

REFORMATION TODAY



SEPTEMBER-OCTOBER 1990

117



Bill Ascol, the leader of the Youth Conference described in the editorial

The Carey Conference for Ministers

January 2-4, 1991

College of Ripon and York St John, Ripon, N. Yorks

Theme: Raising the standard of preaching

Speakers: Donald Macleod, John Blanchard
Don Garlington, Norman Porter

A conference not to be missed!

Preachers, be sure to set aside this period for valuable time together.
Further details will be available in the next issue.

The editor and Lyn are planning to leave for Canada on August 15 to participate in the Canadian Carey Family Conference. This will be followed by a Family Conference in California and then ministry in the Chicago area with Trinity Baptist Church (pastor, Dr John Armstrong) and further ministry in the USA and Canada, culminating with the Fifth International Baptist Conference organised by the Toronto Baptist Seminary for October 15-18. Provision has been made for mail to be processed in our absence and Lyn hopes to be back at her desk by September 26.

Front cover picture: First Baptist Church, Jackson, Louisiana. In the foreground, Pastor Joe Nesom, his wife Janice and daughters Julie and Jaimie

Editorial



David Vaughn of Atlanta in the forecourt of the conference centre at Palm Beach, Florida. David recently married to Nicki of Johannesburg, is soon to spend time in France as further preparation for missionary service in Ivory Coast

Arriving in time to witness the annual Convention of the Southern Baptists in New Orleans (38,000 delegates!), I was given a visual reminder of the vastness and significance of this the largest evangelical denomination in the world.

But how evangelical is this huge denomination? From the Reformed Faith which used to be their foundation, they slipped this century into Arminianism, then into Pelagianism, then into Liberalism. The infiltration of Liberalism into the seminaries has been a major destructive factor. The undermining of the authority of Scripture has had a devastating effect upon the Southern Baptist Convention just as it has in other mainline denominations throughout the world. Who can understand the judgment of God with regard to this blindness? How tragic when the faith of young men training for the ministry is destroyed! How sad when the churches which call them wither through the principles of modernism which they can imbibe!

Yet from conversations, from reading and observation, I could discern a turn-

ing in the tide against Liberalism. This last convention marked a decisive victory for the evangelicals with regard to the maintaining of the inerrancy of Scripture.

Of special interest is the gradual formation and establishment of the Founders' Movement which is set to bring the denomination back to the doctrine of the founding fathers. Compared with the size of the denomination the Founders' Movement is tiny but the potential for reformation is great. The following developments are noteworthy:

The Annual Founders' Ministers' Conference at Rhodes College, Memphis, Tennessee

Leaders involved in the promotion of this gathering include Ernie Reisinger, Tom Nettles, Bill and Tom Ascol and Fred Malone. David Kingdon of IVP, UK, is the visiting speaker this year.

The Founders' Youth Conference, Florida After a small beginning, this Con-

ference increased to 185 in attendance this year representing about a dozen churches. It was my privilege to be the principal speaker with two themes: 1. The necessities of salvation — Regeneration, Repentance, Faith, Justification, Holiness. It is always our aim to establish believers on a strong foundation of truth that they might be mature and not be blown about by every wind of teaching (Eph 4:14-16). At the same time the above subjects can be used to search the hearts of the unconverted. An evangelistic appeal which is not based on truth can easily harden rather than soften the disposition of a hearer.

2. Christian living in our Global Age. Humanistic philosophy rules in our age, an age unique for its population explosion, technological achievements and ecological crises. I gave some background as to how our generation has been hijacked by humanists and hedonists and explained why it is that moral standards have been eroded away. We live in an epoch of dissolution, a dark world in which Christians ought to shine like stars (Phil 3:15), and particularly so with the attributes of love, humility, purity, and dedication.

The character of the conference was unusual in that there was a deliberate effort to be disciplined in our habits and in the use of time which contrasts sharply with the carelessness endemic in Western society. This was not easy in the carefree holiday atmosphere of Palm Beach, Florida. Our orders were to work hard and play hard in the set times allocated. I personally enjoyed the discipline of having to be on time, wear my badge (in many conferences badges are not taken seriously which inhibits fellowship) and participate in the volleyball competition, although special recreational activities were not mandatory. It takes a gifted personality to mix law and liberty in a way which gains the enthusiasm of young conferees and we

were blessed in that way by the leadership of Bill Ascol. Included in the day's structured timetable was a period devoted to personal Scripture reading right through the book of Acts, seven chapters a day, a most beneficial exercise!

It was inspiring to see how much the organisers cared about those coming and about the Lord who saves us, reflected in the careful preparation of a 40 page booklet for every conferee. This booklet included information on several countries: Japan, Columbia, Indonesia and Kenya, with cameos and photos of Reformed Baptist missionaries (George and Donna Martin of Indonesia, Steve and Marilyn Haines of Columbia and Tony and Cindy Ludlow of Japan). It is always our prayer that from our young people some will be called to labour in taking the gospel to needy nations.

The following lives were portrayed by pastors Fred Malone, Joe Nesom, Cary Kimbrell and Thomas Winn in the morning sessions: Adoniram and Ann Judson, William Carey, Luther Rice, Lottie Moon. For those who do not know about Lottie Moon an outline is included. A 30 page bibliography of Ann Judson by Tom Nettles was printed for the conference. (Available from First Baptist Church, PO Box 552, Clinton, LA 70722.)

A Concert of Prayer for Revival

Prior to the Youth Conference, representatives of a number of churches gathered at the First Baptist Church, Clinton, Louisiana for a two and a half hour Concert of Prayer which was well structured with relevant information. The time passed very quickly because of the sense of the presence of the Lord. The structure used was as follows: Hymn, Scripture verses and brief historical sketch describing legitimacy

Who was Lottie Moon? Inspired by the dedication of Ann Judson, Lottie Moon left America at the age of 33 to serve the Lord she loved in China for the rest of her life. For 39 years she sacrificed her own physical and financial condition. There were many occasions when she gave her own food to starving children, used her money to buy coal for local people, books for schoolchildren and paid the rent on a chapel so that they could use the building as a school. At the end of her life she did not have enough money to pay her way back to the USA. On other occasions she was willing to lay down her life for the Chinese Christians. Once when they were threatened, she told the persecutors: 'Jesus gave himself for us Christians, now I am ready to die for him'. Only once during the 39 years did she take furlough to return to the USA. In 1912, her frail, 50lb body was carried aboard a ship to return her to America but just off the coast of Japan she went home to be with her Lord. The Chinese people remembered her by saying, 'How she loved us'!

and usefulness of churches combining for prayer. Silent prayer for personal revival. Prayer for specific churches as connected with the impending conference for young people; for the SBC; for the Louisiana legislature; for the Islamic world. The time ended with a period of praise and thanksgiving for the recent events in Eastern Europe, especially Romania and Russia.

Before leaving for the USA, I completed a manuscript *Give Him No Rest* which explains the concept of the Concert of Prayer. With the addition of a further chapter which has now been completed, EP have agreed to publish the book. The theme got under way at the annual Carey Conference for ministers at Ripon, Yorkshire in January this year, which conference was devoted to the subject of revival. (We regret that it took us 20 years to reach the subject!) The outline that I used at the Carey Conference forms the basis of the book. I would be discouraged if this theme was relegated to the realm of theory and therefore was thrilled to find that Pastor Bill Ascol of Clinton insisted that prayer for revival should be the theme of five expositions in his church.

The relevance of revival can be seen when we view the Southern Baptist denomination. America has its own his-

tory of revivals. That era of revival is now receding more and more into oblivion. If we are to continue to lose the power of God at the present rate the churches will fade away.

The need seen in one particular church

An issue is not made clear by generalisations but by taking one special church in detail we can soon come to terms with the reality of our present need. I was privileged to preach in five different Southern Baptist churches, all of which have reformed pastors. These are mostly young ministers who have grown into the doctrines of grace taking different routes in doing so. We will take an example of a minister in Baton Rouge. He has come to sovereign grace convictions during the last two years having pastored the church for 18 years. Of 650 members, only 150 attend the Lord's Day morning service and less in the evenings. About 25 attend the prayer meetings and only a handful understand the doctrines of grace. Spiritual appetite generally is low. Dedicated members avow their appreciation of a high standard of expository preaching that is sustained and pastoral care which is beyond reproach. They say that they cannot recall any sermon which was not substantial and inspiring. Yet indifference prevails with many who

show far more interest in social events than in spiritual subjects. Is that not typical of so many churches today? What other recourse is there but to seek revival?

After several weeks of ministry among these Southern Baptist churches I would urge the following emphases:

1. *Continued prayer for spiritual awakening* — Those men who are alerted and who have experienced the power of the Holy Spirit in a radical change of direction, need to keep in close fellowship and need to have a covenant to pray for revival. We must not allow the extravagances of the Charismatic Movement to distract us or discourage us. They are noted for inflated reports and exaggeration, and never report on their drop-out rate or on those who are disappointed because they are not healed.

False power boasted of by others must not blind us to our need of genuine spiritual power, powerful preaching, fervent intercession and courageous evangelism. In our praying let us have faith and expectancy to see personal revival in many who languish. When we are encouraged let us share that with others with due caution and truthfulness. Work is being done to link up ministers and others interested in fasting and prayer on the first Tuesday of every month. I was quite struck by one pastor who was not taken aback by the idea of fasting, but promptly informed me that it was his habit to practise this once a week for a 24 hour period.

2. *An evangelistic and missionary emphasis* — It is imperative that we engage in an outreach of quality. By quality I mean that we need to show that we really care for people and that we have the truth which deals with the great issues of eternity. We must not be distracted by the cults. In fact their activity only makes it more imperative that we use the Scriptures fully. We have tremendous resources of saving truth and

freedom to publish and propagate that truth. Moreover a missionary emphasis is imperative. Those churches which become ingrown by thinking only of themselves are likely to wither.

3. *Versatile writing* — *The Founders' Journal* is a new development in the Southern Baptist scene. Two issues have been published. Inquiries should be directed to *Founders' Journal*, PO Box 150931, Cape Coral, FL 33915. There is great scope in addressing and challenging the churches and pastors in particular about the present scene. Subjects such as the reality of true conversion require exposition. Vital, relevant and arresting writing is not easy but it must be attempted and writers must be prepared to persevere. A further suggestion is the continued need for stirring historical and biographical materials presented in a brief compass.

4. *International bonds* — A very important factor is the need to appreciate more the international bonds that are developing. The Reformed Baptists are growing on an international scale. There is great encouragement in enjoying a unity which stretches across the world. Reformed Baptists are also multiplying among the Southern Baptists. The obligations to maximise our spiritual unity are stated in Ephesians 4:1-6. There are different levels of unity and co-operation. It is imperative that we never pose as superior or make out that we alone have the truth. Yes, we highly esteem our doctrinal heritage. We will contend for that in love especially in circles where much damage is occurring because of the loss of sound teaching. We are in the universal body for the good of that body. We are not superior. We acknowledge that in many ways we fall short of the glory of the Lord. None of us can say that we have kept the law of love as we should. In the work of reformation a generous view of the body of Christ universal is imperative.

