to take heed to the flock and feed it, for it is specially precious to God. 'Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood' (Acts 20:28). God forbid that anyone who leads a church should think less of it than the Lord does himself. It is unruly for an elder to go off on his own without any explanation being given to the church.

If an elder has special gifts as an evangelist, church-planter, missionary, writer, radio-broadcaster or any other specialised field, then it is the duty of the church-officers to lead the local church in facing up to the reality of sharing those special gifts with other churches. In the case of missionary work the church may even have to make a great sacrifice of not only losing a valuable leader but also the further sacrifice of supporting him and his family in another country. If specialised gifts are required to be used for some months of the year, for say church planting, then to avoid misunderstanding the time involved and expense incurred must be faced up to in a realistic manner. The one who is sent out in answer to a call should be sent out with the full backing and prayer support of his local church. If his work involves

pioneering in dark and neglected areas it is likely that the sending church will have to bear the brunt of the costs involved. This is no easy matter as it is unlikely that all the members of a church will be entirely unselfish in seeing the needs of those in fields they themselves have never had opportunity to examine first-hand. These are important matters because we urgently need to have more missionary zeal and earnestness about the great commission.

It is in the local church that we submit to one another (Eph. 5:21), and it is the local church which proves those who hold office (1 Tim. 3:10). This is not possible if those who lead are not committed to this principle.

#### *4. Commitment to the Family*

It may be an embarrassing question to ask, but, why are so many pastors' children unruly? It should not be. Think of the following passages — '... one that ruleth well his own house, having his children in subjection with all gravity (for if a man know not how to rule his own house, how shall he take care of the church of God?)' (1 Tim. 3:4-5). 'Let the deacons be the husbands of one wife, ruling their children and their own houses well' (1 Tim. 3:12). '... if any be blameless, the husband of one wife, having faithful children not accused of riot or unruly' (Tit. 1:6). These verses show the importance of a man's family in his ministry and service. He cannot cut himself off from his family, and the church cannot consider him apart from his family.

Love and discipline go hand in hand as Hebrews 12:6 makes plain, 'For whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom he



receiveth.' Not to discipline is to show a lack of love. 1 Timothy 3:2, 12 and Titus 1:6 all speak of love, faithfulness and loyalty. Ephesians 5:22-6:4 also speaks of discipline in the home being of wives and children, and being the responsibility of the husband and father. Do we rule our houses well (1 Tim. 3:4)? Failure in this matter brings the whole Gospel into disrepute. It also disqualifies for office in the Church!

To be a proper father and husband will mean care and patience. It will mean time spent with the family, learning with them, teaching them (both wives and children), leading them in worship, playing with them, enquiring into every part of their lives. It's a commitment which every servant of God has to make, because the reality of his faith and his obedience is proved in the family with those who know us best. But it must start at the beginning, for it is tragic to see what happens when it is left too late, as it so often is. The family is useful training for office in the Church (1 Tim. 3:5) and that is surely one reason why it is mentioned.

This whole matter raises an interesting question about the unmarried elder! Can we really support the notion of an elder having no wife, from Scripture? For instance a bachelor needs unusual qualities to fulfil the requirement of hospitality.

### *5. Commitment to Hospitality*

Hospitality is regarded as something of great importance by Paul when writing of the qualities necessary for leadership. '... given to hospitality' (1 Tim. 3:2), 'a lover of hospitality' (Tit. 1:8) (see also 3 John 5-8). In the ministry of hospitality we see love in action. There is a sense of openness which encourages those in need to approach the man of God.

Hospitality speaks of welcome, a concern for the needs of others, a willingness to be put out and to be involved in the affairs of others. It also means that the man of God is not ashamed of what people might discover about his home and his family. Hospitality is essentially an expression of love and fellowship. Leaders of the Church should have open homes to the members of the church so as to welcome them, both by special invitation and in a general 'drop in anytime' way. This openness should extend to Christians from other churches, visitors to the area and to strangers in whom we might meet 'angels unawares' (Heb. 13:2).

If hospitality is absent in a man he is hardly likely to encourage it in the church where he is to be an example. It is to have a large part in the life of a church — '... given to hospitality' (Rom. 12:13), 'use hospitality one to another without grudging' (1 Pet. 4:9), for good is to be done to all, and especially to fellow believers (Gal. 6:10). There is nothing worse than an inhospitable church. Its whole character is unfriendly and repelling.

A warm friendly church will depend largely on the openness of the homes of the church, and that depends on the openness of the homes of the office holders.

### *6. Commitment to consistent Christian living*

Again this seems obvious concerning any church officer. Paul could say to Timothy that he had 'fully known my doctrine, manner of life, purpose, faith, longsuffering, charity, patience, persecutions, afflictions'. In other words Timothy had been able to observe a consistent life lived out under tremendous pressure.

1 Timothy 3:2 and Titus 1:6 use the word 'blameless'. What does it mean to be blameless? Clearly it does not mean being sinless. Nor does it mean that the officer has reached a particularly high level of holiness in some special way. Blameless means to be free from blame, or being without the possibility of a wedge being driven between a man's words and his actions. In other words it means consistency of Christian living and negatively it means not being a hypocrite. There are two words used in the two verses referred to. In 1 Timothy 3:2 the word is 'anepileptos' — which means 'not laid hold on', and in Titus 1:6 the word is 'anegkletos' — which means 'not accused or called in'. The idea in the use of both these words is that a man should not be open to accusation. So, we need to ask ourselves the question. 'Can anyone point the finger and say with justification "he doesn't live up to it"?' If so, that is, if anyone can say that with justification, that is a disqualification for office in the local church. Before teaching others, the teacher must himself be taught. Paul could call others to follow his example because he followed Christ's. Can we call men to follow our example in the same way? (see 1 Cor. 11:1).

Every action, all activity, every part of life must be under the scrutiny of the Word of God, for, whether we like it or not, or realise it or not, we are constantly under the scrutiny of an unbelieving world (see 1 Pet. 2:15; 4:14-16).

### *7. Commitment to the Calling*

The calling, and the office into which he is called, will overshadow the whole of the man's life. He is no longer a private individual, nor is he ever off duty. This is particularly

the case with Pastors of churches of course because they so often have to act as representative figures, acting and speaking on behalf of the church. But it is also true to some degree for the other elders and for deacons. Gifts which a man recognises in himself he will develop, to be more useful in the work. Reading, learning, training, will all be with a view to the improvement of the work and the ministry exercised. Those who are over him in the Lord will seek to encourage these things too. There will also be a seeking to be informed about all kinds of matters relating to the work so as to develop as wide a knowledge and understanding as possible. There will be some attempt to be proficient in such areas as administration, financial methods, and legal matters. The Scriptures will be sought for information on a host of subjects so as to provide a biblical framework for the life of the church in all its aspects. Attempts will be made to improve speaking, writing and communicating in general. All these things will be of concern to the man committed to the work.

Conferences, courses, seminars, fraternals will all play their part in the development of an all round ministry. Improvements will be sought in personal study habits and methods. Personal devotion and prayer will always be carefully scrutinised and will need constant cultivation. Experience in these matters will fit a man for the pastoral help of others finding these areas of Christian living a special difficulty. It is important that whenever possible the deacons be edified by expository materials of a high quality. We cannot expect them to be enthusiastic about conferences, courses and fraternals if they are not informed and persuaded about the value and



importance of sustaining high standards in the ministry.

Peter refers to elders in terms of being under-Shepherds to Christ (1 Pet. 5:2-4). If this is the case then there is a certain dignity attaching to the office. By that I am not referring to that contrived dignity which has to do with a special kind of dress or a special voice. It is rather what Paul calls being 'sober' (1 Tim. 3:2). There is a respect that is due to elders which Churches need to remember, 'Rebuke not an elder, but entreat him as a father' (1 Tim. 5:1), 'And we beseech you, brethren, to know them which labour among you, and are over you in the Lord, and admonish you; and to esteem them very highly in love for their work's sake' (1 Thess. 5:12-13), 'Obey them that have the rule over you, and submit yourselves: for they watch for your souls, as they that must give account, that they may do it with joy, and not with grief: for

that is unprofitable for you' (Heb. 13:17). But the respect they are to have has to be earned. It is to be earned by the example of godly living and faithfulness in submission to God's Word.

The message we have to proclaim and the support required is a very serious matter, and the Christian life is itself a total commitment. Preaching is God's ordained means of reaching the lost with the Gospel and is therefore not to be treated lightly. We are not in the entertainment business. Preaching and sustaining a church are heavy responsibilities and are not to be entered upon lightly with little concern for the seriousness of the task. Enjoyment of the Christian life, true fun and humour have a proper place, but flippancy and levity do not. We are engaged in the greatest work in the world – we are serving the living God in his Church, and we are preparing men for eternity. □ □ □

In his report of the Carey Conference Bill Edwards of Jersey tells of the attention given to the subject of the minister's wife. Here his wife describes how she came into the doctrines of grace, an experience needful for all believers.

