
REFORMATION TODAY



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David and Valerie Streater

David Streater has been appointed director of Church Society. The previous director, David Samuel, experienced significant opportunities on national TV in which he never failed to be crystal clear about justification by faith and the great truths of the gospel.

David Streater served for 12 years lecturing in the Kalk Bay Bible Institute, Capetown, South Africa. Recently he has pastored St Andrew's Church, Kingham, Oxfordshire. He regularly attends the Carey Ministers' Conference.

Let us pray that he will be greatly used. Church Society are moving their headquarters from London to Watford.

CAREY CONFERENCE FOR MINISTERS

Swanwick, Derbyshire – January 8-10 1992

Speakers: Richard Gaffin, Professor of Systematic Theology, Westminster Seminary, Bill Hughes, Pastor of the Harpur Memorial Church, Glasgow, Daniel Webber, Director of the European Missionary Fellowship, David Kingdon, Geoff Thomas and Erroll Hulse.

For further information contact: 75 Woodhill Road, LEEDS LS16 7BZ. Tel (0532) 612513.

Front cover: Part of Old Warsaw. For update on Poland, see report by Kingsley Coomber in the News section. The opportunities and needs in Eastern Europe and Russia are oceanic in scope. The counter opposition of the old Communist orders in these countries must in no way be under-estimated. Open doors require our best efforts.

Revival in China

We have been corresponding with Tony Lambert for a number of years. Tony, who is fluent in Chinese has been engaged in Chinese-related work and study for 25 years, first at the London School of Oriental and African Studies, then as a British diplomat stationed in Beijing. Since 1982, he has been China consultant for the Overseas Missionary Fellowship, based in Hong Kong. His book, *The Resurrection of the Chinese Church* (Hodder & Stoughton, 320 pages pbk. £7.99), describes contemporary China both politically and religiously. A chapter is devoted to revival with accounts of the outpouring of the Holy Spirit since about 1982. This spiritual awakening has been experienced in the context of bitter persecution. The author draws attention to the fact that while we hardly believe in revival any more and while Christianity is in decline in the West, spiritual revival is taking place in Third World countries, sometimes on a massive scale.

Tony Lambert has an interesting definition of genuine spiritual revival. He says it may be defined as occurring when:

- 1 The people of God are stirred to pray fervently for the low state of the church and for the unconverted world.
- 2 Powerful preachers of the gospel are raised up by God to proclaim the gospel with unusual spiritual force.
- 3 The church is convicted of a deep sense of sin before a living God.
- 4 Individuals and churches repent of specific sins.
- 5 A new sense of joy permeates the church, making the gospel and the things of God become real.
- 6 The Christian church has a marked impact upon the surrounding community.
- 7 God works visibly in supernatural ways.

Signs of decline in the West

Evidences of the low state of evangelicalism I see as follows:

- 1 A lack of confidence in the Scripture.
- 2 A lack of faith in the place of preaching.
- 3 A lack of conviction about eternal punishment.
- 4 A lack of enthusiasm about the Lord's Day.
- 5 A lack of commitment to the biblical view of marriage.

1 A lack of confidence in the Scripture

This is seen in the gradual acceptance of the idea that Scripture is only inspired with regard to the doctrine of salvation but not in historical or scientific matters.

It is quite common now to find that the first chapters of Genesis are not regarded as historical. There is a rejection of the idea that Adam and Eve were created as individuals and the historical basis has been replaced with the idea that the Genesis account is symbolic. However this brings into question our Lord's view of Adam and Eve and the Pauline teaching, especially in Romans chapter 5 and 1 Corinthians 15. It is this lack of confidence in Scripture that has led to a rejection of the biblical view of the difference between men and women which forms the basis of Paul's argument for male preachers. With Paul it was not a cultural matter but a creational matter. We are about to witness a landslide into feminist thinking in literature published by Inter-Varsity Press.

We must believe that the Scripture is God-breathed (2 Tim 3:16), that men spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit (2 Pet 1:21), and that Jesus affirmed that the Scriptures cannot be broken (Jn 10:35). In other words we must believe that the Scriptures are inspired in an infallible way. God who breathed out (expired) all Scripture cannot lie. The inspiration of Scripture is plenary which means full and complete. Scripture is inspired and hence inerrant in all matters it addresses: history, wisdom literature and the doctrines of salvation. A lack of confidence in Scripture leads to all the weaknesses which I will now describe.

2 A lack of faith in the place of preaching

God's way of bringing sinners to repentance and faith has always been primarily through preaching (1 Cor 1:17-24). The Holy Spirit fills the proclamation of the Word with power. A prime example of this is the day of Pentecost. Preaching is unique inasmuch as God uses it primarily to convince the world of sin, righteousness and judgment. But where preachers lack confidence in the Scriptures they tend to give away the primacy of preaching and replace preaching with entertainment and every device to please the natural appetite and desires of the public. The result is that worship services are often little more than a friendly get-together with hearty singing and a man-pleasing talk rather than a sermon. It is not surprising that there are few conversions and that we seldom hear of conviction of sin.

Preaching is stressed in the New Testament not only because that is God's way of making himself known but also because through preaching the authority of the Bible is felt (true preaching is a knowledge of God *applied* to the whole life). Furthermore preaching is the way in which the Church is empowered to live out the message of the gospel and to be Word-orientated, worship-orientated, and witness-orientated. (See J I Packer, chapter *Why Preach?* in the book *PREACHING*, EP, 1985.)

3 A lack of conviction about eternal punishment

Where human reasoning is allowed precedence over the Scriptures there follow manipulation and adjustment of the Word. Because the uniqueness of redemption is so plainly asserted in the Bible, Evangelicals cannot accept the

idea that everyone will be saved in the end (universalism). Yet many cannot accept eternal punishment because this is contrary to human reason. For instance, John Stott is quite plain when he says that this doctrine is simply unacceptable (David Edwards with John Stott, *Essentials*, Hodder and Stoughton, 1988, pages 312-320). Philip Hughes, like John Stott, is a writer of superlative quality. It is a pity to find that his tremendously valuable book, *The True Image*, on the origin and destiny of man in Christ, is marred by ten pages devoted to the subject of annihilationism (*The True Image*, IVP, 1989 see pages 398 following). If this reasoning were to be accepted it would mean that the unsaved will not be punished for their sins but simply annihilated. This plainly contradicts the teaching of our Lord in several places. For instance he declares, 'Their worm does not die, and the fire is not quenched' (Mark 9:48). This teaching is confirmed by the New Testament epistles and by the book of Revelation. It is interesting to note that whenever the Holy Spirit comes in revival, the truth of eternal hell is not only preached but inwardly apprehended by lost souls in an awesome way. EP has published two fine short paperbacks on this subject, *Condemned Forever* by Eryl Davies, 124 pages, 1987 and *How can a God of Love send People to Hell* by John Benton, 96 pages, 1985, also this year Kingsway have published, *Crucial Questions about Hell*, by Ajith Fernando, with a foreword by J I Packer, 188 pages, £6.99.

4 A lack of enthusiasm about the Lord's Day

What we need today is for the Holy Spirit to fill the means of grace with power and glory; glory in the preaching, conviction in the reading of Scripture, liberty and boldness in prayer at the church prayer meetings faithfully attended, heartfelt love and gratitude at the Lord's Table, joy in worship and singing, abounding affection in fellowship together, gladness in giving, zeal in doing good works, enthusiasm and pleasure in visiting the sick and lonely. Most of these activities find their main expression on the Lord's Day. In American evangelical churches there is an increasing tendency for churches to opt for a morning service so that the rest of the day can be spent fishing, boating, golfing, camping or whatever. In a newly published and highly commended small paperback, *Call the Sabbath a Delight* (Banner of Truth, 110 pages, 1991), Walt Chantry describes the idolatry that sport has become to displace the Lord's Day. Here in Britain we are not far behind with Test Cricket now on Sunday, the British Open Golf final on that day and Wimbledon tennis also on Sunday. However it has been noted in British mass media that there is the occasional athlete who is quite outspoken on this issue and uncompromising about Sunday competition. Have we forgotten that Jesus did teach positively about the sabbath? He said that it was made for us and that he was Lord of that Day (Mt 12:8). It is his day, the day of joy and gladness (Ps 118:24). Isaiah 58:13-14 is a Messianic passage describing the way to spiritual revival:

*'If you keep your feet from breaking the Sabbath
and from doing as you please on my holy day,*

*if you call the Sabbath a delight
and the LORD's holy day honourable,
and if you honour it by not going your own way
and not doing as you please or speaking idle words,
then you will find your joy in the LORD,
and I will cause you to ride on the heights of the land
and to feast on the inheritance of our father Jacob."
The mouth of the LORD has spoken.'*

In contrast to the lukewarmness so common about the Lord's Day in the West one of our church members (Graham Sharkey, see *RT* 122 page 22) witnessed the fervency of believers on his first Lord's Day in Romania. The morning service lasted 5 hours. The evening service was followed by visitation of every house in the village where that church is situated. This subject is further addressed in the article *Exercising Ourselves to Godliness*.

