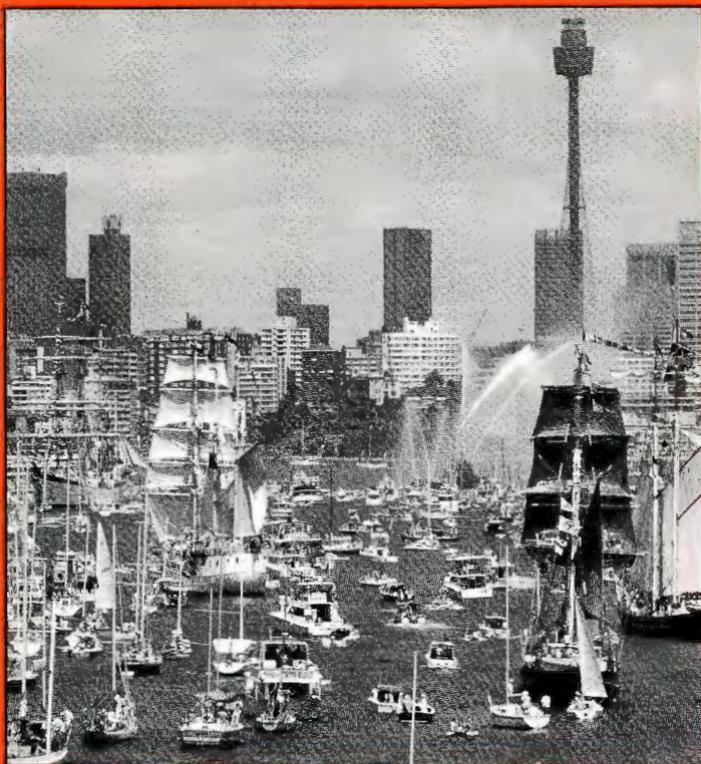


REFORMATION TODAY



SYDNEY HARBOUR

■ NOVEMBER-DECEMBER 1988

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Carey Conference For Ministers College of Ripon and York St John

Tuesday 3rd January to Thursday 5th January 1989

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Front cover

Sydney Harbour, Australia Day, January 26th, 1988. Picture with the courtesy of National Australia Bank Ltd. The bicentenary year of Australia has served to awaken interest in all aspects of Australian history not least the evangelical heritage. Iain Murray's book, *Australian Christian Life from 1788*, (Banner of Truth, 384 pages, £9.95) tells how a heroic form of resolute Christianity made its impact from earliest times on various sectors of the Australian community, parts of which were notorious for brutality and licentiousness. To provide an adequate history in one book is not easy. Australian Baptists complain that they have been left out of the narrative. The only way to remedy the omission is to stir up those who have a flair for history and urge them to write on the theme, the bicentenary having served to remind us all of the importance of preserving historical records.

Editorial

Once a 'prophet'

The testimony of Tony Bickley is typical of many who have come out of the Charismatic movement. It is difficult and embarrassing for any person who has practised tongues and prophecy in public, then to confess publicly that the experience of tongues was not genuine and that the gift of prophecy was false. It can be argued that nothing can be proved by the testimony of one man; it is true that the whole case must stand or fall by Scripture.

The biblical case has been reasoned by capable authors. For instance, Victor Budgen's book 'Charismatics and the Word of God' has been widely read. The position maintained by those of Reformed persuasion is that tongue speaking in the New Testament was a specific fulfilment of prophecy. The marvel of tongues was that it consisted of real languages, not gibberish. Moreover it was a sign to the unbelieving Jews.

Tony Bickley describes how the prophecies he heard failed. Charismatics will claim that his instance is only one example; again Scripture must decide the issue. Our readers may recall that the subject of prophecy was fully expounded from Scripture in *R.T.* 102, and in *R.T.* 103 Victor Budgen carefully expounded the case of Agabus to show that there is not a second-rate type of prophecy that can be partly true and partly erroneous.

But to return to actual experience, it is important to observe that the gifts simply do not work in practice. It is highly significant that when it comes to the acid test of practice both tongues and prophecies fail. Does the Holy Spirit care about the vast amount of deception that goes on in his name? Yes he does, as the following case will illustrate.

The experience of Neil Babcox

Neil Babcox was a pastor of a Charismatic church. In his book *A Search for Charismatic Reality*, he describes how he learned to speak in tongues but then came to question the whole issue of tongues speaking. He also describes his experience as a prophet and how he came to reject that practice as false. What is remarkable is that instead of resigning from the church he shared the problem of his change of mind with his church leaders. The subject was then brought before the church members and the whole issue was faced in a spiritual way. The Lord honoured the spiritual manner in which this controversial matter was handled and the church was turned round from the Pentecostal position. There were those who did not change their views and who resigned from the church. However, we can only marvel at the grace of the Lord and the power of his truth, which prevailed in such a complex situation. Neil Babcox's book is published by Multnomah Press, Oregon, USA. Get your supplier to stock this title! I obtained my copy from John Grier, Evangelical Bookshop, 15 College Square East, BELFAST, N. Ireland. The price is £3.75 plus postage.

I remember a well known minister declaring that he could not believe that so many Pentecostalists could be wrong. Numbers have nothing to do with it. There are vast numbers of Roman Catholics but that does not make their system Biblical. It does not take all that much discernment to see the specious nature of present day tongue speaking or tongue singing and present day claims for prophecy. If reality is faced sincerely then thousands who are deceived will have testimonies similar to those of Tony Bickley and Neil Babcox.

The subject of miraculous healing requires separate treatment. An associate minister friend recently confronted a crusade healer with the fact that he was paying people to leap out of wheel chairs at his meetings. Fraud and deception are rife in these days, but in spite of that we still need to exercise caution because there are genuine cases of healing. Revelatory gifts are redundant, but demons are not redundant, and nor can we say that God cannot heal. Many Reformed men, who believe that the revelatory gifts described in 1 Corinthians 12 and 14 refer to a transitional period from the Old Testament to the New Testament, also believe that James 5:13-16 does not refer to a temporary period of transition.

Robert Amess' book 'One in Truth'

Subsequent to my brief review of the above book a letter has been received from a pastor in which surprise is expressed that I was not more critical of Robert Amess, especially since he backed the Ecumenical crusade 'Mission England.' I expect that regular readers will know my position and not assume that I agree with everything in the books that receive a brief review.

However lest someone might be misled I will explain the position by asserting that if we are to be faithful to the gospel of Christ we must always direct enquirers to reliable evangelical churches. We should never direct them to liberal churches. Indeed we should discourage Christians from attending churches where the Bible is denied because that could undermine their faith. Liberal teaching is disastrous.

Also it cannot be right to direct friends to Roman Catholic churches because that system is inimical to evangelical truth and denies the cardinal truth of justification by faith. Surely the letter to the Galatians is relevant at this point; even if an angel preaches a gospel which denies justification by faith and substitutes justification by works that angel is accursed.

But there is another feature about modern city wide crusades which requires attention and that is the decisionist method that is used. In my book *The Great Invitation*, I have sought to show that this method is not biblical and leads to confusion. For the last thirty years leaders of crusade evangelism have implied that these great efforts will turn the tide in Britain. The truth is that all the major denominations that support crusade evangelism continue to decline. At the present steady rate of decline the Roman Catholic, Anglican, and Baptist Union

denominations will cease to exist about the year 2040. According to the statisticians other denominations such as the Methodists and United Reformed are due to expire before that.

Some evangelical pastors are put under great pressure from their churches to join in and actively support the Ecumenical evangelistic crusades. If they succumb to that pressure it does not mean that we cut them off. Some pastors opt for co-operation in the crusades because they believe the advantages outweigh the disadvantages. It was by actual participation that I came to see that the methods used are harmful. It takes time to evaluate Christian doctrine and practice. Surely the basic tenet of the Reformed faith is the sovereignty of God. It is the Holy Spirit who reveals truth. Therefore we ought to be patient and not break personal fellowship with fellow pastors or fellow believers over these issues, but rather agree to differ amicably. With regard to church members it is possible for church leaders to forbid their members to participate in the Ecumenical Crusades. However many prefer not to follow that policy but rather leave it as a matter of personal conscience. One pastor shared with me the fact that in his church a small number participated in the Ecumenical Crusade and afterward berated the others for their non-participation. Wisely no one responded because they all knew that when it came to the knitty gritty of week by week evangelistic effort that sector of the church contributed nothing.

But to return to the book on unity by Robert Amess let it be recognised that unity is always costly. It is easy to separate and isolate ourselves; it is more difficult to be patient. I would love to have the time to write a book on the pressing need for evangelical unity but Robert Amess got there first; his appeal is needful and urgent and we do well to heed it.

By way of conclusion I would point out that the stress in the New Testament is for all true Christians to strive for unity. This responsibility is emphasised with such clarity and cogency that we neglect it at our peril (Eph 4:1-6).

The Death and Burial of the Old Man

What happens in the new birth? As a Christian are you two persons or one? What exactly is it that remains in you by way of sin? It is vital that Christians should be clear about what has happened to them in the transition from death to life. It is imperative that the believer should know the nature of the enemy within. The subject is prominent in Scripture and yet has suffered neglect. If you find the article helpful why not share it with others?

Carey Conference for Ministers

College of Ripon and York St. John, Yorkshire

THEME: The 1689 Confession

		Robert Oliver	Austin Walker	John Armstrong
John Armstrong	David Kingdon	Bob Sheehan	Prayer and Sharing	Geoff Thomas
John Armstrong	Erroll Hulse			

THEME: THE TRICENTENARY OF THE 1689 CONFESSION OF FAITH

The London Baptist Confession of Faith published in 1689 was substantially a Puritan document, being a modification of the Westminster Confession. Hence those who during the past 30 years have adopted the 1689 as representative of their beliefs, have not hesitated to call themselves Reformed Baptists. The great majority are still not acquainted with the 1689 and the rich heritage that it represents.

