

REFORMATION TODAY '85



R. Fuller

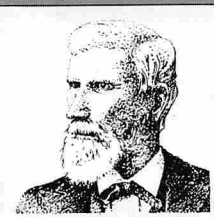


B. Manly

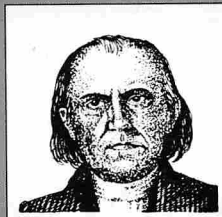


W.B. Johnson

The
founding
fathers



P.H. Mell



J.L. Dagg



J.P. Boyce



R.B.C. Howell

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Hawarden Castle was the home of Prime Minister William E. Gladstone who was born in 1809 in Rodney Street, Liverpool, and who died in 1898 at Hawarden. Rodney Street is to Liverpool what Harley Street is to London.

William Gladstone went to school at Eton and obtained a double first in Classics and Mathematics at Oxford. He was elected MP for Newark in 1832. In 1835 he married the wealthy heiress Catherine Glynne, through whose estate he then came to live in the castle. However there was a financial collapse in 1847 and over a long period Gladstone had to work hard to preserve the castle for his family. It is now occupied by his great grandson Sir William Gladstone. The castle is not open to the public and to take this photo the editor had to obtain a pass.

St. Deiniol's, a magnificent Residential Library, which specialises in 19th century historical and theological books was established and endowed by the Gladstone family.

Editorial

The article, 'Will the Ecumenical Movement take over?' has a sub-title, Merseyside Gospel Witness. The use of these titles is designed to describe the battle going on in one area which is only a representation of what may be coming in the rest of Britain, and perhaps the whole world.

So far the majority of evangelicals have contented themselves with the knowledge that the Ecumenical Movement is so obviously ill-founded that we need not bother about it. It is very easy to outline the separatist position, withdraw into it, and heartily condemn everyone else. Too soon, fellow evangelicals who do not take the same separatist position find it well nigh impossible to rally Bible-believing evangelicals into any kind of visible unity. Most independent churches outside of the Ecumenical Movement are safe, cosy, complacent and quite content so long as they have a little part of the river to fish in.

The B.E.C. (British Evangelical Council) which should be rousing the land and taking great positive initiatives is, it seems, in danger of being influenced in the direction of a totally negative policy.

The problem with the separatist position is that it appears to establish a watertight situation. Its weakness is that it is wholly negative. I have on my desk a 16 page separatistic manifesto which has a heading, 'Separation is positive — not negative'. It then proceeds to be negative in every other paragraph.

The fact is that our Lord prayed for the visible unity of all his people. This was not organisational unity to be sure, but it was a visible unity. So much did he pray for visible unity that it was intended to become an instrument of conversion — 'May they be brought to complete unity to let the world know you have sent me' (Jn. 17:23). Some may argue as I have done myself, that the prayer of our Lord is for our local church and the streets that form a little world around *our church*. But the prayer is too majestic to bear that interpretation alone. Let us say that the idea of the unity of all true believers is a noble and glorious one. Satan has always concentrated on counterfeiting the best things, not trifling things. Let us wake up and realise that we have done too little in reaching out to all believers wherever they are. Every evangelical minister should visit and befriend at least two or three other evangelical ministers outside his denomination. We will win fellow evangelicals from the Ecumenical Movement with the 98 parts we do agree on, not by blasting them with the 2 parts we disagree on.

We rejoice in men like George Whitefield and J. C. Ryle conveniently forgetting that the Church of England was just as comprehensivist then as it is now, with just as many unconverted ministers then as now. The Bishop of Durham is by no means the first heretical bishop.

When David Samuel spoke to a fraternal of ministers in Liverpool recently he had no sooner finished than he was accused of disobedience for staying inside the Anglican Church. He replied that he is an Anglican by conviction who has consistently upheld the Gospel. Ministers are to be assessed not only by their view of the nature of the church but for their overall grasp of the Gospel and

their ability to apply Gospel truth to our present day. I fully sympathise with many evangelicals who opt to join a wider circle with all the risks involved rather than go with people who are obsessed with one crack in a wall. Our Lord was just as offended by the lack of love in the orthodox church of Ephesus as he was with the erroneous and immoral doctrines in the church of Thyatira. It is more conceivable to have a fruitful ministry in a church where there is openness, teachableness and ignorance, than in a church where there is complacency, orthodoxy, deadness and legalism.

We do believe *all* truth is important and we should contend for it all in preaching and in print. At the same time we humbly acknowledge that there are many evangelical churches which do not contend for all the truths we love, but it is quite clear to us that in spite of that some of them enjoy more conversions, and sometimes appear to manifest a greater love among themselves than we do. For us Ephesians 4:1-6 is a splendid basis for expressing a wider unity with other Christians.

The Central Hall advertised in the Merseyside article seats about 1,000. In previous times when a generous spirit possessed the evangelical constituency that size would be far too small for such an occasion. Sadly it may well be that the hall will be far too big because of the fragmented nature of our ranks. We certainly desire your prayers for that occasion.

Biblical Theology

Our warm gratitude is expressed to Don Garlington for the superb articles on Biblical Theology. The others have appeared in *R.T.* 72, 73, 75, 80 and 83.

Tom Nettles and the longest article ever published in 'R.T.'

The importance of missionary work warrants an article of 15 pages. We earnestly appeal to our readers to help us spread these materials to Southern Baptist pastors and members. Tom Nettles' article in *R.T.* 83, 'The Southern Baptist Convention, her origin, growth, prosperity, and present crises,' has been widely spread, but a lot more needs to be done.

Reformed Baptist Mission Services

Pastor Stuart Latimer and his assistant pastor Jamie Howell write to say that they were greatly impressed by the founding Convention of the R.B.M.S., held at Edgewood Baptist Church, Anderson, Indiana. This service should be of great help in Reformed Baptist churches in taking the Gospel to the world. A letter has come from Leon F. Blosser who is the mission co-ordinator for the R.B.M.S. He has sent helpful expository materials for our consideration for publication in *R.T.*

Dennis Hustedt and R.M.I.

Dennis has just taken up a pastorate in America. He has pioneered a wonderful work for literature in the languages of the eastern bloc. He plans to continue this work with the support of his church. We commend his report to our readers as well as the other missionary items in this editorial.



Will the Ecumenical Movement take over?

MERSEYSIDE GOSPEL WITNESS

For further details about this article which was compiled by ministers of Merseyside see the Editorial

A further stage of the Mersey Miracle is due to be unveiled this coming Whitsun Weekend (May 24th-26th) when the Roman Catholic Church, the Anglican Church and some Free Churches will express their unity. On the morning of Sunday May 26th, every Anglican parish has been requested to join with its local RC congregation in a march of 'witness', and planned for the afternoon is a public signing of a covenant for union by leading Ecumenical Church figures. This will undoubtedly receive the attention of the mass media, and may take place in Liverpool's cathedrals.

It is coincidental, but certainly significant that on the same Sunday between 2.30 and 4.30 p.m., Mission England will provide further publicity in the street which links the two cathedrals. The official description of Mission England's Youth Festival named 'Cross Fire' says that this event is an attempt to capture the atmosphere of the first Pentecost by the use of a street theatre, mime, music, clowns and 'happenings'. The supporters of 'Cross Fire' include RCs, the Bishop of Chester and a cross section of people from other traditions. The thought of celebrating the coming of the Holy Spirit in this manner has already proved offensive to many evangelicals because the contrast with the events described in Acts could scarcely be more marked. Time will reveal the significance of the public signing and the activities organised in Mission England's name.

In the meantime there has been the publication of a 36 page document calling for partnership of all churches for the Merseyside region. The designs and ultimate purposes of the new 'unity' are far reaching and all embracing, with very serious implications for churches that are not included. Now there must be a basis for any scheme. What is the doctrinal foundation of the CALL TO PARTNERSHIP? As with the worldwide Ecumenical Movement the basis is that of baptism. To that can also be added belief in the Trinity.

The problem of false unity

One of the cornerstones of Roman Catholicism is the sacramental system which includes baptismal regeneration. If all those thus baptised are Christians, then there is no need to evangelise them. But multitudes of Roman Catholics need to be evangelised. All nominal Christians need to be evangelised. What kind of situation will exist if we are supposed to be one in Christ but we are busy evangelising each other because it is very evident that the vast majority show no credible profession of faith?

The price paid for false unity

An enormous price has had to be paid by way of compromise to advance Ecumenism. How can the unity referred to by the CALL TO PARTNERSHIP be called a miracle when the Gospel itself has been sacrificed? The loss of our greatest treasure is a calamity not a miracle.

David Samuel, an Anglican and director of the Church Society, recently explained to a group of evangelical ministers of different denominations in Liverpool, the extent to which the Anglican evangelical cause has been weakened over the last twenty years. This decline has had serious consequences for Evangelicalism in Britain as a whole. Gone are the strong clear voices from men like J. C. Ryle and W. H. Griffith Thomas.

What about true Christian unity?

At present evangelical Non-conformists are scattered and fragmented. While many evangelical churches have been complacent about their independent separatist position, the Ecumenical Movement has in the meantime been working and advancing. What is contemplated soon on Merseyside could be a prototype for the whole of Britain — a takeover in which true evangelical unity disappears, or is so little and muffled that nobody will know it is there. In Lincolnshire there has been an almost total ecumenical take-over and as far as we know no evangelical voice was heard.

The beauty of true unity in Christ based upon Ephesians 4:1-6 is that we already possess it. We do not have to create it. It is created by the new birth (see John 3).

There is a viable alternative to the false Ecumenical unity

There are many evangelical churches in the Merseyside Region which are already united by basic common belief. Many evangelical ministers know and support each other. What is needed because of the threat of a giant takeover by false Ecumenism, is some form of expression. Ministers have come together under the title, Merseyside Gospel Witness. A rally has been organised for:

FRIDAY MAY 17th AT THE CENTRAL HALL
RENSHAW STREET — 7.30 p.m.

There will be an opportunity for those present to sign a declaration of faith at the end of the rally. Over 200 churches which profess to be evangelical are being invited. There will be two speakers. The first is David Samuel. He will address the subject of the overall national scene and the need to express the Gospel of

Christ in it. The second speaker will be the pastor of Belvidere Road Church, Erroll Hulse. He will preach the Gospel of Justification by Faith in such a way that it will be appropriate to the needs of those who do not yet believe. He will explain the doctrine of justification by faith, its glory and simplicity and its outcome in a holy life.

Those who are excluded from true evangelical unity

It is most important to observe the Biblical parameters of Christian unity. We possess it but it takes all of Ephesians 4:1-6 to retain it and express it.

Two groups are excluded. The first is that group which Paul describes in Galatians chapter 1. False teachers who add to the Gospel of justification by faith alone are under a curse. They destroy the one and only means of eternal salvation. Today there are those who undermine the authority of Scripture and who thereby destroy the Gospel. There are those who like the Judaisers of Galatians chapter 1 preach salvation by good works and thus destroy the Gospel. And then there are those already referred to who maintain baptismal regeneration. We should note well that Paul did not anathematise the poor confused and ill-taught believers of Galatia, but rather the false teachers, the wolves in sheep's clothing.

The second group who are excluded from true Christian unity are evangelicals who themselves destroy that unity based on justification by faith alone through grace alone. They do this by anathematising those whom they regard as being compromised by belonging to mixed or impure denominations. We should observe that our Lord and his apostles never counselled pastors to abandon their flocks but rather to teach and correct them. We do not sit in judgment on the consciences of others.