The article by Robert Godfrey is calculated to inspire us all afresh to preparation and zeal for the Lord's Day.

5 A lack of commitment to the biblical view of marriage

The *Times* newspaper recently reported that a survey had revealed that 31 percent of young church members thought sex outside marriage 'always' or 'sometimes' acceptable. Note that this was the young members which indicates a slide and a sell out. All kinds of erroneous arguments are produced from the Old Testament to support this error. But Malachi avows that the Lord has never changed the creation ordinance of marriage in which the two become one (Mal 2:13-16), a truth which is uncompromisingly endorsed by our Lord when he rejects divorce, and refers back to the creation (Mt 19:1-6). Could there be anything clearer than Ephesians 5:22 – where the man and woman are compared in love and fidelity to Christ and the Church? If premarital sex is to be permitted it destroys trust, but in addition it results in havoc because it leads to experimentation and the philosophy that we will only get married if things seem to work well. This is a gross violation of womanhood. Every rejected woman who is abused and then left by a male is left in a state of miserable disillusionment and distress. But worse than that pain is the judgment of God. He promises that every adulterer, referring both to the man and woman, will be judged (Heb 13:4).

The promiscuity of the 1960s has resulted in a great escalation in divorce, in family breakups and in the scepticism of God's ordinance of holy matrimony. We need a mighty revival to restore to us the fear of God and respect for his holy law. Only in this way will we be brought back to the fidelity and trust of biblical marriage and the stable home that is the fruit of this blessing. We are grateful for the article by John Kruijs which expounds the central issues clearly.

Exercising Ourselves to Godliness

Paul's exhortation to his son Timothy, 'Train yourself to be godly', is made in the context of physical training. Literally translated the text could read, '*Gymnase* yourself to be godly', suggesting gymnastics and the rigorous training that is involved in the gymnasium. That there are parallels in discipline between physical and spiritual exercising is suggested by Paul's reference to physical training having some value. He affirms that while bodily exercise has some profit, 'godliness has value for all things, holding promise both for this world and for the life to come'.

In the context, the exhortation to exercise to godliness is preceded by a negative. The apostle urges that no time be wasted on futile matters such as old wives' tales and godless myths. Rather Timothy is to exercise himself to godliness. The temptation today is not old wives tales but rather the expenditure of too much on lawful and enjoyable pursuits. The harm is done when these squeeze out that time which is essential for the nurture of godliness.

We can get to the heart of 1 Timothy 4:7-8 as follows:

The objective	<i>Godliness</i>
The advantage of godliness	<i>Gain in this world and the next</i>
How to grow in godliness	<i>Exercise</i>

The objective *Godliness*

What is godliness? The word *eusebeia* occurs about ten times in the letters of the New Testament. Its meaning can be derived from its usage. The most telling place is where Paul declares, 'Beyond all question, the mystery of godliness is great:

*He appeared in a body,
was vindicated by the Spirit,
was seen by angels,
was preached among the nations,
was believed on in the world,
was taken up in glory.'*

The incarnation of our Lord was the advent into this world of pure and perfect godliness or God-likeness. The incarnation is unique. Any God-

likeness that we attain is by virtue of our union with the Son of God. That godliness or God-likeness is the result of conformity to him through the work of the Holy Spirit. 'And we, who with unveiled faces all reflect the Lord's glory, are being transformed into his likeness with ever increasing glory, which comes from the Lord, who is the Spirit' (2 Cor 3:18).

God-likeness is the objective or aim of growing in holiness or advancing in sanctification. It is a progressive work. It involves a transformation through the exercise of renewing of our minds (Rom 12:1,2). Godliness or holiness is the supreme purpose of our lives here on earth and the pursuit of godliness involves us all the time. It is comprehensive inasmuch as all our faculties are involved in the exercise which is to godliness. It involves the way we think and speak and act.

German piety

The Greek word *eusebeia* translated 'godliness' refers not only to the end result of godliness (God-likeness) but the actual practice of godliness that leads to the result. In evangelical history the word piety has been used to describe the practice of godliness. A Pietist movement began in 1675 when a German pastor of the Lutheran Church, Philipp Spener (1635-1705), published a treatise with the title *Pia desiderata* which instantly became a best seller. The book consisted of a passionate appeal for the practice of personal devotion (Bible reading, devotion, prayer), but also called for the practical outworking of godliness by way of social care, philanthropy, caring for orphans and the poor. Unfortunately in its later development an unnecessary division developed between the intellectual and the devotional emphases. This proved fatal during the latter part of the last century when it was essential to resist modernism along the lines of a well thought out biblical basis. It was fatally inadequate to think that the maintenance of the devotional life would be an adequate protection of the Church. Devotion is indeed essential but the faith has to be earnestly defended (Jude 3).

English piety

In our study of the development of piety (the practice of godliness) we must not miss the fact that the English Puritans were the supreme devotees of practical piety. They did not make the mistake of allowing an unnecessary division between the mind and the heart. Richard Rogers, Puritan preacher of Wethersfield, Essex, had his book *Seven Treatises* published in 1603. This work was a daily rule of life in which Rogers sought to apply the teaching of Scripture to every human activity and to deal particularly with the use of time for every hour of each day of the

week. Seven editions were printed by 1630. The practice of Christianity by the exercise of godliness as applied to all departments of life became the chief characteristic of 17th century English Puritanism.

A further example of the Puritan approach is that of George Swinnock (1627-1673), Puritan pastor who was ejected from his pastorate for his non-conformity in 1662. He wrote a 1,200 page treatise on the text, 'But exercise thyself rather to godliness'. The length indicates the extent to which the writer applied this spiritual work to every facet of life. Obviously in a single article we cannot do that. Rather I will address a selection of principal matters in which spiritual exercise is of paramount importance.

The advantage of godliness *Gain in this world and the next*

Holiness of character is a precious commodity. It is what makes the angels fall in love with us (Thomas Watson). Holiness of character is what draws the complacent love of the Father and of the Son upon us (Jn 14:23). The profitable nature of the practice of godliness in this life is the assurance that results from knowing that God is with us and guiding us all the way. We call this a comfortable walking with God. By this practical means we are not only enabled to walk rightly but we are peaceably enriched in our minds and in our affections, and enabled to be a strength and encouragement to others.

Godliness is profitable for the world to come because all believers will be comprehensively judged and rewarded for what they have done. Our position eternally will reflect how we have run the race of life here (1 Cor 3:11-17).

How to grow in godliness *Exercise*

We can tell from the references in the New Testament that training for athletics was well known. In our generation there is a vast emphasis on sports and training. It is well known that to excel, training needs to be fervent, constant and intelligent.

The same applies to training in the spiritual life of godliness. There can be little advance or success without enthusiasm. We should enjoy our training. Keep your spiritual fervour, serving the Lord (Rom 12:11). Be joyful always; pray continually; give thanks in all circumstances (1 Thess 5:16).

Exercise — fervent, constant and intelligent

If training must be fervent to succeed, then it also needs to be constant. Athletes motivated to win honour for themselves or their team stick by firm rules of constant and vigorous training habits. It is virtually impossible to succeed without constancy of exercise and practice. Training habits and rules have to be built into the lives of the athletes. The same principle of discipline applies in the spiritual realm. It is only by the exercise *of doing* that progress can be made. We must make rules for ourselves to keep. There are those who will scream that this is legalism! It would be futile to protest against legalism in the gym or on the athletic track where coaches set the disciplines, or in the classroom where the standards are set for academic exams. Either you do the work or you fail. By all means set your own rules or habits but if you remain undecided about discipline you will never attain anything worthwhile. The leader of a family must measure the state and stamina of the members of his family and make wise decisions about the lifestyle of his family. Likewise those who lead a church must decide with the cooperation of the members on the times and extent of worship and service. Deciding and doing there must be.

We need to build into our way of life attitudes of consistency and reliability in assembling ourselves together for worship and the set times of corporate prayer. These events should go down in our diaries and all other matters be secondary to these primary practices.

To follow the illustration of athletics or gymnastics further, training must be intelligent to be of any use. The athlete or gymnast thinks carefully about what he is to do, exactly how to do it, and precisely what skill is involved. The spiritual equivalent of this is meditation.

Meditation a necessity

Meditation involves the action of all the powers of the soul. This is more than simple reflection of the mind about the truth of God. Meditation is thinking through to practice (Richard Baxter, *The Saints' Everlasting Rest* page 551). First we think an issue through and then transpose thought into action, as we see in the command given to Joshua, 'Do not let this Book of the Law depart from your mouth; meditate on it day and night, so that you may be careful to do everything written in it' (Josh 1:8).

