

REFORMATION TODAY



(see inside front cover)

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The Carey Conference for Ministers

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College of Ripon and York St John, Yorkshire

Theme *Revival*

Up until about 1860 or 1870 Christians thought in terms of revival. If the churches declined; if there was little power in the preaching; if there were few conversions; the believers would think in terms of fasting and prayer. They said, 'Should we not have a time of confession and humiliation and prayer to God imploring him to visit us again?' In other words it is part of our Reformed heritage to link the means of grace with revival. Hence in view of the vast need to evangelise the world Jonathan Edwards advocated the Concert of Prayer, which concept caught on in practice and led, as Michael Haykin showed in the article, 'Can we Pray and Work for Worldwide Revival?', to an extensive revival among the Particular Baptists in England, not to mention the launching of the missionary William Carey and others (1790-1830).

Hans von Staden, the leader of the Dorothea Mission which has been mightily used of God to the needy Black urban townships of South Africa, arranged the first of what was to become a series of 100 weeks of Prayer for the World. Hans von Staden also pioneered the concept of fuelling prayer with information which has over the years led to the publication of *OPERATION WORLD*. This has become the most popular and up to date informative tool to assist us in our prayers for worldwide evangelisation, reformation and revival.

Revival is a broad subject: One single aspect is power in preaching. Another is an analysis of the obstacles. In discussing obstacles last time the observation of Dr Lloyd Jones was not mentioned. He suggested that theological seminaries have become an important factor in the lack of interest in revival that has come about. Gradually, suggests the doctor, the learned and intellectual aspect of Christianity has predominated at the cost of the spiritual aspect and the place of the Person and Work of the Holy Spirit.¹ He was careful to point out that there need be no incompatibility whatever between learning and spirituality. The more learning we have the better, but it should be learning saturated with spirituality. In the qualifications for eldership 'apt to teach' is only one requirement and quality of life all the rest.

In recent years the stress on the subject of the Spirit has been in the direction of sensationalism; miracles, healings and prophecies. That has been unprofitable. We need to focus, as did our forefathers, on the all important and urgent need for the world to be convinced of sin, righteousness and judgment (Jn 16:8-11).

Conference Secretary, John Rubens, 22 Leith Road, Darlington Co Durham DL3 8BG.

¹ Dr Martyn Lloyd-Jones, *The Puritans, their Origins and Successors*, Banner of Truth, 1987, p. 6.

Front cover: *As reported in R.T.109 (p. 19), twenty-one men from Edgewood Baptist Church, Anderson, Indiana, gave just over two weeks each to work on a building project in Haiti. The picture shows the work on the construction of a school. All schooling on the island is provided by missions. There are no other schools.*

Editorial

Ecumenical Advance in England, Wales and Scotland

On Friday, 4th September, 1987, 'The Swanwick Declaration' was adopted by representatives of about 36 Denominations and Associations of Churches in England, Wales and Scotland, including the Baptist Union of Great Britain and Ireland (really the B.U. of England).¹ Also included in the number were the Christian Brethren, the Roman Catholic Church, the U.R.C., Salvation Army, Methodists, the Greek Orthodox Church and the Unitarian Church.

The closest organisational unity is envisaged by 'The Swanwick Declaration'. A book of about 110 pages has been prepared which describes how close organisational unity will work in practice. Recently the B.U. of England voted on the implementation of the Swanwick Declaration. The result was about four to one in favour. Evangelicals in the B.U. opposed to the Ecumenical Movement complain that there is no effective way for them to explain their opposition. Their paper *The Baptist Times* maintains a strong Ecumenical policy. Those in opposition tend to be isolated. Here and there a voice may be heard crying in the wilderness.²

The advance of the Ecumenical Movement is more likely to be felt in England than in Wales where it will be resisted by the Evangelical Movement of Wales, in Ireland where the B.U. is evangelical and robust and where opposition by Presbyterians to union with Rome is strong, and in Scotland where the Free Church of Scotland is consistently reformed and anti-ecumenical.

It is hard to see where any cohesive opposition to the Ecumenical Movement will come from in England. Opposition by evangelicals in Liverpool (The Merseyside Gospel Witness) has been silenced, the independent churches being too fragmented, weak and disunited to achieve any meaningful unity or cooperation. All is not bleak however. Reformed Baptist Churches continue to multiply throughout England. It is important that such churches should maximise their unity. When Particular Baptists (Reformed Baptists) first emerged in England it was in the most adverse circumstances, the period 1660-1688 being a time of extreme persecution. During that period John Bunyan spent 12 years in prison. David Kingdon has demonstrated (see *R.T.* 103) that unity and growth was achieved by the forming of closely knit regional associations.

This example is being followed today in some areas of England as well as in other countries (see *R.T.* 104). The example of the R.B.'s in South Africa is reported on page 21. These Associations are committed to the 1689 Confession of Faith. That does not help B.U. churches which oppose the present policy of incorporation into the 'New National Church'. Some of these churches, while anti-ecumenical, are not united with regard to the Reformed Faith. Pressure from the Ecumenical Movement may prompt such churches to associate

together using a thoroughly evangelical doctrinal statement such as that which forms the basis of the Baptist Union of Ireland.

Leaders of the B.U. claim with some justification that when churches secede from the Union they go into isolation and inevitably wither or die. Whilst this is an exaggeration, we have to concede that it has some truth in it. It is important to understand that all churches of all denominations exercise independency in the administration of their own affairs. The difference arises when it comes to how individual churches express their unity with other churches of like mind. Some do it denominationally, others by Presbyterianism, others by Episcopacy and yet others by association. It is interesting to note that even the strictest independent churches who resist and censure every form of denominationalism or association, are often Episcopalian in practice because they almost always have an 'archbishop' who is consulted and who is closely followed. Usually there are several 'bishops' just behind him who likewise follow a detailed code of practice, sometimes in a very strict and doctrinaire fashion far more severe than is ever found among Reformed Presbyterians or in Reformed Baptist Associations.

The reasons set out for one regional R.B. Association in England for a covenanted co-operative unity have recently been drafted as follows:

1. Sharing of evangelistic endeavour
2. Sharing of missionary concerns
3. Provision of help in the ministry during times of stress
4. Ministerial education
5. Ministerial recognition and ordination
6. Sharing of social concerns
7. Sharing the benefits of good relationships with other R.B. Associations and with the wider Evangelical Church
8. Providing a court of arbitration in times of crisis to which any member church or churches can appeal.

It is crucial that evangelical churches should not be swallowed up in the Modernist and Sacramental Ecumenical Movement. Let us do all we can to encourage and help those who are struggling to resist the Ecumenical tide, and at the same time seek to unite with like-minded evangelical churches.

¹ The Baptist Union of Great Britain and Ireland is a misnomer because Wales and Scotland have their own Baptist Unions and Ireland very much so. The Irish Baptist Union has 101 churches representing both the North and South. A robust evangelical doctrinal basis undergirds the Irish B.U.

² One such voice comes from the Island of Jersey. Three writers, Douglas Dron and Andrew Spreadbury from Jersey and Guy Finnie, pastor of the London Road Baptist, Portsmouth, have united to produce a 27 page booklet 'THE SWANWICK DECLARATION' – *An Evangelical Response*. This booklet which reveals clearly the non-doctrinal basis of the Ecumenical Movement as well as its comprehensiveness is available from Man to Man Publications, 7 High View Villas, Manor Park Road, La Pôuquelaye, St. Helier, Jersey, C.I. No price is stated. Doubtless the cost will be reasonable and an invoice included if you write for a copy.

The Holiness and Happiness of God

Of all concepts that we can contemplate not one can equal the holiness of God. Here we are confronted with purity, profundity, mystery, beauty and blessedness. There are pressing reasons why this subject is of prime importance and relevance.

Firstly, how we conceive of God lies at the foundation of all our religious thought and practice.

For instance, the holiness of God can be viewed in an unbalanced way so that the soul is overwhelmed, even devastated. God's holiness taken only from the perspective of transcendent purity and wrath against sin will lead to despair. That was Luther's pre-conversion experience.

Wrote Luther: 'Do you not know that God dwells in light inaccessible? We weak and ignorant creatures want to probe and understand the incomprehensible majesty of the unfathomable light of the wonder of God. We approach; we prepare ourselves to approach. What wonder then that his majesty overpowers and shatters us!'

Nothing seemed to help Luther in his distress. He confessed that he could not love a God who is a consuming fire. Love God? Luther confessed that he hated him! 'Who, then, can love a God angry, judging, and damning? Who can love a Christ sitting on a rainbow, consigning the damned souls to the flames of hell?'

The mere sight of a crucifix was to Luther like a stroke of lightning. He would flee then from the angry Son to the merciful Mother.¹

How do you think of the holiness of God? Do you think of purity only?

Secondly, the subject of the holiness of God is important because it provides the main explanation for judgement, whether judgements in the history of mankind such as the Flood, or that which came on Sodom and Gomorrah, or upon apostate Judah at the time of their captivity in Babylon, or whether it is the final judgement of eternal punishment. Well known theologians such as Philip Hughes deny the doctrine of eternal punishment.² The holiness of God is directly related to that because it is impossible for God to lie. He is a holy God. His nature as holy is the best explanation we have of eternal punishment.

Thirdly, this truth is essential for salvation. The vast majority deceive themselves into thinking that God is not holy. He will not punish sin severely. They think of him as a God of love who will not act in wrath. The essence of revival or true religious awakening is a felt sense of the awesome holiness of God. It is the absence of this element that explains the lifeless condition of so many churches, even churches that are orthodox in believing the Bible.

Related to the above is the fourth reason which is that our view of the holiness of God has a radical effect on our worship. How we pray, how we sing, and how

the Word is preached in public, will reflect what we believe about the nature of God, especially his holy character. This is something which is an inherent part of us. Artificiality is repugnant. Any conscious act to impress others should be avoided at all costs. It is futile to try and act as though we fear the holiness of God. If we truly love God as holy and have had developed within our spiritual lifestyle a filial relationship with the Father as holy, and union with Christ as Shepherd, and the indwelling of the Spirit as our Guide and Teacher, holiness will be reflected without our ever having to think of it by way of external expression.

