

REFORMATION TODAY



*The true and Lively Effigias of M^r.
HAN:KNOLLIS Minister of y^e Gospell
Aged 67. Yeares.*

MARCH/APRIL 1995

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The Carey Conference January 1995



Amin Tjung of Jakarta. Amin and Sutjipto Subeno were the first visitors to the Carey Conference from Indonesia



Left, Stan Thompson, British agent for RT, is an elder at Parbold Evangelical Church where John Palmer is pastor. John is also a trustee of RT Trust. On the right is Mark Battese of Australia



Veteran Leith Samuel. For his rating of the Conference see report



Ken Ryan of Dublin and Stephen Curry of Ballymoney, Northern Ireland



'Hello Carolyn!' Bruce Jenkins of Natal, South Africa telephones home. Bruce gave a report of time recently spent in Addis Ababa



Roger Fellows recently returned to the UK from Canada and Leslie Pinner of the Salvation Army, Stranraer, Scotland

Editorial

Bryn Jones and Terry Virgo are the best known apostles of the Restorationist Movement in England. Bryn Jones is enthusiastic in his endorsement of the Toronto blessing:

‘Young and old, men and women, leaders and people alike are getting drunk. Thousands across the churches are laughing, crying, praying, praising, being healed, falling asleep, going into trances and seeing visions of God. People are experiencing fire in their hands, their stomachs and on their lips, some with such intensity that they cry to God to stop. These things are happening in congregations worldwide. It is refreshing. It is festive – the cry is “Drink, drink, drink!” and everyone is getting drunk.’ (The magazine *Covenant* – summer 1994).

The so-called blessing is invading Pentecostal churches in the UK and causing division, for and against. The Pentecostal and charismatic churches in the UK probably form about twenty percent of the evangelical constituency.

At the recently concluded *Carey Conference for Ministers* in the UK (January 1995) a video was shown which illustrated the tenor or behaviour of the Toronto blessing. Several videos were studied from both sides of the Atlantic and one chosen as typical.

Discussion followed in which a leading British clinical psychiatrist, Gaius Davies, was questioned. An outline of that discussion is included in this issue of RT. It was made clear that manipulation is used by the leaders to create epidemic hysteria.

The experience of Mick Brown a secular non-evangelical journalist of *The Daily Telegraph* in England illustrates the pattern of hysteria. He describes how he was ‘slain’ at Toronto. In the *Saturday Telegraph Magazine* 3 December 1994, he titles his article *Unzipper Heaven, LORD, Ha-Ha, Ho-Ho, Hee-Hee!* Brown’s description is a fair and unbiased description of the procedures, the music, and the generally prevalent uncontrollable laughings, barking, sobbings and prostrations. There is no reference to Christian teaching. There is no stress on content. Brown simply reports that according to the promoters all the hype is the work of the Holy Spirit.

Subsequently Mick Brown has been interviewed by the British monthly evangelical paper *Evangelicals Now* (February 1995). He described his experience as a feeling of euphoria which lasted about three days. His agnostic views about evangelical views of the Bible have not changed one iota.

This question of the supremacy of the mind in Christianity is important (Rom 12:1,2). Those who attend the Toronto style meetings are urged to abandon their minds. The blessing is hindered if the possible recipient retains his critical faculties. A characteristic of the meetings are fierce prophecies denouncing those who attend with a critical spirit. The well-known author and Vineyard protagonist John White is negative about those who criticise the so called phenomena. He describes them as those who have 'had it' (are beyond hope)! I would comment and say that this must surely be the ultimate in second blessing teaching, namely, we are doomed to be second class Christians if we resist this mindlessness!

Union with Christ

Exposition on 'Union with Christ' by the ejected Puritan, Rowland Stedman, has been prepared for us by John A Hopper of Essex. What sublime experiential blessing is ours as we enjoy abiding union with Christ! As we contemplate the fact that we are blessed with every spiritual blessing in Christ in the heavenly realms we can only view the mindless drunkenness as repugnant.

Hanserd Knollys and Wayne Grudem

Educated at Cambridge University Hanserd Knollys was an early Baptist who came from a Puritan background in the Anglican Church. William Erbury (1604-1654) was a Puritan minister. He became a champion of the Seekers. As explained by Prof Michael Haykin, Erbury used the same arguments for the continuation of signs, wonders and miracles used by John Wimber, leader in the Vineyard Movement today. The same dire prophecies against those who resisted these fanatical claims were made in the seventeenth century as are being made by John White and others in our day. In the sixteenth century Martin Luther said of the Zwickau prophets that they had swallowed the Holy Spirit feathers and all! There is nothing new!

As will be seen in the review, Wayne Grudem's *Systematic Theology* is thoroughly Reformed when it comes to salvation truth yet he follows Wimber and the Vineyard Movement in maintaining the same position as the Seekers did three centuries ago and as the Zwickau prophets before them.

Michael Haykin's work on Knollys is to form part of a book on the rise of the Early Particular (Reformed) Baptists. Haykin's most readable biography of John Sutcliff, *One Heart and One Soul*, has just been published by Evangelical Press. This sturdy, 430 page work (£9.95) is a most valuable resource on the renewal of the Calvinistic Baptist cause of the eighteenth century. It describes the friendship of Sutcliff with Andrew Fuller, William Carey, John Ryland Jr. and others.

Hanserd Knollys – Early Baptist Leader¹

Michael A G Haykin

Hanserd Knollys, 1599-1691, was the only significant Calvinistic Baptist leader, apart from William Kiffin (1616-1701), who experienced the golden days of the 1640s and 1650s and who lived to see the toleration extended by William III to them and other Nonconformists in 1688 after they had been persecuted for close to three decades.² Unlike most of his fellow Baptists, Knollys had received a university education. He had studied at Katherine Hall in Cambridge University where, in his words, he ‘prayed daily, heard all the godly ministers I could, read and searched the holy Scriptures, read good books, got acquainted with gracious Christians then called Puritans’.³ After going down from Cambridge, Knollys was ordained and appointed minister of the parish church at Humberstone in Lincolnshire.⁴ Knollys, however, eventually felt constrained to resign this charge in 1631 because, among other things, he could no longer use the sign of the cross in baptism or continue ‘admitting wicked persons to the Lord’s Supper’.⁵

By 1635 Knollys had made a complete break with the Church of England and left England for America. However, he ran into trouble with the New England Congregationalists and decided to return to England in the autumn of 1641. Within three years he had come to hold to believer’s baptism and to identify himself with the fledgling Calvinistic Baptist cause centred on London. Knollys’ identification with the Calvinistic Baptists led initially to a controversial preaching tour in Suffolk, during which, on one occasion, a ‘rude multitude’ prevented him from preaching by casting stones at him while he was in the pulpit.⁶ It was also during this preaching tour that he gave the sermon which he later published as *Christ Exalted*, an excellent example of the Christ-centred spirituality of the early Calvinistic Baptists and which we will look at in more detail shortly. This preaching tour was followed by a couple of publications defending Baptist beliefs, his involvement as a champion of the Baptist cause in a number of formal debates,

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1. The bulk of this article was first published in *The Westminster Theological Journal*, 54 (1992), and is reprinted here by kind permission of that journal.
 2. For two recent studies of Knollys’ life and ministry, see Pope A Duncan, *Hanserd Knollys: Seventeenth-Century Baptist* (Nashville, Tennessee: Broadman Press, 1965) and B R White, *Hanserd Knollys and Radical Dissent in the 17th Century* (London: Dr Williams’ Trust, 1977). For a helpful biographical sketch, see B R White, ‘Knollys, Hanserd (c.1599-1691)’ in Richard L Greaves and Robert Zaller, eds. *Biographical Dictionary of British Radicals in the Seventeenth Century* (Brighton, Sussex: Harvester Press, 1983), 2:160-162.
 3. *The Life and Death of that Old Disciple of Jesus Christ, and Eminent Minister of the Gospel, Mr. Hanserd Knollys* (London: E Huntington, 1812), 11.
 4. *Ibid.* 12.
 5. *Ibid.* 17.
 6. *Ibid.* 32-33. See also Hanserd Knollys, *Christ Exalted: A Lost Sinner Sought, and Saved by Christ: God’s People are a Holy People* (London: 1646), i.

and his signing the second edition of *The First London Confession*, published in 1646. This Confession helped to weld together the fledgling Baptist movement in the early decades of its existence.

Knollys signed this Confession as the pastor of a substantial London congregation, which may well have regularly seen close to a thousand come to hear him preach in the late 1640s and 1650s.⁷ Throughout these years, however, Knollys was active not only in promoting the Baptist cause in London, but also in seeking to establish Baptist works in other areas of England and Wales. These years were a harvest-time for the Calvinistic Baptists, and the religious toleration extended to them by Oliver Cromwell (1599-1658) enabled them to plant some 130 churches in these two decades.⁸

Knollys and the Seekers

Now, in championing the Baptist cause Knollys had to deal with the attacks of an amorphous group known as the Seekers, who flourished during the 1640s and the 1650s. The Seekers, J F McGregor points out, regarded the sign of a true church of Christ to be 'its possession of the grace given to the apostles and demonstrated through miracles'. Thus, since none of the Puritan congregations claimed to be in possession of such charismatic gifts, the Seekers felt that they had to withdraw from them and wait for what they hoped would be a new divine dispensation.⁹

William Erbery (1604-1654),¹⁰ for instance, who began his career as a Puritan vicar in Cardiff and ended up as 'the champion of the Seekers', argued that he and his contemporaries were living in an era characterised by the absence of the life-giving Spirit of God. The Spirit had withdrawn from the Church after the days of the apostles because of the Church's apostate ways. Due to this absence of the Spirit and his charismatic gifts, any attempt to gather churches on the basis of what the New Testament has to say about the local church and its ordinances was doomed to failure. On the basis of this perspective Erbery judged the Calvinistic Baptists to

7. Murray Tolmie, *The Triumph of the Saints: The Separate Churches of London 1616-1649* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1977), 60.