Thomas Manton suggests that there are three sorts of meditation, 1. When a man compares the Word and providence, 2. When a man searches into the meaning of the Word to find out the mind and will of

God, 3. When a man considers how he may act upon the Word and make it fit for use and practice (works vol. 8 page 12). It is this last form which is especially relevant for our subject.

Meditation is preparatory to prayer and to worship and to the Lord's Table, but especially is meditation preparatory to spiritual exercises, the various practical areas of which we will now attend to.

Exercising to godliness for the whole of life

Where should we begin? The first priority is the use of time and that in order to safeguard our spiritual fitness and vitality. If we start with our religious exercises we shall thereby safeguard and protect the pearl of great price, that which is most precious. The chapel occupies the central place in the ancient colleges at Oxford and Cambridge. All other faculties or departments are built around that centre. Our Creator will enable us to apply ourselves to all the subjects he has created with true devotion, appreciation and wisdom when he is put first. It is a basic principle that if we honour him he will honour us.

Exercising ourselves with regard to the use of time.

Our time in this world compared to eternity is exceedingly short. We must be wise therefore in making the best use of time. Paul uses the strong word, *redeeming*. 'See then that you walk circumspectly, not as fools but as wise, redeeming the time, because the days are evil' (Eph 5:16 NKJV). We live in a culture in which there are many lawful pleasures and entertainments: sport, music, wild life TV programs, world affairs and so on. If we do not think about the need to redeem time in order to devote ourselves to spiritual activities we can easily find that our time has been squandered in such a way that we have nothing to show for it. We must seize our opportunities. Time lost cannot be regained. A person who throws bank notes into the fire would be regarded as crazy. Yet time is more precious than money. We must exercise ourselves to godliness by thinking carefully about the best use of time. Every day should begin with this particular exercise. To that should be added a longterm view of our use of time which leads directly to the Lord's Day.

Exercising ourselves to godliness on the Lord's Day

In the New Testament the principal teaching on the sabbath is from the Lord himself. He said that the sabbath was made for our benefit. He being the Lord of that Day had the right to change it to the first day of the

week. He rose on that Day and the Holy Spirit was given on that Day. It is Christ's own Day over which he rules, literally 'I was in the Spirit on the Lordly Day'. That Day is given and organised so that believers might receive maximum profit by it. Therefore it requires preparation by way of spiritual exercises. To draw from our illustration once more. As the Olympic athlete prepares his mind especially for the great day of competition, so believers who derive the most benefit from the Lord's Day are those who have prepared themselves for it and who assist the preacher in prayer before it. The Lord's Day being the first day of the week in turn provides the opportunity of spiritual preparation for all the demands and responsibilities of the six days to follow.

A believer who lives to 80 having believed from the age of 10 will have had the equivalent of ten years to devote entirely to spiritual affairs and the fellowship of the church, and if he uses the Lord's Day well, will have structured his whole life along the principles of Scripture. Having delighted in the law of God he can know that whatever trials he suffers, in spiritual terms he is like the tree planted by the rivers of water, that yields its fruit in its season and whose leaf does not wither (Ps 1:3).

In preparing for the Lord's Day we should be careful about resisting encroachments which will rob us of time that is required for worship, for fellowship, for study and rest and special service. It will also include maximising advantages of the worship services. The constituent parts of the services should be considered, singing, prayer, preaching. We should reflect on the need to render worship, praise and thanksgiving. We should exercise ourselves to godliness in seeking instruction, direction and correction from the preaching. The object of attending the ordinances is to meet God personally in them. We need to exercise ourselves to godliness with regard to preparing for participation at the Lord's Table. Also we should observe that for many the Lord's Day provides the only time of the week for an extended time of reading and meditation. How important it is therefore to exercise to godliness with regard to the choice of reading matter which will convey spiritual improvement.

This article to be continued when we will consider: Exercising ourselves to godliness with regard to our family relationships, to work, in eating and drinking, in our recreation, in adversity and death.

God's Design for Marriage

by John Kruis

A Cause for Alarm

John had been an elder several times and was a respected leader in the Christian Reformed Church. He came for counselling with his wife, Janet (all names in this article are pseudonyms to protect the person's identity), only because she insisted that a problem was developing and something had to be done. The problem? Janet was convinced that her husband was developing too close a relationship with another woman with whom he had almost daily contact.

Thorough data gathering convinced me she was right, and that concrete steps should be taken immediately to lessen their involvement together, to avoid temptation. However, John insisted that he knew what was right and what was wrong, that he was strong enough so that nothing sinful would happen. In fact, he resented being counselled to make some changes so that the devil would not catch him and the other woman in his trap. I drew John's attention to the words of 1 Corinthians 10:12, 'So, if you think you are standing firm, be careful that you don't fall!' Also, Paul's words of caution in Ephesians 5, especially verse 15, 'Be very careful, then, how you live — not as unwise but as wise.'

Before John left my office that day he let it be known that no one had to tell him what to do! No need for alarm. He wouldn't fall. Well, within two months it did happen. Two precious families were put through a lot of misery before God by his power and grace restored them.

Sad to say, this type of thing is going on much more than many of us suspect. What I have seen is in itself cause for alarm. And without doubt this is only the tip of the iceberg. Who can estimate the number of cases dealt with by other counsellors (who by law keep such information confidential)?

How many more have carried on an adulterous relationship and have successfully, thus far, kept it a secret? In the last seven years, I've helped many couples where an adulterous relationship had been established by either husband or wife, culminating in physical adultery. In some cases the sinful relationship had continued several years, while he or she deceived the marriage partner, attended worship services faithfully, partook of the Lord's Supper as usual, and appeared to be a faithful member of the church.

It is an urgent matter for us to be reminded of God's design for marriage, to be

well informed and warned concerning the dangers we face. We must be fully aware of the factors that are helping to destroy marriages and families today.

An Exclusive Relationship

Notice carefully again the words of Genesis 2:24, 'For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, *and they will become one flesh.*' God himself unites one man and one woman together into one flesh. It is an inseparable bond. There is no place, no room for another. It is an exclusive relationship. That is God's permanent design. Paul confirms this as he writes, 'For the husband is the head of the wife as Christ is the head of the church, his body, of which he is the Saviour.' Husband-wife/head and body. It is similar to the relationship between Christ and the Church. Christ is committed to the Church, his redeemed bride. The Church is committed to Christ. To give honour to anything or anyone else that belongs only to Christ is to commit spiritual adultery. So also in the husband-wife relationship, which must reflect the relationship between Christ and the Church. For either one to give the kind of attention, the kind of affection to another man or woman that belongs only to your spouse, is to enter into an adulterous relationship. To have sexual intercourse is the ultimate expression of this.

Marriage — a Covenantal Bond

In Malachi, chapter 2, the Lord refers to marriage as a covenantal bond, which may not be broken. When you marry, you make a solemn vow that you will be faithful to your marriage partner until you are separated by death. To bring another person between you is to break that vow, that covenant. Apparently, many in Israel were guilty of this grievous sin in Malachi's time, and the Lord revealed his anger toward them. The people were crying and asking, 'Why?' God's servant answers, 'It is because the Lord is acting as witness between you and the wife of your youth, because you have broken faith with her, though she is your partner, the wife of your marriage covenant.' As you know well, the Lord very clearly and frequently reminds us in Scripture that we may not commit adultery.

A Defilement in the Media

The predominant message of our culture today is that to have an adulterous relationship with someone is quite all right. It's humorous and entertaining. In certain situations it's the necessary and even noble thing to do. To crawl into bed, to supposedly 'make love' with your fiancée, or someone other than your spouse, is frequently portrayed as the natural thing to do. This is the message conveyed by movies produced in Hollywood, on many video cassettes, 'soap operas', and television programs which are daily consumed in many of our Christian homes. It is the message of much popular music absorbed through many kinds of sound equipment.

Satan's lies! That's what it is! The Lord designed marriage to be an exclusive relationship. Therefore, to bring a third party between you is wicked!

Let no one make light of this sin. Many among us, encouraged by some psychiatrists, counsellors, educators, and other professionals within the Christian community, either deny or minimize the heinousness of the sin of infidelity. They pass it off lightly by using euphemisms, saying such things as, 'I made a mistake'; 'I used poor judgment'; 'I had an affair.' Watch out! Don't get caught up in that kind of thinking. Keep the right name on it: ADULTERY! Keep in mind the words of Hebrews 13:4, 'Marriage should be honoured by all, and the marriage bed kept pure, for God will judge the adulterer and all the sexually immoral.'

