

REFORMATION TODAY'83



1 EDITORIAL

2 CAREY RECORDING STUDIOS

3 WHAT KIND OF MINISTRY ARE YOU LOOKING FOR? *John Benton*

7 THE BONDAGE OF THE WILL AND CALLING FOR DECISIONS *Editor*

13 THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE CONCEPT OF BAPTISM *Frederic Buhler*

15 THE WHITEFIELD FRATERNAL

16 THE INTERNATIONAL BAPTIST CONFERENCE *Editor*

21 DO WE UNDERSTAND THE NATURE OF THE AUTHORITY OF
SCRIPTURE? *Bill Downing*

27 THE COUNTESS OF HUNTINGDON *Francis Coxon*

32 SERVICE IN PAPUA NEW GUINEA *inside covers*



A group of Bible teachers from some of the churches established under Cliff Hellar's ministry over a period of 18 years. These men are well taught and proclaim the Gospel faithfully. The New Testament in their own language is due to be printed soon (see page 32).



A common problem when it is wet! The tyre on the front of the vehicle formed a suitable platform for the open air address referred to (see page 32).

Editorial

From the hands of the Jews Paul received scourgings on five occasions, and from the Romans three beatings (2 Cor. 11:23-27). Only one of these living deaths is recorded in Acts (16:23). Paul's sufferings included one experience of a day and a night in the sea, probably clinging to a piece of wreckage. The catalogue of exposures to death is recited within an extended treatise of self-defence. In no way is Paul's defence self-righteous or peevish. The Corinthians were in the process of being bamboozled by false apostles. It was imperative therefore that the apostle's ministry be vindicated. His appeal was to true spirituality borne out under adverse circumstances. The headings and substance of John Benton's article draws attention to the essential inward fabric and spiritual make-up of the minister of God.

Pastor Nicolai Petrovich Khrapov, well known Baptist leader exemplified this spirituality under the appalling trial of spending 29 of his 67 years in prison. *The happiness of a lost life* is the title of a book he wrote which describes the triumphant sufferings of several generations of believers. A lost life? It would seem so! What could be more futile than the lifelessness of being shut away from spheres of usefulness? Yet in this extended trial it is said of him that he was the model of patience and thankfulness, an inspiring testimony! He died of a heart attack this year. Pastor Khrapov was chairman of about 2000 unregistered Baptist congregations which follow the saying of Jesus to 'render to Caesar the things that are Caesar's', — but in church life accept only the government of Christ, not the clammy hand of atheistic state interference which aims at maximum stifling of spiritual life. In the meantime many other believers continue to be imprisoned or persecuted with fines they are not able to pay. Some in Eastern European countries such as Yugoslavia are under severe pressures. If you wish to assist we are able to direct funds along

reliable channels.

Conferences

In most cases conference times are spiritual banquets when we receive the best that ministers have researched on relevant subjects. Highly commended is Bill Downing's timely exposition on the source and nature of the authority of Scripture.

The annual Westminster Conference held for two days every December is particularly valuable to those who are concerned to build up a well-grounded knowledge of the history of the Church from which valuable practical lessons can be drawn. The gathering just completed was lively and profitable. One paper presented data to suggest that 1800-1835 was a time of powerful and extensive revival in Britain. This period has been sadly neglected. In our last editorial we referred to the present-day revival in Quebec, Canada. All revivals, past and present, stimulate and renew our faith, our efforts, and our prayers.

Counts and Countesses

The charisma of generous and timely giving is mentioned in Romans 12:8. Enormous good was achieved by the Countess of Huntingdon. To get the right help to the truly needy the opportune moment takes acute discernment and a faith which acts decisively.

Subscriptions

We do not have a Countess of Huntingdon to support this work which is a good thing because we all need to pull together corporately and be made to work hard. Our accountant, Bob Campen, is sounding the trumpet of economic reality. He asks you to look at the situation now, and whether you have a Countess to help you or not, to subscribe now for as long as you can, because next time the subscriptions all have to go up so that we can make ends meet. Readers are thanked warmly for their support.

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John Benton is the pastor of the Chertsey Street Baptist Church, Guildford, Surrey. Here he examines the nature of the ministry of the New Covenant. It will help readers if they have their Bibles open and consult the references as they read. This is a telling article. It corrects wrong motives. The author concludes with searching questions.

What kind of ministry are you looking for?

Paul's second letter to the Corinthians is occasioned by a situation which has some similarity to the background of the Galatian epistle. Spurious teachers had infiltrated the church and were seeking to undermine the work which had previously been done in that place by Paul. These false teachers, 'super-apostles', preached 'another Jesus' and were of 'a different spirit' to that which the apostle recognised (11:4). The difference between the two situations seems to be that whereas in Galatia the attack upon Paul was overtly doctrinal, the trouble in Corinth is spearheaded by an attack on Paul's personal character as a minister of Christ and his apostleship. Incited no doubt by the false apostles, a minority in the Corinthian church were alleging that Paul was not to be trusted.

The apostle frames his reply to the attack on his ministry in the context of himself as a minister (diakonos) of the new covenant (3:6). Thus particularly in chapter 3 of the epistle he describes the essential nature of the new covenant with the intention of demonstrating that his own conduct in the ministry is none other than completely congruent with the character of the new covenant itself. He does this by contrasting the old covenant with the new.

John Murray sums up the apostle's description of the most significant features of the new covenant (3:16-18) 'it ministers the Spirit as the spirit of life; it is the ministration of righteousness and of liberty, and, above all, of the transfiguration by which we are conformed to the

image of the Lord Himself. These are the highest blessings, culminating in what is the crown and goal of redemptive accomplishment'.¹ To be like the Lord Jesus Christ is the pinnacle of salvation. That is to be a son of God indeed!

Ministry as a Display of the Life of Jesus

This matter of being transformed into the likeness of Christ is the pivotal point of Paul's rebuke to the accusations concerning his ministry. The false teachers in Corinth were those who made much of outward appearance (5:12); they gloried after the flesh (11:18); and made much of eloquence and rhetoric in speaking (11:6); and made out that such outward dramatic splendour was the only suitable demeanour for a minister of the glorious God. But the essence of Paul's rejoinder is that these people have failed to understand the nature of God's glory which is seen in the face of Jesus Christ (4:6). Rather, he explains, it is his ministry, which is an imitation or duplication of the life, death and resurrection of the Lord Jesus, which bears the real stamp of divine activity and glory. Their question was, 'Is Christ really speaking in Paul?' (13:3). 'The fact that my ministry' says Paul, 'so closely reflects the life of Christ is the proof that he is speaking through me and not these false apostles.'

Thus throughout the epistle we can trace references to the close connection between Paul's own ministry and his Master. It is because Paul's ministry encapsulates the great landmarks of the Christ-event that he can speak of God 'who . . . through us spreads everywhere the

fragrance of the knowledge of him. For we are to God the aroma of Christ' (2:14, 15). In particular Paul uses this identification with Christ as his cutting, penetrating apologetic against those who pointed to his apparent weakness and the troubles which attended his ministry as a sign of divine disfavour. Rather than being a sign of disfavour as Paul comes through them, they are a sign of God's approval. 'For to be sure, he was crucified in weakness, yet he lives by God's power. Likewise we are weak in him, yet by God's power we will live with him to serve you' (13:4). Thus when the 'super-apostles' make much of their power and outward appearances Paul boasts of his sufferings (11:21-33).

In chapter 4, Paul makes the analogy between Christ's ministry and his own absolutely explicit. Just as Christ died, so Paul dies daily (1 Cor. 15:31), that is in the suffering and opposition he meets. Just as Christ was raised to new life, so also Paul also experiences new life. Through him 'dying' there is life in the churches (4:12, 15). The opposition and trouble which Paul has met in his ministry should mean by all human calculation that he and his ministry should have been dead and finished long ago. But nevertheless his work goes on, he perseveres, and the gospel progresses and thus it is apparent that the power of God is at work (4:7, 15). 'We always carry around in our body the death of Jesus, so that the life of Jesus may also be revealed in our body' (4:10). For his ministry Paul relies on 'God who raises the dead' (1:9). And so this matter of being 'in Christ' which we have reduced so often to being a purely forensic thing (that is a legal matter of identification with Christ) is seen to have a far greater scope. Paul sees his total ministry, including his own weakness, as being 'in him' in the experimental and practical senses (13:4).

This solemn identification with Christ, the fellowship of Christ's sufferings, is the Pauline equivalent of Christ's description of both himself and his disciple as the grain of wheat which falls into the ground to die

and so bring forth much fruit (John 12:24-26). Along similar lines, in discussing his ministry with the Colossians, Paul speaks of filling up 'in my flesh what is still lacking in regard to Christ's afflictions, for the sake of his body, which is the church' (Colossians 1:24). The badge of Paul's ministry is that he truly takes up and carries the cross. Thus we see that the essence of Paul's argument is that in this matter of the conduct of his ministry as a display of the life of Jesus, his ministry is congruent with the very foundations of the new covenant. Any ministry which out of policy shies away from hard situations is false ministry.

Ministry With Unveiled Face

The basic ministry of Paul was one of preaching. The new covenant is not ministered primarily by miracles or wonders but by preaching, speaking forth the truth of God openly (2:12, 17; 4:13; 13:3). When miracles are spoken of they are in the context of corroborative evidence of his apostleship, they are not the main task of his apostleship (12:12).

It is a continuing theme throughout the epistle that this ministry of the new covenant is to be marked by plain communication and clarity. This is in contrast to the ministry of the false teachers whose 'knowledge' and 'truth' were of an esoteric Gnostic variety, that is for the initiated only. By contrast Paul can address the Corinthians by saying 'For we do not write you anything you cannot read or understand' (1:13). Although he is accused of duplicity he can say 'Rather we have renounced secret and shameful ways; we do not use deception, nor do we distort the word of God. On the contrary by setting forth the truth plainly we commend ourselves to every man's conscience in the sight of God' (4:2). Paul does not preach to force people into a half-understood decision, or to create an effect, he preaches to communicate the truth of Christ to his hearers minds as simply and accurately and clearly as possible. The knowledge of Christ is diffused freely, like a fragrant smell, in every place to all who will listen.

Again in chapter 3 it is Paul's argument that only such a plain declaration of the message is congruent with the nature of the new covenant itself.