8. Michael R Watts, *The Dissenters* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1978), 160.

9. J F McGregor, 'Seekers and Ranters' *Radical Religion in the English Revolution*, eds. McGregor and B Reay, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1984), 122-123. On the origins of the Seekers, see Watts, *Dissenters*, 185-6. Many of the Seekers eventually became Quakers (*ibid.* 193, 195-196, 204). In the words of Tolmie, *Triumph of the Saints*, 6: 'The Quakers ... succeeded in giving shape and direction to the spiritual turmoil of Seekers and anti-formalists.'

10. In outlining Erbery's thought, the following have been very helpful: Christopher Hill, *The Experience of Defeat. Milton and Some Contemporaries* (London: Faber and Faber, 1984), 84-97; B R White, 'William Erbery (1604-1654) and the Baptists', *The Baptist Quarterly*, 23 (1969-1970), 114-125. Erbery's works were collected together after his death and published as *The Testimony of William Erbery, Left Upon Record for the Saints of Succeeding Ages* (London: Giles Calvert, 1658).

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be sorely deluded in their attempt to establish New Testament congregations. The apostles, he asserted, could baptise believers because they 'had the manifestation of the Spirit in manifold gifts', but, he asked, 'what manifestation of the Spirit have any of the Churches this day?'¹¹ In fact, Erbery maintained, Old Testament believers were in a better state than believers in his day: 'The Church, under the Law, had some gifts of the Spirit manifest among them, as the gift of Prophecie, the gift of Healing, yea raising the Dead, with signs and miracles...; this is more than present Churches have, having less of the manifestation of the Spirit than that under the Law, therefore [they] must needs be more in bondage in Babylon, not having one gift of the Spirit to continue their Church-state to be of a Gospel-glory.'¹²

Thus, because the Baptist congregations have not the appearance of the Spirit from on high, the Lord will roar in them, and will make every one of them to tremble ... because therein they disobey the command of Christ; they tell their proselytes, You must be dipt, because you must obey the command of Christ. I say, going forth to baptize, or be baptized, without the baptism of the Spirit on the Church, is not the command of Christ, but against it... What is the baptism of the Spirit? Is it the presence of the Spirit? The Apostles had the presence of the Spirit before [Pentecost]; Is it the abundance of the Spirit? Christ breathed upon them before [Pentecost], and said, 'Receive the Holy Spirit,' John 22:20, yet they were not baptized with the Spirit. The baptism of the Spirit (as I have often said) is pouring forth of all the gifts of the Spirit on the Church. ... Therefore to Baptize in a Gospel-way without the Baptism of the Spirit, is to deny the Spirit of Jesus.¹³

Illustrative of the Calvinistic Baptist answer to the Seeker position is Knollys' *The Shining of a Flaming Fire in Zion*, published in 1646. This work was actually

11. *The Children of the West. Or, The Fears of all who are in Forms, especially of Water-Baptism* [Testimony, 138].

12. *The Great Earthquake*, Rev 16:18 [Testimony, 302].

13. *The Children of the West* [Testimony, 136, 137].

written in direct response to a pamphlet entitled *The Smoke in the Temple* (1646) by the radical Puritan John Saltmarsh (ca 1612-1647).¹⁴ In this pamphlet, Saltmarsh, though not a Seeker himself, accurately summarised a number of the Seeker arguments against the Baptists, of which the main ones were the same as those of Erbery noted above.¹⁵

In response to these arguments Knollys argued that the Calvinistic Baptists did not 'judge it meet, for any Brother to baptize, or to administer other Ordinances; unless he have received such gifts of the Spirit, as fitteth, or enableth him to preach the Gospel. And those gifts being first tried by, and known to the Church, such a Brother is chosen, and appointed thereunto by the Suffrage of the Church'.¹⁶ Those appointed by Calvinistic Baptist congregations to preach and administer the ordinances were not devoid of spiritual gifts. True, they did not have the same array of spiritual gifts as their first-century counterparts. But, Knollys went on to emphasise: 'Such [extraordinary] gifts and miracles were rather for bringing the Word of the Gospel into the world, and for glorifying Christ's first coming in the flesh, than for after, Heb 2:3,4; John 20:29,30,31.'¹⁷ Knollys did not regard the miraculous gifts of the first-century church as vital to the life of the Church in every age. These gifts were given to illuminate the entrance of the gospel onto the scene of history and to adorn the first advent of Christ. For biblical support he cited two texts: Hebrews 2:3-4, which clearly affirms the authenticating role of the spiritual gifts bestowed in the early church, and John 20:29-31, which also stresses the confirmatory role of miracles.

This line of argumentation was not new; it went back to Reformers like Martin Bucer (1491-1551) and John Calvin (1509-1564).¹⁸ Knollys, moreover, maintained that the Baptists did find their proclamation of the gospel to be accompanied by miracles – miracles of regeneration.

So often as the Gospel comes to any Soul not in word only, but in power and in the Holy Spirit, I Thes 1:3,4, there is a Miracle wrought in them that receive the Gospel, Luke 7:22, and they then receive the Holy Spirit

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14. On Saltmarsh's life and thought, see Leo F Solt, 'John Saltmarsh: New Model Army Chaplain', *The Journal of Ecclesiastical History*, 2 (1951), 69-80; N T Burns, 'Saltmarsh, John (c1612-1647)' in Richard L Greaves and Robert Zaller, eds. *Biographical Dictionary of British Radicals in the Seventeenth Century* (Brighton, Sussex: Harvester Press, 1984), 3:136-137. Knollys' response to Saltmarsh was one of a number of Baptist works written against the Seekers. See Tolmie, *The Triumph of the Saints*, 54-55.
 15. *The Smoke in the Temple* (London: G Calvert, 1646), 17-18.
 16. *The Shining of a Flaming Fire in Zion* (London: 1646), 9.
 17. *Ibid.* 9.
 18. See W P Stephens, *The Holy Spirit in the Theology of Martin Bucer* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1970), 185-189; Leonard Sweetman Jr. 'The Gifts of the Spirit: A Study of Calvin's Comments on 1 Cor 12:8-10, 28; Rom 12:6-8; Eph 4:11' in David E Holwerda, ed. *Exploring the Heritage of John Calvin* (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1976), 273-303.

with his gifts and graces ... So then we need not stay [i.e. wait] for a Ministry with *Miracle*, being we have a *Word* with *Miracle*.¹⁹

Preaching that is empowered by the Spirit to the salvation of sinners is in itself miraculous. This perspective is fully in line with the Puritan thought of the day. The Puritan preacher Thomas Adams (fl. 1612-1653), for example, had stated:

Even still God works miracles, though we take no notice of them. That our hearts should be converted, this is a miracle. That our faith should believe above reason, this is a miracle ... If he does not fetch water out of a rock, yet he fetcheth repentance out of sin, and makes the stony heart gush out tears; this is a greater miracle.²⁰

Thus, Knollys concluded: 'Although we have no gifts in our Churches but what we have received, and we have not received any Gifts of the Spirit to boast of them: Yet I must bear this Testimony, we come behind in no gift; what we have received we are bound to bless God for, and desire to honour Christ our Head with all the gifts which we have received from him.'²¹ Knollys and his fellow Baptists laid no claim to possessing all of the gifts which were present in the early church, but they were conscious nevertheless that the Spirit was at work among them through a variety of gifts.

Knollys' conviction with regard to the whole subject of spiritual gifts is especially instructive in our day when twentieth-century heirs of the Seekers maintain that the full panoply of the Spirit's gifts is always available to the church. Knollys was rightly not convinced that post-New Testament believers had access to all of the spiritual gifts in evidence in the apostolic era. Moreover, contrary to the views of the Seekers, Knollys did not believe that the absence of these gifts impeded the establishment of Spirit-filled congregations. The Spirit always gives that which the Church needs. As Knollys' friend Benjamin Keach (1640-1704), another key Baptist leader in the latter half of the seventeenth century, wrote in a book which Knollys publicly commended: 'Whilst there is a Church Militant, Saints on this side Perfection, ... those Spiritual Gifts needful to their present State, shall be given, and be amongst them, for the Support of the great Ordinance of the Ministry, and for the good of the Church.'²²

Noteworthy in the last text cited above from *The Shining of a Flaming Fire in Zion* is the trinitarian emphasis that Knollys highlights: in the bestowal of the gifts of the Spirit, God the Father and Christ the Son are also vitally involved. Knollys had occasion to discuss further Christ's involvement in the bestowal of spiritual gifts in

19. *The Shining of a Flaming Fire*, 10.

