

REFORMATION TODAY'82

CAREY family CONFERENCE

6th August (3.00 p.m.) 21st August (10.00 a.m.)
 Theme: Daily Practical Godliness Recreation: afternoons

The use of literature in
 building up a robust
 devotional life
 Erroll Hulse

Self-denial and
 recreation related to
 daily practical godliness
 Erroll Hulse

The essential place of
 meditation in devotion
 Tom Butz

Godliness from the
 beginning to the end
 of the Lord's Day
 Erroll Hulse

Biography - time 11.00 a.m.
 how greatly we are enriched by
 the example of others

Thomas Boston
 by pastor
 Malcolm Watts-Salisbury

John Newton
 'from darkness to
 light' Tom Butz

John Wiccliffe
 The morning star of
 the Reformation.
 Kingsley Coomber

The example of
 Philip and Matthew
 Henry by
 pastor Peter Buss

Preaching every evening 8.00 p.m.

Keeping the heart Prov 4:23
 Unwillingness to full
 commitment of heart
 remains in us all
 Erroll Hulse

The family, Deut 6:4-9
 We can be no more godly
 than we are at home with
 our wives and children.
 Tom Butz

Our secular calling
 Genuine devotion will
 show in quality work
 Eph 6:5-8 Tom Butz

The Bible is the bedrock
 of all godliness
 The significance of Ps 119.
 Kingsley Coomber

Devotion in the care
 and
 encouragement
 of others
 James 1:27
 Tom Butz.

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Editorial

The aftermath at Westminster Chapel

Correspondents have pointed out that pastor Coomber made factual mistakes in his brief article describing the F.I.E.C. meetings at Westminster Chapel. These had to do with the order and times of the speakers. While this is acknowledged it should be noted that it in no way alters the force of what was said. Arthur Blessitt was the final speaker. In other words he had the icing on the cake. The excellence of the previous contributions was covered or masked. Mr. Blessitt was the leading personality at Westminster Chapel for four Sunday evenings following. It is charitable not to report from written eye-witness accounts of those services. The contrast with previous years could not be more stark. If pastor Coomber's repudiation was tough it was justly so. There are times when not to express indignation is to fail in faithfulness to the truth.

Sometimes we are taken by surprise and suddenly realise how weak we have all become in areas which we have taken for granted. The article on the Fear of God has inadequacies. It is too brief a treatment of a central subject, but our prayer is that it may lead to a revival of concern and interest in the 'heartland' of our Faith.

Which should we put first — Reformed or Baptist?

Some newly born Reformed Baptist churches in Australia have called themselves *Baptist Reformed*. Does the order of the words matter? Do titles matter?

Obviously it would be very convenient to dismiss about 2,000 years of church history and simply use the name *The Christian Church of Detroit, Sydney, Johannesburg, Buenos Aires or whatever*. But such a procedure would hardly show respect for a multitude of other churches or assemblies. It is generally recognised that it is right to use a name which is not misleading and which conveys an accurate description of what the church stands for in its emphasis — not an easy matter when so few apt words are available.

To our advantage both words, Reformed and Baptist, convey a great deal of meaning if understood within the context of Church history. To the outsider religious words mean little or nothing. That is one reason why the title 'Strict and Particular' has been discarded by some Reformed Baptist churches in England. To the outsider 'Strict and Particular' sounds ominous indeed. Some think that the title has to do with behaviour!

What about the title Reformed Baptist? By Reformed we mean that we believe in the heritage of the Reformation. We believe the 1689 Confession of faith represents the maturest, fullest and most accurate expression of the Christian Faith. The 1689 Confession has 32 rich chapters proceeding in logical order. As it happens this work was not achieved by Baptists but by the Puritans of the Westminster Assembly, 1643-1649. It would be a mean spirit indeed that would begrudge that in terms of spiritual, pastoral and academic ability the Puritan pastors and theologians of that time were not a unique body of Christians. The article in this issue of the magazine by Jim Packer reflects the tremendous stature of that age. Nobody ever said the Puritans got everything right, but those who belittle them tell us about their own ignorance in doing so. J. I. Packer maintains and explains why they can teach us more than any other generation of expositors. They were strongest where we are weakest (see *R.T.* 40, p. 21).

The Baptists changed two or three articles and added one (chapter 20) to the Westminster Confession thus arriving at the 1689 Confession, which represents the main body of what we believe. The word Reformed then is accurate, suitable and appropriate, providing we bear the historical background in mind. As with all names we must always avoid everything which may be party-minded or proud. We are not

saying we are better than other believers. We are simply saying that in a day when almost all Christian truths are under attack that it is needful to be accurate and definite in declaring our beliefs. It is no small help to find that over hundreds of years the Gospel has not changed. It is timeless.

When the 1689 Confession conveys every major truth why is it necessary to add the word Baptist to our title? The 1689 Confession which is comprehensive deals fully with the nature of the church. Baptism is closely related to the nature of the church. Chapter 26 of the 1689 Confession is fuller and richer on the subject of the church than the Westminster equivalent. Chapter 29 fully expresses our convictions on Baptism. In England therefore we could argue that the one word Reformed is quite adequate to express what we are. We are not threatened by anyone. Why should we use the term Baptist at all? A word could be chosen from any chapter of the confession to use for a title.

Every part of the world is different. For instance in America Baptists may feel threatened by Presbyterians whereas in England they hardly exist (a little group of Scotsmen do gather in London in the Free-Kirk – the minister there is a valued friend and highly esteemed). A further factor in America is the proliferation of denominations and especially the multiplication of Baptist groupings. It is necessary therefore for a church to express at the outset that it is Baptist and then in brackets, or by way of addition, what kind of Baptist. When in Indiana recently I was privileged to be invited to play for a softball team. The match was between the Freewill Baptists and the Reformed Baptists! In spite of my presence you can guess who won a resounding victory!

There are some who prefer the title free grace or sovereign grace. Again the weakness of that is that it refers to only one aspect of truth whereas the term Reformed includes a whole cosmos of teaching. In addition it has the historical connotation. It is weak to refer to just one aspect of teaching especially when we remember that every sphere of truth eventually comes under attack, as G. C. Berkouwer puts it, 'Every age produces its peculiar heresy'.¹ The resounding heresy of this age is Modernism which Kuyper described as 'bewitchingly beautiful'. Rampant Arminianism, not to say Pelagianism, is the heresy of modern day evangelicalism while Modernism is the foremost destructive force of Christendom.

The word Reformed conveys almost everything by way of the content of our belief. But as the introduction to the 1689 Confession expresses, we would be well served to have some additions by way of greater clarity on the inerrancy of Scripture to deal with Modernism on the one hand and on the all-sufficiency of Scripture to deal with the Pentecostal idea of ongoing prophecy and revelatory gifts.

Some American Baptists are wary of the word 'Reformed' because they think that we have more in common with the Anabaptists than the Reformers. This brings us to the article 'Baptists and the Reformation'.

Are we the heirs of Anabaptism or the Reformation?

'Baptists and the Reformation' by James McGoldrick, who is tutor of Church history at Cedarville College, Ohio, and author of an excellent book on Luther² demonstrates conclusively that the Anabaptists were not Reformed in their understanding of salvation. Put in another way, they did not grasp the truths of free grace. Soteriologically they were not Calvinists but Arminians. They did not accept the sovereignty of God in salvation in the way we do, and in the way the Reformers and Puritans did. The truth is that in the major tenets of salvation we have nothing in common with the Ana-

Cover: The Carey Family Conference, 16th August (3.00 p.m.)-21st August (10.00 a.m.) is to take place at Elim Bible College, Grenehurst Park, Capel, situated on the A22 between Dorking and Horsham. The Conference is designed for spiritual and recreational refreshment. There may still be room for you. Phone Andrew Symonds (0444)412409.

baptists. Our unity is with the main body of Reformers and Puritans. Not only were the Anabaptists adrift in such basic matters such as free will, as Dr. McGoldrick explains, but they were often subject to all kinds of extravagances with which we would disassociate ourselves completely. Some were violent revolutionaries, others were pacifists, and yet others were confused as to the relationship of church and state.

G. H. Williams in his great thesis, *The Radical Reformation*, shows that the Anabaptist movement was enormous and diverse. William E. Estep's book *The Anabaptist Story* (Eerdmans), because of its comparative brevity and style is easier to read. Estep concentrates on the brighter and healthier parts of the Anabaptist movement. He ably portrays the well-known and more stable leaders of the movement such as Grebel, Hubmaier and Menno Simons. James McGoldrick in his article presses home the point, however, that by no stretch of the imagination would we enjoy unity with these leaders over the central issues of salvation by sovereign grace. In other words we are out of step with them for 95 percent of the time and only in step 5 percent.

From the time of the Reformation there has existed in England a body of Baptists which was not, and has never been Anabaptist. This stream has never followed the Anabaptists in their errors, their extravagances or their fanticisms. The valuable witness to the gathered church idea by some of the Anabaptist leaders is acknowledged but that is as far as it goes.

Baptists today do not have a consistent witness. Some are Modernists while others are hopelessly superficial. Like other very large bodies Baptists vary enormously. In America one of the foremost features with some Baptist groups is adherence to dispensationalism which is a late nineteenth century development. Dispensationalism consists of an arbitrary imposition upon Scripture of ideas arising out of Chiliast (literal) interpretations of apocalyptic sections of Scripture. Fantastic constructions are developed concerning the future some of which revolve around a future tribulation. Not to accept these amazing notions is to be unacceptable in very large sectors of the Baptist world, which sectors are in any case almost entirely non-Reformed (not-Calvinistic) in the basic and central truths. So we are beset all over again with Anabaptist extravagances and fanaticisms. We deplore the persecution meted out upon the Anabaptists at the time of the Reformation by the Reformers. While not wishing to excuse men like Luther, Calvin and Zwingli we must nevertheless make some allowance for the fact that they were themselves newly emerging out of an age of dark night when it was commonplace to slay dangerous enemies. Calvin married the widow of an Anabaptist. The essential conflict with the Anabaptists, which in many ways is similar to ours with the Charismatics, is portrayed well in an excellent and readable book by William Blake, *Calvin and the Anabaptist Radicals* (Eerdmans). It is to the credit of the English Puritans that they advanced greatly in their understanding of religious liberty. Oliver Cromwell was way ahead of his time in seeing this issue as was the Baptist Roger Williams, a Cambridge graduate who settled in America. To Williams belongs the immortal honour of being the earliest champion of religious freedom as a basic human right. Unfortunately, as has so often been the case, Williams was not robust in the weighty doctrines.⁴ We must face up to the fact that Baptists have not given to the larger Bible-believing Christian world theologians of giant-like stature like Calvin, Owen, Edwards and Warfield. The defence of the great truths has been mostly by non-Baptists. Thankfully there have been some reliable Baptists of stature who have not marred their witness with eccentricities such as Landmarkism (the notion that only Baptists form the true church). We are thankful for men like Abraham Booth and C. H. Spurgeon but it must be acknowledged that often our best theologians like Alexander Carson, were trained in Presbyterian schools.

¹ The historical background to this document is explained in a modern translation of the whole work in *A Faith to Confess*. The 1689 Confession of Faith, Carey Publications.

² *The Person of Christ*, G. C. Berkouwer, Eerdmans, p. 9.

³ *Luther's English Connection*.

⁴ *An Introduction to the Baptists*, Errol Hulse, Carey Publications, p. 49 ff.

Tremendous help and advantage can be gained from observing the Biblical principles exemplified by the Puritans as Jim Packer demonstrates in what follows.