In performing his function of ministering the old covenant Moses found it necessary to wear a veil over his face. This was because when 'all the children of Israel saw Moses, his face was radiant, and they were afraid to come near him' (Exod. 34:30). The fear of the people was a reflection of their unworthy condition of heart. They were not fit and not free to approach the glory of God and because of their heart condition the old covenant ministered only death and condemnation (3:7, 9). Paul's argument is that because the new covenant ministers directly the things which make a person fit for God's presence the veil is taken away. The new covenant is the ministration of the Spirit by which we are transformed into the likeness of the Lord, we are made glorious, so that there is no longer any need for a veil' (3:18).

It is the new covenant's ability to transform us, and thus remove that which made the people afraid of the glory of Moses' face, which brings about liberty and openness (3:17). This is how Philip Hughes sees the contrast between the spirit and the letter, signifying the ministry of the new and old covenants respectively. 'The distinction here, then, between the letter and the spirit indicates the difference between the law as externally written at Sinai on tablets of stone and the same law written internally in the heart of the Christian believer'² (3:3).

Because the new covenant brings such liberty and openness it is only fitting that it should be ministered in all openness, sincerity and plainness. The great burden of Paul's new covenant ministry was simply to make the truth of God clear, whereas the burden of the false teachers was to create an impression, to cause a stir, to manufacture a 'language event', even if it meant leaving the truth obscured.

This openness of speech is seen in the way Paul writes the letter itself, and it

becomes very obvious that his frankness goes hand in hand with a burning love in his heart for his beloved Corinthians. 'We have spoken freely to you, Corinthians, and opened wide our hearts to you. We are not withholding our affection from you, but you are withholding yours from us. As a fair exchange — I speak as to my children — open wide your hearts also' (6: 11-13).

It is Satan who deals in darkness, obscurity, and misunderstanding (2:5-11; 4:4; 10:5, 6) not Paul.

Ministry Free From Self-interest

The Christian ministry is a ministry in which by definition self must be abased and the Lord, and him alone exalted. We can locate two intertwined roots which make the production of the flower of self-denial essential.

Firstly, Paul writes 'For we do not preach ourselves, but Jesus Christ as Lord, and ourselves your servants for Jesus sake' (4:5). In the next verse Paul goes on to explain why such a pattern of ministry is the only one appropriate to the new covenant. 'For God, who said, "Let light shine out of darkness", made his light shine in our hearts . . .' (4:6). Unbelievers are helplessly blinded by Satan, and here he shows that it is only the sovereign activity of God, as sovereign an act as creation *ex nihilo*, which saves the sinner. The reason why there is no place in a genuine evangelical ministry for self-esteem and self-publicity is that the believer's experience of salvation is all of God, and nothing of self. A ministry free of self-interest is the only way in which congruency between the ministry and the activity of the new covenant can be maintained. Paul is therefore at pains to acknowledge that his very appointment to the ministry was of God alone (1:1; 5:18). The ministry is not something which he earned, it is through the mercy of God that he has this ministry (4:1). Any success or ability which he has in the ministry he does not attribute to himself. 'He has made us competent as ministers of the new covenant' (3:5, 6). Inevitably therefore

Paul's activity is ever with an eye looking for approval from God alone. 'So we make it our goal to please him, whether we are at home in the body or away from it' (5:9).

Secondly the ministry Paul has been given is the ministry of reconciliation (5:19). 'God was reconciling the world to himself in Christ,' but now there is a real sense in which that same ministry has been passed on to Paul so that Paul stands in the place of Christ imploring people to be reconciled to God. How is it that Paul is able to keep his eye upon God, and upon God's work, which is the Corinthian church, and not upon himself? The reason is that Paul is constrained by the love of Christ as set forth in his selfless, reconciling death on behalf of 'all' (5:14). Philip Hughes writes 'The objectivity and therefore disinterestedness of Paul's outlook is nowhere better seen than in this passage. . . . His conduct, however it be judged, is dictated by the love of Christ. . . . It is this love (*agapé*) and none other, that shuts him in, confines him as between two walls, to one purpose which may be summed up . . . as being to live selflessly "unto God" and within the framework of that supreme allegiance, to his fellow men "unto you".' As he contemplates the substitutionary work of Christ he concludes 'he died for all, that those who live should no longer live for themselves but for him who died for them and was raised again' (5:15).

This freedom from self-interest and even a deep repugnance to it, displays itself in a sustained humility of character in Paul. As he 'foolishly' refers to his own great spiritual experiences he is very careful to deter them from thinking any more of him than is warranted (12:6). This is in utter contrast to the 'super-apostles' who, it is implied, are quite ready even to take the credit of another man's work (10:12-18).

In particular Paul's own freedom from self-interest is seen in the way he handled the financing of his ministry and those connected with him. He lays aside even his legitimate claims to be supported. In implicit contrast to the false teachers Paul

is able to say that he is 'unlike so many who peddle the word of God for profit' (2:17). He can say that he has 'exploited no-one' (7:2). He depended on the gifts of other churches rather than being a burden to them (11:8, 9). His whole outlook and intention is summed up in his passionate cry 'I will not be a burden to you, because what I want is not your possessions, but you!' (12:14). Rather than them giving their substance for him, he will exhaust himself for them. There is no other way to minister the gospel of him who was willing to be sin for us so that in him we might become the righteousness of God. 'So I will very gladly spend for you everything I have and expend myself as well' (12:15).

In conclusion some questions can be asked. How are we to recognise the new-covenant ministry? What is a preacher to aim to be? What kind of ministry do you look for? How are we to assess new stars which burst upon the evangelical scene? What criteria are to be used by a church in looking for a pastor? Paul does not encourage us to go simply by charisma, whether of the theological, intellectual or personality kind. Paul holds up before us the minister of the new covenant who does all in his power to make the truth of Jesus unmistakable in his preaching; who will not only preach Jesus but will live so as to reflect the death and resurrection of Jesus in his selflessness, courage and perseverance.

¹ John Murray, Article on 'Covenant' in *New Bible Dictionary*, IVP.

² Philip Hughes, Commentary on 2 Corinthians, Eerdmans.

Over the last two decades the influence of expository preachers throughout the United Kingdom has been such that well advertised evangelists, who use the decisionist method from ecumenical platforms, have rarely gained the support of all evangelical churches in different regions. The dilemma facing the pastors is that they wish to support evangelism, but not on unbiblical terms. If they decline to cooperate they can easily be caricatured as non-evangelistic or hyper-orthodox. There are currently increasing pressures for men to compromise their convictions. Their beliefs are Bible-based and become clear in the course of systematic preaching.

This exposition is an example. It deals specifically with the method of calling for decisions. The subject of cooperation with those who deny basic Bible truth is only briefly touched upon at the conclusion. That matter would be fully handled in expounding passages such as Galatians 1, Matthew 23, Jude, or 2 John.

The bondage of the will and calling for decisions

The man without the Spirit does not accept the things that come from the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him and he cannot understand them, because they are spiritually discerned (1 Cor. 2:14).

There are only two classes of people: natural and spiritual. Whatever other distinctions there may be, male or female, young or old, rich or poor, black or white, Jew or Gentile, slave or free — all these are irrelevant. Take your own position: are you a spiritual person or a natural person? That is what counts for time and eternity. Either you have the Holy Spirit who has made you spiritual, or you are still a natural thinker, unable to understand spiritual matters. Irrespective of who you are, or what your position in life is, you are either spiritual or natural. Which are you? You may despise an ignorant jungle man but if through a missionary he has embraced the Gospel and has been enlightened then he is spiritual and you are natural. You err to despise him. Let us be very clear about the difference between these two contrasting states:

The spiritual man

Embraces the Gospel

Delights in Gospel truth

Is able to make progress in grasping and appreciating Biblical truths because:

(a) he has been given the Holy Spirit (v 12)

(b) he has been given the mind of Christ (v 16)

(c) he has been given the spiritual equipment by which he can understand

The natural man

Does not accept the Gospel

Regards Gospel truth as foolishness

Is not able to understand the truths of God because they are spiritual

God's creation and redemptive purposes
(d) depending on his growth and maturity
he is given the capacity to advance in
understanding deep truths

You will see that the title of our exposition is, 'the bondage of the will'. The reason for this is that 1 Corinthians 2:14 and Romans 8:7, 8 ('The sinful mind is hostile to God. It does not submit to God's law, nor can it do so.'), are the two most frequently quoted texts to prove the inability of the natural man to do anything spiritual. There are of course other texts such as the words of Jesus, 'No one can come to me unless the Father who sent me draws him' (Jn. 6:44), but the two quoted are probably the clearest assertions of man's bondage.

As we look at 1 Corinthians 2:14 we must ask the important questions: Is it because the natural man finds spiritual things distasteful that he will not come? Is that what enslaves him and keeps him locked up in a natural world without God? Or is his bondage due to the fact that he cannot understand spiritual things? Both are true. The natural man rejects the truth because he is opposed to it. Also he is unable to understand spiritual truths, the reason being that he has lost his spiritual nature and become spiritually dead in his sinful way of life. The bondage of man's will lies in his hostility to the embodiment of the truth that would save him. We must be clear that every person is endowed with the power of intellect (seeing), the power of affections (feeling) and the power of volition (willing). The order is very important. First a person sees and feels. Second he understands and loves. Then he wills to have the object of his seeing and feeling. The will of man never acts on its own. It is governed by the mind and heart. Therefore if there is no beauty in Christ to desire him, the will of man will not take him to Christ. That is why Jesus said that a radical change, which he described as, 'the new birth,' has to take place before a man will come. 'Unless a man is born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God' (Jn. 3:3).

It is the dreadful effects of the fall of man that have alienated him from God. Because his mind and heart are alienated his will is in bondage. Man's will is not free. He is a slave. He is opposed to all that is spiritual. That is what puts him in chains. He imagines he is free in everything whereas he is only free as a natural man in the natural world.

Let us put this truth of the bondage of the will to the test. The bondage or enslavement is this: the sinner rejects the Gospel. It is foolishness to him. Wherever you go you will find this is true. The refined and educated people, the respectable and intelligent of the land are very polite about it all. Many are registered members of some church or other, mostly Anglican but sometimes lapsed Baptists. The commitment is to a sprinkling when they were babes or a confirmation when they were teenagers, or even an immersion a long time ago. That is the end of the matter. They hope that their church registration will be their passport to heaven. Their form of godliness is so slight that nobody on earth or in heaven would recognise any form of discipleship in them.