Calvin, Geneva and Christian Mission

This excellent presentation by Professor Douglas MacMillan first appeared in the Reformed Theological Journal, 98 Lisburn Road, Belfast, Northern Ireland BT9 6AG. The RTJ is published every November and runs to about 72 pages. With postage the cost is £2.75. The journal is edited mostly by the faculty of the Theological Seminary of the Reformed Presbyterian Church of Ireland. Professor MacMillan, well known for his international ministry, is at present recovering from major heart surgery.

As the sun sank over Geneva on Saturday, May 27, 1564, another occurrence was to give this daily happening a striking and strongly symbolic significance; John Calvin died in the city which, although only his by adoption, is forever linked with his name.

It was of the coincidence of these two events that Theodore Beza, Calvin's friend and biographer as well as his theological colleague and successor, made imaginative use as he pointed out the significance to the whole reformed movement of Calvin's removal from the scene.

Thus in the same moment that day the sun set and the greatest light which was in this world, for the direction of the Church of God, was withdrawn to heaven. We can well say that with this single man it has pleased God, in our time, to teach us the way both to live well and to die well.¹

This high evaluation of Calvin's importance to his times is no empty eulogy. No matter how men may appraise his work, there is absolutely no questioning his significance for the theological world of his own day and since. Nor is the tribute to his example in life and death merely the hollow compliment of friendly kindness. Few men have been so single-mindedly industrious as Calvin. Fewer still have achieved so much in a lifetime, despite the fact that he died almost two months before his fifty-fifth birthday. If faith in God, commitment to Christ, compassion for one's fellows and a massive contribution to spiritual enlightenment are factors to be weighed in assessing what it is to 'live well', then Beza was right; Calvin *did* live well.

Beza was also right when he said that Calvin died well. Death had come slowly, lingeringly, painfully. Rumours of his dying had been filtering out of Geneva for months. However, although plagued by a fearsome catalogue of illnesses, and terribly enfeebled in body from the beginning of the year, his mind had remained sharp and clear, his confidence in God strong and sure. He had worked to the last and, until death came, his concern was for the cause in which

he had spent his years and his strength. His final statements on the Christian faith and directions for the Christian Church are in perfect harmony with those which characterise his entire Christian profession and are shot through, not merely with warm devotion to God, but with a driving concern for the good of the whole Reformed constituency and the furtherance of the gospel.

That Calvin was deeply committed to spreading the truths he believed should not seem strange to any of us. What may startle us is the thought that such commitment invites attention to him in the rather unexpected, and largely unexplored, role of evangelist. An upsurge of scholarly interest in this aspect of his work at Geneva has taken place over recent years and has produced some fascinating details of his accomplishments in the sphere of evangelism. The emerging picture kindles a new awareness of his place in the history of Christian missions and exhibits his work in Geneva as one of the finest examples of effective outreach in the history of the Church. This, in turn, calls for a fresh evaluation of his theological perspectives and, in some areas, a radical review of various interpretations, and misrepresentations, of the man and his actual beliefs.

Calvin's Theology and its Motivation to Mission

The problems with which Calvin had to grapple over the closing months of his life touched many lands, but those of one specific country took particular prominence for him, as they had done for many years. This was France, his own homeland. Right up until the end, Calvin kept receiving information about, and commenting upon, political happenings there. To the end his advice was sought by, and given to, the Protestants of France on how to cope with a situation which, in Church and State, was becoming increasingly intolerant of their life and witness. Those concerns of a dying man prompt questions about how they became part of his life and why they weighed so heavily on his mind even in the face of death. The search for an answer leads directly to his theology.

It was in 1536 that the first edition of Calvin's great theological work, *The Institutes of the Christian Religion*, was published. The work provided a clear presentation of Reformed doctrine, linked it back into the writings of the early Church fathers, and showed that all its leading tenets were drawn from Scripture. It also carried a powerful apologetic in defence of the historic Christian faith. The apologetic aim is seen in the way Calvin dedicated the book in his introductory preface. It is couched in the form of a powerful plea to the King of France — then Francis I — on behalf of the persecuted believers in the land.

With its appearance, French Protestants were given a measured and meticulous exposition of their faith by which to refute misrepresentation and misconception; they were also provided with a handbook from which to evangelise and instruct others in the doctrines of biblical Christianity. The appearance of the book in this format, and at this juncture, alerts us to the fact that Calvin's work, even at this early stage of his life, was already deeply enmeshed with the spiritual welfare of his own countrymen.

This concern for mission has been overlooked in the traditions which have encrusted – and too often calcified around – the study of Calvin’s life; mission has far too frequently been assumed to be absent because banished by the force of theological necessity. Dr P. E. Hughes reflects the position accurately, even if he states it starkly:

As for Calvin’s theology, we are all familiar with the scornful rationalisation that facetiously asserts that his horrible doctrine of divine election makes nonsense of all missionary and evangelistic activity.²

Here, Dr Hughes highlights the truth that there has been a long-standing failure to appreciate, far less assess accurately, Calvin’s conviction about or his involvement in missions because of a distorted view of his theology.

This failure traces back, in too many instances, to preconceived ideas about the man and his actual teaching. The notion has prevailed, and still does with people who do not read their Calvin directly, that his theology axiomatically excluded him and his fellow ministers in Geneva from having any concern about, or interest in, a theology of mission. This conception runs counter to the historical facts and to entertain it is to misread both the situation at Geneva and the theology which inspired its circumstances.

Another writer, Professor David B. Calhoun, very cogently summarises the imbalance which has crept into the historical assessment of Calvin’s theology and practice at this very point:

The whole issue has been dismissed at times by the facile assertion that Calvin’s doctrine of divine election makes nonsense of all missionary and evangelistic activity. At other times it has been misunderstood or distorted because of lack of a full definition of missions and the failure to study comprehensively both Calvin’s missionary teaching and activity.³

His assessment is all too factual, and accentuates the need to subject this construction of Calvin’s doctrine of election to careful analysis. Is it the case that Calvin construed his theology in such a way as to obviate any necessity of or obligation towards mission, because the elect would be brought into the kingdom anyway? Careful and sympathetic scrutiny of his own writing, and intimate acquaintance with his enormously energetic activity, should have made it perfectly plain that this was never Calvin’s own view of the matter. A systematic theologian *par excellence*, as all historians and theologians who have studied him allow, he is acknowledged as the outstanding systematiser of Reformed theology. His reputation here should alert us to the danger of assuming that he would easily fall into the one-sided view of this central doctrine which has so frequently been credited to him.

The fact is that comprehensive analysis of his own writings compels a very different opinion. For example, they articulate the continual danger of the Church, or of individuals, becoming complacent about evangelism precisely because of a wrong conception of this very article of the faith. He teaches that,

since no man knows who the elect are, preachers must take it for granted that God wills all to be saved.⁴ In practice, that must be the principle upon which the ministry of the Word operates.⁵ Election belongs to a special category, the secret purpose of God, not to the evangelistic activity of the Church, which has no way of distinguishing between elect and reprobate. The Church must preach the gospel to men, not as elect, but as sinners;⁶ for it is one's believing response to the free offer of Christ in the gospel which reveals one's election.⁷ Further, God opens doors before the Church that the gospel might go into all the world so that his elect may hear it and respond in faith.⁸

The paradox between election and the free offer of the gospel — a paradox of which he is, of course, sharply aware — is never an embarrassment to his exegesis and his handling of Scripture. For example, in his comment on John 3:16, he says:

God has employed the universal term *whosoever*, both to invite all indiscriminately to partake of life, and to cut off every excuse from unbelievers. Such is also the import of the term *world*, which he formerly used; for though nothing will be found in the world that is worthy of the favour of God, yet he shows himself to be reconciled to the whole world, when he invites all men without exception to the faith of Christ, which is nothing else than an entrance into life.⁹

This is typical of the way in which he leaves the free offer completely unfettered. He is utterly confident that the preaching of the gospel will accomplish the divine purpose and that, through the gospel call being made powerful and effective by God, it will bring the elect to saving faith in Christ. However, he normally spells out the obverse implications of effectual calling as well, and his comment on this verse continues:

Let us remember, on the other hand, that while *life* is promised universally to *all who believe* in Christ, still faith is not common to all. For Christ is made known and held out to the view of all, but the elect alone are they whose eyes God opens, that they may seek him by faith.¹⁰

This makes clear that vocation harmonises with, and is dictated by, election but that the latter does not circumscribe the freeness, nor impugn the integrity, of the gospel invitation to men as sinners. This is, in fact, the force of his comment on the opening phrase of the next verse, *For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world*.

He came not to destroy; and therefore it follows that *all who believe* may obtain salvation by him. There is now no reason why any man should be in a state of hesitation, or of distressing anxiety, as to the manner in which he may escape death, when we believe that it was the purpose of God that Christ should deliver us from it. The word *world* is again repeated, that no man should think himself wholly excluded, if he only keep the road of faith.¹¹

This fine, biblical balance runs all through his writings and his theology of election was held in such a way that he felt bound to work and witness for the salvation of others with all his strength. While mission is God's work, it is also

ours and we must be faithful in our prosecution of it. The desire for, and opportunity of, sending preachers into other nations is an argument and pledge of the love of God:

Therefore, there is no question but that God doth visit that nation where his gospel is preached . . . the gospel doth not fall down, and, as it were, by chance, like rain out of the clouds, but is brought by the hands (and the ministry of men) whither it is sent from above.¹²

Calvin believed that the Church must faithfully discharge the commission to go 'into all the world' with the gospel. In one of his sermons he says:

. . . it is not enough for every man to occupy himself in the service of God; but our zeal must extend further, to the drawing of other men thereto. . . . We must as much as lieth in us endeavour to draw all men on earth unto God . . .¹³

Calvin and his fellow pastors in Geneva had strong convictions about God being the sovereign Creator of all things and these also informed their attitudes towards and promotion of mission. Against the gnostic and mystic strands of teaching which persisted into the sixteenth century, Calvin taught that God had not abandoned creation nor the world he had made. The opposite was true. God loved the work of his own hands and although evil had invaded it he would not absolve himself of concern nor allow it to remain forever alienated from himself. Not only mercy, grace and love but also righteousness, justice and holiness dictated that sin and evil must be dealt with. Calvin's teaching on redemption does have a particularistic and individual orientation: no one can doubt that. But it also has a comprehensive, cosmic thrust that should not be overlooked:

God will restore the world, now fallen with mankind, into perfection . . . let us be content with this simple doctrine, that there shall be such a temperature, and such a decent order, that nothing shall appear either deformed or ruinous.¹⁴

In the view of Professor Standford Reid, a scholar who has given powerful stimulus to the study of Calvin and mission, this specific ingredient in Calvin's thought had a powerful influence on our theme:

In order to understand the missionary endeavours of Calvin and the Genevan Church, we must first of all comprehend the theological motivation which lay behind much of their effort to spread as widely as possible the teachings of the reformers. Basic to all their thinking was the doctrine of creation. The sovereign God has made all things, and they are, therefore, his. And although through man's sin alienation has taken place, it is the responsibility of those who are God's people to bring creation back to him. This is the mission of the Church until Christ's return in glory.¹⁵

Calvin's Preaching and its Inspiration to Mission

Calvin not only taught that God had elected a people who should be saved but that he had also appointed the means by which their salvation would be effected. The focal point of grace was, of course, Christ in the glory of his Person

and the perfection of his work. But Christ must be made known and the means by which this was to be achieved was, chiefly, by a knowledge of God's word; men must hear the Word; the gospel must be made known; this was the task of preaching: election, far from making gospel preaching a useless redundancy, ensured that it would lead to the very success at which all true preaching aims, the bringing of others into the kingdom of God and of Christ.

