ARTHUR W. PINK

Born to Write

A BIOGRAPHY



RICHARD P. BELCHER

Arthur W. Pink-
Born to Write

a biography by
RICHARD P. BELCHER

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INTRODUCTION

The life of a man as he lives it is often deceiving. He may live in the limelight of popularity and acclaim all the days of his life, with every indication that he and his works will be remembered for years to come, and maybe even centuries to come. Yet such a man can be forgotten almost immediately at his death or shortly thereafter.

Another man may live and die in obscurity with no indication he would ever influence anyone beyond his earthly days. Yet such a man's life and his works may be resurrected in the memories of men and elevated to prominence a few years after his passing.

The principles are these: popularity during one's lifetime is no guarantee of future earthly remembrance, and neither is obscurity and lack of recognition during one's lifetime the guarantee of banishment to historical insignificance. The role one played in life is sometimes reversed after one's death.

This was definitely the situation in the life of Arthur W. Pink. He lived to a great extent in obscurity, and he died in the same manner with few knowing of the event or place. There was no hint, when he passed from this world, that he would be remembered, except by a few faithful readers of a small paper he published for thirty some years. When these few readers were dead, it would have seemed an obvious conclusion that his remembrance would be gone also. Surprisingly, however, the role Pink played in life was sharply reversed, following his death in 1952. This virtually unknown man has left an impact that cannot be denied, regardless of one's agreement or disagreement with his theology!

It has become the conviction of this writer, as he has read and studied Pink, assessing his life and influence, that he is responsible, as much as any man, for the revival of that doctrine known as Calvinism among Baptists and some other groups. His main influence has come through the books that have been published from the material written in his monthly periodical, with many of them being published after Pink's death.

Because of the revival of the man and his works, there has arisen a strong interest in the life of Arthur W. Pink. Who was he? What were his roots? What was his background and education? When and how was he converted to Christ? Why was he only appreciated after his death? These and other questions surface, as his books are read, and as one begins to sense his spiritual life and devotion to Christ.

It must be admitted that a biography of Pink is not an easy task to accomplish.

For one thing, an obscure personality does not generate great interest in the details of his life, while he lives. Only popular individuals have biographers standing in line to write their stories, even sometimes before they are dead. In the case of Pink, not only his obscurity makes it difficult to chronicle the details of his life, but also one of his convictions (perhaps it was a trait of personality) discouraged anyone of his day from inquiring about the events of his life. He was a very a self-effacing man, who considered it almost sinful to talk about one's self in any manner.

When asked by one correspondent for some details of his history, he tersely replied: "It would require more time than I have available to supply the information you desire, being a long story, if it were to be intelligible; nor do I think the recounting of it would be of any real help to you. A sovereign God does not act uniformly, and He deals in very different ways with different ones."[1]

In the same letter he speaks against any preacher advertising himself in ministry. He notes that he has never permitted a picture of himself to appear on any announcement of his preaching activities.[2] He stated in yet another context that he was reared in a home that taught him it was bad manners for one to speak of himself.[3] More pointedly he refused to relate his conversion experience for the following reasons:

> We shall not relate our own spiritual history. First, because we are not now writing to satisfy the unholy curiosity of a certain class of readers, who delight in pursuing in such things. Second, we regard the private experience of the Christian as being too sacred to expose to public view. It has long seemed to us that there is such a thing as spiritual unchastity: the inner workings of the soul are not a fit subject to be laid bare before others—"The heart knoweth his own bitterness, and a stranger doth not intermeddle with his joy" (Proverbs 14:10). Third, because we are not so conceited as to imagine our own particular conversion and ups and downs of our Christian life are of sufficient importance to narrate. Fourth, because there are probably some features about our conversion and some things in our subsequent spiritual history, which have been duplicated in very few other cases, and therefore they would only be calculated to mislead others, if they should look for a parallel in themselves. Finally, because as intimated above, we deem it more honoring to God and far more helpful to souls to confine ourselves to the teaching of his Word on this subject.[4]

Someone might ask in light of the above, statement, that is, the evident

difficulty in producing the life of Pink, what hope does the present author have in accomplishing this task? If the material is scarce, and if Pink himself discouraged any such undertaking, surely the efforts of the present writer are doomed to failure. This writer would reply that the task, though difficult, is not impossible. Obviously, in light of the problems, the work will have its limitations. But the present attempt does come from a near total immersion in the writings of Pink for the production of a doctoral dissertation, which dealt with one area of his theology. In the process of that labor, the present writer carefully noted, as he read nearly all that Pink has ever written, all the biographical references pertaining to his life. Obviously, again, the conclusion is that enough material surfaced concerning Pink's life to attempt a biography. There were times in his writings, when Pink opened his heart and spoke in a biographical manner to illustrate some point in his exposition of the Scriptures. Even in those cases, it was with reluctance. This present work is an attempt to put together this material, plus other material now available, so that the life of Arthur W. Pink can be set forth for public view and understanding in a fuller manner.

The reader should be encouraged also to understand that we are dealing with a "man of like passions." Pink was not perfect in doctrine nor convictions nor life-style. He was a man, who in many ways struggled, but he knew and demonstrated the reality of a firm commitment to a sovereign God. It is a sad story in many places, and at times rather depressing. Nonetheless, it is the story of a widely-used man of God. It includes his struggles and his failures, as well as his victories. The writer feels no compulsion to justify all of Pink's doctrinal views or personal practices or ideas. To his own master every man must stand or fall. The writer does have definite convictions about Arthur W. Pink, his life, his doctrine and his ministry, as a whole, which will no doubt surface in the presentation and conclusion of this work. In a sense this is not only an informative work, but also an interpretive analysis of the life of Pink, and for this the writer makes no apology.

Special thanks must be extended to the late Mr. Lowell Green of Atlanta, Georgia, who so kindly allowed me the duplication of his prized possession—twenty-six years of Pink's periodical, *Studies in the Scriptures.* Without this gracious allowance, the present work would have been impossible.

CHAPTER I

Introducing Arthur W. Pink

Who was Arthur Walkington Pink?

Not everyone is agreed as to their assessment of the man nor his ministry.

Some laugh, as they ridicule his personality, calling him odd, and they note that he was not always able to get along with people!

Some call him a "hyper-Calvinist," feeling he was overbalanced in the direction of the sovereignty of God to the exclusion or denial of the responsibility of man.

Some may think that his lack of education and ministerial training, could be interpreted as evidence of an unwillingness to submit to any other man's teaching or authority.

Some question his hermeneutics, as being fanciful in places, allowing unusual interpretations, which are not found in the Scripture text at all.

Some call attention to his final years of his life, which were spent in virtual isolation, as he devoted himself entirely to the ministry of his pen—they say this was evidence of a dangerous extremism.

On the other hand, many speak quite positively of Pink, and even of his present influence on the theology of our day, as can be seen in the following statements..

> . . . one of the most prolific Christian writers of this century...[1]

> The life of A. W. Pink inevitably reminds one of similar instances that are to be found in Church history of men whose work was passed over by their own generation, only to be prized by those who followed.[2]

> The written ministry of A. W. Pink was one of the least noticed facts of major significance in the first half of the twentieth century.[3]

> Mr. Pink is known through out Christendom as one of the most devout Bible students and expositors since the days of Spurgeon and Meyer.[4]

> The well-loved writings of Arthur W. Pink can easily be summarized by two words—simple and scriptural.[5]

Arthur W. Pink has become known as a masterful expositor of the Word of God.[6]

There are some men who are in the habit of keeping their light under a bushed. Some men ought to. However, there comes a time, when some of these hidden lights ought to have their bushels ignited and consumed. Such a person is Arthur W. Pink. Mr. Pink has left us a wonderful written ministry on the Word of God. His works show hours of study; each line is filled with information and blessing. His books are not shallow. His studies fill the soul with "strong meat" which needs to be well digested.[7]

The reading of the works of Arthur W. Pink is a spiritual treat, as well as an intellectual exercise. Small wonder that the author has a large and faithful following among the general readers and Bible students alike.[8]

He was in some ways, a Puritan born out of time.[9]

A. W. Pink, a master at making the Bible read like tomorrow's newspaper, . . .[10]

Men of the caliber of Arthur W. Pink appear on the religious horizon only rarely. His ability to apply the truths of Scripture to the lives of people, his vast and intimate knowledge of the Scriptures, and his clear-cut method of presenting the truths he experienced in his own life, make his works not only vitally important for any serious Bible student—minster or layman—but also admirably adaptable for individual devotional reading.[11]

When Arthur Walkington Pink died in Stornoway, Scotland in the Outer Hebrides, on July 15, 1952, his passing was scarcely noticed, save by a small circle of friends and the readers of his monthly magazine titled *Studies in the Scriptures.* Although he had lived and preached in four countries, at the time of his death, his name was practically unknown among Christians in the English speaking world. Only with difficulty had *Studies in the Scriptures* maintained its existence through forty years, and the number of readers was seldom above one thousand.[12]

A summary of the above statements reveals the following concerning A. W. Pink. He was one of the most productive writers of the twentieth century, yet his work was unknown, or at least unappreciated, by his own generation. Since his

death, his works have been published extensively, and many today value his expository and theological ability. He is even placed by some in the same category as the great preachers and expositors of the past, such as the Puritans, Charles H. Spurgeon, and F. B. Meyer. But can these bold claims be substantiated?

The productivity of his pen is beyond dispute (see the bibliography). He wrote, it will be noticed, expositorily on the following books or portions of the Bible: Genesis, Exodus, the Ten Commandments, the life of Elijah, the life of Elisha, the life of David, the Sermon on the Mount, the gospel of John, Romans 7, the prayers of Paul, and the book of Hebrews, and maybe even more. Some of the theological subjects he explored included: the doctrine of God, the doctrine of the Holy Spirit, the doctrine of Scripture, the doctrine of salvation, the doctrine of regeneration, the doctrine of repentance, the doctrine of perseverance, the doctrine of election, the doctrine of justification, the doctrine of the atonement and the doctrine of sanctification. Thus, who can deny the claim of a productive pen?

All of this material was published in his monthly periodical and read by only a faithful few. Several of his books were published before his death. His later ministry found him in isolation in England and later in Scotland. And during this later period he did not preach, except a few times, nor did he publish anything of major import, except for the periodical. One will notice that the publication dates on most of his books are after his death.

Part of the reason for the lack of appreciation in his own day was that he was theologically out of step with his own times. Though Baptists (Pink's denominational preference) found their roots in Calvinistic theology, there came a time in their history, when they left this doctrinal foundation to a great extent, in order to embrace a more Arminian theology, or as some called it, more of a synthesis of Calvinism and Arminianism.

As an example, the present writer, though a member of a Baptist church, since sometime in the early 1940's, and though a preacher in Baptist churches since the early 1950's, I was not introduced to the doctrine of Calvinism until sometime in the mid or late 1960's. Where and how Baptists lost their historic Calvinist viewpoint is a subject beyond the scope of this present work. The point is that Pink, a strong Calvinist, lived during this time, when Baptists had left their historical roots as far as their Calvinist theology. But Pink embraced the Baptist convictions of the past, and therefore he was not popular nor accepted—he was a man out of step with his times both doctrinally and concerning the Biblical methods of ministry.

As one writer comments:

> Mr. Pink's view of the Scriptures, of doctrine and of Christian practice was not the view of many of his contemporary evangelicals. Few men have traveled so widely and yet remained so uninfluenced by prevailing opinions and accepted customs. Independent Bible study convinced him that much of modern evangelism was defective at its foundation; when Puritan and Reformed books were being thrown out, he advanced the majority of their principles with untiring zeal.[13]

Another writer says that Pink has become more popular today because of the awakening of an interest in the truths he so faithfully presented in his writings.[14] That statement certainly has a measure of truth to it, but one also wonders how much Arthur W. Pink was responsible for the above mentioned awakening of interest in these old truths of the past. The present writer has on file numerous letters from pastors, who attribute their theological journey from Arminian theology to Calvinistic theology to A. W. Pink and his influence upon them. These letters are small in number to those who have encountered Biblical truth in a personal way by the means of Pink's writings.

The fact that Pink has a large following today can be seen from a few statistics concerning the sale of his books. Baker Book House has published twenty-two different titles by Pink with a combined total sales of almost 350,000 copies.[15] Banner of Truth has printed 92,000 copies of *The Sovereignty of God,* 65,000 copies of *The Life of Elijah*, and 54,000 copies of *Profiting from the Word*.[16] Zondervan Publishing House has published several works of Pink, but only one is still in print, that is, *The Exposition of the Gospel of John.* Zondervan also reports that book is selling even now between 1500 and 2000 copies a year. (May the reader take note that these were figures back when our book on Pink was first published in 1980—the figures of books published by different publishing houses and writers has no doubt risen since that hour).

But now, who was Arthur W. Pink? We have not yet answered that question in our present search. Some facts concerning Pink cannot be denied. He was a prolific writer, who was by-passed in his day, but he is now recognized through the publishing of his many works. But should he rank next to the likes of the Puritans, Luther, Calvin and Spurgeon? What about his personality? Was it just a unique personality, or did he have a major problem in that area of his life? What about his isolation in his final years? Was that the sign of an extreme personality in the man himself? What about his strong individualism? Was that a strength or a weakness?

It might be assumed that a man's strengths need no defense, but that his

weaknesses surely do. It is not the purpose of the present writer to defend Arthur Pink in all of his ways, but hopefully we shall have a better understanding of the man and his life, when we have finished. It may be that a man's strengths leave in their wake accompanying weaknesses. If that be the case, then it must be admitted that A. W. Pink was a man of strength in many areas, and with those many strengths we should expect to discover accompanying weaknesses. The reader can make his own judgment, as the life of Pink now begins to unfold.

CHAPTER II

The Early Life

Arthur W. Pink was born in England on April 1, 1886 at 4 Claremont Terrace, Francis Street, in the city of Nottingham to Thomas and Agnes Pink.[1] His mother was a godly woman, who he says "dedicated him to God's service even before he was born."[2] His father was also a Christian, who sought to lead his family in the way of the Lord. It is reported that he was a wealthy and busy grain merchant, and at one time he was an official of the town.[3] The family comprised three children in all, with another brother and sister, besides young Arthur.[4]

A Disciplined Christian Home

The Pink home, besides being Christian, was very strict and disciplined, and the children were expected to honor God in all their ways. The Sabbath was reverently observed, a practice Pink continued throughout his life, following his conversion. He later wrote of his early training in Sabbath observance;

> And today, the writer is unfeignedly thankful to God that he was brought up in a home where the holy Sabbath was so "strictly"—scripturally—kept. The day began by our father reading to us God's Word. In the morning the family attended preaching services. In the afternoon father and mother read to us out of spiritual books. Quite a little of the time was spent in the singing of hymns . . .And our father was not a preacher![5]

Pink says further in this comment that no business letters were ever opened in his home on the Sabbath, and neither were Sunday newspapers ever allowed. Besides that, all toys were put away on Saturday night, and pictorial editions of Bunyan's Pilgrim's Progress and other spiritual books replaced them.

Pink never expressed sorrow over this early strict life and training. Rather he often spoke of this early parental and family influence with praise to God. In one instance he listed all he had to praise God for, and he included his godly parents, who cared for him in infancy and trained him in the way he should go spiritually.[6] When speaking of the story of Joseph, he said that story was "indelibly impressed on his memory from his mother's knee and from the lips of his Sunday School teacher.[7] He refers elsewhere to some lines of poetry taught

to him by his mother, lines that searched his heart deeply and stayed with him down through the years. Those lines were:

> I often say my prayers, but do I ever pray?
> And do the wishes of my heart, go with the words I say?
> I may as well kneel down, and worship gods of stone,
> As offer to the living God, a prayer of words alone.[8]

Quite obviously the Pinks took being Christians seriously. Bible teaching in the home, strict Sabbath observance, searching honestly before God in prayer, and no doubt, full respect for the demands of God's Word in lifestyle and holiness of life. The children were expected to behave, to respect their elders, and to be disciplined in their lives. Failure at these points brought punishment mixed with words of admonition and rebuke. The Pinks did not rear spoiled brats, as can be seen from comments made by Pink some years later, as he traveled in ministry:

> One of the most trying experiences of the writer in his extensive travels, has been to spend a season in homes, where the children have been completely spoilt[9]

> One of the saddest and most tragic features of our twentieth- century "Civilization" is the awful prevalence of disobedience on the part of children to their parents during the days of childhood, and their lack of reverence and respect, when they grow up. This is evidenced in many ways, and is general, alas, even in families of professing Christians. In his extensive travels during the past thirty years, the writer has sojourned in a great many homes: the piety and beauty of some remain sacred and fragrant memories: but others of them have left the most painful impressions.[10]

Though Pink and his wife never had any children, his conviction concerning the rearing of children (which a person usually receives from his parents by their example) were strong and unquestionably in line with his childhood training:

> The training of children is a most solemn responsibility, and in these days of laxness and lawlessness, an increasingly serious problem. No little grace is needed to defy the general trend of our day, and to take a firm stand. But the Word of God is plain and pointed. "Train up a child in the way he should go" (Proverbs 22:6). For the parent needs to be daily cast upon God,

> seeking wisdom each hour from Him. The "training" cannot start too early. Just as a wise gardener begins, while the trees are young and tender, to train the branches along the wall, so should we begin with our children in their most tender years. God has declared, "Them that honor Me, I will honor" (I Samuel 2:20). The first lines the Christian children should be taught are not nursery rhymes and fairy tales, but short appropriate verses of Scripture. The first truths which need to be pressed upon the little ones are the claims that God has upon all His creatures—that He should be revered, loved, obeyed. That the child is a lost sinner, in need of a Savior, cannot be taught too early . . . And to give the children God's Word is the binding and daily duty of every parent. You cannot lawfully transfer this duty to someone else. Not the Sunday School teacher, but the parent is the one whom God holds responsible to teach the children.[11]

If the above description has left the impression that the Pink home was all discipline and strict rules without love and understanding, the following words of Pink, written in his adult days, will put that false assumption to rest:

> Sad it is that in this present evil age one of the most precious words in the English language has lost much of its fragrance. Our fathers used to sing "There is no place like home." Today the average "home" is little more than a boarding house—a place to eat and sleep in. But "Home" used to mean, and still means to a few, the place where we are loved for our own sake; the place where we are always welcome; the place whither we can come to retire from the strife of the world and enjoy the rest and peace, the places where loved ones are together.[12]

The conclusion must be that young Arthur Pink was reared in a Christian home, one with strong discipline and strict rules for children to follow in both their spiritual and personal lives. It was also a home that possessed Christian love. This strong background formed Pink's character, taught him self-discipline, established him in clear and definite values, and even perhaps gave him a serious turn of his nature. One source reports that Pink very rarely smiled.[13]

A Strong Early Education

Pink's education, as a growing child, seems to have been extensive, and it found young Arthur applying himself diligently to study. Later in his life in a letter to Mr. Lowell Green he showed displeasure for the choirs of the day, as well as the

song services in the churches. He closed his sharp remarks on the subject by saying, "And I am not a music-hater, but a trained musician, both vocally and instrumentally!"[14] Not being one to boast or ever overstate a matter, this statement can be taken at face value, and the certain conclusion can be drawn that his early days included musical instruction in voice and some instrument. One article says that one of his closest friends, who was an opera singer, urged Pink to train for the same profession.[15] Thus, Pink had a well-rounded and a cultured education (opera, no less), and it speaks of Pink as a disciplined person. One does not become a "trained musician both vocally and instrumentally" without hours of practice and serious discipline.

In other statements throughout his teachings, Pink shows a wide knowledge of many subjects. He evidences a knowledge of literature, when he refers to Milton's view of Satan,[16] or again, when he quotes the words which Goethe put in the mouth of Mephistopheles.[17] He shows a familiarity of history, when he mentions the horrors of Paris during the French Revolution, and the afflictions in Russia, when the Czars were overthrown.[18] Again, he speaks of the kind of treatment the Jews received from the Anglo-Saxon race, and their cruel treatment during the middle ages by Spain.[19] He indicates that he has studied the poets and philosophers of early Greece in one context, and in the same place he states that he possesses a knowledge of the religions of Zoroastrianism, Buddhism, and Confucianism.[20] In another section he refers to philology, art, science, ethics, history, and government in a manner that indicates some knowledge of these subjects.[21]

Pink could not have learned these areas of study in college or seminary, because he was, after his conversion, a self-taught man. This knowledge must have come in his childhood education and training and even into his teen-age days. It is possible that he may have learned some of these matters on his own, after his conversion to Christianity at the age of twenty-two. It is also known that in his ministerial days, he was an avid reader. However, in the days of his Christian ministry, he read and centered his study on the Bible and books that related to it. Knowing Pink, one might have to conclude that he learned these other matters before his conversion, even in his older teen-age days of learning or as a young man before his conversion. However, this writer feels that much of this knowledge is evidence of an excellent education to which young Arthur Pink applied himself, even before his conversion.

Other Matters of Childhood and Early Years

Not much is known of Pink's childhood and days of youth. Particulars of this period of his life are unavailable to us. We do know that Pink was not a Christian during these years, even though he had been reared in a Christian home. He dated his salvation from the year of 1908, when he was twenty-two years of age. It is known that he entered business at the age of sixteen and attained considerable success.[22] But the details of that business is not known to us. We know also that prior to his conversion, he experienced some years of rather strong rebellion and self-seeking. He said of those days:

> What of the writer and the reader? Let us review our own lives. It is not long since we followed a multitude to do evil, had no concern for God's glory, and lived only to gratify self. How patiently He bore our vile conduct![23]

> Let the writer and the reader review their unregenerate days: how dreadfully did we provoke the Majesty on high; how long did we persevere in a course of open rebellion; against what restraints, privileges, light and knowledge, warnings and entreaties, did we act! How many of the godless companions of our youth were cut off in their guilt, while we were spared. Was it because our sins were less crimson? No, indeed; so far as we can perceive, our sins were of a deeper dye than theirs.[24]

As the writer looks back to his unregenerate days, he recalls with a shudder a number of occasions when he was in imminent peril, brought face to face with death. But even then, even while in his sins, he was (because in Christ by eternal election) miraculously preserved.[25]

The extent of these days of rebellion and vile conduct are known only to God. Pink never elaborated further concerning them. These general statements, which speak of "following a multitude to do evil," and "no concern for the glory of God," and "living only to gratify self" are as much light as Pink ever gave concerning his unsaved days. It should not necessarily be assumed that these were days of extreme moral defilement. The discipline and stern home background would speak against such an interpretation. It is probable that the description given above by Pink himself in general terms, speaks of a very moral young man, who was completely satisfied with himself and his supposed standing before God.

