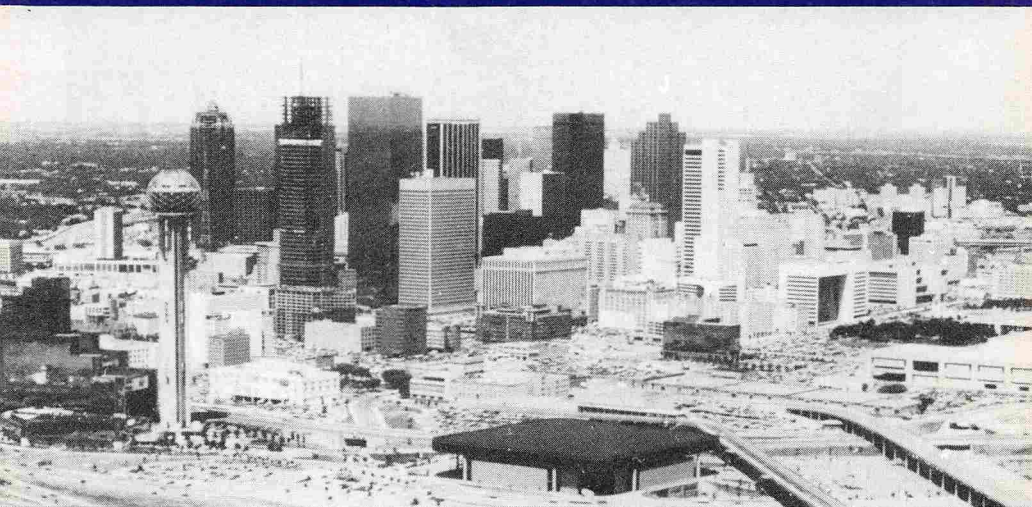


# REFORM. ATION TODAY'86



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# Editorial

'I will build my Church and the gates of hell will not overcome it' (Matt 16:18). This promise of our Lord is a constant source of encouragement to those who reflect upon it. The reference to gates reminds us of the ancient walled cities. Well can we imagine Satan's city with high walls well fortified. Even stronger fortifications mark the gates. We can picture, as did John Bunyan in his allegory, 'The Holy War,' Prince Emmanuel arriving with his army. The gates will have to be stormed but there will be fierce resistance. Nevertheless a breach is made. The city of Satan is invaded. Bastions are created within. The city hall is attacked and overcome. The king of darkness has his flag pulled down. The flag of victory is hoisted in its place. The battle is by no means over. The war rages on.

## *I will build my church in Yugoslavia*

The brilliant description of an Autumn journey to Yugoslavia well fits the description of warfare above. In spite of opposition of every kind Christ's church is being established in Eastern Europe, and in Yugoslavia in particular. This is not to say that a work has not been going on for many years, but rather attention is drawn to work being established in areas or towns where Diabolus has reigned supreme up to now.

Readers of *Reformation Today* who are themselves involved in church planting work, and who are often tempted to think their work is useless will be encouraged by the example of the pioneers described in *The Autumn Journey*.

## *Provisions for the Christian Warfare*

When the Caesars trained their legions

those regiments were not trained and equipped for defence only. Imperial Rome aimed at world conquest. There is a greater Lord than Caesar. Christ will have world dominion. He has given his soldiers a mandate to conquer the world (Matt 28:18-20). The conquest is to be achieved by preaching and by the propagating of Christian truth. To succeed in spiritual warfare we require an overall understanding of what is involved. This perspective is provided in the article on our *Christian Warfare* which concludes with a question concerning the quality of our spiritual combatants today.

## *The minister's devotional life*

The last question about the quality of our spiritual soldiers leads directly to a further question which is the quality of our officers. The role and importance of leadership can hardly be over estimated. What is the standard of godliness of our ministers? Maurice Roberts is very practical, not only in his definition of godliness, but also in his suggestions as to how godliness is promoted.

## *The Restoration Movement, Rome and Ourselves*

Not since the 1930s has the British evangelical constituency been rent with strife and division of the proportions witnessed today. Two major Pentecostal denominations emerged from the 1930s, the Assemblies of God and ELIM. The Charismatic Movement represents the Pentecostal challenge of the 1970s and 1980s. From the Charismatic Movement has come two distinct Restorationist groups, referred to as R1 and R2. All this is described in the review article, 'Kingdom, Cult or New Denomination?' in which two

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Front cover: *The picture of the city of Dallas, Texas, is taken from a booklet by Carey Publications with the title, An Introduction to the Southern Baptists. It is written by Tom Nettles and contains two major articles adapted from articles in R.T. 83 and 85.*

major books are reviewed. One of these is Andrew Walker's book, *Restoring the Kingdom*. This volume provides a full description of the emergence since 1976 of the two major Restorationist groups, R1 and R2.

John Palmer's article logically precedes the review article 'Kingdom, Cult or New Denomination?' because it shows how the average pastor in Britain is confronted by the claims of Restorationism. The relevance of this subject for us all can be understood as we continue with the theme under two further headings as follows.

#### *All Charismatics have to decide*

The actual word 'charismatic' is a good one. It is biblical. It refers to the gifts of the Holy Spirit. Since one cannot be a Christian without the person and work of the Holy Spirit, and since there is no such thing as a Christian without spiritual gifts (Eph 4:7), every Christian without exception is a Charismatic. However in recent times the word has been used to describe those who claim miraculous or supernatural gifts. Also the word has been used to describe those who claim to have a superplus in the dimensions of spiritual worship. This means that all Christians have to decide whether or not these claims are genuine. Every believer must make up his mind where he stands in relation to those who make extravagant claims. Decisions are far reaching. Not only have individuals to decide whether healing claims are true but they must also decide whether medical science should be abandoned. For instance three deaths were reported in the January issue of the Christian Medical Fellowship Journal. These were a consequence of patients trusting charismatic claims. Not only are we required to make up our minds about healings and prophetic claims but also whether we should continue in our local churches.

The Restoration Movement claims that charismatic renewal is impossible outside

its own parameters. Thus all Pentecostals in Pentecostal denominations are required to abandon their loyalties and join Restorationism. All evangelicals likewise are being called on to leave their churches. Every believer must make a decision about this. The whole issue should become more clear to you as you read the review article, 'Kingdom, Cult or New Denomination?' It will not give you all the answers. For instance it will not explain why exactly there is already a division in Restorationism itself. You will have to read Andrew Walker's book for that. Even then it will not be easy to understand.

#### *The Evangelical Times*

The article, 'Kingdom, Cult or New Denomination?' reviews Victor Budgen's book, *Charismatics and the Word of God*. Pastor Budgen's book will help Christians decide where they stand on all the central claims of the Charismatic Movement. Within the book there are references to the monthly newspaper *E.T.* which is subscribed to by most evangelical churches standing outside the Charismatic Movement. Many ministers have been frustrated by the fact that *E.T.* does not represent the churches for which the paper was originally organized. The pro-charismatic policy of the editor means that serious attempts to appraise the extravagant claims made today are frustrated. For instance the *E.T.* review of Victor Budgen's book was not a review at all but rather an unfair attack on the author. This matter is explained in the article 'Kingdom, Cult or New Denomination?'

Whatever confusion surrounds us and whatever distractions may develop, we must not be moved from our chief purpose of evangelizing and church planting. Let us remember our brothers in countries like Yugoslavia and emulate their zeal and perseverance. Their distractions are much greater than ours. We ought always to bear in mind that our labour is never in vain (1 Cor 15:58).

# Autumn Journey to Yugoslavia

Two and a half weeks were spent visiting five centres in Southern SERBIA and the neighbouring Republic of MAKEDONIA (see map) 30th October to 16th November 1985.

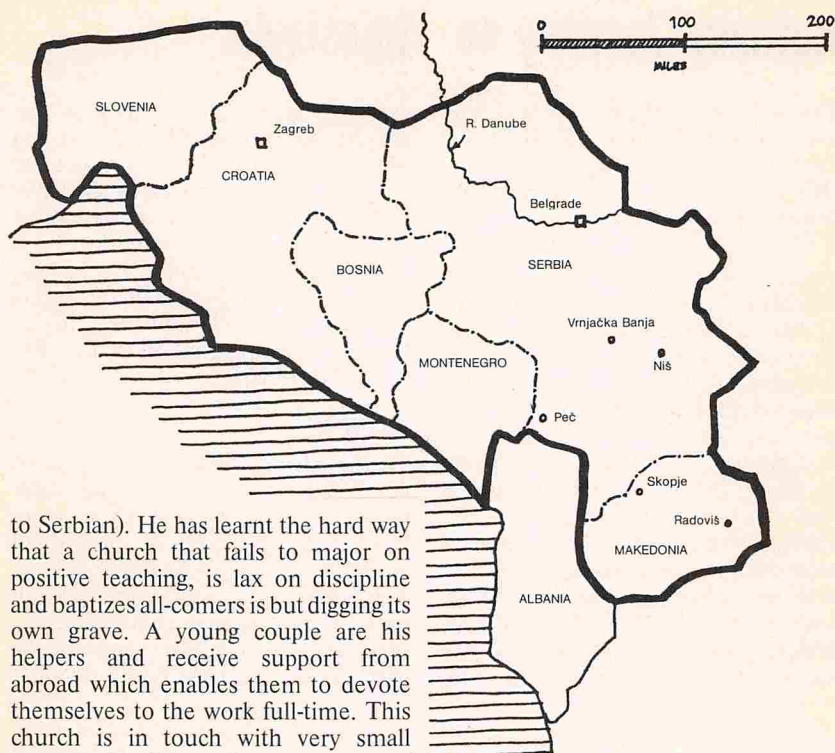
Before the last War the Orthodox Church held sway in these parts. This Church considers itself superior (because more ancient etc.) to the Roman Catholics, and contemptuously dismisses all Protestants as rationalists and sectarians; this attitude persists. The Communists have had little difficulty subduing Orthodoxy and now hold sway without serious rivalry. The Yugoslav character is effusive and generous when pleased, aggressive and vindictive when not, and the change from one mood to the other can be as swift and lethal as lightning! Yugoslav society is savagely self-seeking and,

especially in the poorer parts of the country such as Southern Serbia and Makedonia which are very corrupt and opportunistic. A land of gross darkness and fierce national rivalries where money really talks if you have it. A lovely and a terrible people, not the kind of place to try and plant churches unless you have a persevering faith, a loving heart and a hope renewed from within the veil day by day.

## SKOPJE

Capital city of Makedonia ( $\frac{1}{2}$  million pop.). A group of mostly young Christians meet here, led by IVAN a science lecturer in the University, aged about 30. Membership, 18-20, firmly led and well taught meet in a new room beneath his house. He has just commenced the first magazine and hymn-book in the Makedonian language (quite different





to Serbian). He has learnt the hard way that a church that fails to major on positive teaching, is lax on discipline and baptizes all-comers is but digging its own grave. A young couple are his helpers and receive support from abroad which enables them to devote themselves to the work full-time. This church is in touch with very small groups of believers in many parts of Makedonia and tries to visit and teach them. They have been much encouraged by a new recruit to pastor one of the small churches at Radoviš.