## My experience of Sovereign Grace

After twenty-five years as a Christian I began to question that promise of our Lord, 'If the Son makes you free, you shall be free indeed' (Jn. 8:36). This simply did not seem to be true of me! My experience was one of anxiety and bondage. I seemed to be chained to other Christians in a constant dependence on what they were saying and doing. While experiencing this bondage I began to realise that my husband was not anxious in the same way as I was. When I became agitated he would quietly remind me that, 'the Lord was sovereign', or he would say that everything was, 'a work of grace'. While I assented to these truths in my mind and while they had a calming effect for a little while I did not really grasp them. The truth about the sovereignty of God had simply not been revealed to me. Because this truth did not rest in my heart my anxieties and agitations would soon return. In the meantime my husband was eagerly collecting a library of books about the Puritans. I longed to share his interest in these books about which he was so enthusiastic but found the reading matter too difficult for me. Sadly we seemed to share less spiritually than we did before. However I could only continue in the Scriptures and wait prayerfully upon the Lord.

It was last Easter that the freedom promised by our Lord became mine in reality and so his words were literally fulfilled 'and you will know the truth and the truth will make you free'. I returned from a sermon on the Resurrection with a new joy and peace, finding that my heart was burning within me as it did with the disciples on the Emmaus road. I saw my God as the sovereign King of kings seated on his exalted throne. Also I

*continued on page 14*

# Can we become Calvinistic Pentecostals?

From *The Monthly Record of the Free Church of Scotland* by kind permission

At the recent Conference of the British Evangelical Council the Rev. Peter Lewis, a Reformed Baptist minister from Nottingham, urged that the time had come for a closer integration, at local level, between Reformed churches and Pentecostals.

It is true, of course, that a comprehensive church is a great New Testament ideal, if by that we mean that the only condition of membership of a church is faith in Christ. In accordance with this we would be perfectly happy to admit, simply as members, Baptists, Arminians, Dispensationalists and anyone else who loved the Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity, no matter how much they might differ from us on secondary matters. We would obviously extend the same privileges to Pentecostals.

But serious problems would arise if these Pentecostals, once admitted to the membership of Reformed churches, began to demand that we should stop our anti-Pentecostal polemics, should introduce their distinctive doctrines into our Confession, tolerate their practices (including tongue-speaking) in our worship and ordain people of their persuasion to the oversight of our congregations.

The central feature of Pentecostalism is not tongue-speaking but a view of Holy Spirit baptism which is at variance not with the details of strait-jacketed Calvinism but with the core of the New Testament.

For example, Pentecostalism teaches that baptism in the Spirit is quite distinct from conversion and normally subsequent to it. The most serious implication of this is that many Christians are deemed to lack this great experience. They have not received power to witness nor received the Father's promise nor been given the first instalment of their inheritance. They are sons without the Spirit of adoption, children whom God has not attested as his own. We find this abhorrent and dread the prospect of it being advocated in our congregations. It is tantamount to saying that to be in Christ is not enough — that faith does not save — and we react to it as violently as we do to the Catholic idea of Justification or Wesley's perfectionism. It is an insult to ordinary Christians and divisive in its very nature.

Pentecostals also hold that the usual attestation of baptism in the Holy Spirit is tongue-speaking. It is a gross over-simplification to suggest, as Mr. Lewis does, that the issue here is only whether we allow two particular chapters of 1 Corinthians to remain in our Canon. It is possible, on strictly biblical grounds, to show beyond fear of contradiction that tongue-speaking is not *the* attestation of baptism in the Holy Spirit. The 3,000 at Pentecost were baptised in the Spirit but there is no hint that they also spoke in tongue. Conversely, in 1 Corinthians 13:1, Paul envisages the possibility that a man be a most eminent tongue-speaker and yet lack the most elementary Christian grace.

Furthermore, if by tongue-speaking we mean what Paul describes in 1 Corinthians there is no evidence that even the apostles at Pentecost experienced it. To say the least, it is not self-evident that to 'speak in tongues' (1 Cor.) is the same as to 'speak in *other* tongues' (Acts); or that speech which required to be interpreted (1 Cor.) is the same as speech which could be readily understood by a cosmopolitan Jerusalem crowd (Acts).

Our suspicions grow when we realise that modern tongue-speaking is not confined to Christianity, let alone to Evangelicalism, but can be found in many non-Christian cultures; and that expert opinion is still completely divided over the question whether modern tongue-speaking has a language-like structure or consists only of a random sequence of sounds.

The truth is that we have very little idea what New Testament tongue-speaking was — a very strange situation if it was intended to serve to the end of time as *the* indicator of the presence of the promised Comforter.

We are equally unimpressed by the Pentecostal claim that baptism in the Spirit is the great need of the church today. This is like saying that the great need of a Christian is to be born again. The only churches for whose ill baptism in the Spirit can be prescribed as a remedy are apostate ones. Paul faced many problems in the churches under his care — error, factiousness, legalism, antinomianism, immorality, fanaticism and deadness. Yet not once did he suggest that what they needed was to be baptised in the Holy Spirit or to experience another Pentecost. They were already spiritual, already saints, already in possession of everything necessary for life and salvation. Paul concedes that there



# The basics of Marriage

*Principles from the prototype are here expounded by Bob Sheehan, pastor of Grace Baptist Church, Bexleyheath, Kent.*

On the sixth day of the existence of our universe God instituted marriage. The way he did this is of great importance to our understanding of the purposes for which marriage was ordained, and for the countering of the distortions that have arisen since those early Edenic days. All our information can be drawn from Genesis 1:26 – 2:25. What principles can we find in those verses?

At the outset we must remind ourselves that Genesis 2:4-25 is an expansion of the summary statements of Genesis 1:26-31. Chronologically speaking the order is Genesis 1:26, then Genesis 2:4-25 which is an expanded commentary on Genesis 1:27, then follows Genesis 1:28-31.

The narrative begins with the stated intention of the Triune God to create humans who reflect the Divine Image and who would rule the rest of creation (Gen. 1:26). In fulfilment of this determination God made man in two stages. He created the male human and then the female human (Gen. 2:7, 22). Our principles begin to be revealed.

## *1. The priority of man*

In creating the human race God began with a male. There was a distinct time gap between his creation and that of the female (Gen. 2:7, 22). While the Scriptures make it clear that the female is of the same 'make-up' as man i.e. she shares his human-ness and is God-like in her constitution as he is (Gen. 1:26-27) she was, nevertheless, created after him. This very time act on God's part gives the male

a position of headship.

As later Scriptures go on to develop the doctrine of marriage this basic fact of headship is never ignored. It cannot be changed because it is based upon an act of God in history. The foundation for the headship of the male in the home (Eph. 5:23) and the church (1 Cor. 11:3f.) is his creation before the female (1 Tim. 2:13).

## *2. God created man male*

The Scriptures are at pains, as our Lord observed (Matt. 19:4), to point out that God created man 'male and female' (Gen. 1:27). The significance of this is not merely that it refutes Jewish myths about Adam being created half male and half female and then being sawn in two(!) but lies, rather, in two other important areas.

Firstly, in creating Adam male there was the establishment of sexual difference. Physical sexuality is the creation of God. This was so from the beginning.

Secondly, masculinity is pointless and sterile without femininity. Male-ness has neither purpose nor meaning without its female counterpart. By creating a male in isolation God was demonstrating to man his inadequacy and incompleteness. Adam was perfect in all his parts (Gen. 1:31) but incomplete and isolated by himself.

God emphasised this to Adam by requiring him to name the animals

(Gen. 2:19). As he proceeded with this process of classification it became clear that there was nothing in all of God's creation that met his need for companionship and which could remove his lonely isolation (Gen. 2:20). God knew this, and intended to do something about it (Gen. 2:18) but Adam needed to feel his loneliness and incompleteness, even in a perfect world, before he would appreciate his complement — the female.

God prepared the way for the first marriage by giving the man sexuality and a sense of need for someone to share his life with him. Both were created by God, so that sexuality is not 'dirty' or carnal. So also a feeling of loneliness and incompleteness on the part of the unmarried is natural and not to be fought as a failure to be content with one's lot.

The fundamental reason for the institution of marriage by God was, then, to remove man's loneliness by the provision of a suitable and helpful partner.

Let those who are as yet unmarried, or who will not be married, note that the feelings of loneliness that they endure and the lack of fulfilment that sometimes they know are natural. It is hard to be unmarried. It needs God's special grace.

Let those who are married recognise their privileges, and have a special place in their hearts and prayers and sympathies for the unmarried rather than despising them or viewing them as oddities. To be unmarried is to have special problems to face. Therefore, extra sympathy is needed and meaningful friendships are of special importance.

### *3. Only woman is a fitting partner for man*

When Adam surveyed the animal creation that God had made there was no 'helper suitable for him' (Gen. 2:18). No pet can replace a partner. No animal is fitting as a sexual partner. God did not create animals for such abuse.

When God made man he made him male and female (Gen. 1:27). When God determined to end the male's isolation and incompleteness he did so with female company (Gen. 2:21f.). The male and the female are suited to each other, but a person of the same sex is not.

God established heterosexual partnerships among humans, nothing else.