As a grim and miserable demeanour indicates a distorted view of God as holy, so does flippancy in worship. It is common today for a jovial and jolly kind of spirit to be worked up as though worship were just another great fun spree. That is self-deception. I am not advocating that humanity should be extracted out of our worship. No purpose is served in our being paralysed. We are united to a Saviour who is both divine and human. There must be freedom to worship God but we must avoid generating a false euphoria. True worship is a blend of godly fear and trembling together with joy that we are accepted in the Beloved.

Fifthly, the truth of the holiness of God is essential for holy living. The Lord says, 'Be holy, because I am holy' (1 Pet 1:16). This exhortation is challenging because again we are confronted with the question, How do we conceive of the holiness of God as the model for our holy living?

Sixthly, we must hold on to the holiness of God as expressed particularly in the moral law, because fallen men most wish to argue with God about his holy character. They insist on having their own rules and standards. When God says that homosexuality is sinful there are those who say it is natural. When God says that adultery is evil multitudes will insist that it is normal and enjoyable. God hates divorce (Mal 2:16) but men say it is convenient. We can go on and on. The argument is always against the holy character of God. There is an inveterate unwillingness to acknowledge that he is holy, that his law is holy, and that the great final judgement will proceed along the lines of holiness.

How should this subject be approached in order to have a truly biblical view of God as holy? I will use the following procedure.

1. We will look at the biblical words used to express holiness.
2. We will consider some of God's actions in history, actions which confirm that he is essentially holy.
3. We will see that the holiness of God is related to the whole of his nature and best describes his being.
4. We will extend our view of the holiness of God by viewing holiness as the work of the three persons of the Trinity in our redemption.

Logically the third consideration should come first because the Oneness of God is primary as we will see, but it is necessary to build up a clear concept of holiness first.

1 The Biblical Terms Used for Holiness

It is needful to begin with the words that are used as they provide valuable information, more so in some cases than in others. However the history of the use of the words (etymology) is only the beginning. The way in which the Bible actually takes up and uses words provides the material we need to give a clear and accurate understanding of biblical concepts such as the joy of God, or the love of God, or what the holiness of God is. It is not the meaning of the words only, but the context in which they are used that helps us to understand.

There is a principal word for 'holy' both in the Old Testament and the New. Each of these words conveys two main ideas: that which is set apart, and that which is bright.

The Hebrew word *qadosh* in its roots means 'to cut or separate' and 'to shine'. The word implies shining or a breaking forth of light. 'The Light of Israel will become a fire, their Holy One a flame' (Is 10:17). The light is a moral light, a light of purity as is confirmed by the apostle John, 'God is light; in him is no darkness at all' (1 Jn 1:5) and by Paul, 'God lives in unapproachable light, whom no one has seen or can see' (1 Tim 6:16). But *qadosh* implies a twofold concept: the separateness of God from the world he has made and his elevation above all created things, as well as brightness. It is right then that we should think of God as unique in his transcendence and glorious in the light of purity. This is beautifully expressed in the song of Moses and Miriam, 'Who is like you – majestic in holiness, awesome in glory, working wonders?' (Ex 15:11).

The Greek word *hagios* fundamentally means separated, that is separated from sin and consecrated to God. The word is predicated concerning God in his purity, majesty and glory. We see this with regard to the three persons of the Trinity. The Father is described as the Holy One (Lk 1:49; Jn 17:11). Thirty times Isaiah refers to the Holy One and in one instance to the Holy One who has chosen the Messiah whose victory will be certain (Is 49:7). Christ too is referred to as the Holy One (Lk 1:35; Acts 3:14), while the very name of the person of the Spirit is Holy (Mt 1:18; 2 Pet 1:21). Clearly these titles imply the perfection of God's moral excellence.

Not only is he separate, transcendently so, he is bright in the majesty of his excellence and purity.

It is imperative that we conceive of God as both apart and at the same time unique in the brightness and beauty of holiness. If we think only of him as apart, that is transcendent, he will be out of reach, but we must remember that holiness is the sum of all his attributes including his moral or personal attributes. God is love. Love is essentially a personal attribute. To love you must love another. God loves his people. His love for them is a holy love. God's holiness is not only transcendent, it is also immanent, that is, near to us. We become sharers in his holiness. (Heb 12:10 *metambano* to receive).

2 God's Holiness is Declared by his Actions

The holy character of God is declared by his love of righteousness and his hatred of wickedness (Heb 1:9). All his actions without exception endorse that.

Whenever judgements fall on wicked men their crimes are first laid bare. Pharaoh long contended against Jahweh until he provoked him by going out to destroy his own people. God's holiness is seen both in the deliverance of his people and in the destruction of Pharaoh and his army.

The people of Noah's time were prodigious in wickedness and unrestrained in violence. God bore long with them and strove with them but eventually the judgement that came upon them was cataclysmic just as it was upon the depraved people of Sodom. Simultaneously with judgement the work of salvation goes forward and makes progress because God in his holiness delights in righteousness which he imputes to believers, then working holiness within them.

Impressive measures were taken to confirm the fact that the law of God as expressed in the ten commandments is holy. Apartness was stressed. The mountain became a visible throne. The people had to keep their distance. The law was written by the Lord himself on stone tablets. There was the sound of trumpets. The law was uttered audibly. That same law is written in our consciences. That moral law, the decalogue, is holy and just as God himself is holy.

The holiness of God is declared by the Cross of Calvary. How could it be that the Lamb could suffer so intensely and so completely? In his agonies he tells us the reason. 'Yet you are enthroned as the Holy One!' (Ps 22:3). Justice needed to be upheld. If justice was not satisfied then the holiness of God would be destroyed. When a crime is committed against an innocent victim then the cry goes up to heaven for justice to be done. Where is justice? It has not been neglected and never will be. Justice will always be met in full because God is holy. 'It is mine to avenge; I will repay,' says the Lord (Rom 12:19). Vengeance for our sins has come in full upon us but has fallen upon the head of the one to whom we are united. Christ died in our room and stead. Because God is holy justice has been upheld in full.

3 The Holiness of God is Related to the Whole of his Nature

The first consideration with regard to the nature of God is that God is indivisibly One. He is unique. There is no other. Hence the preface to God's holy law which outlines the substance of all he requires of us, 'Hear, O Israel; The LORD our God, the LORD is one. Love the LORD your God with all your heart' (Deut 6:4). As we think of the unity of his being it is at the same time important to conceive of him as Spirit; infinitely so, eternally so, omnipotently so. In his essence as Spirit he is everywhere present, all-knowing and all-wise. He is to be distinguished from every other thing and especially so from all created matter. In that sense in the whole of his being he is holy, that is, apart. In

all his attributes he is essentially One. He cannot be divided. It is only that we might advance in our knowledge of him that we consider his perfections one by one.

God himself singles out holiness as an excellency by which he is able to pledge his promises and judgements as certain and sure. 'Once for all I have sworn by my holiness — and I will not lie to David — his line will continue forever' (Ps 89:35). 'The Sovereign LORD has sworn by his holiness: The time will surely come when you will be taken away with hooks, the last of you with fishhooks . . .' (Amos 4:2). There is no greater certainty in all the universe than the immutable (unchangeable) holiness of God.

Concerning the holiness of God Stephen Charnock writes, 'Holiness seems to challenge an excellency above all his other perfections, so it is *the glory of all the rest*. As it is the glory of the godhead, so it is the glory of every perfection in the godhead. As his power is the strength of them, so his holiness is the beauty of them.'

What do we mean by an attribute? An attribute of God is a perfection about himself that he has revealed.

What are all the attributes? The usual way to answer that question is to proceed from the transcendent attributes to the personal or moral attributes. Even before that is done it is necessary to explain that there is a sense in which we can never comprehend God because of his immensity and because of mystery. Here is one of the ever present tensions in our faith. On the one hand God is incomprehensible, yet on the other he is essentially knowable. To know him in a relationship of love is to possess eternal life (Jn 17:3). Amazingly we can not only know him, we can be united to him, and live with him,

For this is what the high and lofty One says -
he who lives forever, whose name is holy:
I live in a high and holy place,
but also with him who is contrite and lowly in spirit (Is 57:15).

While authors like Herman Bavinck approach the subject of the attributes of God essentially by means of exposition of the principles involved and then exposition of the names of God, (which I believe to be the correct way), others like A. W. Pink and A. W. Tozer, while by no means ignorant of the principles which underlie this foremost of subjects, dive straight into the ocean of God's revelation, and proceed first to expound the incommunicable or transcendent attributes, then the communicable or personal attributes. The vast majority of Christians are unlikely to have the time to read Bavinck but will profit greatly by reading Pink or Tozer.

I have already adverted to the transcendent attributes: self-existence, self-sufficiency, eternity, infinitude, omniscience, wisdom, omnipotence, immutability. But what of the personal or moral attributes? They are God's goodness,

justice, love, grace, mercy, faithfulness, truthfulness, wrath, patience and blessedness.

Can we say that holiness characterises every one of the above-named attributes? The answer is very much in the affirmative. Holiness characterises God in the entirety of his being, but also characterises each attribute in particular. His love is holy and never merely sentimental. His justice is holy and on that account will be demonstrably perfect for all eternity. God's wrath is a holy wrath. Every attribute complements the others and all are vital. But essentially they are inseparable from each other as God is ever and always One.

In Scripture the names ascribed to God are chosen especially to reveal the nature of his being. The first great name is Jahweh (Jehovah) meaning I AM. (Ex 3:14). That name points to his transcendence, uniqueness and pre-eminence. When Isaiah says God's name is HOLY (Is 57:15), that name points to the overall nature and character of God (Ps 103:1).

Charnock is right when he asserts that holiness is the glory of every perfection in the godhead. He goes on to say, 'If every attribute of the Deity were a distinct member, purity would be the form, the soul, the spirit to animate them. Without holiness, his patience would be an indulgence to sin, his mercy a fondness, his wrath a madness, his power a tyranny, his wisdom an unworthy subtlety. Holiness gives decorum to them all.'⁴ No other attribute is extolled in the way the angels extol and worship God as holy. No other attribute is repeated three times in worship as this one.