## RADOVIŠ

Branko Traikovsky was saved in Australia and then did three years at The London Theological Seminary before returning to his native Makedonia. He proved himself in the work at Skopje before taking up the pastorate of this church. Only a dozen souls gather here and he is the youngest (36) bar one school-teacher. The previous pastor simply quit the work saying the pay was too small and now works on his own small-holding. The Baptist Union still pay his salary and refuse to recognize Branko because he isn't a product of their College! He is currently living off his savings and a small stipend from

poor (and old) believers. This church has a bad name in the town from the scandalous behaviour of ex-members (baptized too rapidly and unproven as true Christians); the police also are angry that he may prolong the life of a church they want to see dead and buried. He is already visiting groups of believers over a wide area in an old and battered little car; a church may soon be opened in one of these places. He is remarkably cheerful despite a depressing situation in his church, but is in close fellowship with all the other pastors visited in the region. He has an excellent library but no wife and no real salary.

## NIŠ

After about five years of persevering faith Simo Ralević's brother Čedo and

his young family have managed to open a church in this town (100,000 pop.) in the teeth of determined opposition and harassment from the police. They put up with poverty and appalling squalor before help was obtained from the West to buy and then convert a battered old house into a church (downstairs) and flat for themselves (upstairs). Again the Baptist Union were against the whole project and even cut off his salary because he felt called to leave one church and come here. Liberalism has almost completely eroded missionary zeal and enterprise from the Union, the headquarters of which are in Northern Serbia. About a dozen souls gather but need much instruction and shepherding. Two young soldiers have recently begun to attend and show signs of spiritual life. They had much appetite for discussing and reading the Scriptures and we enjoyed fellowship with them. The physical work has taken its toll of Ćedo's health as has the burden of the weak spiritual life manifested in some of the members. It is an uphill battle, but a start has at least been made.

## VRNJAČKA BANJA

A young man has lived here for about four years where about six souls now gather in a wooden hut for meetings. Some of those who have been coming have a bad reputation in this small town and unless they are converted and their lives transformed the name 'Baptist' will soon have a bad odour with dire consequences for the work. He has been given a car from abroad with which to visit scattered groups of believers over a very wide area. It is normal to travel 2½ hours in each direction in order to meet them and we found a few days of such activity pretty tiring! He is very keen evangelistically and needs much wisdom to deal with those who name the name of Christ yet show little sign of growth in grace and holiness. His aim is to find a building such as the one in NIS

and establish the work as has been done there. He has a wife and baby son who have found it hard to live life without him for several days each week as he goes away on his visits. We really felt how hard satan is working to spoil the modest start which has been made in this place. A young man recently converted who ought by now to be helping in the work is hindered by his unbelieving wife and her mother in whose house they live. Even his desire to attend the meetings is challenged very aggressively so that in things essential to his spiritual life he feels constrained to back down. A converted young mother has an old aunt living with her who, although baptized elsewhere in a Pentecostal church, continuously rails at her most bitterly so that even the neighbours are shocked at her behaviour. This old fire-brand is most regular at the meetings and we discussed the need to discipline her before she wrecks the reputation of this infant church. I was reminded of the Duke of Wellington's remark to the British infantry standing their ground at Waterloo in spite of a punishing bombardment from the enemy artillery which was inflicting grievous casualties upon them, 'Hard pounding, gentlemen, hard pounding!' This little church is certainly getting a hard pounding during these days.

## PEĆ

No matter how gloomy the present scene has been (we have visited here nearly each year since 1965) it is always invigorating to meet SIMO RALEVIĆ in this his home town. His voluminous library and rugged faith continue to fuel his literature ministry which has now spread into the English speaking world. A huge correspondence bears eloquent testimony to the enthusiastic support and the signal blessing that attends each publication. Equally the 'christian' opposition is amazingly virulent, vin-

dictive and hateful. Liberals in the north say he is mentally sick to believe the Bible is literally true and that his sermons (literature) is filthy garbage. The city intellectuals deride him as little more than a simple minded peasant. We saw one long letter he received the day we were there which was brim full of contempt and derision. We encouraged him to do what good King Hezekiah did with Sennacherib's bitter taunting letter and spread it before the Lord in the place of prayer. He prints three times per year (2,500 copies) but has to spend three days packing and addressing the parcels and envelopes by hand! He doesn't travel so widely in preaching as before, concentrating his efforts more especially on South Serbia and Macedonia, and the fellowship that has come into being with likeminded pastors and workers in this region. Opposition from within the Baptist Union in the north is trying to isolate and frustrate this new grouping probably because they feel it threatens their authority. We pray God to confound their efforts and anti-Christian devices. In spite of becoming ill through unhealthy work routines he continues to pursue the same dangerous habits and warnings remain largely unheeded. There have also been a number of disappointments through young people going back into the world after making professions of faith and being baptized. As a general rule pastors

seem over-anxious to proclaim people saved too quickly and need to be more discerning and more patient in future. The little church here remains very small and he really needs someone to do the work of a local pastor to release him for his wider and effective ministry, but no funds are available to meet this acute need.

The gifts given us by many friends were very thankfully received and in each place special requests were made for prayer; we hope this report will be a help in this regard, 'according to your faith'! Special thanks were made for the generous response of the Banner of Truth to all their literature needs. The Trust has made a considerable contribution to what has, under GOD, already been achieved. Visits by British pastors or mature believers are to be encouraged as our young colleagues in this needy land welcome such to help them in their church-planting ministry. Material help of various kinds is also required and further details can be supplied upon enquiry to the writer, Roger Weil, 28 Hayesford Park Drive, BROMLEY, Kent.

*The needs reported in this description are acute. You are urged to correspond with Roger Weil if you are able to help. Copies of this issue of R.T. are not being sent to Yugoslavia for obvious reasons.*



William Carey  
(1761-1834)

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*In this exposition of the whole armour of God attention is paid to two major principles. Firstly, the whole battle must be kept in perspective. What is Satan's overall strategy today, in the world, in the Church? Can we use Ephesians 6:10-18 to encourage organized evangelism? Secondly, attention must be given to detail: to the individual pieces of armour. It is fatal for a soldier to be careless or shoddy about detail.*

## The Christian Warfare and our Provision of Armour for it

The whole of the Christian life can be described as a spiritual battle. As believers we constantly engage in spiritual warfare. All the equipment required for the battle is provided for us. Soldiers require training and full provision of their needs for every situation.

As we come to this subject, I would like to introduce it by referring to the best known author in this theme, namely, William Gurnall (1616-1679). His ministry of thirty-five years spanned a most stirring and momentous period of English Church history; the civil war, the elevation of Oliver Cromwell to Protector, the virtual abolition of episcopacy, the restoration of the Stuarts to the throne, followed by the act of Uniformity, which led to the Great Ejection of about 2,000 ministers from the Church of England.

During the civil war, Gurnall was impressed by the fact that the real war is not a physical one with physical weapons, but a spiritual one with spiritual weapons. For twelve years he preached a series of expositions on Ephesians 6:10-20 and at the same time produced his famous book, *The Christian in Complete Armour*. This work is one of the great Puritan and Christian classics. Precisely because it

deals with the spiritual warfare in which we are all engaged, it is as relevant now as the time it was written.

We can break down this comprehensive subject as follows:

1. *We need to know who Satan is.*
2. *We need to know Satan's methods.*
3. *We need to know our weapons.*
4. *We need to know ourselves in relation to the provisions made for us in our warfare.*

### 1. WHO IS SATAN?

Jesus said that he saw Satan fall like lightning from heaven (Lk 10:18). Ezekiel describes the fall of the city of Tyre in a poetic form. This is expressed in such a way that we can see how Satan fell. *'You were the model of perfection, full of wisdom and perfect in beauty . . . you were anointed as a guardian cherub, for so I ordained you. You were on the holy mount of God; you walked among the fiery stones. You were blameless in your ways from the day you were created till wickedness was found in you . . . so I drove you in disgrace from the mount of God, and I expelled you, O guardian cherub . . . your heart became proud on account of your beauty — so I threw you to the earth'* (Ez 28:12-17).

A similar description is provided in Revelation chapter 12 where Satan is

described as a great red dragon whose tail swept a third of the stars out of the sky and flung them to the earth.

From the names given to Satan we learn about his character. In a similar passage to Ezekiel 28, Isaiah describes Satan as Lucifer which means shining one or light bearer. Satan in his pride attempted to make himself like the Most High. He said, 'I will raise my throne above the stars of God. I will sit enthroned on the mount of assembly' (Is 14:13, 14). Let us ever remember that pride was and is the great sin of Lucifer, and that one third of the angels were proud enough to fall with him. The name devil (diabolus) means accuser. He accuses the brethren. Another name is 'that ancient serpent', reminding us of the fall of mankind in Adam through the guile of the devil who came in the form of a serpent. The name 'Satan' tells us a lot because it means hater. Lucifer hates God and his people.

As far as we are concerned we must always be watchful to avoid the traps or pitfalls in which the devils attempt to ensnare us (1 Tim 3:6, 2 Tim 2:26, 2 Cor 2:9-11 and 11:13). The evil angels are so cunning that they can even deceive the very elect (Mt 24:24, 2 Th 2:8-10, 1 Tim 4:1, 2).

The wording in Ephesians 6:12 referring to 'rulers', 'authorities', and 'powers', reminds us of order and rank. The fallen angels are united in a highly efficient and organized army. As spirits they are highly intelligent, immortal and not subject to weariness.

Satan leads and organizes his well ordered and united forces in persecuting the Truth of God, in promoting systems of deception, in sowing error in the churches, and by getting them to sin; disfiguring and destroying the testimonies of believers. So diabolical is Satan that after he has caused untold harm, mischief, war, bloodshed and suf-

fering through sin, he then advances the idea that the blame for it all lies with our Creator.

## 2. WE NEED TO KNOW SATAN'S METHODS

Since Satan possesses superior intelligence and greater experience, we have to be on our watch. He has his schemes. He uses his cunning to try and destroy the Christian. This he does by repeating what was so successful in the first instance, in the fall of our first parents. He succeeded in getting them to doubt God's word. He then succeeded in getting them to rebel against his rule. Of course, there are many other sins besides rebellion. What we need to remember is that ungodliness leads to unrighteousness. Once Satan succeeds in separating people from God, then restraints are removed and the way lies open for all kinds of wickedness.

Thomas Brooks in his book *Precious Remedies against Satan's Devices*, distinguishes different categories of strategy. The first category of devices concerns temptation to sin. If Satan fails to destroy the believer's testimony by getting him to sin, he will then employ strategies to make him a weak and ineffectual Christian. Brooks also deals with the subject of how Satan exploits weaknesses. Those who are by nature proud or wise in their own eyes make easy work for Satan. He is easily able to exploit the weaknesses of the ignorant, or those who have been taught erroneous doctrine.

One of the major specialties of our adversary is his work to divide Christians so that instead of fighting as God's mighty army, they are fighting each other. How can a kingdom divided against itself, stand? The Devil is the inventor of sects and cults as well as the corrupter of the true Church. It is inevitable that Christians will be troubled by error within the Church, and time has to be spent on reformation.

Through history Satan has succeeded in corrupting the Church by adding to the Scriptures the traditions of men. It required the 16th century Reformation to bring the Church back to the Bible. In modern times Satan's greatest conquest has been to destroy many churches and denominations through modernism which is rejection of the authority of Scripture presented in the respectable clothes of scholarship.