This was why he insisted that the visible Church was of the utmost importance to the world and the spread of the gospel and why he asserted the primacy of preaching over against ritual and ceremony in the worship and activity of the Church. He himself, of course, gave his strength to preaching as few men have ever done, considering it to be his main business in life.

Holding high views of preaching, it is not strange that he should place a premium upon the training of suitable men for the preaching of the Word and the work of evangelism: 'the ordinary method of collecting a church', he says, 'is by the outward voice of men; for though God might bring each person to himself by a secret influence, yet he employs the agency of men, that he may awaken in them an anxiety about the salvation of each other'.¹⁶ Stanford Reid links those emphases in Calvin's teaching with his magnificent achievements in training and sending out ministers and evangelists:

With this pattern of thought, it is not surprising that Calvin and those with him, looked out upon the world around them with a strong sense of responsibility to the many people in neighbouring lands who were seeking. . . . Calls were constantly coming in for help . . . those who were in the places of leadership in the Genevan church saw them as God's opening of a door before them. . . . Here was the mission placed at their hand, and to which they were prepared to respond with all their resources, both spiritual and material.¹⁷

Calvin's City and its Contribution to Mission

During the years of Calvin's settled ministry in Geneva (1541-1564), the Reformation was struggling for its very existence throughout the lands of Europe. There was compelling need for providing, and maintaining, properly trained workers to carry on the task of spreading the gospel in France, the Netherlands, Germany, Hungary, the British Isles and other countries within reach.

Those needs were constantly being brought home to Calvin. From the early 1540s onward, Geneva became a city of refuge for the persecuted Protestants of other lands, and they flocked into it. It is calculated that at some periods during the 40s and 50s the population (estimated at between 10,000 and 15,000) probably doubled. Naturally enough, Calvin, himself a refugee from religious persecution, was tenderly sympathetic to people driven from their homelands because of their religious beliefs. And of course, in various ways Geneva benefited from their presence. Says Reid:

Coming from very different countries and covering a wide social spectrum, they brought much new life and activity to Geneva.¹⁸

Amongst those who fled and found haven in Geneva were crowds of Calvin's own countrymen. He was thus always deeply aware of the religious and political situation in France and constant dealings with Christians from there must have whetted his concern and maintained his aspirations for the nation's religious reform at a consistently high pitch.

Calvin, however, saw his city as far more than a haven for refugees. He realised the enormous potential of the situation for preparing and sending out preachers and evangelists to the needy lands around him — lands which he regarded, from the spiritual aspect, as being 'fields white unto harvest'. Commenting on this P. E. Hughes writes:

... it was also a school — 'the most perfect school of Christ which has been seen on earth since the days of the apostles,' according to the estimate of the great Scottish Reformer John Knox, who himself found refuge and schooling in Geneva. Here able and dedicated men, whose faith had been tried in the fires of persecution, were trained and built up in the doctrine of the gospel at the feet of John Calvin, the supreme teacher of the Reformation.¹⁹

That Calvin was fully alive to the doors of opportunity opened in this way, we can have no doubt. In a letter to Henry Bullinger, for example, he explicitly links Geneva and evangelistic mission when he writes:

... when I consider how very important this corner is for the propagation of the kingdom of Christ, I have good reason to be anxious that it should be carefully watched over . . .²⁰

This passionate concern that the gospel should reach out to the world from Geneva is reflected in a sermon on I Timothy 3:4:

May we attend to what God has enjoined upon us, that he would be pleased to show his grace, not only to one city or a little handful of people, but that he would reign over all the world; that everyone may serve and worship him in truth.

Geneva was, geographically, superbly situated to be a training centre equipping evangelists for the Reformed Church in France. It was only through Geneva that Protestants could find a reasonably safe entrance into that country, ringed around as it was by Spain, Savoy, Lorraine and the Spanish Netherlands, all firmly under the control of strongly reactionary Romanist leaders.

Politically the city had a powerful military ally, the Republic of Berne, warding off fears of military intervention in its affairs. Within this city Calvin could set to work unhampered by too much outside interference; from it he could keep in touch with the rest of Europe:

He was probably better informed about the religious and political affairs of his time than any one else in Switzerland.²¹

At this centre men were trained and sent out into the lands of Europe. Most of the factual information about them, and especially about those trained for the work in France, comes to us from records which are available for only part of the

period between 1541 and 1564. R. M. Kingdon, whose work with these records has opened up this whole field of investigation within the last thirty years or so, says:

In April 1555 the official Registers of the Company (of Pastors) for the first time listed missionaries formally dispatched.²²

Obviously, records prior to this time were not retained for reasons of security. On this question of extant records P. E. Hughes reminds us:

They were restricted, in the main, to the few years between 1555 and 1562 when it was felt that the names of those who were sent out from Geneva as missionaries might be recorded (though not advertised) with some degree of safety.²³

We know that a very solid programme of education was laid out for these men. One of the catalysts of the Reformation had been scholarly study of the Scriptures and so every man training for this ministry was expected to be well equipped for the life-long task of biblical exegesis and exposition. The maestro himself epitomised the ideal as in his daily lectures and expositions he spoke extemporaneously and directly from the Hebrew or Greek text of the Scriptures.

People today turn up their noses at the many sermons in Geneva and the 'intellectualist' instruction. But we should realise that on this intellectualism depends a great deal of the penetrating power of Calvinism. The Calvinist knows *what* he believes and *why* he believes it.²⁴

The source of Protestant power in France, shown by the sudden appearance of organised Huguenot armies in 1560, has always been difficult for historians to explain. The entire movement is expressive of careful organisation and meticulous central planning. It now emerges that a well-instructed people had by then been integrated into a structured church life which, like a spider's web, reached out into all the provinces and yet had sufficient central coherence for problems to be discussed, plans to be formulated and, if necessary, unified defensive strategies employed.

There is now, also, a growing awareness that the emergence of this powerfully motivated church has to be traced back to the training at Geneva of a very effective missionary force. And supporting it was the line of direct communication back into Geneva, and the men there who had moulded its beliefs and directed its energies. The missionary thrust inherent in their theology, and the spiritual vision for the salvation of others which it generated, ensured that Calvin — and his ministerial colleagues in Geneva — recognised, in the mountain pathways into France, doors of opportunity for spreading the gospel. The story of how they went through them is, in the words of Professor David B. Calhoun, 'a thrilling chapter in the history of missions'.²⁵

Much more could be said on this fascinating subject, but even our brief outline study illustrates the urgent need to reassess and reinterpret the traditional notions entertained about it. The more recent collations, and interpretations, of the relevant data available to us about Calvin, Geneva and Mission combine to

show that he was the person, and it the place, to which one of the finest churches of the Reformation era owed, under God, its life and witness. It was a church which was to stand strong for Christ for more than one hundred years in its own homeland and which, even after its final dispersal in the latter part of the seventeenth century, took its godly witness and its theological heritage out from France to England, Ireland, Holland, America and South Africa.

References

¹ Theodore de Beze, *Vie de Calvin*, in *Calvini Opera*, XXI, 45. cf. also, *The History and Character of Calvinism* (Oxford, 1953; Galaxy Paper, 1967), by John T. McNeil, p. 227.

² P. E. Hughes, 'John Calvin: Director of Missions', in *The Heritage of John Calvin*, J. Bratt, ed. (Grand Rapids, 1973); p. 42.

³ *Presbiterian*: Volume V, No. 1, Spring 1979, p. 16.

⁴ Calvin holds that the gospel call embraces all men, but is made effectual only to the elect. He writes: Did God not, at the very time when he is verbally exhorting all to repentance, influence the elect by the secret movement of his Spirit, Jeremiah would not say, 'Turn thou me, and I shall be turned; for thou art the Lord my God. Surely after that I was turned I repented.' . . . let us now see whether there be any inconsistency between the two things — viz. that God, by an eternal decree, fixed the number of those whom he is pleased to embrace in love, and on whom he is pleased to display his wrath, and that he offers salvation indiscriminately to all. I hold that they are perfectly consistent, for all that is meant by the promise is, just that his mercy is offered to all who desire and implore it, and this none do, save those whom he has enlightened. *Institutes*, III: 24:16 and 17; E. T. of H. Beveridge, Vol. 2, p. 256. (London, 1957), cf. also his following discussion re the will of God and his assertion: though to our apprehension the will of God is manifold, yet he does not in himself will opposites.

⁵ *Op. cit.* Vol. 2, pp. 221-22. Calvin writes: Some object that God would be inconsistent with himself, in inviting all without distinction while he elects only a few. Thus, according to them the universality of the promise destroys the distinction of special grace. . . . The mode in which Scripture reconciles the two things — viz. that by preaching all are called to faith and repentance, and that yet the Spirit of faith and repentance is not given to all — I have already explained. . . . How then can it be said, that God calls while he knows that the called will not come? Let Augustine answer for me: 'Would you dispute with me? Wonder with me and exclaim, O the depth! Let us both agree in dread, lest we perish in error'.

⁶ He draws special attention to, and quotes with approval, Augustine's telling comment: 'Because we know not who belongs to the

number of the predestinated, or does not belong, our desire ought to be that all may be saved; and hence every person we meet, we will desire to be with us a partaker of peace.' *Op. cit.* Vol. 2, p. 238.

⁷ Calvin writes: In regard to the elect, we regard calling as the evidence of election. *Op. cit.* III: 21:7. Vol. 2 p. 211. The same inter-connection between election and calling is in view, also, when he writes: 'Then, if we doubt whether we are received into the protection of Christ, he obviates the doubt when he spontaneously offers himself as our shepherd, and declares that we are of the number of his sheep if we hear his voice (John 10:3,16). Let us, therefore, embrace Christ, who is kindly offered to us, and comes forth to meet us: he will number us among his flock, and keep us within his fold.' p. 245.

⁸ ' . . . where an opportunity presents itself of edifying, let us consider that by the hand of God a door is opened to us for introducing Christ there, and let us not withhold compliance with so kind an indication from God.' John Calvin, *Commentary on 2 Corinthians*, E. T. by J. Pringle (Edinburgh, 1849), ch. 2:12; cf. also, his comments on 1 Corinthians 16:9.