The basis of the Merseyside Gospel Witness is that we are contending for the glory of Christ's Gospel, justification by faith alone as the power of God to salvation to every one that believes. The Merseyside Gospel Witness has nothing to do with Cultural Protestantism or any political movement of any kind.

Ephesians 4:1-6, Romans 1 and Galatians 1 provide clear parameters for all embracing unity of believers. This means that for inter-church unity we do not add to the Gospel our own particular view of Church Government, or Prophecy, or dealing with the pros and cons of Holy Spirit doctrine, or any one brand of separation. Nor should we add our view of the mode of baptism to justification by faith. For those who love truth dearly there are many issues that are very precious and we contend for them in our individual churches, but there is a time when we have to unite on the Gospel alone. Those who think that the Gospel cannot survive unless it is propped up by their brand of separation are absolutely not welcome. The Church of Rome cannot come to terms with the Gospel of justification by faith alone as their whole system is alien to it, but the Gospel can be imperilled by adding other issues out of proportion and thus non-Christians have their view of the Gospel obscured.

An appeal to Bible-believing students

Students these issues affect you. The U.C.C.F. has its own basis of faith which requires that visiting speakers sign that basis. Those who do not sincerely and wholeheartedly espouse those beliefs should not be invited to speak. Those who deny those beliefs by their practice should not be invited to speak. That rules out most bishops for a start.

The amusing anecdote is told of a Hindu who signed an evangelical statement of faith. When challenged he said that he did so because he was happy that Christians should believe those things!

We urge students to be alert. We also urge them to support the Rally on May 17th.

It is important that we should regard our responsibility for Christian unity in a prayerful and spiritual way. The weapons of our warfare are spiritual. Many evangelicals are at present in the Ecumenical Movement because they are disgusted by ugly belligerent attitudes of some separatists or because they think that evangelicals are too narrow in their interests. For instance, the bishop who has been largely responsible for Ecumenism in this area has regarded evangelicals with contempt because of their preoccupation with salvation doctrine. All that needs to be said here is that we maintain freedom on what particular moral, social, missionary or evangelistic issues we wish to pursue.

Our duty at this time is to make a clarion call to stand up for the Gospel of Jesus Christ. It is the Gospel that unites us. We are all one in the Christ of the Gospel. It is a Gospel that is definable and hence it is suggested that the following affirmation be available at the rally for those who wish tangibly to affirm their unity in that Gospel.

1. I BELIEVE THAT ALL EVANGELICALS MUST BE FAITHFUL TO THE GOSPEL OF CHRIST AS EXPRESSED BY THE APOSTLE PAUL IN ROMANS AND GALATIANS, THAT IS THE GOSPEL OF JUSTIFICATION BY FAITH ALONE AND BY GRACE ALONE. JUSTIFICATION IS AN ACT OF GOD'S FREE GRACE BY WHICH HE FREELY PARDONS ALL OUR SINS AND REGARDS US AS RIGHTEOUS IN HIS SIGHT, ONLY ON ACCOUNT OF CHRIST'S RIGHTEOUSNESS IMPUTED TO US, AND THAT BY FAITH ALONE.
2. I BELIEVE THAT IT IS UNFAITHFUL TO PROMOTE, UNITE WITH, OR SUPPORT THOSE TEACHERS WHO OVERTHROW THE ABOVE GOSPEL.
3. I BELIEVE THAT WHILE ALL BELIEVERS AND CHURCHES SHOULD BE FREE TO PROMOTE THEIR OWN DOCTRINAL DISTINCTIVES THERE IS A RESPONSIBILITY FOR US TO EXPRESS OUR BASIC UNITY IN CHRIST AND IN THE GOSPEL.

If there is an adequate response on May 17th the Press will be informed that the Anglican RC Call to Partnership is not supported, but rather opposed by the Gospel churches of Merseyside.

The Moral Glory of Christ on the Cross

by Jim van Zyl

The death of our Lord Jesus has been the subject of a stream of never-ending meditations. Then too there are so many possible angles from which one can look at his death — for instance as prophecy fulfilled; as the substitutionary death for sinners. I want us for a while now to look at an aspect which is not always touched upon by some writers — the moral glory or moral perfection that emerges from the sayings of our Lord Jesus on the Cross. I am certainly not going to go into this in detail. A few thoughts only to stimulate your own thinking.

According to the records left us in the Gospels, Christ was on the Cross for some six hours during which time he accomplished our salvation. During this time of intense suffering and meditation, there fell from his lips only seven sayings, to give us any sort of an idea as to what was going on inside his own person and mind. And they are like windows which give us just a few glimpses of the perfection and shekinah glory that shone within his divine-human frame. Any man who can study those sayings in their depth and come away unconvinced about the divinity and moral perfection of Christ is only proving his own blindness.

The *first* thing that strikes one from a study of these sayings is the fact that our Lord betrays no sensitivity about what has happened to him. If I may put it very reverently — there is no sign of any ‘touchiness’, or resentment. Now humanly speaking there may have been grounds for this, in the fact that he was the victim of a gross miscarriage of justice. The Jews and the Roman authorities condemned our Lord in a thoroughly illegal manner. And yet we find no sign of any ‘martyr-spirit’ in our Lord. On the contrary, we hear him praying — ‘Father forgive them for they know not what they do’. One of the curses of our sinful, fallen natures is this aspect of peevishness and hatefulness that emerges whenever we are the victims of unjust accusations, or even more so, when we are very often rightly criticised! In fact it may become so bad that not only our fellow Christians, but also our own immediate family circle will always be on their guard lest they ‘touch that sore point’. This is not only carnal, but is condemned by the very lack of that spirit in our Lord.

There is none of this immaturity to be seen on the Cross. Our Lord portrays a majestic spiritual perfection and maturity, and in the

mockeries of his enemies we see not only their hatred but their churlishness contrasted with his forgiving attitude.

Then consider his complete lack of self-pity. Think about this for a moment, and you will realise how easy it is for us – when in difficult circumstances, or physical pain, or when proved to be in the wrong about some point – to sink into a sort of morass of self-pity. Oh, how sorry we are for ourselves and how we fondle ourselves and console ourselves by thinking of our virtues, and the injustice inflicted upon us. Now when you search through the sayings from the Cross you cannot discover one single word that betrays any self-pity on the part of Christ. He displays neither physical nor spiritual pity for himself. On the contrary, our Lord shows us that he is so full of pity for his very enemies and for sinners, that he not only prays for them, but identifies himself with their sin to deliver them from it.

Thirdly let me just mention the lack of any pride. Now it is one of the strange results of injustice, that if we are the victims of it, we tend to become proud of the fact. It is the ‘martyr-spirit’ emerging once again in a different manner. Ah, see what I must suffer, and see how quietly I am suffering it. But all this is missing on the Cross.

Fourthly let me mention one last negative – we see no bitterness in anything our Lord does or says on Calvary. And my dear friends, if we have not fallen into the trap, under so many circumstances in life, of ‘touchiness’, or self-pity, or pride, the Devil may make us deeply bitter because of what has happened to us. And yet see our Lord’s greater glory in that in all these things he displays only sheer perfection. He shows no bitterness to the Jews, or Pilate or to the soldiers. He only prays for them. Neither does he turn in hatred or ungraciousness towards the thief, who had first joined in the mockery and then sought for mercy, and in an ill-tempered manner refuse him his request. There is only the promise of divine tolerance and love – ‘Today shalt thou be with me in paradise.’ And even in those dark and mysterious depths of about the ninth hour when he cries out ‘My God, my God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?’ – we cannot discover any bitterness at such a desertion. It was a question that showed our Lord’s perplexity, but certainly not any bitterness towards the Father. And then we see finally that when all is accomplished he finishes his work on the Cross by commending into his Father’s hands his own spirit. Oh, let us be careful that when problems and trials and perplexities baffle us – that at those moments we do not indulge in any bitter thoughts about our loving heavenly Father. This is the very thing Hebrews 12:5 warns us against.

(continued on page 34)

Missionary Theology of the early Southern Baptists

by Tom Nettles

The story unfolds in five parts. We begin with the root of the matter, that is, how it all began.

1. The first churches

The original composition of Baptists in the southern part of the United States could be called two parts English and one part American. The earliest Baptist church in the South was founded by William Screven, born in Somerton, England, in 1629. In 1668 he moved from England to Boston, Massachusetts, where he became a successful merchant. Having been a Baptist in England (he was a part of a Particular Baptist Church that met in his home, and was baptised by the ill-fated Particular Baptist, Thomas Collier), he desired to start a 'Dissenters' church in Massachusetts, an undertaking strictly illegal in the colony of that day. He moved, therefore, north to Kittery, Maine, a location that was better for the founding of a Baptist church, and for the raw materials necessary to continue his thriving ship-building industry. Through a series of events more complex than the scope of this article will allow, a Baptist church was established in Kittery, Maine, on September 25th, 1682, having been sponsored by the First Baptist Church of Boston. This was a Calvinistic Baptist Church.

In 1696, because of Indian trouble, greater opportunity for expansion of the ship-building business, and special contact with other Protestant dissenters, Screven and the entire church moved from Kittery, Maine, to Charleston,

South Carolina, where they became the first fully-constituted Baptist church in the South. It can truly be said that the first Baptist church in the South was established in 1682 in Kittery, Maine, the northernmost state on the continent. When Screven retired as pastor in 1708, he urged the church to find a man as pastor who was orthodox and held tenaciously to the 'Confession of faith as sett forth by our Baptist Brethren in England in 1689'. This church was in its soteriology decidedly and purposefully Calvinistic.

The second English part that we must stir into the Southern Baptist brew, arises in South Carolina as a split from the Charleston Church. A group of General Baptists lived in South Carolina already when Screven came. They joined with his church. The doctrinal differences eventually became so important that the General Baptists split with Screven and formed a separate church, called Stono Church. General Baptists also established two to three churches each in Virginia and North Carolina.

The third element in Baptist life in the South arose during the First Great Awakening. The revival that occurred in New England in the first part of the eighteenth century, the First Great Awakening, caused great division

within the Congregational Church. The New Lights, supporters of the Awakening and defended by the great Jonathan Edwards, and the Old Lights, who were highly suspicious of the enthusiasm and conversion theology that arose in the Awakening, went at each other with great vigour. This conflict gave rise to some of the great analyses of true revival by Edwards, and saw Charles Chauncy, an Old Light polemicist, eventually become a Unitarian. Within New Light Congregationalism the desire to create a pure church and reaction against negative results of the Half-Way Covenant of 1662, led many to adopt believer's baptism. These Separate Baptists, as they came to be called, thrust many of their number into the Southern States where they introduced a zeal and a missionary spirit that has survived to this day.

The first Great Awakening produced expansions within Particular Baptist ranks, with invaluable aid from the famous Philadelphia Association. Particular Baptists became known as Regular Baptists. General Baptists also experienced growth, but, in a most remarkable manner, virtually all of General Baptist life was eaten up by the Particular Baptists. This phenomenon can be explained in part by the superior theological knowledge of the Particular Baptist preachers, the lack of discipline in the General Baptist Churches remedied on many occasions by aid from the Philadelphia Association, and the lack of assurance on the part of many members of these General Baptist churches. Regular Baptist life in the South by 1755 was, virtually without exception, Calvinistic.