20. Cited Victor Budgen, *The Charismatics and the Word of God* (Welwyn, Hertfordshire: Evangelical Press, 1985), 144.

21. *Shining of a Flaming Fire*, 15.

22. *The Gospel Minister's Maintenance Vindicated* (London: 1689), 7. 23. *Christ Exalted*, 11, 4.

another work, *Christ Exalted*, a sermon on Colossians 3:11. Christ, Knollys affirmed, has purchased the gifts through his death, and as such is the 'Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the ending, of all those graces, gifts, and fruits of the Spirit, which are in the new man'. It is Christ who gives 'lustre and beauty' to each spiritual gift. Indeed, it was the Father's design that 'Christ should communicate all grace, gifts, etc. unto his people'.²³ And because he is the source of the gifts, Christ is to be more highly prized than any of them.

In making this final point Knollys enunciated what will become a familiar theme in the Calvinistic Baptist tradition, namely, the subsidiary importance of the gifts of the Spirit in the Christian life.

Let Christ be all in all, in the gifts of the Spirit and graces of sanctification; for ... he is the Author, the Preserver, and finisher of them all. Therefore let him have the pre-eminence above all, set a high esteem on every gift and grace of God, account a little grace better than all the riches, honours, pleasures, and creature-comforts of this world. But you ought to prize Christ far above all his own gifts and graces in us, for he is the life of them all, the marrow and substance of them all. What is all knowledge, unless ye know God in Christ? 1 Cor 13:2: nothing. What is all faith, except Christ be the object of it? 1 Cor 13:2: nothing.²⁴

Knollys was insistent that Christ is far more precious than any of his gifts. For possession of Christ is evidence of salvation, whereas that of the gifts is not.

If you have Christ, you have all ... but if you lose him you lose all; you will lose your hopes, Comforts, and all your duties, yea you will lose God, Heaven, and soul, and all. It matters not what you have if you want Christ, no gifts, duties, reformations, qualifications, or other things whatsoever, will make you happy without Christ... Therefore make sure that Christ is yours.²⁵

Knollys proceeded to apply this perspective on the gifts of the Spirit to the age-old problem of believers being overawed by other more gifted Christians.

Hear this you poor in spirit, you new-born babes in Christ, who have the persons of believers (especially Preachers) in admiration, and set them up on high in your hearts, and extol them with your tongues; because you discern so much humility, love, patience, faith, and other gifts of the Spirit, and graces of sanctification in them: should you not rather admire Christ, exalt Christ, and extol him, who is the purchaser, the owner, the

23. *Ibid.* 10.

24. *Ibid.* 7.

25. *Ibid.* 11.

Donor, and the author of all these spiritual gifts and graces, for we have nothing but what we have received, by his grace we are what we are, and all the grace we have, from his freeness we received it, John 1:16. Therefore let him receive the glory of all, and let him have the pre-eminence in all, for he is all in all.²⁶

This text well reveals the Christ-centred nature of early Calvinistic Baptist life and thinking. Christ, not his servants, is to be the object of the Church's adoration.

Knollys and Physical Healing

From the 1660s to the 1680s those who dissented from the worship and rites of the Church of England experienced heavy persecution. Knollys himself was twice imprisoned. But, as has been mentioned, he survived to see the dawn of a new era, when William III secured the passing of the Toleration Act in 1689, which gave the Dissenters freedom to preach and gather congregations. Although Knollys' physical capabilities appear to have been somewhat restricted, he and his fellow Baptist William Kiffin took the occasion of this declaration of toleration to issue a call for the first national assembly of Calvinistic Baptists. The representatives of the one hundred or so churches which met in London in September of 1689 gave their formal assent to what is known as *The Second London Confession of Faith*, the definitive Calvinistic Baptist confession of the seventeenth century. Attached to the Confession was a list of names, thirty-seven Calvinistic Baptist pastors who concurred with the Confession, and it was appropriate that heading the list was the name of Knollys.

The same year that this assembly took place in London, Knollys was involved in a fascinating event that is recorded by Thomas Crosby (1683-ca 1751) in *The History of the English Baptists*. Crosby's father-in-law was Benjamin Keach, who was taken ill in 1689 and was expected to die. But, Crosby records: 'The reverend Mr Hanserd Knollis²⁷ seeing his then dying friend, and brother in the Gospel, near, to all appearance, expiring, betook himself to prayer, and in an earnest and very extraordinary manner begged, that God would spare him, and add unto his days, the time he granted to his servant Hezekiah; and as soon as he had ended his prayer, he said, Brother Keach, I shall be in heaven before you, and quickly after left him.'²⁸ Knollys would die two years later; Keach lived another fifteen years, dying in 1704, the same span of years God added to the life of Hezekiah according to Isaiah 38.

26. *Ibid.*

27. Knollys' name was variously spelt. See Duncan, *Hanserd Knollys*, 9, n.3.

28. *The History of the English Baptists* (London: 1740), IV, 307-308. For other similar incidents from Knollys' life, see Michael A G Haykin, 'Hanserd Knollys (ca 1599-1691) on the Gifts of the Spirit', *The Westminster Theological Journal*, 54 (1992), 110-112.

How can this incident from Knollys' life be reconciled with his clearly held belief that the extraordinary gifts of the Spirit were a thing of the past? One answer, that given by the nineteenth-century Baptist historian Joseph Ivimey (1773-1834), is that Knollys probably thought the 'direction given [in] James v.14-16, was not confined to those who possessed the "gifts of healing", as one of the extraordinary gifts of the Holy Spirit, bestowed in the Apostolic times; but that it extended to all the ministers of Christ.'²⁹ A more general answer, building on that of Ivimey, would be that while Knollys did not believe in the continuation of the extraordinary gifts given to the first-century church, nor look for their restoration, neither did he wish to restrict the sovereignty of God and wholly confine his wondrous deeds to the past. God could and did still heal in answer to prayer. Knollys' position appears to be essentially the same as that of other Puritan authors. For instance, John Owen (1616-1683), the leading theologian of Restoration Puritanism, could state in *A Discourse of Spiritual Gifts*: 'It is not unlikely but that God might on some occasions ... put forth his power in some miraculous operations; and so he yet may do and perhaps doth sometimes.'³⁰

Knollys died in 1691 when he was in his ninety-third year, a mature and 'old disciple of Jesus Christ'. To the end he retained his clarity of mind and solicitude for his flock, as a final letter to his church amply bears witness. After Knollys had especially commended the church in this letter 'for continuing in the Apostles' doctrine and fellowship, in breaking of bread, and in prayer', he went on to exhort his flock to be zealous in God's service and to have their zeal directed by 'the light of knowledge' and the glory of God.³¹ Well over a hundred years later this letter could call forth from an anonymous reviewer in *The Baptist Magazine* the desire that 'the spirit which indited it be possessed in an abundant measure by all our Pastors'.³²

29. Joseph Ivimey, *A History of the English Baptists* (London: 1814), II, 23.

30. *The Works of John Owen* [ed. William H Goold: 1850-1853 ed.; repr. Edinburgh: Banner of Truth 1967], IV, 475). For discussions of the approach of the Puritans to the extraordinary gifts of the Spirit, see J I Packer, 'The Puritans and Spiritual Gifts' in *Profitable for Doctrine and Reproof* ([London: The Puritan Conference, 1967]), 15-27; Garth B Wilson, 'The Puritan Doctrine of the Holy Spirit: A Critical Investigation of a Crucial Chapter in the History of Protestant Theology' (Unpublished Th.D. Thesis, Knox College, Toronto, 1978), 292-300; Budgen, *Charismatics*, 133-145; Sinclair B Ferguson, *John Owen on the Christian Life* (Edinburgh: Banner of Truth, 1987), 201-208.

31. *Life and Death of ... Hanserd Knollys*. 58-67.

32. *The Baptist Magazine*, 5 (1813), 78

Ready for press is Bob Sheehan's exposition *God's love for sinners*. See page 12 for reference to this and the available cassettes. Any profit from the Carey Conference cassettes is donated to Caring for Life, a charity work devoted to caring for homeless young people.

Carey Conference Report

A report by Bill James of the Carey Ministers' Conference which took place at Swanwick, England from 4-6 January 1995.

It is never easy to plan or even to predict a good conference. The programme plays its part; the fellowship is indispensable. But on some occasions there is just the sense that God himself has knitted together the ministry and fellowship to bless and edify his people. This year's ministers' conference was one such occasion, and proved to be a unique spiritual feast for all present.



Bob Sheehan and Sinclair Ferguson

The conference was opened by Geoff Thomas, from whom we have come to expect historical and biographical materials of the highest quality. We were not disappointed, as he reminded us of our heritage of great preachers from Daniel Rowlands to Lloyd-Jones. The decline of preaching in the modern age is lamentable. Furthermore, we now see less evidence of spiritual blessing on the ministry. So we were exhorted to look back and learn lessons from a past age, rather than limit ourselves to the practice and expectations of the present.

