

## In Grateful Remembrance ...

*H. L. Williams*

*The ambulance bus had arrived, but it was not in a hurry. He was ready, but turned aside to us and asked that we have a word of prayer. Afterwards, he reached for "something to read" during his coming wait at the hospital, and he took the current issue of the Protestant Reformed Theological Journal, and slowly walked out of his home to the waiting vehicle. He sat somewhere near the back, and as the ambulance bus pulled away we saw him gazing resolutely forward. And then ... and then he was gone.*

Till the day dawn, and the shadows flee away!

Anthony James Morton Horne was born in 1936, and grew up in the West Country town of Frome, in Somerset.

He was educated at Bruton Boys Grammar School, a private boarding school in the south east of the county of Somerset. Subsequently and on matriculation, he entered the University College of Cardiff in the nineteen fifties where he read for a degree in the electrical engineering sciences and physics.

It was during his school years that Tony first made profession of his Christian faith, having come under strong influences from the evangelistic outreach of local churches in Somerset, and also partly the result of the nationwide impression made by the Billy Graham missions. Providentially, in those teenage years, he met the young lady who was destined to become his wife. Sandra Nash, too, was a native of Frome and, like Tony, her voice also carried the pleasant and homely Somerset burr on its intonation.

During his student years at Cardiff, he maintained an active Christian witness under the aegis of the IVF-affiliated Cardiff Inter-Faculty Christian Union, of which body he was elected president for the academic year 1959-1960, thus becoming only the second Englishman to occupy that position. These years were a period of growth in the Evangelical Christian Unions, and Cardiff was not behind in this respect. Of this time Tony could relate to the Welsh author Geraint Fielder in later years:

Conversions did take place, but usually in an undramatic way over a period of time. People would, say, attend an evangelis-

tic meeting. They might come back for two or three more such meetings over the months, and then, one day, you would see them at a Saturday fellowship meeting. You would begin to treat them as belonging to the “household of faith” and perhaps in the next session you would find them joining the Christian Union. Their testimony would often be that the Spirit was quietly at work in their hearts during one particular term or a college year. Some would say they could not put a date to their conversion. Others would point to a particular meeting or speaker that clinched the matter for them.<sup>1</sup>

In those days, the notion of revival was very much on Tony’s mind. He related again in later years that the visit of Elwyn Davies, the then Traveling Secretary for the Inter-Varsity Fellowship in Wales, was “the means of awakening within me the desire to see a day of revival.” Tony was to note then and in later years that “few have a clear understanding of what revival is, or how it differs from an evangelistic campaign where blessing is experienced.”<sup>2</sup> He was in still later years to revise his outlook on these matters, as he became wiser doctrinally and practically.

On leaving the academic world, Tony took employment as an engineer at the Berkeley Nuclear Power Station, located on the southern bank of the River Severn in Gloucestershire. In 1961 he married Sandra, his sweetheart from teenage years. They made their home in Gloucestershire, in the village of Thornbury, not many miles from the power station where Tony worked, and under the shadow of the northern range of the beautiful Cotswold hills. From atop those heights, the salient monument to William Tyndale punctuated the skyline, for it was here, in this area, that the great English reformer and Bible translator had begun his work. In this area Tony and Sandra were to remain for some 33 years. In this time they raised a son, Timothy, and a daughter, Elizabeth. They became active members of the local Baptist church in Thornbury, where their labours were greatly appreciated. During this time Tony was instrumental in bringing to a living faith a young man who had been institutionalised in a special care facility nearby. With patient care and instruction over some years this man

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<sup>1</sup>Geraint D. Fielder, *Excuse me, Mr. Davies, Hallelujah!* (Evangelical Press of Wales and Inter-Varsity Press, 1983), p. 198.

<sup>2</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 198.

came to know the Lord Jesus, and still today, in his more senior years, he is a faithful attendant at Morton Baptist Church.

