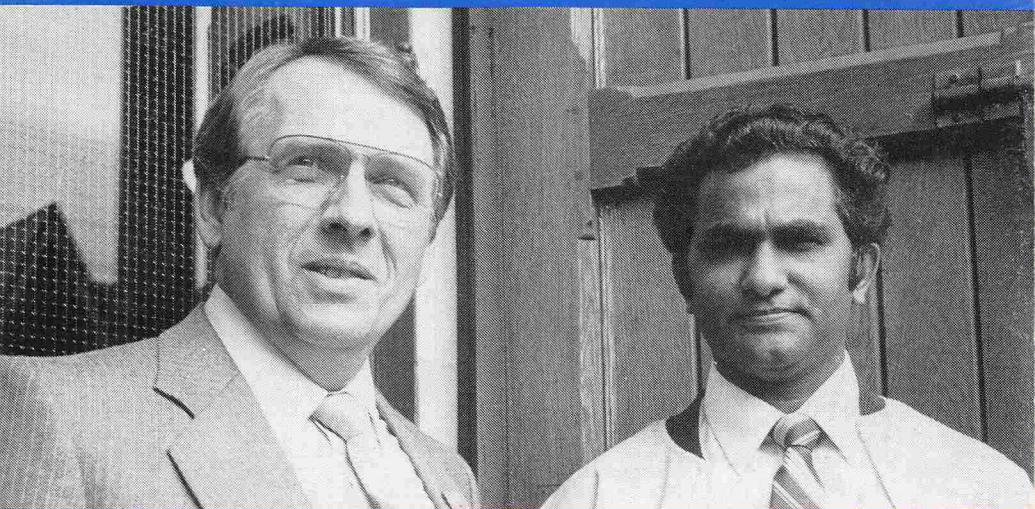
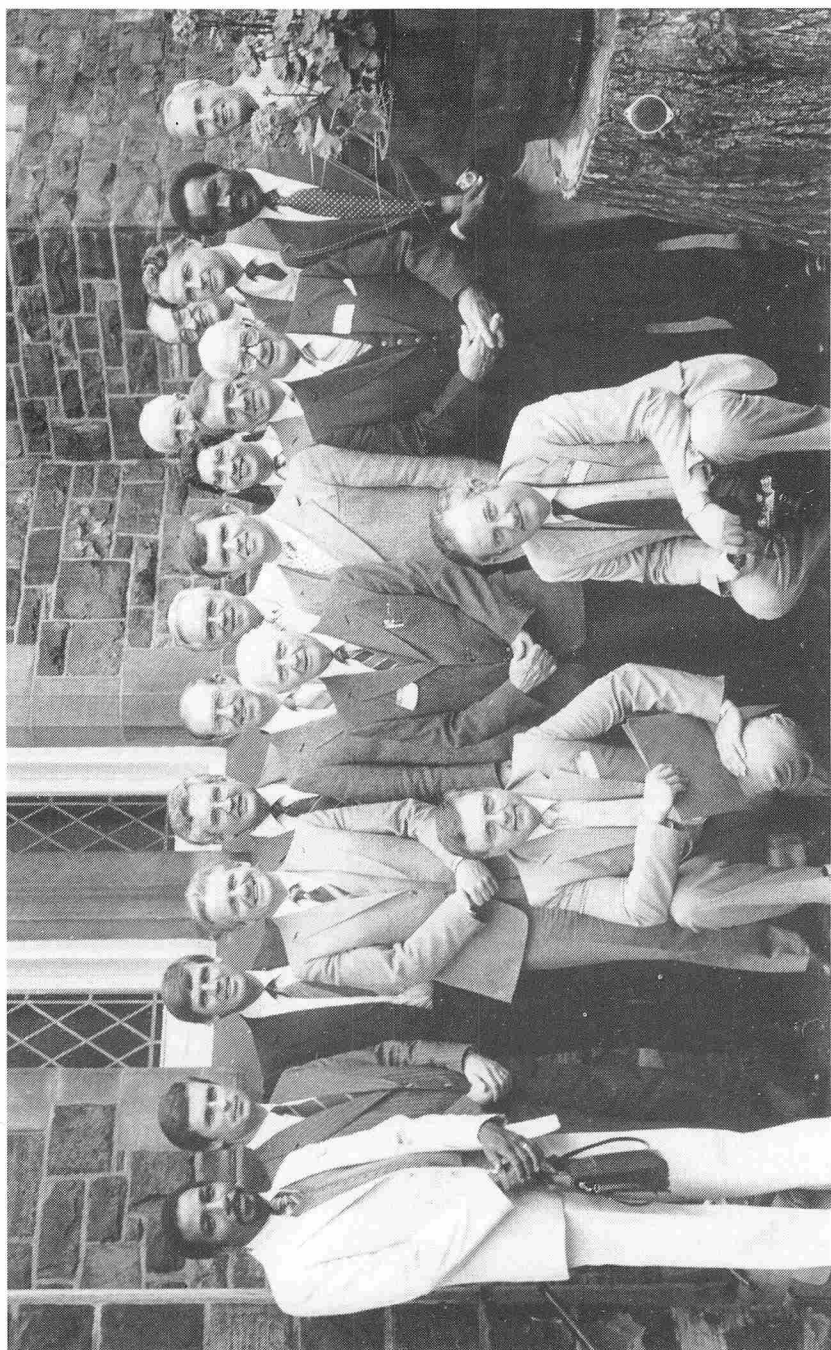
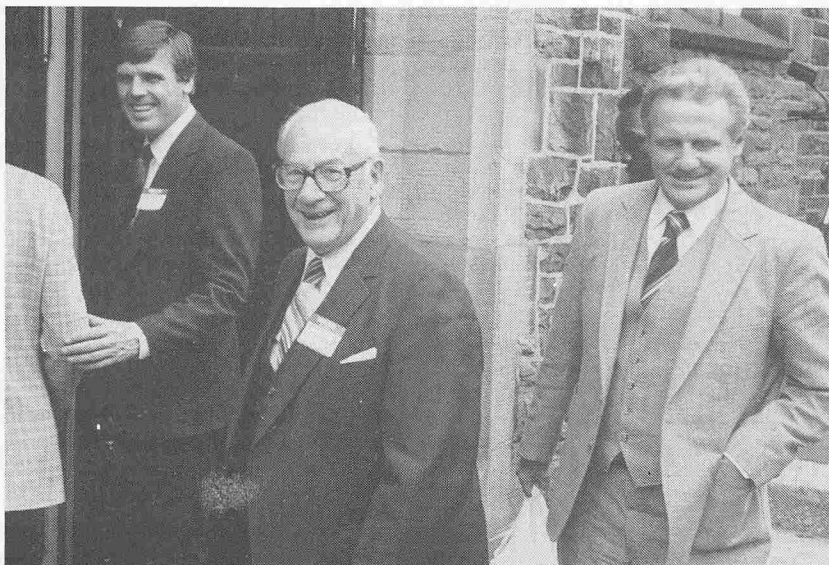


REFORM- ATION TODAY'85



- 1 EDITORIAL
- 3 THE SOUTHERN BAPTIST CONVENTION . . . HER ORIGIN,
GROWTH, PROSPERITY, AND PRESENT CRISES *Tom Nettles*
- 11 WHY HAVE ARTICLES OF FAITH?
- 13 BOOK NOTICES
- 15 THE LIFE AND BEING OF A LOCAL CHURCH IN RELATION
TO THE COMMUNITY *Keith Davies*
- 20 THE TESTIMONY OF VIJAY CHANDRA
- 22 PAUL'S METHOD OF PREACHING *Geoff Adams*
- 27 STUDIES IN BIBLICAL THEOLOGY *Don Garlington*





Martin Holdt (left) from South Africa, Dr. R. E. Brackstone of Canada, and John Campbell of Australia.

Editorial

The Second International Baptist Conference sponsored by the Toronto Baptist Seminary was held at Jarvis Street Baptist Church, Toronto, from October 15-19. No one personality or theme dominated the conference which was rich in expository materials. These are available in a ringbinder, 260 pages (details from Toronto Baptist Seminary, 130 Gerrard Street, E. Toronto, Ontario M5A 3T4). The application of the doctrines of grace to our churches was the basic concern of all the contributors.

The exposition by Geoff Adams on the method of Paul's preaching is an example of the work from the conference.

The benefit of such a conference for students from different parts of the world is considerable. As an example the testimony of Vijay Chandra is included in this issue of the magazine. Fiji is one of the most isolated islands of the world. Sometimes a man returns to his native country never to have another opportunity of exposure to like-minded preachers. Like Elijah of old (1 Kings 19:7) the one meal will have to sustain him for a long time.

The Southern Baptist Convention

We often glory in the work attempted and the victories won by the Reformers and the Puritans. But what about the message proclaimed by the title of this magazine? What about reformation today? Tom Nettles describes what the S.B.C. once was. Would the founding fathers of the S.B.C. recognise the denomination they laboured to promote? How far would they identify with the doctrines taught and the methods employed?

Front inside cover: *Some of the pastors and leaders who attended the International Baptist Conference in Toronto during October. See editorial.*

Front cover: *Leroy Cole (left), and Vijay Chandra of Fiji, whose testimony is included in this issue.*

The scope for reformation is enormous. On the map a church is mentioned with 25,000 members. How many of these are proper members? How many are well taught, integrated members? For obvious reasons most of our readers would not be impressed with such statistics but they do point to the extent of influence exerted by the S.B.C. in which there is an increasing consensus desiring reformation.