⁹ *Commentary on John*. E. T. Wm. Pringle. The Calvin Translation Society (Edinburgh, 1847).

¹⁰ *ibid.*

¹¹ *ibid.*

¹² *Commentary on Romans*; 10:15; E. T. Ed. H. Beveridge (Edinburgh, 1844).

¹³ See Calvin's sermon on Deuteronomy 33:18,19.

¹⁴ *ibid.* Rom 8:21.

¹⁵ W. Standford Reid, *The Reformed Theological Review*, Vol. 42; No. 3; 1983, p. 65.

¹⁶ *Commentary on Isaiah* 2:3.

¹⁷ *Op. cit.*, p. 66.

¹⁸ *Ibid.* p. 67.

¹⁹ *Op. cit.*, p. 44.

²⁰ Bonnet, *Letters of John Calvin*, p. 227.

²¹ Harro Hopfel, *The Christian Polity of John Calvin* (London, 1982), Paperback ed. 1985, p. 140.

²² R. M. Kingdon, *Geneva, and the Coming of the Wars of Religion to France 1555-63* (Geneva, 1953), p. 2.

²³ *Op. cit.* p. 45.

²⁴ Karl Hall, quoted by T. H. L. Parker, *John Calvin*, p. 113.

²⁵ *Op. cit.* p. 27.

Expository Preaching

By Sidney Greidanus

Dr. Sidney Greidanus is professor of theology at The King's College, Edmonton, Alberta. Beginning in July, 1990, he will be associate professor of homiletics at Calvin Theological Seminary, Grand Rapids, Michigan. This article was first printed in OUTLOOK with whom RT has reciprocal arrangements.

When Paul charged young Timothy to 'preach the word', he intended not simply that Timothy mount a pulpit and speak but that he base his spoken word on the written (and heard) word (see 1 Tim 4:13; 2 Tim 2:2,15). If the Scriptures were a prerequisite for Timothy's preaching, they are so even more for contemporary preachers, for the latter have no other source of revelation. If contemporary preachers wish to preach the word, they will need to proclaim relevantly the word that was long ago inscribed in Scripture. To preach the word today means, therefore, to pass on to the church here and now the message of the Bible.

The Heart of Expository Preaching

Expository preaching is 'Bible-centred preaching'. That is, it is handling the text 'in such a way that its real and essential meaning as it existed in the mind of the particular biblical writer and as it exists in the light of the over-all context of Scripture is made plain and applied to the present-day needs of the hearers'. Thus one might say that expository preaching is preaching biblically. But 'expository preaching' is more than a mere synonym for biblical preaching; it describes what is involved in biblical

preaching, namely the exposition of a biblical passage (or passages). John Stott elucidates this point as follows: 'Whether it (the text) is long or short, our responsibility as expositors is to open it up in such a way that it speaks its message clearly, plainly, accurately, relevantly, without addition, subtraction or falsification. In expository preaching the biblical text is neither a conventional introduction to a sermon on a largely different theme, nor a convenient peg on which to hang a ragbag of miscellaneous thoughts, but a master which dictates and controls what is said'.

The Question of Authority

The necessity of expository preaching shows itself most clearly when the question of authority is raised. By whose authority do preachers preach? Whose word do they bring? If preachers preach their own word, the congregation may listen politely but has every right to disregard the sermon as just another person's opinion. If contemporary preachers preach with authority, however, the congregation can no longer dismiss their sermons as merely personal opinions but must respond to them as authoritative messages. The only proper authority for preaching is

divine authority — the authority of God's heralds, his ambassadors, his agents. Heralds and ambassadors, we have seen, do not speak their own word but that of their sender. Contemporary preachers, similarly, if they wish to speak with divine authority, must speak not their own word but that of their Sender.

Accordingly, if preachers wish to preach with divine authority, they must proclaim the message of the inspired Scriptures, for the Scriptures alone are the word of God written; the Scriptures alone have divine authority. If preachers wish to preach with divine authority, they must submit themselves, their thoughts and opinions, to the Scriptures and echo the word of God. Preachers are literally to be *ministers* of the word. Thus, preaching with authority is synonymous with true expository preaching. 'Preaching which severs itself . . . from the Bible can have little or no valid authority over men's minds or hearts,' asserts Miller, 'for it is an irreverent assumption of authority which no living man may rightly claim. . . . The only right we have to preach is to preach Christ as he makes himself known through the Scriptures of the Old and New Testament.'

The Bible as the Source for Preaching

Not only does the Bible provide divine authority for preaching, it is also the *only* normative source for contemporary preaching. Donald Miller asks, 'Why . . . does the Bible remain unique and authoritative for preaching? Why is the canon closed and a clear line of demarcation drawn between the history of redemption in the Bible and church history? The answer to this is to be seen in the light of the fact that revelation lies primarily in the unfolding drama of redemptive history, rather than in a set of religious ideas. Since the Bible is the record of the redemptive history, it remains permanently normative.' This

answer is valid as far as it goes, but there is more to the uniqueness of the Bible than simply being 'the record of the redemptive history'. The Bible is unique and indispensable for preaching because it provides the definitive *interpretation* of God's acts in history; the Bible is the source for contemporary preaching because it alone provides the normative *proclamation* of God's acts of redemption and the response he requires. The Bible itself, therefore, can be seen as preaching: authoritative proclamation for future generations of God's good news of salvation. As such the Bible is the only normative source for contemporary preaching.

From the beginning the church recognised the Bible as the source for preaching (see, e.g. Luke 4:16-27; the sermonic material in Acts; 1 Tim 4:13). At certain points in history (AD367, 393, 397) however, the church *officially* acknowledged the biblical books as canonical, as the *standard* for faith and practice. In the *Belgic Confession* of 1561 we hear the following profession of the church: 'We receive all these books, and these only, as holy and canonical, for the regulation, foundation, and confirmation of our faith' (Art 5). In line with that faith commitment, contemporary preachers are to use 'all these books, and these only' as the source for their preaching. This is not an impossible task since, as we have seen, the Bible is essentially God's proclamation to future generations. As proclamation, the Bible is the ideal source for further preaching; as canon, it is the only normative source.

Using the Bible as the source for preaching undoubtedly places a heavy responsibility on preachers, for they must seek to do justice to the Scriptures as well as to the contemporary situation in which the word must be spoken. Paul reminded Timothy of this responsibility in a word that is equally applicable to contemporary preachers: 'Do your best to present yourself to God as one

approved, a workman who has no need to be ashamed, rightly handling the word of truth' (2 Tim 2:15).

The Bible as the Criterion of Preaching

The affirmation that the Bible serves as source for preaching and lends authority to preaching does not entail that the congregation must blindly accept whatever is said, for the other side of the coin is that the Bible also functions as the criterion of preaching. Paul reminds the Corinthians that even the word of New Testament prophets is not simply to be accepted but should first be *weighed* (1 Cor 14:29). In 1 Thessalonians 5:20,21 he encourages the congregation, 'Do not despise prophesying, but *test* everything.' And in Galatians 1:8 he goes so far as to say, 'Even if we, or an angel from heaven, should preach to you a gospel contrary to that which we preached to you, let him be accursed.' Someone may claim to speak the word of God, but that claim does not necessarily make it so. Someone may have been called and ordained to the office of preacher, but that office does not automatically transform the preacher's words into the word of God. The sermon is the word of God 'only in so far as the ambassador does not deviate from his Sender; the sermon requires unconditional submission only in so far as it correctly interprets the normative, infallible Word of God.' Hence the hearers will have to test the word that is spoken to see if it is indeed worthy of acceptance as the word of God.

Testing, of course, must be done with a certain standard, a criterion. But what standard shall we use for testing sermons? The standard surely cannot be personal likes or dislikes. The only standard we have today is the canon, the Bible. Sermons, therefore, must be tested against the Scriptures. The first and foundational criterion is that sermons must be biblical, that is, they

must pass on the meaning and intent of Scripture. A second criterion, implied in the first, is that sermons must be God-centred (or Christ-centred) rather than human-centred. If the Bible can indeed be characterised as God's *self-revelation*, then any biblical sermon will have to manifest that same quality by being *God-centred* and not human-centred. A third criterion is that sermons must be good news. If one of the main New Testament words for preaching is 'to announce good news' (*euangelizomai*), and if one may characterise as 'good news' not only the Gospels but the entire Bible, then our sermons ought also to measure up to this standard so that they are indeed *good news*.

Expository Preaching and the Bible

The outstanding characteristic of expository preaching is that it uses the Bible as the source for its preaching; it seeks to give an exposition of a biblical passage. By contrast, non-biblical topical preaching presents neither text nor exposition. Although it is possible to preach topical sermons that are biblical, in actual practice they often turn out to be flights of fancy which have little or nothing to do with biblical thought. Moreover, it is extremely difficult for the congregation to test topical preaching by the criterion of the Bible. But an expository sermon purposely seeks to set forth a biblical message on the basis of a biblical text. 'The expositor is only to provide mouth and lips for the passage itself so that the Word may advance'.

At heart, expository preaching is not just a method but a commitment, a view of the essence of preaching, a homiletical approach to preaching the Scriptures. This underlying commitment, in turn, is bound to reveal itself in a method in which preachers tie themselves to the Scriptures and, as heralds of Christ, seek to proclaim only that which the Scriptures proclaim.

Our Lord's Teaching on Repentance

Gospel presentations nowadays often consist of entreaties to 'accept Jesus as Saviour'; or, 'ask Jesus into your heart'; or, 'make a decision for Christ'. Many have been conditioned into thinking that because they have recited a prayer, or made a commitment, or signed a paper, or walked down an aisle in response to a call for decisions, they are now Christians. This is especially the case in America and no more so than in the Southern States where there are churches with membership rolls of 500 while regular attendance would be nearer 100.

In his book *The Gospel According to Jesus* John F. MacArthur has challenged American evangelicalism in particular for deceiving multitudes with a shallow gospel of easy believism in which there is no call for discipleship.¹ He cites one of the advocates of the pseudo gospel, namely Zane C. Hodges, who claims that conversion to Christ involves 'no spiritual commitment whatsoever'.² In reply to MacArthur's book Zane C. Hodges has written another book with the title *Absolutely Free*.³ In this book Hodges labours the point that it is faith only that saves. Repentance is not necessary. He makes much of the fact that repentance is not mentioned in John's gospel.⁴

The answer to that is simply that a good preacher does not try to say everything every time. Our Lord's teaching on repentance is nowhere more clearly portrayed than in the parable of the Prodigal Son. In that account there is no mention of faith for the simple reason that faith is implicit in the experience of the prodigal as we will see. If the prodigal did not believe that his father would accept him, he would not have taken the homeward journey.