### *4. God made the man one woman*

Although many men have regretted it since, and have sought to change the rules, God believed that Adam needed one woman to be his partner. He created him a wife not a harem! Polygamy is a development in marriage since the Fall but is not original to the Divine ordinance.

### *5. The first marriage was a voluntary relationship*

The narrative of Genesis 2 is beautiful in many ways, but not least in its description of all that led up to the first marriage. Adam sits with a lonely heart in a perfect world, feeling his incompleteness and longing for a partner but finding none. Put to sleep he awakes to find before his eyes the very partner that he needs.

The ecstasy with which Adam received Eve bursts from the page. This is no animal or bird or beast! This is the real thing! He recognised his kinship with her and expressed his similarity with her — she was of



the same sort, human — and his dissimilarity — she was different, a female — by the simple device of giving her a name like his yet different. She was not man but woman (Gen. 2:23), and he was delighted with her.

There is no sense of necessity in the first marriage. Rather there is the ecstatic joy of heart felt appreciation. They want each other. Their relationship is not a necessity or an imposition but a willing acceptance of each other. Necessity is ever a poor substitute for willingness.

#### *6. The first marriage was with Divine approval*

It was God who created them male and female, who filled Adam's heart with desire and who brought Eve to the man (Gen. 2:22). When a man and a woman know that their marriage is in accordance with the will of God as expressed in Scripture, and not in contravention of his laws, then they see each other as God's gift and have a spiritual reason for enjoying their relationship to the full.

The history of the world and the teaching of the word of God give ample evidence of the difficulties, problems and disasters that follow marriages contracted in defiance of God.

#### *7. God's definition of marriage*

While there are those who argue that Genesis 2:24 is Moses' comment I believe that our Lord makes it clear that it was God's statement at the beginning (Matt. 19:4-5). If this is so then as a response to the successful bringing together of Adam and Eve God laid down three basic outline principles of marriage for future generations in Genesis 2:24. They are:

(i) That marriage involves leaving the

control of one's parents (Gen. 2:24a). Parental interference bedevils many marriages, especially in the early stages. Unfortunately, mother-in-law jokes are popular with good reason!

Of course, children always have responsibilities to their parents, even after marriage, but in marriage a new unit is formed to which primary loyalty is owed. Running home to mother when problems arise solves nothing.

(ii) That marriage is a strong bond of union (Gen. 2:24b). The idea is of being glued together! By this the closeness of the love that is to be exhibited in the marriage bond is emphasised. The old word 'cleave' is a good one. Marriage is not a polite relationship at arm's length!

(iii) That marriage is a sexual relationship (Gen. 2:24c). Physical union is achieved through sexual intercourse, and God has ordained it so. The physical isolation of the man and woman, and their male and female distinctiveness only find fulfilment in sexual relations. The closeness of their marriage bond is physically expressed by Divine decree. Low views of sexual activity are not Biblical, nor is sexual activity outside of marriage.

It is important for us to note that sexual relations are a means of expressing oneness, unity and partnership in marriage. They are the means by which physical isolation is ended. This is the primary purpose of such relations, and there is nothing shameful in them (Gen. 2:25). Sexual activity is valid in marriage whether or not children are in view as sex is an act of marital fellowship not simply a means of reproduction. If

the only or main purpose of sex was to have children then sex should cease once the age for child bearing is past!

Having given his definition of marriage

*8. God blessed the married couple and commended child-bearing*

As God blessed marriage (Gen. 1:28) it can hardly be a carnal relationship in which the 'best' Christians don't engage, can it!? In blessing marriage reproduction received its first mention in relation to marriage. Adam and Eve were exhorted to 'be fruitful and increase in number; fill the earth and subdue it' (Gen 1:28). Now it is exceedingly doubtful that our first parents were being personally addressed and given a duty to fulfil by themselves! Rather, they were being addressed and the rest of humanity through them. God's will for man is that he should reproduce, fill the earth and subdue it. Adam and Eve were not personally responsible to have so many children that the earth was filled. Nor are we! The number of children each couple has will depend on a variety of factors. The doctrine of human responsibility is clear enough in Scripture. There is nothing wicked about only having two! Nor is it wrong to have twenty — although for most of us it would be foolish!

It is important for us to remember that this blessing preceded the Fall. Through the entry of death and decay into our world some couples are sadly childless. Such couples, and others with children, should remember that having children was not mentioned by God as the purpose of marriage. It is often the result of sexual union in marriage but it is not the purpose of that union or of marriage in its other aspects. Marriage was ordained for companionship. Child bearing is a bonus — and sadly, sometimes in this fallen world, a curse.

For a man to despise his wife, or vice versa, because no children are produced, or for the family couple to despise the childless couple, is a consequence of giving too much emphasis to child bearing in marriage and too little consequence to companionship. Christ loves a childless Bride for herself not because of what she can give him (Eph. 5:25f.). Marriage was ordained of God for the happiness and enjoyment of the human race. Whether we are referring to the cleaving or the sexual union, the companionship or the reproduction of children the Christian of all people should most enjoy this blessing. □ □ □

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*continued from page 9*

saw all the workings of providence around me as proceeding from that throne. Now my former agitation and fretfulness were banished.

Somehow I had thought that the great doctrines of our faith were for men only. Now I have enjoyed the exciting reality that an understanding and heart experience of the implications of sovereign grace is designed for all believers and not just special people like church officers or intellectuals. The biographies of the Puritans are now open to me as well because I understand the key to their lives and experience. The doctrines of grace also enable me to view Spurgeon's life and testimony in a clearer light that thrills my heart. Of course I am not claiming that now I never have an anxious moment but in a new way I feel that I can be confident in the work of God. The main point is to observe what he is doing for us rather than putting all the stress on our own human efforts. He draws us and calls us and then we follow after. He builds his church and we are co-workers. Sovereign grace guarantees that all the glory is given to him who reigns in every sphere. Ministers' wives are subject to tremendous pressures and it is just as important for them to be established in the sovereignty of God. I hope that my testimony may encourage them particularly. It is a joy to say that I no longer doubt the promise but rejoice in the truth that if the Son shall make you free, you shall be *free indeed!* □ □ □



*The exposition which follows was not originally written with publication in mind. It was prepared by Derek Bigg as one of a series of five studies for the Men's Training Class at Haywards Heath Evangelical Free Church. The general theme of the series was the relationship between the Old Testament and the New. The double thrust of the Abrahamic covenant is very clearly brought out. We thank Derek for this contribution which we commend highly.*

## Continuity and discontinuity

From the beginning, God's dealings with his people have been based on sovereign grace. At every stage of their history we see this divine grace revealed, and it can always be traced back directly or indirectly to the covenants made by God with Abraham and Moses. These two covenants are intimately related but they serve different purposes. Both lead ultimately to the new covenant sealed by Jesus' blood; but whereas the Abrahamic covenant illustrates the principle of continuity between the two Testaments, the Mosaic covenant demonstrates that of discontinuity. Our task will be to follow these two parallel lines of development, from their origins in Abraham to their culmination in Christ and his Church.

### THE LINE OF DISCONTINUITY

#### (a) *From Abraham to Moses*

Details of the covenant made with Abraham are given principally in four passages: Genesis 12:1-3 (cf. Acts 3:25), 13:14-17, 15:1-21, 17:1-21. It contains various promises, of which only two have a direct bearing on our study at this point. The first may be summarised in the words, 'all the land which you see I will give to you and to your descendants for ever' (Gen. 13:15). Of greater importance was the promise contained in Genesis 17:7. 'And I will establish my covenant between me and you and your descendants after you throughout their generations for an everlasting covenant, to be God to you and to your descendants after you.' Here, for the first time, is a specific statement concerning the unique relationship which was to exist between God and his people.

After the death of Abraham, the covenant was confirmed to both Isaac and Jacob (Gen. 26:1-5, 28:10-15, 35:9-12). And Joseph, on his deathbed, reminded his brothers of God's promise to their forefathers (Gen. 50:24-25). Then followed the years of slavery until at last God remembered his covenant and through Moses promised once again that he would give his people the land of Canaan (Ex. 2:24, 3:16-17; cf. Ps. 105:8-11).

However, the promised land was only an outward sign of God's favour. As such, it depended on an inward, spiritual relationship established by God through the sovereign act of deliverance from the Egyptian bondage. Hence the assurance that 'I will bring you into the land which I swore to give to

Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob' is preceded by the more fundamental promises that, 'I will redeem you with an outstretched arm . . . and I will take you for my people, and I will be your God' (Ex. 6:6-8).

*(b) God's requirements under the old covenant*

We have now reached what is virtually the point of transition from the Abrahamic to the Mosaic covenant. The promises are renewed; the people are redeemed. And now, as a further manifestation of divine grace, God makes known to them those laws and ordinances which are to govern their national life (Ex. 20-23). Having seen what God had done to the Egyptians, the people were to show their gratitude by obeying his voice and keeping his covenant (Ex. 19:1-6). So when the book of the covenant had been read in their hearing, they responded with the words, 'All that the Lord has spoken we will do, and we will be obedient' (Ex. 24:3-7). The Mosaic covenant was now in force, ratified by sacrificial blood (Ex. 24:8).