The life of the church and the community

On the first page of Keith Davies' article there is a quotation describing what is to be found in 2,000 houses in an average city. Nearby Belvidere Road Church here in Liverpool the situation for 2,000 houses is worse than that. An ocean of need surrounds our city churches. Thought, prayer, planning and work to effectively reach the community is essential for the witness of the local church. The thrust of Pastor Davies' material is timely and important.

The Altar Call?

One of the subjects at the next conference for ministers has the title 'The Altar Call'. What has the altar call to do with mission? A great deal! Since the days of Francis Xavier there has always been the tendency to baptise multitudes who merely acknowledge the Gospel or register a decision for Christ. To induce a response or even to attain to conviction of sin is not conversion or regeneration. The Bible provides all the data we need for the universal invitations of the Gospel. Operating within that pericope we have only one satisfactory end in view and that is union with Christ. In our love and zeal for souls we must not allow ourselves to indulge in human inventions, shortcuts, expedients and manipulations which go beyond the criteria of the Word. It is easy to support the altar call with stories of how it worked for this friend or that, but that fails to reckon with all the implications of the procedure. The remedy to misguided practice is to understand and love the methods used by the prophets, our Lord and his apostles, methods which always fully accorded with the truths of human responsibility and divine sovereignty.

As we study the lives and ministries of the foremost preachers of past eras we wonder why they did not employ the altar call method. Jonathan Edwards, George Whitefield, Asahel Nettleton, C. H. Spurgeon and Martyn Lloyd-Jones are key figures in this debate because we can see clearly the link between their theology and their practice. Southern Baptists are sometimes shocked to discover that powerful reasons are put forward against the altar call. They should consult their founding fathers. Basil Manly senior called into question the whole practice, J. B. Gambrell was opposed to it.

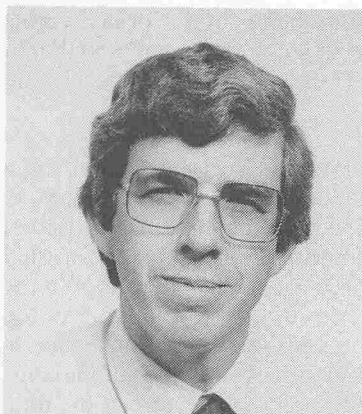
A most relevant Scripture is 1 Corinthians 3:12-15. Are we working to obtain gold, silver and precious stones, or are we involved in amassing hay, wood and stubble?

The progress of revelation in the New Testament

In the third of the series of his articles, Don Garlington highlights the importance and significance of Pentecost as one of the crucial events to which the prophecies of the Old Testament looked forward. He argues that Pentecost does not make sense unless it is understood in the light of progressive revelation. Our attention is drawn in particular to the New Testament antecedents of Pentecost. These include the declaration of John the Baptist concerning the Spirit and fire baptism that comes from the Messiah. He will baptise Israel with his own baptism. The encounter of Jesus with the Spirit and the coming of the Spirit upon him marks the inception of a new creation. The baptism of Jesus was for him what the day of Pentecost was to become to the Church. It was also the inauguration of a process leading to a baptism in the sea of sufferings terminating in death on the cross. Thus we have a paradox of life and death: the baptism of death for him, but a baptism of life for us.

The significance of Pentecost is summarised in the following terms:

1. It is the Day of the Lord — foretold by the prophets as a specific coming event.
2. The Church is baptised in the Spirit just as Christ had been three years earlier.
3. The essence of the pentecostal experience is repeated in the conversion of individuals. God's Spirit indwells every believer who in this way has the 'down payment', the guarantee, the assurance of eternal life.



Tom Nettles

The Southern Baptist Convention is by far the largest Baptist Denomination in the world today. This article by Dr. Tom Nettles is therefore of particular interest to all Baptists. Dr. Nettles teaches Church History at the Mid-America Baptist Theological Seminary, Memphis, Tennessee.

The Southern Baptist Convention – her Origin, Growth, Prosperity, and Present Crises

The influence of Andrew Fuller and associates upon the American Baptist scene was phenomenal. The formation of the Baptist Missionary Society in England soon prompted American Baptists to form similar societies specifically to support Carey and the mission to India. American Congregationalists, given a mission challenge by Adoniram Judson, formed the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions in 1812, and sent Judson to Burma. Judson, knowing that he would meet and visit William Carey before finally settling in Burma, felt he must be ready to defend the instructions of his society to baptise believers 'and their seed'. He thought he ought to sharpen his biblical defence of paedobaptist practice. His study, initially much to his chagrin, led him only to doubt the validity of his instructions. In spite of warnings from his wife, Ann, he eventually landed solidly upon the Baptist position. Instead of debating with Carey, Judson (yes, and wife Ann) were baptised by him in 1812. A few months later their friend Luther Rice followed suit.

Upon the urging of Carey, the request of Judson, and the labours of Luther Rice, other missionary societies began to be established in America. This increase of missionary spirit led eventually to the formation of the Baptist General Missionary Convention in April 1814, in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. The appointment of Mr. and Mrs. Judson as missionaries was one of the first acts of the new Convention. This Convention, better known perhaps as the Triennial Convention, brought together Baptists from the North and the South and had as its one goal the support of Foreign Missions.

For almost twenty years utmost harmony and unity of vision characterised Convention relationships. Healthy zeal for increase in the number of

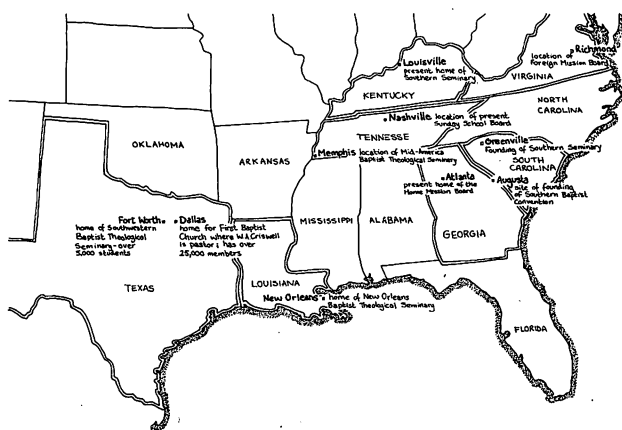
benevolent activities produced some disagreements over Society versus Associational structure. The fruit, however, was not division, but growth into new areas of cooperation: the formation of a Tract Society (1824), and a Home Mission Society (1832).

Beginning in 1833 conflict marred the harmony. English Baptists, in a celebrative and victorious mood over the abolition of slavery in the Empire, wrote a letter to Lucius Bolles in America. Bolles, a prominent Baptist leader, was corresponding secretary for the Triennial Convention. The letter consisted of an admonition to the Triennial Convention to do all it could to abolish the institution of slavery in America. Bolles, after consulting with officials of the Convention, answered that little or nothing could be done by the Convention as such because of its organisational structure and purpose and the autonomous nature of the churches; additionally, America's political structure at the time prevented even Congress from such power.

In spite of this apparent impotence, Baptists in the North began to show clearly their sympathy with the abolitionist cause. Baptists in the South felt threatened. Would they continue to be treated as equal members of the various societies in which they had cooperated with other Baptists in America for years? They feared not.

Each year brought more zealous abolitionist activity from Baptists in the North, even the formation of an American Baptist Anti-Slavery Convention (1840). In the light of these sobering developments, southerners decided to test the desire of the acting board of the Triennial Convention to maintain sectional equality in the Convention. After one such attempt was sidestepped successfully by the acting board, Baptists in Alabama, in 1844, flatly asked, 'Are slaveholders equally entitled with non-slaveholders to all the privileges of our union?' The answer came: 'Should a slaveholder submit himself to us as a missionary and insist on retaining his slaves we could not appoint him.' For many, the moral issue was so clear-cut that they deemed any other response as ethically impossible; others, however, felt the slave issue much more complicated and indeed, invested other issues in the present denominational crisis with equal importance. Many southerners, though certainly not all, would welcome the chance to be divested of slavery. 'Slavery has been inherited by her,' they said: 'It clings to her; she feels it to be a burden and a curse; and gladly would she get rid of it, if she could do so without inflicting greater mischiefs than those which she would attempt to remove.' Many godly and considerate people in the South shared this view.

The issue of immediate import concerned the devastation of missionary efforts from the South. The decision of the board in principle simply prohibited the southerners from fulfilling the missionary imperative. Additionally, their action contradicted the constitutional equality of all participating in the Convention and violated the autonomy of the local church as the only New Testament



institution for calling and setting apart missionaries. An arbitrary qualification proscribing a whole class was introduced – ‘non-slave holding’.

As a result of such prescriptions and the ecclesiological and constitutional impasse, Baptists in the South organised, in 1845, a separate Convention. The stated purpose of the Convention was to ‘elicit, combine, and direct the energies of the whole denomination in one sacred effort for the propagation of the Gospel’. In conformity to the purpose, two boards were organised immediately: The Foreign Mission Board and the Domestic Mission Board.