In salvation repentance and faith are inextricably bound together. It is important to distinguish the one from the other yet at the same time understand that both are essential. Repentance is a change of mind (*metanoia meta* after, *noia* mind). Sometimes much can be extracted from the Greek words used. In the case of repentance the word tells us little compared with the large amount we learn from passages which describe repentance in action. True repentance is a change of mind which leads to action. That is more than notion just as true faith is more than head knowledge. Moreover it must be said that true repentance is more than reflection or meditation. A person may have a change of mind about the validity of the gospel, and even agree about the rightness of the gospel commands, but yet do nothing about it.

We should note that the call to repentance is accompanied with instruction. John preached, 'Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is near' (Matt 3:1). He called for evidence of repentance saying, 'Produce fruit in keeping with repentance' (Matt 3:8). Jesus began his ministry with the call, 'The kingdom of God is near. Repent and believe the good news!' On the day of Pentecost Peter's instruction to those who cried out 'Brothers what shall we do?' was, 'Repent and be

baptised, every one of you.’ And again as reported in Acts 3:19, Peter said, ‘Repent then, and turn to God, so that your sins may be wiped out, that times of refreshing may come from the Lord.’

What then is repentance? It is a change of mind which results in an about turn. It means to take a different direction. The way in which our Lord teaches the meaning of repentance in the parable of the Prodigal Son is decisive. The parable says nothing about the incarnation or the atonement but it fulfils its purpose in describing the main points about repentance. This we can see as follows:

1. The Necessity of Repentance

In requesting his share of the inheritance the prodigal wished his father dead. It was entirely against the culture of the time to demand the estate or part of it before the decease of the owner. Once he had his cash it did not take long for the prodigal to take off. The country to which he travelled was far away. He wished to distance himself from the lifestyle of his home. The real situation soon emerged for he spent his fortune on prostitutes and wild living. Jeremiah accurately describes the case not only of the prodigal but of fallen mankind represented by the prodigal.

My people have committed two sins;
They have forsaken me,
the spring of living water,
and have dug their own cisterns,
broken cisterns that cannot hold water (Jer 2:13).

The real tragedy is that the prodigal was alienated from his father. The catastrophe of the fall of mankind with Adam into sin is the breach that has been made with our Creator. Alienation has taken the place of love. Men and women show their disaffection by their lack of interest in God. They do not care. They have their share of the inheritance in the form of the pleasures of this world. Their hearts are fully set to live their own lives without a further thought for their Father. It is not only that they do not care about God. They wish him to be dead. Their language about him reveals their enmity. Hell is the place where this enmity will be fully exposed. The reality of hell is expressed by Revelation 16:9, ‘They were seared by the intense heat and they cursed the name of God, who had control over these plagues, but they refused to repent and glorify him.’

The prodigal in the distant land represents humankind alienated from God, described by Jesus as DEAD and LOST (Lk 15:32). When theologians use the term ‘total depravity’ to describe the state of mankind after the fall, they do not mean that every sinner is as bad as he possibly can be. They mean that every faculty is affected by the fall: the affections, the mind, the conscience, the will. There is not a particle of spiritual life in a fallen sinner, just as a dead body is devoid of circulation, or life of any kind. The sinner is dead in trespasses and sins (Eph 2:1). He will not seek God because he hates God. When challenged, he

will deny that. The day before writing this I was engaged in house to house evangelism. I spoke to a man who has heard the gospel many times. He said he was not interested. He could not care less. He does not believe because it does not suit him to believe. He does not want to be troubled by the gospel. It would be inconvenient for him to believe. By his attitude he was expressing plainly that he is spiritually dead. I told him that that is exactly how the Bible describes him.

In the prodigal we see the necessity of repentance. The prodigal was dead spiritually in his sins. Unless he turned his back on that far country he would certainly be lost. What was true of him is true of all those who live for broken cisterns. Hence Jesus said, 'Unless you repent you too will all perish' (Lk 13:3). Paul summed up the situation for everyone when he said, 'God commands all men everywhere to repent' (Acts 17:30).

2. Repentance includes sorrow toward God

'When he came to his senses, he said, How many of my father's hired men have food to spare, and I am starving to death! I will set out and go back to my father and say to him, Father, I have sinned against heaven and against you. I am no longer worthy to be called your son; make me like one of your hired men' (Lk 15:17-19).

Observe the prodigal felt that it was against heaven that he had sinned. He was sorry. How much sorrow must there be for repentance to be genuine? Repentance cannot be quantified in terms such as a litre of it, or a cupful, or only a teaspoonful. Certainly enough sorrow must be there to motivate the will to quit the life of godlessness and embrace a life of holiness. The Prodigal was sorry enough to express his sin and to express it without any excuses. He was sorry enough to declare his grief that he had sinned against the person of his father. His words are similar to the greatest of the penitential psalms, namely Psalm 51. 'Against you, you only, have I sinned and done what is evil in your sight' (verse 4). But how could King David say that when he had sinned grievously against Uriah and Bathsheba, and against his family, and against the nation he led. What did he mean by expressing the issue in exclusive terms: against you, *you only*, have I sinned? Such was the intensity of David's conviction concerning the law of God that sin against others was primarily sin personally against God.

Repentance must have this element of sorrow toward God if it is to be genuine. With some, the consciousness of sorrow for sin toward God is small at the time of their conversion, but later their conviction and repentance deepens and is more keenly felt. Others are overwhelmed with grief about their sins at the time of their conversion. That is certainly the case in the words of the prophet Zechariah, who prophesies a conviction so deep as to be compared with the loss of an only son (Zech 12:10). It is important to note the wide diversity of conversions reported in the book of Acts and to allow for that today.

Penitence is the term used for sorrow. Practising Catholics confess regularly to

the priest. Regularly they repeat the number of prayers stipulated by him. But in that system penitence is stressed at the expense of repentance. The process is interminable. For penitence for sin to amount to anything it must result in repentance. This is illustrated by examples of those who experienced sorrow, but it was a sorrow of remorse and not the sorrow of repentance. King Saul confessed his sin but he did not repent of it. Balaam was very sorry about the displeasure of God toward him but he clung nevertheless to the reward he loved and did not repent. Pharaoh was sorry about the distress into which his nation plunged but he did not repent. Judas Iscariot was full of remorse about his betrayal of Christ but he did not repent.

Sorrow for sin committed against God is an essential element in repentance but unless the prodigal had actually taken the road toward home he would have been lost. That factor leads us to the next point.

Repentance includes faith

While this is not expressed in words it is implied in every step taken by the prodigal on his long journey home. Would his father accept him? How much would he have to plead his case for his father to accept him? However the factor of acceptance or non-acceptance was not as important as the reality of trusting in his father again. For the prodigal to trust in his father was the opposite of wishing him to be dead. When he left home, he abandoned his father in preference for the pleasures of another world. When he repented, he was content to be given any place of subservience in his father's household. That is typical of a repentant sinner. Just to be forgiven is heaven. Never mind about position or prestige in our Father's kingdom, we are simply happy to be received.

It is impossible not to admire the loving welcome the prodigal received. The father did not even listen to his repentant son's carefully prepared speech. Irrespective of broken protocol and loss of dignity, he ran through the town to embrace his son and hugged him all the way home! Jesus intends the parable to encourage sinners to know that repentance is acceptable. God will receive repentant sinners. The journey home, more than his carefully prepared speech, was the prodigal's testimony of repentance.

The faith of the prodigal might be compared with the faith of the tax collector in the temple, who could not lift up his head, but deploring himself, could only utter one prayer, 'God be propitiated to me the sinner' (Lk 18:13). The use of the word 'propitiated' in the text is very expressive of the fact that this man believed that God possesses a propitiation that saves. Moreover the urgency of his prayer implies his faith. His prayer is in itself an act of faith. His prayer expresses faith that God is, and is the rewarder of those who diligently seek him. The tax collector is earnest. Only propitiation could satisfy his conscience. Only God can provide a propitiation adequate to meet his dire need. In the prayer we observe repentance, sorrow and faith combined. Obviously this approach has the approval of Jesus as he commends the approach of the tax collector compared with the arrogance of the pharisee.

Repentance and Reconciliation

Repentance that falls short of actual reconciliation is not true repentance. The prodigal travelled all the way home to become reconciled again with his father. Not until that reconciliation had been effected could repentance be sure.

There are four passages which speak of reconciliation; Romans 5:10,11; 2 Corinthians 5:18-20; Ephesians 2:14-17 and Colossians 1:19-22. In these passages it is made clear that the provision for reconciliation is made by the father and the initiative taken to achieve reconciliation is by him too. Repentance is the gift of God. The believing Jews rejoiced that God had given repentance resulting in life for the Gentile household of Cornelius (Acts 11:18).

In the debate referred to at the beginning, the concern of the writer Zane Hodges is that repentance can be used to overthrow justification by faith alone. He is concerned that no conditions of any kind impede the sinner: only believe and you will be saved! He makes much of individuals such as the Samaritan woman, instances in which no conditions for salvation were stated. However if we take repentance in the sense of the prodigal's determination to go all the way home then we can more readily see why repentance is essential. It is a necessity. Nobody can be saved without it. But the scriptures never allow us to construe repentance as a good work in the meritorious sense that it earns, or contributes toward our salvation. As faith is the gift of God so is repentance (Acts 5:31). We must always press the urgency of faith and assert that there is immediate and full salvation to those who believe. To come to Jesus is essential if we are to be united to him. That turning from the world to Christ is correctly construed as repentance (Acts 26:18).

Repentance and Regeneration

Nothing is said in the parable about prevenient or effectual grace or about the new birth. When was the heart of the prodigal changed? Was it when he came to his senses? Probably. We cannot tell for certain. Reformed theologians insist that regeneration precedes repentance and faith. Jesus said, 'No one can come to me unless the Father who has sent me draws him' (Jn 6:44). Is there not a drawing of the lost sinner before regeneration? Is it not true that a measure of reformation and of conviction precedes the new birth? It is very difficult to locate the exact moment of regeneration. Often those who are dogmatic about it are far from convincing.

The New Testament does not lay down a precise *ordo salutis* (order of salvation): regeneration, repentance, faith. We deduce such an order from texts such as John 1:12,13. The character of scripture is such that it presents truth in a way that the reader is made to think and meditate about it. It does not come in mathematical style, and nor in the 1, 2, 3, style, of which we are so fond because precision suits our times. There is a danger of over simplification. I do not want to digress into a discussion of the issue of how we present truth, but rather stress that drawing *does take place* in sinners prior to their actual conversion, and before they show evidences of having been born again. All drawing is of grace. It

is not as though the sinner, dead in his sins, takes the initiative and then gives God a chance to be gracious. Paul tells us that we are saved by grace, through faith — and this not of ourselves, it is the gift of God (Eph 2:8). We are created in Christ Jesus to do good works (Eph 2:10).

Repentance and Sanctification

When the prodigal repented and went home to his father it was with a godly sorrow such as leads to salvation which leaves no regret (2 Cor 7:10). The parable of the prodigal son is presented together with the parables of the lost sheep and the lost coin in which the emphasis is on the joy of the angels (Lk 15:10). The angels would not rejoice over a spurious repentance but rather over a reconciliation that is complete and permanent.