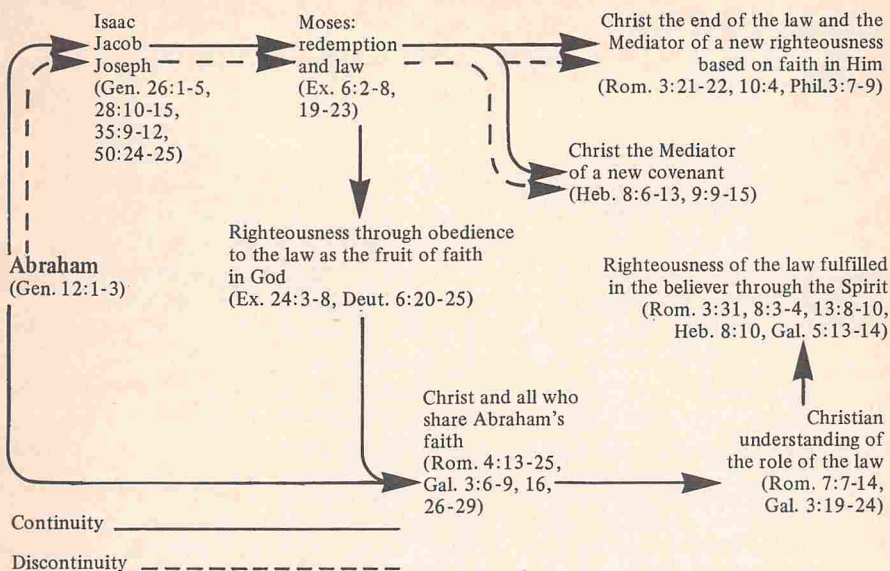
This further covenant grew naturally and logically out of the original covenant made with Abraham. In a sense it was simply a continuation of it, since it expressed in a more concrete form the nature of the relationship between God and his people which already existed. God had entered into a special relationship with Abraham; and Abraham for his part was to live a holy life, teaching his children to do the same (Gen. 17:1-2, 18:17-19). Implicit obedience was the basic requirement (Gen. 22:1-18). Later, through the promulgation of the Law, Abraham's descendants were given specific instructions as to what constituted a holy life in God's sight.

*(c) Obedience as a response to grace*

Obedience to the Law could not be viewed as a means of salvation, for the salvation of Israel had already been divinely accomplished at the beginning of their history. Obedience was essentially the fruit of faith in God and a heartfelt response to his grace. Every generation of Israelites had the opportunity to make such a response, since the annual passover feast would serve as a reminder of what God had done in the past for his people (Ex. 12:24-27). Furthermore, the divine commandments themselves — particularly their spiritual interpretation in Deuteronomy — would induce future generations to enquire as to their meaning, and this again would provide a natural point of departure for instruction concerning God's redeeming grace and the consequent duty of reverent obedience (Deut. 6:20-24). 'And it will be righteousness for us, if we are careful to do all this commandment before the Lord our God, as he has commanded us' (Deut. 6:25).

Faith in Christ was of course impossible in Old Testament times. But there was every possibility of faith in God, and under the Mosaic covenant such faith was expressed by obedience to the Law. Where faith was lacking, there could be outward conformity to the requirements of the ceremonial law without obedience to the more fundamental moral law (Amos 5:21-24,





The diagram above is intended to give, however inadequately, a bird's eye view of the whole continuity/discontinuity landscape. Ideally, it should be discussed and elucidated in a live teaching situation, but examine it for yourself with the aid of the Scripture references alone. It looks complicated but is basically very simple.

The line of discontinuity, representing national Israel and the Mosaic covenant, runs along the top and ends in a two-pronged cul-de-sac. Its starting-point is Genesis 12:1-2. The line of continuity, beginning in Genesis 12:3, is concerned with spiritual Israel and the covenant made with Abraham as father of the faithful.

To follow the line of continuity, you can choose between two alternative routes. The historical route, which should be regarded as running parallel to the line of discontinuity, takes you on a journey through the Old Testament with the true people of God. The theological route, along the bottom of the diagram, should more exactly be described as a journey in retrospect as we look back with Paul over the centuries and see a direct link between Abraham and New Testament Christianity.

The historical approach may be compared with the cumulative experience of a touring holiday; the theological approach is more akin to the subsequent viewing of snaps showing highlights of the same holiday. The first might be called a soul-stirring pilgrimage along the highway of Biblical Theology, the second a more contemplative survey of the whole scene from the high plateau of Systematic Theology.

If, after this brief explanation, you still find the diagram a complete mystery, try reading the article!

Is. 1:12-17). On the other hand, where faith was living and active, where there existed a constant sense of gratitude for God's grace, righteousness flourished as a natural consequence. This is particularly evident in the life of David and is implicit in many of his psalms.

(d) *The inadequacy of the law*

The spiritually minded saint of the Old Testament perceived that both the moral law and the ceremonial law suffered from fatal weaknesses. The moral law was seen to be weak in the sense that its promise of life (Lev. 18:5) could not be fulfilled owing to man's inner corruption and consequent inability to keep it. Hence the anguished cry of the prophet that 'all our righteous deeds are like a polluted garment' (Is. 64:6). The weakness of the ceremonial law lay in its essential nature as a ritual system which in and of itself had no spiritual power. For this reason the psalmist concluded that God would not be pleased with a mere burnt offering to atone for sin, since the sacrifice acceptable to God is 'a broken and contrite heart' (Ps. 51:16-17).

With his limited theological horizon the Old Testament believer could not appreciate the full significance of the Law's inadequacy. This only became clear when Christ came to fulfil the Law (Matt. 5:17). His perfect obedience made possible a higher righteousness than that of the most law-abiding person imaginable (Matt. 5:20, Rom. 5:19, Phil. 2:8). Such righteousness is not *achieved* by human endeavour but divinely *revealed* in the Gospel; it comes as a free gift to all who are united to Christ by faith (Rom. 1:17, 3:22, 5:17).

(e) *Law-righteousness and faith-righteousness*

What is the relationship between the law-righteousness of the Mosaic covenant and the faith-righteousness of the new covenant? It is one of complete discontinuity. Nobody knew this better than the apostle Paul. Although Paul could honestly claim that he had reached the peak of legalistic righteousness, he discovered that it was not a stepping-stone to that altogether different righteousness which is to be found in Christ (Phil. 3:6-9).

Nothing in fact can bridge the chasm between the outwardly impeccable morality of a self-righteous Pharisee and the righteousness acceptable to God of a self confessed sinner (Luke 18:9-14; cf. Matt. 19:16-22). One is based on pride, the other on humility. One is of human origin, the other of divine origin (Phil. 3:9; cf. Rom. 10:1-3). In the light of these profound differences, Paul is able to describe Christ as 'the end of the law' (Rom. 10:4). 'Christ has abolished the law, not by destroying, but by fulfilling it' (Hodge; cf. Eph. 2:15, Col. 2:14). Now that Christ has come, the Mosaic covenant has nothing more to say about the attainment of spiritual life (Gal. 3:11).

(f) *The old covenant abolished*

Such is Paul's conclusion regarding the moral law. The writer to the Hebrews



reaches essentially the same conclusion in relation to the ceremonial law: the message of discontinuity between the Old Testament and the New is spelt out in the clearest possible terms. We read that Jesus made the Mosaic covenant 'obsolete' and therefore 'ready to vanish away' (Heb. 8:13), for he himself inaugurated the new covenant and sealed it with his own blood (Heb. 12:24).

Hebrews teaches us that the ritual laws of the Mosaic covenant were imposed only 'until the time of reformation' (Heb. 9:9-10), when Christ came as God's eternal High Priest (Heb. 7:23-24). Israel had repeatedly broken the old covenant by her idolatry (Hosea 8:1-5, Jer. 22:8-9), but it was to be replaced by a better covenant, based on better promises, and mediated by Christ himself (Heb. 8:6). In this way God would fulfil the promises made centuries earlier through Jeremiah (Heb. 8:8-12).

The first covenant had been inadequate in that it could only deal with external cleansing (Heb. 9:9-10). In fact the ceremonies associated with the blood of animal sacrifices were merely 'a shadow of the good things to come' (Heb. 10:1-4). However, when Christ shed his own blood as a sacrifice for sins (Heb. 9:11-14), he became the 'substance' of this shadow (cf. Col. 2:16-17). The offering of his body once for all in obedience to the Father meant that he abolished the first covenant in order to establish the second (Heb. 10:5-10). Once again, discontinuity is the theme. The people of God under the new covenant no longer need the daily sacrifices of the Old Testament priesthood, for they rejoice in the single offering which has perfected for all time those who are sanctified (Heb. 10:11-14).

## THE LINE OF CONTINUITY

### (a) *Blessing promised to all nations*

We must now return to our original starting-point, the covenant made by God with Abraham. Here we find two promises representing the beginning of two separate, though related, lines of development in God's purposes. It is of crucial importance to distinguish between them. Failure to do so will inevitably lead to countless problems of interpretation elsewhere in Scripture.