'Holy, holy holy, is the LORD Almighty;
the whole earth is full of his glory' (Is 6:3)

Day and night they never stop saying:

'Holy, holy, holy, is the Lord God Almighty
who was, and is, and is to come' (Rev 4:8).

4 The Holiness of the Three Persons of the Trinity is Expressed in the Work of Redemption

Sin was the supreme challenge to the holiness of God and to the divine order in the universe.⁵ God's response to this was twofold. The first response is one of judgement and retribution has come and will come to all those in rebellion and sin. The second is the work of redemption. In the first God shows his justice and abhorrence of sin and in the second he demonstrates his delight in holiness and love.

The Father's delight in holiness is evidenced in the provision of redemption in his Son, in the manner of application of that redemption to his people, and in the consummation of that redemption. The consummation is the Marriage Supper of the Lamb: the gathering of his people into the new earth where holiness and love will reign forever.

First then we see the Father's delight in holiness in providing the Son of his love

to live a life of perfect holiness for his people, to die in their place that their sins might be atoned for and blotted out. Through union with Christ it is the Father's purpose that all his elect people should derive holiness of character from Christ and be conformed to him in holiness. It is the Father's wisdom and delight that Christ should be made to all his people righteousness (imputed), holiness (intrinsic holiness of character born in them by the new birth and progressive sanctification), and final redemption, when they will be redeemed from the presence and power of sin once and for all.

The Father's pleasure in holiness is seen in his affirmation of joy in Christ's life and work on our behalf, 'This is my Son, whom I love, with him I am well pleased' (Mt 3:17). The Father's complacent love is expressed for his children as they love and obey him. Complacent love is a love of delight for the worth and character of the objects loved. If we obey Christ's teaching the Father will love us, come to us, and make his home with us. That is because he delights in holiness.

Such is his love for holiness that he will unite himself to us. We enjoy a mystical spiritual unity with the Father and with the Son (Jn 17:21-23).

The Father's love for holiness is seen too in the way he effects the salvation of his people. He will not save sinners without exhibiting righteousness and justice. He will never save without imputed righteousness (Rom 1:17 and 3:21). That righteousness is the basis of justification. Only when the sinner has the righteousness of Christ's perfect life placed upon him is he declared to be just by the Father. The removal of guilt requisite for justification is obtained only by the propitiation made by Christ. In that way God can be just and the justifier of those who believe.

Over-simplification of the way of salvation is an affront to the holiness of God. The moral attributes of God spring from holiness and are determined by holiness.⁶ God's holiness and justice require that the law be upheld and sin be atoned for. None but the Son of God could render satisfaction to the law or vindicate the requirements of the holy character of God.

The Father's love for holiness is seen in the complete Church when she reaches perfection. Then she will have been made beautiful in holiness (Rev 21:2). Not only will the bride of Christ be beautiful in holiness but her habitat, the New Jerusalem and the new earth, will be beautiful and shining in holiness. 'On that day HOLY TO THE LORD will be inscribed on the bells of the horses. Every pot in Jerusalem will be holy to the LORD Almighty' (Zech 14:20-21).

The holiness of God in practice is exhibited in the life, ministry and teaching of Christ. In contemporary terms we may say that by possessing four Gospels we have cameras focused on him from every angle. In addition we have the prophetic descriptions of his ministry and sufferings as recorded in Isaiah and the Psalms and many other places. We tend to think of sinlessness in terms of avoiding actual sin but omission is sin. Love is the fulfilling of the law. The marvel of Christ's life was twofold; not only was he holy, blameless, pure, set

apart from sinners (Heb 7:26), he actually fulfilled the law of love by positive works of love and compassion.

To the Holy Spirit is ascribed the work of regeneration and progressive sanctification. Remaining corruption is alien and hostile soil for the new plant of holiness born within us. Yet such is the Spirit's expertise, wisdom and power that he transforms the believer. With all patience and thoroughness he progressively advances the work of holiness in the believer (2 Cor 3:18).

The Happiness of God

The word 'blessed' used to describe God (1 Tim 1:11 and 6:15), approximates to our word happiness. There are three reasons why God is blessed in himself.

The first is that he is holy in the transcendent sense. He is complete and self-sufficient, unchanging in all his glorious attributes. In his nature he is perfect in holiness as we saw earlier both in the purity and the excellence of his being. Hence he is the ever-blessed God.

The second reason for God's happiness is the nature of the Trinity. The inexpressible beauty of holiness in the transcendent sense characterises each person of the Trinity. However we must remember the moral attributes as well. There is love in the Trinity. To love you need another. Other-person-centredness characterises the three persons. The Holy Spirit searches all things, even the deep things of God (1 Cor 2:10). Likewise the Son knows the Father in all the immensity of his being and in his love and wisdom. There is perfect blessedness and complacent love in the three persons. There is equality because each person of the Trinity possesses all the attributes of deity. Yet there is diversity of character in each for each performs a different work in our redemption.

The third reason why God is blessed or happy in himself is through the joy of redemption. 'He will take great delight in you, he will quiet you with his love, he will rejoice over you with singing' (Zeph 3:17). The love of Christ for his redeemed people is beyond description. It surpasses knowledge (Eph 3:19). Many waters could not quench it. It burns like a mighty flame. His love is stronger than death. Rivers cannot wash it away. He will comfort his own. Then the Father himself will be with them and be their God and they will be his people.

Holiness and Happiness for Believers

Says Peter, 'But just as he who called you is holy, so be holy in all you do' (1 Pet 1:15). There must be a likeness between the caller and the called. But how can we be holy as our Father is holy? Not in his transcendent holiness, for he is unique, but in the holiness of his moral attributes in which he delights in truth and righteousness and hates iniquity; in that way we can be holy. Moreover we can be holy by doing good as he does good and by loving others as he loves them, especially the household of believers.

As his perfect bliss and blessedness arises out of his holiness so our happiness depends on our being holy. Today people are obsessed with finding happiness but it eludes them for they seek happiness without holiness. Sin has always brought a harvest of misery with it. Instead of being holy and happy our first parents through their rebellion and sin became wretched and miserable. By living selfishly people live unhappily because they have forgotten that they are made in the image of the Triune God who lives essentially as other-person-centred. Nothing is more icy than unitarianism: nothing more ominous than a self-centred monod.

Conclusions

Firstly, it is paramount to view the holiness of God in a way which not only does justice to the utter hatred of sin that is there, but at the same time sees the beauty and brightness of holiness, a quality which brings joy and ensures happiness for those who are holy and who delight in holiness. 'Those who are wise will shine like the brightness of the heavens' (Dan 12:3).

Secondly, holiness of life should be viewed not only as abstention from evil, important though that is, but also in positively doing good. Sanctification should lead to a life which reflects the beauty of Christ's character and the sterling qualities exhibited in his life.

Thirdly, we should seek public worship which is joyful in praise and appreciative of the beauty of holiness. 'Worship the LORD in the splendour of his holiness' (Ps 29:2; 96:9; 1 Ch 16:29; 2 Ch 20:21).

Fourthly, the holiness of God Triune should have an effect on our prayer lives. The first petition of the Lord's prayer is, 'Let your name be holy'. God's name stands for all that he is in his glory.

Fifthly, we should be firm in our rejection of teaching that contradicts eternal punishment. We should regard those who teach annihilationism as seriously heterodox. They undermine the urgency of the gospel in a most injurious way. In sermons like 'The justice of God in the damnation of sinners',⁷ Jonathan Edwards expounds the nature of justice. If justice required the death of the Son of God on the Cross, then that justice of a holy God will require that unrepentant sinners pay for their sins. It is as though the Holy Spirit knew that the doctrine of hell would be twisted and therefore used consistent language so that its nature should not be misconstrued.

Sixthly, we should regard the holiness of God as the ultimate guarantee of our eternal happiness. Holiness is what ensures the blessedness of God and holiness in all its beauty and glory is our happiness.

¹ Roland Bainton, *Here I Stand – A Life of Martin Luther*, Abingdon Press, 1987, U.S.A., p. 43.

² Philip Hughes, *The True Image*, IVP, 1989, chapter 37, Is the Soul Immortal?

³ Stephen Charnock, *Works*, Parsons edition, 1815, vol. 2, p. 495.

⁴ *ibid.*, p. 496.

⁵ R. A. Finlayson, *The Holiness of God*, Lectures from Westminster Chapel, Marshall Pickering, 1988, p. 196.

⁶ J. H. Thornwell, *Collected Writings*, Banner of Truth, 1974, vol. 1, p. 367.

⁷ Jonathan Edwards, *Works*, Banner of Truth, 1974, vol. 1, p. 668.

News

Malaysia

Reformation Today 107 was able to report the provisional release of Malaysian Christian leaders Poh Boon Sing and Joshua Jamuludin. Since that time there have been further developments affecting the work of the gospel in that country. The Malaysian government's appeal against the release of Joshua was dismissed in the Supreme Court. In what must be regarded as a significant and historic decision the Chief Justice ruled that 'the freedom to profess and practise one's religion must be given effect unless the actions of a person go well beyond what can normally be regarded as professing and practising one's religion'. He also stated, 'We do not think that mere participation in meetings and seminars can make a person a threat to the security of the country. As regards the conversion of six Malays, even if it was true, it cannot in our opinion by itself be regarded as a threat to the security of the country.' This encouraging report was soon followed by the news that Pastor Poh has been released from the remaining restrictions placed upon him.

Our joy at the restoration of liberty to Christian leaders has, however, been tempered by alarming news from the Malaysian state of Pahang. The State Assembly has passed legislation which allows the whipping of persons who abandon Islam or who tell Muslims about other faiths. Pahang is only one of the states of Peninsular Malaysia, but

such legislation could of course be attempted elsewhere. The Christian community in Malaysia still needs the active prayerful support of their brethren throughout the world. Those living in the United Kingdom must inevitably contrast the proper freedom afforded Muslims in this country with that denied to Christians in certain Islamic states.