Repentance is a vital mechanism in the work of progressive sanctification. He whose heart has been changed is always repenting in the sense that he continues to change his mind. As he grows in knowledge and discernment so he recognises God's standard of holiness. The Christian daily confesses his sins and repents, not with a penitence that simply regrets the sins but continues in the practice of them, but with repentance that hates and forsakes those sins. 'Repentance is active. It is not inert and passive, a fatalistic self-pity. It is the rousing of the self actively to repudiate the former life. It is a turning from the old course of life but it does not simply imply a cessation of evil, the gaining of a position of neutrality. In repudiating the old life the new standards, the standards of God's law, are vigorously adhered to.'⁵

The 2 Corinthians 7:8-11 passage is important because it reveals that repentance can involve profound passions in the soul; indignation, alarm, longing, eagerness to get things right, concern to see justice done. Repentance is a deeply spiritual exercise. In the case of the prodigal there would be time enough to look back with horror on that episode of shame in that country far away where his wild experience led to bankruptcy and the humiliation of starvation in the company of pigs. 'Then you will remember your evil ways and wicked deeds and you will loathe yourselves for your sins and detestable practices' (Ez 36:31).

Conclusion

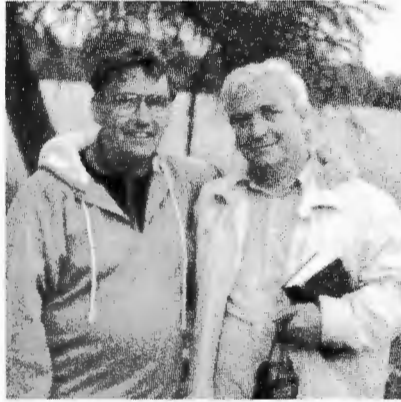
We began by referring to the debate in America. John F. MacArthur has rightly put his finger on the fact that repentance is missing in today's preaching. Zane Hodges and Charles Ryrie have written books seeking to uphold a position which separates faith from repentance. This error has a knock-on effect. As I have sought to show, repentance and faith cannot be separated. In the same way justification cannot be separated from sanctification, for both are grounded in union with Christ. Paul demonstrates this in Romans 6. Both Ryrie and Hodges are guilty of robbing the gospel of that emphasis which most urgently requires to be sounded out today, namely, repentance. This has led too to a truncated view of discipleship and also to a defective view of sanctification. In attempting to defend an unbiblical position, Ryrie falls into serious error. For

News

Poland

A report by Kingsley Coomber

I have just returned from my fourth trip to Poland, where I ministered at a youth camp organised by the Evangelical church at Wloclawet. This is a very young church that has been pioneered by Pastor Swavek Rutkoski. Over the past few years God has blessed him and the church has grown to about 60 members. His eldest son, Christoph is the co-Pastor. One of the main problems they face is lack of teaching. This is due mainly to the complete shortfall of good literature in Polish. I was able to give them copies of the 1689 Confession and I am sure that blessing will accrue as they work through this great statement of faith. At the moment there is a danger of majoring on minor issues such as whether it is right for a Christian to eat



Kingsley Coomber with pastor Swavek Rutkoski

blood (a basic Polish food is blood sausage). Many of the new converts in Wloclawet come either from a Roman Catholic background or from the Jehovah's Witnesses. The latter cult forms the second largest religious grouping in Poland. This presents the

continued on page 24

instance he says that sanctification does not appear in Romans 8:29,30.⁶ But what is conformity to Christ if it is not the very heart of sanctification? We are predestinated to be conformed to the likeness of Christ, a reference to the theme of progressive sanctification, begun in Romans 6 and continued in detail in Romans 12:1 following.

Paul summing up his ministry said that from the time of his conversion he preached repentance to both Jews and Gentiles. 'I preached that they should repent and turn to God and prove their repentance by their deeds' (Acts 26:20). He did not preach easy believism. If there is no repentance in this world what will the angels have to rejoice over? The message of the Bible from beginning to end is the message that God is rich in his kindness and patience in order that all men everywhere should be like the prodigal and repent, and, in repenting, come all the way home to the Father and be saved.

¹ John F. MacArthur's book, *The Gospel According to Jesus*, was reviewed in *RT107* by pastor Dean Olive who is now occupied in planting a Reformed Baptist church in Alabama, USA.

² Zane C. Hodges, *The Gospel Under Siege*, Redencion Viva, Dallas, 1981, page 14, cited in *The Gospel According to Jesus* p. 22.

³ Zane C. Hodges, *Absolutely Free! A biblical reply to Lordship salvation*. Redencion Viva, Dallas, 1989.

⁴ *ibid*, p. 147.

⁵ Paul Helm, *The Beginnings*, Banner of Truth, 1986, p. 74.

⁶ Charles C. Ryrie, *So Great Salvation*, Victor Books, p. 150.

continued from page 23

church with a major problem when it comes to evangelism because any endeavour is often assumed by outsiders to be JW.

Another problem faced by the Polish church is the flood of pornography that is becoming available. I noticed pornographic materials for sale at many street corner kiosks.

The task facing the Polish church is daunting. I was amazed that in one town where I addressed the few Christians, there are in fact only six known Christians in a population of 120,000. The harvest is white but the labourers are few.

I was asked if it were possible for me to visit at least four times a year for evangelism and teaching. The financial resources of the churches are very small and it is impossible for them to cover expenses.

The danger is that in the West we forget Poland because of the many other countries that are opening. However within a few years the doors in Poland could once again be closed. Poland was won for the Reformation during the 16th century but soon lost again to the counter reformation mainly because the Polish church was divided. That tendency is there today and should be carefully guarded against.

Literature

We are happy to report that the entire edition of 4,000 of the *1689 Confession of Faith* recently published in Poland has been sold out. It is hoped that with the proceeds a further edition will be produced since this edition is in such demand. We have reports that recent publications in Polish include *Knowing God* by J. I. Packer and future editions are planned of *Know the Truth* by Bruce

Milne, *The Sermon on the Mount*, and *Ephesians* by John Stott. The above report emphasises how vital it is that sound and expository Christian literature reaches the churches and people and we must pray that much spiritual benefit will result from the circulation of these works.

A new Reformed Baptist Association in Los Angeles

On Sunday evening, July 29th, 1990, four RB churches in metro-plex Los Angeles formally covenanted together into an association of churches: Sovereign Grace Baptist in Ontario, Trinity Baptist in Buena Park, Centinela Baptist in Lawndale, and Sovereign Grace Community in Hawthorne.

These churches have enjoyed a very close fellowship over the past four or five years. Combined worship services involving the four churches and Family Conferences have been times particularly favoured. Every Labour Day weekend (the first Monday of September), the churches go to the mountains for a family conference.

Principles from the Word of God and guidance from the minutes of the Philadelphia Association and articles in *Reformation Today* helped in the formulation of a basis for the Association.

On July 29th the Association was formed. Brian Ellis of the Philippines gave a missionary report. Earl Blackburn preached a message on 'the purpose of the local church and the place of associations'. His text was Colossians 4:13-18. Prayer followed and then the elders of the churches came forward and signed a covenant.

(The concise, well laid out four page basis for this Association will be published in the next issue of *RT*.)

Bearing One Another's Burdens

Part 3

'Bear One Another's Burdens': Galatians 6:1-5

Fulfilling the Law of Christ

An exposition by Don Garlington

For the apostle Paul rules of faith and order were not enough, valuable and necessary though they may be in themselves. Nor was it enough simply to insist on godliness; and certainly the pursuit of holiness was not made to hinge on harangue and intimidation, no matter how well intentioned. The well-being of the church, as he fully knew, could never be forced or coerced. It is because Paul understood that only the love which covers a multitude of sins could, at the end of the day, effect the growth of the people of God that he counsels his Galatian converts to restore fallen members of their assembly: 'Brethren if a man is overtaken in any trespass, you who are spiritual should restore him in a spirit of gentleness' (Gal 6:1a).

We have seen thus far that Paul, in Galatians 6:1-5, devotes more space to the attitude with which the work of restoration is to be undertaken than to the restoration itself. He does so because of the 'leaven of the Pharisees', which can permeate even a Christian response to the sin of others. Not only does he spell out in fairly detailed terms who should undertake the task of restoration and how it should be done (v. 1a), he adds the warning 'Look to yourselves, lest you too be tempted' (1b). As R. Y. K. Fung puts it, each one has the responsibility to exercise the strictest vigilance over himself, 'lest the would-be restorer become an offender himself. Such vigilance is necessary because "anything can become a temptation" and because no one is above the possibility of succumbing to temptation. Awareness of this is conducive to the cultivation and manifestation of the spirit of gentleness enjoined here.'¹

However, the course of action outlined in verse one is only half the process, because one must be prepared to assume responsibility for the long-term effects of sin, even once repentance has been secured. This is why Paul adds in verse two: 'Bear one another's burdens and so fulfil the law of Christ'. It is possible that the term 'burdens' here is intended broadly, ie, the burdens of pain, suffering, inconvenience, etc. But it should be kept in mind that in 6:1-5 Paul is pursuing a specific point, namely, how Christians are to respond to the 'trespasses' (v. 1) of other Christians. Most likely then Paul's counsel to the 'spiritual' concerns not burdens in general but the *sin-burdens* of the one who has fallen. But how so? Assuming that 'bear' is more than 'tolerate', that the word includes 'effective assistance and relief',² in what ways is the onus of sin to be borne?

For one, sin always has its consequences ('burdens'). Frequently the consequences have a domino effect, meaning that problems can be multiplied and

compounded almost indefinitely because of one foundational mistake. To bear the burdens of the other, in this case, is to *get involved in the difficulties occasioned by sin*. Sometimes, of course, these problems can be intricate in the extreme, particularly where sexual sin is involved and families are broken as a result. Yet fulfilling the law of Christ may require involvement to this degree.

In the second place, we are to bear with the person himself. Sin is not eradicated overnight. There may well be a period of time — even a lengthy period — during which the power of sin is being mortified. Since the process is not instantaneous, the original ‘trespass’ may at intervals reappear. Therefore to bear the burden of sin means to *forbear the person who has sinned*. Not that we are condoning sin itself, but we are telling the sinner that he is not rejected, either by Christ or by us. As Paul writes elsewhere: ‘I . . . beg you to lead a life worthy of the calling to which you have been called, with all lowliness and meekness, with patience, forbearing one another in love, eager to maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace’ (Eph 4:1-3).

To bear one another’s burdens in such a manner is not only to ‘manifest a God-like quality’ (1 Pet 5:7)³ it is to ‘fulfil the law of Christ’. ‘The law of Christ’ reminds us that the concluding injunctions of Galatians are very much connected with the letter as a whole, in which discussion of the law of God has dominated.⁴ The exact phrase occurs only here in the New Testament. However, the idea contained in it is present in a similar combination of words in 1 Corinthians 9:21. In context, it is ‘the law of Christ’⁵ which accounts for Paul’s lifestyle as a Christian in contrast to what it used to be as a Jew. That is to say, he is no longer bound by the distinctives of the old covenant, though, in order to win Jews, he frequently sacrifices his liberty in Christ. Here clearly ‘the law of Christ’ is set in opposition to the law of Moses: Christ’s law has relieved Paul of the necessity of ‘living as a Jew’ (Gal 2:14).