'I will make of you a great nation' (Gen. 12:2) speaks of the chosen people under the old dispensation, whose life was to be regulated by the Mosaic law. But alongside this promise is another which tells Abraham that in him all the families of the earth will be blessed (Gen. 12:3). The same promise is repeated, in a slightly different form, after Abraham's supreme demonstration of obedience (Gen. 22:18): through his descendants blessing will come, not merely to one nation, but to all nations.

We can focus on this second promise in two different ways. With our telephoto lens we can follow the march of the saints through the pages of the Old Testament, concentrating particularly on the emergence of the righteous remnant. Alternatively, we can occupy the lofty heights of a New Testament vantage-point and take a close-up of the Old Testament evidence as seen

through the eyes of the Apostle Paul. For the purposes of this brief study we shall adopt the New Testament perspective and admire the contours of the Pauline picture in Galatians and Romans.

### *(b) The promise fulfilled in Christ and his Church*

According to Paul, the truth of fundamental importance is that the promises made to Abraham and to his offspring were fulfilled in Christ (Gal. 3:16). But although Christ himself is Abraham's offspring, this does not exhaust the scope of the promises; for Abraham's offspring also embraces those who have been baptised into Christ (Gal. 3:27-29). Thus Paul draws a direct line of continuity from Abraham to Christ and those who are spiritually united to him.

The basis of the connection between Abraham and his spiritual offspring is faith. Such is Paul's argument in Galatians 3:6-9, culminating in the words, 'So then, those who are men of faith are blessed with Abraham who had faith.' This is the spiritual link which joins together the people of God in both Testaments. Under the old covenant and under the new there are men of faith who are therefore sons of Abraham (Gal. 3:7). The only difference is to be seen in the historical context and in the consequent change in the believer's expression of faith. Faith in God under the old dispensation (Gal. 3:6) becomes faith in Christ under the new (Gal. 3:22, 26).

Paul develops a similar argument in Romans 4, taking from Genesis the same key text as the one already used in Galatians: 'Abraham believed God, and it was reckoned to him as righteousness' (Gal. 3:6, Rom. 4:3, 9, 22). The whole chapter is virtually an exposition of this text, leading up to the conclusion that Abraham's faith-righteousness is paralleled by the faith-righteousness of those who 'believe in him that raised from the dead Jesus our Lord. . . .' In short, Abraham is the spiritual father of all who share his faith, Jews and Gentiles alike (Rom. 4:16).

### *(c) The purpose of the law*

In showing this line of continuity from Abraham to Christ and his Church, Paul leaps over the intervening centuries without considering the long history of Israel. However, he is then compelled to look back and raise the important question, 'Why then the law?' (Gal. 3:19). If the man in Christ can trace his spiritual ancestry directly to Abraham, what was the purpose of the promulgation of the law?

For Paul, the erstwhile Pharisee, this was a burning issue. The law and the righteousness based on obedience to the law had been the foundation of his whole life. But now, viewing the matter from a Christian perspective, Paul realises what a shaky foundation it was. The law had promised life to those who kept it (Gal. 3:12), but Paul now sees that the object of the law was essentially to underline its own weakness as a life-giving power and to lead



men to a recognition of their sinful condition (Gal. 3:21-22). Thus the law 'was added because of transgressions' (Gal. 3:19). It was added to the promise of the Abrahamic covenant (Gal. 3:18) in order to awaken a sense of guilt and drive home the lesson that, by virtue of the high requirements of the law itself, 'no man is justified before God by the law' (Gal. 3:10-11).

#### *(d) God's righteousness revealed through Christ*

Paul reaches exactly the same conclusion in Romans and he does not hesitate to state explicitly the reason: 'through the law comes knowledge of sin' (Rom. 3:20). As a Pharisee, Paul had been blind to this. But now that his eyes have been opened by the Gospel of Jesus Christ, he can not only see clearly the righteousness of God 'manifested apart from law', but he can also perceive with true spiritual understanding that the law itself as well as the prophets had borne witness to it (Rom. 3:21-22), as illustrated by Abraham and Habakkuk (Rom. 4:1-25, 1:17). The way in which Paul uses these two examples shows how deeply the new truth had penetrated his heart and mind. Nor is it confined to the law and the prophets. David makes it plain that the same truth is to be found in the third section of the Hebrew Scriptures (Rom. 4:6-8).

The law, as Paul now appreciates, was a divine parenthesis between Abraham and Christ (cf. the verb in Rom. 5:20) — a custodian which kept men under restraint until Christ himself revealed in all its fulness that righteousness of God based on faith in him which the Old Testament saints had but dimly discerned (Gal. 3:23-26, Rom. 3:21-26; cf. 1 Pet. 1:10-12).

#### *(e) The sinner's experience under the law*

Paul's new understanding of the place of the law comes to the forefront again in the autobiographical passage contained in Romans 7:7-25. 'Law came in,' he has already said earlier, 'to increase the trespass' (Rom. 5:20). This enigma he now explains in some detail in the light of his own experience. The law came into Paul's life at a certain point, and the effect it produced was to stimulate the very desires on which the law itself pronounced judgment. When definite commandments took the place of a mere vague awareness of the moral law, Paul became increasingly a transgressor. Consequently the promise of life to the law-keeper turned into a sentence of death on the law-breaker.

The law itself was holy and spiritual, but Paul's inherent sinfulness prevented him from keeping it. Even though he delights in the law, he now recognises that it does not possess the capacity to deliver him from his own carnal appetites. Something greater is needed, something that will go to the root of the trouble and deal effectively with the 'sin which dwells within me'.

All this represented nothing less than a revolution for Paul. From being the touchstone of his own moral superiority, the law became the instrument for laying bare his moral bankruptcy. Nevertheless, this did not mean that the

law was to be thrown overboard. The law as such is good. What is lacking is the power to obey it. Such a power exists, and Paul's new status in Christ has told him its secret: the Holy Spirit. 'For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has set me free from the law of sin and death' (Rom. 8:2).

(f) *The law's ambiguity resolved in Christ*

The law possesses a certain ambiguity, arising from the ambiguity of human nature itself. It offers life, but on account of human weakness it only produces death. However, this ambiguity is resolved in Christ. 'For God has done what the law, weakened by the flesh, could not do: sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh and for sin, he condemned sin in the flesh, in order that the just requirement of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not according to the flesh but according to the Spirit' (Rom. 8:3-4).

Paradoxically, Christ both abrogates and fulfils the law. As a result, those who are 'in Christ' are at one and the same time freed from the law and obliged to keep it (Rom. 7:1-6, 8:3-4)! Thus a man's acceptance with God no longer depends on his obedience to the law; but, once accepted on the basis of his identification with Christ, he submits voluntarily to it as the divinely prescribed standard of conduct.

In this way Paul finally unites the two lines of thought which we have been following from their source in Abraham. In Christ, the seed of Abraham, both the continuity and the discontinuity of the divine purposes find a point of reconciliation. In him the law has been abolished, but in him it also maintains its validity.

Under the new covenant the law is no longer an external code, for it is written on the hearts of God's people (Heb. 8:10). It is now an inner principle whose motive power is the indwelling Spirit (Rom. 7:6, 8:7-13). Nevertheless, the law as such remains unchanged (Rom. 13:8-10, Gal. 5:13-14). To obey it is for us, as it was for Israel, to persevere in the grace of God (1 Cor. 10:1-12, Heb. 3:7 - 4:11). This is the true continuity of all God's people, a spiritual continuity which rests on divine grace and shows the reality of a living faith by constant obedience to his commandments.

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*continued from inside back cover*

penetrate Latin America, Africa and South East Asia with their ecumenical message. The recent conference at Melbourne in May of this year, organised by the Department of World Mission and Evangelism of the W.C.C. at which I was present as a journalist provided abundant evidence of this. Evangelical Christians in this country, the United States, Canada, Australia and New Zealand must not dismiss liberation theology as irrelevant to them, for it is becoming increasingly influential in those areas of the world in which they have a vital missionary interest and in which

evangelical churches are growing most rapidly.

The material in the article which follows was given originally as a paper delivered to a Baptist ministers' conference in South Africa. It has been subsequently presented in the United States, Canada and Australia.

This article does not pretend to be a complete survey of liberation theology nor a full answer to it, but it does attempt to consider what I regard as its salient features and to suggest reasons why the path of liberation theology is a most dangerous one for biblical Christians to tread. □ □ □



*This biography is by Mike Harris, formerly Baptist pastor at Soham, Cambridgeshire, but now pastoring the Baptist church in Ballymena, N. Ireland.*

## **The life of Cesar Malan**

*Robert Haldane and the revival at Geneva*

The Reformed church of Geneva as established by Calvin in the 16th century had sadly declined from orthodox Calvinism by the 19th century. Rationalism had overwhelmed the church until nearly all the pastors regarded Jesus Christ 'not as the unique Son of God but as a messenger from God'. But there were factors at work preparing the way for a revival of biblical truth.

Zinzendorf had founded a Moravian congregation in 1741, whose members belonged to the Reformed church but followed the Moravian methods. In 1810 these people experienced a particular burden of prayer in their meetings. There were also a few godly pastors who sought to lift up the banner of truth and stem the tide of liberalism.