Spain

What does it take to plant a church? It has taken two full-time missionary church planters, one of Spanish birth (Eugene Ciria) and one Canadian (John Frances), three years to bring together about 25 people, including their own families, in the middle of a working class area in the city of Palma, Majorca. The doctrinal foundation of the church is the 1689 Confession.

Eugene Ciria writes: "The main obstacle to the propagation of the gospel is to break through the tradition among the Catholics. We continue to be "Protestants", the ones who separated from the mother Church. Recently, someone painted on our mission door "anti-Christ". They consider themselves Christians, but not us. This can describe the feeling.

The discouragements are the lack of response from the people, materialism, humanism, mental and spiritual blind-



Pastor Jose Rodriguez leads a church situated about 10km from Cadiz and about 130km from Gibraltar. Instead of a worship service Lord's Day morning the believers take up a position with a book stand in one of the busy streets. There is a Sunday School at that time but the main worship service takes place later in the day. It is the custom of the people of the town to go out in large numbers on Sunday mornings. Evangelism is the priority with this assembly led by Pastor Rodriguez. The church is only three years old but already between 55 and 60 (including children) gather at the services. On Thursday evenings the work of evangelism and literature in the streets is repeated. The example of these Spanish believers is a reminder that the Great Commission requires that the whole Church take the whole gospel to the whole world.

ness and fear to look for an answer to their spiritual agony and emptiness.

We consider the most effective evangelism to be door to door visitation and personal contacts.

We are surrounded by a selfish society. We are in the electronic era. The name of the game is "FAST". Somebody said; "The problem today is not that men do not believe any longer in God, but that they believe in everything." As I look at the context of our Spanish society it seems to me that a lot of *patience* is required for the extension and preaching of the gospel. Another thing that concerns me is the preaching. We have attended many services that I would

classify as entertainment with self-satisfied feelings and manipulation of the audience.

Since we came to Spain we have been involved in expository preaching and clarifying the doctrines. This means a lot of work, but it is rewarding. Much damage has been done by Jehovah's Witnesses as well as superficial star pulpiteers with a "show". As is everywhere the case the need is for faithful preaching.'

France

The Baptist Union of Ireland must not be confused with the Baptist Union in England. The B.U. in Ireland has a

robust evangelical basis of faith which includes a clear repudiation of annihilationism (see article on 'The Holiness of God').

There are 101 churches in the Union which has concentrated its missionary endeavour in Peru where there are 140 churches. More recently the Union has sought to pioneer in France and small beginnings have been made.

Recently, Pastors John Birnie and Clive Johnston visited the scene of a pioneer work only two years old at Neuville, near Lyon. Five were baptised at a service in which Clive Johnston preached. Fifty-seven attended. It is believed that these were the first baptisms ever in the town of Neuville.

Scotland

For twenty years the Perth Evangelical Church, Scotland, has been concerned to see the gospel of Sovereign Grace preached regularly in the many small towns of Perthshire, which have been devoid of this since the general decline of the Free Church of Scotland in the lowlands a hundred years ago.

In 1982 a monthly home evangelistic Bible study was commenced in Scone, a growing community about three miles from the Perth church's meeting house. In 1987 Ken Cotty was sent from the church in Ripon to work with the Perth church in establishing a permanent witness. Sunday services were commenced in a hired hall. Last year a second-hand portable hall, originally used by the Brethren for short campaigns in various parts of the county, was obtained for £250! Several of the members had actually been saved in this building when it was erected in the village of Errol. After some tough and protracted bargaining the only available plot was secured on a five year lease and the hall



Perth Evangelical Church Elders involved in church planting work, left to right, John Davison, Ken Cotty and Tom Hill.

erected and brought up to present day building standards to seat 60-80 at a total cost of about £4,000, much of which has already been found. Eventually it is hoped that a more permanent home can be found for the little fellowship which numbers the same as Noah's church. The building can then be moved to the next church planting location. The official opening took place on Saturday, May 13 with over 100 present from fourteen churches. Twenty years ago there was only one Reformed Baptist church in Scotland.

Scone is significant in that it is almost at the geographical centre of Scotland. It is also the place where the kings of Scotland were traditionally crowned, seated on the 'Scone Stone' which is now under the throne in Westminster Abbey. It is the prayer of the new fellowship that many in Scone will spread their trophies at Jesus' feet and 'Crown Him Lord of all'.

The Centrality of Preaching among the Puritans

Part 2

by Jim van Zyl

In part one (*R.T.105*) we saw that preaching was regarded by the Puritans as the highest function for the Christian minister. Richard Sibbes called preaching the ‘gift of all gifts’. Stephen Charnock devoted most of his time to preparation. He was typical of the Puritans.

Not only did these godly pastors devote time to preparation for preaching; they also believed in preparing themselves by prayer for themselves and their hearers. William Perkins for instance exhorted those training for the ministry to think about and pray over seven different categories of hearers and make sure that there was thoughtful and adequate application for every person who would attend.

We now consider ten positive characteristics of Puritan preaching.

First characteristic. The preaching was essentially expository. To expound (from which the adjective expository comes) means to draw out the meaning, doctrine and application of a text, texts or passage. It belongs to the glory of the Puritan preachers that if they did not originate expository preaching (this honour belongs largely to the Continental Reformers, particularly Calvin), they nevertheless developed it to great heights. They believed in expository preaching, not simply because it was a Reformed method of proclamation, but because their submission to God’s Word was so profound that they insisted that the Word be allowed to speak for itself.

What did this expository preaching involve in practice?

It involved exact exegesis. The precise meaning of a word, a verse, a passage, a phrase, a chapter, a book had to be ascertained in the biblical Greek and the Hebrew before any sermon could be constructed. This was not because the Puritans were pedantic or simply academic. It was because they believed that they were dealing with the very *words of God*. Could anything be more important than discovering exactly what God had said and meant? To guess vaguely at the biblical author’s meaning was nothing less than criminal, for it showed contempt both towards *God’s words*, and ultimately towards God himself.

It involved the context. What was the surrounding background and context, the setting or ethos of a verse or passage?

It involved the essential doctrine set down in that verse or passage. It was not what you would like Paul or Ezekiel or James to be teaching, but what the Holy Spirit had truly recorded, palatable or unpalatable. If you had been honest in your

exegesis then the essential doctrine or teaching would begin to emerge of its own accord.

It involved the underlying argument. One of the greatest weaknesses in the preaching of the church from soon after the apostles right through the middle ages and up to the Reformation was the failure of its preachers to recognise that the authors of Scripture, and in the NT, Paul particularly, always based their practical exhortations on sound, spiritual arguments and reasoning. And to fail to grasp those arguments is to fail to grasp the message and fail to hear God speaking. God addresses us as spiritual and cognitive beings because he himself is cognitive. Thus when Owen, or Sibbes or Flavel preached they sought to grapple with and expound the underlying argument of the passage in question.

It involved the 'analogy of faith'. All the Scripture had one source and would thus not be self-contradictory. Scripture must not only be compared with Scripture, but the complementary and confirmatory nature of Scripture must be exhibited. One explanation for the Puritans' apparent 'wordiness' and length lay in the fact that they knew the total Word in all its unifying parts so well that they could literally range from Genesis to Revelation collating verses, passages, teaching, doctrines and arguments and comparing them with each other. One of the great characteristics of their sermons was the covenantal breadth of their understanding. They viewed Scripture as a totally integrated unity: one God, one Word, one revelation, one message.

It involved practical applications. The Puritans were justly famous for their so-called 'Uses'. All truth required application. They were superb pastors and curers of conscience. One has only to read William Gurnall's magisterial *The Christian in Complete Armour* to realise just how profoundly the Puritans knew the hearts of their people. They knew intimately their sins, foibles, eccentricities, failings, weaknesses, strengths, needs, heartaches, sorrows, spiritual battles and problems. They had a 'high' view of the ministerial office and were profoundly committed to care for their flocks with loving, tender, compassionate care.

Second characteristic. Their sermons were rooted in first-order theological principles, and the relation of these principles to each other. We come here to one of the most profound differences between Puritan preaching and much modern preaching. The difference is so important and the implications so serious for those who take preaching seriously that we pause with this characteristic for a moment.

It is like the difference between two kinds of archaeologists working at the same 'dig'. The first man will find an artefact; he will then concentrate his whole attention upon that one item: its size, shape, colouring, age and so on. He will think of little else and will view it in virtual isolation from the other finds at the dig. The second archaeologist will also discover an artefact. But he uses it essentially as part of the entire civilization and culture that it represents. So, he goes on to examine the whole location, the artefact's relation to other artefacts on the site, its dating and its setting in the total culture of the period and the broad historical setting of other cultures in the same period.

How does this illustration apply to modern and Puritan preaching?

Many present day preachers will tend to depend on a series of texts which have to do with their subjects. The Puritan preacher would place his subject within the framework of Scripture as a whole but focus on and develop the doctrine on which his subject was based. That foundational teaching would also be related to other truths.

Puritan preaching therefore was not topical, it was integrated. All the great teachings in the Epistles on union with Christ, adoption, regeneration, repentance, faith, sin, sanctification, assurance, glorification, prayer, surrender, obedience, the fruit of the Spirit and so on were treated as inter-related. The hearers were thus presented with a gospel which consisted of a unity of truth, not fragments of truth. Thus the gospel was preached with authority.

Third. Their sermons were structured. We have, in a sense, already touched on this and it thus needs little additional explanation. Suffice to say that it is a grave mistake to look at the multiplicity of divisions and sub-divisions and sub-sub-divisions of an average Puritan sermon and conclude that the preacher is simply long-winded, verbose, or cluttered in his thinking. Some perhaps were. But the average Puritan preacher felt on the one hand that he had to deal with God's Word as thoroughly as possible, but the divisions are indications that he was exploring all the related truths that the passage suggested. Thus, a closer examination will reveal a much tighter co-ordination of divisions and points than at first suspected.