Besides that Satan has worked to establish whole religions or systems of philosophy which keep people locked up. He has done this either with false systems, or large cults such as Jehovah's Witnesses and Mormonism, or with Eastern religions in which there is no teaching about the holy character of God, the provision of salvation, the forgiveness of sin and reconciliation through the saving work of Christ. Satan and his angels have masterminded and now control these systems and use them to impede the gospel. In the great day when everything is unveiled we will be amazed to see how Satan and his allies have organized their spiritual forces.

With regard to evangelical Christianity we have seen the centre of gravity more from truth to experience and feelings. The essence of all religion is how people feel. Thus liberals who do not believe in Adam as a real person, or in the deity of Christ or his literal resurrection unite with Roman Catholics in the Ecumenical Movement. Liberalism is worse than Roman Catholicism but we need to remember that Rome has not changed. Tradition and the centrality of the Mass and Mary are the same. The Ecumenical Movement is a masterpiece of deception because it is unity without truth.

By reviewing the various pieces of armour provided we can be reminded of Satan's powers and devices. His design is to destroy our faith in the truths of God's Word (hence the girdle of truth);

he would destroy our standing or justification by imputed righteousness (hence the breastplate of righteousness); he would destroy a Christian's usefulness by crippling his ability to move in the battle (hence the shoes); he would destroy a believer's assurance of salvation, his hope of eternal life, and thereby his peace of mind (hence the helmet of salvation); he would destroy the Christian's exercise of faith (hence the shield of faith); he would destroy the believer's ability to counter attack and win battles for God's kingdom by means of the Word of God (hence the Sword of the Spirit).

### 3. WE NEED TO KNOW OUR WEAPONS

We can well imagine Paul composing the letter to the Ephesians while actually being able to see Roman soldiers and the formidable instruments of war which were theirs. Our weapons are spiritual. It is important before we look at the weapons one by one, that we grasp the wonder of them.

First of all, God himself fills the Christian with power as he uses the armour. This is evident in the opening exhortation, 'be strong in the Lord *and in his mighty power*' (verse 10). There is a supernatural, glorious brightness and power in all the weapons. They all complement each other and constitute a fullness which can make the Christian irresistible. Lack of care of expertise with any one of the weapons or pieces can mar the whole. A soldier who cannot move in battle because his shoes are the wrong size is crippled. A soldier who cannot use his sword with agility and power will be beaten. All the weapons harmonise, which reminds us that there is a majestic wholeness about the mature Christian.

It is important to remember that the battle is not one of defence only. When our Lord was attacked by Satan (see

Matt 4), he did not only defend himself, he beat Satan back. He defeated the Devil with the Word of God.

In this same context I would boldly affirm that the whole armour can be taken in the strongly aggressive sense of evangelism. We have a mandate to conquer the world (Matt 28:18-20). We have been given the necessary equipment. We must train to storm the gates of hell which will not prevail against us. We must attack Satan's fortresses with determination and courage. Our churches must be constantly mobilized and trained for evangelism. Our very best troops must be trained for special service duties in difficult fields abroad. We should look out for modern William Careys and maintain a world vision.

The morale of an army is a matter of the utmost importance in warfare. In dealing with the Christian warfare, expositors mostly omit this aspect. No soldier fights on his own. He is part of a body. Ephesians 4:1-6 is just as important as Ephesians 6:10-20. Every Christian should be a member of a local church and be subject to spiritual leadership, instruction and oversight.

Now we examine the armour piece by piece.

### **The belt of truth**

This is first because it formed the anchor or basis of the protecting armour. The truth of God as a whole, is a foundation of our faith. Satan belittles Christian doctrine and would try to persuade believers that it is not important. He has always laboured to destroy faith in the Bible. Our Lord spoke about 'knowing the truth', and 'the truth will set you free' (John 8:32). He is speaking about the whole Bible, the entire written revelation of God. This truth has been given to us as a whole. It is a tremendous possession. It is the source of our knowledge and our authority. How important it is that we should

know it well and experience its power and effectiveness. All through history, but particularly during the last 150 years, our Adversary has attempted to destroy the Bible as a book to be believed and trusted. The truth must be buckled on. That is, it is all joined together in one unity. We believe it as a whole, and as a whole it forms our defence.

### **The breastplate of righteousness in place**

The word righteousness is one of the great words of the New Testament. The righteousness which is provided by God for our justification, is the righteousness of Christ (Phil 2:9, Rom 1:16, 17, 3:21). The whole merit of Christ in his life and death, is imputed to us, or credited to us, when we believe in him. Christ's righteousness is put upon us or wrapped around us with a perfect fit like the armour. On this basis the Father himself justifies us (Rom 8:33). This gives the Christian a strong assurance. The devil's accusations bounce straight off his armour. His tactic is to accuse the believer and discourage him, but if God accepts him, who can condemn him?

Justification by faith is the foremost and foundational truth of the Bible. It is a glorious provision for the believer to possess the Lord as his righteousness (Jer 33:16). This righteousness is perfect and complete and therefore, our justification is perfect and complete. Justification can never be partial. Either a judge acquits or condemns. We are externally perfectly righteous in God's sight. Note it says that the breastplate must be in place. It is a perfect fit because it is a perfect provision.

That Christians truly understand and appreciate the great importance and relevance of justification by faith is of the utmost importance. This truth must fit them perfectly. They will find it a glorious defence in the battle. Christ's righteousness is impregnable.

**Your feet fitted with the readiness that comes from the gospel of peace**

In ancient battle, agility and speed of movement was vital. Often it proved the crucial factor. Sportsmen take great care about fitting the right shoes. In many athletic events and competitive exercises, correct footwear is of paramount importance. In hand to hand combat, sure footing was essential. The Roman battalion moved forward one, two or three steps, like one man, at the command of their leader. Their shields acted as a solid wall of defence to the enemy. At the same time their swords were used to compel the enemy to retreat.

The way in which the apostle refers to the fitting of the shoes should be noted, together with the fact that they are associated with the gospel of peace. There is the aspect of careful preparation and attention to detail, in order to be ready. Then there is the aspect of purpose. We move forward in battle to conquer for the cause of peace, for our Captain is the Prince of peace. The similarity of thought with the words of Isaiah 52:7 is compelling,

*How beautiful on the mountain,  
are the feet of those who bring good news,  
who proclaim peace,  
who bring good tidings,  
who proclaim salvation.*

Paul cites this passage in Romans 10:15. The Church can be thought of as an army sent out to conquer all the world for Christ. To achieve that, preparation is needed. Christians should always be meditating in the truth. In this way, their minds are always ready to seize opportunities to witness for the truth. This activity will truly involve them in a battle. Yet they must not be afraid, because their mission is one of peace. We come to bring peace. Yet it is inevitable that, in bringing peace, the light we bring will conflict and clash

with darkness. All the pieces of our armour shine with the bright light of Christ when we move into the battle for him. Satan will say, 'Don't be a fanatic! Don't be a nuisance to people! Don't upset them! Don't disturb them!' But we must use the Word which says, 'Therefore go and make disciples of all nations' (Matt 28:19).

Bearing a clear and bold testimony for the truth, both individually and corporately, is very important. This fact highlights the importance of sound instruction in a church and the need for pastors to make sure that that teaching is understood and put into practice.

**The shield of faith, with which you can extinguish all the flaming arrows of the evil one**

Prominent here is the fact that Satan and his forces are spiritual. They can assault us in our thoughts. This reminds us of the reality of the spiritual world. How can a demon know what we are thinking? A demon is a spirit. That is why he knows.

The flaming arrows are thoughts and temptations which are evil. We can easily be guilty of originating our own evil thoughts, but these flaming arrows are suggestions that are suddenly shot from outside into our minds. It can be a vicious slander about someone, or a provocation to hatred, or appalling fear, or a violent lust, or a horrible pornographic image, or a deep-seated resentment, or even an awful blasphemy against God! The suddenness and the fiery nature of the arrows indicate that they emanate from demons. With some believers, these attacks can be so prolonged and vicious as to cause intense suffering.

The only way to handle this problem is with the shield of faith. The shields used by the Romans were very similar in size to those used by the police today in times of riot. The shield measured four

feet ten inches by two feet six inches; adequate to protect the whole body very similar in size to the shields used by riot police today. The arrows fired had burning heads, calculated to wound mortally. The shields were constructed to absorb these arrows and quench their flames. By faith, the Christian has to fend off and resist the vile and hurtful evil thoughts that are fired.

The shield is a shield of faith because it is by faith that we vigorously resist these arrows — *all* of them. The word *all* is important. We must extinguish them *all*. For instance, a vicious slander defaming someone may be shot into the mind. That slander must in every respect be destroyed or extinguished by faith.

The fact that two items of armour are mentioned in 1 Thessalonians 5:8, and that in a slightly different way shows that we must not be rigid in our interpretation of the armour. By faith in what is true, and love for others, we resist that which defames or slanders them (1 Thess 5:8).

### **The helmet of salvation**

The helmet was carefully designed to protect the head which is exposed and which is so strategic. Clear vision is essential in any battle. The helmet in 1 Thessalonians 5:8 is called, 'The hope of salvation'. This raises the important subject of assurance. There is nothing uncertain about our hope. We know that there is now no condemnation to those who are in Christ (Rom 8:1). Those who lack assurance of salvation are vulnerable. It is much easier to win a battle with a person, if he or she is not sure.

There are many ways in which our Adversary tries to knock off the helmet of salvation. He will, for instance, attempt to undermine our faith in God's Word. His favourite attack is to sow

doubt and then to exploit that doubt. 'Has God said?' is a favourite approach of Satan. It may be the theory of evolution presented in a glossy way by *The Geographic Magazine* or some other reputable journal. That theory is based on much imagination and juggling about with a few bones. The general public do not know how spurious the whole theory is and it is easy for a believer to begin to doubt the reliability of Scripture.

The unity of the armour, the body girded with truth, the breastplate of righteousness and the helmet of salvation should be noted. Satan will attempt to strike a mortal blow at our faith in the truth of God and thus remove our helmet of hope. If this does not succeed, he will strike at the breastplate. He will accuse of sin, or attempt to remove assurance by getting the believer to think that his justification is based on his good works. Our works can never justify us. They are necessary as an evidence that our faith is genuine, but all our good works do not form the basis of salvation. Christ's righteousness is the basis. We can readily see how important it is to be clear about this if we are to maintain our hope and assurance.

We must always maintain a clear mind about the foundations of our salvation and seek to have a strong, well-grounded assurance that we possess the gift of eternal life. We keep our helmet of salvation always in place when we keep our minds clear, and our understanding of the gospel relative to ourselves, firm.

### **The sword of the Spirit which is the Word of God**

How can it be that a Christian who is so limited in his spiritual powers can actually put demons to flight, as James says, 'Resist the devil, and he will flee from you'? (Jas 4:7). The answer to that question is that the devils, for all their

knowledge, power and experience, hate and dread the Word of God. The words of God include sentences of certain and eternal ruin for the fallen angels. They are doomed to the lake of fire (Rev 20:14).

'The Word of God is living and alive.' It is described as being 'sharper than any double-edged sword' (Heb 4:12). We see this illustrated in the way our Lord used Scripture against Satan in the temptation in the wilderness (Matt 4:1-11).