Nevertheless these natural people find nominal Christianity a useful piece of equipment to repel enquirers after their souls. They say they belong to this or that church. They possess not the foggiest notion of the Gospel. They know nothing of its power. They are not spiritual. They are natural. As natural men they are eternally lost. They are just as lost and just as hellbound as the non-respectable people who laugh spiritual subjects to scorn, who heartily curse the name of Christ, and who couldn't care a tinker's cuss whether their names are on any church register.

Lest wrong conclusions be reached regarding the bondage of the will, let us note these points:

1. Man is still fully responsible

Observe the order in the text. First expressed is the fact of indisposition, disinclination and dislike. *The natural man does not accept.* The Gospel is foolishness to the natural man. That does not excuse him. He is responsible. He is fully responsible. Illustrations all fall short on a subject like this but note that if there is an excellent dentist round the corner, gentle and reputable, you have the means to go, the time and everything else; whose responsibility is it if you allow all your teeth to rot in your mouth? You should go but prefer not to go.

Note secondly that inability is described. *He cannot understand.* The natural man cannot understand the Gospel. Does not that excuse him? Not at all! The Scriptures show that we only have to ask and it will be given to us. If we knock, seek or ask we will find (Lk. 11:9). Man has lost his love for God but not his responsibility to love God.

2. Christians have still to evangelize enthusiastically and ceaselessly

Even when everybody has refused our invitations to come to the Gospel banquet we are still, as Christians, obligated to go into the highways and byways and try and constrain people to believe. It may be a heartbreaking and seemingly useless and futile task. Yet we are always to remember that that is the only way God's house will be filled. The Holy Spirit, even though he seems sometimes to be working in other countries right now, is committed to calling God's elect. He is committed to using men and their proclamation of the Gospel, not angels. No matter how bleak the prospect, no matter how fierce the natural man's rejection, the Great Commission remains in force. Go to all nations, to every creature, to every natural man! This command stands to the end of time. 'And surely I will be with you always, to the very end of the age.'

To evangelize enthusiastically when you have been disappointed many times takes a lot of faith, but a persevering and determined faith glorifies God. If you don't believe me read about the faith of those recorded in Hebrews 11.

3. Christians have to keep to the rules

When converts are so difficult to get the temptation arises to take short cuts. So what happens is that in order to get results Gospel preachers aim at galvanizing

the will of the natural man into a decision. His will is challenged to record a profession, to walk the aisle, to sign a pledge card that he will now be a Christian. This has become very common and is the principal method used by famous evangelists like Billy Graham or Luis Palau. This method is particularly attractive in hard and dead times because it gives the appearance of activity and success. What happens in the vast majority of cases is that the mind and heart of the natural man is by-passed. His will is activated to make a decision, but when the emotion of the moment passes he is as natural and unspiritual as ever he was before. If the preaching is powerful the Holy Spirit may well use it to regenerate people but note well and remember it is the preaching that is used to bring the new birth (Ja. 1:18, 1 Pet. 1:23). The life of new creation comes from God omnipotent. It does not spring from the movements of man's legs as he walks the aisle. It does not flow from secret sources in his brain or in his hand as he signs a card. Such power does not belong to the will as it sends a message to the elbow joint for the arm to be raised in response to an appeal.

If any man becomes permanently willing to follow Christ it is because his mind and heart have been permanently changed by regeneration to make him a true believer. Obedience is the result of God's prior merciful action of quickening. We are born again not of natural descent, nor of human decision, but by God alone who removes the evil heart of indisposition and replaces it with a heart of spiritual love (Ez. 36:36, Jn. 1:12, 13).

I recall my first experiences of evangelistic effort as a young Christian. I thought that by getting people to make a decision I could change them from being natural into being spiritual. The black people of that time and locality were very patient hearers. They responded in the required manner of making a decision very readily. However it was disconcerting to observe the frequency with which they would do it and yet show no basic change. Also it was humbling to learn that they felt sorry for me and did not wish to discourage me by not responding with a decision.

We have to remember that people can be challenged on all sorts of grounds to make a decision. You can put it in such a way as to make them cowards if they do not respond or come forward or give some sign that they are on God's side. Now who on earth wants to be a coward? It is much better to put one's hand up or sign a card than be thought a coward!

The conclusion is that we must avoid using methods which bypass man's understanding and affections. If his mind and heart are not changed then nothing changes. There are many who argue that we are contending about words only and that it does not matter. As long as evangelism is on the move, they say, the methods do not matter. It is maintained by some that even if a large majority do make temporary decisions it is worth it for a few who prove to be genuine.

In reply let us note that regeneration is a colossal act of creation. It is the incomparably great power of God (Eph. 1:19). It is a mighty creation (Eph. 2:10,

2 Cor. 5:17). Therefore we can be quite sure that we will discover who the committed are without calling for decisions. The Christian Church has managed to do that very well throughout the centuries. Also it is a serious matter when evangelists employ methods which produce spurious professions or when they allow the Biblical standards of Christian commitment to drop. The parable of the weeds is appropriate at this point. Let us look carefully at what our Lord says.

Matthew 13:24-30

The Parable of the Weeds

Jesus told them another parable: 'The kingdom of heaven is like a man who sowed good seed in his field. But while everyone was sleeping, his enemy came and sowed weeds among the wheat, and went away. When the wheat sprouted and formed heads, then the weeds also appeared.

'The owner's servants came to him and said, "Sir, didn't you sow good seed in your field? Where then did the weeds come from?"

' "An enemy did this," he replied.

'The servants asked him, "Do you want us to go and pull them up?"

' "No," he answered, "because while you are pulling the weeds, you may root up the wheat with them. Let both grow together until the harvest. At that time I will tell the harvesters: "First collect the weeds and tie them in bundles to be burned, then gather the wheat and bring it into my barn".'

Matthew 13:36-43

The Parable of the Weeds Explained

Then he left the crowd and went into the house. His disciples came to him and said, 'Explain to us the parable of the weeds in the field'.

He answered, 'The one who sowed the good seed is the Son of Man. The field is the world, and the good seed stands for the sons of the kingdom. The weeds are the sons of the evil one, and the enemy who sows them is the devil. The harvest is the end of the age, and the harvesters are angels.

'As the weeds are pulled up and burned in the fire, so it will be at the end of the age. The Son of Man will send out his angels, and they will weed out of his kingdom everything that causes sin and all who do evil. They will throw them into the fiery furnace, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth. Then the righteous will shine like the sun in the kingdom of their Father. He who has ears, let him hear.'

Observe that Christ says it is while men slept that the evil work was done. If those who do understand the issues are silent, if they do not contend for the truth, then long term damage will result. No good service is done to the Church of God by the addition of spurious conversions. Our assemblies will not be well served when natural men are brought in to occupy spiritual positions. In this way damage is done to the Church. Harm is also done to those deceived by such methods into believing themselves to be born again when they are not. How dreadful it is to be led and encouraged to believe yourself to be secure and safe when you are nothing of the kind. In hell it is too late to remedy the situation.

An additional factor which must also be reckoned with in the decisionist method is illustrated from the parable of the sower. There are those who emotionally and temperamentally are easily aroused. They hear the word and at once receive it with joy, but have no root and only last a short time. Those

with inclinations very easily moved should not be taken advantage of but dealt with in a sober, long term, non-excitabile manner.

Children easily respond to a fervent or emotional call for decisions. When such resolutions do not result in the radical change of life anticipated a deep-seated distrust and scepticism often follows.

We do well to keep to the doctrines of Scripture and to keep the precepts and practices of the Word. Be told about it. You do not have to apologise for principle. We do not believe in the short-cut of decisionism. It does not matter how illustrious or how ecumenical or how attractive the evangelist is: we do not break the rules of Scripture. We do not compromise. We continue to evangelize enthusiastically and ceaselessly because we know that God will give the increase and he does not have to break the truths which he has himself enshrined in his Word.

Powerful Gospel preaching will in itself be appealing and compelling to mind, heart and will. The preacher's love for his hearers should be so evident that nobody would have any hesitation to converse personally about his problems. Genuine response is that which irresistibly springs from the heart, 'brothers what shall I do?' The response at Pentecost was not one which was manipulated.

The Holy Spirit and evangelism

The context in which 1 Corinthians 2:14 is found is one of the richest, yet one of the most neglected, as pertaining to the person and work of the Holy Spirit. We have many books on the Holy Spirit and yet it is hard to find one that expounds 1 Corinthians 2. The passage is saying that the Holy Spirit knows the mind of the Father and of the Son completely. He interprets spiritual truth to those he has made spiritual. There is nothing needful in which they need be ignorant. 'The spiritual man makes judgments about all things' (v 15). It follows that we have all the resources we require in the work of evangelism whether on an individual and personal basis, or corporately in a united effort. The Holy Spirit will never contradict the Scriptures which he himself has inspired. To join forces with liberals who deny the Scriptures in order to promote decisionist type evangelism is really to imply that the Holy Spirit has not provided adequate means or materials to do the work. The mind of the Spirit is very clear as to the impossibility of alliances with those who deny the Gospel of justification by faith only (Gal. 1:8).

With any subject like this the difficulty is that we can be put on the defensive. If we are evangelizing faithfully as we should, then we will be able with all sincerity to reply to those who wish to draw us into their ecumenical schemes with the words of Nehemiah, 'I am carrying on a great project and cannot go down. Why should the work stop while I leave it and go down to you?' (Neh 6:3). ☐ ☐

The development of the concept of Baptism

An exposition of the development of the concept of baptism from John the Baptist to Pentecost was included in Pastor Frederic Buhler's paper at the Toronto Conference. Comments made by the speaker on the importance of the subject as such precede the material by way of introduction.



It is important to see the place of baptism in the divine programme. Two texts are prominent, Matthew 28:18-20 and Acts 2:37-42. It can be remarked that the text in Acts shows how the apostles obeyed the command of Matthew 28.