Fourth characteristic. Their sermons were reasoned and largely based on logic. By this I do not mean they were rationalistic! By 'logic' I mean quite literally that branch of philosophy that deals with the methods of argumentation. Large numbers of Puritan preachers were trained at Oxford and Cambridge where they were trained in formal logic. Thus they had to learn to argue in terms of syllogisms, or from minor to major truths, or vice versa. Their formal training therefore to a large extent shaped their sermon preparation.

But more than that, they believed that God's truth was logical. To them Scripture possessed an inner spiritual and theological logic in and of itself. And if this is how God chose to reveal his truth, who were they to tamper with it? Furthermore, man made in God's image possessed as his highest faculty rational intelligence. Man was to be addressed primarily as an intelligent being. William Gurnall summed it up succinctly: 'We must persuade by teaching; we must never teach by persuasion?' To produce strong, mature Christians you have to teach them the basics of the Christian gospel. But to teach is to make men think. And to make men think you have to present them with an argument.

It is, by the way, quite wrong to conclude that they were therefore 'heavy' preachers, that is to say, 'intellectually heavy'. I am talking about or describing the method or format they employed in preaching. It was a didactic format which strove to engage men's minds in argumentation; they wished to develop thinking Christians, but also Christians who because of what they came to know, learnt to love and obey God more and more. 'They believed', says Dr. M.

Lloyd-Jones, 'in plain, direct, experimental, saving preaching. Preaching was to be simple, earnest, faithful.'

Fifth characteristic. Their preaching sparkled. 'The colloquial style of these (sermons) was winsome, abounding in similes and metaphors from every-day life and alive with anecdote and illustration.' Here are some examples: *Robert Leighton on adversity*: 'Adversity is the diamond dust Heaven polishes its jewels with.' *Thomas Watson on affliction*: 'Affliction may be lasting, but it is not everlasting.' *John Trapp on love*: 'Affection without action is like Rachel, beautiful but barren.' *Thomas Adams on marriage*: 'Woman takes her being from man, man takes his well-being from woman.' *George Swinnock on pride*: 'Pride is the shirt of the soul, put on first and put off last.'

Sixth characteristic. Their preaching was evangelistic. They never missed an opportunity to call men and women, boys and girls to repentance from sin and faith in Christ. Although firm believers in election, they held equally firmly to man's responsibility to respond to the gospel call. As Giles Firmin put it: 'It is the duty of all the sons and daughters of Adam, who hear the Gospel preached, and Christ offered to them, to believe in, or receive Christ, whether they be prepared or not prepared.' The powerful evangelistic preaching of Joseph Alleine, John Bunyan, Richard Baxter and Ralph Venning all bear testimony to the fact that they were urgent, incessant, evangelistic preachers.

Seventh characteristic. Their preaching portrayed the attractiveness of Christ. The Puritans have been portrayed as dour and negative, crabby and insensitive; men who were concerned with law and discipline and theological hair-splitting. All this is a caricature which is not supported by the facts. An examination of their sermons shows that they were passionate in their devotion to Christ! An example of this is seen in *Samuel Rutherford*. Writing to Lady Kenmure he says, 'My adversaries have sent me here to be feasted with love banquets with my royal, high and princely Lord Jesus . . . I would not have believed that there was so much in Christ as there is . . . I wish all this nation knew how sweet he is.'

Eighth characteristic. In their sermons they dealt very gently with Christians. For all their determination, courage and even toughness they were exceptionally tender in dealing with Christians in their sermons. They are always 'fathers-in-Christ'; tender shepherds watching over the foibles and faults of their flocks; fellow-sinners saved by grace; co-pilgrims on a hard and difficult journey. They had suffered deeply themselves and so they could truly shepherd the hurting, wounded flocks they were called to tend. James Durham speaks for his fellow Puritan preachers when he says: 'The faults of believers (must) be so reprov'd . . . (that) . . . what is commendable in their practice be not (also) condemn'd and . . . rejected; but that there be intermix'd, commendations . . . of what is approvable, lest godliness suffer when the fault of the godly person is reprov'd, and lest the sentence go beyond the Master's intent, which is not to condemn the person, but to reprove the fault.'

One of the most disturbing features of modern-day Christianity is that for all its sentimentality about 'brotherhood' and 'togetherness in Christ', as well as the

multitude of books that have poured out on counselling, there is a marked lack of sensitivity in Christian-to-Christian dealing. And this comes out in much of our preaching. We teach, we exhort, we lecture, we warn, we even thunder – but do we preach with sensitivity and tenderness to the sheep in our care? In a most revealing recent book Hugh Milne describes his personal experience of one of the most famous of Eastern Gurus, Bhagwan Shree Rajneesh. ‘He had little compassion or regard for the feelings of others. There were to be many deaths in the ashrams, both from suicide and from hepatitis and other diseases which could have been cured with proper medical attention. Rajneesh never gave enough money for food in the ashrams, and was not concerned when we worked too hard or slept too little. . . . Many of us who lived remained in very poor health for years afterwards. . . . Tended by his own large staff of housekeepers, cooks, physicians and helpers, he was himself quite removed from our hardship.’²

Ninth characteristic. Their sermons sought to apply their Christian teaching in what they called ‘Uses’. In our times the applicatory content of sermons is minimal so I will reinforce what I stressed at the beginning. The Puritans were justly famous for their never-ending applications of Christian truth to the Christian’s life and practice. For example, in a sermon on Psalm 90:1-2, in which he deals with the eternity of God, Stephen Charnock suggests no less than three main uses and twenty-four subsidiary uses of this great doctrine; these are all ways in which the Christian can apply this truth in a practical and relevant manner in his daily life. John Dod said he worked mostly on application and avoided needless repetition of doctrine.

Tenth characteristic. Their sermons were aimed at building up their people. Nicholas Byfield, preaching ca. 1649, asks the hypothetical question: What good do men get from hearing sermons? And in his answer he reveals one of the great aims of Puritan preaching: ‘Many are the singular benefits that come to men thereby. First, the Holy Ghost is here given, Acts 10:44. Secondly, men’s hearts are here opened, Acts 16:14. Thirdly, the fear of God doth here fall upon men, Acts 13:16. Fourthly, the proud and stony heart of men is here tamed, melted and made to tremble, Isaiah 66:2. Fifthly, the faith of God’s elect is here begotten, Romans 10:14. Sixthly, men are here sealed by the Holy Spirit of promise, Ephesians 1:13. Seventhly, here the Spirit speaketh to the church, Ephesians 1:13. Eighthly, Christ here comes to sup with men, Revelation 3:20. . . . Ninthly, the painful distress of the afflicted conscience is here (aided) . . . , the bones that God hath broken receive joy and gladness, Psalm 51:8. Tenthly. . . . If you can do nothing else, yet “hear, and your soul shall live”, Isaiah 55:3.’

We cannot resurrect the Puritans. We must not imitate their style. We should avoid their weaknesses. In a TV age when most are totally intolerant of long sermons we certainly cannot follow them in that respect. But we can learn a very great deal from re-examining their priorities and methods of preaching. We can certainly seek to attain the qualities inherent in their preaching. ‘The Puritans were men who were God conscious, dominated by a sense of the presence of

God. They were not men pleasers. They did everything, to use the words of John Milton, "as in my great taskmaster's eye", knowing that we shall have to render up an account of our ministry. . . ."³

Finally. Dr. Martyn Lloyd-Jones's definition of preaching is supremely applicable to the Puritans: 'What is preaching? Logic on fire! Eloquent reason! Are these contradictions? Of course they are not. Reason concerning this Truth (of the Gospel) ought to be mightily eloquent, as you see it in the case of the Apostle Paul and others. It is theology on fire. And a theology which does not take fire, I maintain, is a defective theology; or at least the man's understanding is defective. Preaching is theology coming through a man who is on fire. . . . It is to give men and women a sense of God and his presence.'⁴

¹ *Letters of Samuel Rutherford, A Selection*, The Banner of Truth, 1973, pp. 43-44.

² H. Milne, *Bhagwan. The God that Failed*, Sphere Books, 1987, pp. 105-111.

³ D. M. Lloyd-Jones in *Preaching*, a paper given at the 1977 Westminster Conference, London. 'Anglican and Puritan Thinking', pp. 101, 102.

⁴ D. M. Lloyd-Jones, *Preaching and Preachers*, Hodder, 1971, p. 97.

Charles Grandison Finney 1792-1875 Revivalist and Reformer

Dr. Keith J. Hardman, Syracuse University Press, 1987, \$45,00, 448pp.

The ministry of Charles Finney represents a massive defection from the Reformed Faith. The review by Ernest Reisinger in the last issue (*R.T.* 109) of the new biography described above was important, and it is hoped that Dr. Hardman's book will be widely read. Lending libraries should be encouraged to obtain it. In Britain Alethia Books, 11 High Street, Whitchurch, Shropshire SY13 1AX will stock the title. Telephone (0948) 3770 for details.

The excellent review by Ernest Reisinger was unfortunately marred by the editor in two places as he prepared the material for the press. I apologise for these. The first instance concerns the very important role of Asahel Nettleton. Discussing this at some length Mr. Reisinger said, 'The author left me a bit uncomfortable and not in agreement.' Instead of that I put, 'It is disconcerting to find that Dr. Hardman misrepresents Asahel Nettleton.' It certainly was not my intention to question Dr. Hardman's integrity, still less make out that the reviewer was doing so. It is my passionate interest in the revivals experienced by Asahel Nettleton that led

me to that inadvertent statement. John Thornbury's biography of Asahel Nettleton published by Evangelical Press tells the story of those revivals.

The second intrusion was made on page 29 where I made the observation, 'It is a defect in Dr. Hardman's book that he does not answer this.' Mr Reisinger did not say that and I ought not to have said it, for the simple reason that it may well be impossible to find out why the Presbyterian Church of Finney's day allowed Finney to get away with a wholesale denial of the Westminster Confession of Faith. When preparing the review for press I pondered the question for some time and wondered whether synodical records exist which would reward a researcher with the necessary answers. I ought not to criticise Dr. Hardman for not telling us something which may defy investigation. Sorry Dr. Hardman! I hope many more will read your book through being stirred up to consider the momentous questions which underly the tension that is represented between Nettleton's Calvinism and Finney's Pelagianism.