A Tragic Loss

There is a tragic loss of sensitivity concerning the sanctity of marriage within the family of God today. For many, the deep, firm conviction of the exclusive relationship between husband and wife, as God's unalterable design, is fading away. What is happening? Many of our people, young and old alike, are habitually watching movies, video cassettes and television programs and listening to popular music by which Satan's message is effectively conveyed. Consequently, what God says to them in his Word, what is preached and taught in the Church, is being effectively undermined. Gradually many professing Christians are being made to feel that to give the kind of attention and affection to another that belongs only to your spouse, to carry on an adulterous relationship is not so bad. It's not something about which God gets angry, for which he will condemn a person. They really *know* better. But the feelings are changed. Therefore, it becomes acceptable to flirt with sin and to become intimately involved with the wrong person. Some have been so conditioned that even after they have yielded to sexual immorality, they don't consider it to be a terrible sin.

The Appalling Evidence

Dick and Mary, both professing Christians, came for help after he learned that she was sexually involved with another man. At first she was in essence saying (by her body language as much as by her words), 'What's the big deal? I know it wasn't a nice thing to do. But why are you making so much of it?' I spent about an hour opening the Scriptures to her to make her realise what a terrible thing she had done! This type of thing has happened again and again.

An Obvious Lesson

An obvious lesson for us is that we should not accept that which many of our Christian leaders and professionals are teaching: that mature Christians, even young people, can safely keep exposing themselves to the moral rot that is in movies and on television without being adversely affected by it. Many are

propagating the idea that it is only the weaker Christians who preach and teach that we ought to avoid such stuff. Regretfully, we are reaping the bitter fruit! Will you take steps to see to it that this does not happen to either you or the members of your family?

Another Contributing Factor

Another thing that is contributing to much infidelity in marriage is the fact that there are many more women in the work force today than there were many years ago. Here is the type of thing that is happening: Ted and Fran, both in their forties, have frequent contacts at their place of work. They become good friends, and begin to have coffee breaks together, thoroughly enjoying their little talks, especially if either one of them is having marital problems. Soon they go out to lunch together and their friendship keeps growing stronger and stronger. It gets totally out of hand, so they rendezvous for illicit sex. Will you take every possible step to make sure this doesn't happen to you?

Be Very Careful

Hold fast to God's design for marriage! Don't allow the wrong kind of relationship to begin developing with another man or woman. You cannot afford to think that you will not fall — even if you are in your fifties or sixties! Be very careful, then, how you live — not as unwise but as wise, making the most of every opportunity, because the days are evil (Eph 5:15,16).

Rev John Kruis is a retired CRC pastor involved in personal, marriage and family counselling at the Biblical Counselling Centre in Jenison, MI. The article first appeared in OUTLOOK magazine, April 1991.

Cassettes:

Messages on the theme outlined in the Editorial were preached by the editor at the Maranatha family conference in Pennsylvania, USA, August 12-16 1991. The titles are as follows: **Why do we believe the Bible** (62 min), **Marriage** (53 min), **Eternal punishment** (57 min), **The Lord's Day** (57 min), **Biblical theology — why it is important** (62 min), **How to understand biblical theology** (58 min), **The covenants** (55 min), **The Trinity** (61 min), **Should we seek revival** (82 min).

The set of nine cassettes is available from, *Pastor Dan Dahlgren, 11 Dunham Street, Sheffield, PA 16347, USA.*

For those in the USA there is a special price of \$6.00 for the set, postpaid. Those outside the USA who have dollar accounts should write to Pastor Dahlgren concerning the cost of postage. Enquiries from others who would like to obtain the cassettes should be addressed to *75 Woodhill Road, Leeds LS16 7BZ, UK.*

The Beginning of Worship: Preparation

W Robert Godfrey

The first section of the Westminster Directory of Public Worship is entitled, 'Of the Assembling of the Congregation, and Their Behaviour in the Public Worship of God.' Our Puritan ancestors began at the beginning. What should characterise the Christian community as it gathers for worship?

The first concern of the Directory was for preparation. The Directory – just in a parenthesis – comments that hearts are to be prepared before we assemble for worship. And this is surely a sobering word today. Do we prepare for worship? I fear too many of us are so rushed on Sunday mornings that we are just satisfied to get to church on time. Time for prayer and meditation on Saturday night is an old ideal that has largely passed away. It is one of the greatest ironies of modern life that with more 'time-saving' devices than any other generation, we have less time for the things that are important.

What are the consequences of going to worship unprepared? The great consequence is that we do not enter into fellowship with God and our fellow Christians as fully as we might. The blessing of meeting with God is diminished. We are not as ready for praise, as involved in prayer or as attentive to the preaching of the Word as we ought to be.

Is it also possible that churches of unprepared people will gradually see the character of their worship change? We see all around us worship services where entertainment seems to be a

factor of growing importance. Is the desire for entertainment a reflection of hearts that are unprepared for worship?

The Directory next admonishes God's people that they are not to miss worship due to negligence or to attend private meetings. (The 'good old days' had many of the same problems as we do). Negligence of the worship of God says either that God is not important or that his worship is not or both. No Christian can say that God is not important. Nor should a Christian ever say the worship that God has established and called us to is insignificant. We need worship as a source of grace and strength in our lives.

But negligence is not the only danger the Christian faces. Equally dangerous is the notion that a private meeting can replace worship. The Puritans were not thinking of golf or brunch with friends when they mentioned private meetings. They had in mind private meetings for prayer or Bible study or fellowship. They were concerned about Christians who might think that regular worship was too dull or formal or profitless and so would gather for more meaningful spiritual growth with more serious Christians than one finds in church services. The Puritans wanted to warn against the arrogance and foolishness of such notions. We must not be so proud as to despise the institutions that God has established by his Word or so unwise as to miss the blessing of public worship where God has promised his presence and grace.

Next the Directory cautions that we are not to enter the place of worship irreverently, but rather 'in grave and



As we go to press we are saddened to hear that Douglas MacMillan, previously a professor at the Free Church of Scotland College and latterly minister of Buccleuch and Greyfriars Church, Edinburgh, was suddenly taken to be with the Lord while out walking on Saturday afternoon, August 3. Professor MacMillan authored books on Psalm 23 and the life of Jacob. He travelled widely and ministered in South Africa with the editor in 1986.

Our loving sympathy goes to his wife, Mary and to their family.

seemly manner'. This caution raises very interesting issues for the modern church. Today reverence and gravity do not seem to be high priorities in worship. Joyful, loving and Spirit-filled worship is what most pastors and worshippers seem to be seeking. Deadness, dullness and formalism are the enemies of modern worship. Many seem to feel that the pursuit of reverence is what has produced the dull and flat worship that so many criticise today.

But reverence in worship is required in the Bible. Hebrews 12:28,29 states: 'Therefore since we are receiving a kingdom that cannot be shaken, let us be thankful and so worship God acceptably with reverence and awe, for our God is a consuming fire.' Worship must not be dull and flat because we are in the presence of a totally awesome God. The reality of God's power and majesty should take our breath away. The cost of his love and salvation as we see it in the cross of Jesus should overwhelm us. Certainly an awe-inspired silence is one

of the proper reactions to God's presence.

Perhaps our failure to recognise God's presence among us and to remember his character and great acts of redemption leads us first to feel that worship is dull and then to turn worship into entertainment. And perhaps our failure is due to a lack of preparation in prayer and meditation before we come to worship. We recognise God's presence in worship only by faith. We cannot see him when we enter church. We remember his great mercies to us best as meditation on the Word fills our minds and hearts. We must recommit ourselves to beginning our worship with hearts prepared. That will help solve many problems that we face today.

Dr Godfrey is Professor of Church History and Academic Dean at Westminster Seminary in California. This article first appeared in OUTLOOK magazine, December 1990.

The World Through Literature

by Philip Grist

'Into all the world' was a slogan taken on board by Grace Baptist Mission (GBM) probably back in the early 70s. At that time it sounded a bit 'pie in the sky'. India had been the mission field for over 100 years. 'Into all the world' to some of us was a bit ambitious to say the least. Twenty years on, that slogan has become a reality. The present literature ministry commenced in the early 80s has spread from South India into more than 90 countries through the world. My wife and I find it almost unbelievable. As mere tools in the hand of the Mastercraftsman we would ask that all glory be given to him. The Psalmist aptly expressed our feelings — 'This was the Lord's doing; it is marvellous in our eyes.'

We returned to the ranks of GBM in 1987 after 19 years pastoral ministry in Colchester. In the 50s and 60s we were part of the team in South India engaged in radio ministry and church work. My colleague in radio for 7 years was John Appleby. In 1985 when we felt convinced that our ministry in Colchester must come to a close, we shared our feelings with the church. Over the next 18 months they were to be much in prayer with us for the next step to be revealed. Naturally speaking, returning to GBM was far from my mind. However, the Lord knew his plans for us and quite independently, he led my wife and myself. For me the call came through a young Indian pastor over here from Madras.

The vision for the present literature work came to John Appleby during a visit to South India in 1981. The great Christian classics of the Puritans and

others since them were now readily available to the Western World. But what about India and other parts of the Third World? This literature was of little use. Why?

a. It was far too difficult to read particularly for somebody whose first language was not English.

b. Even if it could be read, it was far beyond the means of the average person in the Third World.