Over the following two days we were to enjoy the excellent ministry of Thomas N Smith (USA) and Sinclair Ferguson, who gave complementary papers on the person and work of the Holy Spirit. Thom reminded us in his first paper of the ministry of the Spirit through biblical history in pointing to Christ, and then in anointing the person of Christ himself. Amidst modern confusion in the spiritual

realm, we were urged from Luke 10:17-20 to keep hold of that which is of first importance, namely salvation and the message of the gospel. In his second presentation, he focused on 1 Corinthians 2, showing the work of the Spirit in pointing to Christ crucified. Spiritual ministry is that which exalts Christ crucified through the preached word, and has the character of humility and weakness fitting for a servant of the crucified Saviour. We were reminded of Geoff Thomas' earlier words on preaching, and encouraged that it is the Spirit himself who helps and energises us for this work. Sinclair Ferguson spoke on knowing the Holy Spirit in our lives as Teacher, Paraclete, and Homemaker (making a place in us where God can dwell). His exposition of John 14 and 16 drew out in a fresh and clear way the facets of the ministry of the Spirit. Then in his second paper on Romans 8 he dealt with the theme 'Experiencing the



*Pastors Thomas N Smith and
Bernard Honeysett*

Holy Spirit'. His many pointed and winsome illustrations led us to glory in our assurance of adoption and the love of God, especially in the context of suffering.

The 'Toronto blessing' was inevitably in the minds of many, and two papers were devoted to consideration of this phenomenon. We were privileged to hear Gaius Davies give his assessment from the perspective of a consultant psychiatrist. He exposed much as mere psychological manipulation. Erroll Hulse spoke from his experience of watching videos of meetings where these phenomena had taken place and gave a clear verdict that this is not blessing at all but a movement which displaces the gospel, distorts Christian experience, and depersonalises the Holy Spirit. Later that evening we were invited to see a video of these things for ourselves. The men were only able to put up with a few minutes before being so disgusted by the antics, showmanship and manipulation of Rodney Howard-Browne and his motley crew of prophets that there were calls for the video to be stopped. There followed a most

profitable question time with Gaius Davies giving us the benefit of his wisdom.

The conference included the traditional time for prayer and sharing. A delegate from South Africa, Christo Heiberg, spoke of downgrade in the Dutch Reformed Church. Two brethren who had travelled from Indonesia to be at the conference brought an encouraging report of work in their land. Bruce Jenkins gave a description of the time he had spent in Addis Ababa. There was a stirring presentation of the needs and tremendous opportunities in Serbia by Bob Sheehan. It was Bob who also drew the conference to a conclusion with an excellent paper on God's love for sinners. Not only was the system of hyper-Calvinism torn ruthlessly limb from limb, but we were given a fresh sense of God's love for the lost and stirred to give ourselves to gospel work once more. This paper will be included in the next issue of *RT*.

It was good to see an encouraging attendance at the conference (125 in residence in addition to day visitors); furthermore there was unprecedented demand for tapes, and orders continue to flow in. Veteran Leith Samuel said: 'This was altogether the best conference I have ever attended at Swanwick.'

You are urged to benefit from the cassettes. Tapes are available from *Carey Conference Cassettes*, Crag House Farm, Smithy Lane, Leeds LS16 7NH at a price of £2.50 each, postage, 1 tape = 75p, 2 = 95p, 3 = £1.15, 4 = £1.35.

'The Toronto Blessing' – a discussion

Following one of the sessions of the Carey Ministers' Conference in January 1995, a brief section of a video of one of Rodney Howard-Browne's meetings was shown. Pastors present were generally sickened by the antics. Then followed an open question time with Dr Gaius Davies answering from the point of view of a psychiatrist who has some understanding of social and group psychology. This is summarised by Bill James.

Q *Over 20 years ago my brother went on a mission from medical school at which there were strange happenings similar to the 'Toronto blessing': slaying in the Spirit and laughter. Although I am opposed to such phenomena, I found that when he was shaking, if I sat next to him I shook too. Even in telling others of his experience, I began to shake. How can this be explained?*

A Opposition to an experience will often protect you from falling under the 'spell' of the group. However some say that great opposition may make you more vulnerable. This particular incident may be a case of sympathetic reaction. The fact of your love for and identifying with your brother could explain the physical symptoms. We are all very susceptible to suggestion and the power of this should not be underestimated.

Q *Watching Rodney Howard-Browne in action made me think of the Nuremberg rallies which I studied at university. The 'prophets' and Browne himself were whipping up the audience into a frenzy, just as techniques of mass psychology were used in Germany.*

A Yes, the video shows classic manipulation of the audience, just as at Nuremberg. Politicians can use these skills. At pop concerts it is routine for the crowd to be deliberately whipped into a state of physical, emotional and sexual frenzy. Excesses can follow such events, and surely some of the Browne meetings must be in danger of leading to such scandal.

Watching the video, you see Browne and the 'prophets' exciting a state of expectancy: 'God is doing a great work NOW.' The audience is repeatedly urged to suspend critical faculties and be open and receptive to 'the blessing'. Meanwhile the audience itself is shouting and laughing and crying out for more. This is epidemic hysteria. When individuals come forward they are often instructed in what is about to happen to them. Such suggestion can easily produce the desired results, even in a less emotional environment. This can all be explained in purely psychological terms. There is no need to invoke the supernatural at all.

Q *Is the audience then the innocent victim of deliberate manipulation by the leaders? In this case the*

leaders must bear the blame for the excesses.

A Yes, the leaders are wicked men to abuse power in this way. The clearest signs of drunkenness in these meetings are that the leaders are drunk with power. There is no sign of care or concern for the people. There is no attempt at proper counselling or help for the needy. And there are some really needy people coming to such meetings in search of help. At HTB (Holy Trinity, Brompton) I saw individuals with a 'pill rolling' action of their hands and others with serious psychological problems. These people were not being helped. Many at HTB could be identified by their demeanour as not regulars at the church. They had come with real needs, but were just being manipulated.

Q *Do the leaders really believe in what they are doing or do they know that they are guilty of manipulation and deception?*

A That is the most difficult question to answer. How can we say? But if someone is deceiving the first step is self-deception, and the leaders may be given over to their own delusion.

Q *How can we help or persuade people who are involved in all of this? Sometimes folk are attracted to these phenomena from dead or lukewarm churches. When they become disillusioned or hurt they do not return but fall away entirely from the faith. Is there any way in which we can help such people?*

A If we come into contact with folks who have left the movement, we may be able to help them. But while they are involved it is more difficult. When people are embroiled in this sort of scene they lose rational sense, and argument will not normally prevail. Highly intelligent and rational people can believe anything in the religious sphere and do not seem to think that it is right or appropriate to apply normal critical faculties.

It is difficult to know what to do for the best. If we are forthright in our criticism, members of this movement will accept our attacks as persecution for the sake of Christ and become even more entrenched. The psychologist would say that we must just let it blow itself out of its own accord.

Q *Earlier this evening we heard a fine exposition of Scripture, which had an emotional effect on me. I shed a few tears as I considered my failures, and was moved and stirred in other ways. How do I know that I am not just the victim of our own particular manipulation which is only a different variety of manipulation from that seen on the video? How can we distinguish spiritual and psychological manifestation of emotions?*

A Preachers can be guilty of psychological manipulation. This need not be confined to the charismatic movement. But from a psychological point of view, your emotion is more likely to be appropriate if it is prompted by rational argument and presentation of objective truths. Furthermore, there is an objective standard, the Bible,

against which we can test our emotions. But on the video we just saw raw emotional manipulation, with no truth content and no attempt to compare with the objective standard of the Bible.

Q We have been wondering how to address this movement. Are not the Minor Prophets our model? What we have seen on the video is the religion of Baal so often practised by Old Testament Israel. OT Israel rarely abandoned the worship of Jehovah for Baal but they often syncretised, worshipping Jehovah as if he were a Baal. Such paganism has characteristics of the priest or practitioner manipulating the deity, and producing magical manifestations. 'God is here and we can get what we want from him.' Furthermore, there is every sign of sensuality and carnality built into this form of religion. Not only the leaders but also the people are guilty in treating God in this way and seeking him by unspiritual means.

In addition to that comment, I have a question. If people are spiritually damaged by these phenomena, should we also expect them to be psychologically damaged?

A Yes. When they reflect or see pictures of what they have been doing under the influence of these meetings, their self-esteem and self-respect may well be damaged. Furthermore, such meetings put enormous stress on an individual which will inevitably have consequences.

Q If we are to speak out prophetically about these things, how

can it be done? Should we hold public debates?

*A This is not easy. Some say that Wimber backs off when challenged. But Wimber, John White and Wayne Grudem present the acceptable face of the 'Toronto blessing' and attempt a reasoned defence. They say that any excesses are just an abuse of real spiritual phenomena, and we should not throw out the baby with the bathwater. It is to be regretted that IVP has published Grudem's *Systematic Theology*. Vineyard will take that as IVP's imprimatur or *nihil obstat* to their theology and methods. I have heard a tape of a meeting in a Vineyard church and the opening section is very reasonable, persuasive and rational. It is only when the 'prophets' appear that the tone changes to one of hectoring, aggression and opposition to those who do not accept these phenomena.*

I have had opportunity to appear on TV and comment on the phenomena at HTB. But the producer cut and pasted the programme together which damaged my case significantly. If we are to appear on the media, we must insist on a clear run to put our case.

But whatever else we do, we must pray. There are signs of great activity in heavenly places, and there is a spiritual battle going on.

Q What do secular psychologists make of these phenomena?

A They would say it is epidemic hysteria.