At this time also there was a movement among some of the theological students for a spirituality that was missing in the dry lectures of their professors. They formed themselves into a group called 'Society of the Friends' and had some fellowship with the praying circle of the Moravians. These students had only a weak theological knowledge but they had the warmth and light of the true gospel. In 1813 two of them formed a Sunday school which in those days was considered a very radical step.

The Church Convocation viewed the students' group with grave suspicion. Some of the pastors attended the student meetings and were shocked by what they heard there: total depravity, the deity of Christ, free grace and justification by faith. A student by the name of Empeytaz was the leader. He was called to answer for his doctrine and he wisely replied in the words of Scripture. However, the convocation decided against him and gave him fourteen days to renounce 'the Moravians' or else forfeit his theological studies. Eventually, after a struggle, for the sake of peace, Empeytaz obeyed and continued his studies. However, he began to hold meetings in his own home and as a result it was decided that he would not be allowed to enter the ministry.

Empeytaz went away for two years but returned and published a book entitled *Considerations about the Divinity of Jesus Christ*. He stated that only two of the pastors in the city preached this doctrine. He urged the return of the Genevan church to its original Calvinism as the only hope for the future. The book created a tremendous sensation and caused a great stir among the theological students. They held a meeting in the great hall with Merle d'Aubigne as presiding officer. d'Aubigne protested against 'the odious aggression of this calumnious book'. Strangely enough, Empeytaz held his meetings on the very site which had seen Farel first preach the Gospel in 1534. Those who gathered were joined by an English businessman called

Richard Wilcox, a Calvinistic Methodist who encouraged the young Christians while he was there but he himself did not have an evangelistic ministry.

When he left they prayed for someone to be sent to help them. In the goodness of God, Robert Haldane was led there and was a means of leading sixty young men to Christ and a clear knowledge of the doctrines of grace in a remarkably short time. d'Aubigne, the student leader who until now opposed Empeytaz, was converted and said in later years, pointing to the apartments where Haldane had held the Bible studies, 'that was the birthplace of the second Reformation in Geneva'.

Where does Malan fit into this revival which came to Geneva in 1817? He was born in Geneva on the 7th July, 1787. His father was a follower of Rousseau, who had denied the sinfulness of human nature. However, his mother taught him the divinity of Jesus Christ and he said, 'I remember at the age of 16, I maintained this doctrine against some of my fellow-students in the college-room. Yet the belief in it was dead within me. During my four years of study not a syllable reached me from the lips of my teachers calculated to call it to life. Yet I thought myself and was thought by others to be very religious. My morals were unimpeachable and my life was regarded as devout.'

In 1809, after some brilliant examination passes, he was named as regent of the fifth class of the college and held this position for nine years. He emerged from this theological course ignorant of gospel truth and was ordained in October 1810 at the age of 23. For the first five or six years after his ordination Malan preached things which were diametrically opposed to the Bible, which to him was a sealed book. He picked up his Bible occasionally to read a chapter or two but found the style old-fashioned and he laid it aside. During this period Malan spent a summer with a Waldensian pastor and preached for him. After the sermon the pastor said to him, "It appears to me that you have not learned that to convert others, you must yourself be converted. Your sermon was not a Christian discourse and I sincerely hope that my people did not understand it."

### *Malan's conversion and early ministry*

It was not until 1813 that he started to examine the errors of rationalism. In 1814 he began to emerge from his darkness by realising the importance of the deity of Christ. He now came under the influence of a local evangelical pastor called Moulinie. He then became orthodox in his views but his soul had not yet been awakened.

Malan came into contact with Robert Haldane on 31st December, 1816. He had become very active in several philanthropic ventures, among them a refuge for fallen women. Having visited Haldane in his hotel rooms and been favourably impressed, it occurred to him that this wealthy Scotsman might be able to help his work which was badly in need of funds. Haldane kindly put some money into his hands as he left. As soon as the door was closed, he counted the money by the light of the nearest lamp on the staircase and



found that it amounted to the very sum (240 francs) which was required next day to pay the baker's bill! He regarded this as a remarkable evidence of Divine providence and from that night his visits to Haldane were repeated, his enquiries became more searching, and their conversations more earnest. He was finally led to find peace with God and attributed much of his conviction to these talks with Robert Haldane. In his own words, 'I know not how useful, how efficacious, under God's blessing, to my mind, to my soul, to my humbled heart, were the teaching and fatherly guidance of Mr. Haldane, whom, in the bonds of love, I honour as a father sent to me by God, and who, before he left Geneva, had seen, not only in myself but in numerous other instances, that the word of truth had been wonderfully blessed for the present and eternal happiness of many souls.'

His conversion came in 1817 and happened in this way: 'One afternoon while reading my New Testament in the school where my students were preparing their lessons, I turned to Ephesians chapter two and came to the words, *by grace are ye saved through faith and that not of yourselves it is the gift of God*. The passage seemed to shine before my eyes. I was so moved that I was compelled to leave the room and take a walk in the courtyard. I walked up and down with the intense delight saying, "I am saved, I am saved".'

It is interesting to hear from Malan the teaching methods used by Haldane: 'In general, he waited until I put a question to him. He often made me repeat the question, in order to assure himself that he had entirely understood me. He would ask me what I thought on the subject and I gave him my opinion. Then he would ask me to support it from Scripture. It was thus that he convinced me of ignorance or weakness. When he saw me perplexed by my lack of acquaintance with the Bible, he would begin to establish the truth in question by passages so clear, so explicit that it was impossible but that I should yield to the evidence. If one of these passages did not appear to me conclusive, or if I gave it a false interpretation, he would immediately produce four or five others which supported or explained the other and put the true sense beyond a doubt. In all this discussion he would only say a few words. His Bible was literally worn out from having been read and re-read, his finger rested upon the passage, and, while I read it, his piercing eye looked me through, as if he wished to discern the impression which the sword of the Spirit made upon my soul.'

As soon as Malan had discovered salvation by grace he began to preach it. In May 1817 he preached at the St. Gervais church in Geneva and once again the old Gospel of Calvin was sounded forth. In his sermon Malan plainly and forcefully showed the difference between vital godliness and mere formal religion. As he preached righteousness by faith, the congregation began to show distinct signs of dissatisfaction and impatience. As he began to earnestly appeal to sinners, derision broke out in parts of the church. When he left the pulpit he strode out of the building like a soldier being drummed out of the camp! His own parents deserted him and his wife was greatly upset, all her

cherished dreams of ambition having been shipwrecked. There was only one person who encouraged him for the stand he had taken. It was Haldane, who met him at the door of the church, shook his hand warmly and said, "Thank God, the Gospel has again been preached in Geneva. You will be a martyr for the truth in this place." His words were to prove true for he became not only a bold witness but also a suffering servant in the cause of the truth.

The next day, Professor Cheneviere of the Church Consistory and the theological college demanded that he change his doctrine because of the danger that would come from preaching that good works are not necessary to salvation. Malan refused and as a result the pulpits of the city churches and most of those in the villages were closed to him. The church authorities saw Malan and the evangelical students as a serious threat to their position. Although they had been posing as orthodox Reformed people they were really Socinian. Malan's preaching therefore was like a bombshell exploding in their camp. Under the pretence of acting in charity and peace they resolved to forbid all preaching and discussion on four topics which they particularly hated. 1. The deity of Christ. 2. Original sin. 3. The operation of grace or effectual calling, and 4. Predestination. They demanded that all preachers sign regulations which would prevent them preaching evangelical doctrines.

The leading students refused and prepared a confession of faith of their own, clothing it in the language of the old French Protestant confession of faith. The professors objected to such doctrine as antinomian and refused to ordain the young men. This was the reason for many of these godly students being driven into secession. Merle d'Aubigne left his native Geneva to finish his studies in Berlin. He eventually returned to Geneva via Brussels to unite with Gausson, the pastor of the village church of Satigny, just outside Geneva, who had exercised a powerful ministry there. Together they were able to establish a new Evangelical College.

Monday and Thursday were 'Haldane days' for the students and they themselves preached the word on the other weekdays. They expounded the Word of God with unction. The joy of the Holy Spirit more and more filled their hearts in proportion as the plan of redemption was unrolled before them. Haldane contented himself with expounding the doctrines of the Gospel. He deliberately avoided controversial issues and confined himself to the essentials. He left on 20th June, 1817 for the college at Montauban in the south of France with the same object which had brought him to Geneva.

After his departure from the city, the young and wealthy Henry Drummond came along and urged the students to secede. They had suffered financially because of their stand but Drummond was able to assist them. The authorities later accused them of becoming evangelicals for the sake of monetary gain! Drummond was at that time an evangelical in doctrine, emphasising the doctrine of the nature and blessings of the union between Christ and the believer. He was challenged by the authorities but stood firm in his defence of the deity of Christ and his opposition to the rationalistic version of the



French Bible of 1805. He was, therefore, requested to leave the city, but he went only a few miles away across the border to Ferney. He then declared his intention to publish, at his own expense, a new edition of the old Genevan version of the Bible, which was evangelical.