In the following years, after he was converted, as he possessed a sensitive spirit towards God and His Word, he came to understand the depravity of his heart and actions in those early religious days. Therefore, he writes with such

vividness concerning his early sin—his was the sin of a Pharisee, who was following the way of works against all light and knowledge that God had given him in his early home training. This truly is vile conduct, as vile, according to Pink, as the one who wallowed in the gutters of sin, because such conduct still rejects (and perhaps with greater determination and understanding) the Son of God and His holy Word.

More will be said concerning this subject in the next chapter, as we now turn to consider the conversion of Arthur Pink to the Lord Jesus Christ!

CHAPTER III

The Conversion to Christ

The following facts have been seen concerning the early days of Arthur W. Pink. First, he was reared in a very strong Christian home with both parents seeking to do their Christian duty towards their children and God. Second, he was well educated and evidenced discipline in applying himself towards the pursuit of study. Third, he must have been a young man of morality, who was sensitive to any breakdown of his ethical standards. Fourth, he entered business at the age of sixteen, and he was a considerable success by the time he was twenty-two years old.

A Leader in the Theosophy Society

There is another fact that must be mentioned now, as consideration is given to Pink's conversion. Somewhere in those early years, probably his early twenties, he became involved in the Theosophy Society, a spiritualist movement that was begun by Madame Besant. This fact may give some light concerning the days of Pink's "rebellion," as mentioned in the last chapter.

As this writer pictures the situation, and he must admit there is some speculation here, young Arthur Pink, who was brilliant in mind, disciplined in spirit, serious in attitude, and eager to study rejected the Christian faith of his father for what appeared to be an intellectual, philosophical and scientific explanation of God and the world. It is reported that at the age of twenty-two in the year of 1908, that Pink was such a rising star in the Theosophy movement, that the chief leaders decided to give him status as one of their primary teachers and leading members of the society.[1] This evidences several years of the recognized potential of Arthur Pink in the society. This also is the reason the present writer interpreted Pink's days of rebellion as days of religious blindness and arrogance, rather than days of moral defilement.

A Sinner Apprehended by Christ

Understandably, Pink's involvement in this intellectually alluring. but spiritually deadening movement, deeply troubled his father. During one week in 1908, Pink was scheduled to speak at an important gathering of the Society. He was to lecture once early in the week, and then again later in the week. The meeting

seems to have been in his home town of Nottingham, but we cannot be certain of that. But when Pink returned home from his first teaching assignment at the Theosophy Society meetings, he was faced by his father's quotation of Proverbs 14:12. That verse says, "There is a way which seemeth right unto a man, but the end thereof are the ways of death." Evidently this portion of the Word of God shook Pink deeply and sent him into seclusion to his room for the remainder of most of the week. He says he stayed there without food, until he finally came downstairs to go preach the gospel at the Friday meeting of the society. One can hardly imagine the pandemonium his actions brought to the society that day. This action sets forth another of Pink's characteristics—a frankness and boldness to speak his convictions without fear or favor, regardless of the situation.

What transpired in his room those several days was never divulged completely by Pink. Obviously, he was converted to Christ during those hours, as he wrestled with God in his room by himself. We do know that there was an overwhelming and powerful impact by God in a sinner's heart, as he was alone with God. We know also that Pink carried a conviction throughout his life that this should be the experience of every man, as one is convicted and saved, as one meets God by himself. He said:

> Alone with God is where the sinner needs to get with none between and none around him. This is one reason why the writer, during the course of four pastorates, never made use of an "inquiry room," or "penitent form."[2]

This was not only a time, when he was alone with God, but it was also an hour, when God overcame him. It is not that he sought God, but that God subdued his stubborn and sinful heart and will. He says again:

> This writer sought not the Lord, but hated, opposed, and endeavored to banish Him from his thoughts; but the Lord sought him, smote him to the ground (like Saul of Tarsus), subdued his vile rebellion, and made him willing in the day of His power. That is Grace indeed—sovereign, amazing, triumphant grace.[3]

> And let us add to the praise of the glory of God's grace, but to our own unutterable shame, it was so with the writer, when Christ "apprehended" him; when he was altogether unconscious of his deep need, and had no desire whatever for a Savior. Ah, blessed be His name, "We love him, because he first loved us!"[4]

> Let the Christian reader join with the writer in looking back to the past, recalling when we too kicked against the pricks. How infinite was the forbearance of God towards us! Though we had no regard for Him, He had set His heart upon us; and perhaps at the very time, when our awful enmity against Him was most high-handedly operative, He moved someone of comparative obscurity to reason with us and point out to us the folly of our ways and urge us to submit to God's holy requirements.[5]

Thus it was that an educated, brilliant, self-disciplined, independent, studious Arthur W. Pink was converted to Christ. Thus it was that the young man, who had gone into business at the age of sixteen and attained considerable success by the age of twenty-two, began his Christian pilgrimage. Thus it was that the young student of spiritualism and theosophy, who could have perhaps someday have headed the society, returned to the God of his father. Something took place that week, which he knew was life-changing, but he could not possibly have been aware of the change it would bring to his life, and the maze through which he would travel in the years ahead.

CHAPTER IV

Early Ministry and Study

Arthur W. Pink was a man who did nothing in moderation. His personal self-discipline demanded that he give all to whatever cause or person he committed himself. If he was in business, he gave himself to it fully. If he was following a false religion, his life and soul were totally immersed in its study and practice. Could his conversion and new commitment to Christ bring anything less than the same total dedication?

One should not be surprised to learn that following his conversion to Christ, he immediately plunged into the study and ministry of the Word of God. His first sermon came just shortly after his salvation, and it was to a congregation of seven hundred people in his hometown of Nottingham, England. His text was Romans 1:16.[1]

The Rejection of Formal Training

Several other facts are clear concerning his early years as a Christian. First, he was urged by his pastor and some friends to go to school and receive training for the ministry.[2] This suggestion was refused by Pink, because he thought the school they had in mind was harboring some serious doctrinal errors. His independent spirit and boldness of conviction is evident here again, though he does acknowledge that it was very difficult to go against his pastor and friends. Finally, though it was not the school suggested by his pastor and friends, he enrolled at Moody Bible Institute in the United States for a summer session. He left that school, however, even before the completion of that summer time of study.[3]

One can only venture a guess, as to why he left Moody, after coming all the way to America to study there. Perhaps it was his strong individualistic spirit that made it difficult for him to submit to any human authority. Another suggestion is given by another writer.[4] Ian Murray suggests Pink may have left because he was so much further advanced in Bible study, both in method, discipline and knowledge, that he so clearly outstripped the other students and the level of instruction. Thus, he felt he was not occupying his time to the best possibility. If this is the reason Pink left Moody, it is a commentary on the rapid advancement and depth of knowledge of the Scriptures and truth possessed by

Pink in just two years as a Christian, but of course, he did have a Christian home as his background. It can be established that he was a dedicated student of the Bible and an avid reader of books related to the Bible from the hour of his conversion. Pink notes his early method of study as follows:

> In my early years I assiduously followed this threefold course. First, I read through the entire Bible three times a year (eight chapters in the Old Testament and two in the New Testament daily). I steadily persevered in this for ten years, in order to familiarize myself with its contents, which can only be done by consecutive reading. Second, I studied a portion of the Bible each week on the same passage, pondering the order of it, the connection between each statement, seeking a definition of the important terms in it, looking up all the marginal references, being on the look-out for its typical [types] significance. Third, I meditated on one verse every day, writing out on a slip of paper in the morning, memorizing it, consulting it at odd moments through the day, pondering separately each word in it, asking God to open its spiritual meaning and to write it on my heart. The verse was my food for that day, with meditation standing to reading as mastication does to eating.[5]

Pink was so convinced of his method and the need of Bible study, that he encouraged others to be students of the Bible also:

> Let no reader complain that he has not the time. You may not have time for the careful study of the whole chapter each morning, though even that is to be seriously questioned, but certain it is that you have time to prayerfully select one verse of Scripture and write in on a piece of paper and attempt to commit it to memory, consulting it during your spare minutes through the day, on the train, or the streetcar, if needs be—the writer memorized the whole epistle of Ephesians on the streetcar, a verse at a time.[6]

Concerning his other reading, especially theological books, he stated in 1935 (about twenty-seven years after his conversion) that he had read by that time ". . . more than one million pages of religious literature, a goodly proportion of which was "theological."[7] If one averages that one million pages over twenty seven years, it comes to over thirty-seven thousand pages a year. Therefore, Pink was not only a student of the Bible, but also a student of theological literature as well.

In other contexts one finds such phrases as "reading through scores of books"[8]

and "extensive reading."[9] In another place he mentions his large library that had to be packed for travel, and that it weighed over half a ton.[10] His commitment to study and work is evidenced in another statement, as he spoke concerning the preacher:

> Whether he rises early (as this writer) or finds it more expedient to burn the midnight oil, he is in honour and duty bound to spend, at least as many hours in his study each day, as does the farmer in his field, the clerk in his office, or the labourer in the factory. He has no warrant to expect God to use him unless he be industrious and denies himself.[11]

God Must Be the Primary Teacher

It becomes evident from statements, such as the above, that the reason Pink never attended any school for theological training, was that he was capable and disciplined in study, and therefore able to teach himself. In fact, he came to the conviction that God is the primary teacher and that man really needs no one else to teach him. This may have been the conviction of the mature Pink in his later years, as he looked back on his experience, but it was also his practice in his early years as well. He felt he could justify that conviction from Scripture, as he wrote:

> The instrument through whom God did the most for Israel, and the one He used to bring the greatest blessing to the Gentiles, was each unqualified, when judged by the standard of human scholarship.[12]

> One does not have to enter a seminary or a Bible Institute and take a course in Christian Apologetics in order to obtain assurance that the Bible is inspired, or in order to learn how to interpret it. Spiritual intelligence comes not through the intellect but via the heart: it is acquired not by force of reasoning, but by the exercising of faith.[13]

Pink also used Christ, as evidence for his conviction, that man needed no human instrument to teach him:

> "Jesus answered them, and said, "My doctrine is not mine, but his that sent me" (7:16). Let every young man who reads these lines ponder carefully this sentence from Christ. If he is fully assured that he has received a call from God to devote his life to the Lord's service, and is now exercised as to

> how he may become equipped for such service, let him prayerfully meditate upon these words of the Savior. Let him remember that Christ is here speaking not from the standpoint of His essential glory, not as a member of the Godhead, but as the Son of God incarnate, that is, as the Servant of Jehovah. Let him turn to John 8:28 and compare its closing sentence: "As my Father hath taught me, I speak these things." It was in no human schools He had learned to teach so that men marveled. This discourse He had delivered originated not in His own mind. His doctrine came from the One who sent Him.[14]

Pink continues in this same context, using Paul and then Spurgeon as examples of much used but untrained men:

> It was the same with the apostle Paul. Hear him as he says to the Galatians, "But I certify, brethren, that the gospel which was preached of me is not after man. For I neither received it of man, neither was I taught it, but by the revelation of Jesus Christ: (1:11-12)." And these things, dear brethren, are recorded for our learning. No one has to take a course in any Bible school in order to gain a knowledge and insight of the Scriptures. The man most used of God last century—Mr. C. H. Spurgeon—was a graduate of no Bible institute![15]

In case one might conclude from the above statements that Pink had absolutely no use for schools, and that he felt no one under any circumstance should attend such an institution of education, another statement he made should be noted, as he continued in the above context:

> We do not say that God has not used the Bible schools to help many who have gone there; we do not say there may not be such which He is so using today. But what we do say is, that such schools are not an imperative necessity. You have the same Bible to hand that they have; and you have the same Holy Spirit to guide you into all truth. God may be pleased to use human instruments in instructing and enlightening you, or He may give you the far greater honor and privilege of teaching you directly. That is for you to ascertain. Your first duty is to humbly and diligently look to Him, wait on him for guidance, seek His will, and the sure promise is "The meek will he guide in judgment: and the meek will he teach his way" (Psalms 25:9).[16]

A Word of Warning for the Reader

The present writer feels a need to speak a word of clear warning concerning the above statements of Pink. Please remember the disciplined nature of Pink, which enabled him to begin a task and finish it on time and intact. In our age, which lacks discipline, one rarely finds one with the discipline of a Pink! This is not to say that only people lacking discipline should go to schools for Biblical training, or that disciplined people do not need such academic environment and instruction. It is only to call attention to the disciplined character of Pink, and to see that trait of his character as the foundation of what he was able to accomplish through self study.

Another reason Pink was disenchanted with Biblical and theological training was that he felt it had become an idol for so many men, as they trained for the ministry:

> How many there are in the education and religious world, who suppose it is impossible for a man to expound the Scriptures gracefully and to the edification of his hearers unless, forsooth, he has first been trained in some college or seminary! Education is an altar which is now thronged by a multitude of idolatrous worshipers. That, no doubt, is the reason why God's curse has fallen on almost all of our seats of learning. He is jealous of His glory, and anything which enters into competition with Himself blights and withers. An unholy evaluation of human learning, which supplants human dependence upon the Holy Spirit is, perhaps, the chief reason why God's presence and blessing have long since departed from the vast majority of our centers of Christian education.[17]

> In proportion as the churches have made an idol of education and theological learning in their ministers has their spirituality waned: that is a fact, however unpalatable it may be.[18]

Not only did Pink feel ministerial education had become an idol, but he was also convinced that much of it was misdirected. Instead of centering on the Word of God, too many students were ". . . wasting their time reading through almost countless volumes treating of the authorship of the Pentateuch . . . "[19] He said further " . . . they prefer to wade through the polluted streams which the higher critics have dug, rather than drink from the pure river of the water of Life."[20]

Again, Pink spoke forcefully, when he said:

> Some of the denominations require him [the ministerial student] to spend years at a university in order to obtain a degree, and there his time and

> energies are strenuously occupied with subjects that contain nothing whatever for the soul, but only that which is apt to foster intellectual conceit.[21]

It must be remembered that these statements are coming from the Arthur W. Pink, who himself had received a very extensive education in his early years, though not in college and seminary.

Please note also that it is not being contended that all of these full and mature convictions were in his mind, when he made his decision not to attend school, following his conversion. These may have been present in some embryonic form in his mind, but there is also the possibility and probability that these convictions developed from his early experience in self study, plus also being the result of a more reclusive personality, as well as some ministers he came in touch with, who did not study or did not know how to study the Word of God.

Language Deficiencies

The present writer does not wish to appear to second-guess Pink or God concerning Pink's educational background and study habits, but he does feel a necessity to speak a further word on the subject. It is true that Pink evidences a wide range of theological and Biblical knowledge. But he also evidences a lack in some areas, which schooling might have corrected. Some may read Pink without detecting these deficiencies, but, nonetheless, they are there for the eye of some to detect.

For example, Pink seeks to use Greek and Hebrew in his exposition, but his use shows he is not trained in these languages, and that such training may have improved his writings,. The result is that he has to rely constantly on others. He trusts almost absolutely *Bagster's Interlinear,* and he strongly recommends it to those with a desire to get into the Word in depth.[22] He seemed to see it as a literal, word for word translation, even the best translation available.[23] He believed that the word order in the Greek must be carried over into the English, as one translates from Greek to English.[24] Examples will not be given at this point, but one who has some knowledge of the Greek language can imagine what awkward translations result from such a conviction.[25] In one instance Pink seems to argue that a Greek verb must be taken as an imperative, because the same verb is used in another text, and it is an imperative.[26]

Again, he felt lexicons were overrated, as an essential in the interpretation of Scripture.[27] He admitted that they contained information of great interest to

etymologists, but he thought it was more important in studying the Scripture to see how the Holy Spirit uses a word in the Bible. Again, he was convinced textual criticism was not of much importance and somewhat fruitless.[28]

Thus, the above evidence should be sufficient to show that Pink was not a trained scholar. In fact he never claimed to be one. He was self-taught under the leadership of the Holy Spirit, and perhaps it could be argued that his writings would have carried more respect and acceptance among scholars. But then one could point out from the other side, that Pink had no desire to be accepted among the scholars. His desire was to feed the people of God, as he was convinced so many of them were starving, probably due to the failure of ministerial training. He wanted to be very practical in all he did in the exposition and application of Scripture.

The definite possibility does exist, and it could also be argued, that had Pink spent his time seeking an education in the formal direction, he might not have fulfilled God's purpose for his life. The danger, as this writer sees the matter, is that those who are taught directly by God, as Pink was, so often seek to make that an absolute standard for all to follow, and those who go the educational route seek to lay that conviction and route of study on all others also. And, plus, some who deny themselves of the school route of studies, sometimes lose something in the area of relating to others.

This writer is satisfied to recognize that God has a variety of works for his servants to fulfill, and that He best knows the preparation that is needed, whether it be the disciplined self-study of a Pink, or whether it be the training under gifted and qualified Bible-believing men of God. It is true that Pink wondered at times, like perhaps we do also, concerning God's will for his life. His heart was broken. when his public ministry was shut down, but perhaps he finally saw why —that God wanted him to spend his time writing, which is what he finally did, and multitudes have been blessed by his writings. For this reason, your author here has no real problem with the route taken by Pink in his life. This conviction is stated clearly, lest someone take any of your author's statements, as the second-guessing of Pink concerning the will of God for his life. Struggle, as he did, Pink did the will of God for His life, and so must we do the same, whatever men might say or what we might think at times concerning our lives. But at the same time, it is possible for one to make some wrong choices in the unfolding of one's life, concerning schooling and the route to take in entering and fulfilling the ministry.

Pink's Method of Bible Study and Writing

Though it may appear that we are getting somewhat astray from the life of Pink, there is another question that follows at this point that should be discussed. If Pink was not a trained scholar, who knew and was able to use skillfully the original languages, what was his method of Bible study and writing? In his earliest writings he appears to be little more than a synthesizer of the writings of others. He admits this in one of his earliest books:

> We wish to be clearly understood that there is nothing in these pages, except that which we have ourselves first received. We lay no claim at all to originality. We have read diligently many works on prophetic themes and have sought to "prove all things" and to "hold fast that which is good." It is impossible for us now to do more than make this general acknowledgement of our indebtedness to other students of the Word. We have gleaned in many fields, gathering a fragrant flower here and there, and all that we now attempt is to arrange these in simple form, leaving our readers to admire the products of the labors of others into which we have entered.[29]

With the passing of the years, he developed a more advanced form of study, though he always remained dependent on the works of others to a large degree. In one place he says he came to the English Authorized version with the use of Young's concordance, the Greek Interlinear, and the American Revised Version for an exhaustive study of the passage on his own with the help of commentaries.[30] That study consisted, as he details the process in another place, of ascertaining the relation of the text to the context, the discovery of the relation of the several clauses, followed by the study of the passage in light of the distinctive dominant theme of that book of the Bible, and, finally the study of the leading terms or words in connection with their usage in this passage and in parallel passages.[31] He states in another context that his method consisted of asking the text various questions.[32] Elsewhere he stresses the use of prayer as he says, "Prayer and study, study and prayer are called for; and they demand the exercise of faith and patience . . "[33] For the study of a word, he used a concordance ". . . so as to find out how it is actually employed on the sacred page."[34]

After completing his own lengthy meditation and study of the passage, he then consulted other commentaries.[35] His reading of the commentaries, at this point in the method, was quite extensive also. Commenting on the work of the gospel of John, he says he prepared a chapter each month, reading over forty commentaries and expositions, considering each verse carefully to supplement

his own findings.[36] In his commentary on Hebrews, he acknowledges that he read between thirty and forty commentaries on that book, and that he would quote the authors and names when possible.[37] In his work on the doctrine of sanctification, he states that he possessed discourses and treatises on the subject by fifty different authors, old and modern, and men of all persuasions. He says, "All of them have been carefully digested by us and diligently compared on the leading points."[38]

After the above exhaustive study, Pink arrived at his own conclusions concerning a passage or subject. If these conclusions were in disagreement with the great divines, he did not hesitate to follow where he felt Scriptures led. He says of his interpretation of Hebrews 6:

> The interpretation which we shall give of the above verses is not at all in accord with that advanced by the older writers. It differs considerably from that found in the commentaries of Drs. Calvin, Owen, Gouge, and more recently, those of A. Saphir, and Dr. J. Brown. As much as we respect their works, and as deeply as we are indebted to them, yet we dare not follow them blindly. To "prove all things" (I Thessalonians 5:21) is ever our bounden duty.[39]

To state Pink's method of study and writing very simply, he was a deep student of his primary text, the Bible. After his own exhaustive study of a verse or passage, whereby he formed some basic convictions, he used the words of others for further light, and he often gleaned from others and even synthesized several ideas or authors into his work. Sometimes he used the works of others to build his framework, but at other times to enforce the content, and still again at times to do both. His writings abound with quotations from others. He recognizes the author, but very seldom does he name the book from which the quotation is lifted. And very rarely does he give pagination. Obviously, footnotes in Pink's works are non-existent. In other places he will note an article or even a whole series of articles based on a book[40] or the sermon of another.[41]

This method might prompt someone to conclude that the writings of Pink were no better than the sources which he used, which though not fully accurate, does have a measure of truth to it. Pink did have strong personal convictions, which he would never change, unless convinced he had to alter them, because of the teaching of the Scripture. On the other hand, he never hesitated to disagree with any writer, if again, he felt compelled to do so because of the authority of the Scriptures. Nevertheless, he never hesitated to use the labors of others to help

him in the learning and the communication of the truth. At all times, he sought to avoid the technical matters and to pursue instead that which would feed the people of God.

Summary

The point that is being stressed in the above discussion is that Pink was a diligent, self-taught student of the Word of God and and of other writers and their writings from the time of his conversion. This constitutes the primary reason for his rejection of any formal education, though there may have been underlying factors, such as his independent spirit and personality. Thus, even his first two years as a Christian were years of study and ministry, even though that time span of 1908-1910 was spent in his native land of England.

Theologically, from the very beginning of his Christian life, he was a Calvinist. This was the doctrinal conviction, no doubt of his home church in Nottingham. Pink does show a change in the basic framework of his theology in the passing of time (from dispensationalism to Reformed theology), but there is no evidence of any change in the matter of his Calvinistic convictions.

Thus, the first two years of Arthur W. Pink's Christian life were spent in extensive study and in the ministry of the Word in various places in England. He possessed a brilliant mind, and he was a gifted speaker, having had some experience as a lecturer in the Theosophy Society. He had a definite ability to take ideas, understand them, organize them, and then present them to others in a logical and comprehensive manner.