Union between the Regular Baptists and the Separate Baptists did not take place until after the American Revolution. Separate Baptists led by the Sandy Creek church in North Carolina ex-

panded rapidly. When first established in Sandy Creek in 1755, the church was composed of eight couples. Within three years that number had expanded to 900 people, three fully-constituted churches and about six other major teaching points with large numbers attending each of them. Separate Baptist Associations were soon established in North Carolina, South Carolina, Virginia, Kentucky, and Georgia. Many a tale of courage and persecution could be told about this phenomenal expansion. Suffice it to say, that Separate Baptists were a zealous group characterised by a strong conversion theology, a delight in the visible display of the strong arm of the Lord in the slaying of sinners before his majestic holiness, and a deep sense of responsibility about organising for gospel preaching activity.

Many have characterised them as having an aversion for creeds and confessions of faith. This is true only to the extent that they loathed substituting confessional orthodoxy for true conversion. One must understand the plague of their Congregational background to grasp their suspicion of credal Christianity. When they eventually united with Regular Baptists it was on the basis of Calvinistic Confessions of Faith. In Virginia for example, the Separate Baptist adoption of the Philadelphia Confession of Faith cleared the way for their union with the Regular Baptists.

By around 1800, then, Baptists in the South looked like this. They were well organised at Association levels; took seriously the obligation to preach the gospel in unchurched areas, aimed at the conversion of sinners; and guarded with great fervour the great Calvinistic Doctrines of Grace. In this soil, Southern Baptist Mission theology first took root.

2. The Southern Baptist Convention born out of a desire to go to the Gentiles

The great missionary enterprise of the General Missionary Convention of the Baptist Denomination of the United States of America for Foreign Missions, born out of the zeal of Judson and Rice, involved Baptists from the North and the South in one sacred effort for the propagation of the gospel. Southerners participated equally with Northerners and held high elective positions in the Convention. It would not be an exaggeration to say that Baptists were elated that their age had seen the recovery of world-wide missionary efforts. Carey and Judson alike were true heroes in Baptist households and every published correspondence was greeted by earnest and eager readers. Baptists felt singularly blessed that God, in his Providence, had moved in that generation again to take the gospel to the nations. Great harmony and unity of purpose in this enterprise characterised, for the most part, the mentality during the first part of the nineteenth century. Two controversies, to be mentioned briefly later, did smear the picture, but for those who remained with the Triennial Convention, agreeing with its purpose, joy abounded.

This unity and fellowship was interrupted by the dominant ethical issue of the early nineteenth century — the slavery question. English Baptists, jubilant over the abolition of slavery in 1833 in the British Commonwealth, wrote American Baptists a letter. They admonished their American brethren to do all that they could to abolish slavery in their country. At first resistant to cause controversy within the fellowship, Lucius Bolles, the Corresponding Secretary of the Convention, responded that such an activity by the Convention *per se*, was quite out of the question.



R. Fuller

Subsequently, however, personal conviction became so complicated and intermingled with denominational affairs that it became impossible to exclude tension and suspicion from what was once a united fellowship. Many efforts, most of which were led by southerner Richard Fuller, to forestall argument and eventual division were tried, but failed. Fuller, in a sermon before the tenth meeting of the Triennial Convention in 1841, meeting in Baltimore, preached on the Cross. A most moving and eloquent statement of the power of the cross to melt the hearts of men, the sermon pleads for unity among brethren.

And I — I exclaim, with equal confidence, who, what, shall separate us from each other, united as we are by this love? What shall separate us? Shall persecution? No, that will only bind us closer. Shall the feuds by which this world society is torn, and even members of the same family armed and exasperated against each other — sectional jealousies and political rancour, and party malignity? No, the cross which lifted the Saviour from the earth lifts us high

above these petty tumults and distractions. What then? — what shall separate us? Internal strife, internecine dissention? God forbid. No, my brethren, I am persuaded better things of you. No, never, never, never, it cannot be. No, by our common toils and sufferings as Baptists: by the venerable men who sang together over the cradle of this Convention — those whose reverend forms I still see lingering fondly here — and those who this night, it is no presumption to believe, are beholding us with ineffable concern even from their thrones in glory: by the blood which cements us, and the new commandment written into that blood: by the memory and love of him who hath bound us together with ties indissoluble and eternal, and who is now in our midst showing his wounds, his hands, his feet, his side, his head, and saying ‘as I have loved you even so ought ye to love one another’: by all the glorious recollections of the past, and by all the more glorious anticipations of the future — this must not, will not, shall not, cannot be.

Division came, however, despite Fuller’s efforts.

Baptists in the South felt that they were on the verge of being excluded from participation in the joint missionary efforts. Georgia Baptists decided upon a test case. It failed to produce substantial information. Alabama Baptists took up the cause. They wrote the Acting Board of the Triennial Convention and in a series of resolutions asked directly, ‘Are slave-holders equally entitled with non-slaveholders to all the privileges and immunities of our joint associations?’ The answer came back to Alabama in December 1844. In a long letter which expressed regret that any such hypothetical case was sent forth, the answer was nevertheless clear. ‘If any one should offer himself as a missionary. having slaves, and insist on retaining them as his property, we could not

appoint him. One thing is sure, we could never be a party to anything that implied approbation of slavery.’

When the answer became public, the Virginia Baptist Foreign Mission Society issued a call to Baptists in the South to meet in Augusta, Georgia, in May of 1845. The purpose of the meeting was to confer on the best means of uniting Baptist churches in the South for the propagation of Messiah’s kingdom. On the third day of this consultative convention a constitution was adopted. The constitution stated the purpose of the Convention: ‘The purpose of this Convention is for carrying into effect the benevolent intentions of our constituents, by organising a plan for eliciting, combining and directing the energies of the whole denomination in one sacred effort, for the propagation of the gospel.’

Critics of the action said the Baptist Convention was formed because the ‘South must cling to and cherish slavery, in preference to anything else’. Southern Baptists denied it and responded, ‘Southern Baptists . . . do not “cling to and cherish slavery in preference to every thing else”. Slavery has been inherited by her, it clings to her; she feels it to be a burden and a curse; and gladly would she get rid of it, if she could do so, without inflicting greater mischiefs than those she would attempt to remove.’ On the contrary, the issue for the Southern Baptist was threefold: Constitutional, Ecclesiological and Missionary. The Constitution called for appointment of missionaries with the following qualifications: ‘Such persons only as are in full communion with some church of our denomination, and furnish satisfactory evidence of genuine piety, good talents, and fervent zeal for the Redeemer’s cause, are to be employed as missionaries.’ The South claimed that both the rights of the sending churches and the Constitution

had been violated by the implicit addition of another phrase to the constitutional qualifications for the missionaries. The additional phrase would be 'and are not slaveholders'. The South asked, 'What may we inquire, would be the value of an instrument which might be thus changed to suit the interests or caprice of a Board?' The South contended that slaveholders, qualified according to the express provisions of the Constitution, should not, as a class, be proscribed — declared ineligible — unfit to be appointed missionaries. According to the South, the action of the Board clearly violated the constitutional equality of all members of the Convention.

Beyond that, in principle it excluded the South from the missionary enterprise. A leader of the South writes:

It excludes the South, either directly or by fair inference, from all participation in the Foreign Mission enterprise, except in contributing funds, a privilege granted to the ungodly. If a slaveholder cannot be appointed a missionary, lest the appointment should imply, on the part of the Board, approbation of slavery, neither can he be appointed an agent or to any office, for the same reason. Nor does the consequence stop here. If a slaveholder is unfit to be appointed to office, then those persons, who own no slaves, but countenance slavery, are connected with slave-



B. Manly
50

holding churches, and derive their authority to preach the gospel from them, are equally unfit; and these two classes embrace all the ministers in the South. We now ask — we put it to the common sense and candour of every man, Is it fair, is it equal — that the South shall participate in all the burdens of the Convention, and be excluded from all its privileges?

In the words of James B. Taylor, a Virginia Baptist, the action had the effect of 'forbidding us to go to the Gentiles'. This was a condition that the Baptists of the South could not tolerate. Going into all the world, a Christian duty so recently rediscovered, could not so soon be forsaken. The only option was to form a new Convention. A missionary plant grew from missionary soil.

3. A unanimous and hearty approval of the Doctrines of Grace constituted the theological stance of the early Southern Baptists

The thesis for this section would not be easily acknowledged by many Southern Baptists today. Nevertheless, it must be affirmed boldly and persistently if we

have any chance of regaining the missionary obligation and vision that characterised the early days. Amazingly, the thesis is not difficult to demonstrate.

A look at the published works of leaders and presidents of the Convention for the first 50 years verifies this beyond all dispute.

Basil Manly, Snr., was one of the major architects of Southern Baptist life. For 13 years he served as pastor of the First Baptist Church of Charleston, South Carolina. In 1849, while in Alabama, Manly preached a sermon at a meeting of the North River and Tuscaloosa Associations. The purpose was to correct a tendency toward Arminianism in a group of men in the North River Association who were allowing the complexities of the relationship between divine sovereignty and human responsibility to move them toward diminishing divine sovereignty. The title of the sermon is 'Divine Efficiency Consistent with Human Activity'.

Manly admonishes his hearers, 'Let us not then give up either the doctrine of human activity and responsibility, or that of the divine sovereignty and efficiency. Why should they be thought inconsistent? Or why should those who cling to one be disposed to doubt, or disbelieve, or explain away the other?' When asking why men are disposed to believe one of these truths and reject the other, Manly answers his question with three reasons. The third one states:

The greatest reason, however, why the Christian family is divided on one or the other side — rejecting one or the other of these great doctrines — is that the doctrine of dependence on the Divine Being, throws us constantly into the hands, and on the mercy of God. Proud man does not like it; prefers to look at the other side of the subject; becomes blinded, in part, by gazing at one view of the truth alone; and forgets the Maker, in whom he lives, and moves and has his being.

Later Manly contends that the turning point in the entire discussion related to divine sovereignty is to 'account for the

first commencement of the work of grace in the heart. . . . This is the great question — the one question on this subject — the question on which all the others turn.' To answer the question Manly tells a story: 'I remember a pious old Methodist lady, singing with my mother, that hymn, "Come Thou Fount of Every Blessing;" and when she reached the verse "Jesus Sought Me When A Stranger, Wandering From The Fold Of God" — she burst into tears, and hid her face in her handkerchief, and said, "Yes, it was so, it was so".'

Then after exclaiming over the grace that brought his unwilling heart to seek the Lord, Manly poses the question, 'If God began this work, when did he conceive the purpose to do this? He does nothing without a purpose to do it.' His answer, condensed from the homiletical rhetoric which only a Southern Baptist preacher of the nineteenth century could perform, is, 'Known unto God are all his works from the foundation of the world.'

The death of Christ illustrates clearly the relation of human responsibility to divine sovereignty: 'The salvation of the world, your salvation and mine, and that of all the people of God, was suspended on the fact that the Son of God should die. This fact was foreseen — pre-determined: Yet, will any man say that the parties concerned were not both free, and guilty, in their course — acting as they did, from evil motives, and the promptings of their own bad hearts.' The care of Manly's language even in the passion of preaching is quite remarkable in this place. He defines the death of Christ for the salvation of the world as a death for 'all the people of God'.

W. B. Johnson, First President of the Southern Baptist Convention, was, for 28 years, President of the South Carolina Baptist Convention. One Baptist historian has said, 'No single

individual had more to do with determining the nature of the Southern Baptist Convention than W. B. Johnson'. In 1822, Johnson preached the missionary message before the Charleston Association, entitled 'Love Characteristic of the Deity'. Johnson contends that the most loving and benevolent end that God could pursue would be a display of his entire character to the created order. Johnson discusses the mighty themes of scripture to demonstrate how each and every event of history contributes to the end of displaying some aspect of the matchlessly inscrutable and wondrously complex character of God.