Slaying in the Spirit

Slaying in the Spirit – The telling wonder. Nader Mikhael, 1992, 196 pages. Published by the author and available through Koorong Books, 11 Koorong Street, Eastwood 2122, NSW, Australia. 14.95 Australian dollars.

There are three things which mark this book as a masterly examination of certain aspects of the charismatic movement: the author's extensive research, his clear-headed analysis of a common charismatic 'wonder' and his unequivocal condemnation of what has proved to be false.

His research clearly demonstrates the similarity between the 'slaying in the Spirit' experience and a similar one resulting from hypnosis... practices in which people deliberately place their minds under the control of another.

In his research the author draws extensively from charismatic authors as diverse as Dr John White (psychologist), Francis McNutt (RC), Dr David Lewis and many others. He uncovers some deeply disturbing facts about the selective reporting and quoting used by John White to justify his charismatic position.

Mikhael exposes the teaching and practices of John Wimber, Kenneth Hagin and Paul Yonggi Cho as covetous, dishonest and dangerous. Their claims of miraculous healing simply don't stand scrutiny. Dysfunctional ailments frequently return within weeks. He cites some documented instances where mistaken belief in a cure actually led to death, including the tragic instance of Wesley Parker (p 146).

In this example an 11 year old diabetic died because his parents, believing him to be cured, withheld insulin. They watched him die, believing he would rise from the dead. The parents, later arrested and jailed

for child abuse, have since renounced the movement.

The references are the most copious that I have seen in a book of this size. The chapter 'Slaying in the Spirit and hypnosis' contains 134 references! Its usefulness would be enhanced considerably by including a subject and author index.

There are two minor criticisms. The first is that there are some typographical and setting out errors which could easily be corrected in a subsequent edition. The second criticism is that the author of an otherwise excellent book is unaware of the theological differences between Finney, Wesley, Whitefield and Edwards. It is unwise to link them together (p 75f) simply because some of the outward effects seen in their hearers were similar.

Finney was a Pelagian heretic who denied the biblical doctrine of imputed guilt and imparted corruption upon the human race from Adam's sin (Rom 5:15-21). Wesley was an Arminian who denied election, contrary to the Church's 39 Articles (art. 17) and passages such as Ephesians 1:4-11. Edwards and Whitefield were Calvinists.

Nader Mikhael was converted from Eastern Orthodoxy. He is a Baptist missionary who lives in Sydney and ministers in English and Arabic. His book deserves the widest possible circulation. Thoroughly recommended.

This review first appeared in 'The Protestant Review' of Australia.

Sent Out or Stoned Out?

Systematic Theology – An Introduction to Biblical Doctrine, Wayne Grudem, 1264 pages, 1994, IVP, Leicester, England, £19.99 and Zondervan, Grand Rapids, Michigan, USA.

A review by the editor

In 1959 the Banner of Truth published Louis Berkhof's *Systematic Theology*. The strength of this Reformed, paedobaptist, widely used, 784 page work lies in its clear textbook format and the manner in which historical theology is blended with systematic theology.

Louis Berkhof (1873-1957) trained at Princeton under B B Warfield and G Vos. Berkhof taught theology at Calvin Seminary. Almost 40 years on we are presented with a work of greater significance. Grudem's *Systematic Theology* builds on the foundations laid by Berkhof, Charles Hodge, Dabney, Edwards, Prof John Murray and many others. Grudem explores theological themes more widely. He is thoroughly contemporary. His references are wide-ranging and he interacts with contemporary scholars over a wide spectrum. Compared with Berkhof, Grudem is richly practical, joyfully doxological, and eminently more readable. These features give this volume tremendous potential. It is likely to be pervasively influential right across the Evangelical world.

Published in 1994, Wayne Grudem's *Systematic Theology* is Reformed in soteriology. He reasons cogently for believer's baptism and as cogently rejects infant baptism (page 966ff) but seeks to minimise the element of division over the ordinance (page 982). He is enthusiastically non-cessationist. To that crucial issue we will return presently. Grudem holds degrees from Harvard, Cambridge, and Westminster Seminary. Those who dissent from him will have to rise higher than the Westminster theologians. Grudem is no push-over.

With 1264 pages the work is compactly massive; compact because no space is wasted. Much useful exegesis is footnoted in small but legible print. The work concludes with extensive, useful indices as well as historical confessions of faith: the Apostles' Creed, the Athanasian and Chalcedon Creeds, the Westminster Confession, the New Hampshire Baptist Confession, the Baptist Faith and Message, and the Chicago Statement on Biblical Inerrancy.

There are 57 chapters. Each concludes with a page of personal application and a bibliography referring to Anglican, Arminian, Baptist, Dispensational,

Lutheran, and Reformed (Presbyterian) Systematic Theologies. A further bibliography of special works on the particular theme for every chapter is provided and this is topped off with a memory verse and a joyful hymn of praise.

In apologetics Grudem follows his mentors at Westminster Seminary, John Frame and Cornelius van Til. In the chapter 'The Doctrine of God' he discusses divine impassibility. While affirming the immutability of God he firmly rejects impassibility (page 165).

Dr Grudem is Warfieldian in his view of the inspiration and infallibility of Scripture. He is adamant in holding to the Genesis account of creation. He rejects theistic evolution and the gap theory.

Chapters 21, 'The Creation of Man', and 22, 'Man as Male and Female' are exceptionally edifying, especially since there is much pressure to compromise the biblical testimony in this area.

Part 5, *The Doctrine of the Application of Redemption*, contains 13 chapters, all of which are robustly Calvinistic. The errors of Arminianism are exposed and refuted as unbiblical. This section begins with a chapter on common grace. Examples of common grace are expounded under the following heads: The Physical, Intellectual, Moral, Creative, Societal, and Religious Realms. The author shows how common grace and special grace influence each other:

Common grace, of course, influences and enriches the church, since apart from God's common grace given to carpenters and other kinds of craftsmen there would be no church buildings; apart from common grace given to printers and typesetters and bookbinders (and even those who work in paper mills or cut trees from forests to make paper), there would be no Bibles. In countless ways in everyday activities the church benefits from common grace.

On the other hand, the special grace that God gives to those who are saved brings more of the blessings of common grace to unbelievers living in the realm of the church's influence. Unbelievers benefit from the example of Christian lives that they see in society, from the prayers and the acts of mercy that Christians do for the community, from the knowledge of the teachings of Scripture and its wisdom in which they find some intellectual and moral benefit, and from the influence on laws, customs, and beliefs of a society that comes through the social and political activities of Christians. Historically it

has often been the powerful presence of those whose lives were changed by the gospel that has resulted in freedom for slaves (in the British colonies and the United States), rights for women, productivity in the economy, a high value placed on work and thrift and honesty, and so forth.

In these chapters regeneration is explained as preceding repentance and faith. Divine election is not based on God's foreknowledge. Election is unconditional. Objections are carefully weighed and discussed. Every chapter concludes with searching personal and practical questions.

Grudem rejects the idea of the baptism of the Spirit as a mandated post-conversion experience. With helpful diagrams (a feature throughout the volume), he firmly rejects any kind of two-level system for Christians, that is, a level for those who have something special and a level for those who do not.

Chapter 46 is titled, 'The Power of the Church' with sub-title, 'What kind of authority does the church have?' How should church discipline function? The material is outstanding for its practical usefulness. For church government the way of plurality of elders is opened up and commended. Thereafter various forms of government are set out diagrammatically. The author insists on the role of women in the body of Christ but firmly rejects woman elders. For him 1 Timothy 2:11-14 is 'the single passage in Scripture that addresses this question most directly' (page 937).

Let a woman learn in silence with all submissiveness. *I permit no woman to teach or to have authority over men; she is to keep silent.* For Adam was formed first, then Eve; and Adam was not deceived, but the woman was deceived and became a transgressor.

All principal biblical references in this work are cited in full in the text from the RSV which makes for easier reading.

Part 7 is devoted to *The Doctrine of the Future*. On the final judgment and eternal punishment the author is uncompromisingly biblical. He repudiates the arguments set up for annihilationism (page 1150). The principal viewpoints concerning the future: A-, Pre-, and Postmillennialism, are fairly stated. Grudem opts for historic premillennialism. He places far too much weight on the highly figurative Revelation 20:1-6, and far too much reliance on the fact that most expositors struggle with that passage. It is a matter of wonder that the crystal clear statements in the NT letters which preclude a special millennium after Christ returns do not convince premills. For exposition see Anthony Hoekema, *The Bible and the Future*, Eerdmans, 1979.

The Prominence of the Charismatic Issue

The principal departure from historic, orthodox, Evangelical Christianity represented in this great work is seen in the non-cessationist position espoused by the author. The average length of chapters is 15 to 35 pages, but 75 pages are devoted to *Gifts of the Holy Spirit*. What are the spiritual gifts? How many are there? Have some gifts ceased? Seeking and using spiritual gifts. How should we understand and use spiritual gifts? There is an additional chapter of 20 pages with the title Miracles in which the author argues against restricting the miracles to the apostles.¹

Wayne Grudem dedicates his book to his parents, his original Baptist pastor, his professors at Westminster Seminary who taught him Reformed theology and finally to Harald Bredesen and John Wimber 'who more than anyone else taught me about the power and work of the Holy Spirit'.