Ultimately, it was the sword that gave Caesar's soldiers their power. A thorough and living knowledge of the Word of God can make a Christian into a most effective power, to advance the cause of Christ. However, it is not a knowledge of the Word alone, or even the ability to use that Word in engaging the powers of darkness. There are further factors. There are true Christians who are very knowledgeable, but they are apathetic and lack zeal. Observe that this passage concludes with an exhortation to be constant in prayer. Prayer is the way in which we show our dependence upon God and also the way by which we are empowered by the Holy Spirit. As Ephesians 6:20 suggests, there are all kinds of prayers. We must be proficient in them all, because only in that way will we be powerful in using all the armour of God.

We need to know our weapons. That is one factor. Power in using them is another. That is where prayer is essential.

A good soldier will know the enemy, know his strategies and know his own armour and how to use it. Yet there is a further important factor, which we now consider.

#### 4. WE NEED TO KNOW OURSELVES IN RELATION TO THE PROVISION MADE FOR US IN OUR WARFARE

It is one thing to know about the

weapons and to know about the truth. It is another to have the will to fight. The Roman legion had a will to conquer for Caesar. The question of will-power, morale, vision, determination and energy is of the utmost importance. Hence the prominence of exhortation in Ephesians 6:10-20 '*Be strong in the Lord and in his mighty power*'. '*Put on the armour*'. '*Stand firm then*'. '*Pray in the Spirit on all occasions with all kinds of prayers and requests*'.

These commands are essential. We have to be stirred into action. Without effort, we will become lethargic and our armour will be neglected. Of all the commands, the one which urges prayer is the most important. By constant prayer, we are assured of the vitality of the Holy Spirit, who enables us to be strong and to employ the armour.

Not only are we to be strong in the Lord's mighty power, but we are to stand firm. There are times when we are weary and when we seem to be losing the battle. It is just at that time that we must hold on and not retreat under any circumstances. We may call for fellow believers to come and help us in the battle. It may be the pastor who is needed. However, if all the others are themselves engaged in fierce battle, and cannot help, we have the Captain of our salvation, Christ Jesus, to fight for us. He will never leave us or forsake us (Heb 13:5, 6). He always intercedes on our behalf (Heb 7:25).

*Stand, then, in his great might,  
With all his strength endued;  
And take, to arm you for the fight,  
The panoply of God.  
To keep your armour bright  
Attend with constant care,  
Still serving in your Captain's fight,  
And watching unto prayer.*

### Concluding questions

Having surveyed our provision for warfare, we should stand back and ask the question, How strong are the Lord's soldiers today? Since prayer is a crucial activity, we should ask about our prayer meetings. Are they well attended and are they characterized by zeal? Also, we should ask about the prayer lives of believers. Are they strong in prayer?

An outstanding feature of the full armour is that the whole description presupposes an excellent knowledge of Scripture. Every piece of armour points to the need of a living knowledge of the truth. The shoes point to preparation in the gospel. The sword assumes that the Scriptures are well known and can be appropriately used in battle. Satan's purpose is to replace the Word with the traditions of men. During the centuries preceding the Reformation, the Church became sacrament-centred, rather than Word-centred. The task of the Reformers was to restore the authority of Scripture. In our generation, Satan has succeeded in making the Church feeling-centred and entertainment-centred. In many churches, the pressure is on to produce warm feelings and to put on a good show. That is not training for war! It is foolishness! The result is that an anti-doctrine attitude is engendered and ignorance prevails.

Instead of vigorous training in the truth, congregations are entertained. They learn little and are content with repetitive choruses, sentimental feelings and prayers which revolve around themselves and their own little circle of interests.

If the trumpet was to sound in your church or Christian Union group, how many would there be who would respond to the discipline of spiritual war, and the effort of mind and will to know the truth and use it in battle? How much stamina would there be? How

many would respond by saying that they did not *feel* like fighting? They would prefer to listen to music, and really they are not interested in anything that does not make them *feel* good. What kind of army is that? Little wonder that we do not have recruits for the mission field and for long-term sustained evangelistic endeavour! You cannot be a good soldier of Jesus Christ without the hardship of discipline and training. Let us exercise ourselves in godliness and put on the whole armour of God!

### Commended books

Before reading books on the subject, it is helpful to come to terms with the exact meaning of the text by using commentaries such as Hendriksen, Lenski, Geoffrey B. Wilson and Charles Hodge.

William Gurnall, *The Christian in Complete Armour*, 1,200 pages hardback.

Martyn Lloyd-Jones, *The Christian Warfare*, an exposition of Ephesians 6:10-13, 371 pages.

Martyn Lloyd-Jones, *The Christian Soldier*, an exposition of Ephesians 6:10-20, 361 pages, hardback, £7.25.

Thomas Brooks, *Precious Remedies Against Satan's Devices*, 252 pp. paperback, £2.45.

Frederick S. Leahy, *Satan Cast Out*, 181 pages, paperback.

All the above published by the Banner of Truth.

Also:

James Philip, *Christian Warfare and Armour*, CLC, 126 pages, paperback, £1.80.

Peter Jefferey, *Stand Firm*, a young Christian's guide to the armour of God, Evangelical Press of Wales, 71 pages, paperback, £1.25.

I record my indebtedness to Jim van Zyl for allowing us to read his thesis on *William Gurnall and The Christian Armour*. This work was prepared for academic purposes and is not available but we should encourage the author to prepare the work for popular use. His address is:

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Lynnwood Ridge  
Pretoria 0002  
South Africa

*Although the following article by Maurice Roberts of Ayr Free Church of Scotland is written for ministers, it is relevant and challenging for all Christians. The author concludes with two major questions which are central to the life of every believer: What is it that we call godliness? and, How can we attain true goldiness?*

## The Minister's Devotional Life

The ministry is going to be very much what each of us makes of it. Probably more than any other calling, the character of every particular ministry will be shaped by the character of the man himself. Every man begins and must begin his ministry with a high degree of idealism. No man — unless he is a fool or a charlatan — embarks on the Christian ministry without entertaining high hopes of doing good.

The difficulty one experiences in the ministry is therefore related to the maintaining of this idealism and being faithful to this heavenly vision. This may seem easy to us when we stand, as young and inexperienced preachers, on the threshold of the work. We cannot yet imagine what effects disappointment or discouragement, opposition or chronic ill-health may have on a man. Experience teaches that men who begin with great promise sometimes end up in terrible failure. And, more happily, men who are not marked out by exceptional gifts may, through faith and patience, do work for Christ which is of real significance.

The ministry is a very complex task and requires effort and competence of many kinds. A man needs to be able to study, think, talk, address audiences, evaluate character, lead his fellows, anticipate problems, correct errors, reprove, rebuke, exhort, wrestle with God and converse with the devil. Usually too he has to guide a family of his own and — what concerns us most of all in this article — to watch his own soul. In the midst of so many demands, any intelligent man naturally reacts in a twofold way. He cries out, 'Who is sufficient for these things?' And he attempts to identify his priorities.

We said earlier that the ministry is what we make of it. That is true in more ways than we may imagine. There is a kind of tyranny in the ministry. It is the tyranny of there being so many good things to be done: meetings to organise, other meetings to chair, committees to convene, protests to set in motion, societies to encourage, fraternities to support. And this list is only partial. So the question of priorities is in some ways the most vital one of all. Given there are so many good things to do and causes to foster; and then given our limited gifts,

time and resources; where are we to put the centre of gravity of our own particular ministry? Is it reading and study? Is it preaching and exposition? Is it writing? Is it pastoral visiting? Or is it something else? Each of these objectives is both laudable and essential. But it is here argued that the first and primary emphasis of a man's ministry should be on none of these things but rather on something more important than them all.

It is here urged that it is the primary duty of a Christian minister that he should watch his own soul. This is to say that the supreme calling of a minister is to spend the prime of his strength in 'the pursuit of God' (to use the phrase of A. W. Tozer). The ambition is to know God, to reflect his character, to know his will and mind in Scripture, to approximate increasingly to his image, to wait on him, seek his face, have him as our friend, and to cultivate fellowship with God in Christ more or less consciously and deliberately every day we live.

*Reasons why this Attitude must surely be Right*

1. Because *the minister is first a Christian* and not first a minister. All the exhortations to godliness which all Christians receive from Christ in Scripture are true *a fortiori* of the minister: to delight himself in God — to seek first the Kingdom of God — to wait on the Lord — to pray without ceasing — to be holy as he is holy — to put off the works of darkness — to walk worthy of the Lord — to grow in grace — to pass the time of his sojourning in fear — and a host of other texts to the same or similar effect.

2. Because the putting of anything in front of God is nothing but a *form of idolatry*. Supposing we enjoy ministerial success, influence, popularity, acclaim, or supposing we see rich blessing; or that Satan's kingdom is crushed beneath our ministrations; or that crowds of converts are the reward of our preaching. We dare not put these things *first*. We have Christ's own explicit words to his disciples in Luke 10:17-20. Rejoice first in what is first, namely that we are eternally elected to be God's children and to have God as our Father.

The marvel is not simply how God blessed Martin Luther and John Calvin and Thomas Chalmers and C. H. Spurgeon with astounding success; it is that he did it in a way which did not destroy these men with pride. God's secret is far deeper than the granting of success. It involves also the preserving holy of his servants who are in special danger on account of the success they enjoy. To the accomplishing of this, God uses ill-health, affliction, opposition and numerous other devices so that successful ministers may see their successes, not as an idol to be adored, but as a thing vastly inferior to the privilege of knowing *God himself* and the prospect of being with him in heaven forever.

3. Because the nature of ministerial work is that it is *spiritual work*. It is not primarily intellectual work done to promote a set of ideas or to advance a theory or point of view. It is not first of all efficient church business. True, it is work which takes in these elements along the way. But it is primarily work done by

divine energy to pull down satanical strongholds and elevate God himself as supreme and as all in all. And it is therefore axiomatic that before such work can begin or advance, it must engage the minister first and foremost in spiritual communion with God himself.

The main thesis we have advanced, then, is that the first duty of the minister is to study holiness or the knowledge of God. Perhaps a few observations and comments would not be out of place at this stage regarding this emphasis.

1. For one thing, it will *preserve us from the curse of professionalism*. No snare is more insidious than this. This will save us from a distasteful manner; the ingratiating style of address; the unctuous condescension; the self-conscious and cultivated mannerisms; the fussiness and fastidiousness which make us look more foolish than the contemptible churchly creatures we meet in Jane Austen and Anthony Trollope.

2. It will preserve us, secondly, *from much frustration and disappointment*. No occupation is more acquainted with disappointment, perhaps, than the ministry — particularly in the age in which we live. This is not to suggest that we should *attempt* less. But it cautions some of us sometimes to *expect* less. If we are feeding primarily upon God, we shall not go hungry. But if we are feeding on our own preaching, then what will we do when we go through times of leanness? If we are leaning on God, we shall find support. But what if we are only leaning on the fellowship, on the ambition to attain to a city-centre congregation, on the hope of becoming a conference speaker, or on the prospect of making a name for ourselves as a lecturer or sought-after controversialist? No being is more pitiable than the frustrated preacher. But is this frustration not the outcome very largely of misdirected energy? Ought the preacher not to have been seeking to acquaint himself with God more in that situation where he feels so frustrated? And if he had delighted himself in God more, would he not now enjoy richer comfort?