Respected Indian pastors were asking, 'Couldn't something be done to make these treasures available and relevant for the Third World?' The answer was, 'Yes. There is a way.' Why not take a tip from the *Reader's Digest*? — condense and re-write in easy-to-read English but without losing the rich spiritual content of these great works.

So the work began on Owen's *Death of Death in the Death of Christ*. The result was a paperback entitled *Life by His Death*. It is currently out of print. God used this simplified version. Early on it was translated and published in Tamil and was in fact used of God in the conversion of a Hindu farmer who obtained a copy from an 'Operation Mobilisation' ship. A treatise on particular redemption is not exactly the kind of material for evangelism! God's ways are not our ways. Perhaps we can learn a lesson from this. 'Never be afraid of declaring truth. God will honour his own word.' This book, also translated into Indonesian, had a profound effect on a group of theological students. To quote the tutor responsible for the translation — 'The students' reaction began very negative. They had not been exposed to any teachings concerning

particular redemption. But as they read the book their views began to change. It was a wonderful sight to see them come face to face with the issues.'

By the time we arrived back in GBM in 1987, seven books had been simplified and published by Grace Publications Trust in a series called 'Great Christian Classics'. Added to this, a number of booklets were available, several Correspondence Courses and a series of Study Notes for Preachers. One or two simple commentaries had also begun to emerge. Because of the pressure of work, a large quantity of simplified material was stockpiling at the Mission Centre. Somebody was needed to get it out into the Third World and encourage translations into other languages. It was at that point that we came into the picture.

At the time of writing, 11 titles comprise the 'Great Christian Classics' series:

1. **Life by His Death** (at present out of print)
2. **God Willing** — Flavel's *Providence*
3. **Biblical Christianity** — Calvin's *Institutes*
4. **By God's Grace Alone** — Booth's *Reign of Grace*
5. **Born Slaves** — Luther's *Bondage of the Will* (out of print)
6. **The Glory of Christ** — Owen
7. **Christians are For Ever** — Owen's *Perseverance*
8. **Learning to be Happy** — Burrough's *Rare Jewel of Christian Contentment*
9. **Thinking Spiritually** — Owen's *Grace and Duty of being Spiritually Minded*
10. **Not Guilty** — Buchanan's *Justification*
11. **The Experience that Counts** — Edwards' *Religious Affections*

Other books are in the pipeline. For instance, the next could be Baxter's *Reformed Pastor*.

Ten titles are available in booklet form in the 'Christian Life' series.

1. **Who is in Control?** — Pink's *Sovereignty*
2. **What's the Good of It?** — Pink's *Profiting from the Word*
3. **Into Life** — Doddridge's *Rise and Progress of Religion in the Soul*
4. **The Best that We Can Be** — William Law's *A Serious Call to a Devout and Holy Life*
- 5/6. **Spurgeon Speaks Again** — 10 Spurgeon sermons in two booklets
7. **To be Sure** — Brooks' *Heaven on Earth*
8. **The Christian's Inner Life** — Winslow's *Personal Declension*
9. **Resist the Devil** — Brooks' *Precious Remedies against Satan's Devices*
10. **Union with Christ** — Al Martin

Commentaries are available on Genesis, Joshua, Judges, Ruth, Esther and Ephesians.

Mention should be made of three dictionaries which have been prepared but not published. These are:

1. **A Dictionary of Bible Symbols**
2. **A Dictionary of Bible Knowledge**
3. **A Dictionary of Theological Terms**

The publication of these would have to be an open missionary project. The market in the West would be very limited because similar books are available. However, these books are generally too expensive for the Third World and there is little doubt that the three dictionaries would be of tremendous benefit particularly to pastors and students. The cost is high.

Millions in the world today speak English but many more millions don't. As my contacts with the Third World increase, the message becomes louder and clearer — 'We have few books that teach.' The number of good commentaries and books that teach in the language of India is pitiful even after nearly 200 years since Carey set foot on

Indian soil. Why do we so lag behind? The cults manage to flood the world with their glossy literature. The teachings of Communism filled the bookshops of India in the vernaculars 30 years ago. That produced in Tamil, for example, was beautifully produced and in most attractive Tamil. Our eyes have been opened to see the glories of the doctrines of grace and yet we often fail to share these treasures. My personal concern is that the material we have should be translated so that it can be made available to the greatest number of people possible. Currently material is available in Ateso, Bengali, Bulgarian, Chinese, Hebrew, Hindi, Indonesian, Korean, Persian, Portuguese, Spanish, Tamil, Telegu and Urdu. The book that heads the list at present is *Who is in Control?* and this is the book that has received the most opposition! In Malawi the original English was used to teach Muslims the Deity of Christ and with such effect that it was decided to translate it into Chichewa. This is currently being published. In Telegu (Andra Pradesh, India) it has been used to transform the thinking of a whole group of people. One of their elders commented, 'Now we know that Satan isn't in control.' In Tamil (India) it changed the thinking of a brother who thought that such a book would shatter the faith of Indian believers until God richly blessed his own soul.

Other languages now have translated manuscripts — Albanian, Arabic, Chichewa, French, German, Hausa, Turkish, and Xhosa. The Albanian Evangelical Trust informs us of four titles currently translated into Albanian. What a thrill to feel that such books could be amongst the first into that country and for the many Albanian believers that without doubt will be discovered. This project will require much funding to make it a reality. That is true of several other projects. A comment made by a highly respected

Arab Christian in North Africa is significant — 'The Middle East is ripe for good Reformed literature in Arabic.' He was referring particularly to Calvin's *Institutes* and Luther's *Bondage of the Will* (abridged editions) both of which are being translated.

I find it remarkable that God has again and again led us to translators or those who can check translation, who are recommended as reliable. Many years ago we discovered an excellent translator in Tamil. However, on reading through his translation we discovered that he had completely mistranslated a whole section. He had made it say what he thought it ought to say! He changed Arthur Pink into an Arminian! This highlights a problem: a translator can become guilty of interpreting. The possibility of such a thing happening again has been the cause of much heart searching and prayer that God would overrule in this matter. We have to trust a translator; therefore we pray that God would lead us to the people who translate because they are convinced of the truth and its relevance.

Relevance? Are the Puritans relevant in today's world? When I did the first précis of Owen's *Spiritual Mindedness* I was amazed how relevant he was to situations in the 20th century. In fact, he could have been addressing the 80s and 90s. A comment out of Africa bears this out — 'As soon as I received *Thinking Spiritually* I read through it in one go and greatly benefited and was soundly challenged. I wish I could honour the Lord with such lofty thoughts continually! I felt very small and dirty. Oh for a perpetual cleansing.'

The publishing of *Not Guilty* coincided with the opening up of East and Central Europe. Within weeks more than 2000 copies had been sent into Romania and other countries. I have pin-pointed Romania because the largest demand

came from that country. We ordered a run on of 5000 of that particular book so that they could be made available freely if necessary. It is now Mission policy that we run on each new book. Churches have kindly sponsored these projects. *Not Guilty* was a significant title. Did not the Reformation rest on justification by faith alone? Could it be that God would do a similar work in these countries emerging from their years of bondage? In any case, of one thing we can be certain: he declares, 'My word shall not return to me void.'

Every human being is important. After all, Christ's command was to make the good news of redeeming grace known to every creature. However, there is one section of society for which I have a particular burden — the thousands of theological students. The second edition of the ACTEA Directory of Theological Schools in Africa lists 742! Many of these colleges are equipped with libraries but many are not. We have chosen at random several colleges out of each country listed and packets of books have been sent to them for their libraries. A number of colleges have responded very favourably and some have actually ordered and paid for quantities of commentaries. Their intention has been to give copies to each student. I hope in future that we can cover more of these colleges but the cost of postage is high. We normally send individual packets by air because surface mail takes so long and is often unreliable.

Knowing the power of the printed word and being very much aware of the fact that no other tool has been more used of God, I sometimes try to imagine the impact upon churches if God were pleased to open the eyes of students to the glory and riches of the doctrines of grace. I am utterly convinced that no better way exists than prayerfully covering the world with the material

that we have to offer. The task is humanly impossible. Just two of us in GBM Literature can't do that. As I think about the world's millions, the 742 Bible Colleges in Africa, the mass of glossy material produced by the cults, the question Andrew put to Jesus concerning the five loaves and two small fish is often in my mind — 'What are they among so many?' The Lord who multiplied the loaves and fish is still the same Lord. God can take the message of one little book to open the eyes of one student in perhaps some obscure part of Africa. The doctrines of grace transform his life and he, like Abraham who is blessed, becomes a blessing to countless others. Wasn't that the case with Spurgeon? A cold snowy day, a back street chapel, an unknown semi-literate preacher, and he who was to become a prince among preachers was born from above. These are all incentives to keep us going, for who can tell what God will do?