Puritan Preaching

Four axioms underlay the Puritans' philosophy of preaching and this was true not only of the seventeenth-century Puritans, but also of their Elizabethan precursors. You can find these axioms written into Perkins' *Art of Preaching* (1595), though he does not make points of them in the way that I am going to do in this article.

Axiom 1 – The Primacy of the Intellect

It was a Puritan maxim that grace enters by the understanding. They were not rationalists in any vicious sense but they did believe that God was rational and that he had made man in his own image as a rational being. Therefore man was to be treated as rational and so in the ministry of the Word a preacher must treat his congregation as rational. The intellect is primary. In other words, God does not move men to action by physical violence; but rather he addresses their minds by his Word and he calls for the response of deliberate consent and intelligent obedience.

It follows that every man's first duty in relation to the Word of God is to understand it, and the preacher's first duty is to explain it. The only legitimate way to the heart is through the head. And so, in all his preaching, the minister must be teaching and instructing systematically. If he is not a didactic expositor in every sermon he preaches then he has gone astray.

Axiom 2 – The Supreme Importance of Preaching

To the Puritans the sermon was the liturgical climax of public worship. Nothing, they said, honours God more than does the faithful declaration and obedient hearing of his truth. Preaching is an act of worship and is the prime means of grace to God's people. David Clarkson, a late seventeenth century Puritan said this:

'The most wonderful things that are now done on earth are wrought in the public ordinances. Here the dead hear the voice of the Son of God and those that hear do live. Here he cures diseased souls by a Word. Here he dispossesses Satan. These are wonders and would be so counted were they not the common work of the ministry. It is true indeed the Lord has not confined himself to work these wonderful things only in public, yet the public ministry is the only ordinary means whereby he works them.'

In this sermon entitled 'Public Worship to be preferred before private' (*Works*, 1865, III. 190 ff.). Clarkson was not trying to downgrade what we call personal work, but rather he was trying to upgrade the public ministry of the

Word. The Puritans regarded preaching as of far greater significance than we do. To the Puritans, preaching was the most solemn and momentous enterprise in which any servant of God ever takes part in his life, whether he be preacher or hearer. For this reason, whatever else was neglected, the Sunday sermons should not be. There should be no neglect in the preparation either to preach or to hear.

The Puritans insisted that sermons should be thought out. Preaching requires premeditation, preparation and care and no man should speak lightly in the name of the Lord. To them, the idea that after a few years' practice, sermon preparation becomes easy, was anathema. To ensure that the work was well done the Puritan preachers had full manuscripts before them in the pulpit although Perkins advises that if you can you should nevertheless learn your sermon and deliver it from memory!

Corresponding to this thoroughness in preaching, the congregations were encouraged to thoroughness in hearing. They were advised to memorise the headings, to look up references in the Bible (this would help fix them in the mind), and if necessary come armed with pencil and paper.

After going home, families should discuss the sermon to ensure that they all understood and remembered what was said. Their devotional life for the rest of the week was meant to be nourished by meditating and praying over the sermons heard on Sunday.

Axiom 3 – Belief in the Lifegiving Power of Biblical Truths

The Bible is the Word of God – light for the eyes, food for the soul, God's rule, God's directive, God's word of life. So preachers must feed their congregations by teaching them the contents of the Bible for the words of God are quickening and invigorating.

The Puritans all along defined pastoral work in terms of preaching. The shepherd's business is to see that the flock is fed and the sheep do not die through want of nourishment. This is a good word for our time when we tend to think of pastoral work primarily in terms of visiting and personal dealing only. To speak of a man as a good pastor but a bad preacher would have seemed to the Puritans a contradiction in terms. Here it is worth quoting John Owen:

'The first and principal duty of the pastor is to feed the flock by diligent preaching of the Word. It is a promise relating to the New Testament that God will give unto his church pastors, that is shepherds, according to his own heart which should feed them with knowledge and understanding (Jer. 3:15), and this is by preaching or teaching the Word and not otherwise. This feeding is the essence of the office of a pastor.'

Axiom 4 — The Sovereignty of the Holy Spirit

The Puritan preachers were strong, lively, impassioned and pointed in the pulpit, but they never allowed themselves to impersonate the Holy Spirit, nor did they ask for a response to themselves as God's messengers as distinct from requiring a response to God's Word. Believing that the ultimate effectiveness of preaching is out of man's hands altogether, they saw it as their whole task simply to be faithful in teaching and applying the Word. It is God's work to convince men of its truth and so to write it in the heart as to elicit faith and obedience. They did not think in terms of appeal but rather of application, an important distinction.

Acknowledging the sovereignty of the Spirit, the Puritans were confident that if the Scriptures were faithfully expounded and applied, then the Spirit would work and good would be done. They prayed for God's blessing on his Word no less earnestly than they preached it, but they were prepared to leave the appearing of fruit to God's good time. This then was the Puritan philosophy of preaching. What kind of sermons did it produce?

The Puritan Sermon

1. Puritan preaching was *expository in its method*. Texts must not be wrested but must be put in their context. A preacher must bring out of the text what is already there rather than reading into the text what is not there. It is a 20th century comment that a text without its context is a pretext, but the 17th century Puritans would have nodded approval. They would wholeheartedly have agreed that preaching is not juxtaposition, putting a truth alongside a text; nor is it imposition, reading a truth into a text; but rather it is exposition, getting out of the text the truth that is already there.

By this method they would extract from their texts many doctrinal truths and practical applications ('uses') and confirm these statements by other Scriptures. I can illustrate the method from John Owen as he works on Romans 8:13 'If ye through the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live.' From this text he raises three 'doctrines'. Doctrine number one: The choicest believers who are assuredly free from the condemning power of sin ought yet to mortify the indwelling power of sin. Doctrine number two: The Holy Ghost only is sufficient for this work and it cannot be done without him. Doctrine number three: The vigour, power and comfort of our spiritual life depend upon our mortifying the deeds of the flesh. Developing those three doctrines and making application of them, Owen rapidly produces his classic treatise on the mortification of sin in believers (*Works*, VII. 1ff.). Richard Baxter's *Call to the Unconverted* is another example of this method: it is an exposition of seven doctrines derived from Ezekiel 33:11. Both books were originally series of sermons.

2. The second feature of Puritan sermons was that they were *doctrinal in their content*. Had you asked a Puritan, 'Should I preach doctrine?' he would

have replied, 'What else do you suppose there is to preach? Doctrine is what God has put into the Scriptures and doctrine is what you, the preacher, must bring out of them. Doctrinal truth is the first thing that your congregation must learn from the Scripture.'

Like many folk today, Richard Baxter's working class parishioners at Kidderminster in the 1640's and 50's tried to excuse themselves from the bother of coming to grips with doctrinal sermons. But Baxter reasons with them like this: 'Have you not souls to save or lose just as the learned have? God has made plain to you his will in his Word and he has given you teachers and many other helps. You have no excuse if you are ignorant, you must know how to be Christians even though you are no scholars. You may hit the way to heaven in English though you have no skill in Hebrew or Greek, but in the darkness of ignorance you can never hit it.'

The Puritans knew that doctrinal preaching often bores hypocrites. But they believed that only doctrinal preaching saves the sheep, and to do that, they held, is the preacher's task, rather than to entertain the goats.

3. The third feature of Puritan preaching was *its orderly arrangement*. They used headings which stuck out to help the people memorise what they heard. A sermon that was needlessly hard to remember would have been considered a bad sermon. The Puritans were often found extolling the value of what they called 'method', the orderly arrangement of ideas and truths. A sermon must have a method, they believed, otherwise it will not teach effectively.

4. Fourthly, Puritan preaching, though profound in its content, was *popular in its style* — plain, as the Puritans would say. This was in contrast to the ornate style of preaching which was popular in the earlier part of the 17th century. Baxter condemned this 'witty' preaching as 'proud foolery which savoureth of levity and tendeth to evaporate weighty truths.' Preaching that exalts the preacher, the Puritans said, is unedifying and sinful on that very account. The preacher should, as far as possible, obliterate himself and call our attention only to God and the truths of God and to Christ. Bishop Ryle said of himself that in the early years of his ministry, in order to preach plainly, he crucified his style. The Puritans did just the same. They eschewed any kind of rhetorical display and talked to their congregations in plain, straightforward, homely English. Their speaking was not however slipshod or vulgar; it had a dignified simplicity, as well as great force.

Baxter said that he aspired to be nothing other than a 'plain and pressing downright preacher', talking to people in a way that would help them believe he was just as serious as he claimed to be; behaving like a straightforward man sent on an urgent mission; not showing off or putting on an act, but

bringing a life or death message; spoken in plain language, for that was the only appropriate language.

5. The fifth feature of Puritan preaching was its *practical and experimental interest*. These men preached in order to bring men and women to know and to serve God. Baxter urged young men to get the books of many 'affectionate, practical English authors' (he meant, Puritans) as they could. These books contained printed sermons, directed to both head and heart; they are the source books from which our own knowledge of Puritan preaching is fleshed out. They show us that the preaching was experimental, not in the modern sense of 'try it and see' but in the old sense that one's whole being, including emotions, should be engaged in response to God's truth.

The things about which they were always preaching were sin and the cross, the work of the Holy Spirit, faith and hypocrisy, repentance, assurance and the lack of it, prayer, meditation, temptation, sin and its mortification, growth in grace, death and heaven. In a word, they preached on all the themes that Bunyan's *Pilgrim's Progress* deals with. They taught scriptural doctrines as these related to Christian living.

It was a Puritan, David Dickson, who told a young man being ordained that he should study two things, the Bible and his own heart: for the way human nature works must be known before the Word of God can be accurately applied. To know one's own heart was to know the hearts of others. Owen put it thus: 'A man preacheth that sermon only well to others which preacheth itself in his own soul. If the word do not dwell with power in us, it will not pass with power from us!'

6. Puritan preaching was *realistic in its application*. The preachers did not declaim at random about sin but saw it as the preacher's job to consider, so far as he could, the congregation to whom he was preaching and try to form a judgement as to what they needed. The expositor must take care to make the Bible address men where they are. Yesterday's application may not speak to their condition today. Thomas Manton said, 'it is but a cheap zeal that declaimeth against things now out of use and practice. We are to consider what the present age needeth.'

The Westminster Directory for Public Worship speaks of application as 'a work of great difficulty to the preacher himself requiring much prudence, zeal and meditation; and to the natural and corrupt man it will be very unpleasant!' Such consideration, of course, will tempt a man to pull his punches to avoid giving offence. 'Yet,' continues the *Directory*, 'the preacher is to endeavour to perform it (this work of application) in such a way that his auditors may feel the Word of God to be quick and powerful, a discernor of the thoughts and intentions of the heart, and that if any unbeliever or ignorant person be

present he may have the secrets of his heart made manifest and give glory to God.'

Perkins noted that every congregation contains many different classes of people — the proud unhumiliated ignorant; the teachable ignorant; the proud knowledgeable people; the humbled knowledgeable people; those who had lapsed or fallen from grace, from orthodoxy or right living. A church is a mixed assembly, many of whose members do not know what their real needs are, and all must be searched out by sermons that are full of application to this end.

7. Finally, Puritan preaching was, or at least aspired to be, *powerful in manner*. The Puritan coveted unction in the pulpit. He sought to preach, as was said of one preacher, as if death were at his back or, as Baxter put it in a poem of his, 'he preached as one that ne'er would preach again and as a dying man to dying men!'

These men prayed for the power of God on their ministry. Mere orthodoxy was not counted as being sufficient. Let Baxter speak again: 'A minister should take some special pains with his heart before he is to go to the congregation. If he be then cold, how is he then to warm the hearts of his hearers? Go therefore then especially to God for life and read some rousing awakening book or meditate on the weight of the subject you are going to speak of and the necessity of your people's souls that you may go in the zeal of the Lord to his house!'