3. Thirdly, this emphasis will do much to keep us from wandering off into ministerial by-path-meadow. All of us have met or at least heard of ministers who began full of promise and who pursued their course well for some years, only to spend the rest of their ministries in a back-water of triviality or, worse, of down-right worldliness. When *God* is not our delight, we shall need to find delight elsewhere. And if we do not find our ministries satisfying in themselves because they give us time to be with God, then we shall slip into one or other of the well-worn ministerial lines of temptation. If God is not our delight, then golf might be, or the study of local history, or the allotment, or a dozen other small things, which, though all safe and lawful in themselves perhaps, are the proof of shipwreck when they have become the chief thing in the minister's heart. No wonder, that the ministry is a sink of broken reputations, when men have got their priorities wrong!

4. Fourthly, this emphasis will do very much to keep us sound in our theology. We believe in the doctrines of grace today; but shall we still be believing in them in ten, in twenty, in thirty years time? It is very sobering to recollect that men in the ministry are liable to suffer changes over the years. The Calvinist may be a Hyper-Calvinist. The Protestant may become a Crypto-Catholic. The Reformed man may turn into a Semi-Arian, or a 'dance-drama' man, or even into an Atheist. 'Have not I chosen you twelve?' (said Christ), 'and one of you is a devil.'

Our theology follows the spiritual level of our soul and falls when it falls. So the man who keeps his soul preserves also his soundness. Orthodoxy is not merely a matter of having a clear head. It begins with a pure heart and is dependent on factors which are ethical and spiritual.

We come then to look at the questions: 'If godliness is the first thing in the minister, how are we to get it, and, for that matter, what is it?' We may look at these two questions in the reverse order: what *is* it? How may we strive to get it?

*What is it that we call godliness?*

This is a very fascinating subject in its own right. It is not so easy to answer this question as one might imagine. If we were all to become suddenly more godly, would we be more approachable or less so? Would we be more happy or less so? Would men *admire* us more, or *love* us more? It is not certain what the answers to these questions are. For example, would one interrupt a M'Cheyne in his prayers as readily as one might interrupt a college friend? There are undoubtedly many ideals of godliness. If we doubt this, then we might watch our fellow-Christians carefully. We shall soon be able to see what their spiritual background is. Can we not detect the Church of England man? The Brethren man? The Church of Scotland type? We are the unconscious product of our religious backgrounds and it is often mortifying to think that our ideal of Christian saintliness is really something we have picked up from our place of spiritual nurture rather than from the Bible.

One mistake Christians often make is that they unthinkingly adopt and reflect certain stereotypes. For instance, we may employ phrases like, 'Praise the Lord', to punctuate our conversation with the spice of saintliness. Or we may adopt that 'gracious' bearing or that 'solemn' expression to meet the demands of our particular Christian circle. Widespread today is the concept that Christians should be outgoing and affable and should show this by embracing one another. It is difficult to describe the idea. Some use the word 'muscular' to describe it. Certainly it would be wrong to quench a truly affectionate spirit and we would discourage coldness or indifference to each other as an enemy, but we need to avoid generating what may be cultish or promoting ways simply because they are the 'in thing'.

Of course, some of these things are inevitable. But the danger is when we identify this or that particular form with the essence of godliness. It is easy to be critical. Is it possible to say anything positive and constructive? We offer the following analysis.

1. *Real spirituality is involuntary.* It is the tendency or involuntary inclination of the soul, behaving and acting in a way that has become habitual as a result of long years of fellowship with God and long acquaintance with his revealed will in Holy Scripture. Take these lines from Joseph Alleine's letter to a dear friend:

'Though I am apt to be unsettled and quickly set off the hinges, yet, methinks, I am like a bird out of the nest. I am never quiet till I am in my old way of communion with God; like the needle of the compass, that is restless till it be turned towards the pole . . . my heart is early and late with God; 'tis the business and delight of my life to seek him.' There is real spirituality — naturally turning 'early and late' to God.

2. *Real spirituality is not so much a thing in itself as a reaction to the being of God as he is apprehended to be.* There is a biblical phrase which puts the matter perfectly: 'the fear of the Lord', that is, godliness is not a thing which initiates itself but is itself initiated by an awareness of God. It is an awareness which induces 'fear' or numinous awe in the soul and which therefore leads to behaviour and action which are of a particular quality.

It must surely follow then that we must strive to attain to as perfectly correct a view of the character of God as that which is revealed in Scripture. We all reflect the God whom we worship. As is our conception of God's character, so will be our own character as Christians. The Pharisee sees God as a rabbi raised by the power of infinity and so his own character is pharisaic. The mediaeval saint saw Mary as the Mother of God and so his piety was a sort of marianised passivity. The teenager who follows a 'pop' Christianity sees Jesus as a superstar; and so he himself aims at that image accordingly. Some Christians see Jesus as an extrovert and so that is the pattern developed. If only we could really be sure we knew God as he is! and Christ as he is! It all begins there. Doubtless the Reformers and Puritans were closer to the ideal than most other generations of Christians have been.

3. *Godliness is a species of love.* One of the finely balanced relationships in Scripture is that of law and love. If either is defined without due regard to the other then we may be sure we have gone astray. Law without love is legalism; love without law may become antinomianism. Each is in need of the other to give it its true meaning. Putting the same point a rather different way, we might say that we are saved in order to love God and to love our neighbour as ourself. But that is the same as saying that we are saved in order to keep the law of God in its details. We are not saved by keeping the law but we are saved in order that we may keep it and *love* to keep it.

We said a little while ago that there are two questions to be considered: 'what is real godliness?' and, 'how can we get it?' We have looked at the first question and must now turn, finally, to the second.

*How can we attain true godliness?*

1. We need as ministers first to be convinced of the great advantages of making progress in sanctification. The following quotations may be worth pondering in order to have ourselves more thoroughly persuaded.

- (a) Flavel: 'What health is to the heart, that holiness is to the soul.'
- (b) Jenkyn: 'There is nothing destroyed by sanctification but that which would destroy us.'
- (c) Gurnall: 'God would not rub us so hard if it were not to fetch out the dirt that is ingrained in our natures. God loves purity so well he had rather see a hole than a spot in his children's garments.'
- (d) Bernard: 'It would be wholly monstrous for a man to be highest in office and lowest in soul; first in station and last in life.'

2. We must adopt a particular attitude towards ourselves. We see ourselves as corrupt, weak, sinful and exposed to a thousand dangers. We need to watch over the first risings of our sins, cut off the right hand, pluck out the right eye, steel ourselves to a life-long conflict with indwelling corruption and sin and strive daily to mortify through the Spirit the deeds of the body. This is unpleasant work and distasteful to flesh and blood. But it is the way to progress. It would be nice to think that the old Keswick theory was correct, namely that sanctification in its entirety could be had, like justification, by one simple act of faith. But it is unfortunately not so. It would be easier if the Higher Life could be got by a simple action like speaking in tongues or prophecy. Calvinists know that the eminent theologians of our tradition have not taught so. The uphill road is rough and thorny. But it is safe and it leads at last to the desired goal.

3. We would do well to endeavour in our private devotions to strive to come habitually to the point at which we are 'filled'. We mean, to the point at which we have 'prayed out' our souls and have nothing further to say for the time being. The ambition in our devotions, we would suggest, is that we should bring ourselves to God in the reading of Scripture and prayer till we 'enjoy' him and know something of his 'felt presence'. It is a mistake to pray too much for others. We need to pray for ourselves first, striving to get into the Spirit and into the enjoyment of God. Then we need to have occasions in which we stretch ourselves in our devotions. If we habitually pray for half an hour there should be times when we school ourselves to pray for an hour; times, too, of personal fasting and self-discipline. The hard thing is to *seek* God; the tendency is to go through a mechanical round of unfeeling ritualisms. Time, of course, is not ultimately the important thing. But we need to have time and we need to bring our minds fresh and unhurried to it. It is hard work. But it is the best work in the world. Surely, greater good could scarcely come to our churches (short, of revival itself) than that ministers should advance greatly in holiness.

R.T. 82 carried an article by Brian Beevers documenting the claims of the Restoration Movement. One claim is that this movement is the greatest thing that God has ever attempted. Yet we hear reports that this greatest thing is already divided. One factor dividing the churches of the movement is the Prosperity cult (also reported in R.T. 82). This article deals with the movement and its claims in the north of England. The writer is John Palmer who is the minister of the Parbold Evangelical Church near Wigan, Lancashire. He trained at the London Theological Seminary. One of his interests is the wellbeing of the Merseyside Gospel Witness which aims to unite all gospel churches on the basis of the gospel of justification by faith. Inimical to such unity is any claim to be the only true Church on earth. In the article a capital 'C' is used for the universal Church and a lower case 'c' for the local church or group of local churches.

The Movement here described is the same as R1 which is explained in the next article.

## The Restoration Movement, Rome and Ourselves

The constitution of our church, adopted in February 1985, states that we 'stand against . . . the false church of Rome; and also against any church or denomination which claims to be the one true Church'. Surely all evangelicals would agree. Therefore, it is becoming increasingly necessary to guard against the false claims of the Restoration Movement. For there are many parallels between their claims and those of Rome. In this article I hope to demonstrate five of these, which together give evidence of a 'one-true-church' mentality in Restorationism.

This is not an attack on Pentecostalism, or even on the Charismatic movement, insofar as this is different from the Restoration Movement. The two are different, for one of their own apostles has said (and so it must be infallibly correct!), 'The charismatic message is largely dying out and God's giving the Restoration message in these days. . . . The Charismatics didn't receive the Restoration message. . . . The Charismatics, by and large — not all of them — do not receive the Restoration

message'.<sup>1</sup> It is this new sect — for it has all the marks of a sect — that is claiming to be the only church in which God is working today, that is an enemy of true Biblical Christianity. We should not be surprised at the parallels it has with Rome — for both fill something of the void which exists in evangelical churches. We can always learn from, movements that deviate from the truth, for if people are drawn into them from or in preference to, Biblical Christianity, this points to our own failure in some ways to live up to our own ideals, as shown in Scripture. This article, therefore, aims not only to warn of the dangers of the Restoration Movement, or show how it is similar to Rome, but to remind us of the inadequacies of our own churches.

1. The fundamental distinctive of the Restoration Movement is the belief that it, *and it alone*, possesses present-day 'apostles'. This is clearly impossible, as a comparison of 1 Corinthians 9:1-2 with 15:8 makes clear. The marks of an apostle including having truly seen the risen Lord Jesus — not in a vision — and

Paul states that he is the last who has so seen him. Acts 1:21-22 is also relevant here — an apostle is a witness to the resurrection — in a literal sense, not merely in the way that all true Christians are (see Acts 4:20, 5:32). Moreover, Ephesians 2:20 clearly also marks out apostleship as a *foundational* office in the church — and a foundation is laid once only, at the beginning — this is the whole point of the illustration in the context.

The Roman Catholics do not claim now to have apostles, but to have, vested in the pope and their bishops, continuing ‘apostolic authority’. This is passed on, *ex opere operato*, by the laying on of hands — by mechanical transmission. So that the pope (since 1870) is infallible, when he decides to decree what is to be believed — but more importantly, he is to be regarded as, in a very real sense, the embodiment of Peter himself.