As for Galatians itself, even a casual reading of the epistle informs us that Paul continually contrasts Christ and his benefits with the law of Moses. To make a long story very short, Paul informs the Galatians that what Israel was expecting by obedience to the law (justification and sonship to God) is to be found in Christ. Accordingly the law of Christ is the freedom to which the Galatians have been called (5:1f.). No longer are they required to observe ‘days, months, and seasons’ (4:10), the ‘weak and beggarly elements’ (4:9). In order to be acceptable to God, one no more has to submit to circumcision, the dietary laws and other boundaries, markers of Israel’s national identity. Therefore the whole of the letter suggests most strongly that ‘the law of Christ’, as in 1 Corinthians 9, is purposely set in contrast to the law of Moses.

There is then an irony in Paul’s phraseology. His opponents in Galatia (and elsewhere) were ‘law men’; for them the Torah in its entirety reigned supreme in every area of life. But Paul speaks of ‘the law of Christ’ (probably a startling combination of words to his contemporaries). He does so quite on purpose: ‘It is as though he said to his converts: if you must observe the law (as the agitators say), do so — only make sure that the law you observe is not Moses’ law, but the

law of Christ'.⁶ Paul is not against the law and the regulation of one's life by law. But what law? For him the answer is clear: it is not that legislation which was valid only between Moses and Christ, but rather the expression of God's will which has come into being with the advent of Jesus the Messiah – the law of Christ.

All of this sets the stage for Paul's pronouncement that bearing one another's burdens *fulfils* the law of Christ. In our first study, we encountered the historical fact that the Judaism of Paul's day was very much concerned to remain within the boundaries set by the law. Of particular importance were those aspects of it which marked Israel out as a distinct society, mainly circumcision, sabbath/festival days, the purity and dietary regulations. So, for the Judaisers of Paul's day the law (of Moses) was fulfilled, ie, achieved its purpose, when Israel was loyal to the covenant, when the people of God maintained their peculiar ethnic and religious identity.

However, the situation mirrored in Galatians went beyond a commitment to God, Torah, and nation, which in itself was right and proper. Rather, the effect of Israel's zeal was a hardened nationalism which gave disproportionate emphasis to those aspects of the law which marked her out as a distinct and chosen people, making *them* indispensable to a life pleasing to God. As Dunn explains:

Such an understanding of the covenant and of the law inevitably puts too much weight on physical and national factors, on outward and visible enactments, and gives too little weight to the Spirit, to faith and love from the heart. Such an understanding of the people of God inevitably results in a false set of priorities. On such an understanding of the law, fulfilment of the law will inevitably be judged in terms of these priorities.⁷

Consequently the Judaisers, as we know, insisted that Gentiles had to become 'honorary Jews' before they could be reckoned among the people of God. Hand in hand with this demand went a hatred for anyone unwilling to conform particularly to the Pharisaic conception of covenant life.⁸ Therefore the law for the Judaisers was fulfilled not merely by their allegiance to it but also by *their hatred*.⁹ Not to hate would have been the same as compromising the honour of the God of Israel.¹⁰ In short, *hatred was the fulfilment of the law*. No wonder Paul calls the Judaising message 'another gospel' (Gal 1:6).

It is in the fact of just such an attitude that Paul writes that the commandments are fulfilled by one word: 'you shall love your neighbour as yourself' (Gal 5:14; Rom 13:8-10). In this light the statement of 6:2 makes perfect sense, since there can be no higher expression of love than bearing one another's burdens. The law (of Christ) is, fulfilled, ie, attains its reason for existence, not by hatred, however 'sanctified', but by love.¹¹ If we may compare an important saying of Jesus himself: 'A new commandment I give you, that you love one another; even as I have loved you, that you also love one another' (John 13:34; 15:12; cf 1 John 3:23). For all practical purposes, 'the law of Christ' is nothing other than his own 'new commandment' to the church.¹² Bearing one another's burdens therefore fulfils the law of Christ because it is love going into action. Of

course, love stood at the centre of the law of Moses;¹³ in this sense Jesus' commandment is not new at all.¹⁴ Nevertheless it was precisely the primacy of love in the Torah which was blurred, if not obliterated altogether, by the 'false brethren' in Galatia (2:4). But when the new Israel bears the burdens of its members who sin, it succeeds where the Israel of Paul's day failed so conspicuously.

In sum, faith is indispensable. 'We are not to suppose for a moment,' says J. C. Ryle, 'that charity (i.e. love) can atone for our sins, or make our peace with God. Nothing can do that but the blood of Christ, and nothing can give us an interest in Christ's blood but faith.' Nevertheless 'you should remember that there is a faith of devils, which is utterly unprofitable, and that the faith of God's elect is a "faith that worketh by love"'. Orthodoxy as the confession of faith is good and necessary. Yet, as we saw from the example of Diotrefes, one may be orthodox, indeed a defender of the faith, and still fail to appreciate that the truth accords with godliness (Tit 1:1). Love of country and family is an expression of loving one's neighbour as oneself; and true patriotism should be considered a biblical virtue. But it was the tragic flaw of first-century Judaism that both nation and Torah were turned into idols, all owing to the boast that Israel was exclusively the exalted and glorified people of God. Whether we realise it or not, even our Protestant and Reformed heritage can become an idol, if we pursue its aims and ideals apart from love. Not without reason, John told his Christian readers so long ago, 'Little children, keep yourselves from idols' (1 John 5:21).

¹ *The Epistle to the Galatians* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1988), p. 286.

² *A Commentary on Paul's Letter to the Churches in Galatia* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1979), p. 299.

³ Fung, *Galatians*, p. 287.

⁴ According to J. G. M. Barclay, 'These verses are not an independent or dispassionate account of Christian ethics tacked on to the end of an argumentative letter, but a continuation and completion of the argument'. *Obedying the Truth: A Study of Paul's Ethics in Galatians* (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1988), p. 143. Galatians is a letter to be read both forwards and backwards.

⁵ *Ennomos Christou*.

⁶ Fung, *Galatians*, pp. 287-88.

⁷ 'Works of the Law and the Curse of the Law (Gal 3:10-14)', *New Testament Studies* 31 (1985), p. 534. Cf. Dunn, *Word Biblical Commentary: Romans* (Dallas: Word, 1988), 2, pp. 582-83, 593.

⁸ See the first article, *Reformation Today* 115 (May-June 1990), pp. 26-30; and at more length a forthcoming piece entitled 'The Obedience of Faith in the Letter to the Romans: Second Article', *Westminster Theological Journal*, to appear in 1991.

⁹ The Jewish scholar Elias Bickerman once wrote that 'Early Pharisaism was a belligerent

movement that knew how to hate'. *From Ezra to the Last of the Maccabees* (New York: Schocken, 1962), p. 103. Cf. Jacob Neusner, *From Politics to Piety: The Emergence of Pharisaic Judaism* (Englewood Cliffs: Prentice-Hall, 1973), pp. 51-52.

¹⁰ Martin Hengel shows how the Zealot movement of the first century was a religious phenomenon. The prime concern of the Zealots was for the sole rule of God, *The Zealots* (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1989), pp. 90f.

¹¹ The verb 'fulfil' almost always occurs in the New Testament as an eschatological term, i.e. it signals the completion of the eternal plan of salvation in Christ (e.g. Matt 5:17; Mark 1:15). In the present instance, God's design for his people as expressed in the law of Christ is achieved when they bear one another's burdens; their love entitles them to be called 'the Israel of God' (Gal 6:16). Ironically, Israel believed that the law was fulfilled when she maintained her status as the separated people; but for Paul just the opposite was true: the fulfilling of the law is commensurate with the obliteration of Jew/Gentile distinctions. The former attitude fostered hate, but the latter love.

¹² In view of Galatians 5:14, Romans 13:8-10, *Continued on opposite page.*

Reforming Fundamentalism

A review of the book 'Reforming Fundamentalism' – Fuller Seminary and the New Evangelicalism by George M. Marsden. Eerdmans. 319 pages.

There is a detailed and perceptive history of Fuller Theological Seminary over forty years, since its foundation in 1947 in Pasadena, California. Marsden sees it as illustrating changes and tensions taking place in American evangelicalism over that same period and as contributing significantly to them.

There is little doubt that mid-century American fundamentalism needed reformation. Arising from the protest by evangelicals against theological liberalism some thirty years earlier, it had become, in part as a result of that conflict, defensive and inward looking. It was strongly influenced by dispensationalism and was almost universally pre-millennial. With exceptions it was obscurantist. Its aggressive evangelism and vigorous missionary endeavour were not paralleled with concern on social issues – the two were almost regarded as antithetical. Fundamentalism was generally associated with conservative political views although political involvement as such was not regarded as proper for a Christian. It was strongly separatist and its militancy has led to a predominant spirit of censoriousness. Its rigidity was also shown in its legislative definitions for Christians, non-smoking and absolute teetotalism being the norm, as though that constitutes the substance of true holiness.

This view of Christianity was being increasingly rejected by Americans in leadership roles in society in the post second world war period. In contrast to the earlier strong evangelical tradition in American history, Biblical Christianity was in danger of being marginalised in terms of the social, cultural and intellectual life of the nation.

The vision that became Fuller was the establishment of a prestigious evangelical seminary that would so influence American Christianity and American society as to restore evangelicalism to its former determinant role. Old Princeton, the Princeton of the Hodges' and Warfield, was to be the model.

Marsden describes how the pursuit of prestige, with considerable success, continued through its first 40 years. He also records how the model came to be dropped. From seeking a vigorous re-statement of traditional evangelicalism, the seminary moved to embrace neo-evangelicalism only then to move on to 'open evangelicalism'.

As the story unfolds we see the interactions between Fuller and other institutions, but, most significantly, between individuals within and outside of Fuller. Those individuals are presented both in their vision, industry and skill but also in their frailty, foolishness and vanity.

The history of Fuller is a history of controversy. Given the nature of American Christianity and the objectives set for Fuller, that isn't surprising.

the law of Christ is not love pure and simple, because Paul singles out specific and concrete commandments which are summarised and accomplished by love. However, we are not to miss the obvious: the quintessence of the law of Christ is love, and without love there is no true obedience. Without love the law of God becomes a vehicle for spiritual exhibitionism and a club for subjugating

sensitive consciences.

¹³ Matthew 22:34-40 = Deuteronomy 6:5; Leviticus 19:18.

¹⁴ 'New' always has eschatological overtones in the New Testament. Thus the 'new' commandment of John 13:34, etc., has reference to the new Israel or the new humanity, the participants in a new covenant and new creation.

But not only did it sustain attacks from without, it was prone to dissension within and with them, its objectives changed.