As, Johnson lists his themes they are:

The formation of the Universe — the creation of angels and men; of the former, the preservation of an innumerable host of holiness, and the irrecoverable apostasy of fallen myriads; of the latter, the degeneracy of the whole race, and recovery of a part — The atonement of the Lord Jesus Christ, and its glorious results.

In a mighty and masculine presentation of the purpose and providence of God, Johnson unfurls the banner of God's glory and love over each part in a way so zealous for God's sovereignty that none could ever doubt the theological system which gave rise to the sermon. His specific discussion of the atonement demonstrates Johnson's position.

In the atonement of Jesus, this plan is gloriously set forth. As man, he suffered under the law; As God he stamped an infinite value upon his sufferings, giving them the most complete effect, as a full and adequate atonement to the violated law, and dishonoured government of God. . . . The mercy of God, through the interposition of this glorious Mediator, finds access to the guilty, on perfect correspondence with his truth or veracity, which threatened



W. B. Johnson

the sinner with the penalty of the law; for Christ hath borne its curse, and consequently removes it from the sinner interested in his mediation. . . . [and then after discussing God's sovereignty in designing the atonement specifically for the ones 'on whom he would have mercy' Johnson continues:] One great object that Christ had in view, in undertaking the office of Mediator, was actually to redeem and introduce to glory, all believers in his name, all who are his people.

It should be remembered that Johnson is preaching a Missionary message. This entire exposition centres upon the purpose of encouraging an Association in the task of foreign and home missions. Johnson says, 'The character of Jehovah in this view is at all times worthy of our serious and devout consideration; but more especially so when we are assembled to consult about the interests of his kingdom, and to form and execute plans for the good of man and the glory of his great Creator.'

At the close of the sermon when drawing inferences from his theme Johnson reiterates this missionary purpose:

Inference 4. It appears from our subject that God has provided a costly sacrifice for the redemption of sinners. Let this amazing display of

divine love teach us to make sacrifices for his service, and for the prosperity of his kingdom — to be willing to spend and to be spent in the cause of God, and to lay ourselves out according to our means and ability for the good of our race, and the salvation of their immortal souls.

If the first President of the Convention was Calvinistic, no less was the man who was President of the Convention for more years than any other person. Patrick Hues Mell was born in Liberty County, Georgia, in 1814. He attended the Consultative, or Founding Convention in Augusta in 1845. While he taught at Mercer, a Baptist School, and the University of Georgia, he also served as pastor of several country churches in the area. He was one of the most notable preachers of his day having such influence in Georgia, that the central part of the state became known as Mell's kingdom. From 1857-1886 he served as President of the Georgia Baptist Convention. From 1863-1886 he served as President of the Southern Baptist Convention, a tenure interrupted only by his absence from the Convention 1872-1879 because of sickness. In 1850, Mell wrote a book entitled, *Predestination and the Saints' Perseverance Stated and Defended from the Objections of Arminians*. The treatise employs humour, penetrating logic, theological inference, and direct biblical exposition in a clear and forceful display of the Doctrines of Grace. Mell's succinct statement of these truths demonstrates a lucidity of thought and cogency of argument few could parallel in his day. Seeing election and reprobation as only two particular manifestations of the comprehensive sovereignty of God, he expressed their essence and relationship in the following way.

In reference to men, predestination is divided into two parts; 1st, as it relates to the elect, and 2nd, as it

relates to the non-elect. Having decreed to create a world, and to people it with beings who would voluntarily sin against him, he determined from eternity to save some, and to leave others to perish in their sins. 'Willing to show his wrath, and to make his power known,' he 'endured with much longsuffering' these as 'the vessels of wrath fitted to destruction: and that he might make known the riches of his glory' on those as 'the vessels of mercy which he had afore prepared unto glory'.

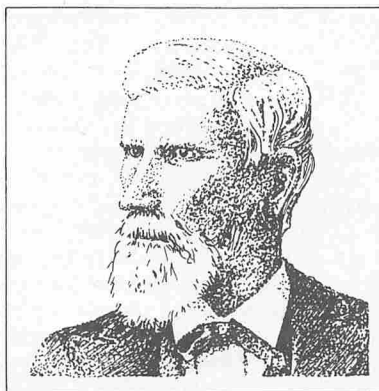
To carry out his purpose of grace, he chose some to holiness and eternal life, entered, for their sake, into the Covenant of Redemption with the Son and the Holy Ghost, appointed his Son as their substitute, to suffer in their stead, and having died to rise again, and appear as their advocate before his throne, appointed all the intermediate means necessary, and by an infallible decree, made their salvation sure.

In other places Mell discusses profoundly the entire scheme of God's sovereignty in salvation.

None of these, Manly, Johnson, or Mell should be viewed as unique or even rare in Southern Baptist life of the nineteenth century. John L. Dagg, the first writing Baptist theologian in America, shared their views of the sovereignty of grace. His theology is notable for its combination of uncompromising loyalty to historic Calvinism couched within the framework of man's duty to love and know God. James Petigru Boyce, the founder of the Southern Baptists' first theological seminary, Convention President 1872-1879, promoted that establishment largely to counteract what he perceived as a pernicious tendency toward Arminianism in many men who remained unschooled in matters of the faith and lacked sufficient personal zeal to train themselves in the doctrines of divine revelation. Arminianism is the natural

tendency of all men, and, unless arrested by a thorough and systematic exposure to divine revelation, will soon assume the form of a system hostile to the very heart of the gospel. Boyce's, *Abstract of Systematic Theology* was written as a textbook for the Systematic Theology classes at Southern Baptist Theological Seminary. Anyone familiar with its contents could testify to its thoroughgoing Calvinistic persuasion. Boyce's colleagues on the first faculty at Southern held virtually the same views. John A. Broadus wrote, 'The people who sneer at what is called Calvinism might as well sneer at Mont Blanc. We are not in the least bound to defend all of Calvin's opinions or actions, but I do not see how anyone who really understands the Greek of the Apostle Paul or the Latin of Calvin and Turretin can fail to see that these latter did but interpret and formulate substantially what the former teaches.'

Names of others could multiply and quotations from their works could



P.H. Mell

extend proportionately. So pivotal has been the influence of the ones mentioned thus far, however, that even from this slight discussion a conclusion can be drawn without fear of serious contradiction: The theology of nineteenth century Southern Baptists was historic evangelical Calvinism. Neither ideologically nor practically did they consider it as anything other than supportive of their missionary impulse.

4. *Southern Baptists did not hold their Calvinistic theology in such a way as to negate human responsibility*

Southern Baptists were never plagued with enervating debates concerning the duties of man relative to the gospel commands of repent and believe. Eighteenth century English life suffered from such a malady. Many actually zealously defended Lewis Wayman's and John Brine's rejections of duty-faith. Brine admitted that evangelical repentance was the duty of particular persons. 'But it can't be proved,' Brine argued, that it is 'the duty of unregenerate persons, to exercise that grace. This becomes the duty of men, when they have warrant from the divine Word, to consider God as their Redeemer in

Christ, which no unregenerate men have any warrant to do.' Neither is faith in Christ either the duty or privilege of lost men. For though faith 'in the promised Messiah', is preached by John the Baptist and the apostles, 'what proof does this afford, that faith is the duty of such persons, as have not at present warrant to consider God, as their Redeemer through Christ? None at all.' In this scheme only the already-saved-and-assured are told they must repent and believe.

Before the formation of the Convention, Baptists in America had already

been through their version of the hyper-Calvinistic controversy. The Anti-Mission-Society movement, which began as a protest, not against missions or evangelism, but against centralised agencies doing the work designated in Scripture to a local church, eventually degenerated into what became known as the 'Hardshell' or 'anti-effort' movement. This reaction to the missionary societies had already done its damage before the 1840's and those in agreement with their particular tenets had formed their own Associations. The Calvinism with which the Southern Baptist Convention was born had as an inseparable part of its system the reality of human responsibility to do all that God requires.

As mentioned before, the entire theology of John L. Dagg is organised around this theme. Consider Dagg's answer to a notable objection to the doctrines of sovereign grace.

Objection: If repentance and faith are gifts of grace bestowed by the Holy Spirit in effectual calling, men on whom this grace is not conferred, are not blameworthy for being impenitent and unbelieving.

The objection virtually assumes, that men are under no obligation to serve God further than they please; or that if their unwillingness to serve him can be overcome by nothing less than omnipotent grace, it excuses their disobedience. Let the man who makes to himself this apology for his impenitence and unbelief, consider well, with what face he can present his plea before the great judge. 'I did not serve God, because I was wholly unwilling to serve him; and so exceedingly unwilling that nothing less than omnipotent grace could reconcile me to the hated service.' Who will dare offer this plea on that great day?

The following passage from W. B. Johnson upholds the same viewpoint.

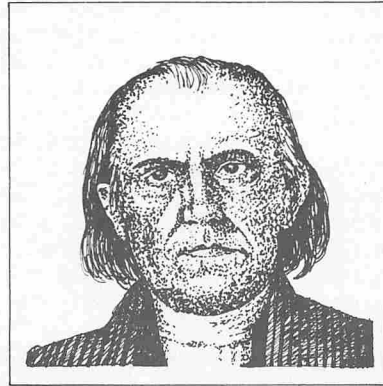
He is discussing the condition of those who receive no benefit from God's gracious activities effectually to redeem a portion of the fallen race.

They are not excluded from God's favour by any arbitrary power in him. They exclude themselves by their own act — by their own voluntary opposition to him, and persevering rejection of the only plan by which they can be saved. God as the righteous judge, will only inflict on them that punishment, to which they expose themselves, under circumstances of most aggravated guilt. Jesus is freely *exhibited* to them. Without money, and without price, irrespective of merit in them, and freed from all conditions on their part, they are invited, encouraged, commanded to believe in Christ, and assured that believing in his name, they shall have life and be eternally saved. For the exercise of this faith, they have the natural ability. For with the same ability that they disbelieve, they can believe. Their hearts are at enmity against God. Under the influence of this enmity, they exercise the ability which they possess, in refusing to accept Jesus. They refuse to exercise faith in his name. They treat the offer of his mercy with neglect, if not with contempt. God is under no obligation to exert his transforming influence upon their hearts, to bring them to the exercise of faith. Where then is the injustice or malevolence in leaving them to the awful result of their deliberate choice? And if it seem good to the all perfect mind to leave them in this state, who is he that shall reply against God?

Richard Fuller's great sermon on Predestination is built around the dual truth of God's sovereignty and man's responsibility. Fuller, Third President of the Convention, says 'the antipredeterminarian system is wholly untenable. It is good for nothing, since it solves no difficulty, it stultifies our reason, it is practical atheism, and it contradicts the

express assertions of the Bible.' He just as vigorously argues for man's free agency and responsibility, for 'every threat, every exhortation, every exhortation in the Bible supposes that man is a free agent'. In fact should one accuse Fuller of denying the doctrine of man's free agency he would respond, 'On the contrary, I accept it most heartily and insist upon it, for otherwise I must denounce my own distinct consciousness, I must disbelieve the Scriptures, I must make God the author and yet the punisher of sin, I must precipitate myself into I know not what absurdities. I embrace both doctrines. Nay, and more, I see clearly that if I reject either of these great truths and cling to the other, it will tow me away into fathomless depths of folly and impiety.' When asked to reconcile the two doctrines Fuller simply carries the questioner to Scripture and says 'God fully understands his decrees; he also comprehends man's free agency; and he declares as we have seen, that all our speculations are wrong; that both these doctrines are true; and, of course, that there is no discrepancy between them.'