The exact aspirations of this young preacher's heart at this time of his life are not known. We can probably assume that there was a strong desire and a full expectation that in the future his life would be spent in the arena of a public ministry. Like any other young preacher, Pink no doubt longed for God to use him to the fullest, and that God would magnify Himself through the office of the ministry he would fill. Pink made himself available, and in those first two years, to a great extent, he made himself usable by full commitment to the study of the Word of God. The future was promising, and there must have been an excitement in the young preacher's heart, as he waited for God's leadership concerning his future at the age of twenty-four.

CHAPTER V

The First Trip to the United States

In what form the call of God came to lead Arthur Pink to the United States for the first time is not certain. It has been noted in the previous chapter that he spent the first years of his Christian life in his native England in deep study and in the ministry of the

Word. His preaching during those two years was not as a pastor, but mostly as a Bible conference speaker.[1] The only comment this writer found that Pink made concerning a reason for this trip to America was that he ". . . was called to labor in a part of the Lord's vineyard thousands of miles from his native land . . . " and that he didn't see his parents for thirteen years.[2]

Whatever the reason, it must have been a strong and compelling decision which caused this young man of twenty four years of age to travel those many miles to a strange land and a work that he knew not. It could be, though Pink does not state it as a reason, that he came to the states to enroll at Moody Bible Institute in the city of Chicago. He enrolled for the summer session in June of 1910, but he dropped out of school without completing even that term of study. It certainly must have been a difficult and heart-searching decision to leave school in the middle of the term, when and if he came to America for the reason of study at Moody. The fact that he left before finishing even that period of study is not like Pink, whose discipline and perseverance have already been noted. Yet, in another way, it was characteristic of Pink—his perseverance was strong at tasks that he was convinced were worthwhile, while his patience was at times short, if he felt he was wasting his time and not spending it to the fullest extent.

The suggestion has already been made that the reason for leaving Moody was that he was so much further advanced than the other students, and he was beyond the level of instruction at the school. Also, it could be that the requirements of study at the school actually interfered and encroached upon Pink's personal and disciplined method of study, both in subjects required and time demanded. There exists no evidence that he came to the states for Bible conference work at this time, though he did later engage in that ministry here in the states..

So from Moody Bible Institute in Chicago, he journeyed to Silverton, Colorado to become the pastor of a church in a mining camp.[3] This move might give some hint as to the reason he left Moody. Perhaps an opportunity came to

pastor, which he felt would be God's will for his life, and that would be more challenging to him than the years of schooling he faced. And he may have felt he could pastor and still use his method of studying the Word of God in the area of what he chose to study, rather than what someone else set before him. And further, perhaps opportunities in Chicago to preach had been limited, and when this opportunity came, he eagerly accepted it. This would also give him the chance to return to his self-study approach to the Scriptures.

Thus, young Arthur W. Pink, just a few months removed from his native England, entered his first pastorate in an area that must have been difficult—a small church in a mining camp district in Colorado. It was during this time that he wrote on the inside page of his Bible the words of Deuteronomy 4:2: *Ye shall not add unto the Word which I command you, neither shall ye diminish ought from it."*[4] It was Pink's practice to read this admonition immediately before entering the pulpit for many years to come. Thus, in the year of 1910, Pink came to the states, enrolled at Moody Bible Institute, and then dropped out and moved to a Colorado pastorate.

How long he stayed at this first church is not known. In fact, the details of the next several years are of a general nature. We do know the places to which he moved, but the time chronology and details are very obscure. It is known that he went from Colorado to Garden Grove, California, and then to Kentucky, where he pastored two churches at the same time, one at Burkesville and the other at Albany.[5]

It was while he was in Kentucky that Pink, at the age of thirty one, married a twenty-three year old girl named Vera E. Russell.[6] She was born January 8, 1893. The greater details of their meeting and courtship are unknown, but the marriage was on November 16, 1916. It is also known that her parents had died before she was ten years of age, and that she was a girl with a "frail constitution."[7]

In closing this chapter a few words are in order concerning Vera Pink. She proved in the years to come to be a dedicated servant of the Lord, as well as a faithful companion for Pink. Her frail body must have been continually strengthened in light of the many moves the Pinks faced together in the passing of the years. Though they never had any children (and the reason for that is not known), she never lacked in constant demands on her life. She was a constant companion in travel and ministry with her husband. She was a co-laborer in Pink's ministerial life, and then finally in the ministry of his periodical, as we shall see in a future chapter. She was a constant source of encouragement and strength to Pink, as he wrestled with God's will for his life, and as he faced

recurring depths of despair and several nervous breakdown.

And she was a gracious contact between Pink and the public, often meeting and entertaining visitors, who wanted to see Pink at their home. At times such reception of guests was not easy, for they came in the middle of the day, when her husband was studying and working. The uncertainty of whether Pink would receive them or not receive them, must have put his wife in a delicate position.

She also lived for a number of years on a very frugal budget, as income for the Pinks was not constant nor abundant for many of their years of ministry. Her creativity in cooking and preparing meals must have been stretched to the limits during these times. Obviously, Vera Pink was sent from God for His servant, Arthur W. Pink, who had waited a number of years before marrying. He no doubt faced this step, as he did all other major decisions in his life—with much prayer and patient contemplation, as he sought God's will for his life in the area of marriage. And Vera Pink proved in every way Pink's conviction that "a prudent wife is from the Lord" (Proverbs 19:14).

CHAPTER VI

Ministry in South Carolina

If the details of Pink's first three pastorates in Colorado, California and Kentucky are lacking in detail for us, the opposite is true of his next pastorate at Northside Baptist Church in Spartanburg, South Carolina. In fact, none of his pastorates are as clear to us as this one, thanks to a series of about one hundred and thirty letters, which he wrote during this time to his publisher, I. C. Herendeen, in Swengel, Pennsylvania. We know that the Pinks moved to Spartanburg, South Carolina in July of 1917, so that Pink might pastor the Northside Baptist Church there. We also know this ministry lasted until March of 1920.

The Northside Baptist Church

The Northside Baptist Church was organized in 1904 and was a member of the North Spartanburg Baptist Association, which thus identifies it as a Southern Baptist Church. Even before Pink arrived, it does not appear to have been very much involved in the denomination's associational matters, as far as interest and support of the local association. In the association's annual minutes of 1915, 1916 and 1917 there is no report from the Northside Baptist Church, nor is there even a pastor listed. The church is listed, but only blanks follow.

The City Directory of Spartanburg does list a W. P. Southern as the pastor of this church from 1916-17. The church is listed in the 1918 City Directory (see p. 353 of that directory). The Pink's address is listed as 105 Evins St. (see p. 37). Some unique events did take place, as Pink labored there as the pastor of the Northside Baptist Church for about two years.

The Writing of the Sovereignty Book

Though Pink's books now number in the thirties or forties, there is one which seems to have distanced the others in its influence and lasting ability. Some even think it may go down as a classic in Christian literature. It is his book titled *The Sovereignty of God*. Interestingly, it was written during the the time of his pastorate at Spartanburg, after Pink had been a Christian only about ten years.

As he wrote this book, he realized it would evoke bitter criticism,[1] yet he was also convinced that the book was sorely needed.[2] One of his friends, a Brother Knapp, who had critiqued the manuscript before it was printed, suggested

leaving out the chapter on reprobation, but Pink considered the suggestion as pointless, because even without this chapter, he was convinced, there would be an outcry against the book.[3] The book was finally finished about July 24, 1918.[4] Pink felt the book would sell slowly at first, but that the stir it would create would also bring a demand for it. He also stated that he was certain the book could bear any

Scriptural test. He noted it was the result of almost ten years of unbroken deliberation and study on this theme.[5]

The reaction to the book is known to us also through Pink's letters. He was especially interested in the reaction of well-known Christian writers and pastors. He sent several of them a copy, and he then eagerly waited their reactions. Pink said that William L. Pettingill, a dispensational writer and speaker, first recommended the book without hesitation,[6] but then he stated later that Pettingill neither recommended or condemned the book.[7] A. C. Gaebelein, editor of the periodical *Our Hope*, and a man who had published some of Pink's writings, wrote and told Pink that he had made a great publishing error in printing the book, and that he condemned the book "in toto."[8] Thus, it seems the first edition of five hundred copies[9] was so strong a presentation of Calvinistic theology, that the publisher had a hard time disposing of the first edition.[10]

However, some purchased the book and were blessed by it, for Pink says in 1921 in the foreword of the second edition:

> It is now two years since the first edition of this work was presented to the Christian public. Its reception has been far more favorable than the author had expected. Many have notified him of the help and blessing received from a perusal of his attempts to expound what is admittedly a difficult subject. For every word of appreciation, we return hearty thanks to Him in Whose light we alone "see the light." A few have condemned the book in unqualified terms, and these we we commend to God and to the Word of His grace, remembering that it is written, "a man can receive nothing, except it be given him from heaven" (John 3:27). Others have sent us friendly criticisms, and these have been weighed carefully, and we trust that this revised edition will be unto those who are members of the household of faith more profitable than the former one.[11]

A Sermon Series on Sovereignty

The issue of God's sovereignty also became a factor in the church Pink pastored

at Spartanburg. It seems a member of the church, a Brother Miller, occupied the pulpit for three straight Sundays in Pink's absence in the late fall of 1918. On the first occasion, probably in reaction to Pink's book, he sought to disprove the doctrine of election, but Pink said he didn't think much damage was done.[12] Pink reported later that same month that Brother Miller had sought to speak against election, and then Pink began a series of sermons on God's sovereignty. He preached a full hour, as he delivered the first message, and the people listened intently.[13] But by the end of January of 1919, Pink acknowledged that his series on sovereignty " . . . has evoked considerable open criticism and opposition, though practically all of our active members have received them [the sermons] favorably and with blessing."[14] The opposition to these messages on God's sovereignty came from his church membership, but these were the more inactive ones, something most Baptist churches have in abundance, so said Pink! Later that same year in a May letter, he mentioned a Brother Metcalfe, one of his church members, who was very bitter against Pink's teaching.[15]

That the subject of God's Sovereignty, including all the subjects of the Calvinistic acrostic of TULIP, was on Pink's mind and in his preaching during this period of his ministry, is obvious from the preaching he did, when invited to other places to speak. For a special series at Murry Bible Institute in the western part of Kentucky, Pink said he hadn't dared to think that his " . . . extreme setting forth of God's Sovereignty would be so favorably and wisely received."[16] At this conference Pink spent almost an entire hour in one of his sermons on the limited design and application of the atonement without a soul coming to him afterward to call in question his viewpoint or to argue about what he had taught.[17] He also, while at this conference, mentions receiving invitations to present the same series from pastors of four different large city churches.

There is no question about it! The subject of the sovereignty of God in all matters, including salvation, was not only settled in Pink's mind at this time, but that doctrine was also considered by him to be an important and necessary doctrine for believers to know and understand and apply to their lives.

Stringent Work and Study Habits

Pink's discipline and study habits have already been noted in a previous chapter. Thus, it should be no surprise to hear that such habits continued during his days in Spartanburg, South Carolina. In one letter he declared that he worked both early and late.[18] In another letter he defined late as "well past midnight."[19] He comments again about weariness from overwork.[20] In another context he decried

the attitude of preachers he had met while in Kentucky, who felt they were too busy to study or that they had done that in seminary.[21] Finally, he noted the reality of a sickness from overwork.[22]

Part of the work was an extensive reading schedule. He stated in early 1919 that he had read forty-five books in the last three months and still had forty unread books on his shelves.[23] A little later he said he would complete Thomas Manton's twenty-two volumes next week, and then he expected to make a careful study of Thomas Goodwin's twelve large volumes.[24] He notes in the same context that he hadn't had time to read John Owen's sixteen volumes yet.

A Longing to Leave Spartanburg

Perhaps it was the turmoil in the church spoken of above, or just the longing for a greater ministry, but Pink had been in Spartanburg just a little over a year, when he commented that the Lord's work for him there may be drawing to a close.[25] The problem was that he had no clear understanding of the exact nature of God's will for him at this time of his life. The choices were several, but none of them were clear to him.

He had a burden to have more time to write, and numerous times he mentioned he was considering devoting himself full-time to his writing ministry. He says he was even tempted to quit the pulpit ministry altogether and give himself exclusively to his writing.[26] In another letter he stated this as a preference.[27] In November of 1919 he spoke of a renewed forceful thought that he should quit the pastorate and devote himself to writing and teaching.[28] He rejected Herendeen's suggestion to resign the church, and yet remain in Spartanburg to devote himself to his writing ministry.[29] Perhaps the heat in the summer was part of the reason for his definite veto of this suggestion. But he was also hesitant even to consider the First Baptist Church of San Francisco, a church where one of his friends promised to place his name, for this too would hinder his writing ministry.[30]

As time passed in Spartanburg, Pink spoke more and more of his conviction of devoting himself strictly to his writing ministry, as that idea continued to press upon him.[31] In December of 1919 he became absolutely convinced that the Lord would have him give himself to writing—the only question was where?[32] But there was also some evidence that he was seeking help from the Lord and even others for an open door to pastor or to enter an itinerant ministry. He hoped for a period of time that A. C. Gaebelein, a well known preacher and an editor of a

periodical also, would help him. Gaebelein had published Pink's articles on Genesis in his periodical. And Gaebelein did recommend Pink to the Clarendon St. Baptist Church in Boston (A. J. Gordon's former church), but nothing ever came of these recommendations.[33] Pink waited several months to hear from Gaebelein, and when he finally did hear from him, Gaebelein noted a sorrow that the Boston church didn't open up for Pink, but now he would try to help him get placed as a pastor of the First Baptist Church of Boise, Idaho.[34]

Pink also wrote William L. Pettingill and his cordial reply encouraged Pink to think he might be an instrument to help open a door for him.[35] Pink even planned to meet and visit with Pettingill at Pettingill's request on a trip to visit Swengel, Pennsylvania.[36] Pink says his hopes were dashed considerably, when no answer came to set up a meeting with Pettingill.[37] Other possible doors to pastor fell through as well. One was in Petaluma, California,[38] while another was in San Francisco.[39] At other times there were inquiries, which came to Pink to consider positions and churches, but he either refused to respond, or if he did respond it was in a manner, which would discourage the invitation. He answered one contact abruptly, concerning teaching at Bethel Baptist College, and he said he did that purposefully, so that it would come to nothing unless God were in it.[40] He stated in another place that while he was in a Bible conference in Kentucky, he was offered several important pastorates in Kentucky and Tennessee, but he did not feel drawn to any of them.[41] On another occasion he wrote a very blunt letter in response to an inquiry from a church in Newport, Tennessee. This church had inquired with a strong interest in his ministry and availability to pastor. After his blunt letter, he never heard from them again.[42]

Thus, we can see how Pink vacillated concerning his future ministry, almost to the place it seemed he eventually was closing the door of every opportunity that came to him. Did he really understand what he wanted to do in the future? Should he devote his time to a full-time writing ministry? Or should he try both to write and pastor again? Or should he enter an itinerant ministry, while he sought at the same time to pursue his writing between meetings and conferences? Only one thing was constant in Spartanburg during this final year of his ministry there—the desire to leave Northside Baptist Church for a more fruitful ministry. But how could that be, if he kept turning down opportunities?

Sickness and Depression

In a June letter of 1919 to I. C. Herendeen, Mrs. Pink tells of the deep depression her husband had been suffering. She stated:

> I am quite worried about my husband. The word here is so discouraging and the strain of waiting for something else to open up is telling upon him. He is quite despondent, nervous and irritable and unable to sleep. This last week has been the worst of all.[43]

She goes on to say that her husband is even considering leaving the ministry and going back into business, thinking he could accomplish more for the Lord by giving the money he made to the Lord's work. Mrs. Pink, however, is convinced he is wrong at this point, but that instead he should devote more of his time to his writing. Pink admitted in his next letter to Herendeen that Satan had taken advantage of his depressed physical condition to cause him to worry over his present circumstances.[44] In a letter later in the week, he noted that he had spent the first half of that week in bed, and he also admitted that he was on the verge of a nervous breakdown.[45] He had tried to get ready to go speak at the mid-week church service, but he couldn't even get out of the house before he literally tumbled back into bed.[46]

This period of depression was very deep, as a reading of the letters in their entirety will demonstrate, and it was not the last time of deep despair that Pink would face. It is difficult to know exactly how much the circumstances contributed to the depression, nor even how much the depression contributed to certain attitudes of this time, such as his attitude of trying to open ministry doors, and yet at the same time he was discouraging other possible open doors, when they came to him. But at the same time, the whole period was a time of firm commitment to the doctrine of the sovereignty of God. But perhaps God's servant was still wrestling with its practical application in his own life. That seems to be a problem in many areas of theology—we can learn the doctrine in its definition and rejoice in it mentally, but the practical learning of applying it to real life is not so easy. There was at least one thing both Pink and his wife knew—they were both convinced that his time needed to be devoted primarily to his pen! Yet it took the sovereignty of God through many further trials and difficulties finally to bring Pink to that place about fifteen years later.

The Resignation from the Spartanburg Pastorate

When it became evident to Pink that no doors would open to another pastorate (and he seemed not even to desire such a possibility, as time passed in Spartanburg—as we have seen), he finally made a decision to move to Swengel, Pennsylvania near his friend, I. C. Herendeen. His intention was to spend his time writing and going out occasionally for itinerant ministry. So he resigned at

the annual meeting of the Northside Baptist Church of Spartanburg, which seems to have been in January of 1920. The resignation was to be effective on either March the 1st or the 15th, according to Pink.[47] He had passed through the dark night of his soul, as Satan had assaulted him severely in mind and body and spirit. At one point he had even vowed never to pastor again. But who could know the future path he would follow besides our sovereign Lord? Even his priority of much writing and just a little public ministry would be reversed during the next period of his life.

The Future History of the Northside Baptist Church

It seems clear that the Northside Baptist Church went independent several years following Pink's departure, for by 1926 there was no listing of that church at all in the Spartanburg Baptist Associational minutes. However, that decision came not necessarily by the leadership of Pink, for the next pastor after Pink was a George M. Reeves, who was an independent Baptist. He is listed in the city directory as early as 1922 and as late as 1926, as the pastor of Northside Baptist Church. But from 1928 to 1947 the city directory lists no pastor for Northside. Then again in 1948 Reeves is listed as pastor, but he is living at Route 6 and not in the city.

The question is, was Reeves the pastor at Northside Baptist Church all those years from 1922-1948, or did he pastor at an interval with a long period of time between his pastorates there. It does seem that Northside Baptist Church ceased to exist about 1949. One report that came to us in talking with people in Spartanburg, South Carolina, was that the building was torn down in the late forties or early fifties. It is obvious the building no longer stands on the corner of Freemont Avenue and Magnolia St., because as this writer checked the address a few years ago, a bank building was standing on that spot.

One report, which could not be confirmed, said the church moved to the 300 block of Dakota St. as an independent Baptist Church. There is a Charity Baptist Church in that block at the present time, but the pastor there had no knowledge of a previous relationship to the Northside Baptist Church. Another report said the members simply scattered and went to other churches. Thus, it seems the church died a few years before Pink himself died.

CHAPTER VII

Itinerant Ministry in the United States

When the Pinks left South Carolina in the Spring of 1920, according to the letters of the last few months at Northside Baptist Church, they had laid extensive plans to build a house near I. C. Herendeen in Swengel, Pennsylvania. The house does not seem to have ever materialized, so they ended up in a rented house near their friend and publisher there in Swengel. As noted in the last chapter, Pink had planned to spend a considerable amount of his time writing and some occasional time in itinerant ministry. However, the order was reversed, as he spent most of his days the next few years in an itinerant ministry, while still yearning for greater opportunity to write during his busy schedule.

Thus, after getting settled in Swengel, he left for the west coast for a series of meetings in the middle of July in 1920, as some invitations to speak there had come to him. His first meeting began on July 27 in a church in Garden Grove, California.[1] The remainder of the summer found him preaching in various California cities, such as Orange, San Francisco and Oakland. The fall was equally as busy as he ministered still in the state of California. He was in Shafter, Anaheim, Riverside, Pasadena, Santa Barbara and Long Beach. The Pinks arrived home from the west coast for a period of time on October 30, and they remained there for the remainder of the two months of 1920.

The most significant meeting of his finished fall schedule, of which we have been speaking, proved to be the several weeks he spent in a tent in Oakland with a Brother Thompson (Pink only refers to him as Brother Thompson and he never uses Thompson's first name). But in God's providence this traveling evangelist had preached evangelistically in a tent in Oakland for three months in the earlier part of 1920.[2] Large crowds of 400 to 500 gathered to hear Brother Thompson, and numbers of people made professions of faith. Brother Thompson admitted that he was not gifted for a ministry to establish these new saints, and that he had brought the new converts and other people, as far as he could take them. When he met Pink in a meeting, where Pink was preaching in San Francisco, he immediately, after the service, approached Pink about preaching to the people in the tent. He told Pink he would gladly place his tent at Pink's disposal.