The Content of Puritan Sermons

The Puritans who lived in an age before everyone had become history conscious in the way that happened in the 19th century, approached the Bible as primarily a book of doctrine. They knew that the Bible was an interpretive record of historical redemption; but rather than treating it in a historical manner they dealt with it as a source of theology. To them the Bible contained three things: law, gospel and narrative. That is to say, precepts and promises together with narrations which illustrated the principles of law and gospel working out in people's lives either as they had or had not obeyed God's law, or had or had not believed his promises.

This approach goes back to Tyndale and beyond. It meant that there was not a great deal of preaching direct from Biblical stories, particularly gospel stories. But the stories were constantly brought in to illustrate doctrinal points. Broadly speaking, the Puritans preached the economy of redemption and thus the law and gospel for conversion, edification and the shaping up of practical religion.

The Puritans did not preach a great deal on problems of Christian ethics for, in general, they were able to take for granted a general knowledge of ethical

Lost – the fear of God!

The fear of God may be defined as that apprehension in the soul of man of the profound holiness and majesty of God. This apprehension is by no means confined to these attributes. All that God is in his eternal glory; his justice, his wrath, his power, his omniscience, inspires awe and reverence when truly apprehended. Other attributes such as God's grace, love and wisdom are by no means excluded. Caution in definition has to be exercised because of the widespread notion that God is love only, that is a formless glob of sentiment before whom no one trembles. There can be no meaningful knowledge or experience of the one and only true God if there is not appreciation, love, wonder, awe and praise, because of his matchless being and character. The fear of God then is that inward knowledge and respect for the matchless holiness of the transcendent, infinite and eternal God. To be destitute of this fear of God is to be destitute of saving faith.

The fear of God is by no means to be divorced from joy. The elements of joy and fear blending together is expressed in Psalm 2, 'serve the LORD with fear and rejoice with trembling'. A filial fear of God is of the essence of the Christian faith. This is the opposite of a servile fear such as the devils have. They believe, they tremble, but have no joy. The fear of God is the soul of godliness. Take away awe and reverence for God and you have mere human expression. True fear mixed with joy cannot be created by men. It is something imparted by the Holy Spirit. Sanctimoniousness or affected solemnity and gloom is as repugnant as an artificially created euphoria of rocking and rolling in the name of the Lord.

Increasingly we are confronted with 'soda fountain' Christianity. That is the idea that you do with God exactly as you will. You get out of him exactly what you want. It is as though he was created for your convenience. This god is a giant dispenser which gushes out supplies to people according to their demands. This god is an essence which performs exactly as required.

standards just as they took for granted a general knowledge of Bible stories. Therefore, they did not devote their sermons to telling the stories and crystallising the standards, but rather they assumed that these things were known and devoted their sermons to enforcing them.

One particular area in which they did preach a great deal was in the area of preparation for conversion. They devoted a lot of time to preaching through texts which dealt with how a man is humbled by God for his sin, made to hate it and to desire a new heart, to long for forgiveness and to seek restoration. Thus they prepared men for the working in their hearts of regeneration and the dawning in their consciousness of faith and assurance. □□□

The powers of this god are dispensed by jovial and congenial manipulators just as easily, quickly and jollily as one of the fluids of the soda fountains or public house bars. Needless to say this god exists only in the imagination. Jehovah is as far removed from fleshly performances of this kind as he was from the frantic gegaws and gegums of the prophets of Baal who performed on Mount Carmel. It takes only one Elijah to expose the antics of a multitude of idolators for whom religion is merely the projection of themselves.

The fear of God is predominant in Scripture, so prominent that we tend to take it for granted. It is an expression used to describe true religion (Ps. 34:11). It is the beginning and end of all true experience. It is the beginning of wisdom and forms the basis of acceptable living (Prov. 1:7, Ecc. 12:13). It is as basic to the New Covenant as it is to the Old. God puts his fear into our hearts (Jer. 32:38). The Messiah delighted in the fear of the LORD (Is. 11:2,3). It is the characteristic of all God's people (Luke 1:50). It is the chief feature of revival (Acts 9:31). It is the constant description of those who belong to God (Ps. 103:11). We are commanded to fear God, and described as blessed if we do (Rev. 14:7, Ps. 128:1). All the godless are such because they lack this grace. There is no fear of God before their eyes (Rom. 3:18).

Awe for God filled Jacob's heart after his experience at Bethel. 'How awesome is this place,' he said! 'This is none other than the house of God, this is the gate of heaven' (Gen. 28:17). That awesomeness should characterise all worship. The effects of the revelation of the true God are always the same, namely, reverence, awe, respect and conviction of sin. Isaiah was prostrated at the sight of the Lord's glory (Is. 6:3). Daniel complained that his breath had been taken away and he could hardly breathe (Dan. 10:17). Moses said that he trembled with fear (Heb. 12:21). Ezekiel was prostrated like one dead, as was John at Patmos (Ez. 1:28, Rev. 1:17). The apostle Peter could hardly bear a glimpse of the deity of Christ. 'Go away from me, Lord, I am a sinful man' (Luke 5:8). When the Father came down in his glory on the mount of transfiguration James, John and Peter were totally overwhelmed (Mt. 17:6-8). Our Lord insisted on the importance of fearing God who has the power to cast body and soul into hell (Mt. 10:28). We are told to work out our salvation with fear and trembling (Phil. 1:12).

Have we lost this sense of God? With the help of music and a manipulator to lead, it is easy to create scenes of euphoria. The place of seriousness is incongruous in such situations. Therefore it is not surprising when the leaders ridicule any who look serious or restrained. But the necessity of Godly fear is at the heart of the matter. There can be no genuine joy of the Holy Spirit without it. Fear precedes joy. This is prominent in all Holy Spirit revivals. Where is this fear today? Who ever heard of meetings or festival gatherings to try and attain an awe for God who is a consuming fire? (Heb. 12:29).

We could go further and ask whether we ourselves have ever trembled? Have we ever known a sense of reverence and awe? It is not a matter of criti-

cising others who may be tired of drabness and dullness in religion and who try to stimulate some happiness. It is a matter of examining ourselves.

Paul said that he experienced fear and trembling (1 Cor. 2:3). The Corinthian believers received Titus with 'fear and trembling' (2 Cor. 5:7). It was said that the elders of Bethlehem trembled when Samuel visited them (1 Sam. 16:4). When last did you tremble at the thought of a godly preacher probing your heart with the Gospel of an awe-inspiring God? During the week of writing this one of my pastoral visits included a veteran believer who said that the first time she ever heard Dr Martyn Lloyd-Jones preach, he preached on the subject: Who is God? The awe and reverence inspired by that sermon, she said, has never left her. It has filled her prayers with a sense of the majesty of God.

Without due respect, awe and reverence for God our prayers are meaningless babblings and our lives destitute of genuine spiritual experience. Jehovah has described those whom he receives:

*This is the one I esteem:
he who is humble and contrite in spirit,
and trembles at my word' (Is. 66:2).*

How can we regain the fear of God?

God-centred preaching

A history of the work of God from the beginning, from Moses and Samuel, the prophets, the apostles, and on through this dispensation indicates that preaching in the power and unction of the Holy Spirit is the special instrument by which we receive a sense of the 'fear of God'. Powerful preaching will exhibit the attributes and perfections of Jehovah — his wrath, his power, his immutable righteousness. All his glorious excellencies are designed to instil into us that respect which is the very first fundamental of worship, an essential ingredient for genuine happiness as the proverb says, 'blessed is the man who always fears the LORD' (Prov. 28:14). The declaration of the mind and will of God in preaching is the main means by which we learn the fear of God. The psalmist expresses it like this:

*My flesh trembles in fear of you;
I stand in awe of your laws' (Ps. 119:120).*

Care about public worship

The felt presence of God in the assembly of believers met together for worship and the preaching of the Word is any church's first and chief glory.¹ The encouragement of worship services which conform to the standards of Scripture will do much to restore a true sense of the fear of God among us. Chapter four and five of the Revelation sets before us the pattern for worshipping the triune God in the beauty of holiness. As in Isaiah 6 the predominant theme of the angels is the holiness of God. The angels set the pattern for the elders to follow. If ministers in the sanctuary stomp around and parade about with fleshly performances, is that not an abomination to God? When Nadab and Abihu went before God with false worship the Lord destroyed

them by fire. Fleshly performances are entirely unsuitable for the house of God. We do not come to be entertained. We do not come to focus on man or man's performances, or to hear about how wonderful men are. We do not gather to focus our attentions on man or men, woman or women. We gather to worship God in Spirit and in truth. We come to worship in the beauty of holiness. All lightness, triteness, froth, bubble and frivolity are an abomination.

It is surprising that this most fundamental aspect of the fear of God in worship is not dealt with in most books on the subject today. Is this a sign that we think almost entirely in terms of what we do? The holy fear of God, is the divider between the wheat and tares of what is conducted and what passes as suitable in the presence of God. In other words we examine each activity and ask whether it reveres and exalts the Lord, or whether it honours man. Ecclesiastes 5:2 reminds us of the restraint we need: 'Guard your steps when you go to the house of God. Go near to listen rather than offer the sacrifice of fools, who do not know that they do wrong. Do not be quick with your mouth, do not be hasty in your heart to utter anything before God. God is in heaven and you are on earth, so let your words be few.'

Those who lead services of worship should do so with a sense of awe and reverence (Heb. 12:28). If they do not possess that attribute they should not lead. It is something given, not something that can be imitated. Sham, hypocrisy and imitation is just as much to be detested as showmanship and tripping into God's presence as though the deity is a chum and the angels our buddies. To be sure there is the reality of Sonship but the intimacy of adoption, of crying Abba Father, is something very serious and wonderful. There is a freedom and closeness given to the sons of God just as a child has with its parents, but this spirit of closeness and union is something wholly different to an entertainment spirit of jokes and coarseness. Faber's hymn, 'My God, how wonderful thou art, thy majesty how bright' conveys much about true reverence, especially the verse:

*O how I fear thee, living God,
with deepest, tenderest fears,
And worship thee with trembling hope
And penitential Fears!*

Regular Bible reading

Bible reading which is joined to meditation is a main way of recovering a true sense of the holiness of God. As we contemplate such subjects as the nature of God, his judgments, heaven, hell and the sufferings of the Lamb of God, we will surely be frequently brought to acclaim with Moses.

*Who is like you — majestic in holiness,
Awesome in glory, working wonders? (Acts 15:11).*

As we read the Scriptures daily we will find that the fear of God will relate to our conduct in every way. It will affect our thoughts, our speech, our conduct and our regard for others. Especially as we have seen, it will affect our bearing and conduct in the house of God. Urgently needed today is a recov-

Highly commended books

The capacity to benefit from Christian books varies. A small minority can assimilate whole storehouses of knowledge to their advantage and the benefit of others. For several reasons the majority read very little. Noted is the tendency for newly born believers to read Bunyan's *Pilgrim's Progress* with delight. (The Banner of Truth edition is recommended for its helpful notes, illustrations and general quality.) When enfeebled by the weakness of age believers tend to return their Bibles only plus one classic such as Baxters' *The Saints Everlasting Rest* (E.P. have an edition in print), or a favourite hymn book.