If we reject this idea, how much should we see the folly of supposing that, after a break of nineteen hundred years, not only apostolic authority, as vested in the pope, but true, full-scale apostleship, can be legitimately claimed once more? Some searching questions need to be answered by the Restoration movement, such as:

- (a) Who ordained the first of these ‘new apostles’ and what was his qualification to do so?
- (b) Did Christ himself say to this apostle *ego apostellō se* (to whom I send thee) as he did to Paul? (Acts 26:17).
- (c) Who was competent to authoritatively confirm that this person was a true, and not a false, apostle?
- (d) Where does Scripture teach that anyone, except an apostle, has the right to appoint others? If the twelve did not see fit to appoint successors, who should?

If such an important happening as the re-instatement of the apostolic office were to be part of God’s plan for the

Church, we would expect Scripture to say so. There is no such teaching. All we have is warning against false apostles (2 Cor 11:13). If we apply this chapter to ourselves against the papacy, as we should, then ought we not to see that it applies equally to the Restoration Movement? For the claim to be the only Church with apostles necessarily implies that any church which refuses to recognise these claims cannot be a true Christian church at all. This has been Rome’s consistent position (even though it is being soft-pedalled at present for ecumenical reasons). Rome teaches that all who claim to be Christians but refuse to accept its authority are heretics, by implication excommunicated, and therefore outside of salvation. The Restoration Movement does not make such claims, not yet, but they are inherent in its position.

The question needs to be asked why do Christians join the Restoration Movement and follow these self-appointed ‘apostles’? Sadly, because they seem to be going somewhere. They claim to have vision; they do have evident purpose. Their teaching is fresh (because it has been recently invented). None of these would be such great attractions, were it not that evangelical churches, and their leaders, so often lack vision, purpose, and lively, relevant teaching.

Tragically, many will follow a lead away from the Word, and therefore away from God, rather than persevere with those who remain faithful.

2. If the Restoration Movement has ‘apostles’, then we would expect them to place the teaching and writing of these men alongside Scripture, as of equal authority; and so they do. Here again, the parallel with Rome’s ‘tradition’ is clear. However, it took many years for Rome to come to the official position of placing its tradition on a level with God’s word. The doctrine was not formally adopted until the Council of

Trent. The equal veneration of tradition and 'apostolic' teaching, alongside Scripture leads to Scripture being given a secondary role.

The Restorationist, having once accepted that his 'apostles' are of equal status with Paul, which is their claim, cannot but say that their writings are of equal status with Pauls – and in practice, of more relevance. Do they not explain, amplify, and apply the nineteen-hundred year old writings of Paul – and, indeed, all the Scripture?

For any man to put himself on a par with Paul, to whom the Lord actually appeared, and his own writings on a par with the Scriptures, is the height of delusion. The present writer still finds it hard to comprehend how Christians can place themselves under the authority of such men. Yet many evangelicals have done so. Surely this should ring alarm bells throughout our churches!

We need to ask ourselves, Do we love the Word so much that we will never place uninspired writings on a level with it? Can we say with the Psalmist: 'Because I love your commands more than gold, more than pure gold, and because I consider all your precepts right, I hate every wrong path' (Ps 119:127-8)?

Rome, because it could not substitute its heretical doctrines from Scripture, eventually forbade the laity to read the Bible lest the errors of the system be questioned. This policy has recently been altered, because they believe that Protestantism has so lost its faith in the Bible, and is so destitute of those who can truly expound it, that their own false interpretations can be taught as the true exposition of Scripture without any danger of their people hearing true Biblical teaching to refute this. Sadly, they seem often to be substantially correct in this assumption.

3. The 'apostles' have supreme authority over the Restorationist churches.

Often, those churches are divided into groups, with specific leaders in each group, who 'cover' the members, that is give them detailed guidance as to how to run their lives. The right of private judgement in accord with one's own conscience, guided by God's Word, is not only a foundational principle of Protestantism: it is Scriptural (Rom 14:5, 12-14, 23b).

Rome, similarly, teaches the duty of blind obedience to the teachings of the Church, even when the Church is in error. On which side of the line is Restorationism? Does it permit freedom of Christian conscience on matters where Biblical teaching is in terms of principles to be applied rather than commands to be obeyed? If elders are not infallible, they should seek in such cases not to order, but only to guide.

The level of authority which a church claims over its members is one measure of how much, in practice, it claims to be the one true Church. As the possibility of leaving a church without 'denying the faith' is removed, so authority within that church can become absolute. The converse is that those churches which are enthusiastically ecumenical are also those which find scriptural discipline impossible to enforce.

The existence of 'covering', as of obedience to a priesthood, points to a truth we often underemphasise: that people (not just Christians) will generally follow a lead, providing it is firm enough, even in terms of the details of their life. We must make sure that the 'leader' is God, through his Word. All recorded there is 'profitable for teaching, the reproof, for correction and for training in righteousness, so that the man of God may be fitted, having been furnished for every good work' (2 Tim 3:16-17). Detailed day-to-day guidance produces perpetual babes in Christ. No direction at all produces wayward children. The correct path is the middle one – guiding and encouraging one another

to apply the Word prayerfully to our own lives, and to seek to find God's will for ourselves. This is the way to Christian maturity.

Because of the excesses of the Restoration movement, Rome, and others, 'authority' has sometimes become a suspicious word among evangelicals, when referring to the function of the eldership. It is as wrong for the elders of a church to refrain from exercising Scriptural authority, or for the people not to submit to such authority, as it is for an unscriptural authority to be imposed. (See Heb 13:17; 1 Pet 5:1-3.)

4. The 'one-true-church' mentality behind the Restoration movement is seen also in their emphasis on geographical organisation, directed from above. Restorationists claim that there should be only one church in each place. This is despite Romans 16:3-5 and 1 Corinthians 16:19, which show that, in both Rome and Ephesus (where 1 Cor was written) Priscilla and Aquila were members of a church, distinguishable from others in the same city, and small enough to meet in a private house.

The implication of this claim is that theirs is the true church in any place, and that all who refuse to join them are schismatics. As they are only prepared to allow one 'church' in each town, what is developing is essentially a parish system, with 'apostles' over many parishes. This again is analagous to Rome, and to those denominations whose system of government is derived from Rome. In effect, the Restoration Movement is episcopal.

5. The conviction that theirs is the only true Church — the only one in which God is working today — is fundamental to the Restoration Movement. Beasley declares: 'All that I can suggest to you is that it might be a good idea to be involved with the churches that are going to be getting the blessing. If you want . . . to see souls saved, it's no use worshipping with churches that . . .

believe that miracles went out with the early Church. . . . Some churches in the land today . . . go through the ritual and yet nobody has told them that God left donkey's years ago and that he has gone down the road to David's tabernacle.'<sup>2</sup> This attitude leads to them seeing part of their mission as gathering up the 'lost sheep' who are at present out of their fold, that is our church memberships. The language they use sometimes seems to suggest that those who refuse to join them will ultimately be proved not to be Christians at all. Dave Mansell: 'If people do not hear this word (repent) at this time, they are going to miss and be unprepared for the coming again of the Lord Jesus.'<sup>3</sup> This is clearly a reference to Matthew 24:42-25:13, where it is the wicked servant who is unprepared, and the foolish virgins who 'miss' the second coming. Thus it follows that by its very nature, the Restoration Movement, like Rome, must be either the one true Church to which all Christians belong, or a delusion of Satan — there is no middle position.

This arrogant attitude declares that we evangelicals are wilfully ignoring the great miracle which Restorationism is supposed to be. It assumes moreover that if we are really Christians, we will see the light eventually. The attitude sometimes adopted is that we are perhaps more to be pitied than censured.

The conclusion we come to is that we need to strengthen our churches in the areas of truth and practice which have been referred to in this article. The text in 1 Corinthians 11:19 is relevant, 'For there must be also heresies among you, that they which are approved may be made manifest among you'. K.J.V.

#### References

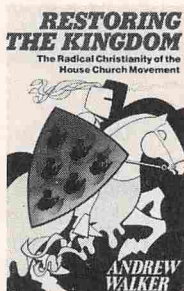
<sup>1</sup> Quoted from the transcript of a sermon preached by Clifford Beasley, at Northgate, Chester (Dales) Church October 1982.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>3</sup> Quoted in *R.T.* 82, p. 47.

*This is an article in which two major books and one smaller one are reviewed.*

*The first book sets the scene and makes way for the second. The third is a simpler version of the second.*



1. **RESTORING THE KINGDOM**  
Andrew Walker, Hodder and Stoughton, 300 pp., paperback, £5.95.
2. **THE CHARISMATICS AND THE WORD OF GOD**  
Victor Budgen, 280 pp., paperback, Evangelical Press, £5.95.
3. **TEST THE SPIRITS**  
Colin S. Butler, 156 pp., paperback, Evangelical Press, £1.95.

## Kingdom, Cult or New Denomination?

RESTORING THE KINGDOM IS A 300 page book by Andrew Walker. He is a professional researcher who has worked for BBC Radio 4. He is a communicant member of the Russian Orthodox Church and has no axe to grind with regard to his subject. He presents a large amount of factual material and leaves the reader to make his own conclusions. The book is interesting to read and provides a valuable history of the Restorationist Movement in Britain.

The presentation enables the reader to see the emergence of two distinct restoration groups which for convenience the author calls R1 and R2. These charismatic groups make radical claims, namely, that they represent the emergence in the final form of the Kingdom of Christ on earth. Each group is about 16,000 strong, including children. This figure will need to be halved because statistics are recorded according to adult membership. Suppose we reckon on there being about 15,000 Restorationists. An establishment of the

Kingdom in the UK alone will require the conversion of 225,000 Baptists, 64,000 Christian Brethren, 31,000 evangelical Presbyterians (including 14,500 Free Church of Scotland which is unlikely with leaders like Donald MacLeod!) – not to mention the evangelicals in the C of E and other sacral type denominations. There are probably 1,100,000 evangelicals in the U.K. A mighty effort will be required to convince them of Restorationism!

Andrew Walker is to be congratulated not only on the way he sustains interest as he unfolds the story but also in the way he has explained the principle doctrinal issues. He has not attempted any refutations, only given descriptions and raised questions.

This leads to the second book, *Charismatics and the Word of God*, by Victor Budgen. This volume provides a thorough examination of the principal doctrines of the current movement, namely, prophecy, tongues, apostles.

This book received strange treatment from *The Evangelical Times* which is the main evangelical newspaper read by non-conformist evangelicals including Reformed evangelicals. Why did the book evoke such an odd review in *E.T.*? We will return to that when we have surveyed the scene further.

### *The Rise of Pentecostalism in Britain*

The story of Edward Irving has been well related by Arnold Dallimore. Although the book was played down by *E.T.* it is an important contribution because we have in Irvingism, and the Catholic Apostolic Church (C.A.C.) that emerged, a full dress rehearsal for similar movements that have developed this century. Whether these movements will become extinct as the C.A.C. has done (except for churches in Holland), is another matter. At any rate it helps tremendously to keep everything in historical perspective and observe that between 1910 and 1920 an Apostolic denomination developed from Penygroes in Wales. The movement was characterised by a fervent stress on prophecy as inspired exhortation. Strongly separatist, the Apostolic Church has never been accepted by other branches of Pentecostalism that have developed subsequently. They number about 5,000 (the official U.K. Christian Handbook figure).<sup>1</sup> There is a strong authoritarian and hierarchical leadership of apostles within the Apostolic Church. While never really taking off in Britain they have had phenomenal success in Nigeria where they claim to have 3,000 churches. We need to remember that Nigeria has the largest population in Africa and is the scene of many messianic cults, which is not to suggest we should place the Apostolic Church in that category.