Growth and Prosperity

After beginning with only two boards, Southern Baptists soon saw the need to engage in support of other ministries. The Bible Board, for distribution of the Word of God, was begun in 1851. This became a casualty of the civil war in 1863 but was replaced by the Sunday School Board. Financial panic in 1873 brought about its demise. Eventually the Sunday School Board was re-established in 1891 and to this day provides the great majority of varied kinds of literature for 30,000 Southern Baptist churches. It publishes 140 different periodicals with an annual distribution in excess of 80 million.

Education also found a lodging within Southern Baptist life. Several colleges were supported by State Conventions even before the founding of the Southern Baptist Convention. These institutions have prospered so greatly that one State Convention, Texas, sponsors eight separate colleges, five of them at University status. Most other State Conventions, especially in the South, sponsor at least two liberal arts colleges from which many Baptist ministers receive their final formal training.

The great need in the mind of many denominational leaders of the 19th century centred on theological education. In 1859 the first Southern Baptist Seminary was founded in Greenville, South Carolina. James Petigru Boyce (1827-c.1885)

exerted the principle energy leading to this establishment. Around Boyce gathered an outstanding faculty including John A. Broadus, Basil Manly, Jr., and William Williams. This seminary eventually moved to Louisville, Kentucky.

The famous leader, B. H. Carroll, was responsible, under God, for founding the second Southern Baptist Seminary. In 1908 Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary was founded in Ft. Worth, Texas. Now the largest seminary in the world, Southwestern enrolls more than 5,100 students. Geographical and numerical expansion has become so great that Southern Baptists now support six seminaries through the Cooperative Programme and at least two others, Mid-America and Luther Rice, through the donations of individual churches.

Southern Baptists desire to engage in comprehensive Christian ministry has given rise to other enterprises. The Historical Commission stores and makes available for research much material of historical value. The Christian Life Commission sensitises Southern Baptists to numerous ethical issues which confront Christians today. The Radio and Television Commission produces and broadcasts a wide variety of programmes aimed at a considerable range of audiences in an attempt to confront the world with the Gospel. Its most recent enterprise is the development of a 24-hour cable television channel called ACTS (American Christian Television System), transmitted via satellite. The Stewardship Commission encourages Baptists in the wise use of financial resources and aids in discovering creative and expansive means of endowment stewardship. This agency supplements the ministry of several foundations connected with State Conventions; e.g. Georgia Baptist Foundation, Mississippi Baptist Foundation, etc. Estate planning has become a major ministry leading to vastly increased support of a multitude of educational and benevolent institutions.

Other subdivisions of each of these agencies would create a list too long to be meaningful. The publications arising from these various enterprises could occupy the total reading time of an above-average reading Southern Baptist pastor. Top all of this off with Sunday School, Church Training, Brotherhood, Women's Missionary Union, Church Music, and Youth Divisions, in most of the State Convention organisations, and one is confronted with one of the organisational wonders of the modern evangelical world.

The ingenious financial plan behind these manifold Christian ministries is called the Cooperative Programme. Begun in 1925, its formation constituted the main success of the 75 Million Campaign, a five year programme which provided greatly increased support for all Baptist missionary, educational, and benevolent work. All official Southern Baptist agencies and institutions receive a percentage of Cooperative Programme funds. All State Convention agencies are funded through the State Cooperative Programmes. Local churches voluntarily designate a percentage of the church budget for this purpose and, in turn, these funds are divided between the State Programmes and the World-wide Programmes.



John A. Broadus

The early years of the life of the Southern Baptist Convention saw many of God's most splendid servants in its ranks. Among them was John A. Broadus. Born January 24, 1827, in Culpepper County, Virginia, and educated at the University of Virginia, he served as tutor of Latin and Greek at that University while he laboured as pastor of Charlottesville Baptist Church. He continued as pastor of the church until 1859 when he became Professor of New Testament Interpretation and Homiletics at the newly-formed Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in Greenville, South Carolina. The seminary, which eventually moved to Louisville, Kentucky, benefited from Broadus's labours until his death on March 16, 1894.

Broadus's *On the Preparation and Delivery of Sermons* still remains a classic in homiletics and his commentary on Matthew in the *American Commentary* series never fails to provoke reverent, godly, and edifying reflections on the Word of God. Such servants of God are rare and some generations never see one so choice as Broadus. May God raise up his kind in our day.

With such a plethora of causes, it is remarkable that still close to 50 percent of the Cooperative Programme budget is earmarked for foreign missions, supporting close to 3,000 foreign missionaries and all the various needs connected with their particular fields of service. Another 3,000 home missionaries work in an incredible variety of situations and often perform highly specialised ministries. They find their support from approximately 20 percent of the Cooperative Programme budget. In addition, two major offerings, one each for foreign and home missions, draw special attention from Southern Baptists each year: The Lottie Moon Foreign Mission Christmas Offering and the Annie Armstrong Home Mission Easter Offering.

Present Crises

Present troubles within the SBC spring from theological roots. Such poisonous herbs, however, were not present in the Southern Baptist garden at its first planting. Instead, this came at a most auspicious time theologically. Two major doctrinal areas had been purified and strengthened by virtue of numerous fiery trials to which they had been submitted: bibliology and soteriology.

Deism and Socinianism in the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries had launched extended and greatly refined attacks against the historic Christian doctrine of revelation. Evangelical Christianity mounted its cannons in defence of this fortress and in the process exposed the weaknesses of the opposition and uncovered new and glorious and impenetrable strengths in the orthodox doctrine. Early Southern Baptists became heirs to this strong doctrine. Not only did they appreciate its value but they were determined to protect its purity. The definitiveness of the action taken by J. P. Boyce in the Toy controversy at Southern Seminary in 1879 demonstrates this conclusively.¹ Basil Manly's *The Bible Doctrine of Inspiration*, while not a detailed discussion of critical theories, gives a firm rejoinder to the basic philosophical commitments of higher criticism. There can be no reasonable doubt that early Southern Baptists firmly and knowledgeably adhered to biblical infallibility and inerrancy.

Experiential evangelical Calvinism constituted soteriology for early Southern Baptists. The false Calvinism opposed by Andrew Fuller never had an advocate

in Southern Baptist circles. The anti-mission society Baptists who opposed the Triennial Convention and hardened into hyper-Calvinism had long since absented themselves so that that plague never threatened to undo Southern Baptist missionary efforts. The entire purpose for the founding of the Convention, as previously indicated, centred upon missionary work. No enervating debates, therefore, as to whether all men are duty bound to believe the Gospel or what part of the Gospel should be preached to what sort of people ever occurred.

On the other side of soteriology, the 1830's had seen the Campbell controversy arise in Baptist life. Alexander Campbell advocated an intellectual assent as biblical faith, dismissed the regenerative work of the Holy Spirit upon the sinner prior to faith and repentance as unnecessary, and, in all, virtually duplicated the errors of Robert Sandeman. Campbell was eventually disfellowshipped from regular Baptist churches and Associations and, sadly, took a large number of followers with him. Due to this disruptive happening, Southern Baptists felt keenly the dangers of this classic 'easy-believism' and at every hand sought to shield their message and their methods from this error.

Affirmations of unconditional election, effectual calling, total depravity, definite atonement, and perseverance of the saints abound in the theological writings of nineteenth-century Southern Baptists. W. B. Johnson (the first president of the Convention), Basil Manly, Sr., Richard Fuller, R. B. C. Howell, P. H. Mell, John L. Dagg, James P. Boyce, John A. Broadus, and B. H. Carroll were neither exceptional nor unusual as they joyfully, confidently, and zealously built the doctrines of grace into Southern Baptist life. These doctrines so pervaded the Baptist mentality that in 1905 F. H. Kerfoot (who succeeded J. P. Boyce as professor of theology at Southern Seminary) could say in a confession of faith 'nearly all Baptists believe what are usually termed the "doctrines of grace" '.

From such a felicitous theological and missionary beginning, and from such numerical and organisational prosperity, one should not infer that all is peaceful in the Southern Baptist Zion. Quite the contrary. In fact, Roy Honeycutt, president of Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, has declared 'holy war' on a group within the Convention. This 'war' pits a large group called 'Denominational Loyalists' against a large and coherent group (an unholy alliance, according to Honeycutt) of traditional conservatives.

What issue could possibly bring such distress to a group apparently so successful and happy? The answer depends on which group fields the question. The traditional conservative will say, 'The issue is biblical inerrancy. A gradual but definite drift of our agencies and institutions away from our historic affirmations of the full truthfulness of the canonical text in the original manuscripts sounds the death knell for evangelical Christianity as held by our forefathers.' The denominational loyalist will say, 'The fundamentalist theory about the origin of the Bible not only arises from a restrictive scientific rationalism, but threatens to undo the historic Baptist commitment to the priesthood of the believer,

freedom of conscience, and sole competence of the individual. This theory is being used as a bludgeon to dismantle the unity and fellowship of Baptist life as symbolised in the Cooperative Programme.'

All these sentiments presently focus on the power to control the agencies and institutions of the Convention. These establishments answer to boards of trustees which are appointed by a Committee on Boards, which is appointed by a Committee on Committees, which is selected by the President of the Convention in consultation with the Vice-Presidents. The election of the President, therefore, assumes gigantic proportions. Traditional conservatives are now in the sixth consecutive year of gaining the ascendancy in the pivotal position. For this reason the self-styled Denominational Loyalists feel that if a knock-out punch is not delivered immediately, they will soon be at the mercy of the conservatives controlling every board, agency, and institution.