It was of personal interest to me to observe that of hundreds of volumes the member of our family with least aptitude for literature, without urging from anyone else, fastened onto two large

volumes published by Baker. Both have a double column tiny print. The first of these is *The Practical Works of Richard Baxter — Select Treatises* (956 pp.). The second is *A Treasury of Bunyan* (1,015 pp.), with an excellent essay on Bunyan by way of preface by John Gulliver (16 pp.). The contents of the Bunyan volume include most of his best works such as, *Grace Abounding*, *Pilgrim's Progress*, *Solomon's Temple Spiritualised*, *The Holy War*, *The life and death of Mr. Badman*, *Come and Welcome*, *The Barren Fig Tree*, *Prayer*, *The Strait Gate* and *Sighs from Hell*.

The Baxter volume (sets of Baxter's works are very rare) includes, *The Everlasting Rest*, *The Divine Life*, *A treatise on conversion* (based on 2 Cor. 5:17), *A call to the unconverted* (based on Ezek. 33:11), *Directions to Weak Christians* — who unfortunately would be least likely to read Baxter now!, and *Baxter's Dying Thoughts*. □□□

Lost! — The Fear of God (continued from page 12)

ery of the lost sense of the fear of God, summed up well in the paraphrase of Nahum Tate's paraphrase of Psalm 34:

*Fear him, ye saints, and you will then
Have nothing else to fear;
Make you his service your delight,
Your wants shall be his care.*

¹ See *The glory of the Church. Local Church Practice*, Carey Publications, p. 159.

Source materials. The Puritan writers have many passing references to the fear of God, but apart from John Bunyan's short 43 page treatise (vol. 1, p. 437 ff.) I have not yet located a specific book on the subject. John Brown has nine pages of exposition on the text 'fear God'. This appears in his commentary on 1 Peter (vol. 1, p. 466). Nine sermons on cassette by Al Martin are available from the Trinity Pulpit Library, Box 277, Essex Fells, N.J. 07021. U.K. readers can loan these from Chris Frohwein, 15 Highfield Road, Woodford Green, Essex I68 8JA. They can be purchased from Mr E. Hornsey, 222 Halstead Road, Kirby-le-Soken, Frinton, Essex. These expositions are highly recommended. There is a survey of Scripture in the first sermon. Definition and ingredients of the fear of God follow in several sermons. The sixth deals specifically with the source of Godly Fear. Relationship to conduct follows with numbers 7 and 8. The final exposition has the title: How to maintain and increase the fear of God.

Baptists and the Reformation

By James Edward McGoldrick, Ph.D.

Baptists have always had difficulty in identifying their lineal descent in church history, and symptomatic of that difficulty is the Baptists' attitude toward the Protestant Reformation of the 16th century. Are Baptists of today the heirs of the Anabaptists of the 16th century? No, they are not. No vital links connect the modern Baptists with the Anabaptists. On the contrary, a radical theological discontinuity has separated the two movements from the beginning of Baptist history. In other words, the Anabaptists were not the forefathers of the Baptists, because the latter grew out of English Puritanism and espoused a Protestant theology from their birth. Baptists then are children, rather than 'stepchildren'¹ of the 16th century reformers.

There were free church groups which existed throughout the Middle Ages and which sometimes promoted doctrines and practices agreeable to modern Baptists. When those groups are judged by standards now acknowledged as baptistic, not one of them merits recognition as a Baptist church. While Baptists have claimed to be the people who have preserved the faith of New Testament Christians, the modern Baptists, in point of time, originated in Holland and England, early in the 17th century.

The General Baptists, who were mostly Arminian in doctrine, appeared first in Holland, while the Calvinistic Particular Baptists developed a few years later in England. Neither of the pioneer Baptist groups attributed its origin to the influence of the Anabaptists, although the General Baptists did have close contact with the Waterland Mennonites in Holland.

John Smyth, founder of the General Baptist movement, was the leader of an English Baptist congregation in Amsterdam. Smyth eventually applied for membership in the Waterland Mennonite Church and, when he did so, some of his associates in the English Baptist congregation at Amsterdam called Smyth a defector, because they regarded Anabaptism as a heresy. Thomas Helwys then led a remnant of the original English Baptist body at Amsterdam in excommunicating Smyth and those who followed him towards the Mennonite Church.

In 1611 Helwys and his General Baptist disciples published the first English Baptist statement of doctrine, the title of which was 'A Declaration of Faith of the English People remaining at Amsterdam'.² This document rejects the Mennonite position on the swearing of oaths, the Christian's relationship to civil government, the use of weapons and the practice of excommunication.

Soon after their affirmation of faith, Helwys and the General Baptists returned to England, and there they established the first General Baptist Church on English soil. It was located at Spitalfield, near London. This was a church founded by Baptists who denied any succession from the Anabaptists and scorned John Smyth for embracing the doctrines of the Mennonites.³

For many years after the founding of their church at Spitalfield, the General Baptists had to defend themselves against the accusation that they were actually Anabaptists.

In 1660 a general assembly of General Baptists met in London and issued another statement of faith. This one was entitled 'A Brief Confession or Declaration of Faith', and in this statement the authors indicated that they were thereby defending themselves against the charge, the false charge, of being Anabaptists.⁴

Although the Arminian General Baptists demonstrated considerable vitality in the 17th century, they declined very greatly in the 18th. Many General Baptist leaders succumbed to the spirit of rationalism and embraced a unitarian view of God. The Calvinistic Particular Baptists, however, preserved their witness and thus became the progenitors of succeeding Baptist groups. By some route or other, the modern Baptist movements, in all their diversity, can trace their ancestry to the Particular Baptists of England in the 17th or 18th centuries.

Unlike the General Baptists, the Particular Baptists had very little contact with the Mennonites or other Anabaptist groups.⁵ The Particular Baptists not only developed independently of the Anabaptists but were independent of the General Baptists as well. It is evident that two lines of development took place in early Baptist history, and the lines grew up separate from each other and maintained conflicting theological positions.

The Particular Baptists grew out of Puritanism, with its Calvinistic system of doctrine. Their birthdate was about the year 1638. In 1616 one Henry Jacob had founded a separatist church in London, and Jacob was followed in turn as pastor by John Lathrop and Henry Jessy. It is common to find references to the Jacob-Lathrop-Jessy Church. This was not a Baptist church, although within its membership there were some who denied the validity of baptism administered in the Anglican Church. They concluded that it was invalid because they perceived the Church of England as being corrupt. By 1638 there was a faction within the Jacob-Lathrop-Jessy Church which was insisting on believer's baptism. That group withdrew from the separatist church and formed the first Particular Baptist Church, with John Spilsbury as pastor.

Shortly after espousing believer's baptism, the Particular Baptists came to believe that immersion was the only valid mode for administering baptism. The congregation then selected one of its number, Richard Blunt, who spoke the Dutch language, and sent him to the Netherlands, where a religious society called the Collegiants was known to have been practising immersion for some time. Evidently, Blunt went to the Collegiants for instruction in the matter of baptism, but it is not known for certain whether or not Blunt was immersed while in Rhynsburg, the meeting place of the Collegiant society.

When Richard Blunt returned to England, he began immersing his brethren in the Particular Baptist Church. The General Baptists, however, continued to practice affusion, that is baptism by pouring, as they had done since their founding in Amsterdam in the days of John Smyth. In this the General Baptists maintained the mode of baptism which was almost uniform practice among Anabaptists on the continent.

By 1644 there were seven Particular Baptist congregations in England. Those churches issued the 'London Confession of Faith of Those Churches which are Commonly, though *Falsely*, called Anabaptists'.⁶ This was the first Baptist statement to affirm immersion. The General Baptists did not insist upon that mode until 1660. It is highly significant that, when Particular Baptists issued their statement of faith, they disavowed categorically any connection with the Anabaptists. At the same time

they affirmed their loyalty to the Protestant Reformation, and in some of their doctrinal pronouncements, these English Baptists *called themselves Protestants*.

In the Second London Confession, which appeared for the first time in 1677, the Particular Baptists affirmed their agreement 'with Protestants in diverse nations and cities . . . in that wholesome *Protestant* doctrine, which with so clear evidence of scriptures that they have asserted'.⁷ The following year the General Baptists published 'An Orthodox Creed or *Protestant* Confession of Faith, being an essay to Unite and Confirm all true *Protestants*'.⁸ This same statement extols the heroism of England's Protestant martyrs who gave their lives in opposition to Romanism.⁹

It is very clear that English Baptists of the 17th century, both General Baptists and Particular Baptists, disavowed Anabaptism and asserted their allegiance to the Protestant Reformation. The Protestant character of the Particular Baptists is especially evident in the Second London Confession, which is a frank and obvious adaptation of the Presbyterian Westminster Confession of Faith (1646). The Philadelphia Confession, which became the standard statement among Baptists in the American colonies, was likewise a slightly modified version of the Westminster Confession. In fact, the Second London Confession was intended to show that broad agreement existed among the Calvinists of England as represented by Presbyterians, Congregationalists and Particular Baptists.¹⁰

Although the General Baptists rejected the Anabaptist position on oaths, magistrates, war, etc., there was a rough theological similarity between the Anabaptists and General Baptists. That similarity appears principally in their doctrine of salvation. Both Anabaptists and General Baptists held a semi-Pelagian view of salvation. The early 17th century was a time of great amalgamation as far as religious influences were concerned. The Protestant Reformation was still in progress, Arminianism had made its debut, Romanism was resurgent under the impact of the Council of Trent, and Christian humanism of the Erasmian type was still exerting an important, albeit waning, influence.¹¹ An examination of the Anabaptist doctrine of salvation reveals that it resembles most closely late medieval Catholic beliefs, whereas that of the General Baptists seems to reflect the influence of Dutch Arminianism.¹²

The Particular Baptists, on the other hand, repudiated the semi-Pelagian-Arminian doctrine of salvation in favour of Calvinism, and it is precisely the theological position of Particular Baptists that renders any causative connection between them and the Anabaptists untenable. The two movements represent mutually exclusive views of salvation. In assessing the relationship between Anabaptists and Particular Baptists, theology in general, and soteriology in particular, is the most important consideration. A careful comparison of Anabaptist and Particular Baptist beliefs about salvation will show that no continuity and no compatibility exist between them.

In order to appraise the fundamental disharmony between Anabaptists and Baptists, it is necessary to compare their respective beliefs on the doctrines of grace — the traditional distinctives of Calvinism. These distinctives were formulated for the first time by the Dutch Reformed Synod of Dort early in the 17th century. It is evident then that the pioneer Baptist confessions of faith and the classical formulation of Calvinism appeared in the same era.

It is appropriate to remember that the Particular Baptists were called 'particular' because they advocated the doctrines of grace so fervently. The Anabaptists, on the

other hand, rejected all of these doctrines. When the Particular Baptists drafted the London Confession of 1644, one of their purposes was to defend themselves against the charge of Pelagianism and, in setting forth their position, they left no doubt whatever about their subscription to Calvinism.¹³

Particular Baptist adherence to the doctrines of a Reformed soteriology was made even more forceful in the Second London Confession (1667).¹⁴ To Particular Baptists, man's total depravity as a lost sinner, unconditional divine election to salvation, particular atonement for the sins of the elect, irresistible saving grace, and the perseverance of the saints to final glory were cardinal principles of the Christian faith. Anabaptists, conversely, denied these teachings completely by building their view of salvation on the foundation of a pre-supposed free will in all men. Subscription to the principle of free will was the basic assumption of every Anabaptist who wrote on the issue. Although there was great diversity of opinion among them on other questions, all Anabaptists believed that salvation is a cooperative endeavour between God's grace and man's free will. This will become clear as Anabaptists are allowed to speak for themselves on each of the doctrines of grace, beginning with total depravity.