On the first night with Pink in the tent, a single Sunday night service in the fall of 1920, found the tent packed with over 1200 people. Brother Thompson was overwhelmed by the services, and he asked Pink to stay and preach during

the weeks to follow, but Pink had other commitments. When Brother Thompson begged Pink to reconsider, Pink asked for twelve hours to pray about the matter. In that time he became convinced the tent in Oakland was God's will for him now, and he shifted his schedule for the next several weeks, so he could minister in the tent for an extended period of time. Pink spoke later of these weeks, as the most wonderful opportunity he had ever had. When the time came that Pink had to leave the tent and go on to other obligations, the people begged him to stay.[3] This first series in the tent in the fall of 1920 was followed by a second one beginning on February 1, 1921 and ending on April 14. By the middle of February the services were running an average of about 500 during the nights, with about 800 on Sunday afternoon and 1000 on Sunday night.[4]

The Continuing Burden to Write

The meetings just described, were probably the primary reason for Pink being willing to stay in an itinerant ministry, and yet his heart was still burdened to write. Even as this period of traveling and preaching began, he realized writing would not be easy, because of so many demands by the people.[5] His goal was to spend at a third of his time in study and writing.[6] Even as he was in the final days of his tent ministry in 1921, he said that the sale and writing of books was more important than his oral ministry.[7] Yet he was fully submissive to God's will in the matter, as he declared regarding the writing of other books, "I hope to, I want to, but what is God's will in the matter, I know not."[8]

The Issue of God's Sovereignty

A proper question at this juncture is the place of the doctrine of God's sovereignty in Pink's life and ministry. Was this doctrine primary in his beliefs and preaching now, as it was in Spartanburg? First, the doctrine of God's sovereignty was no doubt still important to Pink, but the setting he is filling now is different, in that he is preaching to those, who have just become believers—they were not church members of years gone by. In his meetings of a week's duration in the local churches, he spoke on themes relating to salvation.[9] And in the tent he seemed to speak also evangelistically and not on the sovereignty of God. At the first service in the tent he preached on *The Way of Salvation*.[10] He did say in the same context that he intended to expound doctrine in the tent during the first series in the fall of 1920.[11] During the second and longer period in the tent in 1921, he expounded the gospel of John,[12] Hebrews 11,[13] Matthew

7-8,[14] Luke's gospel,[15] etc., but he never spoke on sovereignty as a theme. In a letter in March of 1921 he said he had spent fifty hours on John's gospel, and he was only in the fourth chapter.[16]

However, this is not to say that the doctrine of God's sovereignty was not in the forefront of his thinking or in his conviction of its importance at this time. He was still concerned about and continued to discuss the reception or rejection of his sovereignty book. He declared that one letter he received at this time about the blessing of the book on God's sovereignty, convinced him he needed to spend a third of his time writing.[17] G. P. Raud, the Director of the Russian Bible and Evangelization Society, had stated from the platform of the tent that Pink's book on the sovereignty of God had meant more to him than he could express.[18] But not everyone was blessed by the book. Pink noted again that several well-known preachers were against the book—H. A. Ironside, A. C. Gaebelein and Alesor Marshall.

Pink's conviction of the importance the doctrine of God's sovereignty is also shown by the fact that he desires to discuss the issues with those around him, even the well-known preachers, who were against the book.[19] He stated that he was expecting to hear from A.C. Gaebelein on the subject, because he had said he was going to write Pink about the book. It was also rumored that

Gaebelein had declared that if Pink was guilty of preaching false doctrine, he would cease publishing Pink's articles in his magazine, and he would break fellowship with Pink, and he would also refuse to speak on the same platform with Pink.[20] Pink also expected to discuss the issue of God's sovereignty with H. A. Ironside,[21] one who had, so it was reported, sought to influence A. C. Gaebelein against Pink.[22] Pink also noted Ironside's coolness to him, when they met, but there is no report the two ever did discuss the matter of God's sovereignty.[23]

Pink was also at this time seeking to influence Brother Thompson, the tent preacher, on the subject of God's sovereignty. First, he said, Thompson agreed with him on the doctrine, but that he is only half convinced on reprobation.[24] Shortly thereafter Pink was convinced that Thompson agreed with him on the subject, that is sovereignty, eternal reprobation and limited atonement.[25] Later Pink stated with some disgust that Brother Thompson was a strange fish, who wavered from day to day on sovereignty—one day he was for it and the next day he is riding a hobby [horse].[26] Pink's final analysis of Brother Thompson's view of sovereignty was that he was doctrinally erratic, not a thinker and very illogical.[27] In this context Pink stated Thompson was clear on total depravity, but

he based election on God's foreknowledge of one's faith. Thompson also then rejected reprobation. Pink was convinced that Thompson had never read his sovereignty book, nor had he ever read through any other single book in his library. Finally, in the same context, Pink noted that Thompson thought the sovereignty book must be wrong, because it divided God's people.

The conclusion seems to be, that though Pink was not preaching publicly on sovereignty and its related subjects, he was still deeply concerned about the doctrine and was convinced of its importance, as seen by his desire to discuss and promote it in personal conversations.

To Seattle

In February of 1921 Pink reported that Brother Thompson had received an urgent call to come to Seattle for meetings.[28] Seattle was Thompson's home area.[29] The plan was that Thompson would go to Seattle first for several weeks of meetings, returning the first week of April. After that Pink would then go to Seattle for a couple of months to speak to those, who had been reached by the gospel.[30] What exactly did take place is unclear, as the plans changed several times, and the final disposition of the matter is not fully clear either.[31] Thompson did go to Seattle in February of 1921 for several weeks, but meetings were not conducted at this time. During this trip a lot was selected, and he wired on April 7th to have the lot leveled for the tent.[32]

Though we possess the letter of Pink to Herendeen for this period in California at this time, we do not possess any letters to inform us about the trip or ministry in Seattle. The last letter from Pink to Herendeen was dated April 21, 1921 and stated, "It is now practically certain we shall leave here early next week for Seattle."[33] The lot for the tent had been secured and the rent had been paid on it for May and June. Pink expected the trip to Seattle to take about a week.[34] Thus, it does appear that the Pinks arrived in Seattle with Brother Thompson, sometime in late April or early May of 1921. Murray says they appeared to stay in Seattle for four months,[35] but he does not give documentation for this statement.

Analyzing Pink's Conference Ministry

Before moving to the next area of Pink's life, the present author feels a necessity to say something in way of an analysis concerning Pink's conference ministry versus his pastoral ministry. He seemed quite successful as a conference speaker,

but something of a failure as a pastor. Why the difference in the two ministries? The answer is that Pink seemed to be much better suited for the conference ministry, than he was for the pastorate for several reasons.

First, he was not a sociable person. He did not seem to enjoy being with and fellowshipping with people, except certain ones that his personality seemed to mesh with. Some found it difficult to be with him or even to be in his presence, and the same was true of Pink—he was more comfortable with some people than others. Remember the earlier statement by one who knew him well, who said he seldom smiled. In the pastorate, after he had preached, he would retire to his study to pray, rather than greet the people at the door. He commented on this preference at least twice in his writings as follows:

> During the twelve years he was in the pastorate, the writer deemed it expedient to retire into the vestry as soon as the service was over: the "flesh" loves to hear the eulogies of the people, but they are not conducive to humility. "Seekest thou great things for thyself? Seek, them not" (Jeremiah 45:5).[36]

> After he has delivered his message he should retire as quietly and quickly as possible, leaving the Holy Spirit to apply the Word in His own sovereign way. Pink then felt he should get alone with God and in the name of the Lord Jesus, plead His promise . . . [37]

One may escape with this kind of aloofness in conference work, because there is a kind of mystique about the special speakers, but such action will not be readily accepted in most pastorates.

A second reason Pink was best suited for the conference ministry, or perhaps we should say least suited for the pastorate, was because of his bluntness of speech. He said that when he spoke in Australia (this is a later event in his life, but it does give the characteristics of the man), that he would begin his addresses by saying, "I am going to speak tonight on one of the most hated doctrines of the Bible, namely, that of God's sovereign election."[38] The handling of the doctrine of election in this manner, appears to this writer to be somewhat tactless and insensitive to the doctrinal state of the people to whom he spoke. One could speak with that kind of boldness on some themes, if the group of people were in agreement. In that case the crowd would be endeared to the speaker. But to speak that way to a group on the misunderstood subject of election without some background and preparation, evidences to this writer an absence of the best tact and most compassionate sensitivity.

Pink did seem to posses this bluntness in the Spartanburg pastorate, but not as sharply in the California itinerant ministry. It seems by the time of the Australian itinerant ministry, as we shall see, the bluntness was there also. Therefore, it is somewhat understandable why he stayed only a short time in his pastorates. Perhaps this trait is evidenced again in the following statement by Pink—

> Some years ago, when the editor was preaching a series of sermons on Hebrews 12:3-11, several members of the congregation intimated they were growing weary of having so much upon the subject of Divine chastisement. Alas, the very ones who chafed so much at hearing about God's rod, have since been smitten the most severely by it.[39]

One must wonder with what attitude these several members of his congregation spoke. Were they honestly and kindly speaking or were they mean and nasty about it all. It could have been that these people were the instrument in God's hands to tell him something about his preaching, as corresponding to their needs. But then further, one wonders about Pink's further statement that whatever these people have suffered since, has been the smiting of God's rod upon them. The present writer would add, that such preaching and statements may be more received in a conference, where the speaker knows little of the people, than in a church and pastoral setting, where the preacher knows the people quite well and vice versa. This is not to say that the pastor should never speak negatively nor powerfully against sin, but it is to say at conferences it is easier to do so correctly, but it is also possible that one could speak with the wrong kind of spirit.

A third and last reason concerning the suitability of Pink for conference ministry more than for a pastoral setting, is the length of time he spoke, when in the pulpit. He talks in one context of speaking two hours, and in other places of occupying the pulpit for an hour.[40] Now your author realizes that we do live in a different time frame, when sermons are supposed to be shorter. But the present writer would still maintain that a conference speaker can get by with speaking a longer time than he can duplicate the same time-setting in his pulpit at home. Or we could put it this way, that one can more easily occupy the pulpit for a greater length of time in a conference ministry (though still two hours might seem a little too extensive a period even in in that setting), because people who attend such meetings are deeply spiritual people, and in many cases they possess an almost insatiable hunger for the Word of God. But to speak that length of time in the average pastorate, is probably neither wise nor considerate of the people.

The point is, to state it again, that one cannot lay upon the average

congregation the same ministry in content or the time element, that one gives to a conference crowd. This is a generality and all generalities have exceptions, but this axiom comes from the present writer's experience as a pastor and a conference speaker as well. Though brilliant of mind and committed in heart, Pink never seemed to learn this lesson. He did recognize eventually, however, that his gifts and personality were best suited for a conference ministry, as this became the primary ministry and burden of his heart for the near future.

Thus, in fifteen years in the United States, he had begun to turn away from the burden to pastor, and having tasted considerable success in conference ministry, he felt this was God's call and purpose for him in the years to come. Little did he realize, as he left the United States in 1925 for ministry in Australia, that this expectation would soon crumble as well. But before considering this unexpected turn of events, consideration must be given to the beginning of that which would eventually become the entire purpose for his existence—his periodical titled *Studies in the Scriptures.*

CHAPTER VIII

The Periodical

Though the Pinks never had children, the fall of 1921 found them back in Pennsylvania giving birth to a monthly publication of spiritual writings, which would consume eventually more time than a child, and which they would care for and nurse for the next thirty years or the rest of Pink's life. No matter where they were to travel, and no matter what the circumstances or trials, and no matter what other demands were placed upon their time, and no matter what their health conditions would be, the responsibility of this publication, titled *Studies in the Scriptures,* went with them.

The Early years of the Periodical

The periodical was begun at the suggestion of Pink's publisher, I. C. Herendeen, who agreed to do the clerical work and the publication work for them.[1] The publication at its conception had just over a thousand subscribers the first year. Near the end of the next year, Mr. Herendeen resigned, leaving the Pinks with a difficult decision—to either stop publication or go on alone with the work. Pink stated this was a time, when preaching invitations were decreasing. He noted that he had been engaged in Bible conference work all over the states (as we have chronicled in the previous chapters), preaching to one to two thousand people, and at times addressing over a hundred preachers. But now, as said above, the preaching invitations were decreasing.

A Work of Faith

That the paper was a work of faith from the beginning can be seen from Pink's statement as follows:

> We had no earthly organization behind us, no influential friends who guaranteed their support. Nor had a company of Christians offered to subscribe, if we would print it. We were the pastor of no church, belonging to no denomination, and were "in fellowship" with no "assemblies." We had not a single reader in sight! We were cast entirely upon Him, whom we believed put it into our heart to embark on this enterprise. And He did not fail us.[2]

So the decision to continue publication at the resignation of the publisher was again a step of faith taken after much prayer. Pink said at this time that he had little hope of continuing, because there was no one available to type the manuscript.[3] He would do most of the writing, but neither he nor his wife could type, and the situation seemed impossible. He stated that he was in complete despair over the matter.

But the Lord gave faith and hope to his wife, and through her efforts they moved from the small village of Swengel to the city of Philadelphia into the home of a young couple, Charles and Elsie Pressel, who were almost complete strangers to them. Pink had met them at a Bible Conference at Spruce Street Baptist Church in Philadelphia in late 1921. Mrs. Pressel could type, and she gladly consented to type the articles for them.

At the same time she taught Mrs. Pink in the art of typing, until she was able to take over the task, when they moved from that gracious and kind home. Mrs. Pink remained the typist for the periodical for the remainder of its years.[4] She was faithful to the work, even as they crisscrossed the entire American continent four times on the train, and while they traveled in ships through the ocean.[5] The publication of the magazine demanded discipline and hard work from the Pinks. Pink says concerning his labor over the publication:

> Very few realize the vast amount of time and labour which is involved in composing a monthly magazine of this size and character. Every article has hours of hard work in it, for we do not just scribble down the first things that enter our mind. Moreover, writing sixty articles each year for several hundreds [of people], who have had at least half [of the periodicals], and probably fifty who possess the whole of the previous volumes, and to prepare fresh articles for them, would be impossible unless the Word of God were inexhaustible. Yet to do so requires increasing thought and study in order to bring out of the Divine treasury things new and old. To maintain the standards we have set before us keeps us busy the year round, night as well as day.[6]

The despair noted above, when Herendeen resigned, plagued Pink, as he wrestled with the decision to continue the magazine. In fact it was this depression, which caused the Pinks to move in with the Pressels. But even after they moved in with them, Pink continued to flounder in deep depression. Mrs. Pressel was not only a typist, but she was also a nurse, and she was instrumental in bringing Pink back to his health. This was the second time of such deep

mental and emotional anguish in his life, the first being the days in Spartanburg, when he faced a nervous breakdown.

Later in his life, Pink looked back over the work he had expended on the periodical and said that during the past quarter of a century, almost seven thousand pages had come from his pen, which included seventeen hundred articles, averaging four pages each.[7] A few years after this statement, he recorded the fact that neither he nor his wife had taken a single day for a holiday for the past eight years.[8]

After five years of publication, the Pinks removed the subscription price, and the publication was sent to anyone who desired it, provided they wrote once a year declaring that desire.[9] If no such request came, the name was dropped. Therefore, annually, several hundred names were removed from the mailing list, and new names had to be sought constantly to sustain the publication. The paper almost folded several times, and Pink continually urged the readers to pray for the circulation.

The Purpose of the Periodical

The purpose of the periodical was two-fold: first, that God might be glorified in its pages, and second that the people of God in every place, who were starving, might be fed through the sound exposition of the Word of God. The first purpose is clearly stated by Pink when he said:

> That God in all things may be glorified. Unless that be the editor's grand aim in the publishing of this magazine, then far better that it should now cease and fade into silence.[10]

> Our sole purpose therein is to magnify God's enabling grace, to testify unto His unchanging faithfulness, to demonstrate that only by His help could we have maintained this ministry . . . [11]

Concerning the second purpose, which was to feed the starving people of God, Pink was convinced (and that conviction increased over the years) that the people of God in every place were in a deprived state.[12] He felt the preaching of his day was a dismal failure, as it majored on shallow and topical subjects. The literature too was as bad, suffering from the same malady. Therefore, Pink centered his magazine on exposition of the Scriptures, and for this he made no apologies. Along with the exposition, he sought to set forth strong practical

application for the readers' lives.[13] He said in this respect, "Our aim in them is to not only to furnish bare expositions of the passages before us, but to foster a spirit of devotion and provide that which will be of practical use in the daily life of the Christian."[14] Pink loathed anything sensational and refused to deal with popular subjects, even though that might have increased the circulation. He said:

> Out of the hundreds of names, which we removed from our list at the end of last year (many of whom we fondly hoped to hear from), hardly any wrote requesting that the *Studies* be sent to them again this year. We know quite well that if we would devote an article each month to "the Signs of the Times," a page to "Questions (on the Bible) and Answers," and would introduce one or two other such things, our little magazine would be popular in a much wider circle than we now reach. But it is our aim not to tickle the ear, but to search the conscience; not to pander unto the sensational-monger, but to feed Christ's hungry sheep; not to please empty professors, but to make God's children more and more out of love with themselves.[15]

Pink was aware that not everyone relished the reception nor the reading of the magazine, and that some felt the articles were too difficult and too deep.[16] His reply to that accusation was that such ones did not so much reflect on the magazine as on themselves. The periodical revealed the low state of their own souls, and the need to cry out to God for help in reading the material, rather than complaining and accusing falsely the man of God who wrote it.

Financing the Periodical

If one were to ask at this point, how the magazine was financed all those years, especially in light of evident rising costs over those years, the answer is that it was entirely a work of faith, coupled with the frugality of the Pinks. They lived on a shoe string and handled their money on the basis of definite financial convictions. For one thing, Pink was convinced that extravagance was a sin, and that if people purchased anything, they should do it unto God's glory and only by God's permission.[17] Further, he himself never went into debt, and he advised other Christians against indebtedness in all circumstances.[18]

Again, the Pinks refused to take any money for themselves, which came in for the publication. He says at one point, "Every cent that has been received for the magazine has been devoted to the expenses of printing and postage; the editor

and his wife take out nothing for themselves, being more than glad to give their humble services."[19] Another financial principle that Pink followed very religiously, was his refusal to ask for money. He was strongly opposed to any kind of begging for religious causes. He said:

> Whenever there is any begging (directly or indirectly) for money or gifts, it is a certain sign that the one begging is not in the will of God, and is working in the energy of the flesh. And we would earnestly exhort every Christian to have no fellowship with such a work. No, we have no need to ask for a cent from any one.[20]

He says in another context that these are degenerate days with men asking, even begging, for money. He then challenged God's people to beware of all who would solicit money, and he hoped that God would deliver his people from such "hungry wolves."[21] Pink was so conscientious in this matter of finances that he did several things that are unheard of in today's religious arena. For one thing, there were actually times, when he asked people not to send money. He said in one statement that he had several hundred dollars on hand for the magazine, and therefore, he requested that his readers not send any gifts until the Lord so prompted them to do so again.[22] Eventually, when he received an inheritance at the passing of his father, (which seems to have been about 1934), he asked his readers at that time and from henceforth to cease sending money for his personal use.[23] He said that if any sent money, he would not take it for himself, but give it to the Lord's poor or to a certain brother for the printing of tracts.

Another unusual practice of the Pinks regarding finances is evidenced by a statement in one of the periodical letters to his readers. He informs them that he had at times refused gifts and even returned some, if the givers gave evidence they were not the children of God.[24] He based this conviction on III John 7, which declares that the Christian is to take nothing from the Gentiles. And further, his conscience in money matters was shown by the use of any balance of funds they had at the end of the year, as it has already been noted that he refused to take anything from the fund for himself. He would do one of several things with it, two of which have been mentioned previously. He would carry the balance over to the next year for publishing,[25] or as noted above, he would distribute it to the poor of the flock, or he would donate it for the printing of tracts and booklets.[26]

Sometimes the arrival of the money for paying the bills for printing was close, but it always came in and on time. The last gift given to close one year came in

the very last morning.[27] In another statement, as Pink reflected over thirty years of publication, he stated that the magazine had never been in debt—every bill has been paid within forty-eight hours of its reception.[28] In this statement he noted again that they had never made any appeal directly or indirectly. In one of his very last articles before his death, he rejoicingly declared:

> For upwards of forty years the Lord has moved his stewards to minister freely and liberally to his temporal needs: so that we too can reply to the question, "Lacked ye anything? Nothing!" (Luke 22:35). "No good thing has He withheld from us!" (Psalm 84:11)[29]

Conscientious Production and Mailing

Pink was not only conscientious regarding finances, but also concerning the production and mailing of the magazine on time each month. The Second World War was a particular threat to the paper, as Pink was living in England at that time, and the readers were scattered all over the world. He wrote sadly that he feared all of the March and April issues of 1941 had been lost in route due to submarines, and that he could not furnish any duplicates.[30]

In December of 1942 he summarized the year by noting that at one point the building in which the magazine was published had been damaged by air raids in April, and that a paper shortage had also hindered them that year, and the ocean had been infested still with the enemy, yet as far as he knew not a single copy had failed to reach the readers in America, Australia, and even Malta.[31]

In August of 1944 he expressed regret that the July and August issues were so late, but he quickly assured his readers that it was through no slackness of the Pinks[32] There were times when he sent double copies at different intervals to assure his readers of receiving that month's issue of the magazine.[33] Later when the war was over, but the paper was late again, Pink lamented the presence of shirkers in business.[34]

Summary

Thus, the periodical, *Studies in the Scriptures*, had its inauspicious beginning in 1922. It was begun and sustained for over thirty years by faith, and even continued a year past the death of Arthur Pink. It began as the secondary ministry of Pink, something to supplement his public ministry, not for money, but as part of his ministry. It will be seen that eventually it became his whole

life, his whole ministry, his whole purpose of existence, and the organ that connected Pink with readers for years to follow. No one could have begun to imagine then that the articles written so faithfully for so few for so many years under such difficult circumstances, would eventually be lifted from the periodical's pages to be printed in book form to bless the hearts of thousands.

CHAPTER IX

Ministry in Australia

Having traced Pink's life in relation to his periodical, we now return to the early 1920's to take up his life again to see its further unfolding. The details and events of his life during the years of 1922 through 1924 are very scarce. The restoration of his health, no doubt, took some months, especially since he continued to work on the periodical, writing numerous articles. Some hint is given, perhaps, concerning the return of his health, in that the Pinks moved from the Pressel home to their own residence in 1924. Their address beginning in the February 1924 issue of the periodical was 222 N. Creighten Street in Philadelphia.

The Call and Move to Australia

Pink may have begun in the Philadelphia area to take some speaking engagements, but those invitations were not as extensive in his schedule, as was previously before his sickness. But now among the invitations, which did come to them, was one from Australia. By the fall of 1924 the Pinks had decided this was God's next move for them. Before they left, arrangements had to be made to care for the publication and the mailing of the periodical, and several months of advanced copies had to be prepared. These labors of preparation consumed the remainder of that year.

And, thus, with that preparation finished, the Pinks left the United States on March 3, 1925, and they arrived in Australia on March 24 of the same year.[1] Pink explained the move more than twenty years later, as he wrote:

> At the beginning of 1925 the Lord indicated that He would have the editor engage in oral ministry in Australia, though we were acquainted with only one person there, with whom we had exchanged a couple of letters. To respond unto that leading of Providence presented a task of no small dimensions, yea, one utterly beyond our own unaided powers. But again God helped us in a manifest manner, enabling us to get sufficiently ahead with our work, so as to provide the American printer with enough manuscripts for four issues, and our good friend in Philadelphia kindly undertook to address all envelopes and mail out the copies.[2]

The above quotation does not give us a full explanation of the reason for

leaving the states. Pink's weakness in the pastorate in the states has already been noted, as has the fact that during the last few years in the states, his conference invitations were decreasing also. Perhaps he felt the needed to leave the states for awhile in light of the above, but hoped to return sometime in the future for further conference ministry in America. When the correspondence came from Australia, the Pinks sensed this to be God's leadership, and so after making it a matter of prayer, Pink says in the same context of the above quotation, that they almost wrecked on their voyage to Australia, but the Lord allowed them to land safely, nonetheless, in Sydney, Australia.