For that reason alone there is a need to expound the chapters and demonstrate their riches and relevance. Several sessions at the Conference will be devoted to this task more or less.

Underlying the whole 1689 Confession is the principal reason for its origin, namely, that it is Baptist. David Kingdon has agreed to develop further the substance of his book *Children of Abraham*. There have been requests from many for this to be done and the Carey Conference will provide an ideal opportunity to make progress in our understanding on the place of children in the Christian family, and their relationship to the Church. Under the heading then of 'drawing inspiration from the 1689 Confession', we anticipate the following:

- | | |
|--|----------------|
| 1. The history and influence of the Confession | Robert Oliver |
| 2. Advancing in the doctrine of adoption | Austin Walker |
| 3. The doctrine of inerrancy | John Armstrong |
| 4. The relationship of our children to the church | David Kingdon |
| 5. The 1689 Chapter on the Law | Bob Sheehan |
| 6. The necessity of a missionary vision (see ch. 20) | John Armstrong |
| 7. The perseverance of the saints | Erroll Hulse |

The evening sessions will be open to the public. On the first evening John Armstrong, who is pastor of Trinity Baptist Church, Wheaton, Chicago and leader of the Whitfield ministers' fraternal in that area, will take as his subject John chapter six and the discouragement that our Lord was subject to, when despite the great miracles that he wrought, many deserted him. What was his response and teaching at that time? On the second evening we look forward to Geoff Thomas giving us a biography of Francis Schaeffer. The closing address will examine, with examples, the searching and exacting trials to which ministers of the gospel are subject, and the necessity of cultivating endurance as a way of life, always developing spiritual stamina by reliance on the perseverance which the Holy Spirit himself gives.

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The Death and Burial of the Old Man

We sometimes read of those who, converted by the gospel, are rejected by their own families. In some cases a converted husband is rejected by an unbelieving wife, or vice versa.

‘John is simply not the same person,’ declares Jane. Even though John may improve by way of being more considerate and kind, the change is so profound that Jane is right when she maintains that he is a different person. Jane’s interest in the Church is nil and now to her John seems a religious maniac. He insists on going to church three times a week! But it is not only that. Jane protests that John is not interested in dances and parties. He has abandoned his old social life. Jane is right. The old John has died. He will never live again. John is a renewed person with a new disposition. He has a new set of affections and has a new spirit. This is reflected in his new world of interests.

What brought about the change? In what way and to what extent has that change taken place? Since John is still capable of sin of all kinds, to what do we attribute that sin?

It will help to establish a basic principle and then examine the relevant Scriptures on this theme.

The unity of a man

It is a commonly held idea that the struggle in the Christian is between two people, the old man and the new man, as though the believer is a kind of split personality.

From the outset we must repudiate completely the idea that the Christian is two people, an old man and a new man. It might be convenient to blame our sins on the old man and attribute credit to the new man, but the fact is that a person is one not two. In creation man is essentially one. For the purposes of study we can follow the example of Thomas Boston who made an analysis of man by dividing him up into constituent parts: mind, affections, conscience, will and memory. Such considerations are important and useful. We can learn much from the procedure but it is important to remember that man is one in the unity of his being.

The death of the old self and the emergence of the new

Having stressed the unity of a man in his being or make-up it is necessary to stress the importance of using the right terms. In the King James translation of Ephesians 4:24 we read 'that ye put off the old man' which is a literal translation of *palaion anthropov*, old man. However it is better to use the terms 'the old self' and 'the new self' and to use them consistently which is the case in the N.I.V., N.A.S.B. and T.E.V., since that avoids the idea of any person being two people at the same time, a Jekyll and Hyde. Some would use the term 'schizophrenia' as they think that conveys the idea of a split personality. Schizophrenia is a complex illness and it is better not to use that word in this context. A born again person is changed but is still the same person with the same natural temperament, the same personality and the same natural gifts. It is just as important to avoid over-rating what occurs in the new birth just as it is to under-rate what takes place.

The Relevant Scriptures

'For you died, and your life is now hidden with Christ in God,' declares Paul to the Colossian believers (Col 3:3). Then further on he appeals to them on the grounds that they 'have taken off the old self and put on the new self,' (Col 3:9,10). In determining the extent to which a person has died and has been changed through the new birth (regeneration), it is helpful at the outset to have an outline of our subject together with the most relevant scriptures:

- 1 **Through the new birth the old self dies once and for all** John 3:1-16 together with John's statements in his first letter (3:2,3; 3:7-10; 4:7-9; 5:1-4; 5:18). Also Titus 3:4-7, Ephesians 2:9,10 linked with 4:24, 2 Corinthians 5:17 and 1 Peter 1:23.
- 2 **Christians are required to live according to the new self** Colossians 3:8,9 and Ephesians 4:20-24 speak of the old self and the new self in the context of an old sphere of outlook and practice left behind for a new sphere.
- 3 **Christian baptism symbolises the burial of the old self and the resurrection of the new self** Romans 6:1-6 and Colossians 2:11,12.
- 4 **Conflict takes place in the new self due to remaining sin** Romans 7:14-25 and Galatians 5:16,17.

1 Through the new birth the old self dies once and for all

Regeneration can be defined as that change brought about in a man by the powerful creative work of the Holy Spirit whereby his whole nature is made spiritual. His eyes are opened to the truth. The old enmity to God is completely removed. He is enabled to love God and embrace the revelation of God in Scripture. No part of man is excluded in this change. It is a renewal of the affections and of the mind, of the will and of the conscience. It is brought about by union with Christ and that union means that the regenerated person now shares the mind of Christ and is enabled thereby to will and do God's good pleasure.

The new birth is wholly an act of God's grace. Justification which is external and regeneration which is internal, are brought together in Paul's letter to Titus (Tit 3:4-7). God saves his people 'through the washing of new birth' which signals the end of the old life and the origin of the new life.

When we view the scriptures describing the new birth and its consequences we see that Jesus spoke of the new birth as 'a seeing' (Jn 3:3), an illumination of the mind whereby the kingdom of God can be seen (comprehended) and believed. In his first letter John insists that the new birth brings a person to believe in the deity of Christ (5:1), to moral obedience (he cannot go on sinning, 3:7-10 and 5:18), and to love for fellow believers (3:14; 4:7-12).

It is significant that the new covenant is described as the writing of God's law on the heart and mind (Jer 31:33; Heb 8:10), 'I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit in you; I will remove from you your heart of stone' (Ez 36:26). The outcome: adoption, 'you will be my people, and I will be your God' (Rev 21:3; Rom 8:15,16). The giving of a new heart is God's workmanship and is like a new creation. 'For we are God's workmanship, created in Christ Jesus to do good works' (Eph 2:10). This creation is 'to be like God in true righteousness and holiness' (Eph 4:24). It is brought about through spiritual union with Christ.

An act of creation has taken place. The Revised Version of 1881 has a marginal note for 2 Corinthians 5:17 which states it well, 'Wherefore if any man is in Christ, *there is a new creation.*' A new nature has been created which now relates to the new world. *Ktisis*, 'creation' refers not to the believer as such but to the making of a new creation which centres in Christ and of which the believer becomes a part.¹ The Christian now relates to that new sphere and to every part of that new sphere. 'Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has gone, the new has come' (2 Cor 5:17).

Philip Hughes in his commentary text provides a superb statement:

A man in Christ is in fact a new creation a reborn microcosm belonging to the eschatological macrocosm of the new heavens and the new earth for whom the old order of things has given place to a transcendental experience in which everything is new. In the experience of this new creation the standards and pretensions of this world sink into insignificance (p. 202).

The Christian belongs to the coming new world order, the eschatological (coming) macrocosm. Peter confirms this in describing the Christian's inheritance that can never perish or fade (1 Pet 1:3-5). He describes the seed by which we have been born again as imperishable (1 Pet 1:23). That seed is his Word and what that Word creates cannot perish (Jn 10:28). It stands forever for it is God's will and promise. The sons of God now await their glorification, the redemption of their bodies together with the glorification of the entire creation (Rom 8:18-25).

The old self dies in the transition by new birth from the old order of sin to the new sphere of glory. By the new birth that person can never be what he was before. He possesses a new disposition which pervades the entirety of his being. The old self has died. The new self now lives.

2 Christians are required to live according to the new self

The New Testament is consistent in speaking of the death of the old self as something which took place in the past, a definitive act, something decisive. The birth of the new self is also definitive, something definite in a point of time. 'It is no more feasible to call the believer an old man and a new man, than it is to call him a regenerate man and an unregenerate.'² Observe the use of the past tense employed in Colossians 3:9,10:

Do not lie to each other, since you have taken off your old self with its practices and have put on the new self, which is being renewed in knowledge in the image of its Creator.

Paul's appeal is an ethical one. I used to walk in the world of rage, malice, slander, filthy language, but then there was the transition. Now as a renewed person I have nothing in common with the ungodliness and sinful practices of that former life. Note the apostle's reference to what happened in the past. As a decisive event the old self was put off. The figure used in the text is that of clothing. Paul's reference is probably to proselyte Jewish baptism in which stripping off of clothing was required because it was essential to them that every part of the body be touched by the water. G. R. Beasley Murray discusses this with regard to early Christian baptism.³ The idea of stripping off filthy clothes and being clothed with the garments of God's righteousness is familiar in the O.T. (Zech 3:3 Is 61:10; Ps 132:9 & 16). The death of the old man and the birth of the new man is in the past. It can never be repeated.