Balthasar Hubmaier was probably the most learned Anabaptist theologian. Being a Doctor of Theology, he was well versed in Roman Catholic scholasticism prior to embracing Anabaptist views. In 1527 Hubmaier published a treatise entitled *Von der Freiheit des Willens*, 'Concerning the Freedom of the Will'. In that document he set forth the view that man is a three-fold being composed of flesh, soul and spirit. Each component of man's being possesses its own will. In the fall the flesh and the soul lost their freedom,

but the spirit of man has remained utterly upright and intact before, during, and after the fall, for it . . . did not in any way consent to or approve of the eating of the forbidden fruit by the flesh. But it was forced, against its will, as a prisoner in the body to participate in the eating. But the sin was not its own, but rather that of the flesh and of the soul, for the latter had also become flesh.¹⁵ . . . The spirit has maintained its *inherited righteousness*, in which it was first created; only it, among the three substances in man, has the same form before and after the fall of Adam.¹⁶

The above is an unequivocal statement by the single most influential Anabaptist theologian of the 16th century. According to Hubmaier, man's soul stands between his flesh and his spirit, and because Christ has brought liberating truth from heaven, the soul has been freed from the bondage caused by the fall, and now the soul may choose to remain with the flesh in evil or to join the spirit to serve God. Divine grace, as Hubmaier saw it, enables man to choose God, but the decision to accept or reject enabling grace lies with man entirely. As Hubmaier stated it, '*God created you without your aid, but he will not save you without your aid.*'¹⁷

Hubmaier's denial of total depravity and his defence of free will appear to reflect the influence of his fellow Anabaptist Hans Denck. Denck is the author of a treatise entitled *Whether God is the Cause of Evil*, which appeared in 1546. Denck was another university-educated South German Anabaptist of considerable influence. Although he did not revert to speculative analysis about the number of wills in man, Denck was unequivocal in asserting that the fall left man's powers of choice largely unimpaired. Denck declared that God 'gives man absolute free choice, as he gave in the beginning, in such a way that man might grasp either the good or the bad, as Scripture testifies'.¹⁸

Denck held that grace is bestowed universally, and thereby all men can freely and easily turn to God.¹⁹ Both Hubmaier and Denck saw sinful man as fallen but not utterly corrupt. In this regard they advanced the semi-Pelagian teaching about man which had been condemned by the ancient church and was likewise condemned by the Protestant contemporaries of the Anabaptists in the 16th century.

The expressions of Hubmaier and Denck might, of course, represent only their own thinking and not a formal theological position to which any body of Anabaptists was ready to subscribe. Such, however, was not the case. In 1580 the Waterland Mennonites, the same group with which John Smyth was to seek affiliation, published a confession in which they espoused the same view of the fall as that affirmed by Hubmaier and Denck. Article V of the Waterland Confession proclaims that fallen man retains freedom of the will – ‘the faculty of accepting or rejecting the grace of God truly offered; this faculty remains, through grace, in all Adam’s posterity’.²⁰

A second Anabaptist confession, the Frisian Confession of 1660, is even more explicit in affirming free will. Article IX states that Adam and Eve ‘were not utterly divested of . . . their previous free will, . . . and this free will or power has been transmitted to all their descendants, who proceed from them as branches from their stem’.²¹ Whereas Protestants, including Particular Baptists, contended that Adam’s children inherited their father’s spiritual bondage, the Anabaptists claimed that Adam and his posterity never lost their freedom of will.

Anabaptist leaders, both as individual authors and compilers of doctrinal pronouncements, very seldom made explicit mention of original sin, and those who did consider the matter denied the imputation of Adam’s guilt to his descendants. Hans Denck believed in the inherent goodness of man, and so he practically ignored the question of original sin.²² Some Anabaptists interpreted Paul’s reference in Romans concerning the ‘wages of sin’ to mean physical death rather than eternal damnation. In the view of most Anabaptists, Adam’s sin condemns only those who choose Adam’s way and produce the evil fruits of that way.²³ Such conclusions are completely foreign to the beliefs of Particular Baptists.

Regarding predestination and election, the incompatibility of Anabaptist and Particular Baptist thinking is crystal clear. Since belief in free will was their basic pre-supposition in soteriology, the Anabaptists, as a matter of course, rejected predestination. While they argued that man cannot save himself, but must have the grace of God, Anabaptists insisted that this grace is given to everyone, because God desires to save everyone. In the words of Denck, ‘God bids all people be called and proffers his mercy to everyone in cordial earnestness and yearning in order to fulfil all that he has promised in truth.’²⁴ Melchoir Hofmann, principal leader of early Dutch Anabaptism, defined election in terms of human achievement. As he phrased it,

All men are called, . . . but no one has been elected except for them who have struggled through to victory. And in case all of them struggle and conquer, all of them should also be elected by God, yes, even the whole world.²⁵ . . . They who have once struggled and conquered are then elected by God, so that they will not depart from Christ and the eternal temple of God.²⁶

The Anabaptist confessions are emphatic in denying election solely by sovereign grace. The Waterland Confession defines election as a divine choice of those who, by

free will, respond believably to the Gospel. In other words, people become elect by choosing Christ.²⁷ The Frisian Confession likewise defines election as God's foreknowledge of man's response to the offer of salvation. God chose those whom he foreknew would choose him. In election, then, the ultimate choice lies with man!²⁸ Once again, it is evident that the Anabaptist doctrine has no correspondence with the view of election proclaimed by Particular Baptists and other Protestants.

Perhaps the best known distinctive of Particular Baptists, at least concerning the matter of salvation, is that doctrine of particular redemption, often called limited atonement. On this question the disagreement between Particular Baptists and Anabaptists is absolute and obvious. Without exception, Anabaptists believed that Christ died for everybody, and some Anabaptists did not hesitate to claim that his sacrifice actually redeemed everyone. The Mennonite Dordrecht Confession (1632), in article IV declares,

We believe that the Son of God . . . purchased redemption for the whole human race; and thus he became the source of eternal salvation to all who from the time of Adam to the end of the world, shall have believed in him and obeyed him.²⁹

The Frisian Confession is equally explicit.

Christ Jesus redeemed, delivered and justified from condemnation and placed into the state of grace and reconciliation, all men, without exception of persons, without any of their good works, only from pure grace and mercy.³⁰

Hans Denck argued that the nature of God's love demanded universal atonement for if he had excluded anyone then love would have been squint-eyed and a respecter of persons.³¹ Such teaching about the atonement might be harmonised with the doctrine of General Baptists, but it is entirely incompatible with the Particular Baptist position.³²

Orthodox Protestants believe that fallen man is spiritually dead, so they insist that a person's conscious acceptance of Christ must be preceded by regeneration, which is a sovereign operation performed by the Holy Spirit within his elect.³³ The Anabaptists, by way of contrast, viewed regeneration as a joint achievement of God and man. Anabaptists argued that repentance precedes regeneration — one must choose to be born again, because human decision is sovereign in making the divine grace effectual. This belief was expressed forcefully by Mennonite leader Dietrich Phillips in 1560.

No one can be born again or spiritually quickened, and can believe the gospel, except he first repent sincerely, as the Lord Jesus Christ himself testifies. . . . All who from the teaching of the law learn to fear God, recognise sin, sincerely repent . . . and accept Jesus Christ as their Saviour, are born anew of God. . . .³⁴

Menno Simons also placed repentance before regeneration when he wrote, 'if you wish to be saved, by all means and first of all, your earthly, carnal, ungodly life must be reformed'.³⁵ It is clear that the Anabaptists did not believe that regenerating, saving grace is inherently effectual.

Finally, the Anabaptists did not believe in the eternal security of the regenerate. Like medieval scholastic theologians before them, they held that regeneration does not assure final salvation. Writing about 1537 from Moravia, Ulrich Stadler warned that

the wrath of God awaits Christians who sin wilfully.³⁶ In fact, the Anabaptist practice of church discipline rests upon the belief that there is always a danger that the elect will apostatise.³⁷

In summary, the disagreements between Anabaptists and Baptists over the doctrines which pertain to salvation are so numerous and so fundamental that one cannot, on the basis of documentary evidence, conclude that the two movements are causally related. Anabaptists, rather than being forerunners of modern Baptists, were exponents of a synergistic soteriology that has greater correspondence with the works-righteousness motif of medieval Catholicism than it does with the *sola gratia*, *sola fide* teaching of the Particular Baptist confessions of faith. Baptists, historically, have claimed to be Protestants, and the sovereign grace theology which has been the Particular Baptist heritage since the time of the Reformation entitles them to make that claim.

¹ See Leonard Verduin, *The Reformers and Their Stepchildren* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1964).

² William L. Lumpkin, *Baptist Confessions of Faith*, rev. ed. (Valley Forge: Judson Press, 1969), 116-23.

³ cf. Lonnie D. Kliever, 'General Baptist Origins: the Question of Anabaptist Influence', *Mennonite Quarterly Review*, 36 (1962), 291-321.

⁴ Lumpkin, *Baptist Confessions*, 224.

⁵ There is, however, some evidence that Particular Baptists were acquainted with the *Foundation of Christian Doctrine*, the most important theological writing of Menno Simons. See Glen H. Stassen, 'Anabaptist Influence in the Origin of the Particular Baptists', *Mennonite Quarterly Review*, 36, (1962), 322-48.

⁶ Lumpkin, *Baptist Confessions*, 167 and 228 (emphasis mine).

⁷ *Ibid.*, 245 (emphasis mine). ⁸ *Ibid.*, 297 (emphasis mine). ⁹ *Ibid.*, 322. ¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 244-48.

¹¹ cf. Hans J. Hillerbrand, 'Anabaptism and the Reformation: Another Look', *Church History*, 29 (1960), 404-23; Kenneth R. Davis, *Anabaptism and Asceticism* (Scottsdale, PA: Herald Press, 1974), especially 102-8 and 266-97.

¹² Kliever, 'General Baptist Origins,' 317.

¹³ cf. articles XXI, XXII, XXIII, Lumpkin, *Baptist Confessions*, 162-63.

¹⁴ cf. articles IX and X, *Ibid.*, 263-65.

¹⁵ Balthasar Hubmaier, 'On Free Will,' in *Spiritual and Anabaptist Writers*, eds. George H. Williams and Angel M. Mergal (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1957), 120.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 124 (emphasis mine).

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 125. For a more enthusiastic appraisal of Hubmaier's doctrine, see W. R. Estep, 'The Anabaptist View of Salvation,' *Southwestern Journal of Theology*, 20 (1978), 32-49.

¹⁸ Hans Denck, 'Whether God is the Cause of Evil,' in *Spiritual and Anabaptist Writers*, 97.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 101. cf. Walter Fellmann, 'Theological Views of Hans Denck,' *Mennonite Life*, 18 (1963), 43-46.

²⁰ Lumpkin, *Baptist Confessions*, 46.

²¹ Thieleman J. van Braght, *The Bloody Theatre or Martyrs' Mirror of the Defenseless Christians*, tr. J. F. Sohm, 5th ed. (Scottsdale, PA: Herald Press, 1950), 379.

²² Robert Friedmann, 'The Doctrine of Original Sin as Held by the Anabaptists of the Sixteenth Century,' *Mennonite Quarterly Review*, 33 (1959), 206-7.

²³ Peter Riedeman, *Account of Our Religion, Doctrine and Faith*, tr. Hutterian Society of Brothers, 2nd ed. (Riffton, NY: Plough Publishing House, 1970), 57-9.

²⁴ Denck, 'Whether God is the Cause of Evil,' 109.

²⁵ Melchoir Hofmann, 'The Ordinance of God,' in *Spiritual and Anabaptist Writers*, 192.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, 201. ²⁷ Lumpkin, *Baptist Confessions*, 47. ²⁸ van Braght, *Martyrs' Mirror*, 380-81. ²⁹ Lumpkin, *Baptist Confessions*, 69-70. ³⁰ van Braght, *Martyrs' Mirror*, 378.