In actuality, a major crisis does centre on biblical authority. It is not of recent origin, however, but has been building pressure for 25 years. The Elliott Controversy over Genesis (1959-1963) at Midwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, and the Broadman Commentary Controversy (1970-1972), never terminated in a satisfactory settlement. Instead, each left the theological issue of authority poorly defined and even more poorly defended. Without doubt, the affirmation of biblical inerrancy in the autographs enjoyed the splendour of unimpeachable orthodoxy for the first 250 years of modern Baptist life. Acquiescence to non-Christian world views gave rise to radical biblical criticism and ideological as well as biological theories of evolution which have slowly but surely weakened commitment to the Bible as the written Word of God, incapable of error.

The depth of this problem is tragic indeed. When a teacher who contends that Jesus' disciples glamourised and embellished his self-understanding and accomplishments to appear more impressive than they actually were can maintain popularity with his colleagues and confident trust within many churches, one must certainly concede that something desperate is on hand. When a teacher who denies the necessity of Jesus's death for a sinner's forgiveness and considers the Pauline view of legal satisfaction in the death of Christ as a transient cultural model is considered evangelical and orthodox, one must know that somewhere along the way the banner was changed. Yes, the turmoil is more than just an attempted ecclesio-political *coup*; the basic Christian commitment to the necessity of a divine revelation is at stake. Even the infidels understood the principle two centuries ago, as did the pagans virtually two millenia ago. Admit or demonstrate an error in the book of divine revelation, or diminish the necessity of such revelation, and historic Christianity is raised to the dust.

Another crisis, less obvious, in fact alarmingly subtle, threatens Southern Baptist life. Not only is the nature of Scripture under attack, the nature of the Gospel has already been fragmented. The historical facts of the Gospel are still

quite well known; a great majority of Southern Baptist pulpits rehearse consistently the great themes of incarnation, death, and resurrection and do so out of hearts that passionately believe those facts. These divine activities, however, become curiously blended with various portions of free-will to create a synergistic mixture. The sovereignty of God in election must not be mentioned, or if spoken of is depicted as unfair and out of harmony with the character of God; the atonement is more emotionalised than objectified and is believed, not to have effected the blessings of salvation, but to have created the universal possibility of salvation; effectual calling is vilified as ungodly partiality and opposed to the passage which teaches 'God is not willing that any should perish' as well as 'God so loved the world that *whosoever* . . .' (as if Calvinist Baptists of the past never heard of those verses or gave expositions of them); total depravity is denuded of the reality of total spiritual and moral inability and is treated primarily as the need for forgiveness. Lost is the conviction that man rests in such desperate wickedness and is such a willing captive to Satan that nothing less than the release granted by sovereign omnipotent quickening can bring him to the point even of desiring the favour of God in forgiveness. Perseverance of the saints in a greatly altered state remains the sole survivor of the once vigorous commitment to the doctrines of grace.

This theological obliteration has engendered some dangerous fallout. Overall, the fragmentation and loss of coherence has created a scene of theological anarchy. This explains why calls to unity always focus on the Cooperative Programme rather than unity in the faith. Within the Denominational Loyalist group, liberal, neo-orthodox, process, existentialist and neo-evangelical theologies command varying degrees of allegiance. Within the inerrantist group, neo-evangelical, evangelical, pietistic, Finneyite, Arminian, Calvinist, and a number of self-styled theological positions live rather amiably together because of the overarching commitment to biblical authority. It is possible that even this unity, on such reductionist terms, may only cover a more destructive corrosion resulting in a loss of the Gospel.

The doctrine of justification has seen a slipping away of imputed righteousness replaced by an emphasis on Christ in the heart. At times preachers employ vocabulary alarmingly reminiscent of the Catholic Tridentine concept of infused righteousness. The doctrine of sanctification has largely been replaced by Keswick 'deeper-life' and Campus Crusade 'Spirit-filled life' concepts of Christian discipleship. By this route, Southern Baptist enclaves in the incipient stages of perfectionist theology have been established. Penetrating insight into the true nature of saving faith and repentance and their gracious character has been dimmed by a mechanistic style of 'asking Jesus into the heart' bordering on the old Sandemanian heresy and positively resembling Roman Catholic sacramental regenerationism. Inquirers hear promises that if they will pray a certain form of words (with sincerity) [as soon as the coin in the coffer clings] they may be assured of going to heaven [the soul up from purgatory springs]. Some Luther must arise to drive these indulgence hawkers away from Southern Baptist borders.

(continued at foot of page 11)

In the last issue (R.T. 82) there was printed for the use of local churches,

1. Articles of Faith
2. An up-dated Constitution
3. Covenants for a local church

We would be pleased to supply copies of R.T. 82 at a reduced price should you need such with respect to the needs of your church.

But why should we bother with Articles of Faith or with a Church Constitution?

Why Have Articles of Faith?

William Hetherington declared that, 'a Confession of Faith is not the very voice of divine truth, but the echo of that voice from souls that have heard its utterance, felt its power, and are answering to its call'.

Articles of Faith usually consist of a couple of pages of definitive truth whereas Confessions of Faith are longer, but they are the same in essence.

Throughout her history the Church of Christ has found it necessary to be definitive about truth. In the early centuries a fierce battle was waged

concerning the Person and Work of Christ. The results by way of clear declarations of truth have not only served to win the victory over error but have been the source of enrichment for all succeeding generations of believers. The Reformation and Puritan periods were rich in Confessions and it is noteworthy that those churches and denominations of churches that have sought to be faithful to these Confessions have survived much more than those who have abandoned them.

Those who really love the truth and care for it are prepared to spell it out, apply it

Most devastating, perhaps, is the loss of a conviction in some circles that Christianity exclusively opens the narrow way to salvation. Earnest and honest inquirers in other religions may just as surely know God as Father and virtually come to know Christ as Saviour though they do not know, indeed have never heard his name. What vigorous missionary programme aiming at the conversion of the lost 'without hope and without God' could survive on such a non-foundation?

Conclusion

In spite of sitting precariously on the edge of disintegration in the larger fellowship and waging a battle for Scripture (a situation anomalous for any Christian group), a more profound challenge confronts Southern Baptists. What shall be done with the Gospel? If the answer comes, 'Don't argue about it, but preach it,' we should perhaps pose the question more precisely. Shall we continue to teach men that God will help them be saved if only they cooperate with him; or shall we preach to men that are dead and helpless the only news that is of benefit at all, 'Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners'?

Note

¹ See Bush and Nettles, *Baptists and the Bible*, Moody Press, 1980, chapter 10.

and defend it (Jude 3). Ambiguity about Gospel truth is helpful to those who oppose it. Satan loves ambiguity. He is a master at quoting half truths and incomplete texts (Matt. 4:1-11). He detests truth which is plainly declared and he loathes Confessions of Faith because they can so clearly enshrine biblical truths and practices. The old Confessions based on the Bible are especially unpopular with Liberals and Modernists.

But do we need Confessions or Manuals of Christian Doctrine and Order in our sophisticated modern age? The answer is that we need them more than ever. In every scientific subject definition and precision is the order of the day. Why is it that the Gospel should be left in the mists of confusion and obscurity? Our anti-supernaturalistic generation rejects the biblical assertions about creation. That means we should spell out clearly why we believe in the creation of the universe by an omnipotent Creator. Our age is anti-authoritarian and lawless. Does that mean we must be defensive and not proclaim discipline and order? Certainly not! Our times are characterised by people being governed by their feelings and emotions, with the result that subjective feelings dominate rather than the teaching of the Word of God. Lukewarmness and worldliness prevail in many churches of our Western, materialistic and secular culture. The demands of church membership and the call to be zealous about the household of the Lord may well meet with resistance and even hostility.

Reluctance is shown by many evangelical believers to be under the authority of Scripture. Particularly is this so in the realm of what we term experimental religion. Spelling out objective truth like the trinity, the virgin birth and the resurrection – Yes! But matters like conversion, sanctification, assurance, the sealing of the Holy Spirit – No! But the Scriptures spell out truth

and define experience as well. The Bible does not leave us to our imaginations when it comes to the realm of spiritual experience.

Confessions or Articles of Faith provide invaluable guidelines. They are under the authority of Scripture and we should not hesitate to see their weaknesses and improve on them. For instance chapter 20 of the 1689 Confession is a jumble. It was an important attempt to spell out our responsibility to evangelise. If there had simply been a plain repetition of Matthew 18:18-20, with a clause pointing to the permanent nature of the Great Commission, it would have been much better.

In the second year of his ministry in London the illustrious Spurgeon published the *1689 London Confession of Faith*. In presenting the Confession to the church at New Park Street he wrote:

This little volume is not issued as an authoritative rule, or code of faith, whereby you are to be fettered, but as an assistance to you in controversy, a confirmation in faith, and a means of edification in righteousness. Here the younger members of our church will have a body of divinity in small compass, and by means of the scriptural proofs, will be ready to give a reason for the hope that is in them. Be not ashamed of your faith; remember it is the ancient gospel of martyrs, confessors, reformers and saints. Above all, it is the truth of God, against which the gates of Hell cannot prevail. Let your lives adorn your faith, let your example adorn your creed. Above all live in Christ Jesus, and walk in him, giving credence to no teaching but that which is manifestly approved of him, and owned by the Holy Spirit. Cleave fast to the Word of God which is here mapped out for you.