The Early Ministry in Australia

The Pinks spent a total of three and a half years in Australia, and he testified that these were some of the happiest and busiest years of his life. The reason he was so busy was that he was not only writing for the magazine, but also that his ministry in Australia was an instant success, at least for a period of time.[3] Upon arrival he had more invitations than he could possibly fill, and he was booked for several months in advance. Attendance swelled in every place he preached, and according to Pink, God granted him liberty to minister His Word. He reported that at times he preached five or six times a week, even when it was a hundred degrees in the shade. He also kept up his heavy schedule of editing the periodical, plus a demanding load of correspondence.[4] In a notation in *Studies* later, he informed his readers that he had two-hundred and fifty speaking engagements that first year in Australia.[5] But the accomplishment of all his other work made it necessary for him to stay up many nights until two o'clock in the morning.[6]

To mention one of his campaigns in Australia, we would note that in 1925 in the Ashfield Baptist Tabernacle, hundreds came out to the services to hear the Word of God expounded by Pink.[7] One elderly lady, as testified to Allen McKerrel and recorded in his article in *Reformation Today,* reported the services as follows. She says that she:

> . . . used to walk miles each evening to sit under his [Pink's] ministry. She described him as an excellent teacher, very clear in his exposition of the Scriptures and most convincing. He seemed to draw people like a magnet. He was not what some might term a "fiery" preacher, although he was very forthright, clear and uncompromising. He preached the whole truth of God's Word, as he saw it in Scripture. She said that so thoroughly and gifted was

> he in expository preaching, that he could take a single text of Scripture and preach from it for several weeks. He was capable of preaching a sermon from every word of the text.[8]

Thus, the first few months in Australia must have been glorious days for the Pinks, and they must have felt that they had at last found the place and work that God had prepared for them. How could this evident anointing of God on his ministry ever be doubted or denied? Churches filled, believers were revived, and souls were brought to the Savior. Who could find fault with this ministry, which was so clearly from God? Surely, all the believers and pastors of Australia would rejoice and promote the God-anointed ministry of Arthur Pink!

Troubles in Australia

Continual rejoicing and unhindered blessings were not to be the lot of the Pinks for long in this new area of labor. It seems that his preaching on God's sovereignty raised some question of his doctrinal soundness.[9] On August 8, 1925, he was invited to read a paper on "Human Responsibility" at the Baptist Ministers' Fraternal. This request probably rose out of a series of messages that he had preached in a second meeting at the Ashfield Baptist Tabernacle in the summer of 1925 on the subject of sovereignty.[10] One can understand that the ministers of the Baptist Fraternal, having heard in person or at least having heard of these messages, would want to know if Pink was sound and trustworthy to speak in their churches. Could it be that Pink had said some things in his preaching that had raised questions as to his doctrine, or could it be that some of the pastors became jealous of Pink, as their people accepted his preaching with such grace and enthusiasm. Perhaps, the powerful revival of life in some of their churches irritated some dull hearts. We do not speak here with authority, but we can only give some possibilities.

Whether the pastors were setting him up or not, Pink took the challenge to address them on the subject of God's sovereignty, as a serious opportunity to present what he felt was the truth of God's Word. So he read his paper on God's sovereignty to them, and then he defended it capably for over an hour, answering questions with precision from the Scriptures. And thus the Fraternal of the pastors found out what they wanted to know, because it is recorded in the September 29th issue of the *Australian Baptist*, that having heard Pink and his views, they censured him. Their resolution read as follows:

> Having heard conflicting statements concerning the doctrinal position of Dr.

> A. W. Pink, at the invitation of the Baptist Ministers' Fraternal of N.S.W., he stated his views in a paper at a meeting held on Tuesday, September 8. As a result of this paper and the questions and discussion that followed, the Ministers' Fraternal unanimously resolved that they could not endorse Dr. Pink.[11]

McKerrel says this was the beginning of the end for Pink's ministry in the Baptist Union of the N.S.W., as the doors were now closed to him in that denomination's churches in Australia.[12] The accusation that the Fraternal raised against him was, no doubt, that Pink denied human responsibility or the free will of man. Clearly, this was not a reformed Baptist group, and their actions must have been an extreme trial to Pink in light of his sensitive nature and his longing that God would bless his public ministry. So here then is another group that at first received the ministry of Pink enthusiastically, until he set before them a reformed view from the Scriptures. No doubt some have and could argue against Pink's preaching on this doctrine so early in his ministry among them. But after they had received his preaching with such blessings from

God, it may have seemed to Pink, that now in all honesty he must also share with them what he believed to be the truth of Scriptures, trusting these ones, who had seen the mighty hand of God in their midst, would also believe what he held to be the truth in other areas. Thus, his ministry in Australia seemed to be virtually silenced by these non-reformed Baptists of Australia.

Accepted and Then Rejected as Pastor by a Local Baptist Church

With the doors now fast closed in one of the Baptist denominations in Australia, what was Pink to do? He continued the production of the periodical, and he accepted the pastorate of the Belvoir Street Particular Baptist Church in Sydney, Australia. This was a strong Calvinistic church, and it appeared that they had a strong agreement with Pink concerning the doctrines of grace. But eventually he was forced to resign from this church also, as he was accused in this instance of holding to the doctrine of the free will of man.

What an ironic situation! The Baptist Fraternal censured him on the charge that he denied the free will of man, while the Belvoir Street Baptist Church dismissed him on the grounds that he held to the doctrine of man's free will. The crux of the problem in this present church's situation was that the deacons of the Belvoir Street Baptist Church were so strict in their Calvinism, that they denied the universal offer of the gospel to the lost, and they denied also the responsibility of the lost man to believe the gospel. Pink was convinced that the

Bible taught that the gospel must be offered to all men, and that all men had the responsibility (though not the ability) to accept the gospel by faith.

This last observation may come as a surprise to some readers, who have only been introduced to Pink's theology in some surface manner or by rumor only. This present writer has found that many people supposed that because Pink held such a strong view of the sovereignty of God in predestination and election, that he would deny or at least tone down human responsibility and the necessity to offer the gospel to all men, an accusation that comes to all Calvinists at times. The truth of the matter was that there is no question in Pink's mind on these matters. Neither his strong doctrine of predestination nor his equally strong conviction concerning the depravity of man, robs man of his responsibility before God. Men have the responsibility to repent of their sins and to come to Christ by faith, even though they are not of the elect, and even though they are unable to do so.

Pink does not seek to explain the tension between God's sovereignty and man's responsibility from any philosophical or logical standpoint, but he argues both are true, because both are clearly set forth in God's Word. Both therefore must be held in delicate balance. A few examples of his thinking here might be helpful. In writing on Christ's statement in John 6:27, when Christ challenges men to labor for the meat that endures to everlasting life, Pink says Christ was not teaching a salvation of works, but rather He was stressing the responsibility of man before God in the matter of salvation. He continues:

> It is difficult to preserve the balance of truth. On the one hand, we are so anxious to insist salvation is by grace alone, that we are in danger of failing to uphold the sinner's responsibility to seek the Lord with all his heart. Again. in pressing the total depravity of the natural man, his deadness in trespasses and sins, we are apt to neglect our duty of calling on him to repent and believe the gospel.[13]

At times Pink had harsh words for those Calvinists, who he felt were over-balanced, as they denied the responsibility of the lost man before God in the matter of salvation.[14] He said that some Calvinists argue that the natural man cannot believe, because he is devoid of spiritual life, therefore, he is not responsible and should not be presented the gospel. They argue that a dead man cannot receive Christ, so why present Christ to him? To this Pink replied that a dead man cannot reject Christ either, but many do. Then he argued that even though a dead man cannot receive Christ, he is still responsible to do so because he ought to do so, as declared in the Word of God. Man's inability, said Pink, is

not the absence of the necessary faculties, but in the perversion of the faculties through sin.

In numerous places Pink set forth the responsibility of the sinner before God. It is enough for him that the Bible taught both sides of the tension—God's sovereignty in salvation and human responsibility. Several quotations will show the prevalence of this conviction in Pink's thinking, as well as his method of justifying that view:

> There are two great basic truths which run through Scripture, and are enforced on every page: that God is sovereign, and that man is a responsible creature; and it is only as the balance of truth is preserved between these two, that we are delivered from error. The Divine sovereignty should not be pressed to the exclusion of human responsibility, nor must human responsibility be so stressed that God's sovereignty is either ignored or denied.[15]

> Neither Christ nor any of His apostles ever told a convicted soul to passively wait for God's appointed hour of deliverance. Instead He bade the heavy laden "Come unto me." And instead of informing those who followed him across the sea, "It lies not in your power to do anything to secure the bread of life," he exhorted them to, "Labour . . for that meat which endureth unto everlasting life" (John 6:27). Rather than tell men they must sit quietly before it, Christ commanded, "Strive to enter in at the strait gate" (Luke 13:24). When his hearers were pierced in their hearts and asked, "What shall we do?, instead of saying, "You can do nothing, except wait until God speaks peace unto you," Peter bade them "Repent!" (Ac 2:37-38).[16]

Thus, for Pink God's election does not render void the exercise of man's moral agency.[17] Neither can it be construed that the fall of man destroyed human responsibility.[18] Rather man is a responsible creature and accountable to God for all his actions, words, and thoughts.[19] Man is still responsible, though he is unable.[20]

Furthermore, Pink cannot be accused of holding a weak view of the responsibility of the Christian before God. Human responsibility is not ended, when one becomes a Christian. The believer is fully responsible in his life and in all Biblically prescribed responsibilities in his Christian life. Pink states flatly that "God has not promised to conduct any one to Heaven without the exercise

of his faculties and the discharge of his responsibility!"[21]

He says again, "Committing my soul and its eternal interests into the hand of the Lord by no means releases me of the obligation."[22] At least twice, as he expounds the prayers of Paul, he declares that these prayers and their content give evidence that Paul was no "fatalist," who reasoned that because God had predestined all things, there was no need for him to be concerned about himself or the churches.[23] He argued that all of his prayers imply that it is the responsibility of the believer to produce the things asked for, but that such accomplishment is only by God's enablement. Even to ask God, does not release us from our obligation.[24]

Pink is saying here that man is responsible as a believer before he prays to pray, and after he prays he is to work for the fulfillment of his responsibilities in the process of bringing an answer to his prayers. It is in prayer that we see the union of God's sovereignty and human responsibility in the life of the believer, and we must never set apart what God has joined together.[25]

Finally, he cites the Old Testament story and picture of God's sovereign grace and power, as given to Israel in the promise of the land of Canaan. Canaan was a free gift by the sovereign grace of God to Israel, but they had the responsibility to fight for the possession of it.[26] He sees this as a type of the Christian life—one is saved by the sovereign grace of God, yes responsible before God for the victory over the enemy in one's daily life. Yet, even this victory is by God's power, for Israel fought not in its own strength, but in the might of God.

Thus, the present author hopes that this rather lengthy excursion concerning Pink's view of man's responsibility before God, will be helpful in understanding his dilemma at this time of his life in Australia. He was caught in a bind between those who overbalanced in the two extremes of God's sovereignty and human responsibility, while he sought to hold steady the tension of the two. The Baptist Ministers' Fraternal overbalanced in the direction of human responsibility, while the deacons of the Belvoir Street Baptist Church overbalanced in the direction of God's sovereignty. Pink was caught in the middle, and therefore he was rejected by both groups. The Fraternal accused him of denying human responsibility, while the deacons of the other church accused him of denying God's sovereignty.

The Pain of Rejection

Therefore, this must have been a painful hour for the Pinks, especially after being received so well in Australia at first. In fact, when called to pastor the Belvoir Baptist Church, they felt they had found a place where they could labor

for some years to come. Pink commented as follows, giving insight into his view and understanding of this entire situation:

> The editor and his wife thought they had found a congenial church-home and hoped to remain in it till the Lord came for them. But He willed otherwise. Our preaching was too Scriptural for some of them. In Arminian "churches" our exposition of the sovereignty of God gave offense; in this Calvinistic "church" our enforcing of the responsibility of man occasioned trouble. The deaconate and about fifty percent of the members deny that it is the duty of unregenerate sinners to repent and believe unto salvation. Though the Lord and His apostles (see Mark 1:15; 6:12; John 12:36) pressed these upon all, yet his servants today must not, because it is contrary to the denominational "Articles of Faith." We laboured hard to set before them the teaching of Holy Writ on the subject; but in vain. Moreover, their ideas of maintaining discipline were so different from what we believe the word of God requires, that we felt there was only one course open to us: "Can two walk together, except they be agreed?" (Amos 3:3) We have, therefore, resigned; and (without any pressure from us) about forty percent of the membership have done like wise.[27]

As a result of his rejection by the Belvoir Street Particular Baptist Church, an independent Church was formed at Summer Hill on September 27, 1927, with a nucleus of twenty-six members from the above church. Pink was fully aware that this departure and action put him outside of all denominational circles. His first sermon, after he had withdrawn, was from Hebrews 13:13, and it was titled "Outside the Camp."[28] He spoke rather confidently, no doubt reflecting this rejection, in the January 1928 Studies as follows:

> "Let us go forth there unto Him without the camp, bearing His reproach" (Heb. 13:13). This is the word God gave us; and we feel it is a timely one for many of His people today. We are now on the outside of denominationalism. But blessed be the name of our Lord and Savior, we are "with Him," and most blessedly is He manifesting Himself to His despised people. To bear His "reproach" is an unspeakable privilege and honour. We have attempted to organize on Scriptural lines, without any man-made "rules" or "articles of faith;" fully assured that the Scriptures are sufficient to "thoroughly furnish us unto all good works" (2 Ti. 3:16-17).[29]

With Pink serving as pastor of the new independent church, the membership

doubled in a very short time, as people were converted and added to the church. However, just a few months after the organization of this new church, Pink resigned and eventually sailed for England. He stated that he became convinced that the church had started incorrectly, though he does not elaborate on what he meant by that statement.[30] His resignation was given on March 25, 1928, and he left Australia for England on July 20 of the same year. The new independent church continued after that for a year or so, but then closed.[31] This independent church was also Pink's last pastorate.

Losing One's Reputation

By no means does this present writer wish to justify all of Pink's actions in this period or any period of his life. But I do seek to understand his feelings and thoughts, as he passed through these experiences. No doubt people were hurt on both sides of the controversies in which Pink was involved, while in Australia.

What a humbling experience this must have been in Pink's own personal life. He had previously experienced God's blessings in public ministry. He longed and prayed for a further powerful public ministry to the glory of God. Such a ministry came in an undeniable manner in Australia, only to be completely thwarted and killed by one set of ministers, and when he turned to minister in a reformed church, they too rejected him. During this time, a little later with his mind on the Australian experience, he wrote some comments on Hebrews 10:33 concerning the need of the Christian to undervalue and even lose his reputation for the Lord Jesus Christ.[32] Pink said that the case of these Christians in the book of Hebrews included the loss of reputation, and that such loss is a very sore trial, especially to one of a sensitive character (which Pink undeniably possessed). He stated that almost anything other than the loss of reputation is easier to bear. He continued in this same context:

> Reproach and slander are exceedingly trying, and if we are not upon our guard, if we fail to gird up the loins of our minds (1 Peter 1:13), we are likely to be so cast down by them, as to be incapacitated for duty. Despondency and despair are never excusable in the Christian, and must be steadily resisted. We need to make up our minds that if by grace we are determined to follow the example which Christ has left us, we shall have enemies—especially in the religious world—who will scruple at no misrepresentations of our motive and actions. We must learn to undervalue our reputations and be content to be regarded as "the offscourings of all things:" we must seek grace to emulate Him who "set His face like a flint:"

(Isa. 50:7), who "endured the cross, despising the shame." (Heb. 12:2) Unless we cultivate His spirit we shall be at a great disadvantage, when sufferings come upon us.[33]

The Rejection of Titles

Mention must be made here of another decision by Pink at this time in his life, which was probably related to his rejection by the Minister's Fraternal. The *Reformation Today* article reports that it was at this hour that Pink renounced the title of "Doctor," having been called that in Australia out of respect.[34] This announcement and request to cease addressing him as "Doctor" was made at a church meeting on December 10, 1927. As far as his reasons, it was probably coupled with what Pink reported a few years later, that is, that he had been previously in his life approached by a "University" (though he does not name the school) to accept an honorary doctorate of divinity.[35] He said when that request came, he asked for time to seek God's will and Word in the matter. Fuller light came, he said, than he had expected. He concluded concerning the "Dr." issue that:

> He had very serious doubts as to the permissibility of one of God's servants accepting a title of (fleshly) honour. He now perceives that it is wrong for him to receive it even compli- mentary. Various friends, as a mark of respect, have addressed us as "Dr. Pink." We now ask them to please cease from doing so. Let it not be understood that we hereby condemn other men for what they allow. No, to their own Master they stand or fall.[36]

He then listed the following passages as Scriptural support for his decision to reject the honorary doctorate and even the calling of him "Doctor" simply out of respect: Job 32:21, Matt. 23:8, John 5:44; Phil. 2:7; Matt. 11:29, Jude 16 and Hebrews 13:13. He then stated that he wanted to be called Brother Pink.

The Beginning of Isolation and Seclusion

It cannot be proven, but one wonders if Pink had not been rejected by the Minister's Fraternal, and if he had not experienced that blow to his sensitive nature, if he would have made the same decision to reject the honorary doctorate. He was a very shy man to begin with, and it could be that these bitter experiences of rejection drove him deeper into the seclusion and safety of his own private world. This may also be the reason he began, as we will soon see, to

lash out at the organized Christianity of his day. A sensitive soul deeply hurt, often turns inward for healing and assurance, and thus because it finds comfort and security there, it never reemerges. The battle is then fought from that supposed solid ground of inward hiding from others. Then it is easier to lash out at all that stands on the outside, while one also hides in his sanctuary of peaceful solitude.

It could be argued from some other statements by Pink, that regardless of how the situation went in Australia, he still would have rejected the honorary doctorate. In 1926 he had written against the practice of calling a minister "reverend." He saw it as irreverent to call a preacher by that title, because the Bible used the word "reverend" just once (Psalms 111:9) in reference to God.[37] He reiterated that conviction almost twenty years later when he said:

> As many of our readers have never seen the earlier volumes, we repeat here what has been said in the past, and we ask friends to kindly refrain from addressing us as "Rev." Though an ordained minister of the Gospel for upwards of thirty years, we have never felt we could accept such a title. The word occurs but once in the Scriptures: "holy and reverend is HIS name" (Psa. 111:9), and in view of that verse it seems to us most impious, a relic of popery, to so address any worm of the earth. We condemn not our brethren, who feel otherwise, but simply ask friends to respect our scruples of conscience.[38]

In one of his last works, as he was commenting on Acts 14:14-15, he said again:

> How dishonouring it is unto God to have so many professing Christians eulogizing worms of dust and using such expressions as "He is a great man," "a remarkable preacher," "a wonderful Bible teacher." What glory doth the Lord get there from? None. No wonder the unction of the Spirit is now so generally withheld! Moreover, nothing is so apt to destroy a preacher's usefulness as to puff him up with flattery; certainly nothing is so insulting to the Spirit and more calculated to cause Him to withdraw His blessing than such idolatrous man-worship. How much better to say, "Such a preacher is highly favoured of the Lord in being so gifted by him." "The pastor was much helped by God in his sermon this morning."[39]

Whatever the relation of these statements, especially the decision concerning the honorary doctorate, to the situation in Australia, they do tell us something of

the humility and sensitivity of Arthur W. Pink before the holy God of heaven. They also declare something of his desire to walk humbly before his fellow man. Such a sensitive soul must have been crushed by the events in Australia. After wide acclaim and evident success in public ministry, he was rejected by two groups of Baptists—both the Arminian and the Calvinistic Baptists.

One might conclude from Pink's bold writings that he was a fortified soul and could take anything without question of hurt! But such was not the case, as a thorough reading of his works will reveal. This writer is convinced that part of the reason he withdrew from all earthly denominations was due to the sting and pain of rejection by men. But we will soon see how his sovereign God used all the these events we have been discussing to bring him to the place, whereby God set him apart from public ministry, in order that Pink might dedicate himself fully to the ministry God had called him to—a ministry which would become a blessing to multitudes of hearts, even after his death—a ministry of his pen.