Reformation in South Africa

People in South Africa identify only too well with the question 'Can anything good come out of Galilee?' For most people outside of our land it seems as though we are a God-forsaken nation; there is rarely anything favourable reported about South Africa. Yet those who love the doctrines of grace throughout the world will be thrilled to learn that a conference of Reformed Baptists was held here at the end of April this year.

A few years ago there were too few people even to convene a conference! But on 29th April 1989 about 90 people assembled in the city of Germiston (which is adjacent to Johannesburg, has a population of around 600,000 and is the sixth largest city in the country), to discuss the formation of a new Association of Reformed Baptist Churches with a view to cooperation in church-planting, missions and theological education. Papers were given by Bernard Cartledge, Martin Holdt, Wilhelm Odendaal and Trevor Roberts. Brian Stone sealed the Conference with his exposition of Gamaliel's counsel from the Book of Acts 5.

The outcome of the Conference was that the Reformed Baptist Association has been born. Thirty-two individuals and three churches signed a document to inaugurate the Association.¹ The basis of association is the 1689 London Baptist Confession of Faith. It was stressed throughout the Conference that the formation of the new Association was not intended to be a schismatic or divisive move in any way. All of the signatories to the Association document are at present committed to remaining and working within the Baptist Union of South Africa.



Wilhelm Odendaal, formerly principal of the Afrikaans Baptist Seminary, now pastor of the Lynnwood Baptist Church, Pretoria, speaking at the recent meetings concerning association.

The Conference was, however, also convened because of recent developments within the Baptist Union which have disturbed a number of us. There has been a growing approval of political involvement of the Union as well as a strong move towards the ordination of women to pastoral ministry. The most vocal opposition to these trends has come from Reformed men within the Union, but with little sympathy for the views they have expressed. Many of us felt the time had come to prepare ourselves for a new 'downgrade' situation. We have felt the need for a stronger representation within our Union of Churches. Individual voices do not carry the same weight as a group and so we hope, by linking ourselves in this way, that we might have a greater influence.

Though the beginning may seem very humble, we are full of anticipation that God will use this Association in a great way.

Details of the Conference are available on request to: Reformed Baptist Association, P.O. Box 619, Germiston, 1400, South Africa.

¹ Of those present, about 55 were members of the local church. Of those eligible to sign, only three abstained.

Meetings vary in character. There is the meeting of the local church and particularly the annual church meeting. Occasionally a conference may take place when papers are followed by extended times of discussion. The following material was prepared with such meetings in mind. The author prefers to remain anonymous. The main conclusion is that chairmanship requires careful and prayerful preparation.

What it is to be a Good Chairman

1. The Chairman must know

that the Speaker is the most important person on the platform
how to start the session
how to stimulate and guide discussion
how to summarise
how to bring the session to a close, and bring matters to a final focus

2. The Chairman's duties

start on time
welcome the Speaker at ease
welcome those who have come (at first session, give very brief outline of the purpose of the Conference)
introduce the Speaker before the Paper
briefly thank him after it
open the discussion
control the discussion
summarise points of major importance
thank the Speaker more fully
close on time

3. The Chairman must accept responsibility for

the objective
the order of events
the feeding of inspiration to the Conference

4. Before the session, the Chairman should

have done some 'homework'
liaise with the Speaker

arrange with him how questions will be handled
ascertain whether there are aspects the Speaker would like the discussion to concentrate on
plan his opening remarks
make some preliminary notes to help with his concluding remarks
pray with and for the Speaker

5. Before the Paper, he should

set the Speaker at ease
strike the right note in his introductory remarks
welcome those who have come
very briefly state the purpose of the Paper; the importance of the topic; and how it fits into the overall theme of the Conference
introduce the Speaker

6. During the Paper, the Chairman should

listen very carefully
make brief notes
prepare questions to start the discussion, and then to keep it moving in the right direction

7. After the Paper, he should

briefly thank the Speaker
state some of the major points raised by the Paper
announce:
(i) brief time for questions and clarification
(ii) time for discussion of points raised by the Paper
open the discussion — perhaps by asking a leading question during

the discussion; if necessary, protect the Speaker

THE CHAIRMAN'S MAIN TASK now is to encourage and stimulate questions and discussion, whilst himself keeping largely in the background — unless the Speaker indicates that he wants help. Then the Chairman may answer, or may refer the question back to the Conference, and seek views there.

IT IS NOT THE CHAIRMAN'S TASK to answer most of the questions, nor should he obstruct the Speaker, who, having studied the subject, is the 'expert'. Some variety, however, is good, and in any case there may be some questions which the Speaker does not wish — or is unable — to answer.

IT IS THE CHAIRMAN'S TASK to keep the discussion moving; to ensure that it is relevant; to maintain interest; and to 'bring in' as many contributors as possible.

8. Concluding the session, the Chairman should

- again very briefly give the main points of the Paper
- draw together the threads of the discussion
- summarise what has been achieved
- thank the Speaker, adequately but not fulsomely
- close on time

9. Stimulating discussion

The Chairman can stimulate discussion by asking good questions. These enable him to:

- (i) get contributions and information from the Conference members
- (ii) introduce an aspect being neglected
- (iii) unobtrusively direct the discussion to important matters
- (iv) get the discussion away from a question the Speaker does not wish to answer — ditto the Chairman!

The two main ways of obtaining contributions are by:

- (i) inviting views on specific matters chosen by the Chairman:
- (ii) asking brief, unambiguous questions relating to a particular point

The Chairman can express a view, of course, but he should *not* monopolise the discussion. He has an opportunity to speak when he comes to summarise the session.

10. Types of contributor

Whilst the Chairman must never embarrass a contributor, he should know how to handle the various types he may encounter, e.g.

THE EAGER BEAVER. This man may keep asking questions or giving his views, and he may go on for too long. The Chairman may have to interrupt him with 'You've got some very good points there, Pastor X. *This* one is particularly relevant'. Then — to the Conference — 'Does anyone agree/disagree/wish to comment?'

THE ARGUMENTATIVE ONE. The Chairman should try to find some merit in some of his points, then ask for other views, or direct the discussion to another matter.

THE KNOW-ALL. Once he has demonstrated his knowledge, only bring him in again if discussion dries up.

If a clash of personalities develops (even in the nicest possible way!) the Chairman needs to be firm. He should emphasise points of agreement, and feed a question elsewhere to bring discussion back to the point.

THE PUGILIST. It has been known for one or more to come with the express intention of opposing the Speaker or contradicting his thesis. The Chairman must keep control, and must not allow

The Influence of the 1689 Confession in America

by Tom J. Nettles

For more than 150 years, the Philadelphia Association exerted great, if not dominant, influence on the theology of Baptists in America. Elias Keach, son of the venerable Benjamin Keach, established and became pastor of the first church in the Association, the Pennepek (after the river that runs nearby) or Lower Dublin (after the township in which it was located) Church. The Pennepek Church, under Keach's leadership, embraced the theology of the Second London Confession from the time of its founding. When Keach went back to England he showed his continued concern for the theological development of the congregation by his correspondence with the pastor, John Watts.

O brother, I never saw clearly into the glorious gospel till I came to London this last time. Gospel light hath broke forth here more of late in three or four years than, I believe, since the apostasy. Arminianism and Socinianism begin to gasp for life. Universal redemption and falling from grace are almost heart sick. Blessed be God for the clear revelation of his grace in the everlasting covenant.

The Philadelphia Association was formally organised in 1707, the first Baptist Association in America. In 1724, one of the first years in which accurate records were kept of the meeting, a 'query' concerning the fourth commandment was answered by a reference to 'the Confession of Faith, set forth by

What it is to be a Good Chairman (continued)

anyone to be vilified. Even in Parliament where debate can become stormy, 'the Speaker' (Chairman) never allows slander by one of another, but insists on correction, or else that the slanderer be removed from the house.

11. Common faults of Chairmen

- Trying to impress
- Being too garrulous
- Allowing two or three people to dominate the discussion
- Lack of tact
- Inconclusiveness
- Parading own views

12. The Chairman must avoid

- bias (if a chairman is hostile to a speaker or to his views, he should decline the position of chairman)
- impatience

- personal arguments
- riding his own hobby horse

13. He needs

- tact
- good-humour
- courtesy
- quick-wittedness (he has constantly to draw on personal resources to meet situations which cannot be foreseen)
- a relaxed attitude
- a pleasant manner
- friendliness
- sensitivity
- much grace!

14. Conclusion

If the session goes well, *the Chairman* has the satisfaction of knowing that, after the Speaker, *he* has been mostly responsible for its success. □□□

the elders and brethren met in London, 1689, and owned by us'. In 1742, the Association moved to reprint 'the Confession of Faith, set forth by the elders of baptised congregations, met in London, AD1689, with a short treatise of church discipline'. The next year, 1743, the Association showed its conscientious adherence to the Confession in receiving repentances from two men. One, Joseph Eaton, 'stood up, and freely . . . condemned all expressions . . . whereby his brethren at Montgomery . . . were made to believe that he departed from the literal sense and meaning of that fundamental article in our Confession of Faith, concerning the eternal generation and Sonship of Jesus Christ our Lord'. Another, brother Butler, acknowledged in writing,

I freely confess that I have given too much cause for others to judge that I contradicted our Confession of Faith, concerning the eternal generation of the Son of God, . . . which I now with freedom condemn.

These renunciations reflected the concerns over the person of Christ that were prominent in the Association at this time.

In 1774 the Association adopted the policy of making 'observations and improvements of some particular article of faith, contained in our Confession, beginning with the first, and so on in order'. The last article treated was article XXII, 'On Religious Worship, and the Sabbath Day' in 1798. The articles are mixed in their worth but generally of excellent content, edifying, and instructive. The total of them composes a respectable and very useful body of divinity. David Benedict testifies to the impact of the Philadelphia Confession of Faith as late as 1850. 'The Philadelphia Confession of Faith was a document of high authority among all the old Baptist churches in this part of the country and generally throughout

the South and West when I first travelled in those regions.'

