CORRESPONDENCE

From Mr W F Spanner, Seaford, Sussex

'I find I agree with Mr Charles Webster regarding his remarks on the view of your esteemed contributor, Rev G VanBaren.

The church at Laodicea is surely not an apostate church. The LORD calls it lukewarm and states He is about to spue it out of His mouth. But He loves this church (Rev 3, v19) and, faithful and true (v14), He rebukes it and counsels it (vs17,18). Such is His love for this lukewarm church that the LORD "stands at the door and knocks" (v20). Is there any man who will hear His voice? If such a man is found and will open the door, the LORD will come in to him and bestow a rich blessing. This blessing may even extend to the whole of the church, if it will take heed to the faithful and true witness (v14), who sheds His light on the wretched state of this church and gives His heavenly counsel (v18).

In the kind providence of our gracious God I pray your labours may redound to His glory and to the blessing of the whole church.'

From Mrs June Daly, Irvinestown, Co Fermanagh, N.I

'I enjoyed reading the booklet on "Modern Bible Versions" and just couldn't accept any other than the King James Version. As the booklet states - "The King James Version is the Word of God: when you have it before you, you have the uncorrupted Word. You can trust it, rely on it, and safely let it continue to work its work on the church, on your home and family, on your Christian school, and on your personal Christian life. It is faithful; and this is the main criterion of a Bible version." Amen to that. Yes, the King James Version has the dignity and solemnity that befit the Word of God. I couldn't really explain how beautiful it is but certainly one believes that it has the smile and approval of God, and the wording is so sweet and spiritual. I've heard read, on occasions, other versions but I seemed to withdraw from them and I don't take kindly to them. Any version that belittles the Saviour and His precious blood, or indeed anything about Him, is an insult to God. Personally, I love the KJV for, on reading same, I feel close to God. It's a privilege to have such a wonderful version.

My, what a solemn and soul-searching booklet on "Marriage and Divorce" by Rev David Engelsma. It brought tears to my eyes to read on the front: "Published by the SUNDAY SCHOOL of the First Protestant Reformed Church." To think that my grand-daughter is being taught in Sunday School by a divorced lady, re-married to a divorced man, who left his wife and small child. All I can say is that this booklet should be placed in the hands of every young person, and placed inside their Bible. I am 62 and have never read a booklet like it anywhere. It is absolutely a real treasure and absolutely faithful to the Word of God. What a booklet it would have been to ourselves getting married, never mind the young people nowadays. The booklet expresses all I believe myself, and more.

Just two weeks ago the Pastor of a Baptist church resigned as he hadn't a Deacon to stand with him against sin. A Deacon sponsored a

folk tournament - drinks and all. His preaching on divorce/remarriage etc wasn't wanted. The Pastor is such a godly man but now he and his wife and three children will soon have neither house or Church. He is waiting on the Lord to direct him. Another Minister had his ordination terminated by just about the best Church in N.I. simply because he exposed sin and stood for truth and righteousness. It's one thing coping with the unsaved and their standards but, when Christians and even Pastors want sin swept under the carpet, it's another thing.

Rev David Engelsma is a courageous soldier of the Cross, so God bless him.'

From Mr A P B Lambert Director for Research, China Ministries Dept, OMF

'I received with interest your information about the new British Reformed Fellowship. I myself can heartily subscribe to the Canons of Dordt (I have an original copy in French) and, of course, the Westminster Confession. Many years ago I was "converted" from strong Arminianism to Calvinism by a careful comparison of the Word of God with "The Sovereignty of God" by A W Pink. I have since found both soul and mind refreshment in the great books of the Puritans. The ministry of the late Dr Martyn Lloyd Jones has had a great influence on me in stressing the importance of both doctrine and Christian experience.