CHAPTER X

The Return to England

The Pinks left Australia on July 20, 1928, to return to his native land of England. They had visited his homeland previously, but this is the first return with the thought of a possible stay in England, as they hoped to find a place of service there. Pink was forty-two years old at this point in his life. It is certain that he left

Australia with deep sorrow over the experiences of the past three years. The move was not caused by any definite promise of a ministry in England, but by the rejection in Australia, and his desire to see his aged parents. He comments on his reasons for his return to his home land in two different places:

> The Lord made it clear to us that the work for which He brought us to Australia has been accomplished. All praise to him, for His counsel "shall stand" (Isa 46:10). The next place in which we believe He would have us pitch out rent is London, England. We have received no human call or invitation; there is no "open door" apparent to sight. We are acquainted with very few of the Lord's people in London, and most of them who have heard of us are likely to be prejudiced because we are outside of every thing ecclesiastical. For all of this we are truly thankful, as it affords another opportunity to prove the faithfulness of Him who never disappoints those whose expectations are (by grace) in Him alone.[1]

> When God made it clear that the work for which He took us to Australia was finished, the editor [Pink] felt it his duty to visit his aged parents, who he had not seen for thirteen years, hoping he might be permitted to settle in England. Only one who has carried the entire responsibility of editing and publishing a monthly magazine can appreciate what it involves to arrange for it to be printed without any hiatus, and for each to arrive promptly in the hands of its readers during a move from one side of the world to the other—to say nothing of packing and transferring a huge library such a distance.[2]

It seems from the second statement that Pink was hopeful of not only returning to England, but even of staying there permanently. He also, as will be seen, was hopeful of opportunities of public ministry, even though he was now

outside of organized Christianity. Concerning their arrival and reception in London, Pink wrote:

> We arrived in London August 30th. As stated in a previous issue, we had received no human invitations or calls, and no "open door" was apparent to sight. Following six weeks of oral silence on ship (we encountered not a single Christian among our five hundred fellow passengers), a further period of four weeks of inactivity followed our landing. But our hearts were kept in perfect peace. By Divine grace we were enabled to "rest in the Lord and wait patiently for him" (Psa 37:7). We are his servants, therefore, it is His to command, ours to obey. At the end of September, without knocking on doors or seeking brethren to use their influence on our behalf, quite unsought on our part, a Devonshire reader of this Magazine kindly opened his home to us, and opportunities to minister the Word in that neighborhood are now being afforded. It is in this district we felt that the Lord would have us pitch our tent.[3]

The above supposed opportunities soon dried up and others never materialized for Pink, as can be seen from the following words in the months that followed:

> Coming to England as we did, with no "open door" visible before us, and being on the outside of everything eccles- iastical—we knew that a season of severe testing lay before us. Such it has proved. During our four months here, we have had only two comparatively brief engagements, and at present everything seems to be fast closed against us. But, "My grace is sufficient for thee" is being realized in a most blessed way. The Lord is keeping our hearts in perfect peace. We have rented a small cottage in a little sea-side town for the winter, where we are devoting ourselves to the work of this Magazine. We are looking to God to grant us access to companies of His hungry people in His own good time and way, to whom we may have the privilege of ministering His Word orally. We shall shall much value the prayers of Christian readers to this same end.[4]

> Since Oct. 7 we have had no preaching engagements. A number of doors could have been entered, were we prepared to comprmise a little; but we dare not . . . We are devoting ourself to study and preparing articles for this magazine. The Lord is being pleased to grant us much light from His Word. Our daily prayer is that in His own good time and way, He will give us access to some company of His people, who really want "all the counsel of

God" (Acts 20;27).[5]

> "Come ye yourselves apart into a desert place, and rest a while" (Mark 6:31). These words sum up the Lord's dealings with us during the past six months. When we left Australia last July, we thought the Lord was bringing us to England for active service. But He had other designs. Since October not a single door for public preaching has been opened to us. "Rest" was what He saw we personally needed, and "rest" is what, in His infinite grace and tender mercy, He provided us. Since Dec. 1 we have been in complete seclusion, and from a spiritual viewpoint, in a "desert place." But, O how wondrously and blessedly has the Lord manifested Himself to us.[6]

From the above statements, it is clear that Pink had not yet given up hope of the possibility of a public ministry. He kept hoping and seeking the Lord for open doors. In his last statement, he seems to have begun facing the reality of the situation. Eventually, he did come to realize that the matter was hopeless, and that the reasons for an absence of open doors was to a great extent his status as an independent. He said that the Baptists and Presbyterians would have opened their pulpits had he been willing to join their denominations, and the Brethren would have welcomed him had he been willing to restrict his ministry to their circle.[7] But this he was not willing to do! His decision to leave earthly denominations and to remain outside their boundaries was strong. Perhaps part of his tenacity to remain separated from them was that he feared further hurt and rejection. This fear may have been unconscious, but the decision of Pink was stated with finality, regardless of his motive.

He had written rather scathingly the following critique of local churches, while he was yet in Australia:

> "Be ye not unequally yoked together." This applies, first to our religious or ecclesiastical connections. How many Christians are members of so-called "churches," where much is going on which they know is at direct variance with the Word of God— either the teaching from the Pulpit, the wordily attractions used to draw the ungodly, and the worldly methods employed to finance it, or the constant receiving into its membership of those who give no evidence of having been born again. Believers in Christ, who remain in such "churches" (?) are dishonouring their Lord, should they answer: "Practically all the churches are the same, and were we to resign what could we do? We must go somewhere on Sundays." Such language would show they are putting their own interests before the glory of Christ. Better stay at

home and read God's Word, than fellowship with that which His Word condemns.[8]

This kind of critique continued in his writings in the years that followed:

. . . very much of the so-called worship of the present day Christendom is only soulical. Touching anecdotes, stirring appeals, thrilling oratory of a religious character, are all calculated to produce this very thing. Beautiful anthems by a well-trained choir, rendered in such a way as to move to tears or to ecstasies of joy, may stir the soul, but will not and cannot effect the new man.[9]

In connection with what is styled "Divine worship" today, the great majority of professing Christians follow the dictates of their own wisdom, or inclinations of their fleshly lusts, rather than Holy Scripture. Others mechanically follow the traditions of their fathers, or the requirements of popular custom. The result is that the Holy Spirit is grieved and quenched by the worldly inventions of carnal men, and Christ is outside the whole thing. Far better not to worship God at all, than to mock Him with human "will worship" (Col. 2:23). Far better to worship Him Scripturally in seclusion of our homes, than fellowship with the abominable mockery that is now going on in almost all the so-called "churches."[10]

What Pink said on this subject of the condition of some churches, surely had some merit and truth to it. The problem is that he leveled his charges at all of the churches, it seems, and not as one inside seeking to help, but as an outsider, who to many, could only criticize. No doubt his charges brought him into further disfavor with the churches, which in turn only further entrenched him in his strong opinions. Thus, it seems that the rejection in Australia continued to be in Pink's mind, influencing his practices and writing, especially concerning the controversy over God's sovereignty and human responsibility. He wrote correctly in the June 1929 magazine, that the gospel is to be preached to every creature, and not just to those giving evidence of being among God's elect. Further, he said, there must be no rest for any soul until the gospel is received, that is, the individual soul has a clear responsibility to be concerned for his soul. And if the preacher is aware of an anxious soul in his congregation, one who is earnestly longing for peace, he should spare no price in seeking to be the instrument of God to point that sinner to Christ the Prince of peace. The preacher must preach, pray, and labor to that end.[11] Thus, it seems that Pink was correct in many ways

in his theology, but incorrect in some areas of his attitude towards the local churches, as he seemed to be separating himself more and more from them, as he went deeper into his shell of thinking that most of them were incorrect in their practices and doctrine.

He wrote as follows concerning his association with the local churches:

> Each time we have been disappointed in a local company with whom we hoped to have spiritual fellowship, our hearts have turned the more to Him, who never disappoints. "Cease from man" (Isa. 2:22) is a difficult precept to obey, and many hard knocks in the school of experience are needed before we are really weaned from the creature.[12]

The depth of his hurt and the sensitivity of his soul to these past events, which were pushing him away from the local churches, can be seen by a statement in which he admits that he has at times prayed for death:

> The writer himself has to acknowledge with shame that more than once has he longed and prayed for death, and it is because he now sees the wickedness of this, that he would endeavor to pass on to tried and troubled souls, what the Lord in His infinite grace has designed to make a real blessing to his own soul . . . [13]

The above statement appeared in the December 1929 issue of the magazine, and since articles were written several months in advance, it must have been penned sometime during his stay in England, just after he came back from Australia. It is a very revealing statement, as it shows the deepest recesses of Pink's heart—an area not often seen in a man's preaching or writing, as he sets forth not his own feelings, but the truth of God's Word in those hours. But the rejection in England which followed the rejection in Australia must have been a giant blow to his hopes for future ministry among men, which, whether he knew it or not, was heavily his own fault.

Thus, in light of the disappointment in England, it should come as no surprise to hear Pink say once again, "The Lord has now made it plain that he would have us return to the U.S.A., where in the past we laboured in the Gospel for upwards of twelve years. Quite unsought by us, several invitations have come . . ."[14]

That statement is beginning to sound familiar, as Pink continues to seek opportunity for public ministry, while he writes and edits his magazine.

CHAPTER XI

The Second Trip to the United States

Thus, with hopes and expectations of a renewed public ministry, Arthur and Vera Pink returned to the United States. This was the land in which Pink had spent fifteen years of his early ministry. He had been well received, as a Bible conference speaker, and he had the opportunity then to speak to crowds of several hundred and even a thousand at a time. Some invitations to conduct conferences had come to him, while still in England, and in light of the fact that all doors there in his own nation were now closed, the Pinks were convinced these were indications of God's will for them.[1] The hurt of rejection in Australia and England still remained, but it could soon heal, if they could recall those days of blessing in public ministry once again in America.

Before leaving England, they sought the prayers of many Christians. They asked them to pray that God would give to them journeying mercies, favor in the eyes of the American officials, and guidance concerning God's plans for them in America.[2] They sailed from Southampton on May 2, 1929, and Pink reported that the Lord made the sea calm and smooth for them, all the way across the Atlantic, so that they didn't even encounter a squall.[3] God answered prayer also in regards to the American officials. Upon landing in the states, the immigration official asked Pink if he planned to pursue his calling as a minister, while in the States. Pink replied, "Yes, by the grace of God." The official then asked him if he was coming to mend the broken souls, to which Pink responded in the negative. Instead he informed the official that he was coming as an instrument in the Lord's hands to bring life to those who are dead in sin. At this reply, the official exclaimed, "Atta boy; that's the talk!" This reply by Pink seems to indicate that he had hopes of evangelistic meetings in the states.[4]

Upon arrival the Pinks visited with their good friends, Brother and Sister Pressel of York, Pennsylvania.[5] This is the couple with whom the Pinks had lived, while Pink recuperated from his severe depression in the earlier days. They also had taken care of the interests of the periodical in the states, while the Pinks were absent those several years. They then journeyed to Morton's Gap, Kentucky, arriving there on May 30th.[6] They were lovingly and joyfully welcomed by a group of God's people to whom they had ministered the Word in the past.

It was Pink's hope to use Mortan's Gap as a base for his ministry.[7] Most of his time he expected to spend on the work of the magazine, but he also anticipated going out occasionally for Bible conferences and evangelistic ministry. He was encouraged to think there would be sweet times of fellowship with these people of God, who had welcomed him so graciously previously. He stated also that there were opportunities to be a "fellow-helper" to the local pastors.[7]

A question does arise here! Do the above statements indicate that Pink's separatist attitude is changing? What of his previous determination of withdrawal?" Was Pink now willing to make amends with the local churches, if they would accept him in ministry? Or was he thinking they might accept him for ministry, even while he kept his commitment of withdrawal from churches and church membership? It is obvious that his above hopes included local churches and pastors. Bible conference work and evangelistic ministry does have a definite relationship to the local churches, as does the stated desire to be a "fellow-helper" to a local pastor. Perhaps Pink was at this point willing to make a new start and forget the bitterness and pain of the past, if the churches in the states would use his ministry, though that is not to say he would go to any kind of a church under any circumstance.

Rejection in Kentucky

But the welcome the Pinks received in Morton's Gap was short-lived. Pink appears to have put the blame on these Christian friends, as he said later that " . . we found that those who had run well twelve years previously did so no longer, and instead of enjoying happy fellowship with them we were a thorn in their sides."[9] Could it be possible that the greatest change had taken place in Pink and not in his friends, and that his change was the problem, as they sought fellowship with these old friends anew? After all, Pink is not the same man they had known in years past. He was probably more distant, less friendly (and sociability was never Pink's strong suit, even on his first visit to the states a few years before). He was now more suspicious and opinionated than before. And if with his shy personality he had difficulty in relating to people previously, how much more so since he had been scarred in the Australian experience?

The Return to California

Whatever it was in Kentucky that caused it, it was clearly another case of dashed hopes for the Pinks in their search for a home base and places for public ministry. So, Pink turned his eyes towards the state of California once again. He

admitted that when the indication came that they needed to leave Kentucky, the state of California came up again, and so their minds were convinced that they must go to that state.[10] The conviction concerning California, as the place of God's choice, came in a unique, if not a questionable manner. Pink said that on March 10, 1930, a letter arrived from a "dear brother" in northern California, who wanted the Lord to bring the Pinks to his state. So on March 13, just three days after this letter arrived, the Pinks discovered that the Scripture text on their daily calendar was Judges 18:9, which said, "Are ye still? Be not slothful to go, to enter to posses the land." This verse made the deepest impression on Mrs. Pink, as she was convinced that it was a message from the Lord. That very same night they received still another letter from a different brother in California, a man they had not had contact with for over a year. He urged them to come to Glendale, a suburb of Los Angeles.

So, on the basis of these indications and confirmations, the Pinks moved to Glendale, California, still hopeful of public opportunity to minister the Word of God. Their new address was listed in the May 1930 issue of the magazine as 1139 Almeda Ave., Glendale, California. As Pink arrived he wrote:

> We shall continue walking in separation from the apostate "churches," for today the Lord is on the outside of practically everything that bears His name (Rev. 3:20). But we hope to conduct some Bible classes, and shall greatly value the prayer of God's people about this.[11]

There is something obvious and striking about the above statement in contrast to Pink's hopes recorded earlier, when he came to Morton's Gap, as he returned to the states. In the previous statement, he desired Bible Conference work and some evangelistic work, while in this statement, as he left for California, there is only the mention of the desire to conduct some Bible classes. In the former words in Kentucky he says nothing about walking in separation and withdrawal. Rather there appeared to be a desire to labor in the local church in Kentucky. But in this statement concerning ministry in California, Pink sets forth a strong separate stance once again. The openness that he desired, as he came back to the states, is gone as he travels to California. Thus, the Australian experience, as he came to America, had somewhat healed, so it seems, and the salve of new hope was his, when he first came to America. But when rejected in Kentucky, the salve of new hope was gone, and the sickness of the latter portion of the Australian ministry is returning or has returned.

But, sadly, the ministry in California was no different than the previous stops in Australia and Kentucky. Doors now remained shut, and he was more

convinced than ever before that apostasy and darkness had surely settled over Christendom.[12] In fact he states in this context that even apostasy is being abandoned by the professing people of God in favor of open departure from the faith. He looked upon most believers as hollow with few truly desiring the Word of God. He declared that Bible conferences were lacking the true exposition of the Word. He was convinced that the only ones getting crowds were the compromisers, who played to the fleshly desires of men. He pictured the church as dead with the Spirit of God having departed.

The present writer feels that this was another turning point in Pink's life, and a very serious one at that. The first one was in Australia, when rejection drove this sensitive man of God into withdrawal and criticism. The bruised servant of God was healing, when he returned to America, only to be rejected once again. Though he had shown some signs of coming out of his withdrawal, the rejection at Kentucky drove him once again back into his secluded self, even into a spirit of isolation. When an invitation did come to preach, he evidenced a hesitancy to accept it, and he used as his excuse that it was not a spiritual church, maybe even without knowing the status of that church! This is what he said:

> When we receive an invitation to hold a meeting in a "church" (?) from which we are satisfied the Lord Himself has departed (Rev. 3:20), we decline it, for it is no place for the servant to be where his Master is not. If a "church" (?) is entirely or even mainly made up of worldlings, we dare not be a partaker of their evil deeds (2 John 11). We cannot fellowship the Christ- dishonoring mockery, which now masquerades under the shelter of His holy name. We are therefore practically confined to the ministry of our pen.[13]

The present writer wonders what happened to the bold Pink, who stood unflinchingly before the Theosophy Society or the Minister's Fraternal and set forth his convictions concerning the Word of God, even in the face of rejection and censure. Where is the Lord God of Elijah, who is able to give his servant words and power and fire from heaven, even as he stands alone against Ahab, Jezebel, and all the false prophets of Baal. Is there not the need to set forth the Word of God in every setting, especially in the places of sin and depravity and departure from God in God's churches? How could such worldly and corrupt professing Christians ever be turned around spiritually, except some faithful servant of God proclaim the Word of God to them? Could it be also that Pink was lacking in love and grace and mercy towards the churches and pastors of his day, in an hour when he could have shown them the truth by preaching and

teaching them with a spirit of love and grace and mercy?

Thus, it seems that Pink may have pulled away from the churches improperly due to a sensitive heart that could not take further rejection, while at the same time he may have lacked the needed love to preach and teach in their churches. In the February 1931 issue of Studies, as an example, he told of being invited to speak to a local Baptist Church. Though he knew absolutely nothing about the church, he declined the invitation, as he simply concluded that it was probably no better or worse than thousands of other churches. The person, who had invited him to speak, left a piece of literature, and from it Pink declared his conclusions about the churches of his day had been correct—they were all false churches. The point is that he rejected an opportunity to speak the truth of the Word of God in a church, which might have needed the true ministry of the Word. And it seems he may have drawn his conclusions about this church before he saw the evidence. Could it be that he had his mind set not to speak at that church or possibly any other church which invited him. He said further on the matter:

> Personally, if the writer were compelled (thank God it is not so) to choose between these two alternatives, conduct Bible conferences in such "churches" as the above, or return to England and hire himself as a bar-tender at a beer and whiskey saloon, without the slightest hesitation he would select the latter. Why? Because, though a most pernicious thing, the saloon is not run under the holy name of the Lord Jesus, and these so-called churches with their worldliness and holy hypocrisy are.[14]

An Emerging Attitude of Isolationism as the Pinks Leave California

The California experience did not help Pink through his struggles. His hopes were dashed once again, as all doors of ministry were either shut to him or shut by him. As he left the city of Los Angeles, he called it the most wicked city of all. He was confident that their maze of travels, however, had not been in vain. He felt he had learned more fully that the "House of God on earth" is in ruin.[15] He was convinced that he was now being led back to Pennsylvania, where he hoped to minister not to churches, but to small groups, who are outside the camp like himself. He was even more determined to pursue his course of withdrawal, as he stated, "Ah, it is only as the servant disassociates himself from everything which dishonours God, and on the outside of the corrupt systems and organizations, bears testimony for his absent Master, that the Holy Spirit will begin to use him."[16]

The Pinks left California at the end of March 1931, and after a few temporary addresses, they settled at Millmont, Pennsylvania.[17] He called their new home "a peaceful habitation," where he planned to spend most of his time in study and in writing for the periodical. He still had hopes of going forth at intervals to minister to small groups, who yearned for a closer walk with God.[18] Thus. Pink has begun, as he turned more inward, to make the magazine and his writing the primary concern of his life, though he has not given up entirely the hope of ministering in some way to others personally. His ministry now, he was convinced, must be within smaller groups independent of any church sponsorship.

Pink continued in this period of his life to urge his readers to come out of the corrupt churches. He mentioned one man who wrote him and told him he had resigned his office as a deacon, given up his Sunday School class, requested to have his name taken from the church roll, and ceased his attendance at his church's services.[19] Pink assured him that he praised God for his decision, and then Pink said:

> Our object in referring to the above case is to warn, admonish, entreat others who are yet members of such "churches" to immediately sever all connection with them. We doubt not that many of the readers of this magazine are yet found in similar associations as the above mentioned Brother. To such we would faithfully and lovingly point out, you are dishonouring Christ, you are disobeying the plan commandments of God, you are endangering your own soul. There is no third alternative: to have fellowship with anything which does not honour Christ, must be to dishonour Him.[20]

He sought to clarify his attitude and statement by saying that he was not urging people to come out of imperfect churches. He readily admitted that there had never been a perfect church. Rather, he said he was speaking of the hypocritical and counterfeit churches.[21] Other statements of this kind are found throughout this period of Pink's life. Not only did he speak against the church, but he also referred to preachers and other periodicals. Here are a few of his comments:

> Personally, the writer very much doubts if two out of each thousand of the preachers, ministers and missionaries the world over have been Divinely called! Many of them are self- appointed, some of them sent out by men,

most of them raised up by Satan.[22]

The great majority of the "orthodox" and "sound" magazines being printed today, can only harm you, for they contain nothing to make you weep before God, nothing that will lead to an increasing mortifying of your members which are upon the earth. If you have proven this to be the case, then from now on shun them as you would the plague.[23]

Christian reader, if you value the health of your soul, cease hearing and quit reading all that is lifeless, unctionless, powerless, no matter what prominent or popular name be attached thereto. Life is too short to waste valuable time on that which profits not. Ninety-nine out of every hundred of the religious books, booklets, and magazines now being published, are not worth the paper on which they are printed.[24]

Alas, also, real servants of God, sound teachers have now almost disappeared from the earth. 2 Timothy 4:3 is now fulfilled before our eyes; men "will not endure sound doctrine." They will still tolerate what is called evangelism, they will listen eagerly to talk on "the signs of the times" (made up of sensational items culled from the newspapers with a little Scripture ingeniously fitted in to give respectability. They will listen to missionary addresses: but sound doctrine they will not endure! Hence we have in that divine declaration an infallible test by which the poor child of God may measure things in the Babel of tongues now going on in Christendom! That test is this: anything which is endured today in the religious world cannot be sound; anything which is approved of, well attended, popular is not "sound doctrine."[25]

The present writer does not seek to excuse the extremity of the above statements, and surely there is some truth to what Pink says here. There are many today, and no doubt there were many in Pink's day, that were professing to be servants of God without any divine call or commission from God, but only two out of a thousand is a little extreme! Again, no doubt there were probably many unorthodox religious magazines, but were the majority of these religious magazines of Pink's day as bad as he declared? And is Pink's test—that which is endured in the religious world must be unsound—a proper statement? Not hardly!

One wonders how Pink might have answered questions concerning his ministry, while in Australia, when the crowds gathered to hear him speak. Was

he unsound then, as proven by the presence of crowds. Perhaps he would have answered that this ministry did not last, and therefore there is a difference between an initial ministry, which might be well attended, and a continuing ministry, which would be rejected, if it was a true ministry. This writer wonders also how Pink would answer the charge that he was limiting the power and sovereignty of the Holy Spirit by his own above test, when he says that almost all were wayward but he himself. The conclusion of the present writer must be that these statements are to be seen as the declarations of a sincere but sensitive and hurting man of God. The truth is present in what he says in some manner, but the extremity and harshness of his claims are the result of a wounded soul, that has found nothing but rejection by the church of his day, which he so longed to bless in ministry. And yet was not some of the blame for the shut doors to be placed upon him?

Thus, Pink was quite frustrated at this point of his life. He knew the truth of God. He was a capable expositor of the Word of God. He was gifted in pulpit ability to set forth the message of the Bible. He must have realized that he far surpassed most of the men, whose ministries were being widely recognized and accepted. Yet his ministry was at a dead end, as far as public communication is concerned. He has been deeply hurt and has been rejected in the past, of which he is in part to blame, though he does not realize that. In this context it became easy to withdraw and criticize what others were doing.

Writing and Editing the Periodical and a Change in Theology

The lack of outside preaching engagements did not idle Pink. He spent twelve hours a day in his study, and at this time of his life, he marveled and praised the Lord, that in spite of all the reading he had done over the years and was still doing, his health was not impaired to the slightest degree, nor did he have to wear glasses to read even the finest print.[26] He reported that his wife, Vera, was also very busy. She did all the housework, even without electricity. She made their bread and her clothes, and she looked after a garden, and she canned many preserved items, and she jellied and pickled between two hundred and fifty and three hundred pints of fruits and vegetables. And on top of this work, she did all the typing and addressing for the magazine.