On first reading the parallel passage in Ephesians 4:22-24 seems to contradict the above concept of the death of the old self once and for all. The text seems to be suggesting that putting off the old self is a continual duty, something that goes on and on as a process. In a thorough exegesis of the passage Professor John Murray provides his own translation as one which clearly brings out the tenses used in the Greek text:

But you have not so learned Christ, if so be you have heard him and have been taught by him as the truth is in Jesus, so that you have put off, according to the former manner of life, the old man who is corrupted according to the lusts of deceit, and are being renewed in the spirit of your mind, and have put on the new man who after God has been created in righteousness and holiness of the truth.⁴

The believer is exhorted to observe what has occurred in the past and to act consistently with that. He is being urged to be what he is, that is the new self. He is not being asked to be involved in a process of taking off and putting on, but

rather to take note of the fact that he has already been brought into the realm of the new life. 'To put off' and 'to put on' are aorist infinitives. The use of these as imperatives is very rare. There is no reason to take the text as an exhortation to keep on doing something which has been done once and for all. The verb 'you have not so learned' points to something which has been done and understood.

What takes place in the new birth is fully expressed in spiritual baptism which in turn is symbolised in water baptism, to which subject we now turn.

3 Christian baptism symbolises the burial of the old self and the resurrection of the new self Romans 6:1-6 and Colossians 2:11,12.

Firstly we look at Romans 6:1-11 concentrating on verses 3 and 4.

When confronted with the idea that a free justification might lead to a careless attitude toward sin, Paul reminds his readers of their baptism and what it signified. The basic meaning signified is union with Christ in his death and resurrection.

Or don't you know that all of us who were baptised into Christ were baptised into his death? We were therefore buried with him through baptism into death in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, we too may live a new life (6:3,4)

The apostle's appeal to baptism certifies that the readers were aware of the place and importance of baptism.⁵ But what exactly did the Christians at Rome understand by this reference to their baptism? Paul says it was a burial. The word baptism was the best word to use to describe a burial because it conveys the concept of totality. The word *baptizo* is an intensive form of the word *bapto* which means to dip or to dip into a dye. *Baptizo* conveyed more than the idea of dipping or submerging, it went further to give the idea of perishing or destruction, the sinking of a ship.⁶

Does the burial have to be in water? Baptism in the N.T. symbolises two things: the washing away of sin (Acts 22:16), and union with Christ in his death and resurrection, but the latter is more prominent than the former. There are some who would press washing as a reference to baptism in 1 Corinthians 6:7; Hebrews 10:22; Ephesians 5:26; Titus 3:5, and hence of equal status with union with Christ as a symbolism.⁷ The union with Christ in his death and burial and the rising again to newness of life is the central thought of Paul in the Romans 6:1-5 passage. There are at least six other Greek words associated with washing or with ablutions. *Louo* to wash, *pluno* to scour, *nipto* to rinse, *ekcheo* to pour, *ballo* to pour rapidly, *brecho* to moisten. In addition there is the word *rantizo* which means to sprinkle. Baptism is the only word which can convey the symbolism of burial because of the totality and comprehensiveness it conveys in its meaning. Non-baptists will not enjoy this part of my exposition but if they reject the idea of water immersion then it is up to them to discover a better way of symbolising burial.

Even when used as a metaphor baptism conveys the concept of something which is complete or overwhelming. In referring to his death Jesus said, 'Can you be baptised with the baptism that I am baptised with?' He is using both the verb baptise, and the noun baptism, in a figurative way to point to that which is catastrophic or overwhelming. The idea of baptism is also used to emphasise union of a complete nature, hence the children of Israel were so closely associated with Moses that Paul says of them 'They were all baptised into Moses in the cloud and in the sea' (1 Cor 10:2).

Therefore to be baptised into Christ's death means that I am plunged into the death of Christ in such a way that the whole of his death was my death too. The next time I see a crucifix instead of imagining that I see Christ there I see myself as the victim, or perhaps myself nailed to the other side of the same cross on which he was nailed. What is true of me is true of all believers. 'One died for all, and therefore all died' (1 Cor 5:14).

Paul in reminding believers of their baptism says that in their baptism they were buried with Christ. Here we have the ultimate expression to denote the decease of the old self. The burial was a burying out of sight of the old life. The old self is not only dead, he is buried!

'Burial is the seal set to the fact of death. It is when a man's relatives and friends leave his body in a grave and return home without him that the fact that he no longer shares their life is exposed with inescapable conclusiveness.⁸ The death we died in baptism was a death ratified and sealed by burial which portrays in the most vivid way imaginable that I have died. With the Roman Christians I can look back to my conversion, and my subsequent baptism which took place fairly soon afterwards. My baptism was a literal burial signifying the reality of the death that had taken place. Although there is no tombstone I know the place and can take friends there and show them the burial spot of the old me.

Of the old self I say with Paul, 'I have been crucified with Christ and I no longer live, but Christ lives in me' (Gal 2:20). 'The old self was crucified with him so that the body of sin might be rendered powerless, that we should no longer be slaves to sin because anyone who died has been freed from sin' (Rom 6:6,7).

Secondly we examine Colossians 2:11,12:

In him you were also circumcised, in the putting off of the sinful nature (literally the body of flesh), not with a circumcision done by the hands of men but with the circumcision done by Christ, having been buried with him in baptism and raised with him through your faith in the power of God, who raised him from the dead.

Ceremonially circumcision stood for the putting off of the sinful nature. It was a rite which pointed to regeneration, 'The LORD your God will circumcise your hearts and the hearts of your descendants, so that you may love him with all your heart and with all your soul and live' (Deut 30:6). The responsibility to get a

new heart was the duty pressed on the people by the prophets (Deut 10:16; Ez 18:31; Jer 4:4). The act of circumcision was performed in such a way that the stripping off of the flesh was performed by the priest as an act of repugnance. The Greek in Colossians 2:11 is a compound word meaning ‘the entire stripping off’ (*apekdusei*, note the double prefix).

In the context Paul is exhorting the Colossians to resist false teachers who were trying to persuade them to receive Jewish circumcision which was the removal of the excess foreskin. The apostle insists that they had already been circumcised with a circumcision of far more significance, that is the spiritual circumcision made without hands, a circumcision brought about by Christ, through his substitutionary death. The believer is united to Christ through Holy Spirit baptism (1 Cor 12:13), a unity with Christ in his death, burial and resurrection. The old unregenerate self is stripped away by union with Christ in his death. It is buried and left behind in the grave, while the new self emerges to walk in newness of life.

Spirit baptism is symbolised in water baptism. The Colossians could reflect on their participation in Christ’s burial. ‘The “putting off of the body of the flesh” and its burial out of sight alike emphasised that the old life was a thing of the past. They had shared in the death of Christ; they had also shared in his burial.’ ‘It is through faith that the believer bids farewell to the old life and embarks on the new; the sacrament of baptism derives its efficacy not from the water nor from the convert’s token burial in it, but from the saving act of Christ and the regenerating work of the Holy Spirit, producing faith-union with the risen Lord of which the sacrament is the outward sign.’⁹

Conclusions up to this point

We conclude from these passages of Scripture that the old self or old man (Rom 6:6; Col 3:9; Eph 4:22,23), which in Colossians 2:11 is also designated ‘the body of flesh,’ K.J.V. (‘sinful nature’ N.I.V.) refers to the godless and depraved fallen nature of the the person living in the cosmos of thinking and speaking and acting according to this present evil world, wholly without God, the old Adam, born of the flesh and living for the flesh.

It follows therefore that ‘putting off the old man is neither a continuous process nor a present duty but an accomplished fact. It is incorrect, therefore, to speak of the old man as remaining in the believer. The old man has been put off, crucified and destroyed. He is not merely enfeebled and enervated. He is not merely in process of destruction. He no longer exists.’¹⁰

While we know with relief and gratitude that we bid farewell to the old man who has been destroyed forever and who met his decease in that moment of union with Christ, we hasten on to note full well that remaining sin and corruption is a terrible reality. Sin remains in us who believe and this involves us in a struggle so severe that it can be like a daily death (1 Cor 15:31).

There is an enormous difference between the spiritual man and the natural man. The contrast is so great that Paul states the matter like this: 'For you were once darkness, but now you are light in the Lord' (Eph 5:8).

4 Conflict takes place in the new self due to remaining sin Romans 7:14-25 and Galatians 5:16,17.

Inasmuch as the passage in Galatians describes vividly the depravity of the ungodly life it is similar to Ephesians 4:17-28 and Colossians 3:1-14. The believer has left that evil world behind him, nevertheless there is conflict because remaining sin conflicts with the mind of the Holy Spirit (Gal 5:17). Romans 7:14-25 describes the intensity of conflict that can be experienced. It is mistaken to conclude that Romans 7:14-25 is the perpetual experience of the Christian or that it describes all his experience. Conflict is part, *not all*, of his experience. Joy inexpressible is also part of his experience but not all the time. We should note too that much of the conflict described in Romans 7:14-25 is due to deep regret and disappointment with ourselves and our lack of love for God. We experience distress because of the weakness of our spiritual life and grieve over our sins of omission.

The sins that Christians commit directly, that is by commission, are not so much against the first table of the law but against the second table. The new self contrasts with the old self because the new self has been fully turned round to love God instead of hating him. Under extraordinary pressures the new self can become angry with God as Jonah was, or speak rashly of God as Jeremiah did, but the regenerate nature does not blaspheme God. Job under conditions of the most aggravating and appalling kind did not blaspheme God. I am not saying that it is not possible but rather that it is entirely uncharacteristic of the regenerate nature, whereas the unregenerate nature constantly curses God.

The clearest distinction is required in the use of terms. We have seen that the old man is the same as the old ungodly self, but what terms do we employ to describe remaining sin? Here are some:

My sinful nature, Romans 7:18

The sinful nature, Galatians 5:17 & 19, Romans 8:13

Sin living in me, Romans 7:17

Law of sin working in my body, Romans 7:23

Remaining corruption, Westminster Confession

Sin's corrupt remnants, The 1689 Confession in modern language

(A Faith to Confess, Carey Publications)

As observed above remaining sin has more powerful tendencies in some directions than in others and varies from person to person. Paul warns particularly against the tendency to go back to old sins and especially does he warn against lust and the sins of the flesh, (1 Th 4:3), but also against sins which

were formerly prominent such as lying, deception, stealing, slander, malice, rage and anger. That which was indulged before must be completely repented of and forsaken (Eph 4:25-32).