What of the future?

1. The simplifying and abridging is to go on. Baxter's *Reformed Pastor* has been mentioned. Other titles in the pipeline are Palmer on *Prayer*, Guthrie's *The Christian's Great Interest*, Owen on *Communion with God*, *Indwelling Sin and Temptation*, Goodwin's *Return of Prayers*, Ryle's *Practical Religion* and possibly *Alarm to the Unconverted* by Alleine.
 2. Commentaries are a must, particularly Old Testament commentaries, but finding writers who know the Third World and its needs is not easy. Although the retirement of John Appleby from GBM has meant a temporary cessation of Preachers' Study Papers, the Lord is now showing a way ahead and already a series on 1 Corinthians 12-14 is being translated into Tamil.
 3. As more and more people become convinced of the Reformed position
- Continued on page 21*

Lessons from the life of James Petigru Boyce

James Petigru Boyce's life (1827-1888) ran more or less parallel with that of C H Spurgeon (1834-1892). Boyce was born in Charleston, South Carolina. His father, a wealthy banker and business magnate, wanted his gifted son to follow in his footsteps and to begin by qualifying as a lawyer. He was bitterly disappointed when James chose the Christian ministry instead. On hearing of James' decision, one of his father's business partners said: 'Well, well, why don't he follow some useful occupation?'

James' mother descended from strict Presbyterian stock. She had been converted under the ministry of the well known preacher, Basil Manly, Sr. James' sense of the transcendence of God came largely from his mother's influence and from Manly. James' barrel-like figure did not fit him to be adept at sports. His natural temperament was toward learning and books. In that respect he was like the American counterpart of Spurgeon,



James P Boyce

throughout his life being an omnivorous reader and a bibliophile without peer.

The period was one of frequent and powerful revivals with outpourings of the Holy Spirit upon colleges as well

Continued from page 20

through reading the simplified classics being made available to them, it is our aim and prayer that national writers will be raised up. We desire to see Africans writing for Africans, Indians for their own people, South Americans writing for the people of South America. In 1959 an Indian brother said to me, 'We shall praise God when all your expatriates are out of India.' I know exactly what he meant. I look and long for the day when what we are doing will

no longer be needed. Instead, people gifted by God all over the world will be providing for their own people what the Puritans provided for us in the West. May we then give God all the glory that a little one has become a thousand, and a small one a strong nation. It all began with a little seed sown in the heart of South India.

See 'News' section for GBM address and further details.

as churches. Some of these are described in the appendices of Sprague's *Lectures on Revival*. There was an outpouring of the Spirit at Brown University under the preaching of Francis Wayland. This led to Boyce coming under a deep conviction of sin when he returned home for the spring break in 1846. John A Broadus, who wrote the biography of Boyce, says, 'Despite his wealthy status, his promising future, his polish and education he felt himself to be a ruined sinner and . . . had to look to the merits of Christ alone for salvation. James came to assurance of salvation under the ministry of Richard Fuller and was baptised. He returned to Brown University a changed man and began to be concerned for the salvation of his fellow classmates.'

Boyce went on to receive his formal theological training at Princeton Theological Seminary from 1849 to 1851. He studied there under the famous Archibald Alexander (1772-1851) who had been converted in the revival of 1789. Alexander fashioned the theological position of Princeton Seminary into what became known as 'the Princeton theology'. Until the formation of the present day Westminster Seminary in 1929, Princeton was the bastion of Presbyterian and Calvinistic orthodoxy. Addison Alexander, son of Archibald, and Charles Hodge were also tutors from whom Boyce received benefit. In writing his own Systematic Theology called *The Abstract of Theology*, Boyce was influenced by Charles Hodge.

Following his training Boyce pastored a church in Columbia. That was a

good practical preparation for his life's calling to be a professor of theology. In 1855 he was elected to teach theology in Furman University. A notable event took place the next year when, at the age of 29, he gave his inaugural address. This exposition was like a manifesto, a declaration of essential principles for theological training. Its superb calibre not only attracted attention then, but has been consulted ever since by those in seminary work. Had this manifesto been followed in practice, we would not have seen the landslide of evangelical seminaries into Modernism. One of the foremost ideals in this manifesto was the necessity for confessional integrity. His rationale was that every professor subscribe to a set of doctrinal principles precisely stated. Maverick theologians detest that idea and regard it as a violation of their freedom. Boyce was brilliant in his rebuttal of those who decry the use of Confessions of Faith and showed that Baptists have been prolific in promulgating Confessions as public declarations of what they believe and as a means of testing others. For Boyce as for us, Confessions are *homologia*, not Scripture but of the same essence as Scripture since they tell out as exactly as possible the meaning of Scripture.

Boyce was always active in the Southern Baptist Convention and early he saw the need to establish a seminary. He prayed with his close friends and colleagues Broadus, Manly junior and Williams about this, and followed the prayers with a definite strategy. However the Civil War (1862-65) interrupted the formation of the seminary. During the

war time Boyce and Broadus both served as chaplains in the Confederate army.

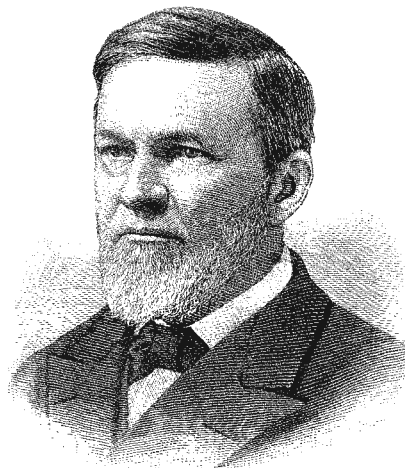
During the war Boyce also served in the South Carolina state legislature and so distinguished himself that he was urged by many to give himself entirely to political life. He obviously inherited his father's astute and efficient mind for business and throughout his life he was offered presidencies for railroads, for banks and for universities. He declined them all in his pursuit of his single objective to train men for the ministry. After the war Boyce returned to his work to establish what became the Southern Baptist Theological Seminary. This eventually became established in Louisville, Kentucky. A tremendous struggle was involved in the birth and nurture of the seminary. Time and time again Boyce gave generously of his own estate to help students or pay the salaries of professors.

In later life his health was poor and in the summer of 1888 he sailed for Europe. This was to be his first and last trip abroad. He died in Southern France in December 1888. His body was brought back to Louisville and buried in Cave Hill Cemetery with the inscription, 'James P. Boyce, to whom, under God, the Seminary owes its existence'.

There are several lessons for us to note from the inspiring life of Boyce.

Lesson 1. The need to think through theology for ourselves

While he enjoyed the best training available at the time, James Boyce did his own thinking. He listened to his tutors but thought the issues through



*John A Broadus — Boyce's biographer
(see p 22)*

for himself. He was a Baptist and did not succumb to the views of his mentors.

Lesson 2. The need to cultivate a disciplined theological mind

This is allied to the above. Today many Christians who graduate in various subjects adopt the attitude that when it comes to theology they can relax and take it easy. There are believers who shine in their secular calling but when it comes to Christian teaching they are immature and sometimes even childish. Theology is for all Christians, not just experts.

Boyce believed in the disciplined dedication of his mind to God in study. He regarded that as part of the fulfilment of the great commandment. Of his two foremost written works, one was *A Brief Catechism of Bible Doctrine*. The catechetical method ensures that truth is imbedded in the mind. The question and answer method (ex-

plained in article on 'Catechizing' in this issue by Chris Passerello) probes out whether a subject is retained or not.

Lesson 3. *The need for a proficiently educated ministry*

Boyce devoted his life to the establishment of the Southern Baptist Theological Seminary. He was spurred on by the realisation of the importance of the need for a thoroughly educated ministry. This is an urgent requirement in most countries today. Britain is destitute of a seminary devoted to Reformed Baptist principles.

During the last century, generally speaking, only the privileged who had a grounding in classical disciplines were accepted for theological training. Boyce worked hard to establish the principle that the seminary would be open to everybody who was called to the ministry irrespective of social status or academic background. Spurgeon's College began when Charles Spurgeon realised the necessity to train a man who was evidently called but who did not know basic English grammar.

Lesson 4. *The need to be clear about the doctrines of grace*

Boyce recognised Arminianism as the thinking of the natural mind. He knew that grace is something experienced in the heart and is more than head knowledge. He contended strenuously for all the doctrines of grace and especially the federal headship of Adam and the totality of the fall in respect of every part of human nature. Today the Southern Baptist Conven-

tion is probably the most Arminian Baptist denomination in the world. It will take a spiritual and theological renewal or revival of colossal proportions to bring that great body back to the doctrines of grace which characterised the founding fathers. Tom Nettles' book, *An Introduction to the Southern Baptists* (Carey Publications) spells this out clearly.