However, I have also come to believe in believers' baptism, along with such men as C H Spurgeon, so I do have reservations about those portions of the great confessions which allude to infant baptism. However, I agree with you in holding the centrality of the Covenant of Grace, and the importance of training children in the fear of God - only I do not believe they should be baptised until there are genuine marks of saving faith. Please let me know if you are open to those who hold a baptist (but note, not a denominational Baptist) position in your Fellowship.

The importance of holding a high view of Scripture is essential, otherwise the very foundation of the church is destroyed.

My wife and I are missionaries with the OMF (formerly China Inland Mission) to support the church in Mainland China and have been based in Hong Kong for eleven years; now we are in the UK for a period, but still as missionaries. I return to China twice each year. The growth of the church in China is a great testimony to the sovereignty of God's grace in the face of savage persecution and a rebuke to all nominal Christianity. The Chinese church numbers 20 million plus evangelicals, so is now the second largest evangelical community in the world after the United States. I enclose a copy of the prayer letter I write and edit which is sent out to some twenty countries. The June report is based on my most recent visit to China this March.'

EDITOR'S REPLY: *'I regret to say that membership of the BRF is restricted to those who accept the teaching of the Reformed confessions on baptism. I know this may appear partisan, but we are convinced that the covenant of grace and its relevance to "generations" of believers is a forgotten concept today and one that the church has neglected at her peril. I am sure you will also understand that once an exception is made on one ground regarding applications for membership, it will become very difficult to refuse admission on other grounds, perhaps with more serious consequences.*

Having said this, you will see from the enclosed slip that non-members are welcome to receive the Journal and we would be pleased to send it to you if you

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keeping the Sabbath after the time of Malachi (Matt 12:1–8; Luke 13:10–17; John 7:19–23; etc).

This is why Calvin now concludes his paragraph: "We must be careful... to observe[!] the general[!] doctrine – viz, in order that religion may neither be lost nor languish amongst us, we must[!] diligently attend on our religious assemblies, and duly avail ourselves of those external[!] aids which tend to promote the worship of God" (Acts 20:6–7; 1Cor 16:1–2; Heb 4:8–11; 10:25; Rev 1:10).

Notes

1. H J W Legerton: *The Church of Rome and the Lord's Day,* Lord's Day Observance Society, London, 1957, pp 5–9.
2. *Institutes,* II:8:28–33.
3. *Institutes,* II:8:30.
4. *Institutes,* II:8:31.
5. *Institutes,* II:8:32.
6. Thus P Fairbairn: *The Typology of Scripture,* Zondervan, Grand Rapids, n.d., p 452.
7. *Institutes,* II:8:33.
8. *Institutes,* II:8:34

[To be concluded]

FRANCIS TURRETIN *[Continued from page 26]*

13. Dabney, discussing "God's Indiscriminate Proposals of Mercy" in his *Discussions: Evangelical and Theological,* pages 282–3, refers to the French Amyraldians as "Hypothetic Universalists."
14. Richard A Muller: has written several important books on post-Reformation Reformed theological matters. I am quoting here from page 38 of his *Post Reformation Reformed Dogmatics,* Volume 1: Prolegomena.
15. Muller: op. cit. page 19. 16. Ibid. page 18

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wished to have it. Moreover, we would be delighted to see you at our meetings and conferences and have you share in our activities.

We have no wish to influence you unduly, as clearly you have given much thought to the study of baptism. Nevertheless, we do have a considerable amount of literature relating to the subject and we would be only too pleased to send some of this to you. In particular, I would recommend the book "God's Everlasting Covenant of Grace" by Herman Hanko and I am taking the liberty of enclosing a photocopy of the Introduction for your perusal.

Thank you for so kindly sending a copy of the China Prayer Letter. It is to the glory of God that the church in that land has survived so many years under Communism – and not only survived but wonderfully grown. Christians in the West frequently get asked about the state of the church in China but are often unable to give a satisfactory answer. The leaflet provides a very useful insight and helps to counter that ignorance.

May our gracious and sovereign God richly bless all your work and labour in His service (Hebrews 6:10).'