The South actually became acquainted with the Second London Confession long before it was the official confession of the Philadelphia Association. In 1682, the First Baptist Church of Boston, Massachusetts, established a church in Kittery, Maine, with William Screven as the pastor. As they examined the church with a view to formal acknowledgement of its separate ecclesiastical existence they ascertained the members' 'conscientious Acknowledgmt of ye Confession of Faith putt forth by ye Elders & Brethren of ye Churches in London and ye Churches in London and ye Contry in England dated in ye year 1682'. This shows a knowledge of the Second London Confession prior to its public signing in 1689. The 1677 edition of the Confession, perhaps with the 1682 printing, was the document used by the Boston and Kittery churches.

In 1696, the Kittery church moved to Charleston, South Carolina. This was the first Baptist church in the southern United States. When its first pastor, William Screven, neared the end of his ministry in the church he prepared an 'Ornament for Church Members'. At the close he urged the people to 'supply yourselves with an able and faithful minister. Be sure you take care that the person be orthodox in faith, and of blameless life, and does own the Confession of Faith put forth by our brethren in London in 1689'. The urgency of this exhortation arose from Screven's perception of the dangers of Arminian influence in Charleston.

The number of churches in South Carolina increased in the First Great Awakening in America. George Whitefield made a positive impact on the Baptist churches in South Carolina during these years and his influence was extended through the life and ministry

of Oliver Hart. Hart, converted under the preaching of Whitefield, came to South Carolina as a Baptist minister from the Philadelphia Association. He became pastor of the church in Charleston in 1750. In 1751, he led in the establishment of the Charleston Association. In 1767, this Association adopted the Second London Confession as its official confession and the Baptist Catechism as its means of encouraging religious instruction in families.

One of the most notable pastors of that church, Richard Furman, who served from 1787 to 1825, used the catechism to wonderful advantage. A valuable testimony to its potency is preserved by the reminiscences of one of his pupils through a grandchild.

We had no Sabbath school then, but we had the Baptist Catechism, with which we were as familiar as with the Lord's Prayer. At our quarterly seasons, we children of the congregation repeated the Baptist Catechism standing, in a circle round the front. We numbered from sixty to a hundred. The girls standing at the south of the pulpit, the boys meeting them in the center from the north. Dr. Furman would, in his majestic, winning manner, walk down the pulpit steps and with book in hand, commence asking questions, beginning with the little ones (very small indeed some were, but well taught and drilled at home). We had to memorise the whole book, for no-one knew which question would fall to them. . . . It was a marvel to visitors on these occasions, the wonderful self-possession and accuracy manifested by the whole class. This practice was of incalculable benefit, for when it pleased God to change our hearts, and when offering ourselves to the church for membership, we knew what the church doctrines meant and were quite familiar with answering questions before the whole congrega-

tion, and did not quake when pastor or deacon or anyone else asked what we understood by Baptist, the Lord's Supper, Justification, Adoption, Sanctification. Oh, no; we had been well taught.

Georgia Baptists also held tenaciously to the Baptist Confession of Faith. In 1839, brother C. Collins was upset because of the detrimental influence a recent Methodist protracted meeting displayed among the Baptists. Some of his own brethren complained about his preaching saying, 'There was too much election in it, the doctrine was too strong.' He called for the *Christian Index*, a Baptist newspaper in Georgia, to 'put something into the *Index* on doctrinal points' because there appeared to be 'a great falling off among the Baptists from the doctrines they once held'. Jesse Mercer, the senior editor of the paper, was delighted to report that in that very issue the junior editor, William H. Stokes, had begun 'extracting articles from the Baptist Confession of Faith with remarks'. Stokes' introductory article, printed as a lead to the 'extract' of Chapter One, 'Of the Holy Scriptures', captures some interesting and important points.

The Baptists as a denomination have always regarded the Bible as being amply sufficient for all the purposes of faith and practice. But knowing that many persons, holding wild and visionary notions upon religious subjects, often use the same language, and say that they too, make the Bible their standard; and knowing that their views and practices are often misunderstood and often misrepresented, our brethren have felt it important to set up certain briefs, or compends of their faith, so that their adoption of the Bible in general terms, might not seem to be a sort of shield for heterodox opinions, and that there might be a oneness of doctrine and practice amongst themselves. These summaries of faith have

The New Age Movement

Review article by Bill and Sharon James

The 1980s have seen the growth of the 'New Age Movement'. Popularised by such writers as Shirley MacLaine it offers inner peace along with spiritual experiences, and the unleashing of hidden personal powers. There is an appeal to those concerned with health and fitness as well as to the businessman wanting to increase his personal effectiveness. Holistic medicine, yoga, business seminars and even health food outlets may propagate the New Age message. It is vital that Christians should be equipped to confront this movement and be aware of links with pantheism and occultism, as well as the false notions concerning Christ that the movement promotes.

Confronting the New Age by Douglas R. Groothuis, 1988, Inter-Varsity Press, Downers Grove, Illinois.

Subtitled 'How to resist a growing religious movement', this book is a follow-up to his work *Unmasking the New Age* (IVP 1986). Groothuis' earlier book looked at the history and ideas of the movement but now he goes further,

identifying the influence of the New Age philosophy in business training seminars, education and medicine. The twin dangers of extreme reaction are noted. The 'taboo' mentality places a blanket condemnation on everything that has to do with the New Age ideas. Those over-reacting in this way would have to forbid Christians to use any 'alternative' or 'holistic' health care, such as acupuncture or homoeopathy, ban entering health food stores and forbid listening to 'New Age' music. Perhaps more dangerous is the 'chameleon' mentality that accepts all current ideas without discerning those things that are inextricably connected with a pantheistic and ultimately pagan world view.

Without being alarmist, the author exposes what lies behind much of what is presented in an innocuous form behind the guise of 'self development', 'meditation', 'positive affirmation' and so on. Christians may well be unaware that pantheistic ideas and occult influence are behind such currently acceptable practices as biofeedback.

generally been taken from the Old Confession, published in England, first in 1643, and subsequently in 1689; adopted by the Philadelphia Association in 1742 and by the Charleston in 1767.

Now it has long been a question in our mind, why the regular Baptists, throughout this whole country, might not adopt this 'Confession', and by so doing, have the articles of faith in every association alike? For certainly, this venerable little book, does contain the doctrines systematically arranged, which are held by the old-fashioned Calvinistic Baptists the world over.

This strong argument for the utility and practicality of confessions probably has greater force in this age of theological anarchy and vacuity than it did when Stokes wrote it. Remarkable also is Stokes' implied proposal that every association in 'the whole country' adopt it. The call for 'oneness in doctrine and practice' falls on many a deaf ear today and mistakenly is viewed as utterly and fiercely un-Baptistic. In this tercentenary year, perhaps our prayers can be penetrated with a renewed energy that God's people might truly come into a 'unity in the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God'.

□□□

The chapter 'Education for a New Age' traces the growth of New Age philosophy in American schools, and offers useful suggestions as to how to confront this.

Groothuis not only traces the influence of the New Age, he explains how to witness to those involved in it. The biblical response to the various ideas put forward by the movement's supporters is most helpfully laid out. A summary of the Christian response to the movement is available in booklet form, *The New Age Movement*, also by Douglas Groothuis and published by IVP.

New Age Medicine: A Christian Perspective on Holistic Health by Paul C. Reisser, Teri K. Reisser and John Weldon, Global Publishers, Chattanooga TN., 1988. Distributed by IVP.

The authors examine the background of holistic medicine and show the influence of eastern mysticism and the New Age movement on such therapies as homoeopathy, biofeedback, therapeutic touch, acupuncture and acupressure. They affirm that the human being does indeed need to be viewed in a holistic way, not as a mere physical machine, but as a unity of body and mind and spirit. But biblical principles are laid out so that Christians may seek to discern those aspects of much current 'alternative' medicine which are anti-Christian.

What is the 'New Age Movement' or 'New Consciousness'?

The above books are available in the US and Canada. For the benefit of British readers we summarise the main ideas, using the work by Groothuis, to which readers are directed for a fuller explanation (available by mail order from Toronto Baptist Seminary Book Room, 130 Gerrard Street East, Toronto, Canada M5A 3T4). Forewarned is forearmed!

1. There's a New Age coming!

After a long period of Western secularism and materialism a time of new

spirituality is dawning. (The Age of Aquarius.) While at present we see the problems of the nuclear arms race, pollution and world hunger we can look forward to a New Age of peace, harmony and truth. This will come about as humanity realises its potential. Each person is divine and possesses untapped resources of psychic power and consciousness. Corporate meditation may release power to change reality and usher in the New Age.

2. All is one

Humanity, Nature and God are inter-related and interdependent. Current world problems are a result of a fragmented world view i.e. of not realising this interrelation. All religions are one: there is a mystical unity in all of them. The uniqueness of Christianity is denied. The New Age adherent believes that the exclusivity of Christianity was introduced by the early church as a distortion of Christ's tolerant and all-embracing teachings. There is no strict distinction between right and wrong, no absolute morality.

3. We are all gods (Everything is God)

God is not personal, but a force (as in 'Star Wars'!). This force is in all of us. The New Age aims to wake people up to who and what we really are — gods! The powers within us are to be released by meditation and realisation of ourselves. The movement believes in reincarnation.

4. We must transform our consciousness

What is wrong with the world and with us? The New Age says that modern Western materialism has blinded us to spiritual things. We remain content with every day existence. We think that we are just evolved animals. But in fact there is vast spiritual power and reality in all of us. As a leading proponent of the movement, Shirley MacLaine has said: 'You are unlimited. You just don't realise it!'¹ This 'realisation' may come through meditation, yoga, drugs, martial arts, subliminal tapes or hypnosis.

Consciousness-raising seminars such as *The Forum*, *Lifespring*, or *Silva Mind Control* also aim to produce a 'new consciousness'. This awareness may be called cosmic consciousness, God-consciousness, God-realisation, self-realisation, enlightenment, illumination, at-one-ment or attunement. It leads to spiritual power and well-being. Higher, para-normal powers are available through such means as Transcendental Meditation (TM).