Just as baptism is the turning-point event between two dispensations, so baptism constitutes a turning-point event in the life of the individual Christian. I feel strongly the necessity of emphasizing the fact that the great commission and the order to baptize were given in the most important circumstances. It was just before Christ left his disciples. It constitutes his last will. Furthermore, they were given in a most solemn context: the absolute Lordship of Christ in heaven and on earth and in the perspective of the end of the world. We should, therefore, take great heed to such an utterance. It is a matter of amazement to see how lightly some Christians consider the baptismal aspect of the great commission as being secondary or even optional.

We observe then that baptism is commanded by Christ and practised by the apostles. It is explained in the epistles.

In turning now to the baptism of John we see that it was from heaven (Mt. 21:25). It was God's intention for all Jews (Lu. 7:29-30). The people generally submitted to it (Lu. 7:29). Jesus insisted on being baptized by John (Mt. 3:13-16), and later he practised it (Jo. 3:22), and commanded it (Mt. 28:19). Baptism is related to all major doctrines of the New Testament. It has to do with soteriology, for it is the seal on salvation; with pneumatology, for it concerns the baptism of the Spirit; with Christology, for it signifies identification with Christ in death and resurrection; with ecclesiology, for through it one enters into the local church; with eschatology, for it is to be practiced till the end of the world; with the doctrine of God, for it is administered in the name of the Trinity. It is intimately related to Christian life. Christians should always be mindful of it. It is a vital part of apostolic teaching. The preaching of the gospel could not leave it out. The remark of Paul concerning his calling is not at all intended to minimize baptism (1 Cor. 1:17), but to show the precedence of preaching and to prevent a party spirit from developing around his person. In a way, baptism is the badge of every true disciple of Christ. It is anything but secondary or optional.

Baptism is of such an importance that it can be said that because the Reformers did not adopt a biblical view of baptism, they failed to have a biblical view of the church. They thus passed by God's pattern and ran into difficulties and inconsistencies fatal to true Christianity. Up to this day, we reap some bitter fruits of their refusal to follow the Scriptures and listen to the voice of the radical reformers of their day such as Reublin, Humbaier, Grebel, Mantz and Blaurock. These men had seen the necessity of believers' baptism and of a regenerate church membership. These radical reformers, our spiritual forefathers, in spite of their erroneous explanations of salvation, were severely persecuted by Catholics and Protestants alike for their scriptural view of baptism, though not all of them saw the scripturalness of immersion. It is impossible to imagine what the Reformation would have been, if the Reformers had adopted the biblical view of baptism and of the local church. It might have been less spectacular but with a greater permanent impact and without the misunderstandings and confusion perpetuated throughout the centuries until this day.

I want to emphasise at this point that in saying this I do not wish to minimize the importance of the Reformation.

Development of the Concept of Baptism from John the Baptist to Pentecost

Scholars generally agree in identifying three kinds of baptism in the New Testament: the first being the baptism of John called baptism of repentance; the second the baptism as practised by Christ and his disciples to Pentecost and the third considered as the true Christian baptism administered at Pentecost and henceforward. It is obvious that the three have each their own characteristics, but on the other hand I am convinced that even here Paul would be right to speak of one baptism. In fact, baptism was the sign of the New Covenant just as circumcision was the sign of the Old, with this difference that one

entered into the Old Covenant by natural birth and that one enters into the New Covenant by spiritual birth (regeneration). Just as the New Covenant was established progressively from John the Baptist to the apostles, so baptism went through these several stages. 'The law and the prophets were until John; since that time the kingdom of God is preached' (Lu. 16:16). The Kingdom was first announced as being at hand and then was manifested. Finally, the Church was built (Mt. 16:18).

The baptism of John was from heaven for John was sent by God (Jn. 1:6). Its principal meaning was a cleansing from sin through repentance. it was linked with the proclamation of imminent coming to the Kingdom into which one could enter only with a cleansed life. Thus the forerunner was to prepare the way for the Messiah. As soon as John could point to Christ as the Lamb of God, the time had come for him to decrease (Jo. 3:30) and the fact was duly attested by the affirmation that Christ baptized more disciples than John (Jn. 4:1-2). The Kingdom was now come among them or within them (Lu. 17:20-21). The King was present and baptism received a new dimension. It was no longer only the baptism of repentance of the forerunner, but it became the baptism of faith in Christ, the now present Messiah. To be baptized now was to submit one's life to the Master and King. During this second period, Jesus announced that he would die and give his life as a ransom for many, ultimately to build his Church. The Spirit was to be given after the fulfilment of God's plan of salvation. Baptism was to receive an additional and greater dimension: the spiritual identification of the believer with Christ in his death and resurrection (Ro. 6), and the incorporation into the body of Christ (1 Cor. 12:13). Thus the baptism of John was completed in the same measure as the Law was fulfilled by Christ and that God's plan was unfolded from the Old Covenant to the New.



The Whitefield Fraternal

Fraternals like this serve several important purposes. They are expressions of our unity in the gospel. They stimulate, equip and encourage men in their pastoral labours. On Monday 22nd November, the morning session was led by John Nicholls, minister of the Free Church of Scotland who pastors the Cole Abbey Presbyterian Church, London. Although under the shadow of the huge St. Paul's, it shines with a bright Gospel light seldom known in the national monument that St. Paul's is.

Mr. Nicholls' subject was The Impact of the Lord's Supper on our lives. In opening up this theme he indicated he was primarily concerned with what believers take away from the Lord's Supper. We may interject at this point and ask, What do you take away from the table? He saw this broadly under two headings.

Firstly the Supper gives us grace as an ordinance of the covenant of grace. Believers are entertained by God as He shares with us the Lord Jesus under the aspect of a sacrificial meal. We participate in the blood and body of Christ (1 Cor. 10:16). This was prefigured in the Passover Feast, with which the first Supper was closely linked.

Secondly Mr. Nicholls set forth something of the grace the Lord's Supper gives. It gives us Christ, on whom we feed in our hearts, and it intensifies our union with Christ. It conveys grace not so much in a general way but specifically, not to provide an emotional experience, but to affect our practice. Attendance at the Supper should therefore strengthen in the believers hope, zeal and unity.

As to hope, Scriptures such as Luke 22:16, 1 Cor. 11:26 and Rev. 19:6-9 set the Supper in an eschatological context. It looks backward to Christ's suffering and forward to his coming again. It is provisional (that is for the time being, while he returns), it arouses hope, and warns against a thinking only of the present time. We feed on Christ who is soon coming for his bride. The Supper is also a motive for holiness, and strengthens assurance as we are united in love and look forward to glory.

Zeal is rekindled as we remember the Lord. In the Old Testament God's people were urged to remember the Lord Jehovah and his acts as this would lead to repentance and trust. To forget was regarded as deliberate sin. Forgetfulness signified rebellion. They forgot what he had

done (Ps. 78:11). 'Be careful that you do not forget' (Deut. 8:11). As we remember our Lord in his sufferings on our behalf, we should be moved to zeal for him, and also in zeal against sin (Rom. 12:1, 2).

A strengthening of unity arises from an intensified awareness of union with Christ through the Supper. Believers meet in fellowship as one body and share one loaf (1 Cor. 10:17): not eating alone as many are seen doing in Wimpy bars (most persons apart or separate), but together as a family sharing in one meal. Love for Jesus should be translated into love for others.

Immediately following lunch we considered what we teach new converts. This was led by Austin Walker of Crawley. From 1 Thessalonians he argued that the apostolic practice was to deal 'with each one of you as a father deals with his children, encouraging, comforting and urging you to live lives worthy of God' (2:11-12). In order to do this Paul gave instructions on Christian obedience in every area of the Christian life. Our traditional practice is to tell the new convert about Bible reading, prayer, witnessing, baptism and church membership. Fine, but it does not go far enough! By sharing what we did in his own church Austin explained the steps involved in implementing Paul's method, namely authoritative instruction for all kinds of relationships and attitudes, in the church, at work and at home. The overall aim was to show the new convert how he should obey Christ immediately, and so work towards the goal of being like Christ.

Every church should have a carefully worked out programme which is flexible enough to deal with all kinds of converts. The benefits of having such a programme are considerable. Prevention is always better than cure and such an approach provides opportunity to deal with potential problems before they arise. As the convert grows you can then go back over the old ground, as Paul did, urging them to go on as they began. If we want level-headed mature Christians who by their life-style and example in all walks of life are the best evidence for the truth and power of Christianity, then imitating Paul's pattern has a vital part to play.

Cassettes are available from Carey Recording Studios.

We look forward to the new year and the next fraternal.

International Baptist Conference

October 18-21, 1982.

Held at Jarvis Street Baptist Church under the auspices of the Toronto Baptist Seminary.

The framework and character of the Conference

Readers in various countries will be helped to have a little background information to the Jarvis Street Baptist Church in Toronto. This large church was made famous by the ministry of T. T. Shields. He was born in Bristol in 1873 and moved with his family to Canada in 1888. He was called to Jarvis Street in 1910 where he ministered for 45 years until his decease in 1955. The age of huge city congregations seems to be past. The Jarvis Street assembly is much smaller than it used to be. However, the witness is vital and the church has much going for it. There is a modest migration of people from commuting centres back to the inner-city, which makes local evangelism meaningful and challenging.

The work of T. T. Shields included the establishment of the Toronto Baptist Seminary (T.B.S.) which is attached to the church. T.B.S. where there are now 42 day students, has been responsible for the production of many fine pastors and preachers. This cannot always be claimed by institutions of learning, especially where the emphasis is on academics rather than on practical application.

From 1975-1981, Eric Gurr, who is now the minister of the Highbury Strict Baptist Church in London, was the pastor. One of the enterprises initiated by him during his pastorate was to organise the redecoration of the main concourse which, like the premises as a whole, is of generous proportions. The old decor was faded and bleak. The new is heartwarming and hospitable. These practical advantages of a comfortable, well-organised layout and warm reception did much to give a congenial welcome to the conferees who arrived from many different quarters, some from long distances. A digression here: Some mausoleum-like forbidding old refrigerators have been transformed architecturally to enormous advantage

evangelistically. Grove Chapel, Camberwell, London, is one such example.

Recently Pastor Norman Street of Flint, Michigan, took pastoral charge at Jarvis Street. The involvement of church members as well as Pastor Street's own capacities of Leadership gave the conference a helpful church-based orientation. To this was added the assistance of students of the seminary who acted as chauffeurs and who assisted in a variety of ways. This also provided a sense of purpose and reality. A high proportion of students come from overseas countries, providing a healthy missionary interest.