The Apostolic Church is the closest in doctrine to the present Restoration movements of R1 and R2. Andrew Walker points out however that 'in feel and tone' they are quite different (p. 242). Outside Black Pentecostal

churches he also points out that the Apostolic Church is the 'most emotionally intense'.

During the 1920s there developed the further Pentecostal denominations, namely, ELIM and the Assemblies of God. ELIM number about 26,000 and Assemblies of God (A.O.G.) 60,000. ELIM have their own Bible College at Capel in Surrey (for several years the venue of the Carey Family Conference).

### *The rise of R1 and R2*

With the above very broad perspective we must now examine the rapid rise of R1 and R2. This will be a pen sketch and those who want the full portrait will need to purchase Andrew Walker's book.

The Pentecostal churches existing outside the mainline denominations have been referred to as the House Church Movement, this being a misnomer because it conveys the idea that the groups are confined to houses. At any rate by the late 1960s independent charismatic assemblies had been increasing, particularly in London. The resurgence of these Charismatic groups continued into the early 1970s when the leaders began to find each other. As they did so a distinct Restoration doctrine developed. This was the idea that the recovery of supernatural gifts together with apostles and prophets as distinct offices in the restored Church would herald the coming of Christ's Kingdom preparatory to his return. Seven leaders were recognized (by each other!) in 1972. By 1974 this developed to 14. In 1976 a major split took place. Hence the need to refer to R1 and R2.

R1 is the more organized of the two streams which have developed. R1 possesses impressive building complexes. Centred round the apostles is a proliferation of house cell groups. House group leaders regularly meet with the elders who in turn report to the apostles. There has been the importa-

tion of a strong American flavour. In the early 80s an annual Dales Bible Week was attended by about 7,000. The ministry of American Charismatic leaders did much to contribute to the success of such a large size residential event.

R2 is more diverse in character than R1. R2 has its own version of the Dales Week. Festival 84 was held at Stafford and was attended by 4,000. Andrew Walker describes the Dales Bible Week as 'a spiritual pressure-cooker', but the Festival like 'a spiritual Butlins' (p. 109). The seminars at the Festival are broader in content and more controversial.

#### *Where has the increase come from?*

R1 and R2 represent the fastest growing section of evangelicalism since the emergence of ELIM and A.O.G. (Assemblies of God) in the 1930s. Followers have been drawn from all denominations. Radically affected have been ELIM and A.O.G. At least six ELIM churches have transferred to R1. The Baptist Union churches have lost large numbers to Restorationism. So have the Christian Brethren. One Baptist Union Church lost exactly half its membership of 300. Many have entered R1 or R2 from the Church of England. It must be clearly borne in mind that Restorationism is very different to Renewalism, the latter being the Charismatic movement within the major denominations. Restorationists believe that it is not possible to revive the major denominations and that it is imperative to come out and join with the people of the Kingdom. They believe that Restorationism will mushroom in such a way as to make the rest of evangelicalism seem irrelevant. Thus Restorationism will take over to become the Kingdom.

Whereas former movements have been noted for revival and increase through evangelism this has not been the case with R1 and R2. The thrust and pulling power throughout has been the very

effective message that the existing churches are defunct, drab, ineffective and powerless. By contrast this new movement boasts of all the characteristics of life, seen especially in freedom and excitement in worship, the exercise of gifts, and supernatural powers. Bryn Jones, who is by far the most gifted of the apostles, has made an attempt to promote true evangelism. The Jefferies brothers of the 1930s were noted Pentecostal evangelists. In 1984 Bryn Jones organized evangelistic campaigns in Birmingham, Leicester and Leeds. This was the first organized assault by the 'restored kingdom' upon the secular world.

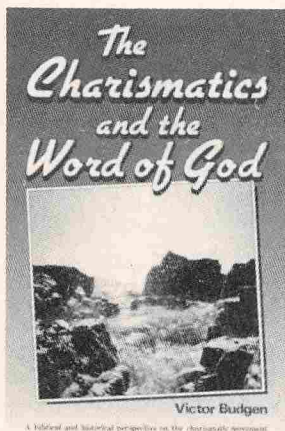
#### *What is the doctrine of the Kingdom?*

The magazine of R1 is called *Restoration*. The November/December 1983 issue summarizes the recovered truths as follows:

1. The baptism of the Holy Spirit.
2. The return of the gifts of the Spirit for both corporate and individual life.
3. A belief in a worldwide end-time revival.
4. The restoration of apostolic and prophetic ministries as a major means of bringing about the unity of the Church.
5. The establishment of apostolic teams to supplement and complement the work of the apostles.
6. The growth of discipling practices, under godly leaders, in local churches.
7. A recognition that denominations are not in God's plan, and are ultimately unrenowable.
8. New freedom in worship and praise.

Bryn Jones, the apostle of the north, is basically Arminian in his beliefs and so would not espouse a doctrinal confession like the 1689 Baptist Confession which we use. We would begin with that and then examine the claims to truth as elaborated above. In accepting the 1689

Confession we are implying our unity with the historic Christian Church and especially with that Church as she recovered her strength at the time of the Reformers and Puritans of the 16th and 17th centuries.



With regard to the claim number 1 above, my response is that the whole ethos of basing Christian experience on a post-conversion experience is erroneous and blatantly unbiblical. The N.T. teaches us to build upon justification by faith, conversion and regeneration. The post conversion experience concept splits the work of the Trinity asunder. Our power, all of it, lies in God Triune himself, not in any subjective experience. It is right to look for and live by the power of the Holy Spirit, but that power is not vested in some post conversion experience of the past but always in God now in the present. Number 1 then is an error rather than a rediscovered truth.<sup>2</sup>

Claims numbers 2 to 5 inclusive are examined by Victor Budgen in his book. To that we now turn.

#### *A notable book by Victor Budgen*

The radical claim of R1 and R2 is that throughout this dispensation the Church of Christ has erred in neglecting

the provision of apostles and prophets and the miraculous wonders that attended their ministries. There is only one way to deal with this subject and that is by looking at it in detail and in depth. This pastor Budgen has done.

He begins with prophecy. What is the nature of prophecy? The author shows that there can be no intermediate in prophecy. Either a message or prophecy from God is infallible or it is not. Modern examples of prophecy are documented. These are by leaders not obscure disciples. They have proved false. The author asks whether any disciplinary action is applied. Details are provided and documentation given of the prophecy that David Watson would be healed. This was a subject that gained nationwide attention. The prophecy failed. It is very important that we should have a book like this which covers an epoch and which is so carefully documented.

It is not necessary in such a study to refer to every treatise written which attempts to find a middle ground for prophecy. Nor is it necessary to refer to all the books that have been written on the subject of tongue-speaking. After prophecy that is the next theme to be examined by pastor Budgen. Various are the views taken, even by Reformed authors on this subject. Victor Budgen takes tongues to be definite languages rather than ecstatic sounds which really amount to gibberish. The view expressed is carefully argued and has the merit of placing this supernatural gift on the same high plane as the other charismata. This means that tongues is a gift and not something that can be manipulated by others attempting to get a candidate to make sounds. He cites the fascinating experience of Wong Ming-Dao (p. 71).

It has become popular in evangelical circles to dismiss the idea that it is possible to prove from Scripture that the apostolic era was unique and that prophecy was to cease together with the miraculous gifts that came with Christ

and which he conferred upon his apostles. Victor Budgen does not hide the fact that the Puritans dealt with 1 Corinthians 13 in a general way and were not definitive with regard to that passage. Jonathan Edwards was an exception. He does deal with the passage in 'Charity and its Fruits' and separately he provided a technical exegesis of 1 Corinthians 13:8-13.<sup>3</sup> The best work today is that provided by Douglas Judisch, 'An Evaluation of Claims to the Charismatic Gifts' (Baker, U.S.A.). Judisch is particularly powerful in expounding the explicit testimony of Daniel and also in his exposition of 1 Corinthians 13:8-13. The value of pastor Budgen's work is that he not only refers to Judisch but brings us right up to date with regard to this crucial subject. His treatment of 1 Corinthians 13:8-13 is excellent. Those who do not agree with this interpretation will need to answer the case which is not done with a sweep of the hand. Godet was one commentator who got to grips with this passage within its overall context of 1 Corinthians chapters 12-14. Present day Charismatics have hardly been noted for their scholarship or painstaking exegesis of the biblical text.

The Apostolic Church and R1 and R2 are consistent in their position that there is no cessation of apostles. Their view is that the apostles and the supernatural gifts continue together. Other Pentecostals hold the view that the apostles were unique but that the miraculous gifts continue. That is a less consistent position because once it is admitted that the apostles were unique that is half way to cessationism. Mr. Budgen deals thoroughly with the signs of apostleship as well as with the subject of modern claims to apostleship.

He points out that there are no criteria in Scripture for recognizing secondary apostles. 'The creature does not exist!' (p. 105). With reference to consistency in following through with the works that are to be expected from apostles, Mr. Budgen shows that the Mormons have

been consistent because their apostles not only have new revelations but incorporate them into their credal beliefs.

Victor Budgen provides an overall contribution of 100 pages of exposition with relevant application. This is followed by 100 pages of historical survey. We are enabled to compare the present day movement with the Montanists, the charismatics of the reformation period and the Puritan epoch. The history of the French prophets is traced out. Jonathan Edwards response to fanatics who made great claims for themselves receives comment. Edward Irving is briefly referred to (only three pages, because of Dallimore's full treatment). However about 10 pages is devoted to a description of Pentecostalism during the first two decades of this century.

In his analysis and conclusions pastor Budgen deals with the Pentecostal movement as a whole rather than with the specific claims of R1 and R2. The ground previously covered and the documentation provided brings him to conclude that there is a widespread delusion that the charismata have been restored. He concludes that those involved are bluffing themselves just as previous claimants have been deceived. Some, like one of Edward Irving's colleagues, called Baxter, came to see this for themselves (p. 179ff.).

The problem is that those involved do not want to face up to books like this. Some Christian bookshops are reluctant to stock such titles. Some retailers will stock the title but only under the counter, not on display. It is not difficult to understand this. Charismatic claims have become so acceptable that it is now exceedingly unpopular to challenge them or put them under the scrutiny of Scripture and experience. What do we suppose Roman Catholic bookshops would do with books which queried the many visions and claims concerning Mary, or books which exposed the fallacious claims made concerning Lourdes? Even if such books were

brilliant and accurate they would not be accepted.

*The review published in the 'Evangelical Times'*

In his preface Victor Budgen appeals for the reader not to be side-tracked by personalities but to stick to the main argument. He asks that we concentrate on scriptural arguments and declares his intention to identify the various spokesmen in the footnotes only, a policy which he faithfully carries out. This is a strong contrast with the book by Andrew Walker who not only names the apostles but all the persons involved. He even discusses their habits such as whether they patronize pubs. Where there have been shady sides he does not hide that either. It is difficult to imagine that anyone is going to take him to task for this.