Bunyan's classic *The Holy War* illustrates the subject of remaining sin very well. King Emmanuel has captured the city of Mansoul. He defeats Satan the previous owner and occupier of Mansoul and drives him out. The city is new inasmuch as it is under new management and has new citizens. The layout, the streets and buildings are the same. (A converted man has the same body, temperament and personality as he had before.) In Bunyan's picture of Mansoul the city being captured, the town hall and major installations are taken over: the affections won, the mind occupied, the will conquered, the memory and conscience taken. Yet there are pockets of resistance. In terms of area there are streets and houses and especially basements still occupied by the enemy. The enemy must be located and must be put to the sword. Some sins can offer fierce and determined resistance. The break with the ungodly life is often spectacular and dramatic at first but then there comes a counter attack. Suddenly the forces of remaining sin fight back with surprising vigour and vengeance.

There can be no compromise with any sin because each sin if indulged can grow and become so powerful as to become scandalous and wreck the testimony of the Christian. Adulterous fantasies if indulged can become tangible adultery and bring havoc not only to the two involved but bring tragic consequences to families, the local church, and the cause of Christ. Likewise covetousness if indulged can turn to fraud which is a criminal offence which disgraces the professing Christian and brings the gospel into disrepute.

Final Conclusions

The Christian should be greatly encouraged that he can never be the man he was before, yet at the same time he must always have a realistic view of the power and danger of sin that remains in him. He should rejoice that he has been planted together with Christ.

In Romans 6:5 a significant word is used which the K.J.V. translates as plant. 'If we have been planted together in the likeness of his death.' The N.K.J.V., N.I.V. and N.A.S.B. all use united instead of plant, 'For if we have been united together in the likeness of his death.' The phrase, 'have been united with him' is from a single word *sumpsutoi* which means 'united by growth.' The word expresses exactly the process by which a graft becomes united with the life of a tree.¹¹ The concept conveyed is powerful, namely that by this union the old is taken over by the new. The Christian is a transformed person 'possessed of new resources and new defences, living under new constraints and characterised by new attitudes and ambitions.'¹²

'The old self has been destroyed in the moment of union with Christ. He no longer exists to bear the responsibility or assume the blame. It is the new self who sins. Indeed this is what Paul is concerned to emphasise, because it declares, as nothing else can, the exceeding sinfulness of sin in a believer'.¹³ When the Christian sins he sins against the light. His culpability is great because he has all the resources he needs in the the Word. He has fellow believers to whom he can turn for fellowship, prayer, sympathy, strength and encouragement.

Mortification of sin is a subject which requires separate treatment yet I would assert here that mortification always concerns remaining corruption not a repeat of being born again. We are baptised into Christ once and for all and hence symbolic baptism is but once. It is possible in times of stress for the Christian to behave like he used to behave when unregenerate and even have ugly facial expressions which very unhappily might remind those who know him well to recall the former unregenerate person that he was. But whatever grievous lapses there may be he ought to bear in mind always that the old self has died once and for all and that it is terribly inconsistent for him to allow remaining sin to defile and disfigure his testimony.

How great is that act of sovereign mercy that gave us new birth, to bring us to newness of life so we we can never again be what we were before.

*Born of the Lord I can't allow
That sin should rule my heart,
But long that every evil thought
Might evermore depart.*

*Born of the Lord I soon shall fly -
Fly to his bright abode;
Rise to the honours of his throne,
To live and reign with God.*

Footnotes

- 1 Peter Toon, *Born Again*, Baker, 1987, p. 44.
- 2 Prof John Murray, *Principles of Conduct*, Tyndale, 1957, p. 218.
- 3 G. R. Beasley Murray, *Baptism in the New Testament*, p. 148.
- 4 Prof John Murray, *ibid*, p. 21.
- 5 Prof John Murray, *Romans*, p. 214.
- 6 Colin Brown, *Dictionary of N.T. Theology*, p. 144ff.
- 7 cf discussion in *The Illustrated Bible Dictionary*, I.V.P., Vol 1, p. 172ff.
- 8 C. E. B. Cranfield, *Romans*, p. 132.
- 9 E. K. Simpson and F. F. Bruce, *Commentary on Colossians*, p. 235.
- 10 Donald MacLeod, Paul's use of the term 'The Old Man', *Banner of Truth Magazine*, number 92, May 1971.
- 11 Sanday and Headlam, *Romans*, p. 157.
- 12 Donald MacLeod, *ibid*, p. 17.
- 13 *ibid*, p. 16.

Preaching – an Act of Worship

by Garry Phillips

As the title of this article suggests, my concern is with the relationship that preaching has to worship in the thought and life of the church today. There has come into being within recent years a view of preaching as something which is incidental and peripheral to whatever else goes on in the public worship of the church. Nowadays, there is more talk about what is expedient than what is right, about what is contemporary than what is biblical, and about giving the people what they want rather than what they really need.

Having recently read a ‘newish’ book of over 200 pages on the subject of worship, I found not one reference to the place and significance of preaching in the worship of the church. It is this subtle attempt to separate preaching from worship (and in some cases and places, even abandon preaching altogether) that has prompted this article. This is a subject of supreme importance and one which calls for much consideration at the present time. In what follows I hope to show that true biblical preaching is an event, in fact, *the* event in the weekly life and worship of the fellowship of God’s people. And far from being subordinate or secondary to worship, preaching is the centre, crown and climax of all spiritual worship. I propose to build my argument on the following premises:

True biblical preaching –

- 1 *Makes fully known the God we are commanded to worship*
- 2 *Provides the proper stimulus to public and corporate worship*
- 3 *Sets the believer free to worship God in Spirit and truth*
- 4 *Is attended by the Shekinah glory of God*
- 5 *Crowns our worship with God’s immediate word to us*

Although I shall treat each point separately, they in fact overlap and undergird each other. When taken together, it is hoped that the cumulative effect will convince the reader that preaching is indeed a constituent and crucial part of worship, and that ‘any system of worship in which the sermon is made little of or thrust into a corner cannot be a scriptural system, or one likely to have the blessing of God’ (J. C. Ryle).

1 True biblical preaching makes fully known the God we are commanded to worship

The principle means of declaring what is most basic to all our religion, namely the character and attributes of our Triune God, is without doubt the preaching of the Word of Truth (Rom 10:14). This is an unwritten law of the Kingdom, and as such I cannot stress it too much. Without it, worship would simply degenerate into exhibitionism, extremism, subjectivism and mysticism. The best corrective to any false ideas about God, therefore, is sound biblical

preaching. This particular truth is perfectly illustrated in the ministry of our Lord himself.

In his discourse with the Samaritan woman (Jn 4), Jesus sets out some basic teaching on the subject of worship. *Firstly*, he teaches that not all worship is true spiritual worship. He tells her ‘You Samaritans worship what you do not know’ (Jn 4:22). Similarly, the apostle Paul echoes our Saviour in his sermon to the Athenians, ‘To the unknown God. Now what you worship as something unknown I am going to proclaim to you’ (Acts 17:23). Let’s just pause at this point to make a number of observations.

a. Worship has absolutely no value in and of itself; its value lies solely in its object . . . the one, true living God.

But why preach what should be obvious? Because there is a great and growing danger in some Christian circles to promote ‘self-inspired efforts at worship’ (Col 2:23 J.B.P.). Worship that is selfish or parades itself before others is just not biblical worship.

b. ‘Just as unbelievers may be ignorant about the God whom they deny, so believers may be ignorant of the God whom they worship’ (Leonard Hodgson). Sadly, this is very true. And perhaps no more so than today. With the rapid decline in the preaching and teaching ministry in many churches, it is no wonder that this is the case. Where our theology is shallow, it will show itself in our worship which will be equally shallow.

c. The most important thing is not where men worship, but how they worship. Worship is first and foremost spiritual, and therefore is contrary to the flesh (Gal 5:17). This text alone should be sufficient to pronounce as entirely unbiblical the modern day cult of ‘body worship’, with its emphasis upon the physical, earthly and sensual. For our worship to be good and acceptable in the sight of our God, it should be marked by propriety and sobriety.

Secondly, in the discourse with the Samaritan woman, Jesus teaches that our views on worship are determined by our views on God.

Knowledge *about* God is the normal means to knowledge *of* God. Jesus himself recognises, endorses and authenticates this great principle of preaching. He proclaims:

a. The nature of God . . . God is Spirit (Jn 4:24)

b. The character of God . . . God is Father (Jn 4:23)

c. The mission of God . . . God is Saviour (Jn 4:23, he seeks and saves the lost, cf. Lk 19:10).

Unquestionably, it is through the gift, ministry and office of preaching that men come to know God. “For since in the wisdom of God the world through its

wisdom did not know God, God was pleased through the foolishness of what was preached to save those who believe” (1 Cor 1:21), and it is through preaching that they grow in their knowledge of him. Consequently, the more we know about God, the fuller, deeper and better our worship.

To sum up: It is through the ministry of preaching that we have access to all revealed truth concerning God (Acts 20:27). Preaching is the key to unlocking the great truths about the God who has called us to worship him.

Let us ask ourselves in closing this section: Is the character of God central in our preaching? Are we clear in our presentation of the biblical view of God’s person and purpose? Do men and women encounter the living God in our sermons?

Thirdly, in speaking to the Samaritan woman Jesus insists that true worship is inextricably linked to truth (Jn 4:20). In the same way, false worship is the result of false teaching. This is evident from Matthew 15:9, ‘They worship me in vain, their teachings are but rules taught by men.’