Southern Baptists did not, however, confuse their high view of the responsibility of man with a Sandemanian understanding of faith. An American Sandemanian controversy had already taken place in the 1830's in Baptist life. Alexander Campbell, of French descent on his mother's side and Scotch-Irish on his Father's, cast his lot with the Baptists in Virginia in 1812. He was a champion of Baptist ecclesiology for a few years and was quite formidable in debates about baptism. Soon, however, he began to doubt the Baptist emphasis on the personal activity of the Holy Spirit in regenerating sinners and opted for a purely intellectualistic view of faith. He also denied the necessity of stating an experience of grace before baptism, opting rather for baptism as a completion of regeneration and that in



J. L. Dagg

baptism sin is washed away. A man must be willing to say merely, 'I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God', to be qualified for baptism, where his salvation is then completed. Obviously where such a view of faith prevails, the Christian doctrine of perseverance perishes.

Baptists held to a radically different concept of the power of the Spirit in regeneration and the resultant change in the life of the sinner. The cleavage became so wide that Campbell and his associates were disfellowshipped from the Baptist Associations in which they arose.

Southern Baptists instinctively opposed, therefore, such 'notional' faith. Since they were born and bred in an area permeated with churches which followed the teachings of Campbell, virtually all of their descriptions of true saving faith carefully avoid such errors. R. B. C. Howell's article on perseverance clearly displays this view. Howell was the second President of the Southern Baptist Convention, 1851-1858, and long-time pastor of First Baptist Church, Nashville, Tennessee. In defining his doctrine of perseverance, Howell first eliminates several false understandings: 'In the first place, we predicate final perseverance in grace of

those only who are “born again” — the saints of Christ Jesus — and not of mere professors of religion. Let this fact be kept constantly in memory. Professors of religion, members of the churches, are not all, as a matter of course, the children of God, and followers of the Redeemer. Many, in every age, have assumed the outward forms of godliness, in whose hearts true piety had no dwelling place. In the estimation of enlightened Christians of every class, *such are expected to “fall away”*. The causes of perseverance should not escape consideration, according to Howell. The eternal purpose of the triune God to redeem for himself a people zealous of good works includes, of course, the regenerating power of the Holy Spirit. ‘Our regeneration,’ says Howell, ‘and sanctification, constitute important parts of the process by which we are fitted and qualified for heaven, and give undoubted proof that it is the intention of the Holy Ghost to save us.’ In harmony with such an eternal purpose, man’s nature as constituted in regeneration persists in the pursuit of holiness. Howell argues,

It is essential to the very nature of grace that it lead to holiness and obedience in this life, as well as to salvation in that which is to come. But it is said, men are free agents, and therefore, have the power to throw

away their ‘faith and regeneration’. Yes, men are free agents; but will they therefore act contrary to nature? Because you are a free agent will you leave the abodes of civilisation, resort to the fields, and ‘eat straw like the ox?’ Never. You will not because it is in opposition to your nature. The nature of the Christian is renewed. His *will* is turned to God, and it determines him to serve God. Can you will in opposition to your will? His *affections* are holy. You love our Lord Jesus Christ. Can you then love and follow sin? Can you have experience of its criminality and ingratitude, and misery, and not instinctively reject it? . . . Can confidence of your safety in Christ become the motive which impels you to rebel against him, and follow the life of a sinner? Surely not. Such things cannot be.

This view of saving faith, I think, is the only view which can support an ongoing vigorous evangelism and missions programme. To forsake it would be, on the one hand, to abandon men to hopelessness and, on the other hand, to trivialise and bring disgrace upon the holy purposes of God. Early Southern Baptists truly believed that the Gospel was the power of God unto salvation — so powerful as to make a responsible but hostile sinner willing to repent and believe in the day of God’s power, consequently:

5. *Early Southern Baptists had no fear of exhorting men to repent of sin and believe in Christ*

When early Southern Baptists confronted sinners, they practised what they preached. If all men are bound by duty to repent of sin and come to Christ in faith then the gospel minister is duty-bound to exhort men to such faith. P. H. Mell in his book on Predestination says, ‘Calvinists rejoice in the privilege con-

ferred upon them to preach the gospel to every creature. . . . They feel no hesitation in calling upon all men, and commanding them in the name of God to repent and believe the gospel, and in pointing all penitent sinners to a crucified Saviour. . . . They feel no hesitation, therefore — nay, they rejoice

to declare to every burdened soul: Christ is able to save to the uttermost all that come unto God by Him.'

J. P. Boyce, the great Southern Baptist defender of Calvinistic orthodoxy, has a published sermon entitled *This Man Receiveth Sinners*. The substance deals with the Pharisees' charge that Jesus received sinners. Boyce claimed that the charge was too little, for Jesus did much more than receive sinners. Using the parables of the lost sheep, the lost coin, and the lost boy, Boyce closes his sermon with the following appeal. I will only quote selected portions of the appeal.

Do you believe Jesus my hearers? Has he spoken here the truth concerning himself? Is it, can it be true that Jesus thus yearns over each one here? That he thus earnestly desires the salvation of each soul?

Hear his cry of old. How shall I give thee up Ephraim? See him weeping over Jerusalem itself doomed to destruction. Hear his own declaration of his feelings as set forth before you today. Surely in the light of these things you cannot doubt it.

Too long have you lingered in the ways of sin and folly. Too long have you stood and trembled and doubted what might be his feelings towards you.

Hearken today to the mercies of his yearning love by which he would win you. It tells you of sinners received. No obstacles hinder. No sins shut out from his presence.

It tells you of sinners waited for — longed for with deep desire.

... It tells you of his earnest seeking, by which he would take you wounded and sore and unable to return and take you back upon his shoulders to the fold.



J. P. Boyce

It tells you of his patient searching, seeking in what way or in what place he may find you. . . .

Can you resist these pleadings? Can you reject such love? Can you disappoint such earnest longings and desires?

Will you not welcome to your heart your blessed Lord, your glorious Saviour who thus seeks you that he may regain his wandering sheep, his lost treasure, his prodigal child — that he may once more number you among his own?

Suffer this day the word of exhortation. Would that I could utter such words as would make you hesitate no longer.

Where shall I find them?

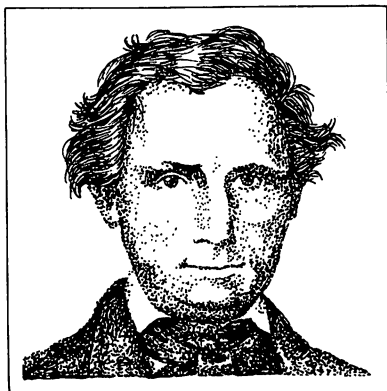
Similar appeals are found in each of the men mentioned in this paper as well as a host of others of that day in Southern Baptist life. Some appeals may, in your view and in mine, be too bold and wrench the appeals from the wrong theological categories. Others, we may conclude, rather than too careless, are too careful in the way sinners are exhorted. The lack of precision, however, does not arise from a lack of light; rather, it comes from a true passion for the souls of men, made in the image of

God and no less blinded nor more blinded than each of these preachers was when the gospel entered their lives and gave sight. In this matter of exhortation we certainly must learn to be chaste, as Judson says, and 'even our compassion for souls and our zeal for their salvation must be kept in subordination to the supreme will of God'. Neither must we, nevertheless, repress the true and undeniable swellings of grace in our own hearts that earnestly yearn for every man to know the love of Christ. As one commentator of another century said in commenting on John 1:41, 'for such is the nature of grace, 'tis very communicative, and those that have it are very desirous that all others should be partakers of it.' This same commentator (Acts 26:28) contends, in fact, that 'it is an evidence of grace, when the heart is drawn out in desires, after the salvation of others'. If John Gill can say so much, we must certainly be willing to understand why passion is often the most characteristic feature of an exhortation.

I close with the appeal at the end of Richard Fuller's message on Predestination:

Alas, you have lived, and you will leave this house to go on living, as if salvation were the only affair unworthy of your serious attention. Lay these things solemnly to heart. Go not all the way to the judgment to discover that your destruction is unnecessary and wilful and wanton.

Or, if you are bent on self-destruction — if no entreaties from God, no re-



R.B.C. Howell

straints of his providence, no solicitations of the Spirit, no expostulations, no tears of your Saviour can stop you — at least do not insult Heaven by pretending that you are waiting for more effectual influences. This plea admits that you feel some strivings of the Holy Ghost; why do you not comply with these? Why resist these, and desire more powerful movements? What is this, but openly to proclaim that you will try conclusions with the Almighty? that you are resolved to strive against your Maker, to yield nothing to him willingly, to defy him as long as you can, and only to submit to a sad necessity when he shall compel you? Is there anything in revelation — do you seriously think that there is anything in the secret counsels of eternity — to justify the hope that God will be thus appeased? What, my beloved friend, what can you expect from such deliberate, unrelenting opposition to the Sovereign of the universe? What must be the issue of such an unequal, disastrous, desperate conflict?

Literature on the Covenants

A review article

Some Baptists have expressed a phobia about the covenant of grace as though we have something to fear. Anxiety about this subject is ill-founded. The subject of the covenants is exceedingly rich and a series on that theme can be most helpful in the local church. Foremost Baptist leaders or writers such as John Bunyan, John Gill, Andrew Fuller, Alexander Carson, C. H. Spurgeon and A. W. Pink handled this subject with profit. The main principle to observe is the unity and diversity of the covenants. The relationships of the covenants to God's overall purpose and to each other must be carefully observed. It is true that writers like J. G. Vos try to make a case out of the covenants for paedobaptism. It is important to show that the very opposite conclusion is the correct one as David Kingdon has demonstrated in his book *Children of Abraham* and as I have sought to show in my book *The Testimony of Baptism*. It is a sad loss if through prejudice potential expositors neglect this grand theme because it encompasses the whole drama of redemption.

Before we get down to reviews I would like to refer to a 14-page booklet by Walter J. Chantry called *The Covenants*. This brief work drives home the all important fact that there is only one covenant of works: the Adamic covenant. Also it stresses that the Mosaic covenant is a covenant of grace from first to last. Many fall into the trap of thinking that the Mosaic covenant was a covenant of works. Walt Chantry is a terse and stern physician and it is likely he will cure you if you are confused about this subject. But I hope that brother Chantry will put more of

Galatians 6:1 into his writings in case he frightens away some whom he most needs to help. If you send a dollar it ought to cover the expenses for this booklet: Walter J. Chantry, Grace Baptist Church, CARLISLE, PA 17013.

God's Covenants Vol. 1 The Covenant of Works.

Malcolm Watts. 120pp. Paperback. Available from the author at £2.00 which includes postage and packing. Address: 16 Devonshire Road, Salisbury, Wiltshire.

The author concentrates on the covenant made with Adam. The quality of his work is excellent. He explains why God deals with men by way of covenant (p. 16). We owe a great debt to Professor Murray, but one of his mistakes was to imply that the covenant with Adam as the representative of mankind was merely an Adamic Administration. We can thank Pastor Watts for the thoroughness of his treatise in establishing the covenantal nature of God's dealings with Adam. He shows effectively that the moral law which was the condition of the covenant of works remains as the rule and standard for all men everywhere (p. 92). Pastor Watts quotes appropriately from an impressive array of writers. His chapter headings run as follows: covenants human and divine; the making of the covenant of works; the parties; the condition; the time of trial; the penalty; the promise; the symbols; consent and agreement; tempted, fallen and lost; the covenant of works today; under law; under grace; God's other covenant.