Lesson 5. *The need for spiritual power in the old truths*

Boyce lived through the period when Modernism and Darwinism were on the increase. It seemed that everywhere there were those fascinated by novel ideas. Boyce experienced the distress of having to endorse the dismissal of one of his closest friends and colleagues, Crawford H. Toy, who gradually espoused Modernism and afterward became a Unitarian. Then as now, it is not new ideas that are needed but spiritual power and wisdom to express old truth in contemporary terms so that the old gospel comes over as alive. I have referred to Spurgeon several times and do so again in drawing attention to the fact that it was the exciting way in which he proclaimed the old, old story of the Cross, that drew the crowds. That is our business. There is no defect in the Bible. The defect lies in our slowness to resort to the plain means of grace by which the old gospel becomes the most powerful message in the world.

In preparing the above I acknowledge Timothy George's work on Boyce in the recent volume Baptist Theologians which was reviewed in RT 122, and the writing of Tom Nettles in his book By his Grace and for his Glory, Baker, 1986.

The Usefulness of Catechizing

by Chris Passerello

1 Mind and Thought

One of the main aims of the Christian ministry is to 'cast down arguments and every high thing that exalts itself against the knowledge of God, bringing every thought captive to the obedience of Christ' (2 Cor 10:5). In keeping with this aim, Cornelius Van Til has forcefully taught that believers are obligated to 'think God's thoughts after him'. Many citations could be brought forward to present the case that the thought life of the Christian is of considerable importance. We are not to be whitened sepulchres which have an outward appearance of cleanliness but inwardly are full of corruption and dead men's bones. It is imperative that the Christian should 'not be conformed to the image of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of [his] mind, that [he] may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God' (Rom 12:2).

In an endeavour to facilitate the renewing of the mind and the conformity of one's thoughts to the thoughts of God, the devout Christian will spend time in corporate and personal Bible study, prayer and worship. Bible study will take many forms as indicated in the Scriptures themselves, especially in Psalm 119. This Psalm, which focuses on the Word of God, encourages us to keep, look into, learn, hide in our hearts, declare, rejoice in, meditate upon, contemplate, delight in, not forget, ask God to teach, and cling to the Word of God.

While there is a plethora of Bible Study aids and methods available, many of these are shallow and ineffective. It behoves us at this stage of Christian history to consider the lessons of the past. We often find that it is easy to consider that the current methods and ideas are better by definition than those that preceded. There is the underlying supposition that we have 'progressed' from the past and the current state of affairs is, while not perfect, at least more enlightened. However, this may be presumption and in many instances be without substance. While we may believe in the possibility of progress, it is not acceptable for us to equate the passing of time with progress. We must admit that the Christian community does experience set-backs and declension just as surely as it experiences progress and growth.

One of the study methods of the past which has largely fallen out of

favour is catechizing. John J Murray once aptly described this as a forgotten practice. (Catechizing – A Forgotten Practice, Banner of Truth magazine, Oct 1962).

2 Defining our Terms

‘Catechize – instruct by question and answer, or by use of a Church Catechism; put questions to, examine.’ (Concise Oxford Dictionary).

Most readers of *RT* will understand catechizing to mean instruction in the truths of Christianity by means of question and answer. There are other definitions however. Martin Luther, for example, considered ‘the Catechism’ to be that body of truth summarized in the Ten Commandments, the Apostles’ Creed, and the Lord’s Prayer. Additionally, he considered any presentation of these subjects as a Catechism or catechizing. So a series of sermons explaining ‘the Catechism’ was called ‘a Catechism’ by Luther. For the purposes of this article, however, catechizing is taken to mean instruction by question and answer.

3 Brief History

The training and instruction of believers on an individual level has been practised throughout the history of the Church. The methods used, however, have varied and the practice has at times been neglected to the point of near extinction.

At the time of the Protestant Reformation catechizing gained great importance and its method began to take a consistent form. As mentioned above Martin Luther had a rather broad definition of what constituted catechizing and a catechism. His Large Catechism (1529) is a series of sermons on the Ten Commandments, the Faith (Apostles’ Creed), the Our Father, Baptism, and the Sacrament of the Altar (Lord’s Supper). It is his Small Catechism (also 1529), however, which seems to have set the stage for the many Protestant catechisms which were to follow. His Small Catechism is more akin to the catechisms our readers are familiar with, being a series of questions and answers covering the same topics as his Large Catechism.

In 1537 John Calvin published an Instruction and Confession of Faith for the Use of the Church of Geneva. It seems this work was too long and detailed for general use, so in 1541-42 he brought out a Catechism of the Church of Geneva. This was used widely in Geneva and Scotland.

The Heidelberg Catechism was produced by Ursinus and Olevianus in 1562/63 and quickly became the catechism of choice in the Reformed

churches of central Europe. The Synod of Dort revised the catechism in 1619 and it became a standard for most Reformed churches in central Europe and, in time, Dutch and German Reformed churches in America.

Perhaps the most influential catechism in the English-speaking world is the Shorter Catechism of the Westminster Assembly. It appeared in 1648 along with the Larger Catechism. Most Reformed Christians will be familiar with the first question of this catechism:

‘Q: What is the chief end of man?’

A: Man’s chief end is to glorify God and to enjoy him forever’.

4 Some Thoughts from the Past

Other notable ministers and authors spoke out on the usefulness of catechizing. Richard Baxter in his book *The Reformed Pastor* (1656) fervently calls ministers to catechize each member of their respective congregations. It was his view that private instruction of the congregation was a duty required of ministers and that catechizing was the best means available to accomplish that duty. He intended that the minister should personally catechize the congregation and additionally train the masters of the households to catechize their own families and servants.

John Bunyan in *The Pilgrim’s Progress* illustrates the art of catechizing for us. In an enlightening passage, Prudence asks Christiana if she may catechize the children. Prudence then proceeds to ask each of them a series of questions and they answer with what seem to be spontaneous (rather than memorised) answers. In this case Bunyan has used the word catechize to mean ‘put questions to, examine’. (A personal note is in order here – it was this catechismal passage in *The Pilgrim’s Progress*, along with Baxter’s *Reformed Pastor*, which compelled me to begin using a catechism in family devotions.)

In 1645 John Owen prepared two catechisms ‘proper for all persons to learn before they be admitted to the sacrament of the Lord’s Supper; and composed for the use of all congregations in general’. (This and the following quotes of Owen are taken from Volume 1 of the Works of John Owen, *Banner of Truth*, pages 465 and 466). In the Epistle Dedicatory to these catechisms he wrote, ‘After the ordinance of public preaching the Word, there is not, I conceive, any more needful [endeavour] . . . than catechizing.’ In these catechisms Owen concentrates on the Person and Offices of Jesus Christ. It was his intention, God willing, to produce another catechism which explained the Lord’s Prayer, the Ten Commandments and some articles of the Creed.

As to the use of these catechisms, Owen intended them to be used by parents for the instruction of themselves and their children, as is clear in his words:

1. The Lesser Catechism may be so learned of the younger sort, that they may be ready to answer to every question thereof.
2. The Greater will call to mind much of what hath been taught you in public, especially concerning the Person and Offices of Jesus Christ.
3. Out of that you have help to instruct your families in the Lesser, being so framed, for the most part, that a chapter of the one is spent in unfolding a question of the other.'

5 Methods

Variety is often a key to success. In *A Christian Directory*, Richard Baxter discussed the necessity for variety by Christian ministers as they teach their congregations. He wrote:

'[We all are] much more passionately affected with things when they seem new to us, and are first apprehended, than when they are old, and we have known or used them long . . . it is the duty of ministers to take notice of this disposition in their hearers, and not dull them with giving them still the same, but to profit them by a pleasant and profitable variety . . . there is a grateful variety of subordinate particulars, and of words, and methods, and seasonable applications, necessary to the right performance of our ministry, and to the profiting of the flocks.' (*A Christian Directory*, page 38).

Though Baxter was addressing the pastoral ministry in general, and preaching in particular, his thought may easily be applied to the art of catechizing. We can mix and match the use of a written Catechism, a Confession of Faith, a Systematic Theology, and Scripture passages all toward the end that truth will be taught and understood. As we use these resources we must always remember and make it clear that the only infallible and inerrant source of truth is the Bible itself. On the other hand we realise that an outline and summary of that truth can be found in these other useful resources.

Certainly a written 'catechism' is not required for the activity of catechizing. However, most of us will benefit greatly from the use of a proven catechism. If nothing else, a catechism will provide us with a ready systematic framework from which to teach and learn the Christian Faith.

When using a catechism we can vary its use. Answers can be memorized, discussed, and used as outlines for prayer, essays, and sermons (consider Thomas Watson's *Body of Divinity*).

Many have found that it is beneficial to memorize the questions and answers of a written catechism such as the Westminster Shorter Catechism. These questions and answers can become outlines of thought or a structure around which to build one's understanding of the Faith. This implies that catechizing does not stop with successful memorization. During the activity the student must be encouraged to think through the answers and develop an understanding of the subject matter. To this end the teacher will find it useful to ask additional questions for clarification and to provoke depth of thought. In our own family we have found it beneficial on occasion for each family member to write a short essay using a catechism answer as an outline. Even little children can attempt to explain each phrase of the answer in their own words.