We should note well that worship is not mindless. That is, it does not by-pass the normal and natural process of thought and speech. Worship occurs when divine truth operates upon these frail human faculties. If God’s truth does not shape our worship, then at best, it is nothing more than mystical, at worst it is nothing less than occultic.

Furthermore worship which is not initiated and regulated by truth (*unchanging* truth) will always pander to the needs, whims and fashions of the day. Is this not what we see all around us today? Worship that is inspired by the Holy Spirit will accord with the truth which has been inspired and preserved by the Holy Spirit.

2 True biblical preaching provides the proper stimulus to public and corporate worship

Undoubtedly, man’s highest destiny, duty and delight is to worship God. But man is constitutionally devoid of the capacity to worship. He has neither the instinct, inclination, ability or power to do so. The same can be said of the believer. Even though he is a spiritual being, he is still in need of motivation, stimulation and animation. How is this accomplished? Let Herbert Carson give us the answer: ‘The stimulus to worship is the presentation of the truth, and the control of the pattern of worship is also the preaching of the Word.’

The Word of God is designed to inspire, illuminate and impel believers to worship the known Christ of Holy Scriptures. This is achieved through the preached Word which arrests their attention, stimulates their thoughts, warms their hearts, quickens their spirits, strengthens their faith, focuses their vision, awakens their consciences, stirs their emotions, melts their reserve, evokes their praise and secures their worship. But does our preaching really have this kind of effect and response on our congregations? Are the people moved to new heights of worship? Do they know what it is like to be ‘lost in wonder, love and praise’ as God’s Word is preached?

3 True biblical preaching sets the believer free to worship God in Spirit and in truth

Let me begin by saying that I know of no clear text of scripture which will support the above statement. Nevertheless, I would argue that whereas it is not explicitly stated, it is I believe strongly implied in such passages as John 8:32, 'And you shall know the truth and the truth shall set you free'. Of course I am well aware that the context and content of the verse is freedom from sin's slavery. The Bible speaks of freedom from sin (Rom 6:18-22), freedom from the law (Rom 7:3; Gal 2:4; 5:13) and freedom from death (Rom 6:21; 8:2), but not only are we free *from* certain things but are made free *for* certain things including freedom to worship. The question as to how the Christian is set free to worship God can have but one answer: The answer is; by truth, biblical truth – divine revelation imparted by the Spirit of God. I will develop this point a little further by returning to a verse which we have already considered: John 4:24 'God is Spirit, and his worshippers must worship in Spirit and truth'. The importance of this verse for our present study centres on three key words, Spirit, truth and worship (the order is mine), and the interrelationship of each to the other. It is the Holy Spirit that leads us into truth (Jn 14:17-26; 16:13; 1 Cor 2:9-13), and it is truth (inspired by the Holy Spirit) that provokes the church to worship (Phil 3:3 'We . . . worship by the Spirit of God'). Take away either the Holy Spirit or the truth and what remains is something other than authentic Christian worship. Having hopefully established that it is the Holy Spirit that leads us to worship on the basis of truth, let me go on to conclude that preaching is the Holy Spirit's normative means by which the church receives and responds to communicated truth, and by it, its members are set free to worship God. Now, let us ask ourselves: Does our preaching bring release to the church? Is it effective in liberating its members from the bondage of formalism, ritualism and traditionalism or for that matter from the bondage to forms intended to demonstrate freedom but which in fact may be cultic in origin and nature.

4 True biblical preaching is attended by the Shekinah Glory of God

Thomas Watson once wrote 'Much of God's glory lies in his truth'. By this I suspect he meant that the Word of God, the Scriptures, functions as the bearer of God's glory. This is equally true of the preached Word. For after all, the preached Word (of course, only as it is faithful to biblical truth) is simply an extension of the written Word. The preached Word is the chief means and medium by which God's glory is revealed. But what are we to understand by the glory of God?

Glory is a rather comprehensive word in scripture, but for this present study I am using it to denote the immediate presence of God. To cite just a few Old Testament scriptures in support of this: Exodus 16:10 'While Aaron was speaking to the whole Israelite community they looked towards the desert and there was the glory of the Lord appearing in the cloud' 'and the glory of the Lord settled on Mount Sinai' (Ex 24:16). 'Then the cloud covered the Tent of Meeting and the glory of the Lord filled the tabernacle' (Ex 40:34).

Furthermore, the glory of the Lord was manifested through the ministry of God's servants. We can see this particular truth illustrated in 1 Kings 8:11 and its parallel verse in 2 Chronicles 5:13,14 'the priests could not perform their service because of the cloud, for the glory of the Lord filled his temple'.

The glory of the Lord in this instance, was a sign and symbol that God was in the midst of his worshipping people. The presence of the Lord was so real, so powerful and so glorious that what the people experienced was in effect a foretaste of heavenly worship. Here we have an example of ministry giving way to majesty. How often do we experience visits of the Holy Spirit upon our gatherings? Occasionally? or perhaps never? When was the last time we enjoyed the outpoured blessing of God? Have we known the felt presence of the living Christ in our midst recently?

5 True biblical worship crowns our worship with God's own immediate word to us

Let me refer you to a well-known incident in Old Testament history as it is recorded in Genesis 22:1-14. It is the account of the near-sacrifice of Isaac to God by Abraham. Interestingly, it is the first time the word 'worship' is used in the Bible and perhaps, therefore, we should take special note of what is written. The obedience of Abraham to the command of God to offer Isaac as a sacrifice (verse 2) is described as worship, 'I and the lad will go yonder to worship' (verse 5). And as we follow the narrative through we find that this most solemn act of worship is climaxed with God's very own word to Abraham in which the covenantal promises were reaffirmed (verses 11-18).

From this let me adduce a number of truths:

a. The God of the Bible is a speaking God and he has chosen to communicate his heart, mind and will to his people. He visits his covenant people *with* his truth and *in* his truth. This is a most glorious and precious reality. In the words from a title of a book by the late Francis Schaeffer, 'He is there and he is not silent', God speaks. He has spoken partly through creation (Rom 1:20), partly through conscience (Rom 2:15), partly through the Old Testament prophets (Heb 1:1), but obviously, he has spoken most clearly and most completely in and through his Son (Heb 1:2). God's Son, the gospel of John tells us, has fully expounded and exegeted the incomprehensible and infinite God (1:18). In fact, he is the Word (the Logos) by whom God speaks (7:16; 8:28,40; 12:49) and makes himself known.

b. Contrary to popular belief, worship is not merely one-way activity (man to God), but is the highest, richest and greatest form of dialogue (God-man-God) that a person can ever experience. This is a staggering thought, but it is wholly true.

c. In these last days God does not speak to us by theophany, visions or with a direct voice from heaven. Instead God's ordained way of revealing himself is



Danny G. Roten from Oklahoma City, missionary to Mexico, at the International Baptist Conference, Toronto, with David Kingdon. 300 attended a very successful conference which is to be described in the next issue. David Kingdon is due to give a key address at the forthcoming Carey Conference at Ripon, see page 4.

through the 'ministry of men from the very mouth of God' (Calvin), or to be more precise the gift of preaching ('the gift of proclaiming God's Word' 1 Tim 4:14 J.B.P.). It is through the medium of preaching that the words of Jesus 'he that hears you, hears me' (Luke 10:16) find their proper fulfilment. Preaching is the primary God-given means by which God confronts, challenges and comforts his people, and through which he makes himself accessible.

Sadly, so very often we have not met with him, nor heard him, and consequently not responded to him. We see much the same truth as expressed in Psalm 95: 'O come let us worship and bow down, let us kneel before the Lord our Maker' (verse 6). Once again, we see that the act of worship is crowned by and culminates in God's very own word from heaven (verses 8 and 9). Let us, as both preachers and hearers ask ourselves: Are our ears ever open to hear God's voice (Heb 4:7)? Do we listen in faith for the calls and commands of the Shepherd (Jn 10:16)? Do we wait expectantly for what the Spirit has to say to the churches (Rev 2:7,11,17)?

Conclusion

I have claimed a very great deal for preaching in this article. We should not worship preaching, and certainly never the preacher. My objective has been to show that worship is the proper and appropriate response to true biblical preaching. This article is an attempt to give back to preaching its due and proper status as the cause, control and climax of worship in the life of the body of Christ.

Once a ‘Prophet’

The Testimony of Tony Bickley who is a member of the Reformed Baptist Church, Chelmsley Wood, Birmingham.

My life was a mess! Eighteen years of excessive gambling, drinking, smoking, and fifteen years of drug taking had taken their toll. In trouble with the police on account of my involvement with drugs, I began to search frantically for God. I prayed, ‘Lord, I am not strong enough to come to you on my own, please call Liz also.’ Soon after, to my amazement, I discovered that Liz, my wife, was also seeking God.

We visited a number of churches and were desperate to receive spiritual help. We asked a Baptist minister to visit us, but our plea fell upon deaf ears. The search continued for three months when we saw a poster advertising ‘Mission England’ meetings. We found ourselves listening to Billy Graham at the Villa Park Football Ground on 4th July 1984. God, in his mercy, saved both of us that day, and the habits that had so bound me went within a few weeks.

Introduction to Pentecostalism

We told our counsellor at Villa Park that our church was a certain Congregational church where our eldest daughter had been christened. The minister there, contacted in the ‘follow-up’ work, was too busy to see us. He passed our details to a small Pentecostal fellowship which hired his church premises on Sunday evenings. This fellowship was led by a man who claimed to be an apostle, prophet and a teacher; his wife was the pastor and evangelist! At my first church meeting, I was told that the Gifts of the Spirit were still in the church today; that I needed to be baptized in the Spirit with tongues speaking as the evidence. I was promised, that following this blessing, other gifts would be available

to me — interpretation of tongues, prophesying, words of knowledge, healing, etc. My initial reaction was one of surprise and scepticism, but I submitted to the laying on of hands. Nothing happened!