These words aptly sum up the usefulness of being clear about what we believe.

Book Notices

Seventeenth Century Baptist Confessions of Faith

R. I. P. Belcher and T. Matua

Richberry Press (Box 302, Columbia, SC29202. \$3.00)

This discussion of two Baptist Confessions is of particular relevance to those Baptists in America who have been influenced by the 'New Covenant' emphasis in some quarters. Some have regarded the 1646 first London Confession as presenting an 'Anabaptist' or 'New Covenant' view of the Law. In other words they say that the 1646 Baptists did not regard the Ten Commandments as binding on New Testament believers. How then to explain the 1689 Confession? This clearly regards the Moral Law or Ten Commandments as perpetually binding. Well, this group of Americans resorted to the desperate measure of arguing that this Confession was 'forced on' Baptists due to political pressures. This despite the fact that in 1689 a Toleration Act had just been passed!

This is a careful examination of the position of these two Confessions with regard to the law. The authors demonstrate the basic unity of the two on this matter. They then show that the 1689 Confession was a voluntary statement, made after the 'Toleration Act'. The Confession was largely based on the (Presbyterian) Westminster Confession, but it was not unusual to make such use of other Confessions, and the Baptists freely changed non-Baptist views. William Kiffin and Hanserd Knollys signed both editions of the Confession indicating that they did not see any great discrepancy between the two.

The authors can be congratulated for handling the historical evidence carefully and yet concisely. They present their material calmly, without undue polemics, with historical objectivity. It is to be hoped that their example will be followed by others who venture into what has often been a rancorous and bitter arena of debate.

Scripture and Truth

Ed: D. A. Carson and John D. Woodbridge
I.V.P.

The authors represented in this collection of papers believe that 'the Bible is the Word of God written. We hold that what the Scriptures teach is infallibly true and that this belief is not only patient of reasoned defence but is extremely important for the well-being of the church' (p. 9). Three main sections consist of Biblical Essays, Historical Essays and Theological Essays.

The editors suggest that the current controversies about biblical accuracy may actually *help* Christians to formulate more clearly what the Bible itself teaches about its own nature. The section opens with an essay on Scripture's self-attestation. Don Carson contributes two chapters — one on systematic theology, an examination of the diversity and unity of the different books; and one on the uses and weaknesses of redaction criticism. Richard Longenecker examines the effect of ancient literary conventions on the New Testament letters, and Moisés Silva deals with the discrepancies between Old Testament sections and New Testament quotations of them.

The historical section is particularly relevant as it has been claimed that the Church Fathers and the Reformers did not hold an 'infallible' or 'inerrant' view of Scripture; that these concepts were developed by the Princetonians during the later part of the nineteenth century.

The three closing chapters deal with 'The Biblical Concept of Truth'; 'Faith, Evidence and the Scriptures'; and a contribution by J. I. Packer on Hermeneutics — the correct procedure and mistaken approaches.

This is a most significant contribution to the debate on biblical authority, the approach throughout being rigorous and positive rather than merely defensive.

The Mystery of Christ: Meditations on Colossians

Guy Appéré

Evangelical Press Pbk. 144 pp. £2.95

This is the latest in the series of Welwyn Commentaries, which aim to explain Bible books simply and practically. It is very highly recommended for personal Bible

study purposes, and would be suitable as a gift for young Christians beginning to build up a library. The book is divided into 21 chapters which could be the basis of 21 daily meditations, each dealing with a few verses. Within each chapter there are appropriate headings which help retention of the material – for example chapter 13, entitled *Natural Religion*, deals with Colossians 2:16-23 under 3 headings: legalism, mysticism, and asceticism. This chapter sums up the dangers Paul warned the Colossians against:

‘The gospel is fullness of life, free and without limit, for the gospel is Jesus Christ. Christ is the end of *legalism*, for he is the end of the law (Rom. 10), in the sense that, by leading us to Jesus Christ, the law has achieved its purpose and also that those who are ‘in Christ’ are no longer condemned by it (Rom. 8:1). Christ is the remedy for *mysticism*. Those who have found everything in Christ and his word are completely sufficient. Christ is the negation of *asceticism*. His sacrifice is fully sufficient for our salvation, and trying to add any sacrifice of our own would be to challenge the power of the cross (Heb. 10:12).’

As the above quotation shows the material is handled in a way that is brief and yet faithful to the ever-relevant message of this part of Scripture.

Survey of the Bible

William Hendriksen

Evangelical Press Pbk. 496 pp. £7.95

This must be one of the most helpful aids on the market today for systematic study of the whole of the Bible.

Part One: ‘The Bible’, is introductory, dealing with questions such as the difference between the conservative and liberal view of the Bible, the inspiration of the Bible, the formation of the canon, translations, how the Bible should be studied and how it should be interpreted. ‘It is our firm conviction,’ writes Hendriksen, ‘that before one is able to give a satisfying interpretation of a difficult scripture passage, he must first have acquired a more or less comprehensive grasp of the contents of the entire Bible, both Old and New Testament.’

How can this be attained?

Firstly Hendriksen argues for the need of ‘date consciousness’: that is, when any event of Bible history is mentioned one should be able to place it historically, even if approximately. Achieving such historical consciousness is the aim of Part Two, ‘The Bible Story’. The author has devised ‘streamlined’, or simple and memorisable date charts, as well as more expanded chronological charts for study. Then follows a swift overview of the whole of Bible history, in 5 chapters, with plenty of subdivisions. This whole section is excellent, particularly skilful is the way in which the vividness and relevance of the Old Testament narrative material is brought out.

Secondly Hendriksen believed strongly that for each book of the Bible the average Christian should have in mind its overall theme and a brief outline. So Part Three, ‘Bible Books’, goes through each Bible book, in chronological order. Apart from an introduction and expanded outline to aid study of each book, he gives an outline and theme to memorise. For example for Galatians:

Theme: Justification by Faith

Brief Outline:

- Ch. 1, 2: I **Its origin**: this doctrine is not of human but divine origin.
- Ch. 3, 4: II **Its vindication**: both Scripture (the Old Testament) and experience bear testimony to its truth.
- Ch. 5, 6: III **Its application**: It produces true liberty which glories in the Cross of Christ.

Then in the final section, Hendriksen suggests Bible chapters and passages for further study or memorisation, and there is a question manual for individual or group use.

It is quite clear that Hendriksen was an experienced and dedicated teacher. The overall aim is to help the student in every possible way to come to grips with the content of Scripture.

This is the third and final exposition in the series by Pastor Keith Davies of St. John's Wood, London. Here we are brought face to face with the whole area of practical outreach which is essential for every local church.

The Life and Being of a Local Church in Relation to the Community

The Church is not *of* the world, although its present existence is *in* the world. By virtue of being in the world the Church has to come to terms with its environment while still maintaining its distinctiveness. The Church has actually been sent into the world by the Saviour and must obey his command to proclaim his gospel to needy mankind. In doing this it must still adhere to biblical patterns of life and behaviour. That the people of God have been 'sent' into the world is as much a fact of the divine purpose as the sending of God's Son into the world.¹ The Church's role in the world is to live as the people of God in contradistinction to the people of the world,² and to proclaim the message of Christ to them.³ Donald Guthrie in *New Testament Theology* puts it like this:

The early Church did not work itself up into an evangelistic community. It inherited a command from the risen Christ which it could not ignore. He did not give much indication on church organisation, but he left no doubt what the main aims of the community of his followers was to be. The idea of a closed, inward-looking community finds no support from his teaching. The message entrusted to his disciples was intended for all the world.⁴

The service the Church renders to God is not only concerned with its evangelistic commission. Its obedience and service relates to fellow human beings as human beings too.

Sir Frederick Catherwood in *A Better Way* develops this idea in the following words:

The Church must never be self-centred. Its membership should be closed to those who do not accept its spiritual authority over them. But its doors must always be open to everyone and it must always care for the community in which it lives. It must care, as Christ cared, for their bodies as well as their souls. It must care for the destitute, the orphan, the widow, the sick in body and mind and for the social outcast. It must love its enemies, do good to those who hate it and pray for those who abuse it.⁵

Michael Griffiths in his book *Cinderella with Amnesia* quotes statistics to show that around the average city church there are:

2,000 houses with 10,000 people who could walk to the church within ten to fifteen minutes. You can reckon that there are 500 households needing a neighbourly hand of friendship; 20 unmarried mothers; 100 elderly housebound people living alone; 10 discharged prisoners; 100 deprived children; 10 homeless; 100 broken marriages; 20 families in debt; 100 juvenile delinquents who have been before the courts in the last three years; 80 persons in hospital; 80 alcoholics.⁶

Such is the lost and needy humanity the Church has been sent to serve. It is

involved in that situation whether it likes it or not. To such people it is to go with the love of Christ and the message of salvation. The Church is in the world to glorify God and reveal the life of Christ. It does that not only by the quality of life in itself, but also in its contacts with people — real people, with real needs in real situations.