³¹ Denck, 'Whether God is the Cause of Evil,' 102; cf. Hubmaier, 'On Free Will,' 132.

³² cf. The General Baptist, 'A Brief Confession or Declaration of Faith' (1660), article IV, and the Particular Baptist Second London Confession (1677), article VIII in Lumpkin, *Baptist Confessions*, 225-26 and 262.

³³ cf. Second London Confession, article X in *Ibid.*, 264-65.

³⁴ Dietrich Phillips, 'The Church of God,' in *Spiritual and Anabaptist Writers*, 236-37.

³⁵ *The Complete Works of Menno Simons*, tr. Leonard Verduin and ed. J. C. Wenger (Scottsdale, PA: Herald Press, 1956), 92.

³⁶ Ulrich Stadler, 'Cherished Instructions on Sin, Excommunication and the Community of Goods,' in *Spiritual and Anabaptist Writers*, 274-75.

³⁷ See Dordrecht Confession, article XVI in Lumpkin, *Baptist Confessions*, 76-77.

The Religious Affections and Revival Today

by Victor Budgen

The enthusiasm of Dr. Martyn Lloyd-Jones for Jonathan Edwards is well-known. 'If I had the power I would make these two volumes compulsory reading for all ministers! Edwards seems to satisfy all round; he really was an amazing man,' is his well-known comment on the flyleaf of the recent Banner of Truth reprint of the works of Edwards.¹ Elsewhere, with regard to Edwards' deep spirituality and meticulous honesty as a commentator and writer, Dr. Lloyd-Jones declared that 'he is one of the most honest expositors I have ever read. He never evades a problem; he faces them all.'²

On the issue of the extraordinary and supernatural gifts of the Spirit, Edwards consistently argued for their cessation. He did not do this in a few casual off-hand comments but in a consistent, closely-reasoned stance. He had met claimants to such gifts in his own day. He totally rejected their claims. We must ask why he did this. To do so will show us how relevant his arguments are to the situation in our own day.

Firstly we note as we ourselves pursue this historical study, that, although history is a vital subject, it must always be subordinate to Scripture. Edwards saw this clearly in connection with certain aspects of the Revival in New England which were so strikingly new to people. He specifically stated that, if contemporaries judge of the work by 'history' 'instead of the Holy Scriptures' they were liable to error. 'It has all along been God's manner to open new scenes,' was his firm contention (I 369 see footnote 1). Elsewhere he tells us that, 'no deviation from what has hitherto been usual, let it be never so great, is an argument that a work is not from the Spirit of God, if it be no deviation from his prescribed rule' (II 261). His own firm conviction, frequently expressed, was that in the latter days God was indeed going to bring to pass new and remarkable things in revival.

Yet secondly we must also recognise that Edwards never advocated a *laissez-faire* approach. Everything must be rigorously scrutinised. 'It is a difficult thing to be a hearty zealous friend of what has been *good* and glorious in the late extraordinary appearances, and to rejoice much in it; and, at the same time, to see the evil and pernicious tendency of what has been *bad*, and earnestly to oppose that. Yet, I am *humbly* but *fully* persuaded, we shall never be in the way of truth, a way acceptable to God, and tending to the advancement of Christ's kingdom, till we do so' (I 234). This course he relentlessly pursued in his own writings.

Thirdly, we must heed the warning of Edwards on the dangers of blind allegiance to any great leader in all the things that they do and say. 'We go too far, when we look upon the success that God gives to some person, in making them the instruments of doing much good, as a testimony of God's approbation of those persons and all the courses they take' (I 408). A

contemporary illustration of this danger was the way many people followed the extravagances of Davenport, even saying that it was wrong to criticise a man so signally used by God, only to find out later that Davenport himself repented of many of his views, and indeed publicly recanted and apologised. By this time it was too late to save some groups which had followed him and plunged headlong into error.³

Undoubtedly a key passage for Edwards in his understanding of the cessation of extraordinary and supernatural gifts was 1 Corinthians chapter 13. Here is his exposition as it is found in 'Charity and its Fruits'. 'The extraordinary gifts of the Spirit, such as the gift of tongues, of miracles, of prophecy, etc., are called extraordinary, because they are such as are not given in the ordinary course of God's providence. They are not bestowed in the way of God's ordinary providential dealings with his children, but only on extraordinary occasions, as they were bestowed on the prophets and apostles to enable them to reveal the mind and will of God before the canon of Scripture was complete, and so on the primitive Church, in order to the founding and establishing of it in the world.'⁴ Thus in his view the above gifts were revelatory. They were bestowed as an 'interim measure' by God before Scripture was completed. The 'perfection' of verse 10 in 1 Corinthians chapter 13 was the completion of Scripture.

'But since the canon of the Scripture has been completed, and the Christian Church fully founded and established, these extraordinary gifts have ceased. But the ordinary gifts of the Spirit are such as are continued to the Church of God throughout all ages; such gifts as are granted in conviction and conversion, and such as appertain to the building up of the saints in holiness and comfort,' he continues.⁵ Thus we see that such gifts have ceased and far from being impoverished by this departure we have gifts of far more permanent and far-reaching efficacy, the gift of regeneration and sanctification issuing forth in love.

Hence in 'Marks of a Work of the Spirit of God' he refers to 'these gifts of inspiration as childish things, in comparison of the influence of the Spirit in divine love' (II 274). Once again he emphasises that such extraordinary gifts have ceased, this time also drawing an argument from the last verse of 1 Corinthians chapter 13, where we read that faith, hope and love are to abide. They obviously abide in this life for in heaven faith and hope disappear since, we live then by sight, and hope is no longer necessary. '... here is a manifest *antithesis*, between *remaining*, and that *failing, ceasing and vanishing away*, spoken of in the 8th verse' (II 275). The conclusion is that the gifts cease in this life when we have 'a complete standing rule established', namely Scripture in its completeness (II 274).

In his 'Notes on the Bible' he discusses this passage in exactly the same way. While he acknowledges that the passage has some reference to heaven it must, argues Edwards, also apply to the time when 'the canon of Scripture was completed' when 'the gifts of prophecy and tongues, etc., ceased at the

end of the church's age of childhood' (II 800). In fact he interprets the passage very much as many deal with Matthew chapter 24 where it is often given a twofold reference, being applied firstly to the destruction of Jerusalem in AD 70 and secondly to the return of the Lord Jesus Christ.

This naturally leads Edwards to affirm boldly both the completeness of Scripture and our obligation to reach a complete understanding. In its perfection it reveals all God's designs and government of the world to us. Edwards contends that 'nothing else sets before us how he will govern it to the end, by an orderly prophecy of future events' (I 617). Not surprisingly this particular quotation comes from a work where Edwards strongly argues that God will do many great things in revival in the latter part of world history.

How strongly our author asserts that Scripture and not providence must be our rule. It must be conceded that God blessed Jacob in his trickery and Solomon when he was worshipping at the high places (I 409, 477). But he blessed neither of them because of these acts of disobedience. He blessed them in spite of such. If this is a necessary consideration with regard to prominent saints in Scripture, how much more should we follow this principle in dealing with contemporaries whom God has greatly used.

According to Edwards the book of Revelation and its concluding chapter have a particular significance. 'Christ having given this last revelation to his church to be added to the book of Scripture, with which the canon was to be shut up (concluded) and sealed, by the instrumentality of the apostle John, who lived the longest of the apostles, and wrote this book after all the rest were dead; orders John, verse 10, to publish this book, wherein such great future judgements are revealed as coming on the wicked, and such an affecting declaration of the future glory of the saints, to enforce the rest of God's word and grace; and then intimates, that no more revelations are to be expected . . . the next revelation that is to be expected . . . is to be his immediate appearance in judgement . . .' (II 520). Because 'the Revelation is a *prophecy*' and because of the finality of its themes nothing more can be said until God says it in person in his Son (II 86).

All this means that we are under great obligation to acquire more knowledge. 'We are now under much greater advantages to acquire knowledge in divinity, than the people of God were of old, because since that time the canon of Scripture is much increased,' he challenges, urging us to search the Scripture and procure other books (II 160. See also 162). Because he does not expect that all the volumes of divinity in the libraries of heaven will be solely by English or New England divines, but also by 'Negroes and Indians' he expects a growth in the corporate knowledge of the church and 'a wonderful unravelling of the difficulties in the doctrines of religion, and clearing up of seeming inconsistencies' (I 609). It is a rare vision. But was he wrong? He would take this further. 'It is an argument with me, that the world is not yet very near its end, that the church has made no greater progress in under-

standing the mysteries of the Scriptures' (II 474). Many things remain to be discovered. It is customary and sometimes proper to bewail our lack of knowledge but Edwards would beckon us to greater heights.

Edwards stress on the mind must not be ignored in this connection. A current and widely held view of tongue speaking is that it is an exercise whereby the mind or intelligence is held in abeyance. We would dispute this interpretation of 1 Corinthians 14 and it would seem clear that Edwards would lend his support. '... men receive nothing, when they understand nothing; and are not at all edified, unless some knowledge be conveyed; agreeable to the apostle's arguing, 1 Corinthians 14:2-6.' We recall that the tongue speaker was edified. The implication is that he understood what he was saying.⁶ 'God deals with a man as with a rational creature; and when faith is in exercise, it is not about something he knows not what (II 158). Moreover it is reason that distinguishes man from the beasts (II 159).

His tremendously balanced viewpoint is well expressed in the following. 'Holy affections are not heat without light; but evermore arise from some information of the understanding, some spiritual instruction that the mind receives, some light or actual knowledge' (I 281). Therefore John the Baptist is his ideal of the true gospel minister since with him 'Divine light is attended with heat; and so, on the other hand, a truly divine and holy heat and ardour is ever accompanied with light' (II 958). In keeping with this ministers ought to preach with great fervour and also aim at reaching the understanding 'and endeavour clearly and distinctly to explain the doctrines of religion, and unravel the difficulties that attend them ...' (I 391). This should even lead in some circumstances (cases of melancholy excepted) to administering more light to souls under conviction and distressed by fear of hell (I 392).

Even in the transports and rapturous feelings experienced by John Flavel in his celebrated journey both on horse-back and in heavenly realms there was nevertheless an 'intenseness of his mind' (I 370). Also with regard to those under deep conviction Edwards was satisfied to know that 'there was a clear view of a desert of that misery, and that by the pollution of the best duties' (I 377). 'There has been a very great sense of the certain truth of the great things revealed in the gospel,' he continues. During the revival some came under terrible and overwhelming conviction of sin but Edwards can affirm that 'generally, in these agonies they have appeared to be in the perfect exercise of their reason' although there were a few exceptions to this known to him (II 270). Yet he can categorically state that he knew of no-one lastingly deprived of the use of reason although some found it very difficult to put their thoughts into words.

All this leads to a recurring theme in his writing, the lack of true understanding as a frequent feature of spurious faith. 'Now there are many affections which do not arise from any light in the understanding; which is a sure evidence that these affections are not spiritual, let them be ever so

high,' Edwards declares, instancing such things as people seeing sights or hearing sounds or voices (I 282). Hence in a letter to Mr. Gillespie, he agrees that all are to be told that they are bound to believe in Christ yet a widespread beseeching people to believe with 'a lightless and sightless faith' is fatal, bringing great discredit on the gospel in multiplying people with a 'blind, dark and stupid faith' (I 340). Edwards was never taken in by those who ignored what the Scripture described as the qualifications of a real saint and substituting false tests of their own 'such as impressions on the imagination, instead of renewing influences on the heart; pangs of affection, instead of the habitual tempers of the mind' (I 475).