The most serious and vehement criticism from without has arisen as a consequence of the seminary's changed attitude to Biblical inerrancy. With changes in the membership of the faculty, this commitment was eroded until eventually it was dropped from the doctrinal basis.

However, Fuller has continued to maintain its allegiance to evangelicalism. But its critics argue that it has redefined evangelicalism, some would say to the point where the term becomes meaningless. It continues to affirm the inspiration and authority of Scripture, but so understanding the human aspects of Scripture as to allow for the possibility of error in its original production.

In this view, Fuller is now supported by a substantial number of leading American Christians who would equally vehemently maintain that they remain evangelicals. Some, including Marsden himself (see his 'Preachers of Paradox 1983), argue that inerrancy as currently understood is a relatively modern doctrine and not essential to orthodoxy.

Such a position has its attractions. It no longer becomes necessary to resolve those apparent discrepancies of Scripture which can be so puzzling. Nor is there need to seek an accommodation between the statements of Scripture and what is declared to be the assured results of historical and scientific research.

It may appear that these concessions can be made without jeopardising the principal truths of the Gospel. But is this so? Marsden's account gives one example of what may happen when this view of Scripture is taken to its logical conclusion.

One of the staff of Fuller, Paul Jewett, published (1975) his 'Man as male and female', a study on the equality of men and women. In this work, Jewett concludes bluntly that the apostle Paul was 'in error' with regard to his teaching of the role of women in the church. Although Jewett's view was, at the time, disowned by his colleagues at Fuller it was not an illogical consequence of the stance of the seminary had taken. Once the writers of Scripture are seen as being able to introduce error into the text of Scripture, notwithstanding divine inspiration, where can the line be drawn? It may not seem important that some unknown chronicler allowed error to be introduced into an Old Testament passage. But if this is accepted, on what basis can one exempt New Testament writers? (Many would not.) In that case what authority can the Scriptures, Old and New Testaments carry? If an apostle can be guilty of erroneous teaching, on what as Christians, do we take our stand?

The doctrine of Scriptural inerrancy may not have been defined by the early church in the terms now required, but orthodox Christianity has always accepted as normative the teaching of the apostles and our Lord himself. It is that dominical and apostolic testimony which has led the Church in all ages up to the modern times to a high view of the nature of all Scripture.

If Scripture is not a reliable guide to the doctrine of Scripture, how can it be a reliable guide to any doctrine? If error is part of the nature of Scripture what is the basis of Christian theology, and more personally, what can be the crisis of Christian assurance?

Marsden, although recording the various controversies surrounding Fuller in detail, including the issue of Scriptural inerrancy, does not pursue their theological implications. However

Continued on opposite page

Book Reviews

DARE TO CONTEND

Reg Burrows

175 pages. £5.95. Jude Publications. Distributed by EP.

This volume provides an accurate and easy to read description of the developments in the Church of England, especially since 1977. The issues affect all evangelicals in the UK. The author, who pastors a church in Newcastle on Tyne, uses the expository method from Exodus 32:24, under the following heads.

'They gave me the gold, and I threw it into the fire, and out came this calf.'

1. Man rejects the true God revealed in the Bible.
2. Man makes his own god that he can see and understand.
3. Man continues to use the name of the true God for his man-made god.
4. Man-made gods follow the current fashion.

His concluding chapter has the title, Dare to be an Elijah and expounds the text, *'How long will you waver between*

he is clearly impressed by the growth and achievements of the seminary as he is by the changed status of evangelicalism in American society. Far from being marginalised, evangelicals here, over the 40 years reached and influenced the high ground of American life.

Marsden leaves the reader with the impression that the direction taken by Fuller was natural and acceptable, nay desirable; that if evangelicals are to continue to enjoy the current levels of influence Fuller's open and non-dogmatic stance is the pattern to follow. This would involve, however, a modification of that high view of Scripture we have come to associate with being an evangelical.

two opinions? If the Lord is God, follow him; but if Baal is God, follow him' (1 Kings 18:21).

The author argues against the idea that evangelicals should be like Obadiah who saved 100 prophets from the persecution of Jezebel. Confrontation is necessary because the battle today is for the souls of men and women. We must stand up against the false gods of our time as Elijah did in his. Men like Elijah are rare. We rejoice in the clarity of this book and are grateful for the way in which it challenges us all to stand for the truth.

TRUTH UNDER ATTACK

Eryl Davies

334 pages. EP. £6.95.

Surely this is the most useful and effective book on the cults available to us. The work covers 32 aberrant religions. It is very easy to read, highly informative and completely up to date and positive. How can you be positive about distortions of Christianity? The simple method used by Eryl Davies is to place the errant teaching in the left

Continued on page 32

Nevertheless Marsden does, in conclusion, speculate on the stability of an institution which has, as a matter of policy allowed itself to be so open to change and has significantly moved its basic theological stance in such a short period from that held by its founders. He says; 'How much continuity with its past it would maintain in future transitions, no one can predict'.

If this is true of Fuller, is it not also true of the greater evangelical cause if it continues to question Biblical authority? A movement's value must surely not be judged by its current popularity and prestige, particularly if achieved at the price of compromising its most distinctive characteristic.

Dr John Green

continued from page 31

column and what the Bible teaches in the right column. The result is a devastating exposure of false religion.

Four pages are devoted to explain why Roman Catholicism is included as an aberration. Thirteen pages of the two column comparison vindicate the author's decision.

The cults are listed in seven different categories. The first major category is the movement of false religion within Christendom: Modernism, Roman Catholicism, Quakers, Seventh-Day Adventists, Moral Re-Armament, Campbellites, Unitarians and 'Jesus Only'.

As we would expect the Mormons and Jews are included among the six described in the category, 'Some Established Cults'. The origins of modern movements like Hare Krishna, New Age and Eckankar are described as well as their distinctive tenets compared with what the Bible teaches.

The volume concludes with 50 pages devoted to 13 major Bible truths.

Criticisms? It would be difficult to improve on this work. The reviewer found it hard to believe that the Occult and Witchcraft is quite so widespread in the UK and wonders whether the documentation is adequate. Suggestions? Yes, three or four pages explaining why God has permitted so much heresy and error would be helpful. Also why so many modern cults? Does Satan see that his time is short?

Active Christians are constantly confronted by false religion and hence will find that they will need several copies of *Truth Under Attack* to loan to enquirers.

THE REFORMATION OF WORSHIP

The Westminster Conference Papers for 1989

Obtainable from: John Miller, 55
Warwick Road, Thornton Heath,

Surrey CR4 7NH. Price £3.25, incl. postage. 118 pages.

Because history is a demanding subject it is probable that more research and hard work goes into the annual two day Westminster Conference held every December in Westminster Chapel, London, than any other study conference in the UK. The six papers read at the 1989 Conference are now available. They were:

1. Thomas Cranmer: Compromiser or Strategist – Kenneth Brownell
2. Cranmer's Prayer Book and its Influence – G. Eric Lane
3. Foxe's Book of Martyrs and its Influence – Simon Chase
4. The Westminster Directory of Public Worship (1645) – Alan Clifford
5. Why Another Confession? – Erroll Hulse
6. David Brainerd – Missionary to the Red Indians – Neville F. Rees

The latter subjects may be of particular interest to our readers. Neville F. Rees brings together the salient facts of David Brainerd's life. It is generally accepted that no missionary biography exceeds that of David Brainerd in inspiring others to the call of the mission field. Brainerd's struggle, his prayers, his near despair, and the eventual spiritual awakening among the Indians are skilfully presented.

The structure used for the paper, *The 1689: Why Another Confession?* is as follows:

1. A perspective view of the Reformed Confessions between 1644 and 1689
2. The division over church government disposing the Savoy Confession
3. The division over baptism disposing the 1689 Confession
4. The unity represented by all three Confessions
5. The errors repudiated by all three Confessions
6. The usefulness of the 1689 Confession then and now

For enjoyable biographical reading, Simon Chase's paper on John Foxe is highly recommended.

Editor
Associate Editors

ERROLL HULSE, 75 Woodhill Road, Leeds LS16 7BZ
DAVID KINGDON, JOHN DAVISON, UK, JIM VAN ZYL, SA,
TOM NETTLES, WAYNE MACK, USA

Rates

1 year £7.00 – 2 years £12.00
1 year £7.00 – 2 years £12.00
1 year \$12.00 – 2 years \$20.00
1 year \$12.00 – 2 years \$20.00
1 year \$13.00 – 2 years \$22.00

Subscriptions
BRITISH ISLES

IRISH REPUBLIC

AUSTRALIA

NEW ZEALAND

USA

Agents

Lyn Hulse,
75 Woodhill Road, Leeds LS16 7BZ.

Alan Barker,
Bethany, Cartron Hill, SLIGO.

Ray Levick,
27 Coven Avenue, Bayswater North,
Victoria 3153.

Sovereign Grace Books
P.O. Box 62-159, Sylvia Park,
Auckland 6.

Great Christian Books Inc.,
1319 Newport-Gap Pike, Wilmington,
DE. 19804-2895.

Tom Lutz,
Edgewood Baptist Church,
3743 Nichol Avenue,
Anderson, IN 46011.

Bill Ascol
PO Box 552, Clinton LA 70722

Max Latchford,
6020 154A Street, Surrey, B.C.,
V3S 7H6.

Patrick Palmer,
Box 33226, Glenstantia 0010.

D. H. Gritter,
Laaghalerstraat 12
9414 AK Hooghalen.

Good News Enterprise
Beg Berkunci 210, 43409 UPM
Serdang, Malaysia.

1 year \$13.00 – 2 years \$22.00 CANADA

1 year R14.00 – 2 years R22.00 SOUTH AFRICA

1 year f20.00 – 2 years f35.00 NETHERLANDS

1 year \$30.00 – 2 years \$55.00 MALAYSIA AND
SINGAPORE

Single copies one-sixth the above in each case which includes postage.

For airmail add £4.50 sterling equivalent p.a.

Gifts are welcomed and those who wish to support the Magazine should make out their cheques to "Reformation Today".

Bound volumes available: 37-48 £8 or \$15, 71-90 £13 or \$25, 91-110 £17
or \$28, post free

----- cut here -----

**SUBSCRIPTION
FORM**

Please send to:

Name:

Address:

Reformation

Today

Bound

Volumes

Tick

1 yr	<input type="checkbox"/>
2 years	<input type="checkbox"/>
37-48	<input type="checkbox"/>
71-90	<input type="checkbox"/>
91-110	<input type="checkbox"/>

I enclose..... Your name and address:

Please enclose gift card Yes/No

Please send me a receipt Yes/No

CONTENTS

- 1 Editorial – Reformation among the Southern Baptists**
- 5 Calvin, Geneva and Christian Mission** Douglas MacMillan
- 14 Expository Preaching** Sidney Greidanus
- 17 Our Lord’s Teaching on Repentance** Editor
- 23 News**
- 25 Bearing One Another’s Burdens – Part 3** Don Garlington
- 29 Reforming Fundamentalism –
a review article** John Green
- 31 Book Reviews** Editor