Two basic matters need to be stressed at this point. The first is that all mankind is sinful and all men are sinners.⁷ Undoubtedly there are various ways this sinfulness is expressed, but all men by nature are in exactly the same situation with regard to God — they are without strength, ungodly and enemies of God.⁸ Modern sophisticated man is no different from the peasant of past ages. The Gospel is the only thing which can do him good. It doesn't have to be brought up-to-date as it never goes out-of-date. Its message is always relevant and powerful.⁹ Men will always reject it, not because there is something wrong with it, but because there is something wrong with them. Natural men will always reject spiritual things.¹⁰ The second basic matter is that Christians are different from unbelievers. This means that it is no use whatsoever for a Christian to engage in worldliness and sin in order to reach sinners. Such conduct only confirms the unbeliever in his sin and encourages a low or shallow view of the seriousness of sin. Dr. Martyn Lloyd-Jones in *Preaching and Preachers* makes this point tellingly in the following remarks:

Our Lord attracted sinners because he was different. They drew near to him because they felt there was something different about him. That poor sinful woman of whom we read in Luke 7 did not draw near to the Pharisees and wash their feet with her tears, and wipe them with the hair of her head. No, but she sensed something in our Lord — his purity, his holiness, his love — and

so she drew near to him. It was his essential difference that attracted her. And the world always expects us to be different. This idea that you are going to win people to the Christian faith by showing them that after all you are remarkably like them, is theologically and psychologically a profound blunder.¹¹

The Saviour was very clear on both these matters in his own ministry. He knew what was in men,¹² and no one could accuse him of sin because his life was so plainly different from their sinful lives.¹³

The involvement of the Lord Jesus Christ in the life situations of his day gives us a very important set of guidelines for the reaching of people today. He lived as a member of a human family, he appreciated friendship with others, he knew sorrow and fatigue, he shared in bereavement and joyful celebration, he experienced criticism, rejection and misunderstanding, he enjoyed the hospitality of others yet had nowhere to 'lay his head'.¹⁴ He dealt with the diseased and afflicted, the immoral and the hypocritical. Lepers, the blind, the deaf, the dumb, the lame, rich men, poor men, widows, children, the overlooked, the oppressed, the religious, the mighty, the weak. In fact all sorts and conditions of men sought him and heard his counsel. Only those who refused to hear or to heed went away unbled. No one was too bad or too small to have his full attention. He was never too busy or too tired to receive a needy soul. He came to call sinners,¹⁵ and they came to him for help, and for forgiveness.

Although he preached to large companies of people and attracted a great deal of public attention, the meeting of the needs of the people in their various circumstances was more often accomplished in private and personal encounters. His personal

interest in people is one of the most impressive features of the Saviour's ministry. He turned no one away, however apparently inconvenient it might seem. He was always ready to serve the people. So, as we come to consider the lessons for the people of God today, these factors must be prominent.

No Christian can ever consider himself 'off-duty'. In the world to serve his Saviour, he must be willing to serve people, however inconvenient it may seem sometimes to him. Although he should not allow himself to be 'used' by the unscrupulous or the unthinking, he should be willing to suffer inconvenience for his Saviour's sake. Meeting people, needy people, will mean some (perhaps considerable) involvement in other people's lives, as a friend, neighbour, or colleague. No Christian should ever cut himself off from those around him or turn away from those who come to him for help. Participation in sin he will resist, compromise of his faith he will avoid, but real people have real needs and he will seek in Christ's name to help. It is at this point that so much 'mass evangelism' lies exposed and is found wanting. It is evangelism at a distance, remote, impersonal and professionalistic. Big meetings with massed choirs and special music can create a highly-charged atmosphere when many may be moved to 'decide'. But it is utterly divorced from the reality of life with the problems and pressures of home or work. To dash through a town with a loudspeaker van to announce a meeting may arouse some interest but no one has actually been met. Tract distribution without a sight of the recipients might just as well be done from a balloon! The broken lives of this generation need something more than 'Smile Jesus loves you'. For those in terrible pain, conflict or despair such a message is a mockery. The real needs of people are too deep to be treated in such a way. There are moral needs, political

needs, economic needs, in fact a vast variety of needs. How can the Christian and the church of which he is a part help to meet such needs?

First of all the presence of the church is vital. Erroll Hulse (in the booklet *The State of the Nation* published in 1969) makes the following important points on the lack of healthy local churches:

The lack of healthy local churches has deprived the community not only of mature, strong Christians, but also of leadership. . . . The local church in any given area should be like a city set on a hill, the salt of the community which resists the forces of corruption, the light of the people diffusing knowledge and wisdom.¹⁶

This confirms my strong conviction that one of the great needs of today is for Gospel churches to be planted throughout the land, and especially in the cities. It is churches that God has ordained shall reach the people most effectively — churches made up of transformed people who know God.

The presence of Christians in a situation can have a profound effect upon others, bringing a sense of stability, strength and goodness which otherwise would be absent. By example to others Christians can show how the failures, frustrations and fears of life can be overcome.

In our heavily industrialised world, rapidly becoming more and more technological, the Christian can show those who question life's meaning and purpose how the greatest goal of life is to glorify and please God. In God's service there is greatest fulfilment, even for those who find their quality of life to be monotonous and unfulfilling.

People need people and they need Christians more than any others. Friendship, neighbourliness, help, care

are all aspects of the love the Christian is to show his neighbour. He, living in a neighbourhood, is the most effective missionary of all. His local church supporting him, encouraging him, praying with him, identifying with him, will confirm to a watching world the reality of Christ's life. He is not merely interested in enlarging the church's congregation, nor is he merely interested in people as potential 'converts'. He lives for God's glory in Christ's name and loves his neighbour as himself. In so doing he is aware of the real needs of real people, and because he is a real person himself can point men and women to a real Saviour who can meet their deepest needs.

So, the local church, will be set in the community it is trying to reach. This is essential if the Gospel is to have any powerful impact on real people's lives. A truly local church should, therefore, meet where people live, and its members should live in the locality of the meeting-place.

In order effectively to fulfil the command of the Lord Jesus Christ to be salt and light, the local church and its members will have to have dealings with people who have no use for the church, and it may very well mean challenging groups and institutions which are actively hostile to the Christian religion. The very presence of a church in an area should be a challenge to ungodliness and unrighteousness in that area.¹⁷ It is important therefore that the local church should know its neighbourhood if its ministry is to be effective. New blocks of flats, new factories, shops, schools and housing estates are changing the face of most cities and towns. Even small villages do not escape the effects of rapid 'development'. It is tragic when members of local churches are indifferent to or unaware of these changes and the opportunities for service that many of

them provide. No Christian should ever remain ignorant of the neighbourhood which the church has responsibility to reach with the Gospel. Ignorance is compounded when many members live at a distance from the church premises in an area where the social background and interests of the residents are quite different from the habits and outlook of the people living close to the church meeting-place. This can render the ministry of such members ineffective because they are so different from the people they are trying to reach.

Ordinary people are unlike one another in so many ways and need a personal approach, and yet at the same time people do have common characteristics with others and cannot be understood properly without a knowledge of background features. So, to know a neighbourhood is more than possessing a map and noting the names of the streets. It will mean gathering information from a variety of sources, official and informal, from publications and conversations. It is important for the church to know what exists around it and what is happening in the life of the larger community. It needs to know the agencies of social welfare and what voluntary bodies there are. It will also be aware of the existence of other churches. More particularly it will attempt to build up a fund of knowledge to assist in evangelising where personal contact is made with the needy residents of the neighbourhood. The church can bring a loving dimension to help given, which no state-financed agency can give (we don't go on strike). It is also worth mentioning that to know a neighbourhood thoroughly and to begin to understand it often leads to a desire to reach the residents with the Gospel. An understanding of needs also broadens and deepens the reality of love. So to love one's neighbour in obedience to Christ's command requires a sufficient knowledge of one's

neighbour and his condition to express that love in practical terms.

To reach a neighbourhood with the Gospel is clearly easier if the membership of a church is a cross-section of the community. Those at work are in strategic places and can reach others in a far better way than organised evangelistic thrusts. But if in an industrial area there are few in membership involved in industry the task of reaching industrial workers is all the harder.

When, however, a worker is converted he should be trained, encouraged and supported by the church to become an effective witness where he works so as to make the best use of his opportunities there.

Undoubtedly house-to-house visitation by the members of the church within the surrounding areas is the most effective method of organised outreach from the church and should feature in *every* church's programme. It is no optional extra and should be led by the elders of the church. But the effective reaching of the neighbourhood also needs church members who are involved in the life of the neighbourhood and face the common problems of the neighbourhood with their fellow residents. There is no substitute for good neighbourliness. House-to-house visiting can often open up many opportunities so that such a neighbourly spirit can have a practical reality. In house-to-house visiting the church meets people — real ones! — with real needs which good neighbours can meet.

Today we live in a period of unprecedented movement of population, and many people live in places where they have no roots, no relatives and no friends. The church can provide a sense of stability, warmth of friendship and helpfulness which can be found nowhere else. The normalities of family life within the context of the church are

a vital contribution to a society plagued by broken homes and broken lives. Visiting the sick, the elderly and the lonely are ministries commended in Scripture.¹⁸ The handicapped, the mentally disturbed, offenders, addicts and alcoholics, all need the special interests of God's people, although in each of these cases special ability and training is essential for any long-term ministry.

The areas of need are legion, but the church needs to be alert to the situations which call out for attention near at hand and which it has the resources to deal with. No church can sit idly by while a world of need exists around it. Each church has a being and capability to do a great deal, even with small numbers and limited resources. It could be that as a small church spends itself for the community around in loving and sacrificial service,¹⁹ it will not remain a small church for very long. For those who see its good works will not only praise the Father in heaven²⁰ but will come to know him for themselves through his Son Jesus Christ.