During those years at Morton, Tony's understanding of theology and knowledge of church history matured greatly. Steadily building up a theological library, he eventually became convicted that the fullest understanding of the Scriptures was to be found in the Presbyterian and Reformed tradition, and took particular delight in the *Westminster Confession* and *Catechisms*. Such convictions stirred him to do something about the dreadful lack of Presbyterian Reformed witness in the England of the 1980s, and what he saw by now as the perceptible drift of evangelicalism into doctrinal indifference and mysticism. He ventured to produce a new magazine, which he entitled *The Presbyterian*. First appearing in June, 1984, the early issues were produced via a professional printer, and contained articles expounding the Presbyterian system of church government, the material being mainly culled from classical expositions of these truths propounded by Presbyterian worthies of a former age.

Exigencies of production costs meant that *The Presbyterian* was eventually produced on an electric typewriter in Tony's study, photocopied, collated, stapled and trimmed all in his own time in his own home workshop, and then mailed out to addresses all over the country, and even far across the world. Six times a year he would, with the assistance of his ever-helpful Sandra, spend hours and hours labouring in this task. By now his Christian convictions had fully crystallised into the mould of "Westminster" theology, and he pursued a course that led him to espouse exclusive Psalmody and an upholding of the Authorised Version of the Scriptures.

Such an enterprise was soon noted all across the world, amongst the newly emergent Evangelical Presbyterians of Australia, amongst concerned Presbyterians in the Scottish denominations, in Northern Ireland, in Singapore, and also amongst the Dutch-American Reformed, in particular the Protestant Reformed Churches, who sent a delegation over to the British Isles to meet with Tony and other interested folk. The outcome of this was the establishment in the year 1990 of the British Reformed Fellowship (BRF), the initial meeting of which was minuted by Tony in the capacity of secretary, when it took place at Edgbaston, Birmingham, in the summer of that year. A family conference was duly inaugurated, this being the first BRF Conference that took place, at the Living Waters Conference Centre in North Wales. The secretarial work and organisation for all this was in Tony's capable hands, and it proved a success.

With the setting up of the BRF, Tony wound up *The Presbyterian*, the last issue of which was printed for January, 1992. The mass of this whole undertaking can be gauged from the fact that bound copies bulk into four solid volumes of several hundreds of pages each. They must now constitute a rare “collector’s item,” and the pages are full of fascinating articles, letters, lectures, and meditations. Each issue as it had appeared was much appreciated. This writer must testify that he looked forward to each issue more than that of any other magazine on the theological scene. The material was at once relevant, practical, suggestive, and inspiring, and connected sound biblical exegesis to the stream of Reformation truth as expressed by the Reformed and Presbyterian writers of days of yore.

Writing in the last issue, Tony expressed his consciousness that “ever since the inception of the work in 1984 ... the project was very much a one man affair and did not represent any church, denomination or society of Christians. That,” he concluded, “was not good Presbyterianism!”

It was to facilitate “good Presbyterianism” that the newly elected BRF committee were to sponsor a new quarterly journal, the first issue of which appeared for January to March, 1993. As before, however, the editor, compositor, printer, collator, finisher, and distributor was Tony Horne. With all this he now also had the responsibility of being the secretary of the new organisation, in which capacity he was also the principal organiser of the BRF Conferences which were to be held every two years.

This heavy workload he carried in his spare time, and, by 1994, on the verge of retirement from the nuclear power industry, he handed over the editorship of the *British Reformed Journal* to Hugh Williams. By now the new journal was being mailed out to something like two hundred addresses in the United Kingdom, and another fifty to a hundred overseas. Numbers attending the BRF Conferences had risen to well over a hundred, and a PRC missionary had been sent over from America to Northern Ireland, his brief: to guide and pastor the Covenant Reformed Fellowship that had developed there out of the Ulster contingent that had been linked up with Tony’s initial work with *The Presbyterian*.