The Christ of the Covenants

D. Palmer Robertson. 308pp. \$9.95.
Baker Book House

Professor Robertson is associate professor of theology at Westminster Theological Seminary. He contributes regularly at the Banner of Truth conferences for ministers in the U.S.A.

Professor Robertson first explains the nature, extent, unity and diversity of the divine covenants. The work is thorough without being tedious. He refers to many passages which we might easily overlook such as Ezekiel 37:24-26 (p. 42) where the prophet alludes to the Abrahamic, Mosaic and Davidic covenants with a word of prophecy concerning Israel's future covenantal expectations. The author comments on the Sabbath asserting that neither anti-nomianism nor dispensationalism may remove the obligation of the Christian today to observe the creation ordinance of the Sabbath (p. 69).

Under the title, 'The Covenant of Redemption', Professor Robertson traces out the covenants made with Adam (the covenant of commencement), Noah (the covenant of preservation), Abraham (the covenant of promise), Moses (the covenant of law), David (the covenant of the Kingdom), and Christ (the covenant of consummation). He includes an excursus with the title — 'Which structures Scripture — Covenants or Dispensations?'

The author tries to make a case for solidarity between parents and children on the basis of the circumcision of eight day old infants in Abraham's household, a suggestion which we firmly reject. He also argues that we should administer this sign today (p. 149). However we should observe that Abraham was the head of a clan or miniature nation which included Ishmael. By promise he was the head of a nation through Isaac, the race of Israel. We should note too that to

this race as a whole was given the rite of circumcision, a type of the new birth. In the New Covenant administration entrance into the Church of Christ is not by physical descent but by new birth (Jn. 1:12, 13, Heb. 8:8-13). Apart from this observation the expositions and discussions of this book are thoroughly edifying.

Covenant and Creation

An Old Testament Covenantal Theology
William J. Dumbrell. 217pp. Paperback.
£6.95. Paternoster Press

William Dumbrell, who used to teach at Moore Theological College, Sydney is now Professor of Old Testament Theology at Regent College, Vancouver, Canada. Again we have a valuable book. The author's method is to take up each phase or epoch of covenant administration and to break it down for discussion, each section ending with a lucid summary. He explores many avenues of the theme with profit. For example he takes up the flood imagery in its connection with 1 Peter 3:19-21.

The interesting word in this last quotation is Greek *eperōtēma*, translated as 'appeal'. Such a translation, however, hardly seems to do justice to a New Testament theology of baptism, since this would reduce baptism to no more than an acted prayer. The word *eperōtēma*, however occurs in the contemporary legal terminology in the technical sense of 'entering into a contract'. This would make a translation of 'commitment' or 'pledge' a possibility, with the thought perhaps of that undertaking made at the time by the candidate for baptism which would correspond to a baptismal confession. Equally possible and doubly attractive is the contractual sense that the word is well able to bear. In this case baptism is being regarded as an acknowledgement of covenantal obligations, and thus at

the same time a commitment which is intended to be a moral witness to the world. By itself baptism is merely a water rite which cannot save, for nothing is effected by the rite itself. But baptism can be the means by which the world is renounced, just as by committing himself to the waters, Noah condemned the world and became an heir to the righteousness which is by faith (Heb. 11:7).

The scholarly nature of the work will be noted from this quotation. However the book is by no means heavy, much of the technical data is presented in a smaller type so that the reader can carry on if he chooses not to check the details.

In his exposition of the Sinai Covenant, Professor Dumbrell expounds on the theme of the covenant and law. He is particularly helpful on the saga of Israel's apostasy in the wilderness and the veil of Moses (p. 105ff), and on the subject of the efficacy of the sacrificial system (Exod. 35-40). He rejects the notion that the system was a vague and meaningless ritual (p. 111). The exposition and summary at the end of the chapter on the Davidic Covenant is outstanding, as is the section on the New Covenant which provides splendid expositions on the predictions of Isaiah, Ezekiel and Jeremiah. Paternoster are to be commended for the high standard of production. The work is a pleasure to handle.

The Divine Covenants

A. W. Pink. 317pp. Hardback. 1973.
Baker Book House

As with the former authors Mr. Pink takes his reader through the administration of the covenant stage by stage: Adam and the covenant of works, the Noahic Covenant, the Abrahamic, the Sinaitic, the Davidic and the Messianic. Surely A.W.P. wrote this book in his mature years as he shows a masterly grasp of the subject. His aptitude to light upon outstanding passages from previous authors is evident throughout. A sample of a vintage quote is from Thomas Scott (p. 150). Darby and C. H. Mackintosh are shown to be wholly unreliable (pp. 143ff). Mr. Pink has his own inimitable devotional style and for application far exceeds the previous authors whose strength lies almost wholly in their technical expertise.

If the covenant drama is likened to a great musical symphony in six movements then Robertson and Dumbrell render it with technical brilliance but Pink does so with much more feeling and style. Robertson is weak in the final movement which should be a crescendo and a thrilling climax to the whole. I am glad to have all these valuable books observing that all of them together have by no means exhausted this lucrative theme. There is much covenant territory yet to be occupied.

E.H.

Reformed Ministries International

A statement of objective and a brief history

by Dennis Hustedt

Reformed Ministries was formed to meet a clear need: to provide pastors and church leaders behind the Iron Curtain with Biblical literature which broadens and shapes their understanding of Scripture and the Christian Faith.

For several years I had opportunity to serve a para-church organisation which attempted to minister among Slavic peoples. This ministry, like most such agencies, produced Russian radio programmes for broadcast into the Soviet Union. They also purchased Bibles as monies were available. During summer months, these Scriptures and any other Christian literature (usually in English) would be transported into Eastern bloc countries by various means.

As we are all aware, there is an acute shortage of Bibles and New Testaments in the Iron Curtain countries. However, what burdened my heart most on my several extended trips into Eastern Europe was the lack of solid, Biblical reading material for pastors and church leaders. Pastors were constantly requesting books or Christian magazines in English. I reflected on my own library while surveying the handful of English titles owned by a Hungarian pastor. Most pastors had no literature whatsoever.

Several experts on religious life in Eastern Europe concurred with my growing belief that this was one area where the Western church could truly help believers in the East — yet little literature was being produced.

In 1981 Reformed Ministries was organised for the purpose of translating, typesetting, printing, and distributing the kind of books and sermons which, we prayed, would be of real value to pastors and church leaders in these Communist countries.

We decided to produce relatively short works on various Christian doctrines. These works are not only cheaper to produce, translators are able to complete the material without tiring at the sheer vastness of the undertaking.

Our ministry began translating books in the Romanian language. Soon after commencing this work, Rev. Josif Ton, leading minister of the Romanian Baptist church, was expelled from his native country. As you may know, his stated desire upon arrival in the West was to publish Christian books for the Romanian people. We gave control of initial Romanian translation over to him, and translators prepared the *1689 Baptist Confession of Faith* and the *Attributes of God* by A. W. Pink.

Since 1982 Reformed Ministries has concentrated on translating material into the Hungarian and Russian languages. The *1689 Confession, Attributes of God*, and works by M'Cheyne, Spurgeon, Ryle, Edwards and others have been completed.

A total of nine works are completed in Hungarian, with most of these books already in Hungary and parts of Hungarian-speaking Romania.

Currently five works in Russian have been translated and are in the process of being typeset for publication.

Studies in Biblical Theology

The Progression of Revelation in the New Testament, Part Four

by Don Garlington

In this final study of the progressive character of N.T. revelation we come to consider the importance of what Paul calls 'the obedience of faith'. Before proceeding, we recall simply that the purpose of this current series of articles is to examine the N.T.'s witness as it bears upon the issue of the normal Christian life. That is to say, what is the on-going, day by day, life and work of the church? What is the specific character of Christian existence in this period between the two comings of Christ? Several answers have been given thus far, but it remains now to round off our inquiry by looking in brief at faith's obedience as an integral aspect of the God-honouring life.

Paul's phrase 'the obedience of faith' appears twice in his letter to the Romans (1:5 and 16:26). My study of this phrase has led me to the conclusion that it means two things at the same time.¹ (1) The obedience which *is* faith, that is, a believing submission to the righteousness of God as revealed in the gospel (Rom. 10:3). In receiving Christ the Christian has put down the weapons of his rebellion and has obeyed the summons of God to repent and believe in the gospel.² (2) The obedience which *grows out of* faith. Almost every time Paul uses the terms 'obey' or 'obedience' he has in mind the total commitment of the Christian to please his Lord in all things.³ Professor Murray speaks to the issue when he writes, 'Faith is regarded as an act of obedience, of commitment to the gospel of Christ. Hence the implications of this expression "obedience of faith"

(continued on page 28)

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Translators for both the Hungarian and Russian languages reside in Toronto, Canada. Printing is being efficiently accomplished by members of the Cuckfield Baptist Church in Sussex. Upon completion of printing the materials are air-mailed to Vienna, Austria where an established mission organisation oversees the distribution of the materials.

Every attempt has been made to ensure quality production at the lowest possible price. At this time only the translators are reimbursed for their services. All others who serve Christ through Reformed Ministries are volun-

tary workers. We thank the Lord for those who minister in this way.

Reformed Ministries International strongly seeks your prayer support, that the ministry would meet with God's favour and his blessing.

A full listing of translated works may be received by writing to: Rev. Dennis Hustedt, Bethel Baptist Church, 714 Bethel Drive, Joliet, IL 60735, U.S.A.

Some copies of translated materials may also be secured by writing to the above address, or, in Great Britain, by writing to: Stanley Hogwood, 13 Lucastes Avenue, Haywards Heath, Sussex.

are far-reaching. For the faith which the apostleship was intended to promote was not an evanescent act of emotion but the commitment of wholehearted devotion to Christ and to the truth of his gospel. It is to such faith that all nations are called.⁴ The point is inescapable in Romans 6:17. Christians are those who have obeyed *from the heart* that form of teaching which they have been given. We remember as well that the same apostle spoke of his ministerial labours in terms of taking *every thought* captive unto the obedience of Christ (2 Cor. 10:5).⁵

It is the second dimension of faith's obedience which is so vital for our theme. More especially, Paul in Romans 6:17 can refer to a 'form' or 'type' of teaching (*typos didachēs*) which was well known and well defined, and to which he could appeal in matters of Christian life and walk. In other places Paul names this body of teaching 'the tradition(s)'.⁶ The word 'tradition' means 'that which has been handed down'. In its distinctively N.T. sense the term has reference to that authoritative body of doctrine which originated with Christ, was handed down to the apostles by him, and finally passed on to the churches by the apostles.⁷ The content of the tradition(s) is God's redemptive act in Christ along with its divinely infallible explanation and application.

Because of this doctrine of the tradition Paul can speak in his Pastoral Epistles of 'sound doctrine', 'sound faith' and 'the pattern of sound words'.⁸ Because of the preciousness of the thing which has been handed down from Christ, Paul exhorts Timothy in the strongest terms to guard 'the deposit' (1 Tim. 6:20, 2 Tim. 1:4), another name for the tradition.⁹ But not only are ministers of the gospel required to safeguard the tradition, the church corporately is called on to do the same thing. Because believers have received the gospel for what it really is, the Word of God, they are bound to 'stand firm and hold to the traditions' which they were taught, either by word of mouth or by letter (2 Thess. 2:15). On the other side, the brother who walks in a disorderly way is the one who disregards the tradition received from Paul (2 Thess. 3:6). Thus, the charge to keep the commandment spotless and free from reproach (1 Tim. 6:14) is of supreme importance. 'The renewing of life and the putting off of the old man,' says Ridderbos, 'stand in the closest relationship with the knowledge of Christ thus received and must continually be subjected to that norm'.¹⁰ We see, then, that the essence of godliness entails the necessity of guarding and defending the truth (cf. Rom. 16:17).