A week later, some lively songs and a forceful message from the Bible really had us hyped up and excited. The prophet, a man with a strong personality, prayed for me. I felt something happening and spoke in tongues a few days later. Sadly, another new convert, who received her ‘Baptism’ at the same time, has fallen away, and is in a worse state than before.

Progression in the ‘Gifts’

I was encouraged to step out in faith in the use of the ‘Gifts’. My personality being what it was, I plunged headlong into seeking to fulfil this ministry. I prayed that God would use me in these areas and soon after, there was a message in tongues, followed by a pause. The prophet said that God had shown him that someone had the interpretation, and that they should obey God and give it — so I did! (I had often sat during tongues messages, wondering whether I had the interpretation, or whether it was my own imagination. The prophet’s encouragement was all that I needed.) I spoke out using many ‘thee’s’ and ‘thou’s’ and a few ‘thus saith the Lord’. I did feel good as my ego was fed by one and another patting me on the back and saying, ‘Brother, God is really blessing you.’ I felt that I had arrived spiritually; I was certainly treated differently — more grown up — no longer a babe in Christ,

though I had been a Christian less than six months!

As I continued interpreting tongues, I was not satisfied — I wanted to prophesy! Eventually, I did! It was a scathing prophecy, berating the fellowship for its lack of commitment. We all loved to hear such prophecies, reasoning, ‘God surely loves us because he is chastening us.’

From one church to another

We did not remain in this fellowship much longer as we discovered that some aspects of its teaching on forgiveness and sanctification were not biblical. We were still convinced Pentecostals, however, and started our own church in partnership with a man who had pastored several Pentecostal churches. We called ourselves the ‘Zion Full Gospel Fellowship’ and took most of our direction from prophecies and interpretation of tongues. We set out to conquer Birmingham for God. I am thankful that a lady who has since died from cancer, was saved through this ministry — no thanks to my erroneous ways, but to God, who is merciful! We were later told in an interpretation, ‘I have brought you together to do a work.’ About three weeks afterwards, the pastor went to Wales, leaving us to fend for ourselves. We joined an Elim Pentecostal church.

It would appear that we had forsaken charismatic extremism for a denomination which is a bastion of Pentecostal balance and orthodoxy. Things have changed! Many Elim churches have embraced charismatic excesses hook, line and sinker. In no time, I was prophesying, interpreting, praying for the sick, speaking ‘words of knowledge’ into situations and advising people to go for counselling and so-called ‘inner-healing’. I was doing the same things that I did at the other fellowship, but I now had more than 100 people to pat me on the back. My ego was at a peak!

The Darker Side

Much of what is said ‘in the Spirit’, apart from the erroneous practice, is quite harmless — quotes from Scripture and general exhortation. There is, however, a darker side. Some are using prophecy, interpretation and words of knowledge to manipulate congregations. Some well known practitioners travel from church to church, leaving behind a trail of failed prophecies and unhealed sick people. I recall the ‘act’ of an American couple, Charles and Paula Slagle, who call themselves ‘Prophetic Psalmists’. They perform in Pentecostal and Charismatic churches throughout the world. They were at our church in September 1987. They warned that they do not get all of their prophecies right as they are subject to human frailty. They receive messages regarding past, present and future details of people’s lives; they read letters from God, sometimes signed off as ‘Dad’. Their leaflet explains that clairvoyance is the counterfeit of such ministries as theirs. On the surface, the only difference is that Spiritists claim to get their messages from departed loved ones, rather than God. Another well known travelling couple (English) are Mr. and Mrs. Lloyd. Thelma Lloyd is the preacher, prophetess and healer. I will come back to her shortly.

My Shame

While I am now appalled at these practices, I must confess that I was no better. John, a blind youth, resentful because of his condition, visited our Elim church. Two deacons, and four or five others, including myself, laid hands on him and prayed — all to no avail. I shared with one of the deacons that I felt that John would see within three days. I was asked to tell him this, and did so. Our friend, Steve Healy, sat with him in the Young People’s meeting on the evening of the third day. John was eagerly anticipating his healing and folk

were praying for him. He is still blind, still unsaved, and very bitter. I feel thoroughly ashamed!

The Great Change

In the latter half of 1987 I started questioning the fact that visiting ministers made statements 'in the Spirit' that subsequently proved to be false. Thelma Lloyd, while praying for a woman with cancer, said that she saw the cancer shrivelling. Three months later, the unfortunate woman died. A man who was also told in prophecy that he would recover has since died. She also claimed to see a man's cataracts disappearing — they have since disappeared — through the skill of a surgeon! Thelma Lloyd told others in prophecy that they would be healed, but to this day almost 12 months later, they remain unhealed.

There was much 'binding' and 'loosing' practised in the church, but the things 'bound' were still loose, and the things 'loosed' were still bound. 'Why?' I asked, 'Why?' I turned to God's Word, and then said to Liz, 'I don't believe that our Baptism in the Spirit was the same as that of the apostles; we must pray for a baptism of fire.' We prayed, also asking the Lord to lead us into all truth by his Holy Spirit. Praise God, our prayer was answered, though not in the way in which we anticipated. One of our friends, Steve Healy, who had embraced the doctrines of grace, paid us a visit and told us about them. After he left us, I marshalled all my arguments to refute him. I thought that I was all prepared for Steve when he next called on us a week later. We read Romans 9 together and the Lord opened our eyes to the truths of unconditional election and particular redemption. As we met with Steve in the succeeding weeks, the other truths of Calvinism became apparent. We also came to recognise that if God's Word was inspired and all

sufficient for faith and practice, present day prophesying was excluded. My Arminian church was already wrong on many issues and I saw that they were wrong on this issue also. Steve introduced us to Pastor Alec Taylor in October 1987. He loaned tapes to us and spent time with us explaining from Scripture the doctrine of the Baptism of the Holy Spirit. Alec was also able to answer all my unanswered questions concerning spiritual gifts. In November 1987, I was approached about joining the diaconate of the church. I was now obliged to discuss with the pastor the many differences that I now had with the teaching of the church. I challenged the pastor on the question of Thelma Lloyd, 'In the light of her false prophecies, would you have her back to minister in the church?' His reply greatly disturbed me. He was thoughtful for a few seconds and then said, 'Put that way, I would have to say, "No".' This suggested to me, that had I not raised the question, the answer would have been, 'Yes'. When I later raised this issue with one of the deacons, there was a similar response.

Greener Pastures

I am grateful to Steve and Pastor Alec Taylor for their help and support during this traumatic period; for the love and patience shown to Liz and myself, and for the prayers of their church. We have now joined them in worshipping God reverently and listening to the faithful preaching of the Word.

We still have many Pentecostal friends who showed us love and consideration while we were with them. Most of those I know have a genuine love for the Lord and a desire to reach the lost with the Gospel. I am optimistic that many yet will come to embrace the doctrines of grace and be delivered from their delusion.

Jim Packer, Zechariah and Revival

A Report on the 1988 Southern Baptist Founders' Conference



Pat Stewart and Tom Nettles — speakers at the conference

The largest gathering in the history of the Southern Baptist Founders' Conference, with 243 registrants and close to 275 in attendance during the evening sessions, met on the campus of Rhodes College in Memphis, Tennessee, 2nd-5th August. The theme for the 1988 conference being 'Revival', the speakers examined the subject from various perspectives, always with an emphasis on experimental and pastoral application.

The opening session on Monday afternoon was begun with a warm welcome to this sixth annual conference by Pastor Ernest Reisinger. Following the opening remarks, Pastor George Martin, of Kosmosdale Baptist Church in Louisville, Kentucky, preached from Psalm 80. Recalling the care, graciousness, and power of his God, the Psalmist called upon Jehovah to remember his people in their day of distress. With ascending emotion and earnestness, he pleaded with God to turn his people and

to pour out his blessings upon them. Thus, encouragement was offered to follow the example of the Psalmist, and to cry out to God continually, that he would do likewise in our day and bring revival to our churches.

In the first evening session Dr. James Millikin, Professor at Mid-America Baptist Theological Seminary, addressed the topic 'Preaching of Repentance in Times of Revival'. From 2 Chronicles 7:14 and the phrase "then will I hear from heaven", Dr. Millikin described the source of revival, the concern of God for his people, and the requirements made of the people (summed up in one word — repentance). Dr. Millikin then elucidated five principles connected with the preaching of repentance during times of revival:

1. The preacher must be convinced that repentance is a command of God and the responsibility of man,
2. The preacher himself must have a repentant heart,

3. The preaching of repentance necessarily exposes sin,
4. The preaching of repentance is the God given means by which warning is made of the terrible consequences of sin, and
5. This type of preaching requires great spiritual courage.

The opening message on Wednesday morning was one of two which dealt primarily with historical matters. Pastor Doug Barcroft gave a biographical sketch of Asahel Nettleton, a Congregational evangelist in 19th century New England. In an address particularly suited to the contemporary situation, Pastor Barcroft described Nettleton the preacher, the one-on-one counsellor, and the defender of revival. In this last, Nettleton was seen in his role as a defender of true spiritual revival against the encroaching ideas of Charles Finney and his followers. Nettleton's methodology always was solidly biblical, leading to the observation of two hallmarks of Nettleton's ministry, characteristics which we might long to see more of in our own day, and which flowed naturally and practically from his theology: exactness of doctrine and the unspuriousness of his converts.

In the second morning session on Wednesday, Dr. James I. Packer brought the first of three studies on the topic of revival. Giving an overview of the major elements of revival, Dr. Packer drew from Psalm 85:6 and chapters 2-11 of Acts. From the former he expressed the idea of revival – it is God quickening and restoring life where it has been non-existent; the subject of revival – God's people; the agent of revival – God; the circumstances out of which revival develops – the moribund state of the church; and the consequences of revival – God's people rejoice in God. These concepts were then enlarged in an examination of the work of God as depicted in the opening chapters of Acts.