I have suggested that those who dissent from Grudem will have to rise higher than the best that Westminster has to offer. For instance I believe that O Palmer Robertson's book *The Final Word – A Biblical Response to the Case for Tongues and Prophecy Today* (Banner of Truth) is decisive. I for one would find it difficult to be more clear. Belief in the terminus of special signs is vested in progressive revelation. The whole Bible moves to completion in Christ and his apostles. Obviously more needs to be done to demonstrate that convincingly.

I believe that the supernatural gifts did cease with the demise of the apostles. I believe that B B Warfield is compelling when he deals with history. The miracles that are described following the apostolic era are mostly nonsense miracles.² For sure, learned historians will dig out isolated cases to plead continuation of the miraculous. I do not hold to the position that God cannot do miracles. He certainly can and occasionally does give them. My position is that it is not his mind or will for us to try and practise signs, wonders and miracles. When efforts are made in that direction they end in fanaticism and lunatic behaviour. I have been subjected to the material on cassette by Jack Deere who is commended by Grudem (page 1085) which promotes the Vineyard and am entirely unimpressed. The gap between the claims for miracles now and those reported in the NT is the difference between the sun and the moon.

The present 'Toronto blessing' claims for revival come directly from the Wimber Vineyard school and illustrate the disaster of moving away from the centrality of the Cross in efforts to emulate apostolic miracles. I have carefully examined some of the best claims from Toronto for miracles and would class them in the same category as an experience of a fellow minister who described to me the absolute reality of an experience when he saw real living animals walking upside down on the ceiling. This was the consequence of a dose of

morphine administered by his physicians to relieve pain. Readers are referred to the article 'The Toronto Blessing- a discussion'.

Quests to restore the extraordinary gifts have never been successful. The quest of Edward Irving ended in disaster. The Apostolic Church he sought to establish has all but disappeared. The charismatic movement in Britain posed to be the herald of the golden millennial age but in fact the claim has proved false. The great prophecies of revival by Paul Cain for 1990 did not materialise. Yet he was not disciplined as a false prophet. And we could go on and on. Grudem's response is that abuse of gifts does not disprove their viability. He may say that but my response is that the argument from history discrediting attempts to restore the miraculous is simply overwhelming.

While Grudem discounts pragmatic arguments he nevertheless resorts to pragmatic reasoning when he argues that the Pentecostal case must be correct because of the extraordinary multiplication of Pentecostal believers this century (page 1043 footnote). In response to that I would refer Wayne to page 874 where he outlines twelve characteristics of a church that pleases the Lord. Not one of the twelve is signs, wonders and miracles. Faithful use of the means of grace and especially courageous evangelism explain why the Pentecostals have increased. Fanaticism always mars and hinders their witness rather than enhancing it. Furthermore as our News section on Moldavia illustrates, massive increase is by no means confined to Pentecostals. In some countries like Myanmar (Burma) Baptist growth has vastly outstripped Pentecostal growth. In Korea it is the Presbyterians that have massively outstripped all other groupings. Surely it is the gospel and the gospel alone that is the power of God to salvation to every one who believes.

There will be mixed feelings about this major work. It will promote the doctrines of grace among Arminians. A great many Pentecostal readers will benefit from its robust theology. But its Wimberite teaching represents a dangerous deviation. It opens the door wide to revelations, visions, dreams and other aberrations induced by manipulators (see article 'The Toronto Blessing'). Let us pray that in the next edition the sections that mislead and side-track will be omitted and replaced by an urgent call to complete the Great Commission. The Vineyard people glory in being 'stoned out' – laid flat out, prostrate on their backs! That is farcical to all thinking people! We need to be sent out, not stoned out!

References

1. Grudem fairly records writings on both sides of the question (p 1050). He does not refer to Douglas Judisch *An Evaluation of Claims to the Charismatic Gifts*, Baker 1978. I view the nine gifts of 1 Cor 12:4-11 as a cluster of supernatural, extraordinary gifts which operated by analogy or correspondence with the Holy Spirit (Rom 12:6); see *Can we do Miracles Today?* Erroll Hulse, Banner of Truth, issue 214.
2. See article, *What did Warfield Really Say?* RT 132.

Union with Christ

John A Hopper

Rowland Stedman, a zealous Nonconformist, published his volume on 'Mystical Union with Christ' in 1688 writing particularly for the people at Wokingham whom he served as pastor. Though separated from them he maintained genuine pastoral concern for their spiritual welfare. He commented: 'I can truly say, that since my removal from amongst you, I have frequently had you in my thoughts, much in my affections, and fervently in my prayers.'

Rowland Stedman was born in 1630 to Henry and Mary Stedman, at Corfton in the parish of Diddlebury in Shropshire. He matriculated at Balliol College, Oxford in 1648 but moved to University College on obtaining a scholarship the following year, graduating in 1651 and obtaining his M A in 1655.

In 1657 he was appointed rector of Hanwell, Middlesex serving there until 1660 when he became rector of Wokingham. His ministry there would have continued longer but he was ejected from his living in 1662. He then went to live at Neasdon, Willesden and shortly afterwards became chaplain at Woodburn, Buckinghamshire to Philip, fourth Lord Wharton, who was very friendly with Oliver Cromwell.

Stedman remained at Woodburn until his death on 14 September 1673. He was buried at Woodburn church, 'leaving behind him the character of a zealous Nonconformist'. He was survived by Margaret, his wife, and their two children.

Union with Christ

Definition

The basis of Stedman's treatise is 1 John 5:11-12, drawing particular attention to the phrase '*he who has the Son has life*' – which points to the believer's union with Christ. The text is briefly expounded in context before the subject is opened up in detail.

Without the Son there is no life. Therefore we must make certain of our union with Christ (2 Cor 13:3-5). It is referred to as the 'mystical union' because the intimacy of the relationship is a great mystery – one of the deep things of God.

Stedman defines union with Christ as:

That spiritual relation which believers have to the Lord Jesus as Mediator of the Covenant of grace, arising from their close and intimate conjunction with him; whereupon they are accounted as one with Christ, their spiritual state is fundamentally changed, and the benefits of redemption are effectively applied to their souls.

He explains this in detail in five sections -

1. Union with Christ is a personal relation to the Lord Jesus Christ.
2. It is a special relationship to Christ as Mediator.
3. The subjects of it are believers.
4. The foundation of union is their being joined intimately to Christ.
5. The results are that they are reckoned as one with Christ, they are changed from the state of nature to the state of grace and have a right to all the benefits of the redemptive work of Christ (1 Cor 3:21-23).

Mere outward profession and true spiritual union are clearly distinguished (John 15:1ff). The nominal Christian is represented by the unfruitful branches – these have an outward attachment to Christ but no saving union with him.

The sinner must first be joined to Christ (1 Cor 6:7) so as to be one with him – married to the Son (2 Cor 11:2; Rom 7:14), belonging to Christ (Mark 9:41; Gal 5:24). Though the relationship between Christ and the believer is intimate they retain their distinct personalities. The privilege belongs equally to every believer. This union is made by a sovereign act of the life-giving Spirit.

The Spirit and faith

The mystical union is comprised of two parts. First there is the ‘natural union’ when Christ comes to live in the individual by the Spirit, and the sinner shares the divine nature. This is the work of regeneration – Christ in us conforming us to his likeness and enabling us to be subject to his Lordship. The second part is the ‘legal union’. This focuses on the individual’s acceptance of Christ.

In his death Christ paid our debt and we are acquitted by the law of God. The Spirit enables us to receive Christ by faith and we are made one with him (Phil 3:9). Saving faith is essential – its object is Jesus Christ and it is a response of both mind and heart. In the act of saving faith, Christ is received as Lord and Saviour. It is the acceptance of Christ as Prophet to instruct, Priest to intercede and King to rule. Thus with other Puritans, Stedman describes true spiritual union as having two bonds or ligaments – the Spirit on Christ’s part and faith on our part.

Evidence of the mystical union is the moral or practical union by which is meant communion between Christ and the believer. If we are united to Christ we will enjoy fellowship with him. Frequent use is made of the Song of Solomon to

illustrate this mutual fellowship between Christ and the believer. This is proof of true spiritual union. 'God lives in him and he in God. And so we know and rely on the love God has for us' (1 John 4:16). Finally just as the moral union flows out of the mystical union, the mystical union itself is the result of the 'eternal union' which took place when the Father made with the Son the eternal Covenant of redemption in which Christ agreed to suffer as Representative Man. He bore the sin of many (Isa 53:10-12). Our union with Christ results from this Covenant made from everlasting with Christ.

Union with Christ is immediate (each believer united to Christ), invisible (a spiritual reality), and indissoluble (cannot be broken). It is necessary because every blessing flowing from the redemptive work of Christ depends on it. These include justification, adoption, the supplies of the Spirit, acceptable works, right to God's promises, fellowship with the Father, peace and joy in the Holy Spirit, victory over death, final resurrection, boldness at the judgment and entry into heaven. These can only be ours in Christ (Eph 1:3).

Scripture analogies

Scripture illustrates union with Christ in a number of ways. Stedman expounds four of these: head and members of the body (Col 1:18; 1 Cor 12); vine and branches (John 15); husband and wife (Eph 5:23-32); and foundation and building (1 Cor 3:9-11; 1 Peter 2:4-5; Eph 2:21-22). As head of the body, Christ rules over and cares for his people. As the vine, he supplies the nourishment necessary for the fruitfulness which glorifies God.