Something must be said at this point about a change in Pink's theology, that was taking place during this period of his life. This writer has heard the assumption voiced that the darkness Pink saw concerning Christendom and the churches and his reaction to them, was a result of a dispensational premillennial eschatology. It must be stated in all honesty (though this writer is not a

dispensationalist), that Pink's gloom concerning the visible church and the reactions of withdrawal, were not the result of a dispensational theology. During the three years we have just been covering, when his withdrawal and condemnation of the visible church was on the increase, Pink had been in the process previously of rejecting his former dispensational interpretation of Scripture. Evidence of this change surfaced in the January 1933 issue of Studies, when he began a series of articles against dispensationalism. These articles were quite forceful and even in places caustic, and no doubt that is part of the reason his writings again lost some subscribers, as Pink admitted later—he lost hundreds of readers.[27] A few quotations from Pink himself, which evidence a change in theology and a caustic nature concerning dispensationalism, will nail down this point:

> In his earlier years, the writer of those articles [anti- dispensational articles] was considerably influenced by men who loudly insisted in Scriptures "Jew" meant Jew" and not a Christian, that "Israel" meant Israel" and not the Church.[28]
>
> In His youth the writer was taught by men he looked up to that law and grace could no more be united than oil and water: may the Lord forgive him for inserting this error in some of his earlier writings.[29]
>
> It seems pitiable that at this late date it should be necessary to labor a point which ought to be obvious to all God's people. And obvious it would be, at least when pointed out to them, were it not that so many have had dust thrown into their eyes by carnal "dispensationilists" and hucksters of "prophecy." Alas, that I myself once had my own vision dimmed by them, and even now I often have to exert myself in order to refuse to look at things through their colored spectacles.[30]
>
> During our years of spiritual infancy we heard and read nothing but the premillennial interpretation of prophecy, and of course (as a spiritual child), we readily accepted all that our teachers said. But for the last decade we have sought to carefully examine what was taught us, and we have discovered that, some of it at least, was but "fairy tales."[31]

An interesting and informative point grows out of the last quotation—Pink had been examining his millennial position for the past ten years. Since this statement appeared in the May 1937 issue of the magazine, it indicated that Pink

was wrestling with this area of his theology (dispensationalism) from around the mid-twenties onward. We have already noted in the chapter on his days is Spartanburg that he was reading the Puritan writers in abundance. This change in theology from a dispensational emphasis to a Reformed emphasis must be seen also as part of the reason for his waning popularity. The Reformed position was not a prevalent nor popular viewpoint, among those with whom Pink had been fellowshipping. This change in theology also might explain why Pink never took up the exposition of the book of Revelation in his later years of writing, and why he fell out of favor with many of the churches of his day, as we have seen. Note what he says:

> Now a few of our readers would like us to take up the book of Revelation, but in addition to being conscious of our utter incompetency for such a task, we feel there are other matters of more practical moment for these days. The future is in the hand of God; it is the present which most concerns our own responsibility. It is of far more importance that we should learn to live daily lives, which are pleasing to the Lord, and how to obtain answers to prayer, than to speculate about what is going to happen next in the political world. In the Day of Judgment it will matter comparatively little whether or not we could rightly explain the four riders of Rev. 6 or the two beasts of Rev. 13, but it will make a tremendous difference whether or not we have regulated our lives by the precepts and commands of Holy Writ.[32]

In the preface of one of his earlier books, which set forth a dispensational viewpoint, it is stated that Pink not only left that theological viewpoint, but he even repudiated that book—his own book, which presented a premillennial and a dispensational view.[33] If that be the case, he must also have repudiated several other earlier books as well. It is claimed further by some in this same preface, that at his death, Pink was on the verge of repudiating his former repudiation of dispensationalism. That is, it is claimed he was ready to turn back to the dispensational position. But in all honesty, this present writer, having read and digested most all of Pink's writings (and all of his later writings especially) must testify that he found no evidence whatsoever of that possibility—that is, that Pink later in life went back to a dispensationalism and/or the premillenial view of eschatology. There is not even a hint of that prospect in his writings. Pink, at his death, was thoroughly entrenched in his position of amillenialism and Reformed theology, having arrived at this view after some years of careful study. He not only had rejected the dispensational view, but he had also rejected any form of premillennialism. He was a thorough-going amillennialist, though he did

not like that name-tag to be placed on him.

The point of the above discussion is that Pink's rejection of the dispensationalist and premillennial view, which was the viewpoint of his day to a great extent, among those to whom he was ministering, along with his acceptance of a Reformed view and an amillennial understanding of Scripture, may have done much to put him out of favor with those to whom he desired to minister mostly. This is not to say that there is evidence that he preached to a great extent on Bible prophecy, but in his periodical he did make some strong statements to the effect of his strong stand against the dispensational and premillennial views, and that this part of his theology may have raised questions with many he had fellowshipped with in the past, and those he wanted to fellowship with in the future. In closing this section of our study, for the reader's sake, this writer must note that not all who hold a pre-millennial view of prophecy are dispensationalists. It true that all dispensationalists are pre-millennialists, but not all pre-millennialists are dispensationalists. But it would not be a false statement to say that in Pink's day, most all premillenialists were dispensationalists.

The Decision to Leave the United States for the Final Time

Because of the various reasons discussed in this chapter, Pink did not find what he was looking for on this second trip to the United States. He found no peaceful and permanent place to write and to use as a basis for a Bible conference ministry. This was his hope, when he came to the states. But he found no welcome from the churches. He found no welcome from Christians as a whole. Doors were fast closed to him and his ministry. As we have seen, most of it resulted from his own choosing, as the people seemed to note that his attitude and negativity was strong and forceful and dogmatic. Thus, as the scars of rejection were still healing from the Australian experience, those same scars were torn open anew in his return to America. In that setting Pink reacted not just with a withdrawal, but with a tendency toward isolationism. He gave up hope of finding churches to preach in, but still sought groups that would meet for study outside the sponsorship of the local church. But even these did not materialize to any great extent.

So with further sorrow and hurt, he wrote those familiar lines once again: "The Lord made it plain that the work which took us to the U.S.A. was completed, and that the Lord would have the editor return to the land of his birth."[34] He was aware that he was leaving the United States forever with his personal ministry a complete failure. Failure is never easy to face, but surely it is

easier in one's youth, as many years still lie ahead. But now Pink faced future ministerial failure, being forty-eight years old, and it could not have been an easy hour in his life.

CHAPTER XII

The Second Return to England

It was with great heaviness of heart and deep sorrow that the Pinks left the United States to return to England. His sorrow is evident, as he penned the following letter:

> Oh, my dear brother, my own soul is weighed down in almost all of those to whom I have sought to minister. God's blessing has been and now is upon my written ministry in a most unmistakable and gracious way; but my personal ministry through direct contact is almost a complete failure. But as the closing of Ezekiel 33 solemnly declares, "And when this cometh to pass, (lo, it will come) then shall they know that a prophet hath been among them." And there I must leave it; in the hands of him whom I have earnestly sought—amid much personal weakness and failure—to faithfully serve.
>
> I rather fear that this letter will be somewhat disappointing to you. But as I sat alone in my room this morning, reviewing the past few years, and then realizing how soon I shall have left the United States forever, I hardly felt in the mood for writing a formal letter. As you had so opened your heart to me, I felt like uncovering mine a little to you. None but God knows the sorrow and anguish that my dear wife and I have experienced over some of our best, kindest and dearest friends; those who have freely, unselfishly, frequently ministered to us in many ways temporally, and to whom we so longed to be made a real and rich blessing spiritually, not in a merely ordinary and general way, but to see them actually enter into God's best for them.[1]

This letter not only reveals Pink's deep sorrow, as he leaves the United States, but it also contains the admission that his personal ministry was a complete failure. He admits his own weaknesses as an individual, but only in a general manner, so it is difficult to know what his particular reference is. He is still convinced that he has been as a prophet in their midst, that men had refused to recognize, though he had longed to be a blessing to them. One other point stands out—he sees God's blessing is undeniably upon his pen.

Pink reports in this hour in a letter to Lowell Green, how he and Mrs. Pink had a pleasant train trip to New York, as they prepared to leave the states.[2] On arrival

at the dock, they found their six boxes of books and their three trunks, which had arrived also. This was on September 5, 1934, a Wednesday, and the ship left promptly at 5:00 PM. The Pinks remained on deck, as the ship sailed down the river and past the Statue of Liberty. Pink says, "It was with mingled feelings I watched the fading shore, for although born and educated in England, I have spent less that two and a half years there since 1910. My parents have been called home, and almost all my Christian friends are in the U.S.A."[3]

The Search Once Again for a Public Ministry

Upon returning to England, the Pinks settled for a short period of time in Cheltenham and then in Hove, until they moved finally to the isle of Lewis in Scotland in 1940. His writings and letters still expressed the desire that God would open doors for him to minister publicly.[4] He expressed his hopes in early 1935, when he said,

> Surely there are still left somewhere in these British Isles congregations or groups which would welcome an oral ministry along the lines of our articles; places where all the counsel of God would be welcomed."[5]

He says in the same context:

> Our daily prayer is that the Lord of the harvest will graciously open doors where we may minister His Word orally. There are few places where we would feel free to enter, for we dare not, even by our presence, sanction much which is now going on under the cloak of Christ's holy name. Yet it seems almost impossible to get a hearing on the outside. We have hired a room, where we teach each Wednesday evening, but only a handful have assembled thus far.[6]

It is clear from this statement that Pink has not given up the hope of a public ministry, even though he admitted failure in that area. With the perseverance of a bulldog, he kept on trying! He acknowledges here also the impossibility of getting any kind of a hearing, while he remained outside the denominational structures, but that did not change his mind about his decision to walk in withdrawal of all the churches.

The month of December 1935 (over a year after he returned to England), found him still searching for people and churches, who would invite him and accept his ministry. He speaks almost pleadingly when he writes:

> The days are evil, the need is great, many of Christ's sheep are being starved, very little Gospel is now preached. Soon our race will be run: what little time is left us, we desire to be used wholly for the Lord, and to be made a blessing to His people. Many "churches" and places we could not enter because of their heterodoxy and worldliness. How are we to make contact with sound ones for a week's special meetings? Cannot you be of assistance here. If not, will you please definitely supplicate the throne of grace on our behalf?[7]

Hope for a Public Ministry in Scotland

For a very short period of time (just a few months) in 1935, the Pinks lived in Scotland. Part of the reasoning appears to be the hope of acceptance for public ministry there. Pink expressed this hope in June, 1935 issue of the magazine:

> Our brief sojourn in Cheltenham is over. The Lord, we believe, has called us to pitch our tent next in Scotland. O that it may prove a case of "they went to their own company: (Act 4:23). Will Christian friends kindly pray that God will make his people of the land of Knox a blessing to our needy souls, and that it may please Him to make us of some service to them. We hope to feel more at home in a land where the Sabbath is more strictly observed, and where the doctrines of the Reformers and Puritans are more widely held, than any country we have yet sojourned in . . . [8]

As Pink lived these few months in Scotland, he found his experience there was no different nor happier than it had been in all his previous places of residence.[9] He had been assured by his readers that there would be a place of service for him with the Free Presbyterians. This was a group that broke away from The Free Church in 1893, because of the inroads of higher criticism and worldliness. The Pinks did attend that denomination's church in Glasgow, where they were residing these few months. He reported, however, that this church was lifeless, but doctrinally sound. The pastor was kind enough to call upon Pink to lead in public prayer several times, but that was about all he was invited to do.

And as Pink continued to tell his story, he notes that a resolution was passed at the denomination's annual synod meeting prohibiting those of other denominations from even leading in public prayer in their churches. The resolution denied outsiders the privilege of assisting in the services in any manner. When Pink asked the local pastor about this resolution, he replied that their denomination was a very exclusive one. Pink saw this as an unjustifiable

move, especially since the denomination was short of ministers and some of their pulpits were standing empty. Pink asked if they would rather have these pulpits stand vacant with no preaching of the Word at all, than to be filled by one whose writings they professed to admire? Why could they not just use him as a supply?

He concluded this experience by saying, "So, as you say in the States, 'That's that.' We have not been back again to any more of their services, nor have I preached a single time this year. O what a poor state Christendom is in!"[10] The Pinks then moved back to England sometime in the early part of 1936. When the hope of preaching was gone in Scotland, they left the area.

Should Pastors Have Invited Pink to Speak in Their Services?

Pink failed to realize in this situation, that it was possible for the ministers and churches of this Presbyterian denomination to admire his writings, while questioning his attitude and statements about the local churches. It is not known if the above resolution in some churches in Scotland was passed primarily because of the presence of Pink in the community, but it may have been. Nonetheless, what pastor would want a man in his pulpit, though he was doctrinally sound in all other areas, who would be or had been admonishing people to withdraw from their local churches? Maybe some in this area knew something of the statements Pink had made previously against the local church in his writings, as we have seen in a previous chapter. What guarantee was there that Pink would not advise members of the churches there of that denomination, to leave their churches, as he had done previously, even in his writings. This present writer, to be honest in the matter, would not have been eager to invite Pink into his pulpit in light of his previous statements, even though he does appreciate and admire Pink's gifts and writing ministry.

Thus, there are many questions, as one analyzes Pink's public ministry, which had seemed so promising from 1920 to 1925. But then it was completely shut down in a span of just ten years (between 1926-1936) through a series of unfortunate events, some of which were brought on by Pink himself. Rejection in Australia and then in the United States and now in Scotland was hard for this man of God with a tender conscience to bear. Each rejection seemed to drive him further into his shell of isolation from which he did battle against, not only the forces of evil, but even against himself and some true believers, who might have helped him, had he allowed them. When he sallied forth each time anew for possible public ministry, the doors were shut, as he had also been burnt by his own previous statements and attitudes about the conservative churches. Plus, the

fact that he would not join a local church, must have hindered also.

A Final Decision on Public Ministry

It understandably became obvious to Pink in 1936 that his public ministry was finished. He said:

> We do not expect to engage again in any oral ministry, but we are devoting the energies of our remaining days to the Magazine and the correspondence it entails—we have no "office" help.[11]

The cessation of a public ministry was a bitter pill for Pink to swallow, as he reported in December of 1937 that he had not opened his mouth in public even once that year. He stated this was a great sorrow for him, but that he bowed to the sovereignty of God in the matter.[12] Could it be that the past ten years the sovereign God of heaven had been seeking to confine Pink to an exclusive ministry by his pen? Could it be that Pink had finally realized his primary gift and calling from God? This is not to justify his isolation, and isolation from this time on is certainly what he practiced. Twice in 1938 he informed his readers that he would not receive visitors, who called at his home.[13] He told them that his time was now completely occupied with the study that was necessary for his ministry of writing. He asked people to write letters instead.

This request to write letters was not simply a put-off, where one would write a letter and then never receive an answer. Pink was very faithful to answer letters, as it is reported that in one week he answered forty-six letters, all of which were written by his own hand.[14] Due to the lack of a welcome into a local church, unless he united with their denomination, he spent the Sabbath writing letters, also. This for Pink was not a contradiction of his convictions or a forsaking of his strict Sabbath observance, but what he considered to be a ministry of the Word to his scattered flock—his readers.

His letters were filled with spiritual insight, practical counsel, and admonitions from Scripture. This is not an attempt to justify Pink's actions, but only an attempt to explain the matter from his point of view. He felt his letters were part of his pastoral ministry to his readers, who he fed regularly by means of the periodical. He carefully composed each letter, seeking the leadership of the Holy Spirit.

Past Experiences and Present Stability

We shall let Pink close this chapter with two statements. The first one was written about this time, and it summarizes his past experiences, while the second sets forth the ground of his stability through all of the previously described events. First, a general summary of his experiences over the years:

> What a bewildering maze does the path of life present to many a soul: its twistings and turnings, its ups and downs, its advances and retreats are often too puzzling for carnal wisdom to solve. True it is that the lives of some are sheltered ones, with little of adventure and still less of mystery in them; yet it is far otherwise for others, with their journeyings hither and thither . . . The experiences of David, then, were in this respect far from being exceptional; nor should any child of God deem it passingly strange if he too finds himself retracing his steps and returning to the same place which he left months or years ago.[15]

Finally there was his statement about the ground of his stability:

> Let us also point out what a stabilizing effect the apprehension of this grand truth has upon the true servant of God. How much there is to dishearten him: the fewness of those who attend his ministry, and the opposition made to those portions of the truth which must exalt God and abases man, the scarcity of any visible fruits attending his labors, the charge preferred by some of his officers or closest friends that if he continues along such line he will nave no one at all left to preach to, the whisperings of Satan that God is frowning on such efforts, that he is a rank failure and had better quit; these and other considerations have a powerful tendency to fill him with dismay or tempt him to trim his sails and float along the tide of popular sentiment. We know whereof we write, for we have personally trod this thorny path.[16]

The truth that Pink speaks of in the second statement above is the doctrine of election and God's predestination. The bewildering maze with all its difficulties had only been bearable because of the stability of God's sovereignty in his life and Pink's certain knowledge of that truth.

CHAPTER XIII

The Final Years in Scotland

The Move to Stornoway, Scotland

In September of 1940 the Pinks moved finally for the last time—from England to Scotland. The new residence was in the city of Stornoway on the Isle of Lewis, and it proved to be a sanctuary for full commitment to the publication through its last years. Part of the reason for the move was the war with Germany, and the bombing which took place in England. Pink described some of their experiences as follows:

> Residing in Hove (which adjoins Brighton in southern England) part of "The Battle of Britain" was fought over our heads, for we were only ten minutes air distance from France, where the German squadrons were assembled and from which it was expected our coast would be invaded by their army. We lay in direct route of the enemy bombers as they came to and from London, passing over us nightly: the warning siren sounded at 9 or 10 p.m. and the "all clear" not until 4 to 6 a.m. An occasional one [German airplane] unloaded his devilish freight on Hove. At that time there was no "shelter" within reach, and Hove had no anti-aircraft guns. The house in which we resided was a jerry-built one, incapable of resisting blasts or incendiaries. On July 1 our bedroom was machine-gunned from the air, so from July 2 to Sept. 20th both of us spent every night lying fully-dressed on the hall-floor stairs. Yet the whole of the second half of Vol. 19 [of Pink's writings] were composed and typed during those months and heavy correspondence was attended to. Did not the Lord help us.[1]

Even before the Pinks decided to move from this area, he reported that friends had been encouraging them to do so.[2] But the Pinks were convinced that the Lord had directed them to Hove, regardless of the danger to themselves. But finally God's clear leadership to leave Hove did come to them in the form of an invitation from an old friend.[3] Thus on September 24, 1940, the Pinks traveled from Hove to London, where they encountered a short air raid. From London they made the five hundred mile trip to Glasgow, Scotland. From there they took a twelve hour sea trip to the Island of North Uist in the Outer Hebrides. It was a

safe journey with no submarines sighted. An hour's journey across the island finally brought them rest, until they made the last leg of the journey to the Isle of Lewis. Pink described their new location saying, "We are now situated on an island far removed from the scene of conflict, where we can quietly study and conduct the work of the magazine in peace . . ." [4]

An Independent Status Maintained

In his new residence in Stornoway, Scotland, Pink maintained his dependent status, refusing to unite with any denomination or church of that area or city. He admitted he had no standing with the religious leaders of that "degenerate age."[5] One wonders if he was speaking of the whole area around him or all religious leaders everywhere? Not only that, but he felt this refusal to unite with any denomination was necessary for the good of the magazine. He explained:

> When we began publishing this magazine, we were members of a Baptist church, and we still believe that according to their constitution and principles, Baptists are nearer the N.T. pattern than any other body. But in the Providence of God, we were soon obliged to sever our connection with that church, and it was not long before our Master made it plain why He led us to take that step; the written ministry to which He had called us was designed for a wider circle than any single ecclesiastical fold. By the grace of God it had been our privilege to feed members of His sheep, who are dispersed in many denominations, and not a few who have no church home on earth. We have therefore been constrained to take up nothing in these pages of a sectarian nature, endeavoring to steer clear of whatever would give unnecessary offense, confining ourselves (with rare exceptions) to "those things which are most surely believed among" (Luke 1:1) God's people at large.[6]

In this same annual letter, he evidenced an understanding that this decision had been part of the reason many doors had remained closed to him for ministry. The liberal churches did invite him to speak, but his own conviction about separation would not allow him to speak to them. On the other hand, the orthodox churches were closed to him, he said, because of what he saw as a "sectarian exclusiveness."[7] He stated that he could have preached in their churches, had he been willing to join their denomination. This he refused to do. He realized this refusal offended many and had been the ground for false rumors about him. Some had accused him of being self-righteous. Others had said he

wasn't able to get along with the Lord's people. He acknowledged that because of this, his path had been lonely, as he was misunderstood and falsely accused. Nonetheless, he was convinced this was the path chosen for him by his Master. He was also convinced more than ever that the days remaining for him had to be devoted to the faithful use of his pen. This he had learned through countless trials, and to this task he had to be faithful.

Continual Warnings to God's People

During these years he continued to urge God's people to be careful of false churches (even to withdraw if necessary), and to shoulder the responsibility of instruction and worship themselves. Pink said to Mr. and Mrs. Lowell Green, "I earnestly hope you will never allow Anna [the daughter] to attend any Sunday School; responsibility of religious training rests on you two."[8]

He spoke to young Christians when he said:

> If you cannot find a place where Christ is magnified, where His presence is felt, where the Word is ministered in the power of the Spirit, where your soul is actually fed—then it is far better to remain at home and spend the time on your knees, feeding directly from God's Word, and reading that which you do find helpful in your spiritual life.[9]

Again, it must not be concluded from these statements that Pink was against all churches, though that may have been the manner in which some people interpreted him. Neither was he against all pastors. He declared in the mid-forties:

> Are you favored to sit under the ministry of a faithful pastor who speaks to you the Bread of Life, feeds you the knowledge and understanding, and stimulates you to run with patience the race that is set before you? Then you should look upon that pastor as the love gift of your ascended Saviour.[10]

Yet in this same quotation, Pink indicated that his ministry, at least in his judgment, was as important as a pastor's ministry:

> Do you find a book written by a servant of God or even a monthly magazine, edifying to your soul, made a blessing to your heart, supplying motives for a godly walk and affording comfort and encouragement amid the difficulties of the way? Then you should look upon the same as a

gracious provision made for you by the love of Christ.[11]

Justification for Church Separation

If one were to wonder how Pink justified his separation from church attendance in light of Hebrews 10:25, or in light of the fact he was found in neglect of the Lord's Supper, he recorded his answer in early 1944, when he said:

> For many years past, this writer and his wife have been unable to conscientiously celebrate the Lord's supper; yet (by grace) we do so in spirit, by remembering the Lord's death for His people in our hearts and minds. "Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together: (Heb. 10:25) is very far from meaning the sheep of Christ should attend a place where the goats predominate, or where their presence would sanction what is dishonoring to their Master.[12]

Thus, Pink seems to argue that the local churches about him were not the kind of churches he could join, and in that case, he comes up with a keeping of the Lord's Supper, not literally, but in spirit and in his mind, as he meditates upon our Lord and His death.