Dr. Packer, in his two subsequent messages on revival, focused on the work of revival as portrayed in chapters one through eight of the prophecies of Zechariah. Here are found a series of visions in which the elements of revival are set forth. The visions entitled, with their lessons stated, are as follows.

TITLE *Divine Intercession* (1:8-17)

LESSON Revival flows from God's sovereign and gracious initiative

TITLE *God Overthrowing Secular Powers* (1:18-21)

LESSON Revival means the overthrowing of hostile opposing forces

TITLE *God Transforming Israel* (2:1-13)

LESSON Revival means a renewed experience of God's enriching presence

TITLE *God Cleansing Joshua* (3:1-10)

LESSON Revival means a rediscovery of the blessing of justification

TITLE *God's People Burning as a Candlestick and Maintained by God's Provision* (4:1-14)

LESSON Whether in times of revival or not, God's people shall be sustained by their God

TITLE *The Immoral and Their Judgment* (5:1-4)

LESSON Revival means judgment on the lawless and the hypocrites

TITLE *God Removing Wickedness From Among his People* (5:5-11)

LESSON Revival means the purging of sin from the lives of the saints

TITLE *God Showing his Sovereign Power in the World* (6:1-8)

LESSON Revival shows God still to be on his throne and victorious

In his closing remarks Dr. Packer reminded all that revival is the work of God, and because of this, even in the most difficult of circumstances revival can come. Exhortation from God's Word was given to pray and work, and to keep on until the day of small things becomes the day of great things by God's grace and power.

Patrick Stewart, newly called Pastor of North Pompano Baptist Church in Florida, spoke on 'The Biblical Doctrine of Depravity', a truth which is intimately connected with the concept of revival. It is because of man's nature that a divine work of grace is necessary for life. Examining the opening accounts of Genesis, Pastor Stewart defined the doctrine by stating what depravity is and is not. Turning to Romans 3:9-18, Pastor Stewart described depraved man and reminded all present of that which must be the testimony of every Christian: 'This was I! Before grace intervened, this was I!' By way of application, those present were reminded of the necessity of regeneration and its priority to faith; of the bankruptcy of contemporary methodology (many get responses, but they are dead responses), and the need to perceive the seriousness of our own previous condition.

The evening sessions on Wednesday and Thursday were devoted to biblical preaching, and two men, neither of which are strangers to the conference, preached. David Miller, Director of Missions for the Little Red River Association of Baptists in Arkansas, preached from Hosea 14:1-4. From these verses was expounded 'The Proposition', i.e., God invites the backslidden nation to return. Here is hope, that as long as God is inviting, it is not too late for revival. 'The Predicament' of the people was such that a change was required. Here is a lesson, that a religion which will not change one's life will not save the soul nor take

one to heaven. 'The Prayer for Revival' was examined, and a 'Pardon Promised' to those who pray such a prayer. Here is free grace, that even when we have prayed, still God owes us nothing, but he sovereignly and graciously blesses.

On Wednesday afternoon, Dr. Tom Nettles, of Memphis, Tennessee, documented the place of doctrinal preaching in the ministry of Jonathan Edwards. Always, by this sort of preaching, Edwards sought to convince his hearers of the joy of knowing and enjoying God for who he is, and the criminality of offering anything less than a perfect worship. His doctrinal preaching was Christ centred, aiming to strip the sinner of all sense of self-righteousness and to convince him of his danger, and directing him to Christ alone for salvation. By way of exhortation, and using the example of Edwards. Those present were reminded that gospel ministers have a task of work and study constantly before them. God and his ways must be searched out and presented and applied appropriately, so that the hearers are made to sense and to feel the things spoken of.

On Thursday evening, Pastor James Gables of Birmingham, Alabama, spoke on 'The Personality of the Lord Jesus Christ'. Following an historical review of errors held and taught concerning Christ, Pastor Gables masterfully pictured Jesus Christ as human and divine — 'God manifest in the flesh' — and explained the relation of the two natures. Good doctrinal preaching always is applicatory to life, and Pastor Gables clearly demonstrated that in Jesus Christ the believer has a suitable Saviour and an understanding friend. In Christ, the God-Man, the believer finds all he needs for the beginning and the continuation of the Christian life.

Dr. Stephen Haines, Southern Baptist missionary to Cali, Colombia, took two

continued on page 32

John Owen on Apostasy

A review article by the editor

John Owen on the Christian Life, Sinclair Ferguson, 294 pages, clothbound, Banner of Truth, £9.95.

This is one of the most valuable volumes published by Banner. It is like going to the best carvery and having the choicest pieces cut off what is already the highest quality beef.

The work begins with a 19 page biography of this Prince of the Puritans, and then concentrates on 10 areas of theology from the 16 volumes of his works. The subjects chosen are:

1. The plan of Salvation (the covenants)
2. Grace Reigns through Righteousness
3. Fellowship with the Trinity
4. Assurance of Salvation
5. Conflict with Sin
6. The Fellowship of the Saints (the doctrine of the Church)
7. Scripture and Ministry
8. Sacraments and Prayer
9. Apostasy and its Prevention
10. Perseverance and the Goal

As one who has benefited much from reading Owen I heartily concur with the above choice, all highly relevant for us today, and all of which engender a desire to read the originals.

I will recommend seven strands from the above.

1. Under *The Reign of Grace* there is a section on the use of the Law which is needful. The Law reveals the character of God; The Law reveals the duty of man. The Law brings a man to Christ in three stages; it shows him *his state* as a sinner; it reveals the *sinfulness of sin*; it is used by the Holy Spirit to reveal the

bondage of sin, death, and Satan, to make man long for deliverance and thus seek Christ as Liberator. The Law was never given as a means of justification, but the righteousness that the Law requires is written upon the heart in regeneration, by which the believer receives a new principle of obedience. Owen was particularly competent in explaining the preparatory work preceding the new birth. The preparatory work affects the mind, conscience, affections and conversation — *but not the will*. But regeneration involves the renewal of the will (p. 53).

2. *Communion with the Trinity*. Distinctive communion with the Father, Son and Holy Spirit should become more meaningful as we progress in the Christian life. Owen expounded only two books of Scripture, Hebrews, in six extensive volumes (perhaps Dr. Ferguson might yet produce as a companion volume, the quintessence of Owen on Hebrews in about 250 pages), and an exposition of the Song of Solomon in 272 pages (Works Vol. 1). Communion with the Holy Spirit Owen considers under the headings, Indwelling, Anointing, Earnest, and Comforter.

3. *Assurance of Salvation*. This chapter is rich (pp. 99-124), especially the section on the sealing of the Spirit. Here the author indulges in a most welcome excursus on historical theology comparing Owen with Calvin, Perkins, Paul Baynes, Richard Sibbes, John Cotton, John Preston, Thomas Goodwin and Richard Baxter. While there were differences of interpretation what we should note is the emphasis of all these pastors on the reality of

experience. Said Owen: 'The Holy Spirit seals the believer by his personal indwelling. But the recognition and enjoyment of his presence is a matter concerning which no rules may be prescribed in terms of a rigid identifiable experience' (p. 123). Owen did not deny that Christians may have 'special' experiences.

4. *Conflict with sin*. Owen preached a series of sermons in Oxford on the theme of mortification which were published in 1656, this work being only 80 pages and based on Romans 8:13. Dr. Ferguson's synopsis of the work is excellent but inevitably only a fraction of the power of the original comes through. Owen on mortification is one of the great classics of Christian literature. It was frequently published in his lifetime and could well be published separately today because of its extreme relevance.

5. *The Fellowship of the Saints* (the doctrine of the Church). Owen was an independent and was severely taken to task for that by the well known Westminster Divine, Daniel Cawdrey, in two books, one of which bears the title *Independency a Great Schism*. Yet Owen recognized 'the validity of a synod, at which delegates meet to discuss and determine matters of mutual importance. They may be called to prevent divisions and avoid offences against mutual love; to advance the cause of the gospel by a joint confession of faith; to testify against current errors, and to advise those churches which find themselves in difficulties' (p. 172, cf. Works vol. 16 pp. 195ff.).

Owen wrote powerfully on the nature of schism and Dr. Ferguson opens up this theme too but the reader will want to consult the original as the subject is so topical since we face the Ecumenical movement and its lack of truth on the

one hand, and the need for true evangelical unity on the other (cf. Works vol. 13 pp. 208-343).

6. *Apostasy and its Prevention*. This section is of great importance today. John Owen wrote his treatise on Apostasy in 1676 when he was alarmed by the decline of evangelical and reformed religion. What an amazing period was the Puritan age 1558 to 1662, and beyond! Apart from Owen it is difficult to find anything which is truly analytical on this period of catastrophic decline, and even more difficult to find anything that investigates in depth the causes of apostasy. Apostasy is the term used to denote not backsliding from which there is recovery, but irrevocable decline from professing faith in Christ to eternal death. What in the history of the Church can compare with the apostasy of our times? I am referring to the devastation caused by Liberalism over the last 130 years.

Typical of Puritan titles Owen gives us the contents and tells us where he is going in his 259 page treatise (cf. Works vol. 7):

The Nature of Apostasy from the Profession of the Gospel and the Punishment of Apostates Declared, an exposition of Hebrews 6:4-6; with an inquiry into the causes and reasons for the decay of the power of religion in the world, or the present general decline from the truth, holiness and worship of the gospel; also, of the proneness of churches and persons of all sorts into apostasy. With remedies and means of Prevention.

In his analysis and presentation of Owen on this subject, the author gives us just a little contemporary criticism of Owen's exegesis of Hebrews 6:4-6 citing I. H. Marshall. It would be difficult to improve on the comprehensive survey of work on Hebrews 6:4-6 by Garry Phillips in *R.T.* 98.