### *The Evangelical Church formed in Geneva*

The evangelical students now organised themselves into a church. Having been driven out of the national church, they decided on secession on 23rd August, 1817 and so formed the Evangelical church of Geneva. On 21st September Malan officiated when ten of them shared their first communion service at Drummond's house. As they were so few it reminded them forcibly of the first Protestant communion service held in Geneva in 1536 through the pioneer preaching of Michael Froment.

The congregation proceeded to the call of a pastor. Malan refused this work because he held that he had never left the national church of Geneva. He was faithful to the old doctrines of Geneva and of Calvin and claimed that he was a true representative of the old church. The new church called three men, Pyt, Gonthier and Mejanel as pastors but the authorities forced Mejanel to leave the city.

In July 1818 the new church opened a new and larger hall at the Bourg du Four in Geneva where they stayed until 1839. At the opening a mob gathered outside the building. Members of the congregation were chased through the streets, stoned and threatened with being thrown into the river Rhone. Felix Neff, later a well known believer, was one of the soldiers called out to control the crowds. He struck the wall with his sabre and threatened to run through the first person who spoke a word in favour of the evangelical people. Shortly afterwards he was converted.

In 1820 the little Moravian church joined the church of the Bourg du Four. During 1823/4 there was controversy over baptism but division was prevented through allowing believer's baptism but not as a public ordinance.

Ami Bost became pastor of the congregation in 1824 and soon published a defence of the evangelical position. He defined a church as a union of believers and a sect as a company of those who have abandoned the Gospel. He concluded that the national church was a sect and that the evangelicals were the true church. He was brought to court to answer charges of calumny and was liable to a heavy fine and six months in prison but he defended himself so brilliantly that he was acquitted. Malan supported his friend at the courtroom until they were safe from danger.

In 1835 Plymouth Brethrenism came to Geneva. J. N. Darby came himself in 1837 and was welcomed with open arms by the evangelicals but he did not reveal his own peculiar views until later and this resulted in a division in the Bourg du Four church in 1842. There had also been a dispute in 1836 over church government. One party favoured a presbyterian order of ruling elders,

the other wanted a congregational pattern with the pastors to be advisory only — the latter prevailed. The church membership had now grown to about 300.

*Malan establishes a local church — the Chapel of the Testimony*

As we have seen, Malan had been excluded from the pulpits of the national church because he refused to submit to the regulations which denied him the right to preach the doctrines of grace. He appealed, but the matter was shelved for a year. Then an evangelical friend in the national church urged him to submit to the regulations. As a result he was allowed to preach, but on both occasions his sermons caused controversy. He simply could not keep silent about the truths of the Gospel. He insisted on preaching the deity of Christ and justification by faith. So in August 1818 after just three months remission, he was again banned from the pulpits. In November he was deprived of his post as a teacher as well. This was because he had been teaching Calvin's catechism and the Genevan confession of faith. Another factor which led to his dismissal was his having started a Sunday school which had grown rapidly to 250. Undeterred Malan then established a Sunday School just over the border at a place called Ferney.

Malan always held that he was not a separatist because he had never of his own will left the church. He declared that they had separated from him. He represented the old church of Calvin, Francois Turretin and Pictet. For this reason he had not joined the new evangelical church because it represented a new movement. Another reason was that the church was not fully Calvinistic in doctrine.

In his dire economic straits he was assisted by some English Christians and some Scottish Presbyterian believers. He also began to support himself by writing and selling tracts and starting a boarding school. Till 1830 his home was full with about twenty English boarders who were trying to learn French. He continued preaching in his own home at Pre l'Eveque and as congregations increased asked the authorities for permission to erect a church building. This they refused, so he decided to build a chapel for himself in the grounds of his own home. He began in March 1820 with only a few pounds sent by an Irish Christian. On one occasion he did not have enough money to pay the architect but that day two letters arrived. Inside the letters was the exact amount required to pay the bill! The chapel was opened in October 1820. Unfortunately it was not in the city and thus not in a convenient location, but it nonetheless became a preaching centre for the evangelical people.

Malan soon came into conflict with the State Church again because he claimed the right to administer the sacraments and solemnise marriages. In September 1823 the church authorities finally deposed him from the office of the ministry. He applied to the Church of Scotland (a daughter church of the Genevan church) but he could not be accepted as a minister unless he had studied four years at a Scottish university. So he applied to the seceding Presbyterians and was accepted.



There were now two evangelical churches in Geneva as a result of the revival. It was not easy to keep relations between the two churches amicable. Malan insisted on a Calvinistic position and regarded the others as a mixed evangelical body. The Bourg du Four church resented this lack of trust. Sadly, all efforts at conciliation failed. In 1823/4 Malan accused Bost and Felix Neff of being Arminians. In my view, having examined the evidence of correspondence etc, Neff was Calvinistic in his doctrine and its presentation and had justly reacted against the somewhat rigorous stance of those who laid undue stress on the doctrine of predestination. Gradually the views of the Bourg du Four congregation infiltrated Malan's church and in 1830 one third of his congregation (about sixty people, among them some of his warmest friends) left and joined the other church. Malan had high views of the ministry and tended to keep the authority in his own hands. He opposed a move on the part of the congregation for a share of the authority. He asked for a vote of confidence in his position on this matter and this was resented. Before this incident the chapel had been well filled but gradually the congregations lessened year by year.

### *Evangelistic work*

The truth was that Malan was more of an evangelist than a pastor. He was an earnest, solemn and impressive preacher. His sermons were interesting full of gospel truth. His first evangelistic tour was in 1822; his second, in 1826, took him to England and Scotland, which he revisited in 1833, 1834, 1839 and 1843. He was received there with great enthusiasm as a sufferer for the evangelical faith. Shortly after his return to Geneva in 1826 he received a DD from Glasgow University. He made further preaching tours to Britain, France, Germany, Belgium, Holland and the Waldensian valleys up until 1856. On one of his visits he was used to point Charlotte Elliott to the Lord. She later became a well-known hymnwriter. On another occasion in England, as he was leaving the pulpit, an old man said to him, "I bless God that I have this day heard Romaine and Whitefield." Malan asked him for his name and discovered he was talking to Rowland Hill!

Malan never lost an opportunity to speak a word for Christ. He certainly knew how to introduce the Gospel. Once on a train a young Parisian asked him if he had seen the latest opera 'The Huguenots'. "No, I did not but I have their treasure here" (taking a New Testament from his pocket and giving it to the young man). "Ah! good enough for children — mere fables," said the young man. "How about your soul?" enquired Malan. "My soul? I haven't one. When you die, that's the end." He proceeded to expound his agnosticism. Malan could have answered this philosophically but instead he read some appropriate passages of Scripture. The young man became annoyed for they pricked his conscience. He remained sullen and angry for about half an hour before suddenly saying, "I would like to have a book like that for I'm beginning to think its contents are true and that I have been under a delusion." Malan gave him his own New Testament and met him afterwards at Bordeaux where he heard him preach.

On another day, Malan was travelling from Paris to Marseilles and sitting in the carriage with him were five young businessmen who were chatting about things in a lively way. Suddenly, Malan turned to them and said, "You seem to me like so many kites without a string." One of them replied, "Will you be so good as to prove that statement and tell us how we come to be without a string?" Malan explained that man is only vanity and unless he is held by the cord of the Holy Spirit, he is carried about by every wind of his passions.

On one occasion when travelling on a steamboat on Lake Geneva he first obtained the captain's permission, then climbed on to a pile of cables in the bows of the vessel and New Testament in hand invited the people to gather round and hear the Word of God. A crowd soon gathered and one man who had earlier shown some impatience grasped his hand and thanked him warmly, saying that he had understood the Gospel for the first time and by the grace of God would become a Christian.

One day when mountain-climbing with friends he stopped at a wayside inn intending to spend the night there. He said to the landlady that he planned to have prayers after supper and if she and her household cared to come they would be most welcome. She replied, "We don't need that sort of thing here." Malan replied, "I cannot pass a night under a roof where there is no fear of God or desire for prayer." He took his knapsack and walked on for another hour.

The next morning Malan and his friends were off at dawn. After walking for two hours they arrived at another inn. He noticed that one of the young women on the staff was very unhappy and on enquiring found that she had recently left her husband. He sought to bring spiritual comfort to her from the Gospel. She brought along a friend (Jeanette) and Malan spoke to them both. He then went to see Jeanette's father who was lying very ill nearby. "Father, I have brought you a minister of the gospel." "God be praised," the old man replied. Malan asked him how he had come to a knowledge of the Gospel. He said, "On this bed where I have lain these many years I read a book written by Mr. Malan of Geneva. If I had not been so old and ill I would have gone to see him. I have asked the Lord to let me see him before I die." "What is the name of the book?" asked Malan. "Here it is. It is always with me." He drew out from under his pillow a well-worn copy of one of the earliest editions of Malan's hymns. Malan said, "We have come from Geneva." "Perhaps," said the old man, "you have seen Malan." "Yes, I know him well," Malan answered. He prayed then sang some of his own hymns. He then went towards the door but returned and said to the old man, "God has granted your prayer. I am Malan of Geneva, your brother in the faith of our blessed Saviour." The old man said, "Bless me, bless me before I die." Malan fell on his knees at the bedside and said, "You ought to bless me for you are old enough to be my father. But all blessing comes from God, so let us ask it from him together." He folded the old man in his arms, prayed for the peace that Jesus gives and left the house.