We should recall at this point that this series of articles has to do with the progression of revelation in the N.T. and its bearing on the life of the church in the 20th century. As regards the issue of contending for the truth, we see a clear pattern in the letters of Paul. The earliest Paulines (especially 1 and 2 Thess.) make quite a point about Christians clinging to the traditions taught by the apostles. The middle epistles (especially Romans and Galatians), continue the emphasis with their insistence that the believer commit himself wholly to the

form of teaching which is the standard of holiness. Then the Pastorals come as the climax of this teaching. It is significant that the letters to Timothy and Titus are chronologically the last of Paul's epistles. These writings serve as a real transition into that time when direct revelation would become a thing of the past. Accordingly, Paul's prime concern at the last is his prime concern at the beginning. That is, that the truth handed down by Christ be preserved from corruption and that Christians conform themselves entirely to this body of truth. The Pastorals are full of this kind of emphasis. Coming as the last of Paul's letters it is furthermore significant that nothing is said of the *charismata* which occupied so much of his attention in 1 Corinthians. Rather, Paul is concerned with the hard work of preaching, teaching, pastoral care, church administration and the refutation of error. This very progression of revelation through Paul, reaching its climax in the Pastoral Epistles, speaks volumes about the 'normal Christian life'. Whatever gifts God may sovereignly bestow (or withhold), the commission and mandate of the church are none other than those laid upon Timothy and Titus. Therefore, the on-going, day-by-day, life of the church is obedience to the Pauline commands to safeguard the deposit, along with the manifold duties imposed upon the first guardians of the same deposit (tradition).

We remember, of course, that the Pauline letters are not the only documents of the N.T. The letters of John place their stress on 'the tests of life' and on maintaining orthodoxy. The Epistle to the Hebrews exhorts to perseverance in the faith, especially in the face of difficult experience which is anything but 'charismatic' in character. The letters of Peter likewise encourage believers to be faithful in the fires of persecution; and they also insist upon adherence to the old truths (especially 2 Peter 1). The Epistle of Jude insists that Christians be zealous to contend for the faith delivered once-for-all to the saints. The letter of James presupposes an orderly and proper mode of Christian existence as they confess the faith of the Lord Jesus Christ; and James exhorts them to this end. The letters to the seven churches in Revelation 2 and 3 are unmistakably clear in the requirements exacted by Christ, the risen Son of Man. These requirements include perseverance, resistance of false doctrine (and *false apostles*) and faithful witness to the gospel of grace. Not one thing is said about a kind of experience designed to lift one above the trials, testing, steadfastness and *slog* of the Christian life. Revelation is rightly placed in the final position of the N.T. canon, bringing to completion, as it does, the final speaking of God in Christ. If any book should dictate what the church is to be about between the two comings of the Son of Man, it is this one. Yet interestingly enough, the Revelation emphasises the very same matters as Paul in the final letters of his writing ministry.

To summarise, Revelation in the N.T. goes back to Christ who himself received a commandment from his Father as to what he should say.¹¹ In turn, he passes on the truth to his apostles who are commissioned to transmit the same truth to the churches. The churches then are charged to preserve and defend this self-

same truth and live according to its precepts. Paul names such truth the 'tradition(s)' and the 'deposit'. In short, the 'normal Christian life' revolves around the manifold responsibilities pertaining to the truth of God in Christ.

The recognition of what has been said here is entirely practical in its consequences. Of particular importance is the fact that Christian experience is *truth-oriented*. This is not to play down the role of experience (or feelings) in the Christian life; but it is to say that experience must be grounded in that *doctrine* which is the source of all legitimate experience, because this is the doctrine that originates with *the Christ who is experienced* by faith. Therefore, any experience which promises a 'shortcut' to sanctification or victorious living and bypasses the hard realities of testing and faithful perseverance cannot be the experience of Christ and the apostles. But on the other side, if our experience of the living God is rooted and grounded in the objective truths of the Word, our stability will be the same as that Word itself.

References

¹ A convenient summary of the different interpretations is provided by C. E. B. Cranfield, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans*, Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1975, Vol. 1, p. 66. Professor Cranfield's commentary has now been issued in an abridged version, which should make it more usable for working pastors.

² See the same parallel of faith and obedience in John 3:16 and Hebrews 3:18-19. In Romans 10:16; 11:23, 30, 31 the point is unmistakable.

³ Romans 6:12, 16, 17; 1 Corinthians 14:34; 2 Corinthians 2:9; 7:15; 10:5, 6; Ephesians 6:1; Philippians 2:12; Colossians 3:20, 22; 2 Thessalonians 3:14; Philemon 21; Titus 2:5, 9. The believer's obedience is rooted in the One who himself was obedient unto death, Philippians 2:8.

⁴ *The Epistle to the Romans*, vol. 1, pp. 13-14.

⁵ Cf. the comments of P. E. Hughes, *The Second Epistle to the Corinthians*, p. 353.

⁶ 2 Thessalonians 2:15; 3:6; 1 Corinthians 11:2. The same doctrine is found in those passages where Paul speaks of delivering and receiving information (as tradition): 1 Corinthians 11:2, 23; 15:1, 3; Galatians 1:12; cf. Galatians 1:9; Philippians 4:9; 1 Thessalonians 2:13; 4:1. Also Paul makes reference to receiving Christ (by tradition): Colossians 2:6; Ephesians 4:20.

⁷ The tradition is usefully treated by Ridderbos, *Paul: An Outline of his Theology*, p. 240f. and *The Authority of the New Testament Scriptures*, p. 17f.

⁸ 1 Timothy 1:10; Titus 1:13; 2:3.

⁹ The word 'deposit' in the Greek is *parathēkē*. It is related to the word *parathēmai*, 'to hand down' (as tradition).

¹⁰ Ridderbos, *Paul*, p. 241.

¹¹ John 12:49.

Reviews

The Cloud with a Silver Lining

An exposition of the book of Ezekiel. Denis Lane. 150pp (small paperback and cheap paper). £1.95. Evangelical Press.

We urgently need books of this character. By cutting back on size and paper quality E.P. have put this book within the range of a much wider readership. The main value of the book lies in the author's lively contemporary application. We have technical books on Ezekiel (Fairbairn et al). What we need is an example of how to apply the teaching to our present day. Denis Lane succeeds admirably (see examples on pages 15, 43, 83, and 136). On page 136 he asserts clearly what is expressed in the editorial of this issue. Inevitably sections of Ezekiel have been skipped over. It would be helpful in the next edition if the publishers were to provide an index at the beginning so that readers could turn easily to the chapters which are expounded.

The Revival of Religion

Addresses by Scottish Evangelical Leaders delivered in Glasgow in 1840. 449pp. Hardback. Banner of Truth.

This volume sets before us the Biblical way of seeking revival. It is highly relevant for our churches today. Some well known contributors are included such as John Bonar, R. S. Chandlish, William Burns and Patrick Fairbairn. It is vital that we should persevere with evangelism at all times but simultaneously it is as vital that we understand the biblical principles of revival. An important chapter concerns practical instruction on prayer for revival (ch. 6), and also godliness in the churches (ch. 7). James Munro in chapter 9 provides over 50 pages of encouragements from the history of the Church. These men knew what revival was firsthand. How many in Britain today could expound on this subject from first hand experience?

From Simon to Peter

J. Glyn Owen. 373pp. Large size paperback. £6.95. Evangelical Press.

Among the apostles, Peter was the catalyst. His amazing life is traced out here in detail. Schnackenburg the Roman Catholic scholar in his massive and learned three volume commentary on the Gospel of John asserts that in John 21 there is evidence of Peter being set up as the primate. Much to be preferred is the excellent work of Glyn Owen in this subject (pp. 245ff). Probably the most valuable section of this book is the extended exposition on the work of the Holy Spirit in Peter's speech (ch. 24), personality (ch. 25), understanding of Christ (ch. 27), Peter's will (ch. 28), his self-interest (ch. 29), prayers (ch. 30), discernment (particularly important today)! (ch. 31) and racial prejudice (ch. 32).

A Vision for Missions

Tom Wells. 157pp. £1.95. Banner of Truth.

In ten expositions on the glory of God and the fullness of his provisions, Tom Wells of Cincinnati, Ohio, stirs our vision for missionary endeavour. He deals well with the need to repudiate the popular notion of the utilitarian god, who exists merely to serve us. He opens up the themes of God's self-sufficiency, sovereignty, wisdom, righteousness, grace and glory. The presentation concludes with three interesting chapters on David Brainherd, William Carey and Henry Martyn. The book is a welcome contribution to the subject of mission. It could be criticised for not grappling more with the contemporary world situation. We need more references to missionaries of our day and should not overwork the well known pioneers. Perhaps the Banner have subsidised this edition because it is a much better quality production in every respect than the one on Ezekiel (see above, similar size and also £1.95).

What do we make of Chronicles?

by Stephen Dray

Stephen Dray here examines the way in which to set about preparing for a study of one of the historical books. Bible Study group leaders in particular will find it helpful to follow his principles — first to establish the purpose of writing, then to work out the overall thrust of each main section, lastly to bring out applications. We remind readers that there is an increasing amount of excellent material on the Old Testament at an accessible level, some of which we hope to review in a future issue.

We use language in a lot of different ways: to tell stories, to set out lists, to write poems etc. To read poetry as a story would be nonsense: poetry must be read as poetry and story as story if we are to sensibly understand what we are reading.

The same is true of the Bible: there are lots of different uses of language in the Bible. To understand what God is saying we must know what sort of language we are dealing with and how to interpret it properly.

In the subsequent studies in this series we shall take some specific passages in which language is used in different ways and try to show, by example, how similar passages are to be read and understood.

This study is concerned with *the historical stories of the Bible*. The example used is: *1 Chronicles*.

Context and Purpose:

It is often helpful before studying a Bible book in detail to skim-read the whole book first in order to get a 'feel' for it. A modern version with sub-headings which divide the material up can often be helpful at this point. This is especially true of 1 (and 2) Chronicles since it helps answer two very important questions: when and why was the book written?

The answer to the first question is given in 2 Chronicles 36:22-23. The book was written some time after the decree of

Cyrus, probably shortly after some of the exiles returned (see 1 Chronicles 9).

Why was the book written? Again the same verses indicate the answer. The people of Judah had been exiled because of their sins. Some have now returned with the blessing of Cyrus ringing in their ears. BUT how are the people who have returned going to avoid the mistakes, pitfalls and fate of the past generation? The answer, as becomes even clearer from a closer study of the book, is by learning the lessons of the past. Thus the Books of Chronicles write up the history of the past in such a pointed way as to make the lessons clear for all to see. This is inevitably the way with Bible story writing.

Detailed Analysis:

Having discovered the overall purpose behind the book we are then in a position to work out the details. In doing this it is important to try to pick out the special emphases which the writer makes.

1 Chronicles 1:1-9:34

In these chapters we have a very long 'genealogy'. In our society few of us find such things interesting. But we should hesitate before we 'skip over' these chapters: they have a very important purpose.