Notes and References

¹ See for example Matthew 10:16; 28:19; John 20:21.

² See Matthew 5:13-16 where the pictures of the Church as 'salt' and 'light' suggest both its separation and its involvement.

³ John 15:27; Acts 1:8; Mark 16:15.

⁴ Donald Guthrie, *New Testament Theology*, Leicester: Inter-Varsity Press 1981, p. 716.

⁵ Sir Frederick Catherwood, *A Better Way*, London: Inter-Varsity Press, 1975, p. 136.

⁶ Michael Griffiths, *Cinderella with Amnesia*, London: Inter-Varsity Press, 1975, pp. 170-171.

⁷ Romans 3:10-19, 23. ⁸ Romans 5:6-10.

⁹ Romans 1:16; 1 Corinthians 1:23-24.

¹⁰ 1 Corinthians 2:14.

¹¹ D. Martyn Lloyd-Jones, *Preaching and Preachers*, London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1971, p. 140.

¹² Matthew 12:25; John 2:24-25.

¹³ John 8:46; 3:2; Matthew 19:16.

¹⁴ Matthew 8:20. ¹⁵ Matthew 9:13.

¹⁶ Erroll Hulse, *The State of the Nation*, Worthing, Sussex: Henry E. Walter Ltd. 1969, p. 13.

¹⁷ See 1 Peter 4:3-4, 12-16.

¹⁸ e.g. Matthew 25:35-36, 40; James 1:27.

¹⁹ Matthew 10:39. ²⁰ Matthew 5:16.

The Toronto Baptist Seminary provides a thorough education in theology combined with practical outreach from the local church. Vijay is typical of students at the Seminary who have seen the advantage of training with regard to the countries they represent. Church planting is an urgent need. It is a daunting task. The opportunity to be equipped with a knowledge of theology and church history together with direct contact with mature and experienced teachers can result in far reaching success in a lifetime thereafter devoted to a needy country.

The Testimony of Vijay Chandra

When the Indians from India came to settle in Fiji in the 18th century, they also brought their gods made of gold, wood and stones. While they were settling down in different parts of Fiji, they began to build temples and altars for different gods which were dedicated to goddesses like Nirshna and Siva; Lakshmi, the goddess of wealth and beauty; Sarasvati, the god of wisdom and success; and Kali, the mother goddess who demands blood sacrifice. There are some important features in Hinduism such as religious rituals which are performed daily in the home, usually before images of gods or abstract symbols of deity. Some Hindus worship daily in the temple and the most important ceremony of all is fire-walking. The aim of all Hindus is to escape from the Wheel of Samsara and from Karma itself. Mukti is variously translated as escape, release, liberation or emancipation. Salvation in these categories is a fundamental presupposition of all Hindu thinking. Unless the chain of cause and effect is broken, the bondage of the soul to the process of birth, death and rebirth continues. The Hindu longs for release from life that never ends. The goddesses are worshipped so that salvation can be achieved. Local gods and goddesses who must be appeased are worshipped and propitiated with gifts of food or in certain cases by the sacrificial blood of animals.

My grandfather was installed as a priest in the temple and to perform all the duties in the temple. One of his

important jobs was to prepare the devotees for the fire-walking ceremony. This ceremony takes place once a year in the temple. It goes on for ten days. His job was to see that the devotees were kept away from families and anything which could defile them. On Saturday evening the goddesses are carried around the temple. My grandfather would lead the procession. It was said that he possessed special power to appease the gods. Also, he would be possessed with demonic power and they had to tie him down or else he would go right into the fire pit. Early Sunday morning he would take all the fire walkers to the river for a bath. With the drums pounding, they would come dancing around the fire pit. As a priest, he would be the first one to step into the fire pit to see whether the gods were pleased or not, then the devotees would follow him and they would chant while they walked on the fire.

When I was born, as a baby I was taken to the temple so that I could be healed. My mother gave sacrifice and money to gods and later on I was told that I got healing from one of the gods. As I grew up, I had to perform rituals because of the pressure from my grandparents. I had to please the gods in my religious duties. I was doing this so that I could attain salvation. When I was nine years of age I was taken to the Sunday School by a missionary and this was the first time I heard about the Lord Jesus. That time Christ did not mean anything to

(continued on page 21)

The Carey Conference for ministers

January 8th-11th, 1985

Swanwick, Derbyshire

Theme: *Missionary Motivation*

		Afternoon	Evening
Morning (1)	Morning (2)	The missionary example of Luther Rice and Adoniram Judson <i>Tom Nettles</i>	<i>Alun McNabb</i>
The theology of mission in the O.T. <i>Peter Misselbrook</i>	The supremacy of Scripture and prophecy <i>Victor Budgen</i>	<i>Prayer and sharing</i>	'The Altar Call.' <i>Erroll Hulse</i>
The obedience of faith and the Kingship of Christ in mission <i>Don Garlington</i>	The mission theology of the founding fathers of the Southern Baptist Convention <i>Tom Nettles</i>	The doctrine of eternal punishment <i>Eryl Davies</i>	<i>Clifford Pond</i>

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THE TESTIMONY OF VIJAY

CHANDRA *(continued from page 20)*

me and I could not see any difference between Christ and the gods of the Hindus. In 1964 I was invited to go to Camp, and there I accepted the Lord as my Saviour when the missionary preached on John 3. He said that God sent Jesus into the world to save us from our sin. That night I could feel the power of Hinduism was being broken. I had peace and joy and most of all eternal life which I could not get from my worship of many gods.

As a Hindu I was working for my salvation, but Christ gave me free salvation for which I did not have to pay. After this I was persecuted by my relations, especially by my mother's family. It

was a shame to see a Christian in her family. But with the help of the missionary and of the Lord I had won over this. I had tried to reach gods but never succeeded. In Christ I had won everything. Also I have seen my Uncle who is a fire-walker get burned in trying to achieve salvation.

In 1974 I was led by the Lord into full-time Christian service. As an evangelist it gave me a chance to witness to many Indians. I saw numbers won for Christ. Also my desire is to plant Baptist churches. As the Bible says in John 8:36, 'If the Son therefore shall make you free ye shall be free indeed'. I have been freed from the bondage of Hinduism and my prayer is to see the Indians freed by the Gospel of Christ and nurtured and built up by expository preaching in the local church.

At the 2nd International Baptist Conference at Toronto, October 15th-19th, 1984, Dr. Geoff. Adams spoke on Apostolic Preaching and the Example of Paul. This represents the concluding section which concerns the apostle's method.

Paul's Method of Preaching

Now let us note Paul's methods. While we reject the suggestion that the content of the apostle's message was influenced by the climate of opinion yet we would be prepared to admit that his methods perhaps were. One can examine the papyri and discover the identical epistolary form. J. S. Stewart further observes:

resemblance in point of style, language . . . can be found between the Stoics and Paul. Salient features of the style of the Diatribes, as the Stoic discourses were called, were the rhetorical questions, their preference for short disconnected sentences . . .¹

For Tarsus was a prominent centre and five distinguished teachers resided there in Paul's day. Stoics may have introduced him to the idea of the itinerant preacher.² However, when it came to the message the contrasts were great.

Paul's method was expository. It led the Bereans to examine the Scriptures carefully to check the Messianic interpretation (Acts 17:11). Our accounts of the messages are of course abbreviated, but it would seem fair to see not so much a careful exegesis of small passages of the Old Testament, but rather a wide sweep. In this aspect messages as at Antioch followed the method of Biblical Theology. There was a sense of the organic nature of the Scriptures. Only one system of theology is found, not many. The message was related to the history of salvation and was heavily doctrinal. From this the ethical application was made. In Paul's total ministry covenants such as the Abrahamic, Sinaitic, Davidic and Jeremiah's New Covenant all found a place (Acts 13:26, Gal. 3:6ff.; 17, Acts 13:34, 1 Cor. 11:25, etc.). Paul's preaching was also dispensational, in the sense that he clearly recognised that while there was one system of redemption and one household of faith (Rom. 11:17 one olive tree), yet the differences are marked between those who were shut up to the coming faith under the legal system and those who had reached maturity and were no longer under guardians (Gal. 3:23, 4:1f., cf. Acts 13:38-41). Thus we see a certain bifurcation (division into two branches) of human history. The truth concerning the Messiah and his kingdom bound all together.

Paul's method was devotional. All his preaching and writing is suffused with his love for Christ. It is most natural for him to break out into doxologies. He lives as a man 'in Christ' and knows that he is supernaturally energised. The atmosphere of worship, thanksgiving and prayer is very apparent.

Paul's method is very personal. As he defends himself before the lynch mob in Jerusalem or before Festus and Agrippa, he repeatedly gives his testimony to the grace of God in his life. Being so often under attack, as a deceptive persuader and a fraudulent huckster, he is forced into apologetics. He must insist upon his

integrity. His motives had been pure. He had served with sacrifice and heroically had endured many trials. Theology was experimental, not cold and speculative. The resurrection meant that even physical energy was available for his broken body (2 Cor. 1:9). He could personally attest to the living presence of the Lord, for he had met him on the road to Damascus. He saw himself as a witness (Acts 23:11 *martureo*).