In common with all the Puritans Edwards sees Saul, Balaam and Judas as clear examples of those who had false faith. He refers to them on numerous occasions (I 251 and 254, 268, 285, 287, 405). As a typical example of his mode of argument, he points out that Balaam had various immediate revelations from God, even one of the coming Messiah, the Star rising out of Jacob. 'But Balaam had no spiritual discovery of Christ; that day-star never spiritually rose in his heart, he being but a natural man' (I 268). The tragedy is that people can often be deceived by 'false discoveries and elevations' to their own damnation. 'The chief ground of the confidence of many of them, are impulses and supposed revelations (sometimes with texts of Scripture, and sometimes without) like what many of late have had concerning future events' (I 258).

Where such claim to have their own state of acceptance with God directly revealed to them Edwards is, to say the least, sceptical. There are no new revelations to give a person assurance (I 272 note). The word witness means proof rather than assertion in Scriptures dealing with the witness of the Spirit and such assurance is a reflexive act, rather than something direct from God (I 273). One of the reasons why Edwards so highly commends David Brainerd is because he had strong and clear Scriptural assurance without any new 'immediate witness' (II 448). He tellingly quotes Brainerd's summary of some of the aspects of false assurance. '... a mixture of *self-love*, *imagination*, and spiritual *pride*, or perhaps the influence of Satan transformed into an angel of light . . . they have on a sudden *imagined they saw Christ*, in some posture or other, perhaps on the cross, bleeding and dying for their sins; or it may be, smiling on them . . . some having had a passage, or perhaps many passages, of *Scripture* brought to their minds *with power* (as they express it) . . . some speak of seeing a great *light* which filled all the place where they were . . .' (II 451).

To complete the picture we record how, with perhaps a rare touch of humour, Edwards deftly delineates the kind of corporate self-deceit and Satanic bonhomie that such groups can enjoy. 'Indeed there is a counterfeit love, that often appears among those who are led by a spirit of delusion. There is commonly in the wildest enthusiasts, a kind of union and affection, arising from self-love, occasioned by their agreeing in those things wherein

they greatly differ from all others, and from which they are objects of the ridicule of all the rest of mankind . . . it is only the working of a natural self-love, and no true benevolence, any more than the union and friendship which may be among a company of pirates, that are at war with the rest of the world' (II 268).

Behind all spurious conversions lurks the relentless activity of Satan. His two chief characteristics are readily discerned. 'Love and humility are two things the most contrary to the spirit of the devil, of any things in the world; for the character that evil spirit, above all things consists in pride and malice' (II 269). It is pride in particular that Edwards analyses with all the powers of his acute discernment and deep spirituality. We must be very wary, he urges, when men appear to dwell more on the discovery of Christ than on the Christ who is supposedly discovered. 'A true saint, when in the enjoyment of true discoveries of the sweet glory of God and Christ, has his mind too much captivated and engaged by what he views without himself, to stand at that time to view himself, and his own attainments,' he shrewdly observes (I 278 see also 411).

Satan has consummate skill in managing the temptation of theological and spiritual pride because he 'was trained in the best divinity college in the universe'.⁷ Even the apostle Paul with all his great revelations had to be exceedingly watchful in this region (II 859). How much more should we be cautious in the giving of testimony with 'the great tendency it has to spiritual pride', in the avoidance of giddiness and 'light behaviour' before God.

'Some of the children of *Israel*, because they had gathered a store of *manna*, trusted in it; there being, as they apprehended, sufficient in the store they had gathered and laid up, without humbly looking to heaven, and stooping to the earth, for daily supplies; and the consequence was, that their *manna* bred worms and stank' (I 413). Just a little earlier in the same theological treatise on revival he had reminded us of this: 'And here, I humbly conceive, some eminent servants of Jesus Christ that we read of in ecclesiastical history, have been led into a mistake; and, through want of distinguishing such things as these from immediate revelations, have thought that God has favoured them, in some instances, with the same kind of divine influence that the apostles and prophets had of old' (I 406).

In time of Revival there is especial need to beware of Satan's attack from this angle. 'Pride is the worst viper in the heart; it is the first sin that ever entered into the universe, lies lowest of all in the foundation of the whole building of sin, and is the most secret, deceitful, and unsearchable in its ways of working, of any lusts whatever. . . .' Some eminent saints have been ensnared in this particular trap and especially after 'some eminent experience and extraordinary communion with God'. 'Some of the true friends of the work of God's Spirit have erred in giving too much heed to impulses and strong impressions on their minds, as though they were immediate significations from heaven to them, of something that should come to pass, or something

that it was the mind and will of God that they should do, which was not signified or revealed anywhere in the Bible without these impulses. These impressions, if they are truly from the Spirit of God, are of quite different nature from his gracious influences on the hearts of the saints: they are of the nature of the extraordinary *gifts* of the Spirit, and are properly inspiration, such as the prophets and apostles and others had of old; which the apostle distinguishes from the *grace* of the Spirit, 1 Corinthians 13' (II 274).

Of course many people crave the gifts today because of their longing for the miraculous or for something extra special. Yet genuine conversion is a dramatic work, truly miraculous, and may often be sudden in its effects (I 248). 'I am bold to say, that the work of God in the conversion of one soul, considered together with the source, foundation, and purchase of it, and also the benefit, end, and eternal issue of it, is a more glorious work of God than the creation of the whole material universe. It is the most glorious of God's works, as it above all others manifests the glory of God; it is spoken of in Scripture, as that which shows *the exceeding greatness of God's power, and the glory and riches of divine grace*, and wherein Christ has the most glorious triumph over his enemies, and wherein God is mightily exalted' (I 379). Christ's miracles were images of the great work He came to perform on men's hearts (I 577 and II 563). Fruit is always the only certain test of true conversion (I 302). Therefore Edwards saw ages of miracles in the particular sense as special ages. God has not left us with 'an uncertain guide; but hath himself given us a revelation of the truth in these matters, and hath done very great things to convey and confirm it to us; raising up many prophets in different ages, immediately inspiring them with this Holy Spirit, and confirming their doctrine with innumerable miracles or wonderful works out of the established course of nature' (II 160).

Here he is describing the New Testament situation. 'The next thing to be observed, is the enduing the apostles, and others, with extraordinary and *miraculous gifts* of the Holy Ghost; such as the gift of tongues, the gift of healing, of prophecy, etc. The Spirit of God was poured out in great abundance in this respect. . . .' He then points out that not only ministers but all sorts of people, men and women, were given the power to prophesy. He sees a great contrast with Old Testament times in all this and cites Numbers chapter 11 verse 29. 'And this continued in a very considerable degree to the end of the apostolic age, or the first hundred years after the birth of Christ, which is therefore called *the age of miracles*'.

However Edwards did not see all this as a permanent endowment since he concluded the section in this way: 'This was a great means of the success of the gospel, and of establishing the Christian church, not only in that age, but in all ages to the end of the world. For Christianity being established through so great a part of the known world by miracles, it was after that more easily continued by tradition; and by means of these extraordinary gifts of the Holy Ghost, the apostles and others were enabled to write the New

Testament, to be an infallible and perpetual rule of faith and manners to the church. And these miracles recorded in those writings are a standing proof of the truth of Christianity to all ages' (I 586, 7). Therefore, since we have not the infallible gift of discernment of the apostles, there is greater need for a lengthier examination of baptismal candidates (I 452).

It must also be said that by itself miracle convinces no-one. Again we take examples from both Testaments. Speaking on Luke chapter 16 verse 31 Edwards says that 'it may be they think, if they could see some prophet, and see him work miracles, that this would awaken them. But how was it then when there were prophets? There has rarely been a more degenerate time than that of Elijah and Elisha, who wrought so many miracles. The people did not regard their prophecies nor their miracles . . .' (II 70). He also instances God speaking from heaven in the time of Moses and the hard-heartedness of the people almost immediately after this.

Most importantly of all he stresses that to see Christ is not to believe in him. He asserts this in the above passage and in another context he quotes from Shepherd's 'Parable of the Ten Virgins'. 'I know the saints do know Christ as if immediately present: they are not strangers by their distance: if others have seen them more immediately, I will not dispute it. But if they have seen the Lord Jesus as immediately as if there on earth, yet Capernaum saw him so; nay some of them were disciples for a time, and followed him, John 6. And yet the Lord was hid from their eyes. Nay, all the world shall see him in his glory, which shall amaze them; and yet this is far short of having the saving knowledge of him, which the Lord doth communicate to the elect' (I 268).

As we have seen, Edwards believed that the extraordinary gifts were given both for an enabling in the writing of the New Testament and an interim measure until the New Testament was completed. Prophets spoke by 'immediate inspiration' (I 396). He says this with regard to 1 Corinthians chapter 14 and thus sees the gift as one of infallible utterance. It is also so with apostleship. 'Those who are spiritual among us have no infallible apostles to admonish them,' is his firm conviction (I 398). When he reluctantly ventures forth in print against certain views held by his illustrious grandfather he can indeed quote his own relative in support of his stance: 'All protestants agree that there is no infallibility at Rome; and I know nobody else pretends to any, since the apostles' day' (I 431). Although he can say that 'the apostolical times seem to have returned upon us', he speaks only in connection with the number of conversions (II 258).

His exposition of 1 Corinthians 13 and his understanding of the meaning of the gifts leads him as we would expect to reject utterly any notion that the supernatural gifts would be restored at some later or some last time. Thus he gently leads back to sanity a man whose delusion it was that the gifts should be restored! (I 363). He also digs deeper and brings out a much bigger theological objection against this theory. 'One reason why some have been ready

to lay weight on such impulses, is an opinion they have had, that the glory of the approaching happy days of the church would partly consist in restoring those *extraordinary gifts* of the Spirit. This opinion, I believe, arises partly through want of duly considering and comparing the nature and value of those two kinds of influences of the Spirit, *viz.* those that are ordinary and gracious, and those that are extraordinary and miraculous. The former are by far the most excellent and glorious; as the apostle largely shows (1 Cor. 12:31, etc.)' (II 274).

From one who so frequently and painstakingly pointed out how Balaam, Saul, Judas and others could possess great gifts without even being regenerate such an emphasis is not surprising. But who but Edwards could see that a man could even discern infallibly and accurately the godly estate of another man without himself being converted? He instances the case of Laban and Jacob (I 272). Moreover, even if we were to receive from God direct instructions about where we should go, it would be no more than a common gift which even unsaved people can receive (I 404-405). All the bodily agitations of the French prophets are to him no sure sign of their being inspired by God (I 378). Moreover one of the signs that his wife was genuinely visited by God was that the 'transporting views and rapturous affections' were 'not attended with any enthusiastic disposition to follow impulses, or any supposed prophetic revelations' (I 376).

The man of God is truly guided by a 'rectified palate', that is, by being steeped in God's word rather than by sudden spiritual hunches. Thus we need to know 'the *difference* between *spiritual understanding*, and all kinds and forms of *enthusiasm*, all imaginary sights of God, and Christ, and heaven; all supposed *witnessing* of the Spirit and testimonies of the love of God by immediate inward suggestion; all *impressions* of future events, and immediate revelations of any secret facts whatsoever'. This is coupled with a strong warning against relying on the imagination when 'An enthusiastical supposed manifestation of the love of God, is made by exciting an idea of a smiling countenance, or some other pleasant outward appearance, or by the idea of pleasant words spoken, or written, excited in the imagination, or some pleasant bodily sensation' (I 287).