Christ is the husband who is accepted and loved whole-heartedly by the believer. The foundation gives the outline shape of the building as well as stability – so Christ is the believer's strength and the pattern to which we must be increasingly conformed. Christ-likeness is evidence of vital union with him.

Stedman draws attention to the two-fold foundation: doctrinal – our faith is built on the truth of Christ revealed in Scripture, personal – we must live by faith in Christ himself and live in personal union with him.

Each illustration is inadequate on its own but each serves to convey the glorious truth of our union with Christ. The body analogy draws attention to Christ's Headship and Lordship over the believer. It also strongly illustrates the bonding of believers. One with Christ and with each other we are to experience closeness within the body for mutual support, edification and encouragement. This point is

also made by our Lord in his high-priestly prayer. 'Just as you are in me and I am in you, may they also be one in us so that the world may believe' (John 17:20-23).

As individual branches of the vine are completely dependent on the life-giving trunk so believers depend on Christ for spiritual life. Only by remaining in him can we bear the fruit of holiness for the glory of the Father. We must cultivate intimacy with him through prayer and reading the Scripture. By the Spirit the believer receives fresh supplies each day for coping with dark days and discouraging times.

The marriage analogy is widely used in Scripture. It is found in the message of the Old Testament prophets. They challenge the people of God about their unfaithfulness. In Ezekiel 16 the Lord draws attention to the shame and disgrace of his people who have become 'an adulterous wife'. In Jeremiah 3:1 the Lord tells his Covenant people, 'You have played the harlot with many lovers.' Hosea's wife, Gomer, poignantly illustrates the unfaithfulness of the Lord's Covenant people. At the heart of this analogy is the mutual love between husband and wife – an intimate relationship in which we are to be faithful to the Lord, refusing compromise and divided loyalties. Only in him are we to experience our satisfaction and fulfilment.

The analogy of the building with Christ as foundation gives us a sense of security whatever storms we might experience and whatever attacks the enemy might make. In Christ we are able to stand firm. Here particular emphasis is placed on the close relationship between believers because of our union with Christ. Dr Lloyd-Jones very helpfully explains the importance of the compound word used by Paul in Ephesians 2:21 (*sunarmologoumenē*) and translated as 'fitly framed together' (AV) pointing out that it is the opposite of mass-production. Each person in Christ is chosen, uniquely different and fitting exactly into the right place according to God's plan. Here is real unity with glorious diversity but all 'in Christ'.

Application

We should praise God for this glorious privilege and appreciate the grace of our Lord Jesus, the Mediator, resolving not to live in any way of ungodliness but continue steadfast to the end in a life that glorifies God (1 John 2:5; 2 John 9).

The perseverance of the saints, or their eternal security, is integral to union with Christ. Since our union with him cannot be broken, true believers cannot lose their salvation. Perseverance is based on the fact that God's purpose cannot be frustrated (2 Tim 2:18-19), God is faithful to his Covenant (Isa 54:8-10) and Christ is faithful to his charge to bring all his redeemed people to glory (John 17:2; Heb 2:10). Our Saviour prayed for this. His prayers are effectual and uphold and sustain believers (1 Peter 1:5; John 17:15,24).

Stedman confirms the teaching by dealing with those things that might be thought capable of separating believers from Christ: remaining sin, the devil's attacks, attractions of the world, false teachers, persecution and death. These are all shown to be incapable of breaking our union. The Lord who accepted us when we were enemies will not forsake us because of our sin. His love is not based on our goodness but on his faithfulness. The express purpose of the Father is stated in Romans 8:35-39 which leaves us in no doubt that our union with Christ is unbreakable.

Stedman shows that union with Christ is a powerful incentive to obedience. The knowledge that we are one with Christ confirms the necessity to be holy as he is holy. Our hearts are inflamed with affection and gratitude. We are determined to see the enemy defeated in spiritual warfare.

Assurance of salvation

It is important to be assured that we are in vital union with Christ. Careful self-examination in the light of Scripture will save us from false hopes of salvation (2 Cor 13:5; 2 Peter 1:10). Self-examination involves taking a close look at ourselves, testing ourselves by Scripture and finally deciding whether or not we are in Christ. We must be clear about the 'marks and signs' of union with Christ.

What proof is there that we have been born again? Is there clear evidence that we are one with Christ? We must not depend only on the immediate witness of the Holy Spirit. We must turn to Scripture to identify the marks which prove real union with Christ. There are qualities of life which can be seen in both nominal Christians and believers. But there are attributes peculiar to Christians such as spirituality and godliness. People in vital union with Christ have God's law written on their heart. They worship God in the Spirit. They hate sin. They are surrendered to Christ and lovingly serve him.

Self-examination properly carried out will lead to an assurance that gives us deep joy. We cannot be sure of final salvation unless we are living a life of holiness.

Conclusion

A spiritual grasp of the privilege of our union with Christ will result in true worship, holiness of life, a fervent love for God. We will work for harmony and deeper fellowship among believers. We will engage in urgent evangelism. We will long for heaven where our union with him will be complete.

John Hopper is pastor of the Ramsden Bellhouse Baptist Church near Billericay, Essex.

New Light on Spurgeon?

A review by Robert Oliver

Spurgeon – Prince of Preachers, Lewis Drummond, Kregel Publications, 1992, 895pp

There is an undoubted need for a detailed modern biography of C H Spurgeon. New studies of all aspects of Victorian England appear regularly. Spurgeon needs to be considered in the light of such studies, while historians of the nineteenth century ought to be paying more attention to this remarkable figure. The Banner of Truth has done good service by reprinting the *Autobiography* and more recently the significant work by G Holden Pike. In addition Iain Murray's *The Forgotten Spurgeon* recalled attention to his theology at a time when this had largely been forgotten. There have also appeared a number of good popular treatments in recent years, all of which indicate a continuing fascination with this remarkable man. A valuable shorter work is, *C H Spurgeon, A Marvelous Ministry* published by Soli Deo Gloria. None of these however offered a full discussion of Spurgeon against the background of Victorian England. A biographer was needed who could consider the political, social, economic and cultural movements of the age and show how the great Baptist leader fitted into this remarkable scene.

This Dr Drummond has sought to do. The publisher's blurb states that he 'has exhaustively researched the life and ministry of this legendary figure, bringing the man behind the myths to striking life'. Dr Drummond writes well.



He enjoys his subject and has produced a book which is easy to read and is profusely illustrated with pictures as well as with frequent quotations from nineteenth-century sources. Its appendices are of considerable value as they reprint Spurgeon's famous sermon on baptismal regeneration as well as the articles from the Downgrade Controversy which are not easily accessible. Sadly however although the presentation is good this reviewer was disappointed with the book whose interpretations are open to question in matters of history and theology.

An abundance of printer's errors would suggest that it was a work written in haste. I counted about 26, some being disconcerting such as: dissenters for sinners p 131; Canterng for Ketterng

p 181; Madia Bale for Maida Vale p 246; crest for request p 255; disastrous for desirous p 479.

These errors may be the result of faulty proof reading. However Dr Drummond's treatment of nineteenth-century English history is to say the least questionable. On page 36 we are told that the hope was expressed when Victoria became queen 'that she might bring about the abolition of slavery'. But slavery had been abolished in the British Empire three years before Victoria's accession. On the same page reference is made to Victoria's adviser, Baron Stockmar, stating that in 1837 'he was barely eighteen years old himself'. Stockmar was in fact fifty years old at this time. One is staggered to read that in a reign of over sixty-three years, 'Davies [was] practically the only clergyman Queen Victoria ever saw'.

There is confusion over the British political parties in the nineteenth century. On page 41 we read of the Liberals, 'By 1868 they had acquired a majority in the House of Commons. Except for six years this continued until 1898.' This is not so. In the thirty year period indicated the Liberals were in power for only 13 years and the Conservatives for 17 years. It is completely inaccurate for a serious work to describe the nineteenth-century British working classes as 'serfs', p 42. As an institution serfdom did not survive the Middle Ages. Dr Drummond oversimplifies the relationship between W E Gladstone and the Nonconformists. Gladstone was himself a High Churchman and one-time close friend of H E Manning, later Cardinal Archbishop of Westminster. Spurgeon was a Liberal and believed that the Liberals were the natural supporters of the rights of the Nonconformists. Dr Drummond however states that 'being a preacher of the "crude

masses", he would naturally be adverse to the Conservatives', p 517. Politics were not quite so simple. It was Conservative government in 1867 which doubled the electorate by granting the vote to the urban working classes.

Treatment of the Irish problem is confused, pp 524ff. In the nineteenth century this was not an Ulster problem – it was an Irish problem; the pressure for Home Rule came from the Roman Catholic counties outside Ulster whereas Dr Drummond writes as if the violence were confined to Ulster. It was a problem throughout the sister island causing British Protestants to fear for their co-religionists throughout the land. Perhaps the event which most shook British public opinion was the Phoenix Park murders in Dublin in 1882.