On his retirement in 1994, Tony and Sandra moved north to Scotland, where they would be near Elizabeth, their daughter, now married to a Scottish Free Kirker. Also, for the first time in their lives, they would become members of the kind of Presbyterian church they believed in as they affiliated to the same Free Kirk congregation as their daughter and

son-in-law. There they could worship the Lord Christ via the regulative principle that Tony strove to uphold. Meanwhile, they continued to serve the BRF faithfully, and it was in 1998 that Tony retired as the organisation's secretary. At this time he was also pursuing his long-held association with the Trinitarian Bible Society, and was to become the Society's travelling representative in Scotland for many years until the final stages of his illness in 2007.

Tony and his family were affected by the upheaval in the Free Church of Scotland that resulted in the secession of what was to become the Free Church of Scotland (Continuing). From the year 2000 onwards, he and Sandra affiliated with the "Continuing" group in Aberdeen, where Rev. David Blunt, a former BRF Chairman, was installed as missionary pastor over a small congregation. For some seven years, Tony worked with this small group, whilst also carrying on his travelling ministry on behalf of the Trinitarian Bible Society, and his association with the BRF. In this latter respect it must be said that Tony was a capable speaker, his deep sonorous voice easily commanding attention, while the content of his lectures was always informative and presented in a logical, interesting manner.

It was with great consternation that we learned in 2004 that Tony and Sandra had to cancel their booking at the BRF Conference at High Leigh in England. Tony had been unwell for some time, and the diagnosis was that he was suffering a particularly pernicious form of leukaemia. Chemotherapy was recommended, a course of which he began in the late summer of that year. His robust constitution seemed to take the rigours of this treatment with amazing resilience. On visiting him in the September with Prof. and Mrs. Herman Hanko, we were astonished to find he had walked home the three miles from the hospital, and appeared bright and healthy. So well had he recovered that he was able to return to his work for the Trinitarian Bible Society, which involved him in travelling all over Scotland on long journeys in his own vehicle, then delivering a speech. He seemed to continue in this good state of health for two years, when, sadly, he again had to withdraw from his booking at the BRF Conference at Cloverley Hall in 2006. Further treatment through the ensuing winter was necessary at ever-increasing frequencies, and his last, long journey by road was in the June of 2007 when he visited his son in Buxton in Derbyshire and Mr. Michael Kimmitt in North Wales. It was evident by then that his health and strength were in noticeable decline, hence Mr. Kimmitt and I

arranged to visit him at his home in Aberdeen in late August, where we found he had weakened even more. It was there we said goodbye to him about 10 o'clock on the morning of Friday, 31 August, as he went to the ambulance bus. Though none said it, we all knew intuitively that this was the last goodbye we would make to a faithful and beloved friend and servant of the Lord Jesus Christ. A few days later, we received the news that he had passed over to be with the Lord.

The funeral was conducted by Rev. David Blunt, and attended by over 100 people from all parts of the British Isles. Mr. Fred Witchard, an old friend and associate of Tony's days in Morton Baptist Church, gave an address of appreciation. A collection was taken for the local leukaemia research organisation, and the Trinitarian Bible Society, which so far has exceeded some £900. Interment was at the Hazelhead municipal cemetery in the city of Aberdeen.

We give thanks to God for Tony's life and witness to the truth as it is in Christ Jesus. His passing is a great loss to all of us. His work, his example, and his presence was an inspiration that touched and enlivened many, many, of God's saints in their need, in this country, and indeed right to the far side of the world.

He leaves his wife of 46 years, Sandra, his sister Jennifer, his son Timothy and daughter-in-law Beryl, his daughter Elizabeth and son-in-law Angus, and their children, Hannah, Daniel, Mary, and Calum, who miss their grandfather greatly. We extend our heartfelt sympathies and condolences to them all. May our heavenly Father, the God of all comfort, console them in our Saviour Christ Jesus and uphold them in their loss.

Till He come ... and the day dawn, and the shadows flee away ...