### *Author and Hymnwriter*

Malan was also active in his written ministry and in 1827 founded a society for the distribution of Bibles, tracts and gospel literature. He renewed his efforts to form an evangelical school of theology in Geneva. From December 1827 he taught four students for over a year. He wrote a number of works to oppose the false Socinian doctrine of the national church. Thus, when Professor Cheneviere, in 1831, published his essay on the Trinity in which he recognised Jesus as a divine being but attacked the Athanasian doctrine as contrary to reason and Scripture, Malan replied in a work entitled, 'Jesus Christ, the eternal God manifest in the flesh', which quickly went through two editions and created a sensation in the city.

Malan was one of the greatest of French speaking hymnwriters. Since the Reformation the Huguenots had always sung the Psalms, which had become very dear to them in their long history of persecution. Malan's hymns became very popular and by 1821 he had published 35. By 1855 this had increased to 300. Once, when his doctor advised a period of rest at home, he composed no less than 53 hymns in 17 days! He wrote 1000 hymns in all, some of which have been translated into English. He also composed the tunes for his hymns, some of which, such as Hendon and Rosefield, are used on this side of the Channel. When visiting Geneva I was delighted to find Malan's own small pipe organ still being used in the Evangelical Free church.

### *Final years*

One day, in 1862, Malan's servant was amazed when a carriage stopped at the garden gate in Vandoeuvres where he lived and a lady of the nobility emerged together with her attendants. The maid ran to Malan's room to announce their arrival. Going downstairs Malan found himself in the presence of the Queen of Holland, who had spared a few hours to pay him a visit while passing through Geneva. He was asked afterwards if he had been careful to address her in the prescribed way. He replied, "I knew nothing about that; all I know is that I addressed her as a minister of God. I only had time to think of eternal things. The one important consideration is the gospel and the Saviour. We spoke of the salvation of the soul and of the vast eternity to which we are hastening."

His health was now failing rapidly and in November 1863 he preached his last sermon. The last two months of his life were spent in agony but he bore the pain with great patience. One of his sons asked him if he had any anxiety of soul. He replied, "No, in my heaven there are no clouds." He died on Sunday, 18th May, 1864. That morning his eldest daughter said to him, "Father, this is the day when the Lord Jesus will come to receive you to himself." A beautiful smile lit up his face and he fell asleep in Jesus. His doctor who attended him in the closing hours said, "I have just seen what I have heard spoken of but which I had never seen before. Now I have seen it as surely as I hold this stick in my hand." "What have you seen?" he was

asked. "I have seen faith, I say, the faith not of a theologian but of a Christian. I have seen it with my own eyes."

Perhaps of all the characteristics of this remarkable man, the most impressive was his supreme faith in the Word of God. He always said, "The Bible is the very Word of God." He believed strongly in predestination and viewed it rightly as a greatly comforting doctrine. He held firmly to the Westminster Confession of faith.

It was sad that in more tolerant days during his latter years, when evangelicals were in a more favoured position in Geneva, this old man was comparatively neglected and forgotten, although he had been the one man who had stood faithful and loyal to the truth of the Gospel and had borne the reproach of Christ outside the camp. He was however invited to attend the international meetings of the Evangelical Alliance in Geneva in the early 1860's and Spurgeon refers to having met the snowy-haired old warrior.

His full biography is available from the Evangelical Library in London. I have been deeply moved in studying the life of this outstanding Christian. May God raise up men of burning heart today like Malan who was an excellent theologian and evangelist together. We urgently need to be concerned in prayer for Switzerland and the French-speaking world, that they with us, might see a recovery of the grand doctrines of the Reformation together with the attendant power of the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven. ☐ ☐ ☐

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*continued from page 10*

may be Christians who live *like* carnal men (1 Cor. 3:1-4). But there cannot be Christians who *are* carnal men.

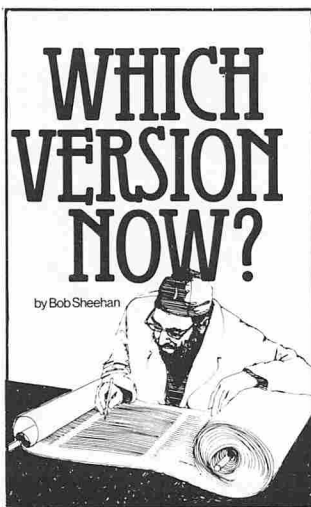
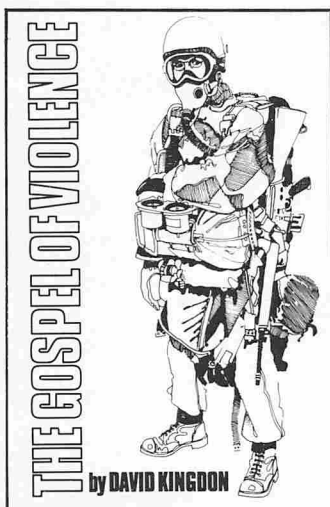
Mr. Lewis posits a strict dichotomy between the Reformed and Pentecostal traditions. The former stands for doctrinal soundness and expository preaching, the latter for spiritual gifts and spiritual experience. But there is absolutely nothing in the Reformed tradition to prevent Calvinists recognising in the fullest possible way that the church is a charismatic, gift-dependent, community. The qualifications for office are not natural aptitudes or educational attainments or worldly experience but spiritual endowments given and maintained by God; ministry is not the prerogative of an elite but an obligation laid on all; we depend for all our effectiveness on the blessing of the Spirit of God. No doubt we have sometimes forgotten these things, but we do not need to become Pentecostals to reinstate them.

Nor do we need to become Pentecostals to give proper emphasis to spiritual experience. In actual fact, the volume of practical religious literature which has flowed out of the charismatic movement is only a trickle compared to the flood which has come from the Calvinistic fountain-head. What were the Puritans – Sibbes, Howe, Manton, Brooks and Owen – but experimental theologians?

We are used enough to tirades against Calvinistic aridity. But to get them, even in small bulk, from intelligent Calvinists such as Mr. Lewis is too much.

It is not clear whether Mr. Lewis speaks for himself or for one of the empires whose existence he deprecates. In either case, a speech which was probably intended as a statesman-like plea for a broader evangelical unity will probably have as its only effect further divisions within the Reformed community itself. His programme would certainly alienate us. Pentecostalism cannot simply become Calvinism plus tongue-speaking. It has a radically different order of priorities and a totally divergent view of the work of Christ, of conversion, of faith and of holiness. We fear it as we do Romanism or Dispensationalism and not even the charming, impulsive volubility of Mr. Lewis can placate us. In short, he must choose between us and the charismatics. ☐ ☐ ☐





**The Gospel of Violence by David Kingdon 16pp. 50p**  
**Which Version Now? by Bob Sheehan 32pp. 80p**

Published by Carey Publications these two attractively produced booklets are now available. *Which Version Now?* is based on the three articles which expounded the principles of Bible translation which appeared in *Reformation Today*. The description on the back cover reads as follows:

When the history of the twentieth century Church is written attention will have to be given in some detail to the work of Bible translation. Not only have many peoples received the Scriptures in their own languages for the first time, but the English-speaking world has been flooded with over one hundred versions. Usually, it is noticed that these versions agree in departing from the text on which earlier versions were based. Some hail this as progress towards a purer text, while others condemn it as a further example of apostasy and infidelity. What one side sees as insignificant changes, the other side terms important corruptions. In addition to this controversy over the true text there are debates concerning the principles which should govern the translation of God's Word. Should the words of the original text be taken one by one and an exact English equivalent be found? Is the meaning more important than the words themselves? How much is the translator to view his work in terms of interpretation? Can translations be theologically neutral? When the text and principles have been determined what have the main versions done with them? This booklet seeks to

guide the Christian through these issues and bring him to some conclusions in days of confusion.

#### **Liberation theology**

Published by Carey Publications *Liberation theology* is a subject of major importance in many nations of the world. If you have contacts in Third world countries please share it with those who are affected. It will be sent to leaders of influence and we hope it will be translated into Spanish and Portuguese. Commenting for this column David Kingdon says:

'Liberation theology' as a term may possibly provoke a groan from some of our readers, satiated as they have been in recent years by a whole host of 'new' theologies — of the secular, the laity, marriage, etc. But liberation theology requires our urgent attention for several reasons.

In the first place it represents a serious attempt to grapple with what the Bible has to say to the poor and oppressed of our world whose numbers are growing continually. Secondly it is being increasingly embraced by socially concerned evangelical Christians both in the Third World, where, generally speaking, evangelical Christianity is growing much more rapidly than in the West and also in this country and the United States. Thirdly, liberation theology is undoubtedly being seen by the leaders of the World Council of Churches as the most effective way to

*continued on page 22*

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