The purposes of the Conference

The purpose of the Conference was to provide a platform on which several subjects of importance could be advanced, and also to promote unity. The Conference was not designed to deal with the severe divisions which have rent the Reformed Baptist Constituency in North America (mostly in the U.S.A.). That some easing of those tensions did take place was a bonus.

Having mentioned the law/grace controversy it may be as well to remind ourselves that it is important to concentrate on the great central truths of the Gospel and to keep on the periphery, or circumference, those matters which can become an obsession and be blown up to such proportions as to cause division. Where this procedure is not observed, great harm is done to the cause of Christ. For instance, it is one thing to have a paper, or perhaps two, on difficult subjects over which there are disagreements, and another thing to have an entire conference devoted to those subjects over which division can so easily become rampant. It takes several years for men to mature in their understanding of the complementarity of themes like law and grace. Why then should we rush into civil war or be pressurised to take sides?

Here in England we are vexed with the Charismatic obsession. It is one thing to have an entire conference devoted to those obsessions and another to have a con-



Pastor Norman Street in foreground. A.D'Jaballah (whose leadership in organising was excellent), and Dr. Geoff Adams, principal of the Toronto Baptist Seminary. Brother D'Jaballah comes from a Muslim background in Algeria. He is a graduate of the Sorbonne. He has been teaching at T.B.S. since 1977.

ference based on the great centralities with a paper or two to deal with that subject. In that way the areas where we are having to do extra homework can be attended to with the advantage of an overall perspective of historic Christianity. The Westminster Conference in London provides an opportunity to view doctrines within the scope of historical theology. The hottest subjects have been debated there without rancour.

A further issue which has to be considered is the matter of personality. We may get on very well with people as people, but that does not in any way change the fact of our doctrinal differences. It always helps to keep open lines of communication with those who differ with us while simultaneously maintaining a sense of reality about those differences. If, however, a minister is unscrupulous and preys on members of other churches, one can well understand that such dishonesty will cause him to be rejected and distrusted. On the other hand, if a man's integrity is indisputable it is difficult to see how God can be honoured by his being refused lines of communication merely because he does not accord with us in every matter. It may be that a sister church concurs with 31 out of 32 paragraphs of the 1689 Confession. Surely we ought to be strong enough to recognise the extent of the unity that exists without for one moment giving away the strength which we wish to maintain on the controverted paragraph. It is another matter, however, if

that single point is taken up and blown up in size out of all proportion to become a call for taking sides. Happily, this gathering was free of such tensions.

The subjects of the Conference

The materials were presented under four headings: 1. History, namely Baptist origins; 2. The authority of Scripture; 3. Ecclesiology; 4. The person of Christ as prophet, priest and king, and the Lordship of Christ in the sphere of public worship. The first three might now well make suitable headings for a report.

1. History: Baptist Origins

Dr. Kenneth Good affirmed clearly the deficiency in the Reformation inasmuch as the Reformers were not prepared to follow through with the teaching of Scripture respecting the nature of the church. Rightly did he criticise the error of the Reformers in continuing the New Testament church along the lines of an extension of the Old Testament theocracy, but in new dress.

Five irreducible Baptist distinctives were outlined as: 1. a regenerate church membership; 2. a baptised church membership; 3. a separation of church and state; 4. a church polity of local autonomy; 5. a church polity of soul liberty.

Correctly, Dr. Good affirmed that it is not possible on the basis of demonstrable evidence, to maintain an unbroken line of Baptists through history. To some,



Well known and loved, David Bugden and his wife Pamela for ten years fulfilled the secretarial work of the annual Westminster Conference in London. Here they are at Jarvis Street, this photo being taken in the famous vestry at Jarvis Street. David is now pastor of the Sovereign Grace Baptist Church at Oromocto, New Brunswick.

reasoning from Matthew 16:18, 'I will build my church,' this matter seems to be of some importance. But it is ludicrous to think that unless churches in history have been Baptist Churches then they have not been true churches at all. That notion is certainly a departure from the Reformed distinctive of justification by faith alone (not by baptism or by church government alone, etc.).

In the debate which followed it was pointed out that Dr. James McGoldrick had presented materials in which he proved that the Baptists, prior to the Reformation, were confused concerning soteriology. In fact they were hostile to the doctrines of grace. While we derive sound teaching from the Reformers and Puritans concerning the doctrines of salvation we at the same time concur entirely with the Baptist distinctives already outlined. While holding to these, what is wrong with learning soteriology from the Presbyterian school, providing we test everything by Scripture?

For instance, on the subject of the covenant many Baptists (A. W. Pink is an example), have come to a clear understanding of the nature, unity and discontinuity of the covenants. A correct grasp of the Old Covenant to the New greatly strengthens, rather than weakens, the Baptist position. It seems puerile to be negative about covenant theology merely because others have misused it to sustain a sacral position.

2. The authority of Scripture

Contributors on this theme were, Bill Downing, Norman Street, Leigh Powell and Don Carson. An extract from the presentation by Bill Downing is included in this issue.

Norman Street, in his presentation, did not hesitate to expose the pseudo-authority of what he called hyper-fundamentalism:

Hyper-fundamentalism has another authority. Some hyper-fundamentalist brethren hearing what has just been said would be quick to respond: 'Well, brother, I don't give out opinions on advice. I tell it like it is. I lay it on the line.' During a thirteen-year pastorate in Michigan I had considerable opportunity to become acquainted with a certain militant separatism which has become such a vocal and often powerful presence in the United States of America. Pulpit-pounding pastors shouting, 'Listen to me,' command their congregations to receive with utter docility, dictates and dogma concerning extreme separatism, both ecclesiastical and personal, hairstyle and dress, prophetic interpretation and political loyalty, etc. Everyone is expected to comply with unthinking, uncritical acceptance.

Militant hyper-fundamentalism claims to be ultra-biblical; but without intending to (I am sure) it nevertheless undermines the authority of the Scriptures. It does so by encouraging authoritarian pastors and other leaders to impose their traditions, codes and convictions on churches, camps and schools, and to bind the consciences of adults and young people with the authority which belongs to Scripture alone. [In a footnote he adds: This is notably true in the difficult matter of divorce and remarriage in which traditional positions and ideas are put on a par with Scripture. Indeed, the Scriptures are tortured to conform to 'what we have always taught'.

Leigh Powell expounded helpfully on the relationship of the law to the Gospel and dealt enlighteningly with Galatians 3 on the purpose of the law:

We must insist that the law must never be preached abstractly and in isolation from the Law-Giver, the grace of the promises, and the Fulfiller of that Law, the Lord Jesus Christ. Verse 21 indicates that no preacher should put asunder what God

had joined together in the indissoluble unity of his purpose of salvation. The close connection in verse 24 between the deprivation of freedom and the immediately following purpose clause 'that we might be justified by faith' indicates that God's purpose in the law is indirectly to make way for our justification by faith alone. Though the law does not plunge men into despair over their sins nor smash their self-confidence, yet it does catapult them into that objective state of increased sin (Rom. 5:20), of which they only become conscious at that moment when the Spirit sends home his gracious arrows. Lest anyone should think that the Gospel demands are somehow less stringent than those of the Law, we should note that Paul lays bare the real motive behind the behaviour of the Galatian Judaizers. Their insistence on law-keeping as the way of salvation masked their hidden fear of the demands of the gospel — they realised that the gospel truly preached inevitably brings persecution (Gal. 6:12).

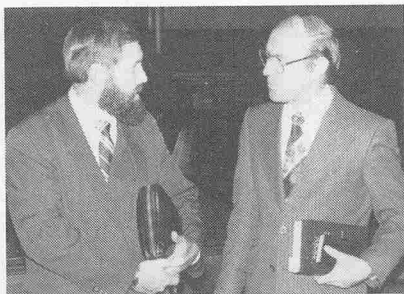
The contribution provided by Don Carson, Professor of New Testament at Trinity Evangelical Divinity School, Deerfield, Illinois, was very stimulating. We are gladdened to know that an extended treatise on what he presented is due to appear in a book published by Zondervan with the title, 'Scripture and Truth,' edited by D. A. Carson and J. D. Woodbridge. A balanced employment of systematic theology, historical theology and biblical theology, was explained. Because of the speed at which Brother Carson moved some may have been left without profit. That is a pity because everything he presented is important for the preacher. Particularly appreciated was the warning given of the abuse to which Biblical theology can be put if not held firmly in place by principles which are supplied by the Scriptures themselves.

3. Baptist Ecclesiology

This subject was presented by David Bugden, Frederick Buhler, Henri Blocher and Joseph Fevrier.

David Bugden expressed the danger of independency:

We Baptists in particular have revelled in our independency that often spelt isolationism and have found some kind of sadistic delight in church splits as if they



Pastors Bill Downing and Bill Payne

were a mark of sanctity. We need to consider afresh the sin of schism and that our High Priest still prays the prayer of John 17 that his people may be seen to be one.

Some of us, out of love for the truth, and under the constraint of the Spirit, have come out from mixed and apostate denominations, and at considerable cost. But we have let the pendulum swing too far the other way: understandably, we fear getting caught up in any other involvement and so boast we are independents and keep ourselves to ourselves. However, the biblical answer to wrong alliances is not aloofness, but right alliances. Independence is as dangerous as authoritarian control.

Frederich Buhler provided an illustrated talk with coloured slides of early baptistries. This was part of a series of three. It is a subject increasing in volume as further archaeological research goes forward. A small section of Pastor Buhler's paper is printed in this issue of *Reformation Today*.

The paper by Henri Blocher (Professor of systematic theology and apologetics at Vaux-sur-Seine, France), on the Lord's Table was presented from the perspective of the Reformation. In his application he stressed the *bodily* expression of the Supper and the symbolic gestures which represent spiritual experience.

Joseph Fevrier outlined the basic principles of missionary work today. He stressed the need for missionaries to be sent out from local churches. Irrespective of the method used one senses a high degree of frustration and disappointment in missionary work today. Reappraisal is urgently needed. Instead of thinking of isolated missionaries ought we not to think



Dr. J. R. Boyd and pastor Herbert Carson. Dr. Boyd studied at T.B.S. from 1933-36. He was instrumental in planting a church at Sudbury which he pastored for 45 years (1936-1981). Versatile in the ministries of radio, T.V. and writing, he is well known in Ontario and beyond.

of team work and tent-making ministries in which groups of Christians work together in small groups and thus seek to plant churches? So often when our hopes are pinned to the isolated missionary the result is failure. Did not Paul always work with the existing remnant, always corporately and never as an individual?