The genealogy begins by tracing out the line of God's promise (Genesis 3:15) from Seth through to Noah (1:1, 4) and

then on to Abraham (1:27) who received further promises (Genesis 12:1-3). Then after briefly dealing with the descendants of the patriarchs who were not in that line of promise (1:28-50) the line of promise is resumed in 2:1 and then in a very abbreviated way brought right up to David (2:14) who himself was given promises to add to those given to Adam and Abraham (2 Samuel 7 and 1 Chronicles 17). David's own descendants are then given (3:10-17): right up to the time of the exile and beyond. In this way *the author of 1 Chronicles shows that the line of promise still exists: in the remnant who have returned from Babylon.*

In chapters 5-9 the genealogies of the 12 tribes of Israel are recounted one by one: but the order and emphasis is very significant. First, Judah is mentioned: as the senior tribe and as the one largely involved in the return. In addition it is probably significant that it was the tribe of the King. Simeon, which early amalgamated with Judah is also mentioned at this point. However, the tribes which settled east of Jordan are then recalled together with the pointed comment in 5:25-26. This has a double purpose: 1, it emphasises that faithfulness to God is required of all those who could wish to enjoy the blessings of the promise; 2, it introduces the idea of a 'remnant' through whom God will effect his promised purposes. In the rest of the O.T. this 'remnant' will become focused increasingly in one man who is introduced to us in person in the N.T.: the Lord Jesus.

In chapter 6 the tribe of Levi is singled out for especial attention and emphasis placed on the fact that they were the people who had been appointed by both David and Moses (verses 31, 49) to serve God. The place of the legitimate sanctuary: Jerusalem (see below) is also singled out (6:31-32). This hints at a theme which is very prominent in the

subsequent chapters: *God is to be worshipped according to his appointment not men's.*

After the brief mention of the other tribes (chapters 7 and 8), emphasis is placed on those who returned from Babylon (9:2-3) and the fact that they came back to Jerusalem (9:6, 10, 14, 17, 34). Here then are *a people who have come right back to the place of God's presence* — but will they be able to avoid the pitfalls of the past? 'Yes,' says the writer of 1 Chronicles, 'if they learn the lessons of the past.'

1 Chronicles 9:35-29:30

These lessons are set out by the writer of Chronicles in the remainder of his book. First, he sets out the positive example of David's reign (the rest of 1 Chronicles) and then, secondly, the mixed but ultimately tragic story of the period from Solomon to the Exile (2 Chronicles).

In the passage under discussion here, several emphases occur and recur. Among them are:

1. David, in contrast to Saul, is the king of God's promise (11:2), who establishes the capital in the 'city of the Great King' (11:5 and Psalm 48:1, 2), and is prospered under the blessing of God (11:9) because he was motivated by the true worship of God (13:2, 3).
2. Thus, David is careful to do all that God wished (15:1, 2) and establishes Jerusalem as the place of God's presence (22:1). As a result he is promised an eternal dynasty (17:14) and is set forward as an 'ideal king' (18:14) who is given success by God (chapters 19 and 20).
3. David, we are told, established the true pattern of worship according to God's will (24:19, 31) and in detail. Truly, 'the zeal of my Father's house has consumed me' was true of him (Psalm 69:9) as was seen in his detailed faithfulness to God's revelation.

4. That faithfulness led to the faithfulness of the people (15:28) and was the means of bringing great joy to *all* (15:16, 28; 22:17-19 and repeatedly in 2 Chronicles).

5. Finally, one of David's psalms is quoted in chapter 16 as is his 'last will and testament' in chapters 28 and 29. His words emphasise the lessons which the post-exilic community need to learn. See especially 16:15, 23, 27, 34-36 and 28:8, 9, 11; 29:5, 6, 9, 18, 20. In this way the writer of Chronicles calls the people who have returned from the exile to a realisation of their calling by copying the past.

1 Chronicles and Me

Two steps are required of us to bring the application 'home' to us:

1. We need to ask how these truths relate to us 'the other side' of 'great David's Greater Son'.

2. We need to use analogy to establish

the application of the principles to us.

Thus (briefly) we note:

1. The perfect faithfulness of Jesus 'typically' set out in David.

2. The people of God are no longer a nation-state but the church gathered out of all nations. Yet many of the principles noted above apply to us as New Testament believers. Thus, for example, we, too, are called to detailed faithfulness to the revelation of God; we, too, will find as they did, that the way of faithfulness is the only path to joy and victory in the Lord.

These applications could be greatly amplified by careful study. They also indicate that Old Testament narrative can become livingly relevant to us. Let us then search those Scriptures so that we may clearly hear the voice of our Saviour addressed to us and let us seek grace to obey.

THE MORAL GLORY OF CHRIST ON THE CROSS

(continued from page 8)

Finally, and positively now, I want us to look at one aspect of our Lord's love, namely, his generous love. Did not our Lord deeply and accurately diagnose the human heart when he said in Matthew 5:46, 'For if ye love them which love you, what reward have ye? do not even the publicans the same?' — in other words we only love those to whom we are joined by flesh and blood, or very dear intimate friends. But notice that in the first three sayings (Lk. 23:34; 23:43; Jn. 19:26-27), our Lord Jesus shows the same generous love to his enemies, the thief and his mother. What a profound lesson for us — to learn to love *all* men whether they are in my family; my circle of friends; my congregation or not.

How great is this moral perfection of our Lord Jesus! And the more we study these sayings of his, the more aware we become of the vast gulf between him and us; between his sacrificial love and our refusal to sacrifice not one thing more than is necessary. May we be humbled and edified through these few thoughts.

The Role of the Lord's Day in our Sanctification

One day for every six has been provided for our benefit. The potential for spiritual good through this marvellous provision is beyond calculation. Our Lord Jesus Christ called himself the Lord of the Sabbath. He also said that the sabbath was made for man's benefit (Mk. 2:27, 28). The spiritual instruction and enjoyment, the refreshment of worship and the advantages of fellowship with other believers all contribute towards the Christian's sanctification. It is imperative therefore that the Lord's Day be well-organised and fully used to gain its potential. First we need to see how this day was made and from that process learn how we can best use it to make progress in our lives for God, that is holiness.

The making of the Lord's Day

When the psalmist declared 'This is the day the Lord has made; let us rejoice and be glad in it' (Ps. 118:24), he is referring to the Messiah's victory day, the day of resurrection, the first day of the week. That is the day over which our Lord exercises his special authority, for it is the day Christians set aside for him. It is literally called the Lordly Day (*te kuriake hemera*: the day of Christ's Lordship, Rev. 1:10). It is instructive to see this day in the making.

1. *The creation sabbath.* At the same time as God created man, he created an order of six days to be followed by one of rest and contemplation. God blessed the sabbath and made it holy. That is he set it apart. We observe then that the sabbath was made not for some men only but for generic man, that is for all men. Marriage and sabbath are creation ordinances.

2. *The moral sabbath.* In giving the ten commandments, and the fourth commandment in particular, God confirmed the creation sabbath. That which was given from the beginning was to be remembered. The ten commandments are referred to as the moral law. That is there is particular moral significance in the keeping of them because they reflect God's character and express his will. Our love for God is expressed by fulfilling his law, not in order to be redeemed, but because we have been redeemed. That is the express reason given for observing the sabbath in Deuteronomy 5. They had been rescued from slavery in Egypt (Dt. 5:15). The fact that Israel kept the sabbath was a sign of the covenant. This made them different to the pagan nations. They were to show their love and enjoyment of Yahweh by keeping his day. Isaiah well states the issue thus:

If you keep your feet from breaking the sabbath and from doing as you please on my holy day, if you call the sabbath a delight and the Lord's holy day honourable, and if you honour it by not going your own way and not doing as you please or speaking idle words, then you will find your joy in the Lord, and I will cause you to ride on the heights of the land and to feast on the inheritance of your father Jacob. The mouth of the LORD has spoken (Is. 58:13, 14).

The New Covenant Lord's Day anticipated. Isaiah was used to give a number of descriptions of the coming messianic age. One of these is Isaiah 56:4-7 when he speaks of God's house being a house of prayer for all nations. Foreigners and eunuchs will be joined to God's people in that day. The eunuchs, standing for those hitherto excluded, will be noted for their observance of the sabbath, and for their enjoyment of the exalted privileges of adoption into God's family (56:5, 6).

The Lord's Day. Only the Lord of the Sabbath has the right to transfer it from the seventh to the first day of the week. Christ having procured an eternal rest for us and a victory greater than that of Joshua has made a day for us, a day which retains the rest and contemplation of the creation sabbath, and the service of joy and worship of the moral sabbath, a sabbath *to the Lord your God* (Ex. 20:10). That our Lord rose on the first day of the week invests it with the significance of triumph and certainty.

How we are to use the Lord's Day for our sanctification

If we go back to the creation account we see that on the first day God created light. Before anything else there was light. That day of light corresponds with the Lord's Day. We must pray for and look for maximum spiritual light on the Lord's Day. Also we should look to the Lord's Day as a day of the Holy Spirit's power. He was poured out on Pentecost, the first day of the week, the Lord's Day. That day is the golden spot of the week, the market-day of souls. We cannot afford to neglect it.

The art of making it the day of the Lord, the day of days, consists of laying aside all work except works of necessity, mercy, and holiness. It is essential to free the day so that it can be devoted to God in the fullest positive sense. Churches should plan the day wisely so that it is a day of maximum spiritual profit, but also a rest day, so that the believers do not stagger exhausted to their workplaces on Monday.

Most important is preparation for the Lord's Day. Prayer and meditation should precede that day. Spiritual subjects should be discussed on the Lord's Day. Precaution is also needed to retain the spiritual influences of the Lord's Day for the week that follows. If progress is to be made in personal sanctification then a right use of the Lord's Day is of foremost importance. If that occasion is not used to the maximum for spiritual growth in grace and knowledge then it is very unlikely that any other time will be available, that is for the majority of people who are employed and whose time is devoted to many other commitments.

If you have been born into a Christian family, have been converted at a young age, and live to 70, then 10 years of your life will have been specially and fully set aside and devoted to God's service and people. How much grace, knowledge, self-control, perseverance, good works, love to God and man, and overall goldiness, will have been added to your life through a sabbath decade of time?

E.H.

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Editor

ERROLL HULSE

361 Aigburth Road, Liverpool L17 0BP

Associate Editors

JOHN DAVISON, Scotland

DAVID KINGDON, Leicester, U.K.

WAYNE MACK, U.S.A.

TOM NETTLES, U.S.A.

JIM VAN ZYL, South Africa

Agents

Agents to whom subscriptions should be sent

BRITISH ISLES

361 Aigburth Road, Liverpool L17 0BP

IRISH REPUBLIC

Alan Barker

Bethany, Carron Hill, SLIGO

AUSTRALIA

Ray Levick

27 Coven Avenue, Bayswater North, Victoria 3153

NEW ZEALAND

Michael Drake

P.O. Box 51075, Pakuranga, Auckland

MALAYSIA AND
SINGAPORE

Good News Enterprise

Beg Berkunji 210, Pej Pos UPM

Serdang, Selangor, Malaysia

U.S.A.

Puritan Reformed

1319 Newport Gap Pike, Wilmington, DE 19804-2895

Ron Edmonds

2817 Dashwood Street, Lakewood, Calif. 90712

CANADA

Max Latchford

1308 Griffith Place, Oakville, Ontario L6H 2V8

Dale Cogswell

R.R.3, Oromocto, N.B. E2V 2G3

SOUTH AFRICA

Martin Holdt

Box 33226, Glenstantia 0010

NETHERLANDS

D. H. Gritter

Beekmanstraat 85, 8265 ZX Kampen

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