Owen lists six particular causes of real apostasy from the gospel which include a rooted enmity to spiritual things, ignorance of spiritual truth, innate pride, groundless complacency, love of the world, and the subtle power of Satan to exploit these traits to the full.

Owen demonstrates that apostasy is not only from gospel holiness and gospel truth but can also take place in gospel worship. He reminds his readers that the Jews of Jesus' day apostatised in worship, as did the Church of Rome by changing the ordinances entirely, replacing the way of salvation by Christ with a complex system of human merit.

Before we start congratulating ourselves that we would never be guilty of that, we should first hear what Owen has to say. Decline is incipient. It begins within with a lack of love. The outward structure of worship may continue but the inward affection can be lost. Many evangelicals, including those who pride themselves on being Reformed, are self-confident about their position because they believe they have the truth. What they do not recognise is that having the truth is inadequate if they do not love the God of that truth, as well as the family who practice that truth. What many seem blind to is that their love for the world is paramount. They are blind to this because all their pleasures and interests, their hobbies, sports, musical interests, social activities are perfectly respectable. Holiness to them is merely the avoidance of anything scandalous.

A passionate love to God is rare and some show very little evidence of practical love for unbelievers or for fellow Christians, especially if they are not in the same social mould or class. Spiritual apostasy shows in an attitude of impatience with spiritual worship and especially with preaching which demands the mind. There is in many a serious disinclination to suffer dis-

comfort of any kind including the intellectual discipline which is a necessity if there is to be growth in knowledge and grace (Rom 12:1,2; 2 Pet 3:18). There is a preference for the packaged and the predictable and a profound rejection of the mortification of inward corruption which Owen insists upon as an absolute necessity for progress in holy living.

Owen recognises fully that lack of love and lukewarmness provoke God as we see in the letters to Ephesus and Laodicea. Declares Owen, 'In the meantime, God himself is not idle, for he, in his holy, righteous judgment, gives them up unto *further delusions*. By removing their candlestick, he deprives them of their means of light. He may even send a strong delusion so that they believe a lie, or smite them with blindness of mind and hardness of heart. The fearful thing about such apostasy lies in its confirmation by God himself' (p. 241).

The whole object of Owen's treatise on apostasy is to provide remedies to prevent the calamity of individuals and churches from falling away. Spiritual mindedness is the preservative. In 1681 Owen wrote a 221 page exposition on Romans 8:6 with the title, 'The Grace and Duty of Being Spiritually Minded'. As with all his work he went to the root of the matter defining exactly what is involved in spiritual mindedness. He is practical in explaining how a spiritual mind can be developed.

7. Sacraments and Prayer. While Owen very clearly adopted the principle of the 'gathered' church, he believed that the children of believers were part of it. We believe that too, but do not believe that this provides a warrant to baptise them. The issues are presented in a lucid way by Dr. Ferguson who cites Bannerman to show that infant baptism is not the same as adult baptism. Non-baptists, as

News

Fourth International Baptist Conference, 17th-21st October, 1988, sponsored by Toronto Baptist Seminary and Bible College, and held at Jarvis St. Baptist Church.

The theme of this conference was 'The Christian and the Future' and a full report will be included in the next issue. The conference provides a unique opportunity to find out more about the work of Reformed Baptists in various parts of the world, and we summarise some of the main concerns shared.

West Germany

Burkhard and Diane Wendel are graduates of Toronto Baptist Seminary, and are engaged in an unusual ministry in Breitscheid. They are 'house parents' of a Christian home for people with a variety of special needs, some of whom might otherwise be in institutions. Burkhard's parents had a ministry of hospitality for lonely people, and had a desire to extend this beyond what was possible in their own home. A large factory has been purchased and converted into a beautiful home, large enough to accommodate up to 15 people. Burkhard and Diane, helped by Burkhard's sister, run the home and provide spiritual and practical leadership. Several of the members of this extended family were previously involved in drug or alcohol abuse, or have other difficulties in leading a normal life. All are integrated into the local church and have a normal work routine: there is daily work on furniture renovation, crafts etc.

Jamaica

Hurricane Gilbert (called 'Killbert' by some) has left a trail of devastation which will take decades to put right. In the short term, there are acute shortages of food, medical supplies, clothing and building materials. Rev. Wilf Bauman of Jarvis St. visited several Reformed Baptist churches soon after the disaster; he found the overwhelming response to be gratitude for life spared. But much

I show in my book *Testimony of Baptism*, are compelled to take one of several options each basically representing a different position in order to accommodate infant baptism. I am glad that as a Reformed Baptist I have a thoroughly consistent view of this matter. There is only one baptism and it symbolises the believer's union with Christ. Owen is superbly forthright and detailed as to what constitutes a credible profession of faith. He is a delight to Baptists on this theme (see p. 178ff.). Until they evidence this credible profession children of believers are

sanctified, in the sense of being set apart (1 Cor 7:14).

I do not wish to end this review on a controversial note but rather point out that reluctantly I have had to leave out much of value. The book is a gem to handle and beautifully designed and presented. John Owen would himself be gratified. The author could have been a bit more daring in the biography because Owen was really much more of a colourful personality than depicted in the opening section, but he probably had brevity in mind.

prayer is needed for our friends there, as reconstruction will be a heart-breakingly slow business. Many church members have lost literally all they possess. Jarvis St. Church has co-ordinated the sending of relief from Canadian Baptist churches, and gifts may be sent to: Rev. W. P. Bauman, Jarvis St. Baptist Church, 130 Gerrard St. East, TORONTO, Canada, M5A 3T4.

Madagascar

Pastor Miara Rabenja graduated from TBS in 1978 and the following year began church planting. Although the beginning was very small he declined financial support from abroad as he wished the church to learn stewardship from the commencement. There are now nine churches. Pastor Rabenja stresses that growth numerically must not be emphasised at the expense of maturity; believers need to be well grounded. A Bible College has begun in full association with the local churches; there are five students. The foundations are being laid carefully for the future. It is hoped that the 1689 Confession of Faith will be translated into Malagasy for the tercentenary of the Confession next year.

Fiji

Vijay and Narsama Chandra continue to lead a church on the outskirts of Suva. About 40 to 50 meet each Sunday in their home. Vijay's work has been among Indians, who come from Moslem or Hindu backgrounds. Prayer is needed for these converts, as they are often regarded as traitors to their race and culture. The vast majority of native Fijians are nominally Christian, but Christianity has been discredited in the eyes of the Indians (who constitute about half the population) because of discrimination practised against the Asian community. Prayer is also requested for an extension work about 100km from Vijay's home; Vijay has been meeting regularly with a group of about ten with a view to starting another church. Enmity between races is a major problem, and prayer is needed that reconciliation 'in Christ' would be a testimony to the power of the Gospel.

1988 Westminster Conference

Westminster Chapel, London, England

13th and 14th December

1588 The Counter Reformation and England: John Marshall

The Connection between 17th Century British and Dutch Calvinism:
Douglas MacMillan

Moving the Heart – The Preaching of John Bunyan: John Harris

1688: Battle Won or Lost: Frank Orna-Ornstein

Christmas Evans and the Demonstration of the Spirit: Ian Childs

1738: The Wesley Brothers: Hearts Strangely Warmed: Paul Cook

£19 Registration fee including meals to be sent to **John Miller**, 55 Warwick Road, Thornton Heath, Surrey CR4 7NH, not later than 3rd December. Cheques made out to THE WESTMINSTER CONFERENCE.

JIM PACKER, ZECHARIAH AND REVIVAL

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sessions to examine the topic 'The Doctrines of Grace and Missions'. In the first, on Thursday morning, Dr. Haines examined confessions of faith and their importance in world missions. Having recalled and explained the historical circumstances out of which several confessions originated, and how the specific wording reflected those times, comment was made that the doctrines of grace must be restated in the framework of our day. No call was made to try to change the truth (truth does not change), but only to state the truth in light of the particular exigencies of our own day. In particular, note was made of the often heard accusation that Calvinism is antagonistic to mission enterprise. In light of this, and since the vast majority of the world's population does not name the name of Christ, those present were exhorted to guide their efforts and to frame their thinking with the evangelisation of the whole world as their guiding principle.

Dr. Haines closed the conference on Friday morning by asking and answering the question, 'What must one do to be saved?' In what turned out to be a preview of next year's conference, the

relationship of the law and the gospel was examined. On the foreign mission field, as in the United States, most professing Christians are not convinced of the need for the preaching of the law. Those present in this last session, however, were reminded that the normal way that men come to the Christ of the gospel is not by the dangle of 'goodies' before them like sugar sticks, but by the conviction of the holy law of God.

The 1988 conference was indeed an encouragement to pray and to labour faithfully in the various fields in which God had placed each servant. As Dr. Packer declared, the Word of God sends each home to pray and work, keeping on until the day of small things become the day of great things, when God sends revival.

The 1989 Founders' Conference is scheduled for 1st-4th August again at Rhodes College. The theme will be 'The Law and the Gospel'. The principal guest speaker will be Walter Chantry, pastor of Grace Baptist Church, Carlisle, Pennsylvania.

George Martin, Kosmosdale Baptist Church, Louisville, Kentucky.

Remember Demas

The apostle Paul relates in one sentence a very sad fact, 'Demas, because he loved this world, has deserted me' (2 Tim 4:10).

Paul's experience of the world had been dreadful (2 Cor 10:22-28). Perhaps Demas had a comfortable haven which beckoned him away from the dangers and discomforts of a Christian ministry. Missionaries in particular turn their backs on countless advantages and 'creature comforts' of modern 'Western' life. They look on the unseen and on the spiritual rewards, and especially the approval of Christ, 'Well done, good and faithful servant!'

Let us all resist the temptation to give up or go back. There is great sadness and pathos in Paul's words, 'Demas has deserted me!'

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