A number of mistakes relate to the history of British Nonconformity. On page 440 the Methodist leader Hugh Price Hughes is described as a Baptist. On page 158 it is recorded, 'When Spurgeon joined the St Andrew's Street Baptist Church in Cambridge, Robert Hall served the Church as pastor.' Hall died three years before Spurgeon was born, having left Cambridge many years before that. On page 161 Rowland Hill is described as a Baptist who preached his first sermon at Waterbeach. Neither fact is true. The statement on page 230 that 'Charles and Susie [Spurgeon] christened their two boys' might be a North American usage but to English ears it sounds as though they submitted them to infant baptism. Surely Spurgeon's sermons were taken down by a shorthand writer not in longhand as we are told twice on page 330.

In the discussion of Spurgeon's Calvinism there is confusion. Spurgeon was certainly opposed by hyper-Calvinists, but the description of hyper-

Calvinism on page 260 is not clear. Not all supralapsarians have been hyper-Calvinists. Again on page 260 Dr Drummond appears to confuse free agency with free will. On the same page he seems to suggest that to emphasise moral inability rather than natural inability indicates a concession to Arminianism. It was surely the great American Calvinist Jonathan Edwards who elaborated this distinction. Dr Drummond seems uncertain about the nature of Spurgeon's Calvinism. In the light of Spurgeon's unconventionality he writes, 'These facts cause one to wonder why Spurgeon remained rather negative to the American evangelist Charles Finney', p 284. He also points out Spurgeon's stern criticism of the Salvation Army, p 284. He seems anxious to present Spurgeon as a figure who held to a Calvinist position but rose above it; 'he held a quite rigid Calvinist theology but preached and gave Gospel appeals like a fervent Arminian Methodist', p 618. Several times he is compared to Arminian Methodists, see also p 658. This suggests an unawareness of the way in which Calvinist preachers have through the centuries exhorted their hearers to close with Christ. Given the confusion this book displays on the subject of Spurgeon's Calvinism it is not surprising to discover that Dr Drummond takes issue with Iain Murray's interpretation of this subject in *The Forgotten Spurgeon*, p 657. He dismisses any suggestion that the nineteenth-century retreat from Calvinism had much to do with the Downgrade Controversy. Spurgeon himself made it clear that the Downgrade was not about Calvinism, but the controversy was sparked off by articles written by Robert Shindler and published and commended by Spurgeon in which it was stated:

Those who turned from Calvinism may not have dreamed of denying the proper deity of the Son of God, renouncing faith in his atoning death and justifying righteousness, and denouncing the doctrine of human depravity, the need of Divine renewal, and the necessity for the Holy Spirit's gracious work, in order that men might become new creatures, but dreaming or not dreaming, this result became a reality, p 677.

The retreat from Calvinism weakened evangelicalism and went hand in hand with a loss of doctrinal precision.

In any biography of Spurgeon discussion on the Downgrade Controversy is of great importance. Dr Drummond has pursued this subject in detail and generally with great sympathy for Spurgeon's position. He points out that 'history has proved that Spurgeon did have a real case', p 682. He shows that Samuel Booth must bear much of the responsibility for the way in which matters developed, but one is amazed that he refers without comment to the suggestion that if the 'Baptist statesman, J H Shakespeare, who succeeded Booth as secretary, had been secretary of the Union at that time, things might have been quite different', p 714. It would be interesting to know what difference is envisaged. Shakespeare showed little sympathy with the gospel preached by Spurgeon or with Spurgeon's understanding of the nature of the Church. He was however undoubtedly a more able ecclesiastic than Booth.

Much work and research has evidently gone into this big biography. There is a wealth of useful material but sadly one cannot recommend it as an adequate and reliable treatment of its subject.

Correspondence

A letter from Philip Eveson

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2 February 1995

Dear Erroll,

It was good to meet up with you again at the Westminster Conference and I was much moved by your paper on Judson.

In your brief review of the papers in RT143 (front inside cover) you misunderstood my main point. The danger is not over widening the concept of righteousness. Righteousness is used with a variety of meanings in the Bible. My concern is the way modern scholars are using the verb 'to justify' and so widening the concept of forensic justification.

The precious doctrine is under attack. James Dunn (Dunn & Suggate, *The Justice of God*, Paternoster 1993) and Tom Wright (*The Paul of History and the Apostle of Faith*, Tyndale Bulletin 29, 1978) teach that 1. A guilt-ridden conscience is a Western preoccupation. 2. 'Works of the law' are merely Jewish 'identity badges', evidences of membership of the covenant community, rather than legalistic efforts to gain favour and future salvation. 3. The righteousness that Paul criticises is not self-righteousness but 'national righteousness' – the belief that fleshly Jewish descent guarantees membership of the covenant

community. 4. Justification is God's declaration that we belong to the covenant community.

The dangers in this approach include: 1. An inadequate view of sin, 2. An underestimate of the human tendency to boast and trust in one's own efforts to gain favour and acceptance, 3. Presenting justification in sociological terms – the particular group is all-important, 4. Undervaluing the objective nature of the atonement.

Furthermore Alistair McGrath (*Justification by Faith. What it means to us today*, Zondervan 1986), while often giving very helpful comments, encourages an understanding of justification which is equivalent to Rome's view.

We must not lose the biblical emphasis that in justification it is the sinner's righteous status before God that is primary. It is on account of Christ's obedience and propitiatory sacrifice that all our sins are forgiven, we are pronounced righteous, and assured of immediate access into God's presence.

Every blessing in your labours,

Philip Eveson

The four principal lecturers at LTS are:

Hywel R Jones (Principal and Biblical theology), Philip H Eveson (Biblical languages and exegesis), Graham Harrison (Christian doctrine), and Robert W Oliver (Church history).

News

Belarus

The life and work of that remarkable pioneer Colonel Thomson was described in *RT 141* and *RT 142*. Roger Weil continues to work in Eastern Europe and provides this report.

During a visit to Belarus in December 1994, Roger stayed with Georgi Viazovski who has just completed two years study at the London Reformed Baptist Seminary (Metropolitan Tabernacle). He has begun a regular preaching ministry at his church and is an elder. He has met with some opposition to his teaching especially on Ephesians one. 'Calvinism' is deemed a heresy in many Russian Baptist circles. Georgi hopes to distribute a Russian magazine mainly using select articles from British theological magazines which will be appropriate to believers in Russia today. He has just completed the text for the first issue.

Roger's Fellowship donated a thousand copies of four books for Sunday School work in the Pentecostal churches which represent the fastest growing denomination in Belarus with 300 churches. The two books they liked best were *A Catechism for Boys and Girls* (Carey Publications) and *Bible Doctrines Simply Explained* by B Ramsbottom. They have nine full-time evangelistic teams spreading the gospel where there is no Christian witness. When sufficient people profess interest, a pastor is sent to lead the work and the team moves



elsewhere. The denomination practises tithing and thus supports both the evangelistic work and the pastoral ministry. One pastor and his wife just commencing their labours have studied at EMF (European Missionary Fellowship), Welwyn.

Roger was privileged again to be with Christians to whom living daily for the faith is a vital experience. Many have suffered imprisonment in the past and many now are extremely poor. The unregistered churches are struggling to emerge from their 'underground' mentality to work openly and effectively. At this stage help from abroad is much valued.

Valeri and Irina Grigorik studied at the EMF Bible School and are now working for Evangelical Press in their home town of Vitebsk with the aim of translating, publishing and distributing

sound literature. Roger has completed a book specially designed for Russian believers, *Outline of Basic Bible Doctrines*. This has now been translated into Russian by Irina and is being checked linguistically by other qualified nationals.

Roger is disappointed that so little interest has been shown in the work (as described in *Slavonia* magazine). It would be encouraging if you wrote to: Roger Weil, 28 Hayesford Park Drive, BROMLEY, Kent BR2 9DB (UK) and asked him for a copy of *Slavonia*. Let us pray for support for this work and for suitably gifted labourers to dedicate their lives to Eastern European nations.

Moldavia

Moldavia is a small country of four and a half million inhabitants which lies between Romania and the Ukraine. Moldavia became an independent republic in 1990. Moldavian desire for reunification with Romania conflicts with the Dnestrian sector which has Soviet loyalties. This provoked six months of bitter war in 1992. An uneasy Russian army-controlled peace now prevails.

Pastor Winston Flavell of Spring Meadow Baptist Church, Warley, West Midlands (Birmingham) – visited the town of Balti in Moldavia, November – December last. The purpose of the visit was involvement in a teaching programme for 25 young men being trained for church planting. While he was there one of the young men was absent from the classes. A search was

made and he was found in hospital. He had been on his way to preach in a village and was waylaid by Orthodox Church adherents who hate the gospel. They stoned him and left him for dead. The young man's name is John Dostan. He is recovering physically but is suffering some brain damage. Let us pray for him and his wife and two small children.

While at Balti Pastor Flavell was encouraged by the large congregation of about 3,000. 67 were baptised at a Lord's Day morning service. During that same service a further 12 professed conversion. Most heartening of all was the spirit of repentance in those baptised and in the converts. Even when we allow for the Latin temperament of the people, the contrast with the low spiritual state of the West is striking.

The number of Baptist churches has increased from 176 to 400 over the last two years. Despite fierce and hateful opposition from the Orthodox Church there is a remarkable spirit of receptivity. This is illustrated in the case of a village where only one elderly believer remained. Recently she died and left a request in her will that one of the two Baptist pastors in the large church at Balti take her funeral. In Moldavian culture funerals are major events. Often funeral services last three hours. At this funeral three were converted through the preaching. The three formed a nucleus for a church which has subsequently grown to 26 members.

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