Yet when we turn to the review in *E.T.* by Roy Clements, Baptist minister of Cambridge, he personalizes the issues and attempts to bias readers against the book. Even though pastor Budgen appeals again in his conclusion for fairness (p. 241), his appeal is ignored. For instance Pastor Clements thinks it is belligerent to call Peter Lewis a Reformed Charismatic. Is this unreasonable when many of us have heard eloquent and frequent appeals from Peter along those lines? If Roy Clements attended some of the conferences and got to know men like Victor he would not be so wide of the mark. Also we would like to know why it is wrong to identify what a man strives to propagate. Peter Lewis has written often in *E.T.* and even now is advertized to speak at a conference specifically advertizing the intention to promote charismatic perspectives. Is it wrong to call Terry Virgo and Bryn Jones apostles when they proclaim themselves to be such?

There may be other reasons why *E.T.* dislikes Victor Budgen's book. One is that the footnotes expose the fact that *E.T.* has been an ally of the Charismatic

movement. The stance adopted has always been that we have much to learn and all we have to do is be careful of extremes. *E.T.* has never taken a firm line. The editor himself is in a church led by a pastor who fervently preaches apostleship and is himself 'covered' by an R1 apostle. The fishing net used for other evangelicals is that they would support Reformed doctrine and accord with the F.I.E.C. statement of faith. Apostle Virgo even has the latter pinned up on his church notice board.

Many pastors in the U.K. regret that a paper that they have supported in good faith should be used to promote errors which are the most divisive faced in our generation. It would be honest if the *E.T.* editor worked openly for one of the many Charismatic magazines that are current and the churches for whom *E.T.* was originally established were responsible to appoint an editor who would represent their interests. This is a practical suggestion. Andrew Walker shows in his book that the main centres of R1 are now extremely well endowed.

*Important lessons emerging*

Whenever we are faced with stupendous claims we become conscious of our own limitations and weaknesses. However we must not be distracted. We must work to make sure that our churches are vibrant and relevant. We must make certain that our people are well taught and see themselves as part of the universal Church of believers not only of our day, but of this entire dispensation.

Every false claim must be met head-on and refuted. For instance the propaganda runs that it is we who limit the Holy Spirit. We need to show that the Holy Spirit has set limits upon himself (see Victor's book p. 205). If a group insists that the Holy Spirit must work in the same way that he did when he was specifically vindicating the ministry of Christ and his apostles, that indeed is to impose our will on the Holy Spirit.

Vital in this whole debate is sound doctrine. A biblical doctrine of holiness and progressive sanctification is essential. The necessity of fruitfulness must be proclaimed. A person can have power on a platform but behave like a devil at home.

Above all we must always be clear as to what constitutes a true local church. Whatever the name (Methodist, Baptist, Anglican, Brethren, Pentecostal) each church requires to evidence definite marks, such as fidelity to the Bible. An assembly may have weaknesses in one area of truth but be robust in others. For instance a local church may be mediocre as far as the pulpit ministry goes but really be terrific in evangelism, missionary enterprise, and practical good works. We only have to read again the letters of Christ to the seven churches of Asia Minor to see how diverse churches can be. A church full of love to Christ is a super church. Subscribing to a set of doctrines does not make a church. That is a good beginning merely. Furthermore subscribing to a set of false principles certainly does not make a church great. And if a church by that set of false principles then maintains that it is the only favoured body, that in itself may soon work to the destruction of the witness of that church. This leads us to our next consideration.

#### *Kingdom, Cult or New Denomination?*

The claim to be *The Kingdom* is extravagant. It suggests a new cult. What characterizes a cult is the claim to exclusiveness. A further feature of a cult is the adoption of an additional source of authority alongside the Bible. The mormons have been consistent and set the Book of Mormon alongside the Bible. Spiritualists place their alleged communications from the spirits of dead persons on a par with the Bible. The role of authority can be more subtle than that as is the case with the Jehovahs Witnesses. The key they provide to

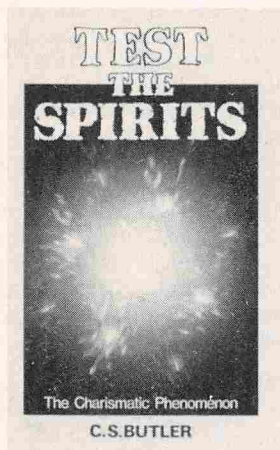
interpreting the Bible is the real source of authority with them. And of course they claim to be the exclusive holders of truth in the world.

While Restorationism has the ingredients of Cultishness in their claims of uniqueness, and in the authority of apostles and prophets (as John Palmer shows in his article) they do not yet deserve to be classed as a cult. The situation is still too fluid for that. The way things are going it may end as a further denomination rather like the Apostolic Pentecostal Church. The present seeming strengths of the movement may prove to be liabilities. The method of covering or oversight has already proved to be legalistic and destructive. It is reminiscent of the Exclusive Brethren horror stories. Walker documents in detail a typical case of a couple who left the movement because of the personal strife engendered by the system. It is one thing to be covered or watched and supervised by a very godly overseer, but if an overseer is himself spiritually immature the outcome can be disastrous. In any case the scriptures indicate that our hold on members is not a suffocating one, but of general spiritual care.

A further factor is the form of worship that is used. C. S. Lewis said that worship is like wearing shoes, the less conscious you are of them the better they are. When worshipping Jahweh Triune we wish to be taken up wholly with him and not be conscious of mechanics and still less of the spotlights on persons and their particular contributions. I maintain that the majority of secular people are not impressed by the jumping about. That is not just middle class people who tend to have conservative taste. I spoke to a retired busdriver who had attended a number of the meetings. Besides taking six friends to be healed and being disappointed inasmuch as they were nothing bettered he was entirely unimpressed, and prefers a calm low key approach. Today's innovation which might be

very exciting becomes tomorrow's standard practice. The much repeated choruses can soon become stale through over-usage. The depth of truth we enjoy with our great heritage of psalms and hymns is an advantage. In due course it may be a relief to refugees who come to our services just to be able to be still. Personally I would find most Charismatic forms of service a desperate hindrance to evangelism.

Yet another disadvantage is the extravagant nature of the claims made. What happens when the Kingdom is not restored? What happens when the miracles do not work and the prophecies fail?



It has always been the case that most of those involved in prophecies, and claims to tongues and interpretations, are frankly not interested in verification. This applies to healing as well. Even though the healings do not take place it does not seem to bother them. There seems always to be some report or excitement to sustain the system. There are none so blind as those who do not want to see.

Yet we should not be discouraged. The apostle Paul gives counsel which we are to follow always, 'the Lord's servant must not quarrel: instead he must be kind to everyone, able to teach, not

resentful. Those who oppose him he must gently instruct, in the hope that God will grant them repentance leading them to a knowledge of the truth, and that they will come to their senses and escape from the devil, who has taken them captive to do his will' (2 Tim 2:25). This advice is set in the context of evangelism. It is imperative that we always maintain a firm determination to reach out with the gospel to all people. In so doing we will come across all kinds of religious aberration. When that is so we should be sure to exercise the above counsel.

Paul also requires that we test everything (1 Thess 5:21).

### *Test the Spirits*

*Test the Spirits* is the title of another book published by E.P. There is a danger that we overlook its role and usefulness because of the larger work by Victor Budgen. *Test the Spirits* is by an ex-charismatic Colin S. Butler. It is a fluent and popular work highly readable and dividing into two parts, 1. The history of the charismatic movement, and 2. The teachings. Three important chapters conclude 17 chapters all of which have arresting titles. The three are, *The charismatic movement, Roman Catholicism and unity, Is the charismatic movement a revival? and, Testimonies of men who have come out of second blessing movements.*

Colin Butler's book compared with Victor Budgen's has little exegesis but it does contain much useful information as well as some excellent insights. For instance the power and prevalence of novelty is most important (p. 58). There is always something new to excite, almost like fashions. Colin Butler's inclusion of testimonies of former charismatics stirs us to use literature. Most professing Christians are not disposed to reading theological treatises but they can manage popular paperbacks. Colin Butler's book with its short interesting chapters is ideal.

The advantage of good literature should be used by us to the full. It may well be that some of our best preachers, evangelists and writers will emerge from the present charismatic movement. At one time I used to work with Denis Clark and Campbell McAlpine. Denis Clark almost made it to be included in 'the fabulous fourteen' (cf Andrew Walker p. 61). Sadly Denis died two years ago. Campbell McAlpine was included but has subsequently withdrawn from the movement as has George Tarleton who was regarded as one of the top leaders. I mention this because these men have been tremendously zealous. Denis and Campbell have not been noted for study or their interest in biblical theology as a science but they represent believers who are totally committed to the gospel. It is paramount that we put materials in the path of men who are searching for the answers.

It is the view of Peter Lewis that we should in effect be with them to win them. However that is simplistic because it is not possible to effect a wedding of the two systems of belief and practice — the Reformed and the Charismatic. Having written in detail about that in *R.T. 84* (Will you attend the wedding?), it is not appropriate to repeat it again but rather appeal to my readers to refer to that article. A foremost difficulty is the highly proselytizing stance of Restorationism and the vulnerability of those who are not firmly grounded in the truth of the all sufficiency of scripture.

### *Contending for the faith*

Jude urges us to contend for the faith that was once for all entrusted to the saints. The fact that it is 'once for all' means that no other faith or revelation is to supersede it. As Christ was offered *once* to bear the sins of many (Heb 9:28), so the faith has been given *once*. There is no deficiency. It is complete. It is perfect. Jude uses the word *epagonizesthai* which we translate *contend*. *Earnestly contend* is better because it comes a little

nearer to the agony involved and which is implied in the Greek word.<sup>4</sup> Contending for the faith is costly and agonizing. It is unfashionable and often discouraging to have to contend for the truth. However we are to be constant in so doing. We must persevere. Often the exercise may seem futile. Sometimes it will be painful and involve disappointment. Nevertheless we must never waver. With love, resolution, patience, and perseverance, let us promote the whole counsel of the faith delivered to us once and for all.

### *Footnotes*

<sup>1</sup> Andrew Walker appears to have made a number of statistical errors in his book. For instance the figure for A.O.G. should be 60,000 and not 25,000 as he suggests. I have followed the statistics given in the current U.K. Christian Handbook, although even with that it is questionable whether some of the estimates are correct.

<sup>2</sup> Obviously it is impossible to deal with the doctrine of post-conversion experiences in a paragraph. Most readers will know of my book *Crisis Experiences* which expounds the subject in detail. (Carey Publications, 140 pp. £2.40.)

<sup>3</sup> The hitherto unpublished treatise is due to appear in the *Complete Works of Jonathan Edwards* published by Yale University Press. This is a massive undertaking which will involve about 50 volumes and continue volume by volume to the end of the century.

<sup>4</sup> Paul uses *agonizesthai* as a term to describe the exacting hardship and painful experience involved in building up believers. See Colossians 1:28, 29. He also uses the term to describe the agony that is involved in prevailing prayer (Col 4:12). The word is suitable too in describing the pain suffered by athletes as they agonize to win the prize (1 Cor 9:25). In 2 Timothy 4:7 the apostle declares that he has agonized through his course. Athletes testify that they actually enjoy the agony involved in the marathon. So again in 2 Timothy 4:7 he says that it has been a good struggle, *kalon agona* — a good agony.

A report of the Carey Conference for Ministers has been held over for the next issue.

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