The evening sessions were devoted to preaching, the contributors being Bill Payne, John Reisinger and Herbert Carson.

The practical details

Every contributor was required to send in a written manuscript. The outcome was a happy one. A 181-page volume was available at the commencement of the occasion. Many are the advantages of early and thorough preparation.

The drawback is when the contributors read their papers. Few have the knack of presenting material in this way and it can become extremely tedious for the hearers. Some speakers tend to be carried away with additional explanations and thereby are unable to complete their contributions. Others (and I include myself) have never developed an ability to read papers in an interesting or gripping fashion. Men who are used to preaching can be dreadful when they are enchain to a manuscript. Surely it would be better to require that all the delegates read the particular paper before they arrive at that session, whereupon the contributor can take two or three themes and open these up in a lively extempore manner. This would give

much more time for the panel and the delegates then to discuss the subject.

For the day sessions following each paper three were chosen to contribute consecutively by assessment, comments and suggestions. The chairmen, by and large, kept these responses by the panel members to time, but even then there was far too little time for really satisfactory discussion to develop.

A most refreshing characteristic of this conference was the openness of the organisers to receive suggestions. These will be carefully considered for a possible repeat of this conference in two years' time.

The organisers might consider devoting more time to biography and history. The session on Baptist origins was a great success, but much more ground could be covered with profit. Some of the papers lacked with respect to bibliographies. These should be short and give practical advice as to what books are available today. Long lists of specialised, unavailable materials, are useless, except to the rare specialist who would find out anyway.

Conclusions

The unusual nature of the gathering, the splendid opportunity provided for so many people coming together without trying to score points or promote a party, the wholesomeness of having the church and students integrally involved, the diversity of the contributors, the freshness of some of the subject-matter, the experience and

The major spiritual battle of the early centuries raged around the nature of the person of Christ. Was he man merely? Was he God only? Was he the God-man in one person? The conflict of our times concerns the authority of Scripture. Does the authority lie in the content of the Bible? Is the authority vested in the Holy Spirit as he applies the message of the Scriptures? Is the authority found in God himself? The exposition which follows is an extract from the material presented at Toronto by Bill Downing, pastor of the Lakewood Baptist Church, San Jose, California. Gently he touches on the subject of philosophy as it relates to the knowledge imparted by the Word of God. Do not be impatient at that point because it is important! We are sorry that we have tended to neglect this foundational subject in the magazine as we should never take it for granted that Christians are well able to defend basic truths.

Do we understand the nature of the authority of Scripture?

The word authority means the power to command, to require and receive submission or obedience. The term carries with it the status of ultimacy or finality. When this term is applied to Scripture it implies that the Scripture is the ultimate or final standard beyond which there is no appeal, Judge or criteria. The power or status to command and require submission or obedience derives from one central truth — the Bible is the very Word of God inscripturated. The authority of Scripture is thus a Divine authority. The Word of Scripture is the Word of God.

What is the source of biblical authority?

Some have attempted to ground the authority of Scripture in its content: its message of salvation, the validity of its historical data, the uniqueness of its character. Others have held that the internal witness of the Holy Spirit forms the basis for authority. Still others have sought a basis in the genius of its human authors. There is a present trend to find in experience or 'encounter' the ground for authority. We call this neo-orthodoxy. Contrary to these, and simply stated, biblical authority drives from its source, its author, the Self-disclosing God of Scripture who has spoken (Gn. 1:3; He. 1:1-2), and identified himself in time and history (Ex. 20:1f.). Because God is absolute and ultimate, his Word is absolute and ultimate. Authority, therefore, is not based on the content of the message. For instance, God's command to Adam not to eat of the tree (Gn. 2:16-17) was not authoritative because of its content (Adam did not comprehend the content or its implications), but rather it was authoritative because God himself had commanded it. Again, when our Lord taught, his listeners were astonished, not at the content of what he taught, or even the elocution he demonstrated. They were astonished at the authority that derived

from his Person – Who he was (Mt. 7:28-29; Mk. 1:22; cf. also Jo. 7:32, 44-46). J. A. Alexander observed this distinction and wrote:

The point of difference is indicated in the positive statement that he taught (or was teaching) them as (one) having authority. This cannot refer to a dogmatical authoritative manner, as to which the scribes most probably surpassed all others. Nor does it mean powerfully. The only sense consistent with the usage of the terms and context is that he taught them, not as a mere expounder, but with the original authority belonging to the author of the law expounded. This is not a description of mere outward manner, but that self-evidencing light and self-assertive force, which must accompany all direct Divine communications to the mind of creatures. Even those who were most accustomed and most submissive to the teachings of the scribes, must have felt, as soon as Jesus spoke that he was speaking with authority, declaring his own will, and expounding his own law, not that of another.¹

Neither is this authority based upon the witness of the Holy Spirit. The Spirit witnesses of this authority to the mind or heart of the believer, but such testimony is not in itself the basis for authority. Further, to seek authority in the genius of the human authors is to deny the reality of Divine inspiration and the possibility of ultimate authority. Finally, to place authority in an experience or 'Encounter' is to disassociate God from his inscripturated Word, and God is never 'encountered' apart from Scripture. Thus, to place authority in anyone or anything other than the Triune God who is absolute, ultimate and the Source of all reality and authority is to make the authority of Scripture subjective and relative and to rob it of its absoluteness and ultimacy.

What is the nature of biblical authority as it derives from God?

We may say that this authority is necessary, comprehensive and ultimate. First, it is necessary. God is revealed in nature (i.e., natural revelation, cf. Ps. 19:1-6; Rom. 1:18-20), but natural revelation in itself is inadequate, as it gives no knowledge of sin, grace and salvation as contained in the eternal redemptive purpose of God. Further, natural revelation was never intended to function apart from special revelation (i.e., God's direct word to man). Even unfallen Adam needed special revelation to understand God, creation, and his own life and purpose. Direct special revelation subsequent to the fall had to be inscripturated because the depraved mind of sinful man would pervert its nature and content if it were left solely to oral transmission and memory (Ro. 8:7).

Second, biblical authority is comprehensive, that is, it encompasses the whole of life and reality. We may divide authority into three aspects: executive, legislative and judicial. The Word of God possesses an executive authority. It is original (derived from God the Source), active, and effectual. Mark the creative word: 'And God said . . .' (Gn. 1:33ff.), and also the invincible word of God (Is. 55:8-11). The inscripturated Word is likewise living, powerful and effectual (1

Th. 2:13; He. 4:12-13). Scripture further possesses a legislative authority as the Word of God which alone is our final and all-sufficient rule of both faith and practice (Mt. 4:4; 2 Tim. 3:16-17). Then Scripture has a judicial authority as the absolute and ultimate standard of right, manifesting the moral character of God himself (Ex. 20:1-17; Mt. 22:36-40; Heb. 4:12-13).

Third, biblical authority is ultimate. Because it derives from God himself, there is no other criteria to which it can be subjected or by which it may be judged. If there were, then logically and necessarily, the Word of God would itself be relative and subordinated to such a standard.

Thus we have marked the significance of biblical authority. It is the Word of God inscripturated and its authority is neither abstract nor merely academic. It is rather inclusive of our entire lives. Inherent to its nature and authority are its implications. We are to believe, submit and cheerfully obey! There can be no selective compliance. To reject part is to reject the whole. The authoritative Word of God demands total compliance.

The Vital Importance of Biblical Authority

Because Christianity is built upon Divine truth, the issue of authority is vital. This is clearly seen in its relation to three basic and essential terms that are used to determine one's relationship to the authority of Scripture: inspiration, infallibility and inerrancy. Depending on one's definition, dilution or denial of any of these terms, one is variously categorized as Fundamentalist, Orthodox, Liberal, Modernist or Neo-orthodox, etc.

Inspiration is the first and primary term. The clear, definitive statement by Warfield is adequate to describe this doctrine:

... the Bible is the Word of God in such a sense that its words, though written by men and bearing indelibly impressed upon them the marks of their human origin, were written, nevertheless, under such an influence of the Holy Ghost as to be also the words of God, the adequate expression of his mind and will ... this conception of co-authorship implies that the Spirit's superintendence extends to the choice of the words by the human authors (verbal inspiration), and preserves its product from everything inconsistent with a Divine authorship — thus securing, among other things, that entire truthfulness which is everywhere presupposed in and asserted for Scripture by the Biblical writers.²

Inspiration by its very nature must be both verbal (extending to the very words and therefore the grammar and syntax) and plenary (full, or extending to every part). The two outstanding passages dealing with this doctrine are 2 Timothy 3:16 and 2 Peter 1:20-21. The former declares that 'all Scripture (literally 'every writing', emphasizing the minuteness of inspiration — each thought, statement, expression) is given by inspiration of God' (literally 'God breathed', or 'spirated'). The latter states that Scripture did not originate from within the

writer himself, but rather from the influence and direction of the Holy Spirit upon him. (The human spokesmen and writers were literally 'borne along' by the Spirit.) The former passage deals with the writing; the latter with the writings and the writers.

What, then, is the relationship of authority and inspiration? It may be said that authority rests upon inspiration, in that inspiration has given us the very word of God and so Scripture possesses, as such, full authority. To hold the doctrine of inspiration is to necessarily hold to Scriptural authority. One cannot believe in inspiration and deny the implications of Scripture!

The second term, infallibility, means incapable of error or deception. When we state that the Bible is the infallible Word of God, we mean that it is incapable of leading astray or deceiving. Because God is fully Self-conscious and has no hidden depths within himself that he either misunderstands or of which he remains in ignorance; because he is Self-contained and not influenced outside himself; because he is absolutely sovereign and sustains this universe by his fiat decree, his word is infallible. Hence, the word of God will infallibly come to pass (Is. 42:8-9; 55:8-11; Mt. 5:18). It was in the light of the infallible, inscripturated Word that our Lord challenged the Jews to 'search the Scriptures', declaring that if they believed Moses, they would have believed him (Jn. 5:39-47). The Scripture could not lie concerning our Lord. What is the relationship between authority and infallibility? Infallibility is grounded in the authority of Scripture, and not the reverse, as some would teach. Because the Scripture is the inspired Word of God it is the authoritative and because it is the authoritative Word of God it is infallible.