6 Available Resources

There are many catechisms and catechismal helps available. Some of the helps are commentaries or expositions of a catechism and provide useful explanatory material for the catechism teacher. Other helps make use of a catechism and are therefore helpful in providing ideas for the use of such (as well as being helpful in themselves). A few of the catechisms and helps are described below.

The Shorter Catechism with Scripture Proofs, the Banner of Truth Trust, 32 pages, paperback, 35p. This is the Westminster Shorter Catechism mentioned earlier in this article. The answers are succinct enough to be recited by children and meaty enough to teach adults. It is helpful that most of the answers are complete sentences which make sense even apart from the questions.

A Catechism for Boys and Girls, Carey Publications Ltd., 24 pages, paperback, 90p. This is a simpler catechism which can be used for very young children and as a supplement for older ones.

The Shorter Catechism Explained from Scripture, Thomas Vincent, Banner of Truth, 282 pages, paperback, £2.95. Each question of the Westminster Shorter Catechism is explained by a series of additional answers.

A Body of Divinity, £5.59, *The Lord's Prayer*, £5.95, *The Ten Commandments*, £5.50, Thomas Watson, The Banner of Truth, paperback, approximately 300 pages each. These are a series of expository sermons on the questions of the Westminster Shorter Catechism. They shed much light on the subjects addressed by the catechism.

Tell Me About God, Susan Harding, Banner of Truth, 64 pages, paperback, £2.95. Useful as an aid for family devotions, this book contains one lesson for each letter of the alphabet. Each lesson comprises a Bible passage reference, a memory verse, a portion of a psalm, a catechism question from the Westminster Shorter Catechism, and a one page explanation of the lesson's subject.



Philip Grist

Literature Worldwide

The report on page 17 by Philip Grist of Grace Baptist Mission, 12 Abbey Close, Abingdon, Oxon OX14 3JD, UK, is of real encouragement. News continues to come in of further translations and since writing, Philip has reminded us that Stanley Line has printed 1000 copies of the Spanish version of 'Not Guilty' for Colombia. Trevor Routley may publish an edition for Argentina. Grace are always ready to cooperate with churches or groups who may wish to sponsor a particular project.

Tracts for prisons

Billy Morrison, A647, HM Prison Maghaberry, Old Road, Upper Ballinderry, Lisburn, BT28 2PT, Northern Ireland, has produced a series of tracts especially for use in evangelistic work amongst prisoners. Titles available are:

1. *What is Freedom?*
2. *You Think You are doing Life Now!*
3. *Who are Christ's Friends?*

These tracts have already been distributed in several languages and in 16 different countries. For further information write to the author (address above). He would be glad to send sample copies to anyone interested in ministry to those in prison. Multiple copies in English or other languages may be purchased or supplied free of charge by special request. It is his burden to reach his fellow prisoners with that saving gospel which has brought new life to him.

IFRB

We have received many letters of enquiry and applications for membership from several countries of the world. Members will be receiving an up-to-date news letter with this issue of RT.

AIDS a worldwide epidemic

Writing in the Journal of the Christian Medical Fellowship, 157 Waterloo Road, London SE1 8XN, for July, 1991, Dr Kristina Baker, who has lived in Zambia for 26 years, describes her experience of feeling overwhelmed by the inexorable increase of AIDS. She declares that this disease has cured medics of any arrogance or blithe optimism in their ability to heal. For Christians, the rule is no sex before marriage and no sex outside marriage. That is the only safe way. But the majority are not Christian and in Africa little notice is taken of the warnings about the scourge of AIDS. Dr Kristina pleads for a new realism in the medical profession concerning the epidemic. In parts of Uganda 20 percent of the population is infected. It is only a matter of time before other parts of Africa are equally affected. During the 1990s three million women are expected to die from Aids leaving 5.5 million orphaned

children by the year 2,000. Other countries are also afflicted. For instance there are orphanages in Haiti where over half the children under 18 months old are infected.

New Zealand

David Yan, pastor of Emmanuel Church, Auckland, New Zealand wrote recently on the subject of pluralism.

There appear to be two major obstacles to the gospel bearing great fruit in New Zealand. One is pluralism. The other is pleasure.

Pluralism and pleasure have all but stifled the spiritual good sense and moral will of New Zealanders and if the evangelical Church of New Zealand is to re-establish spiritual and moral foundations in this beautiful country these two foes must be faced. Pluralism would have it that all religions are equal and that any saviour will do. Therefore all faiths must be tolerated and given equal status. One does not quibble at the right of every citizen in New Zealand to practise his or her religion. That is a constitutional right and must be upheld. One supports the principles of freedom of conscience and the separation of Church and State, but what is constitutionally acceptable may not be so theologically. In America the idea of pluralism was espoused within the framework of an evangelical consensus. The toleration fought for in New England was that of toleration within the Christian Church. Presbyterians were to tolerate Baptists, and Baptists Presbyterians, and so forth. Agreement on the essentials was enough. Persecution of a Christian brother because he held a different view on, for instance, baptism or the holy communion was to cease. In brief, Christian was to love Christian. The historical context in which these momentous issues were faced did not bring into the orb of

discussion non-Christian religions. But it is clear that to the evangelical Church of colonial America non-Christian religions were not to be regarded theologically as being on an equality with Christianity. Thus a worshipper of idols was still a pagan; and there remained the need to convert heathen and infidels. The pluralism of New England was a truce among Christians whereby battle could be done (theologically speaking) with non-Christians. It was not a wholesale abandonment of the historic and biblical faith rooted in the Judaistic-Christian tradition and an acceptance of all religions as being of equal truth as Christianity.

What we have inherited in New Zealand is a corrupted and evolved version of New England pluralism. The Church itself must be held largely responsible for this. All good things become corrupted in time. Just as the medieval Church corrupted the good that came from Constantine, so apostasy has contributed to the corruption of the good that came from the New England toleration. Today, no longer is evangelical Christianity the force it once was in this country, but all other beliefs are tolerably treated as equal in truth, that is, all religions are good, faith is important, therefore have faith in any (or all) religion. In the minds of the people it doesn't matter who you follow, be it Buddha, Confucius, Mohammed or Christ. Today's pluralism is the devil's masterpiece, for by it he seeks to achieve what he has always set out to do, namely detract from the lordship of Jesus Christ who alone is Lord of Lords and King of Kings. By combining a loose toleration with inherent human unbelief he has produced a colossus of a weapon whereby the people's spiritual perception has been dulled. No wonder he is called the god of this age who blinds the minds of people. But there is hope, for today Christ still breaks the enemy's stronghold.

Rothesay Bay

We hear regularly from Pastor Stephen Turner of Rothesay Bay, Auckland. During the last year the church has been encouraged in the baptism of six new believers.

The Reformed Baptist churches in New Zealand enjoy cooperation and the pastors meet regularly for prayer and fellowship. In July this year, Pastor Turner addressed the Association on: A commitment to the truth of the Scriptures, and a commitment to the 1689 Baptist Confession.



Krzysztof and Aneetta Rutkowski

Poland at the Crossroads

by Kingsley Coomber

Once again this year it was my privilege to minister at a youth camp in Poland. Poland is currently passing through a period of transition. There is an air of discontent among the people as unemployment rises and there is soaring inflation.

The Roman Catholic Church has increased in power and the cults are still making alarming inroads with the Jehovah's Witnesses the second largest religious group in the country and the Mormons hard on their heels. Alongside this there is a vibrant evangelical Church. The evangelical pastors are hard-pressed, lacking many of the tools we take for granted. They have little opportunity to fellowship with like-minded pastors and often feel isolated and lonely. It is inspiring to see how there is an undiminished vision in many, even under such circumstances.

Pastor Rutkowski, with whom I have had close fellowship, epitomises that vision. The church which he leads in Wkoclavek have purchased a campsite near a lake with the object of evangelisation. They aim to build up their facilities so as to be able to extend a ministry which will bring the good news

to Russian people from across the border. This year 26 young people came to the camp from Stolin, near Chernobyl in the USSR. The church in Wkoclavek gave them a month's free holiday with Christian teaching, gospel exposition and fellowship. After the time together, I was invited to go to Russia to preach next year.

What can we do practically? In order to have greater potential for impact both on Poland and Russia, this campsite badly needs renovation and the amenities improved and expanded. The Wkoclavek church have taken a step in faith and have started the work. The total cost is estimated at approximately £10,000 (the average annual wage is £1000). We, who take for granted the ability to plan and take holidays with our families, would do well to consider prayerfully the fellowship in sharing in this vision and helping our brothers in Wkoclavek to establish and continue this labour of love.

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