One of the most disturbing aspects of the New Age is the teaching that powers may be released by meditation — such as the 'serpent goddess' at the base of the spine. Practitioners of yoga themselves warn of the dangers associated with releasing this power. The manifestations described are undoubtedly associated with occult possession and are truly terrifying.²

It is generally believed that powers released by meditation, particularly corporate meditation, can actually change reality. (A 'critical mass' of consciousness may be attained.)

There is no central structure or organisation. The movement is propagated by quiet dissemination across a 'network' of contacts, and by publications of popular figures such as Shirley MacLaine and John Naisbitt.

Our response

The claims of the New Age Movement are profoundly disturbing. They have a world view which is far removed from the Bible's view of God and his world. The connection with spiritual powers and the occult is of great concern, as well as the loss of moral values. However the danger of the movement lies in the subtle combination of truth and error that is always the hallmark of Satan's counterfeits. In seeking to confront this, we are engaged in a spiritual battle, against demonic powers.

If we are to respond effectively, we must understand the main attractions:

1. In a world of disharmony and pain, it offers the hope of unity and love.
2. In a world which has devalued spiritual reality, it recognises the need for deep spiritual experience.
3. The whole philosophy of the movement looks within for fulfilment. It is absorbed with *self*, self-image, fitness, awareness. We are essentially proud and vain creatures. The idea that we are in some sense divine with vast untapped powers is appealing. We can glory in ourselves. 'You will be like God. . . .'

In witnessing to those influenced by this philosophy we need to demonstrate that we, too, are profoundly concerned about the problems of the world. If as Christians we are ignorant and uncaring about such things as pollution, the arms race, world hunger etc. we do not commend the gospel. We need to show that we also believe that there is a 'New Age' coming, but we do not put our trust in the vain hope of man's upward evolution! We must also be able to give testimony to a real and meaningful spiritual experience. But we have to insist that spiritual experience, and the solution of the world's problems must be based on truth and reality. Where did the New Age teachings come from? They have very little historical, scientific or logical base. It is a delusion, a fantasy. We also stress that the Bible teaches that God is personal and moral. To have fellowship with him, we must approach him in a manner acceptable to him. The problem is not lack of self-realisation, but sin which can only be dealt with in Christ. Christianity cannot be reconciled with or incorporated into the teachings of the New Age Movement. Christ claims to be the only way to God. The New Age portrayal of Christ has no evidence, and must be strongly refuted.

¹ Quoted in *The New Age Movement*, Douglas Groothuis, IVP, Downers Grove, IL, p. 15.

² *Confronting the New Age*, Douglas Groothuis, IVP, 1988, pp. 78-9.

The Origin of the 1689 Confession

In 1689 the ministers who republished the *Second London Baptist Confession* (first compiled in 1677) met because of their concern about the declension of the churches. The republication of the Confession was a by-product of their meeting. The following reasons were given for their gathering together.

A General Fast appointed in all the Congregations on the 10th of October next, 1689, with all the causes and reasons thereof:

The main and principal evils to be bewailed and mourned over before the Lord on that day, are as follows:

First, Those many grievous backslidings, sins, and provocations, not only of the whole nation, but also of the Lord's own people, as considered in our public and private stations; particularly that great decay of first love, faith and zeal for the ways and worship of God; which hath been apparent, not only in our churches, but also in private families.

Secondly, That this declension and backsliding hath been, we fear, for a long series of time, and many sore judgments God has brought upon the nation; and a strange dearth of late come upon the Lord's faithful witnesses, besides divers painful labourers in Christ's vineyard called home, and but few raised up in their stead; little success in the ministry; storms of persecution having been raised upon us, a new war commenced by the beast (through the divine permission of God, and hand of his justice), to a total overcoming, to appearance, the witnesses of Christ in these isles; besides his more immediate strokes by plague and fire, etc. God blasting all essays used for deliverance, so that we were almost without hope; therefore, our sins that provoked the righteous and just God to bring all these evils upon us, we ought to bewail and moan for before him. But withal not to forget his infinite goodness, who, when he saw that our power was gone, and that there was none shut up or left, that he should thus appear for our help and deliverance, in a way unexpected and unthought of by us.

Thirdly, The things we should therefore in the next place pray and cry to the Lord for, are, that he would give us true, broken, and penitent hearts, for all our iniquities, and the sins of his people, and wash and cleanse away those great pollutions with which we have been defiled; and also pour forth more of his Spirit upon us, and open the mysteries of his word, that we may understand whereabouts we are, in respect of the latter time, and what he is doing, and know our work, and that a blessing may attend all the churches of his saints in these nations, and that greater light may break forth, and the glory of the Lord rise upon us, and that the word may not any more be as a miscarrying womb and dry breasts, but that in every place multitudes may be turned to the Lord, and that love and sweet concord may be found among all the Lord's people in these nations, that the great work begun therein so unexpectedly, may go on and be perfected to the praise of his own glory.

Likewise to put up earnest cries and supplications to the Lord for the lineal seed of Abraham, the poor Jews, that they may be called, and both Jews and Gentiles be made one sheepfold, under that one shepherd Jesus Christ.

These are some of the things we have thought good to lay before you, and which we hope we shall be helped with you to spread before the Lord on that day, with whatsoever else you or we may be helped to consider of; hoping you will not forget your pastors and ministers in your prayers, and what we have been enabled to come to a resolve about, so that all may be succeeded with a glorious blessing from the Almighty; that the present churches, and those saints who shall come after us, may have cause to praise his holy name: Which is the unfeigned prayer and desire of us, who subscribe ourselves your servants for Jesus' sake.

Included among 32 ministers who signed the above were Knollys, Kiffin, and Keach.
from The Historian Ivey.

Knollys, Kiffin, and Keach — significant leaders of their day

Hanserd Knollys (1598-1691), William Kiffin (1616-1701), and Benjamin Keach (1640-1704) have much more in common than a surname which happens to begin with a K. These men though separated by a significant number of years in age became intimate friends. The pastoral service rendered by the three totalled 157 years, 147 of these in London.

Each of these men preached, taught, debated, and wrote for the Particular Baptist cause when all of them were considered 'lewd fellows of the baser sort'. They bore patiently with the most opprobrious epithets imaginable: vagrants, rogues, antinomians, ignorant coxcombs, mountebanks. Their preaching was called prating, ranting, blustering. Kiffin and Knollys endured much of this during the period of the Puritan Revolution, but their sobriety, patience, and true orthodoxy stated in the 1644 Confession settled this irrational opposition. Keach suffered during the persecution which attended the passing of the Clarendon Code.

Knollys, Kiffin, and Keach lost close and dear relations during their lives: wives, sons, and daughters. In all of these strokes of providence they displayed godly patience and would speak in union with Kiffin when he said, 'Through his goodness he hath been pleased to bear me up under them all, and in the sharpest of which I have seen goodness and mercy toward me'. Kiffin lived through the execution of two pious grandsons who had joined the Duke of Monmouth against James II.

In their various imprisonments, trials, and times in the pillory they would speak unanimously with Keach when in 1664 he was sentenced to stand in the pillory: 'I do account this the greatest honour that ever the Lord was pleased to confer upon me.'

They also were together in their joy at the success of the Glorious Revolution and the passing of the Act of Toleration. Secretly they published a letter to the Baptist churches expressing adoration of 'the divers wisdom and goodness of Almighty God, in respect of his late most gracious providence'. And together they put their signatures to the 1689 Confession of Faith and encouraged their brethren to do so.
Tom Nettles.

What does it mean to be Evangelical?

During May this year 350 Christian leaders convened at Trinity Evangelical Divinity School in Deerfield, Illinois to try to hammer out a concise definition of evangelical belief and practice.

During the four day conference a writing committee of seven scholars of various denominations worked on the draft statement which came in the end to about 1,800 words. Carl Henry, J. I. Packer, Don Carson, David Wells, Harold O. J. Brown and Kenneth Kantzer were among those who presented papers on relevant subjects such as ecumenism, modern science and social and personal issues. Ideas from these papers helped shape the final affirmation. It was stressed that the document was an affirmation rather than a Confession of Faith. For instance it was not possible with a variety of denominations represented to be explicit about the sacraments.

Jim Packer blows the whistle!

Disagreement did surface over the position of annihilationism. Packer pointed out that fellow Anglican John Stott, long considered as one of the world's leading evangelical theologians, has become a proponent of conditional immortality.¹ Packer described conditionalism as a 'proposed revision of historical evangelical soteriology, the view that the question of salvation is less agonizing than we thought because after the judgment day the unsaved will not exist'. He pointed out that this view empties evangelism of its urgency.

The conference was evenly divided on whether to include a clause which would renounce annihilationism. In the event a renunciation clause was omitted. When completed the document will be distributed and promoted by the National Association of Evangelicals which helped the organisation of the conference. Papers presented at the conference will be published by Zondervan in the autumn.

¹ John Stott's strongly argued case for annihilationism appears in a book published last year with the title, *Essentials – a Liberal Evangelical Dialogue*, by David Edwards and John Stott. To Stott Liberalism is a form of Christianity albeit a defective form. To us Liberal-Evangelical is the antithesis of Christianity because it denies all the central truths of the gospel. We regard David Edwards as a dangerous false teacher.

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1989

Nº110

July - Aug

CONTENTS

front inside cover – **The Carey Conference**
2nd-4th January 1990, Ripon

- | | | |
|----|--|-----------------------|
| 1 | Editorial | |
| 3 | The Holiness and Happiness of God | Editor |
| 12 | News – Malaysia, Spain, France, Scotland | |
| 15 | The Centrality of Preaching among the Puritans | Jim van Zyl |
| 21 | Reformation in South Africa | Martin Holdt |
| 22 | What it is to be a Good Chairman | |
| 24 | The Influence of the 1689 Confession in America | Tom Nettles |
| 27 | The New Age Movement – a review article | Bill and Sharon James |
| 30 | The Origin of the 1689 Confession | |