The third and final term is inerrancy, by which is meant that the Scriptures (precisely, the original manuscripts, or the autograph copies, as free from any subsequent possible scribal variations) are free from error arising from either mistake or deceit. Inerrancy is inherent in inspiration and infallibility. Because Scripture is the inspired, authoritative Word of God, it is both infallible and inerrant. An errant word would mean that either God did not or could not speak to men infallibly and preserve that word through the human authors. Either alternative would, of course, be blasphemous against the very God of truth and omnipotence.

The authority of Scripture is thus inherently and essentially related to the validity and veracity of the Word of God — the very foundation of all truth upon which Christianity is built.

The authority of Scripture is absolutely vital to a consistent biblical Christianity. Without an absolute or infallible authority, religion must remain merely philosophical and speculative. Christianity, however, claims to speak with an infallible authority.

Competing voices of authority

Two sources conspire to overthrow the authority of Scripture. The first is ecclesiasticism, meaning Scripture as interpreted, modified and amplified by both church and tradition. The second is existential, meaning Scripture as evaluated, interpreted by or subjected to human reason, emotion or experience. Remember the only true voice of authority is evangelical.

Ecclesiasticism, although predominant in Romanism, Anglo-Catholicism and the Orthodox Churches, permeates much of Christianity to a large extent. The incipient principle and effects of ecclesiasticism must be constantly checked by alignment to the Word of God. For instance, the paedobaptists have as much Scriptural warrant for infant sprinkling as some Baptists do for their practice of 'altar calls' in their evangelistic meetings! The pervading principle of Isaiah 8:20 must reign in our faith and practice: 'To the law and to the testimony: if they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in them!'

Existentialism is characterized by the principle of subjectivism and is a source of authority to much of contemporary Christianity. Neo-orthodoxy, holding Scripture as a mere fallible 'record of revelation' rather than recorded revelation itself, on a personal experience or 'encounter' with the living God. It denies the infallibility of Scripture and derides it as God 'imprisoned within the covers of the written word'.³ God, however, is neither known nor 'encountered' apart from his inscripturated Self-revelation. The Charismatic movement essentially holds to a subjective infallibility of experience. We must take great care to interpret our experience by the Scripture and never the Scripture by our experience! Subjectivism, which denies, dilutes or seriously detracts from the objective authority of the Scripture, substitutes the supposed infallibility of human reason (rationalism), emotion (irrationalism), or experience (pragmatism). It is in the Scripture alone that we find the truth of God's eternal redemptive purpose and virtually everything we need for a saving relationship to him and a complete Christian experience.

Evangelicalism itself must be more than mere lip-service to the authority of Scripture. There must be vital, practical submission and obedience to Scripture as the very Word of God, for 'authentic Christianity is a religion of biblical authority'.⁴ Indeed, without such authority, true Christianity would be a virtual impossibility!

Biblical authority is absolutely vital to a truly Christian epistemology. Epistemology (from the Greek *epistēmē*, 'knowledge') is the basic philosophical science — the theory of knowledge and the investigation of truth. It seeks to answer the most basic question: 'Is true knowledge possible?' The Rationalists, such as Descartes, Spinoza and Leibniz, would answer that true knowledge is possible through the autonomy of human reason unaided by special revelation. The Empiricists, such as Locke, Berkeley and Hume would answer that true

knowledge is possible through experience. Kant, according to his presuppositions, and most post-Kantian philosophers would have to answer that objective true knowledge is impossible.

The prerequisites for the attainment of true knowledge are two: the thinker with his mind and body in his given environment, and, second, a sufficient 'universal' (an all-encompassing concept or ultimate point of reference sufficient to give meaning to all particulars). Although each school of philosophy has presupposed the first, no agreement can be reached regarding the second. The biblical Christian, however, possesses both. Not only has he been created in the image and likeness of God (Gn. 1:26-28), he has been regenerated (Jo. 3:3) and the image of God restored within him in principle (Eph. 4:22-24; Col. 3:9-10). Further, he possesses the illuminating ministry of the Holy Spirit to enable him to understand the inscripturated Word of God (1 Jo. 2:20, 27). Through the Scripture he has a true knowledge of God (the 'Concrete Universal'), the One Ultimate Point of Reference who gives meaning to all things. Without the inscripturated revelation of God, true knowledge would be utterly impossible!

The crux of the epistemological problem and the whole issue of the authority of the Scripture meet at this point. Creation was the realization of God's definitive act. God not only created the universe and every fact in it, but he defined it, gave it meaning. God's knowledge of himself, as fully self-conscious and self-contained, and his creation, is thus analytical. God created man in his own image and likeness to reflect his thinking. Thus, man's knowledge of God, himself and the universe is analogical. That is we follow the pattern of God's mind. God created man to give the same meaning to everything that he had given to it — to define, comprehend and interpret himself and the world about him according to the word of God.

In the temptation and fall, man believed and sought to implement the lie of Satan (Gn. 3:1-7). He sought to become his own 'god' and determine for himself what was right and wrong (Gn. 3:5). He sought to give his own meaning to God, himself and every fact in the universe. Every attempt of man to gain true knowledge subsequent to the fall has been a futile exercise in sinful re-definition — a univocal reasoning that puts man himself as the ultimate — his own point of reference, his own 'god'. This is the very essence of sin, which, Scripturally and epistemologically, is lawlessness (1 Jo. 3:4), that is, to give any meaning to anything other than the meaning God has given to it (cf. Rom. 1:18-23; 3:10-18; Eph. 4:17-19). Unregenerate man is thus doomed to the impossibility of true knowledge. Because he is depraved, he is by nature a rebel against God and his truth and seeks to pervert it in his thinking. Because of the effects of the fall, he is utterly incapable of receiving truth or possessing an affinity for it (1 Cor. 1:18-2:14). Only in the free and sovereign grace of God, as exercised in regeneration, the restoration of the image of God in righteousness, knowledge and the holiness of the truth (Eph. 4:22-24; Col. 3:9-10) and the

continued on page 31

The Countess of Huntingdon (1707-1791)

Selina, Countess of Huntingdon, was the daughter of Washington, Earl of Ferrers, and was born on the 24th of August, 1707. Her first serious impressions were produced in early life, when only nine years old, and were occasioned by seeing the funeral of a child about her own age, which she was induced to follow to the grave. While there she began to think seriously about an eternal world, and with many tears cried earnestly to God that, whenever she should be called thence, he would deliver her from all her fears, and grant unto her a happy departure. She frequently afterwards visited the grave, and always preserved a lively sense of the affecting scene. Although her heart and mind had not yet imbibed Evangelical views, she frequently, in all her troubles, poured out her requests to God.

She became united in marriage, on the 3rd June, 1728, to Theophilus, Earl of Huntingdon. Lord Huntingdon's two sisters, Lady Betty and Lady Margaret Hastings, were women of singular excellence and piety. Conversing one day with Lady Margaret, Lady Huntingdon was very much moved with one expression she uttered, 'that since she had known and believed in the Lord Jesus Christ for life and salvation, she had been as happy as an angel'. To happiness like this, arising from the favour of God, Lady Huntingdon felt that, as yet, she was an utter stranger. Soon after this, a dangerous illness brought her to the brink of the grave, when, amid the terrors of her mind, she thought of the words of Lady Margaret, and felt a desire to cast herself wholly upon Christ for salvation. She instantly lifted up her heart to the Saviour in an importunate prayer; her distress and fear were removed, and she was filled with joy and peace in believing. Her illness soon took a favourable turn, and she was not only restored to health physically, but, what was far better, was raised to newness of life. From that period, she determined, by God's help, to offer herself to God as

A two volume set consisting of 96 biographical sketches is available at £15 (post free) from Zoar publications, 44 Ossett, W. Yorks WF5 0ND. The above article is typical of those presented. These sketches of reformers, martyrs, leaders, pastors, authors and Puritans, were written by Francis Coxon as articles for The Gospel Magazine about 26 years ago. These two books form a miniature encyclopaedia of biography for you will find in them the basic facts of the better known, such as Bunyan, Owen, Boston, Tyndale and Knox, but also the lesser known, such as Robert Fleming, Samuel Fairclough, Peter du Moulin, Thomas Hawkes and Alexander Peden. The volumes are illustrated. Some ancient illustrations are limited in value. For instance William Grimshaw used an ornate chair but probably ours are more comfortable. The illustrations help to break-up the type. The headgear used by the Countess is simply frightful and the picture of her surely a poor depiction of an outstanding personality. She would, we are sure, agree with our decision to omit it!

a 'living sacrifice'!

The Grace of God that bringeth salvation — Titus 2:11

The change which the grace of God had produced soon became evident to all around, by the open confession which she made of the faith once delivered to the saints, and by her zealous support of the cause of God, amidst all the reproach which attended it. There were not wanting some who, under the guise of friendship, wished Lord Huntingdon to interpose his authority; but, though he differed from her Ladyship in his views, he continued to manifest the same affection and respect. Some of the clergy were not so liberal as his Lordship. Dr. Benson, Bishop of Gloucester, endeavoured to turn her from her steadfastness; but she so plainly and faithfully urged upon him the awful responsibility of his station that his temper was ruffled, and he rose in haste to depart, bitterly lamenting that he had ever ordained George Whitefield, to whom he imputed the change wrought in her Ladyship. 'My Lord,' said she, calling him back, 'mark my words, when you come upon your dying bed, that will be one of the few ordinations you will reflect upon with complacency.' It deserves comment that Bishop Benson, when near death, sent ten guineas to Whitefield as a token of his regard, and begged to be remembered in his prayers.

This recalls an interesting anecdote from the times of Whitefield, when a bishop had complained to King George II of the preaching activities of Whitefield and his companions. The old king suggested a sovereign remedy for gagging the offenders: 'Make bishops of them! Make bishops of them!'

'Choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season' — Hebrews 11:25

Lady Huntingdon's heart was now truly devoted to God. The poor she bountifully relieved in their necessities, visited in sickness, conversed with, and led them to the throne of grace, praying with them and for them. The Prince of Wales, one day at court, asked a lady of fashion, Lady Charlotte E—, where Lady Huntingdon was, that she so seldom visited the circle. Lady Charlotte replied contemptuously, 'I suppose praying with her beggars'. The Prince shook his head and said, 'Lady Charlotte, when I am dying, I think I shall be happy to seize the skirt of Lady Huntingdon's mantle, to lift me up with her to heaven.'

During Lord Huntingdon's life, the Countess warmly espoused the cause of God and truth, though her means of usefulness were necessarily circumscribed, and her family engagements occupied much of her time and attention. On his decease in 1746, he left her the entire management of her children, and the family possessions. She cordially esteemed all who she regarded as real Christians, but was in sentiment with those who were of Calvinistic views. With an intention of promoting their usefulness, she opened her house in Park Street, London, for the preaching of the Gospel. On the weekdays her kitchen was filled with the poor, for whom she provided instruction; and on the Lord's day, those of her own society circle were invited to spend the evening in her drawing

room, where George Whitefield, William Romaine, and others, were heard with apparently deep and serious attention.

It now pleased the great Disposer of events to becloud the domestic circle of Lady Huntingdon, by the afflictions of her eldest son, for the sake of whose health she was induced to visit Brighton in the year 1757. It was here that her active spirit produced considerable awakenings amongst the people; and her visit ended in her erecting a small chapel in North Street. It must be recorded that the erection of this building was defrayed by the sale of her jewels.

*Exalted soull what thus could treat
The toys thy sex esteem so high,
Thou, when God's jewels are complete,
Shall shine a diamond in the sky.*

The Archbishop of Canterbury, Cornwallis, and his wife, were a scandal at this time, because of their worldly dissipation and extravagance, their great routs and receptions held at their palace on Sundays as well as weekdays. Lady Huntingdon attended the bishop's palace on one occasion in what was intended to be a private protest, and later sought to obtain another interview with the Archbishop, to no purpose. Then her courage rose still higher, and she craved an audience from King George III himself, and was granted it without delay. The King listened attentively and sympathetically to Lady Huntingdon. So King George III, in all good faith, wrote an admonitory letter to the Archbishop, of which follows an extract: '... I would not delay giving you a notification of the great concern with which my breast was affected at receiving authentic information that routs have made their way into your palace. ... From the dissatisfaction with which you must perceive I behold these improprieties — not to speak in harsher terms — and on still more pious principles, I trust you will suppress them immediately; so that I may not have occasion to show any further marks of my displeasure, or to interpose in a different manner. ...'

'Not faithless, but believing' — John 20:27

Though Lady Huntingdon devoted the whole of her income to the Gospel, yet it is not a little surprising how it sufficed from the heavy expenditure which she necessarily incurred. Her income was no more than £1,200 annually; nor was it till after the death of her son, a few years before her own, that she had the addition of another £1,000. Such was her liberality that she gave to every one that asked her, until her own stock being exhausted, she was actually destitute. She received her property as an almoner, and considered it only given to dispose of for useful purposes.

She often incurred expenses for building chapels which she found it some burden to discharge; but the providence of a covenant-keeping God brought her through all engagements, and provided a supply when her own purse was exhausted. Of the latter remark, the following fact affords a striking illustration.

A gentleman, who assisted in the management of Spa Fields Chapel, London, called one day at her house to expostulate on the impropriety of her entertaining any further engagements for another chapel in London without having the means of fulfilling them. Before he left the house her letters arrived. As she opened one, her countenance brightened and her tears began to flow. The letter was to this effect: 'An individual who has heard of Lady Huntingdon's exertions to spread the Gospel requests her acceptance of the enclosed draft to assist her in her laudable undertaking.' The draft was for £500, the exact sum for which she stood engaged! 'Here,' said she, 'take it, and pay for the chapel, and be no longer *faithless* but *believing*'.

'The Coming of the Lord Draweth Nigh' — James 5:8

In November, 1790, her Ladyship broke a blood vessel, which was the commencement of her last illness. Being then asked how she was, she replied 'I am well! well for ever! Wherever I turn my eyes, whether I live or die, nothing but victory!' As death approached, she often repeated, with great emphasis, 'The coming of the Lord draweth nigh. O, Lady Anne, the coming of the Lord draweth nigh!' adding, 'The thought fills my soul with joy unspeakable, whether I shall see His glory appear, or whether it be an intimation of my departure to Him.' At another time she said, 'All the little ruffles and difficulties which surround me, and all the pains I am exercised with in this poor body, through mercy, affect not the settled peace and joy of my soul.' To a friend who called on her a few days before her death, she said, 'I see myself a poor worm drawing near to Jesus. What hope could I entertain if I did not see the efficacy of His blood, and turn as prisoner of hope to this stronghold? How could anything of mine give a moment's rest to a departing soul? So much sin and self are mixed with the best — and that best is so short — of what we owe! It is well for us that He can pity and pardon us. We have confidence that He will do so. I confess I have no hope but that which inspired the dying malefactor at the side of my Lord; and I must be saved in the same way, as freely, as fully, or not at all.' During the whole of her illness her pains never made her impatient; but she seemed more concerned about those who attended her than herself. A few days before her death she said, 'I cannot tell you in what light I now see these words: "If a man love Me, he will keep My words, and My Father will love him, and We will come unto him, and make our abode with him!" To have in this room such company, and to have such an eternal prospect! I see this subject now in a light impossible to be described, I know my capacity will then be enlarged, but I am now as sensible of the presence of God as I am of those I have with me.'

Her Ladyship died at her house in Spa Fields on June 17th, 1791, in the eighty-fourth year of her age, and interment took place in the family vault at Ashby-de-la-Zouch, in Leicestershire. Almost her last words were, 'My work is done, I have nothing to do but to go to the Father.'

The chapels known as 'The Countess of Huntingdon's Connexion' flourished during her latter days, while her rule over it and interest in it only ceased with

her last breath. One great comfort of Lady's Huntingdon's later years was the friendship with a kindred spirit, Lady Anne Erskine, who was appointed the chief trustee to preside over the affairs of the Connexion after Lady Huntingdon's death. Lady Anne discharged the onerous obligations of the position with devotion and fidelity to God's truth, till her own death, thirty years after that of Lady Huntingdon.

When we consider her devotedness to Christ, her separation from the pleasures of the world, the masculine wisdom of her plans, the energy of their execution, her faith in God for their success, and the immense usefulness of her exertions, then we can surely say that the Countess of Huntingdon may be regarded as one of the most extraordinary ladies that the Church of Christ has ever known.

The International Baptist Conference *continued from page 20*

maturity of leaders such as Dr. Adams and Pastor Street, the general spirit of freedom and unity, all these combined together to make it a thoroughly edifying, enjoyable and memorable event.

The papers are available at £15.00 (Canadian); address: Toronto Baptist Seminary, 130 Gerard Street East,

Toronto, Ontario.

One of the purposes of this magazine is to report on any conference, or event, which gives us new heart and provides nourishing teaching, irrespective of the geographical area from which such inspiration comes.

Do we understand the nature of the authority of Scripture? *continued from page 26*

breaking of the dominating power of sin (Rom. 6:1-14) can man through the Scripture possess true knowledge.

We see then that apart from God and his inscripturated Word there is no true knowledge! A truly Christian epistemology with its corresponding World-and-Life view (concept of the world of reality under the power and providential control of the true God) must both derive from the Scripture. Thus, the authority of Scripture is absolutely essential to a truly biblical Christianity.

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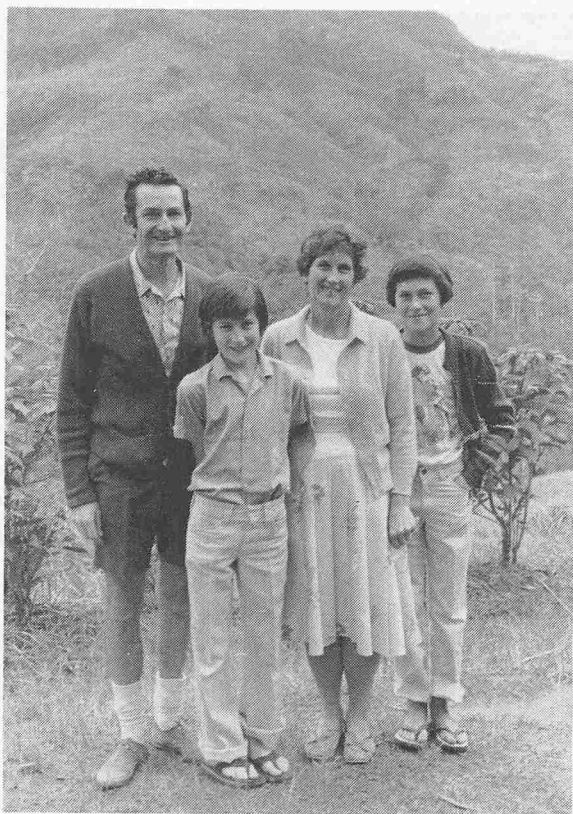
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Service in Papua New Guinea

Don McMurray was one of the leaders in planting a church in Newcastle, Australia. He and his wife, June, are now serving as missionaries in Papua New Guinea. His former experience as an elder is standing Don in good stead. In a recent letter he says, 'what is emerging more strongly in my mind is that missionary work must begin at home, and some of those who are actively engaged as such are sent by the Holy Spirit through the local church to another location, sometimes cross-culturally.'

Not long ago the McMurray family experienced the trauma of being under siege of a group of 'rascals' who tried to break into the home and steal. Precautions had to be taken to resist these raids. For security reasons the family slept in the same room for about a month. Happily, law and order prevailed. The culprits have been arrested. They are to be tried in court soon.



Don, Paul, June and Philip McMurray.

Recently a fight broke out at a market place where Don was preaching. His hearers ran off to watch. He followed them to the place and found a raised position from where he shouted at the top of his voice, 'fight, fight, fight!!' Many turned round to him. He then told them that the reason why they were fighting was because they were sinners. It was because of the sin in their hearts that they liked to watch fighting. Quite a crowd gathered and he was enabled to preach a substantial Gospel message.



Mountains, huts, and most important of all, people.



Henemo, Daniel, Cliff Hellar, and Don.

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