God's Ultimate Purpose Realized in the Periodical

Throughout the decade of the forties the Pinks gave themselves faithfully to the work of the periodical. He wrote all the articles, and she typed them to save costs at the printer's shop. He wrote in 1948 concerning their work:

> If we are preserved in health, such a program, in addition to writing many letters every week, will keep us consistently busy—far busier than many realize. Our articles consist not of the first things which come to mind, but each one is the outcome of many hours' hard work. It is only by adhering strictly to a systematic schedule that the editor is able (by grace) to produce so much month by month from his own pen. Such intense and prolonged application makes it impracticable for us to do any visiting or receiving of visitors; the hour we might spend in conversing with a single person is spent seeking to help a thousand by our pen; so friends will understand why we cannot see any callers. One reason why we remain in this secluded isle is that we can prosecute our labours to undisturbed privacy.[13]

In the 1951 annual letter, he reiterated again that he had no time for visiting friends or receiving callers.[14] He said clearly it was not that he desired to be a hermit or unsociable individual. Rather, this decision had come and was continued because of the necessity of full commitment to the magazine. He felt his life and time were not his own, therefore, it was not for him to decide how he wanted to spend either. He had been given a trust by God to feed His people, and he had resolved to devote the whole of his energy to that task. He was convinced it was a high honor which had been given him, and he had to be jealous of anything that would interfere with that calling. Not only did he see it as a high calling, but he was convinced it was a unique calling—he did not expect everyone to live as he did. He said, "Others must take their place on the firing line, and each soul should seek to perform his or her duty in whatever position Providence has assigned them."[15]

The Decreasing Circulation of the Periodical

The greatest problem faced by the Pinks throughout this period, one noted again and again in the magazine, was the decreasing circulation, because of the practice of dropping the names of those not interested each year. Thus, there was a constant search for new readers to add to the mailing list with the hope they would appreciate the deeper ministry of the Word. Below are some of Pink's remarks throughout this decade, which shows this acute problem. Pink's remarks have been summarized for convenience sake and listed by the year.

December 1943

A decreasing circulation is still the greatest trial of the magazine.[16]

December 1944

Pink's articles on "Profession Tested" in the last years cost him some readers. This he expected when he wrote them. He refuses to water down the truth, but also admits that they can hardly afford to drop any from their declining mailing list.[17]

December 1944

There is rejoicing because the 1944 mailing list has shown an increase. Still there is much lost ground to recover from the past three years.[18]

December 1945

Circulation has registered a slight but steady increase. As usual, many

names will be dropped this year. Pink admits that through the last twenty years they have lost hundreds of readers, because he has upheld the high standards of truth and holiness.[19]

December 1946

Pink is disturbed by an absence of letters and the tone of some which have come to him. Many who formerly enjoyed the magazine, do not wish to receive it any longer. Others, who previously devoured the magazine, now only read an article here and there.[20]

December 1946

Pink speaks of the difficulty of maintaining the mailing list. He has had to trust completely in the Lord to put him in touch with readers. He has prayed often that God would move the existing readers to introduce the magazine to others. God has been faithful, but the task has been difficult.[21]

August 1947

Pink says he has prayed for years for God to increase the circulation. All other requests for the magazine have been answered. He was puzzled all these years, as to why his prayer concerning their circulation had not been answered. He has come to realize that question was answered also, but not in the way he had expected. He has become aware that preachers are using the material for their sermons. His labors have been multiplied. The circulation has been increased, for the magazine is received by over a hundred preachers.[22]

December 1948

Pink reports that they had to drop well over two hundred from the 1947 mailing list and will have to do the same this year. He has reason to believe that some readers, who were church members, have been saved. Some other readers have died this year. The smallness of the circulation is still the greatest problem.[23]

December 1950

Pink says God has granted quite an increase in the small circulation. He also has received more letters that year than the usual number.[24]

December 1951

In his last annual letter Pink notes in the last ten years a fifty per cent

increase in circulation. He states this is surely the Lord's doing in light of the deterioration of the spiritual condition among Christians.[25]

Born to Write

Thus, in this place (in seclusion on the Isle of Lewis), and in this manner (in full concentration on the periodical), Arthur W. Pink spent the last twelve years of his life. He had finally come to understand that by God's providence, he was "born to write," (though that is not the phrase he used), and that he must pursue this calling above anything else. Though it took him over thirty years to come to that realization, and though it brought him much misunderstanding before others, and though at times he himself quarreled with God's ways,[26] he eventually saw God's purpose for him, though even then, he did not understand the matter perfectly.

It was not that he knew at this point that his writings would live on to be valued by others for decades to come. He could not possibly foresee the living ministry of his pen after his death. But that was not the issue with him. The issue for him was that as a servant of God, he was to be faithful to God's work and calling during his life and ministry.

Twice, almost prophetically, he had spoken during his life of a man of God dying before the full fruit of his ministry arrived. In the mid-twenties, he declared, "So, too, God may commission us to work for him, and we may die before the determined issue appears; but not withstanding, the divine purpose will be realized."[27] Later, just a few years before his death, he spoke in a similar manner, when he said, "Sometimes the servant of God is permitted to see fruits from his labours at an early date; at other times he may toil all through a long night and take nothing. That may be ascribed to the sovereignty of God, . . . [28]

It cannot be denied that God commissioned a work for Arthur W. Pink, but he never lived to see the full fruit of his labor. It is also true that Pink labored through a long night, taking almost nothing. Through the whole of that long night, he fervently prayed, as seen above, for an increased circulation in his magazine or paper. There was some increase, but that was nothing of major import. But the prayers of God's servant did not fall on deaf ears or in the presence of a powerless God. His prayers were answered, as can be seen by the many books he wrote, as noted at the end of this book. Pink did not write most of these listings initially as books, but they were in the form of articles he wrote, a chapter or so a month in the Studies. Truly, God heard the prayer of his servant, and that prayer for distribution of his many writings is still being

answered today.

CHAPTER XIV

The Final Days and Death

Thoughts on Death

The reality of death was in the mind of Pink years before he finally faced his departure from this earth. There are indications that even in the late thirties, he thought of death and was fully aware that it was coming, and it was just a matter of time. That fact is a truth for all of us, but it is one with a spiritual maturity that thinks upon it and lives in light of its bold reality. He said concerning death the following:

> The nearer the believer approaches the close of his life, the more is his heart is made to wonder at the sovereign grace of God in laying hold of one so utterly unworthy and raising him to a position of dignity and honor above that occupied by the holy angels.[1]

> As the believer nears the end of his course, he not only mediates upon the lowliness of his original state and then the elevated position to which sovereign grace lifted him, but he also reviews his follies, bemoans his failures, and sorrows over the wretched returns he has made unto God's goodness.[2]

Before these quotations, Pink even spoke of some believers, who felt it was wrong to expect death in light of the supposed soon return of Christ.[3] Pink said they had been taught that Christ would surely come in their lifetime. Pink admitted that he had been guilty of the same. He went on to argue that the believer must anticipate the clear possibility of death, as well as watch for the coming of Christ. He said, " . . . to say that looking for the blessed hope makes it wrong to anticipate death is manifestly absurd . . . "[4]

The Anticipated Hour of Death Arrives

The anticipated hour of death came for Arthur W. Pink on July 15, 1952. His wife was kind enough to share with the readers of the periodical some of the details from which the following material has been taken.[5]

Vera Pink says that she saw he was failing several months prior to his passing, and it worried her very much. If she would make some reference to it, he would reply, "It's old age, my dear. Thank the Lord it is so. I am thankful I am so near the end and not just beginning life. I am heartily sorry for the young men of today, who are just starting out. It will be terribly hard for those who are conscientious. The times are so dark and will get much darker for them, but the Lord will keep His own."

Though he was failing and showing signs of exhaustion and loss of energy, he refused to stop his work for a much needed rest. When Mrs. Pink would try to slow him, or encourage him to rest, he would reply, "We must work while it is day. The night cometh when no man can work. I desire to be found at my post, when the call comes.." He only stopped his work to go for a brief walk each morning, which was his habit, and which he practiced until three weeks before his death.

One night in May, he had an attack, which lasted for several minutes. When it was finally over, he remarked, "I shall soon be home in glory. I cannot go soon enough. Bless the Lord, O my soul, and all that is within me, bless His holy name! I am so happy I feel like singing through that psalm." When he noticed his wife was crying, he said to her, "My dear, why do you weep? You should be rejoicing that I shall soon be home."

When she informed him that she was weeping for herself, as she feared the separation, he replied again, "The Lord has been so wondrously good to us all these years and brought us safely through until now. He will not desert you in your hour of greatest need. Only trust Him with all your heart. He will not fail you." Following that night, Pink was like a man making plans for a long journey. He gave instructions for his wife to publish all the material he was leaving in the Studies before she ceased publication. And he labored more diligently so he could leave as much as possible that was publishable. He constantly praised the

Lord and rested on His sovereignty concerning the future. He said many times, "Let Him do with me as seemeth good." As he spoke one day of their pilgrim journey and God's dealings with them, he said, "He hath done all things well. All things, my dear, not some things."

On Wednesday morning before Pink died the following Tuesday, he broke forth in speech as follows: "The darkness is past and the true light now shineth. Yes, it shineth more and more unto the perfect day. All is glory before me. I cannot say with Mr. Rutherford, 'Dark, dark hath been the midnight,' for my experience has been so different from his. But I can say, 'Dayspring is at hand, and glory, glory dwelleth in Immanuel's land' I am leaving the darkness behind to you who have still to finish your pilgrimage." When Mrs. Pink replied that

this was beautiful for him, he answered, "And it can be for you too, if you will cast aside your doubts and fears and put you whole trust in Him."

For the rest of that day, the Wednesday before he died, Pink sat in his chair dictating to his wife an article for the magazine. It was quite an effort for him to finish, but he so wanted to do so. He feared he had waited too long to get the article done. Suddenly with only four sentences to go, he stopped and asked Mrs. Pink to put him to bed, which she did with considerable effort. She supported him for more than an hour till he found some relief. Then following just a few minutes of rest, he said to her, "Get your glasses and paper and pencil and come to the bed, and I will give you the last four sentences and you can type them, when I am gone." When that was accomplished, he said, "My work is finished. My race is run. I am ready to go. I cannot go soon enough."

Pink never rose from his bed from that Wednesday till he died the following Tuesday. His wife reports that the twenty-third psalm was on his lips, as well as many other words and meditations, such as some of the following:

> Wearisome nights are appointed me, but I have nothing to say, for the Lord has so wondrously spared me bodily pain all my life through till now.
>
> Not one good thing hath failed of all the good things He hath promised.
>
> He hath not dealt with me after my sins, nor rewarded me according to my iniquities.
>
> The King of love my Shepherd is, whose goodness faileth never; I nothing lack, if I am his, and he is mine forever.
>
> O taste and see that the Lord is good, blessed is the man that trusteth in Him.
>
> His last words were, "The Scriptures explain themselves."

In the local paper, *The Stornoway Gazette,* in the July 18, 1952 and the July 22, 1952 editions is found the following listing:

PINK—On 15th July at 29 Lewis Street
A. W. Pink, D.D., at 11:20 a.m. passed peacefully away to be forever with the Lord.

Funeral and Burial

Regarding funeral services, Pink had written earlier, when speaking of the death of Elisha, "It is to be noted that nothing is said here of any burial service. Nor is there anywhere in Scripture, either in the Old Testament or the New Testament. Elaborate, mournful ceremonies are of pagan origin and are neither authorized nor warranted by the Word of God.[6]

Nonetheless, there was a simple funeral service, probably on July 17th. James MacLean describes it as "a simple affair."[7] Eight of his friends carried and laid him to rest in Sandwick Burial Grounds on the outskirts of Stornoway. His grave even into the late eighties remained unmarked, which was his request, and its location can be determined only by inquiring of the cemetery caretaker. Thus, Pink's body continues to lie in obscurity in an unmarked grave on a wind-blown hillside on the outskirts of Stornoway, Scotland in the Outer Hebrides, even as he lived in obscurity for sixty six years all over the world.

Mourned the World Over

But though Pink was mourned by only a few in Stornoway, Scotland, for most of the population there knew little or nothing about him or his work, he was mourned around the world by a small flock. Numerous letters of sympathy and comfort were received by Mrs. Pink, when word of her husband's death reached them. Readers testified as follows:[8]

> Though his pen is stilled by his home-going, yet his articles will ever go on as a testimony unto his and our blessed Lord.
>
> It would seem his ministry was too much needed to be able to spare him.
>
> Truly a "great man in Israel has fallen."
>
> We have lost a father in Israel.
>
> It is the loss of a friend, whom having not seen we loved . . his work will live long in those whose appetites for the deep spiritual things of the Word were made keener.
>
> The Church of God on earth lost a great witness—one of the greatest in this day of apostasy . . .
>
> We feel like orphans with our spiritual father and best friend taken from us.

> The Christian Church has lost one of its finest Bible expositors and hundreds of young men, like myself, have lost the benefit of his wise and deeply spiritual exegesis.

The Death of the Studies

Though Arthur W. Pink died on July 15, 1952, the magazine did not cease publication until December of 1953. Mrs. Pink continued the work, as she had promised her husband, until the material he had prepared was published. Finally, as the end of the little paper drew near, it was understandably a very painful time for her. She says:

> I dare not let my mind think of STUDIES IN THE SCRIPTURES coming to an end—or perhaps I should say closing down . . . It is good to recall the happy years in which we were privileged to "send portions unto those for whom nothing was prepared." How blessed to know that He changes not. He is "the same yesterday, and today, and forever." All things change here and come to an end. He remains—to help.[9]

The time did come for the last issue of Studies in the Scriptures to be sent forth to its sad but eager reading audience. The date was December 1953. But that date did not bring an end to the influence of Arthur W. Pink, nor the little magazine that struggled all those years, just to stay in existence. In fact, the influence of both continued to be strong in the last half of the twentieth century. Pink's articles were printed into dozens of books to be read by hundreds, who never had the privilege of holding a copy of the magazine in their hands. Vera Pink put it best when she said at the hour of his husband's death:

> STUDIES IN THE SCRIPTURES is a living monument of his faith in the veracity of God's Word. Christ's great and glorious work of redemption, and the Holy Spirit's work in applying the Truth to the soul in living power . . .[10]

Vera E. Pink died on July 17, 1962, almost ten years to the date of her husband's death. She was sixty-nine years old, and her body lies at rest in the same wind-blown cemetery in an unmarked grave next to her husband's, outside of the city of Stornoway, Scotland.

A PERSONAL POSTSCRIPT

Arthur W. Pink left the United States one month prior to the present author's birth, which was in October of 1934. He died in the same year this author graduated from high school, as he also sensed the call of God to the ministry in 1952. To be honest I never heard of A. W. Pink until sometime in the mid or late 1960's. I never saw a copy of the Pink periodical until December of 1979, when I was graciously allowed by the late Mr. Lowell Green of Atlanta, Georgia to make Xerox copies of his precious possession—*Studies in the Scriptures*. Now at this juncture in my life, having read and studied carefully almost everything Pink ever wrote, and having thought deeply about the man and his ministry for a number of years, I would like to add several thoughts in the way of admonitions in the form of a postscript for the reader's blessing.

I. We Have Made No Attempt to Gloss Over Pink's Failures!

First, please realize that in this presentation of Pink's life, there has been no attempt to gloss over his uniqueness nor his struggles. Biographies of our day have a tendency to "accentuate the positives and eliminate the negatives." Readers have a tendency to look for heroes, who are presented as perfect in character, as is God Himself. Thus, the world abounds with men presented as "small gods," who are bereft of failures and beyond our critique. This has not been that kind of a biography. Pink's many struggles have been honestly recognized. His weaknesses have not been justified, although an attempt has been made to understand his feelings, thoughts, and reasons (right or wrong) for his actions, as he lived upon this earth. We have sought to be mindful of Paul's admonition in Romans 14:4, when he sad, "Who art thou that judges another man's servant? To his own master he stands or falls."

II. Before Judging Pink's Theology Read His Works Extensively!

Second, we would challenge the reader not to judge Pink's theology until you have read considerably from his works. This exhortation comes for several reasons. For one thing, like most writers, his works are of various levels of value. His later works have a tendency to be of a higher quality, as they are the works of the experienced and mature writer. But immediately it has to be admitted that this is a generalization, for the book which will probably go down in the future as a classic is his book, *The Sovereignty of God*, which was written in 1917. For another thing, Pink will appear to be unbalanced in some of his theological views, unless one reads extensively from his works. For example, if

one only reads his book *The Sovereignty of God,* one might get the idea that he was overbalanced in the direction of God's sovereignty to the point of the denial of human responsibility. But such is not the case, as will be seen in reading all his works. This writer has numerous cards and notations in his files, which show that Pink came out strongly for human responsibility and against any kind of an overbalance in the direction of either side of the theological tension between the sovereignty of God and the human responsibility of man in the work of salvation.

III. Before Judging His Life Become Familiar with the Man!

Third, not only should one not judge Pink's theology until some extensive reading has been done in his works, but the same rule should be observed concerning his life and practices. One often hears it stated (usually by someone with a surface knowledge of Pink) that he was an odd character, or that he was an isolationist, or that he had difficulty getting along with others. The danger is that someone might use this to destroy Pink's influence. The impression is left that such a man could not be worthy of our attention, or that he would have nothing to say that would be of interest or benefit to one who is serious about the service of God and the reaching of a lost world with the gospel of Christ. We must remember that whatever Pink's failures might have been, which as we have seen were many, and which he admitted were many also, it cannot be denied, as one reads his writings extensively, that he had a heart for God and sought to live and write for the glory of God supremely. His writings are warm and powerful, rich and God-centered, practical and uplifting, and spiritually moving.

I remember so well the fall of 1979, when I read and marked and then took notes from Pink's writings. So many nights I went to bed at midnight or later, only to lie awake praising God for a period of time, because of an overflowing heart that had been stirred by Pink's pen. So please remember that the weaknesses of Pink, which seemed to be so obvious to us, yet sometimes unknown to him, were by the providence of God, whereby God used these matters to shut him up to the ministry of his writing, so that multitudes, for years to come, might be benefited by his powerful and productive pen. Please remember also that his weaknesses, that are so obvious to us, yet unknown to him, were by the providence of God used to cause him to finally give himself to his ministry of writing completely, so that multitudes for years to follow, might be benefited from that pen, though he knew it not! Remember that he was a man who was "born to write," yet like many of us, it took him some time and much pain to discover his greatest gift from God, which for him was the use of his pen for the Lord. Remember, also, that even in the employment of his gift, he was

not perfect in theology, conviction or life-style.

IV. May We Remember Our Own Weaknesses!

Fourth, seeing the honest weaknesses of Pink, should cause us to remember our own weaknesses and frailties, when tempted to judge Pink harshly. I must confess that I tire of some men of the present days with their share of weaknesses, sitting in harsh judgment upon some men of the past, that have been and still are being used of God, far beyond most of us of the present day. Surely, we must not ignore the failures we see in men's lives of the past, but neither should we act and speak of them and their ministries, as if our life and ministry was perfect. May we never seek to scale some ladder of self-importance, as we look at the weaknesses of some men of days gone by, while we overlook our own weaknesses of the present. Could it be that some of our weaknesses are greater than some men we like to criticize?

V. God's Standards of Judgment Are Different Than Ours!

Fifth, remember that the standards of earthly or religious attainment or human recognition is not God's basis of judging His servants. Personally, though the present writer possesses some credentials in the educational world, that were not possessed by Pink, and though he also has had an extensive public ministry in Bible conferences, revival meetings, and other local church activities, along with ministries around the world for many decades (something Pink longed for), and though this present writer is more of a people-person than Pink was, he still feels he is not worthy to tie the shoe strings of a man such as Pink. That was not our conviction, when we began our long study of Pink back in the late 1970's, though even then we had a respect for him. Surely, we do not idolize Pink. But we do recognize him as a very unique man of God, who can teach us through his pen and through his life.

Further, I must honestly confess, that I am not sure I would have liked Pink, had I ever met him in person during his lifetime—he might not have given me the time of day, let alone, the opportunity even to get to know him. When I went to Stornoway, Scotland, some years ago, after the death of Pink, and when I began to ask around about him, the few remaining friends of Pink there seemed to want to shut me up and give me no information about him at all. Just go away and leave Pink and them alone, seemed to be their attitude. I think I do understand, this might have been their attitude in light of the fact that there may have been a number of people visiting Stornoway to gather information on Pink or see his grave. Plus, these friends of Pink in Stornoway were probably seeking to extend the attitude of Pink in his desire not to be exalted following his death.

Perhaps, that is the reason Mr. Lowell Green, Pink's dear friend in Atlanta, GA, seemed a little cold to me, when I first asked him if I could borrow and xerox his copy of *Studies in the Scriptures*. But in the providence of God, Mr. Green did allow me to copy those issues of Pink's magazine, which he possessed, and what a joy it was to see Mr. and Mrs. Green again, such dear people they were, several years later, in a conference up on the east coast, after I had published this biography on the life of Pink.

May the reader be assured that I do deeply respect Arthur W. Pink for his heart for his Lord and for his desire to see and manifest the glory of God alone, and for his strong commitment to know and do our Lord's will, and for the obvious God-given use of his pen. He was truly "born to write" and all the circumstances of his life, even the negative ones, which he did not understand, propelled him to the fulfillment of that God-ordained purpose, as difficult as his life may have seemed at times.

May that be our purpose and goal, as we live our lives here on this earth for our Lord, never forgetting that the Christian life is not easy, but it is a life of joyful commitment to Christ, though at times, we may not understand what He is doing in our lives, as we have seen in the life of Arthur W. Pink and his dear wife Vera Pink!

ENDNOTES

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12. Arthur W. Pink, *Exposition of the Gospel of John.* 3 vols. in one (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1968), 2:349-350.

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