Such revelations and prophecies are not neutral. It does not become a pastor to sit on the fence (a very uncomfortable position) and 'wait and see'. 'One erroneous principle, than which scarce any has proved more mischievous to the present glorious work of God, is a notion that it is God's manner in these days, to guide his saints, at least some that are more eminent, by inspiration, or immediate revelation. They suppose he makes known to them what shall come to pass hereafter, or what it is his will that they should do, by impressions made upon their minds, either with or without texts of Scripture; whereby something is made known to them, that is not taught in Scripture. By such a notion the devil has a great door opened for him; and if once this opinion should come to be fully yielded to, and established in the

church of God, Satan would have opportunity thereby to set up himself as the guide and oracle of God's people, and to have *his* word regarded as their infallible rule, and so to lead them where he would, and to introduce what he pleased, and soon to bring the Bible into neglect and contempt. Late experience, in some instances, has shown that the tendency of this notion is to cause persons to esteem the Bible as in a great measure useless' (I 404).

Edwards goes on to say how impossible it is to reason with a man who is directly inspired from heaven. But does the fact that many prophecies fail cause such to stop and think? Not at all. 'I have seen so many instances of the failing of such impressions, that would almost furnish a history,' reports Edwards, adding that those convinced that prophecy is to be restored will not be convinced! Edwards draws a different conclusion: 'It seems to be a testimony of God, that he has no design of reviving revelations in his church, and a rebuke from him to the groundless expectations of it' (I 404). Elsewhere he writes: 'I have seen them fail in very many instances, and know by experience that impressions being made with great power, and upon the minds of true, yea eminent saints — even in the midst of extraordinary exercises of grace, and sweet communion with God, and attended with texts of Scripture strongly impressed on the mind — are no sure sign of their being revelations from heaven. I have known such impressions fail, in some instances, attended with all these circumstances. They who leave the sure word of prophecy — which God has given us as a light shining in a dark place — to follow such impressions and impulses, leave the guidance of the polar star, to follow a *Jack with a lantern*. No wonder therefore that sometimes they are led into woeful extravagancies' (II 275).

The allusion to 2 Peter chapter 1 verses 16-21 is so typical of the approach to the gifts in the Puritan movement as a whole that we pause to underline its significance. Few interpreted 1 Corinthians 13 as did Edwards yet all seemed to believe firmly in the cessation of the gifts. And the passage which they seemed to turn to more than any other was this particular one. Says Edwards again: 'And why cannot we be contented with the divine oracles, that holy, pure word of God, which we have in such abundance and clearness, now since the canon of Scripture is completed? Why should we desire to have anything added to them by impulses from above? Why should we not rest that standing rule that God has given to his church, which, the apostle teaches us, surer than a voice from heaven? Or why should we desire to make the Scripture speak more to us than it does? Or why should any desire a higher kind of intercourse with heaven, than by having the Holy Spirit given in his sanctifying influences, infusing and exciting grace and holiness, love and joy, which is the highest kind of intercourse that the saints and angels in heaven have with God, and the chief excellency of the glorified man Christ Jesus?' (I 404).

The two key issues are — what is the final authority? and is regeneration the truly great work? It is not sufficient to receive 'a revelation'. 'It is no more

than a common gift; there is nothing in it but what natural men are capable of, and many of them had in the days of inspiration. A man may have ten thousand such revelations and directions from the Spirit of God, and yet not have a jot of grace in his heart,' is his strong assertion (I 405). 'Whereas in that leading of the Spirit which is peculiar to God's children, there is imparted that true wisdom and holy discretion, so often spoken of in the word of God; which is high above the other way, as the stars are above a glow-worm; and that which Balaam and Saul (who sometimes were led by the Spirit in that other way) never had, and no natural man can have without a change of nature' (I 287).

Of course Edwards realised that there was no new thing under the sun. 'And it is particularly observable, that in times of great pouring out of the Spirit to revive religion in the world, a number of those who for a while seemed to partake in it, have fallen off into whimsical and extravagant errors, and gross enthusiasm, boasting of high degrees of spirituality and perfection, censuring and condemning others as carnal.' After mentioning instances in early church history he then turns to Reformation times, citing another author. 'The first worthy reformers and glorious instruments of God, found a bitter conflict herein, so that they were exercised not only with formalists, and traditional papists on the one side, but men that pretended to be more enlightened than the reformers were, on the other side: hence they called those that did adhere to the Scripture, and would try revelations by it, Literists and Vowelists, as men acquainted with the words and vowels of the Scripture, having nothing of the Spirit of God . . .' (II 265). We began with a reminder from Edwards that history must always be subordinate to Scripture. So it must. But the insights that Edwards received from the past tied up with what he felt about the prophets and prophetesses of his day. And some of us may well feel that the insights and splendid scriptural exposition and theological acumen that he himself provides tie in with our assessment of the charismatic movement in our own day.

¹ *The Works of Jonathan Edwards*. Banner of Truth Reprint in two volumes. All references within the actual text of the manuscript of this article are to these volumes.

² 'The Puritan Experiment in the new World.' (Westminster Conference 1976) p. 109 in article on 'Jonathan Edwards'.

³ See *The Great Awakening*. Joseph Tracy. Banner of Truth Reprint 1976, esp. pp. 234, 240-253.

⁴ *Charity and its Fruits*. Banner of Truth, pp 29-30.

⁵ *ibid*.

⁶ See, for example, *1 Corinthians, a Contemporary Commentary*, Gordon H. Clark. Presbyterian and Reformed. 1975.

⁷ Quoted in 'Increasing in the Knowledge of God'. Puritan Papers 1960, p. 20. Dr. Packer, writer of the article, 'Jonathan Edwards and the Theology of Revival,' gives no reference for this intriguing comment!

The Centrality of Propitiation

By the editor

Propitiation signifies the appeasement of wrath by the offering of a sacrifice. There can be no true love without wrath. As God's love approves that which is good so his wrath abides upon that which is evil. Wrath is the reflex of love. Unless satisfaction is made for sinners there can be no reconciliation. Propitiation is that satisfaction. Those who shun the idea of God's wrath would take the word *propitiation* away from us and substitute *expiation* because the latter can be used without raising the question of wrath.

As gold is the first among metals so propitiation is the richest of all Biblical words. The cherubims gazed upon the golden mercyseat (propitiation is the literal meaning of the word 'mercy-seat' used in Heb. 9:5) — the place where the law was satisfied by the sprinkling of blood. The example of the cherubim was to be followed by the entire host of Hebrews who witnessed the bearing of the ark of God. They were to look to the place of propitiation. We are to do the same. The place of reconciliation is Calvary where the Lamb was slain; where Christ's blood was shed. Every communion service with the table spread with bread and wine focusses our attention on propitiation. Propitiation is central in the Old Testament as well as the New. The mercy seat or propitiatory was the most sacred spot in the camp of the Hebrews. Propitiation is the recurring theme through Israel's history. Abel's Lamb, Abraham's Isaac, the Levitical offerings, and Isaiah's man of sorrows all point to the propitiation essential for salvation.

Propitiation is central to justification by faith God's righteousness is imputed to believers on the grounds that sins have been remitted by virtue of the propitiation — 'Christ Jesus, whom God hath set

forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God' (Rom. 3:25, K.J.V.).

Propitiation is central to the work of Christ Christ himself as an high priest, the one representing us before God has made reconciliation (the Greek is propitiation) for the sins of the people (Heb. 2:17). This was the main work for which Christ came into the world and is the theme of the Hebrews epistle from ch. 2:17 to ch. 10:23.

Propitiation is central to our experience of salvation

Terrible are the convictions of the sinner who is awakened by the Holy Spirit. He sees the enormity of the guilt of sin he has committed before an infinitely Holy God. There is no adequate or satisfactory refuge for him other than *propitiation*. Thus the publican cries out in the agony of his soul, 'God be propitiated to me the sinner!' Every sinner who looks in faith to the Lamb and cries to God with the prayer of the publican will surely find salvation. Alternatively he who has never looked to the propitiation provided by Christ as the only source of mercy — how can he be saved?

Propitiation is central in the proclamation of the Gospel

'And he is the propitiation for our sins and not for ours only but for the sins of the whole world' (1 John 2:2). The propitiation of Christ will infallibly save those for whom it was made, no more, no less. But in preaching the propitiation — which is the heart of the Gospel, we must in no way feel restricted. We proclaim forgiveness to all the world, not Jews only, not rich only, not adults only, but all men everywhere, of every class and

description — they must all hear about the propitiation. There is nothing in all the universe more important than this! There is forgiveness of sin for every one who will repent and believe. By 'believe' we mean to place all faith and trust in Christ's perfect work of propitiation. This faith also means to trust in Christ's ability now as reigning Lord to save all who come to him, and that to the uttermost.

E.H.

The Etymology of the word Propitiation

The word is so apt for description of the work of Christ that it is not surprising to find the earliest translators of the Bible into English use it. 1. *The Action or Act of Propitiating* For instance in 1388, Wyclif translated Leviticus 25:9 as 'In the tyme of propiciacioun'. This usage appears not only in sacred writings. In 1750 Johnson in the 'Rambler' wrote 'By what propitiation, therefore, may I atone for my former gravity?' 2. *A propitiatory gift or sacrifice*. The 1552 Book of Common Prayer thus quoted 1 John 2:2 saying 'He is the propiciation for our synnes.'

Other instances of related words being used in sacred and secular writings may be brought forward to show that they are a legitimate part of our linguistic heritage.

'Propitiate' means to render favourable or appease (one offended). So in 1645 Waller wrote a poem 'To Mistris Broughton', with these lines 'You (her priest) declare what offerings may propitiate the Faire.' In 1759, Johnson wrote 'That the supreme Being may be more easily propitiated in one place than in another is the dream of idle superstition' ('Rassealas' XI). The famous translation of Plato by Jowett of 1876 also used the word: 'That they (the Gods) can be propitiated . . . is not to be allowed or admitted for an instant' (Plato ed. 2 V 153).

The Propitiator is clearly one who propitiates, and several instances of reference to Christ as the Propitiator can be quoted. Knox, Darcie and Bossuet are examples given in The Oxford English Dictionary (1909, Vol. VII).

Preachers have also used derivatives such as *propitiable* (easy to be appeased); *propitial* and *propitiatory* (place of atonement); the adverbs *propitiatingly* and *propitiatorily* (in a propitiatory manner) and the adjectives *propitiated* and *propitiating*. Examples are quoted in The Oxford English Dictionary (1909, Vol. VII).

International Baptist Conference

An opportunity to discuss and share this and other relevant subjects for Baptists will be provided D.V. in Toronto this year from October 18-21. H. Blocher and F. Buhler from France, Don Carson, B. Downing, Kenneth Good, Norman Street and J. Reisinger from the U.S.A., David Bugden, Bill Payne, Leigh Powell from Canada, J. Ferrier of St. Lucia and Herbert Carson and E. Hulse from England, are scheduled to present a variety of subjects. While recognising that this is a very small and modest representation of a very large Baptist world, it should offer a useful opportunity to be brought up to date on many fronts and if possible advance in some areas of research and mutual understanding. The conference is sponsored by the Toronto Baptist Seminary. The seminary is joined to the Jarvis Street Baptist Church which has recently called Norman Street to be their pastor. The seminary is well worthy of support as is the venture it is sponsoring. For details write to Toronto Baptist Seminary, 337 Jarvis Street, Toronto, Ont. M5B 2C7. Telephone 416 925-3263.

The establishment of the Free Grace Church in Lancaster was reported in *Reformation Today* No. 61. One of the elders, Mr. Michael Pearce, 25 Greenfields, CATON, Lancaster ('phone 770327) writes with an urgent request for prayer and practical support in the acquisition of property. The church at present meets in disadvantageous circumstances.

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