Along with Paul's method being personal we see that his message was integrated with his suffering. The one who had hounded Christian men and women to bring them to trial and death was commissioned in a remarkable way. Ananias had been told by the Lord about the chosen vessel and was informed 'how great things he must (*dei*) suffer for my name's sake' (Acts 9:16). There was a divine necessity for his suffering. We read of the catalogue of trials Paul had been subjected to in 2 Corinthians 11:23ff. But some similar to these he had managed to evade by claiming Roman citizenship, by making a rapid exit from a city, by appealing to Caesar, etc. Surely we are not to suppose that this strategy was carnal? We see that bearing the name of Christ (Acts 9:15) involved suffering.

D. W. Kemmler asks the question,

'whether the personal sufferings actually experienced by Paul are ultimately only the consequences of the suffering which characterises the preaching?'²

Paul of necessity had to be a saviour of life unto life to some and of death unto death to others (2 Cor. 2:16). The one who could wish himself accursed from God for his kinsman (Rom. 9:3) painfully saw that at times his preaching led to such a violent opposition that he had to pronounce Isaiah's judicial blindness on them (Is. 6:9f., Acts 28:25ff.), as they judged themselves 'unworthy of everlasting life' (Acts 13:46). We believe that in this way especially Paul filled up 'that which is behind of the afflictions of Christ' in his flesh for the body's sake (Col. 1:24). On top of all this was the daily care of the churches. Paul was called to be a man of sorrows.

One outstanding feature of Paul's ministry and one frequently overlooked in Fundamentalist circles today is Paul's stress, not on emotions, but on reason. He stresses the role of persuasion (*peitho*). Man originally made in the image of God has a certain light from general revelation. Man can be reasoned with. The reasoning is not derived from vain philosophy, but rather 'out of the Scriptures' (Acts 17:2) in the case of the Jews, and from general revelation illuminated by the Scriptures to the Gentiles. The absurdity of idolatry and of polytheism can be argued with the unsaved, and this is not a farce. Man is a thinking being.⁴ Earlier in his career miracles played an important role in authenticating the truth of the apostolic message. From Acts 17, on we see a fadeout of the miraculous and a greater stress on the discursive method.⁵ Paul's extensive training as a rabbi evidently was quite providential. This should not surprise us for he was ordained from his mother's womb (Gal. 1:15). From Acts 17 on we

see the use of the term 'discuss' or 'conduct a discussion' (*dialogomai*) and it is usually related to Paul's methodology. For Socrates, Plato and Aristotle it was the art of persuasion and demonstration in the form of questions and answers. This method apparently is used in Berea and their minds are opened up as they research carefully the Scriptures. Paul associates with them (instrumental case) and speaks to (*pros*) them (Acts 17:17). According to Kemmler, it involved a preliminary investigation, the holding of an enquiry, putting the right questions, and sifting the evidence.⁶ The right of private judgment is upheld. Even an apostle does not resort to logical bulldozing and coercion. 'What Paul has to say has to be proved and made good in the arena of argument and counter-argument.'⁷ Apparently the synagogues often were closer to a school than to a church. Above we listed many words used to describe Paul's teaching and preaching. Many of these will prove that Paul's message was highly intellectual. It resulted from the regeneration of the mind by the illumination of the Holy Spirit. No wonder that Peter can assert that in Paul's messages are 'some things hard to be understood' (2 Pet. 3:15f.). Paul was not interested in brainwashing people; he was intent on making disciples or learners.

Paul's style was varied and always relevant. He could seize on an engraving, or on an idol, or on the controversy between Pharisees and Sadducees concerning the resurrection. It was fresh and vibrant, as he was aware of opening up mysteries hitherto kept largely concealed. It was compelling: people had to make decisions. It was incisive, reaching the recesses of the heart. It could be literary: the quotes from Aratus and Cleanthes are too apt to be just hackneyed phrases banded about among the populace, it would seem. Yes, while recognising Paul's disdain for the artificiality of the orators and the spurious wisdom of the Sophists, Paul must be acknowledged as one of the master orators of all ages. The Spirit of God had come upon him and made him the chief of apostles. Even his birth out of due season was appropriate, for unlike the other apostles his ministry was not to attest to the earthly ministry of Christ. Rather he was to stress the heavenly. The style of Paul was adapted to the situations he found himself in, as he ministered in public and private. The style was but an index of the stature of the man. One cannot separate the man from his message. Truth was being communicated through personality.

Endowed so richly in the spiritual and intellectual realm we can understand a response similar to Isaiah at the question: 'Whom shall I send, and who will go for us?' (Is. 6:8). As the Apostle to the Gentiles he was prepared to cross cultural barriers. He knew that God had created of 'one blood' all men (Acts 17:26). He was a debtor to all men. His policy was one of integration, so he had to denounce severely Peter's policy which would have resulted in the Gentiles becoming second-class citizens (Gal. 2:11).

III

Now let us make an application of our findings. As we face the weaknesses and errors manifested in today's evangelical world, we have reason to be alarmed. In

effect we have little doctrinal preaching and little stress on the Sovereign Grace which permeated Paul's message. We have that which is often closer to Pelagianism than Arminianism, for Arminius stressed the need for grace: prevenient, awakening, following and co-operating.⁸ None could respond without it. Today's gospel often leaves the unregenerate master of his destiny, with an impotent God, incapable of saving him, looking on.

In the midst of evangelicalism is the Trojan Horse of unregenerate 'believers' dragged in by 'easy-believism'? Entertainment and anecdotal sermonettes sandwiched between a variety of musical packages are the order of the day. Public relations specialists promise instant health, sanctification, financial success, etc. Instead of Paul's profundity we have trite and trivial messages damaging men's minds as well as their souls. The A.B.C. of salvation is often repeated *ad nauseam*.

What does our study suggest to us?

1. Well trained, full-time, dedicated men are needed. The serious work of the kingdom requires spiritual and consecrated men, convinced that a dispensation of the Gospel has been committed to them.

2. More emphasis needs to be given to the organic nature of the Bible. Texts need to be set in the history of redemption. Instead of the levelling tendency of finding as much truth in the Old Testament as the New, we should recognise Augustine's maxim:

The New is in the Old concealed,
The Old is in the New revealed.

Special Revelation was progressive and truth shines brightest in the New Testament. Expository preaching is needed to produce people of the Book, vaccinated with 'Bibline' against all the vagaries of the hour.

3. The sharp division between preaching and teaching should be questioned. People's minds and souls need to be stretched by a heavier intellectual content. We need to resurrect the persuading and reasoning ministry in many parts of the world.

4. Preaching must be evangelistic. J. A. Broadus wisely commented on the effectiveness of preaching:

When a man who is apt in teaching, whose soul is on fire with the truth which he trusts has saved him and hopes will save others, speaks to his fellow-men, face to face, eye to eye, and electric sympathies flash to and fro between him and his hearers, till they lift each other up, higher and higher, into the intensest thought, and the most impassioned emotion — higher and yet higher, till they are borne as on chariots of fire above the world — there is a power to move men, to influence character, life, destiny, such as no printed page, radio cabinet, or silver screen can ever possess.⁹

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Not only should preaching face men and women with a response to the presence of Christ, but it should enlist the company of believers in the evangelistic effort. Recently Dr. Peter Masters reminded our students of the great increase in membership of the Metropolitan Tabernacle in the year 1859. An examination of the written testimonies of those joining the church showed that the large majority had been first personally contacted by the members. Such was the effectiveness of Mr. Spurgeon's ministry.

5. Preaching again must be related with suffering. Too many young pastors are disillusioned by the carnal response of certain church members and other discouragements. We almost have come to think that suffering is just accidental, based on a bad set of circumstances. In Paul's career it had a more integral place.

No doubt any attempt to return to apostolic-type preaching will be subjected to the smear tactics of those who are prepared to transgress the command: 'Thou shalt not bear false witness' (Ex. 20:16). It will no doubt be dismissed as Hyper-Calvinism by those ignorant of the historic significance of the term. But this will be real evangelism, even though it is without the sacramentalism of the 'altar walk'. Maybe then we shall have the same confidence as Paul, who was assured of the election of the Thessalonians as he saw their 'work of faith', 'labour of love' and 'patience of hope' (1 Thess. 1:3f.).

Notes

¹ *A Man in Christ*. ² *ibid.* ³ *Faith and Human Reason*, p. 55. ⁴ *ibid.*, p. 2. ⁵ *ibid.*, p. 11f. ⁶ *ibid.*, p. 34. ⁷ *ibid.*, p. 35. ⁸ H. Bettenson, *Documents of the Christian Church*, p. 375. ⁹ *On the Preparation and Delivery of Sermons*, p. 3.

Don Garlington has the ability to write in a concise way. This means however that if you do not follow the exposition carefully you will be left behind. As mentioned before these articles are exceptional and are designed to provide a true and mature framework for interpreting the New Testament. An enormous amount of error would be avoided if preachers would be more careful in their handling of the Scriptures.

Studies in Biblical Theology

The Progression of Revelation in the New Testament, Part Three.

Our study of the progression of revelation in the New Testament Scriptures has been directed toward answering the question of what constitutes 'the normal Christian life'. More specifically, does the N.T. require of the church and of individuals the possession of such gifts as tongues and prophecy in order to maintain that quality of spiritual life set by itself? In previous studies (*R.T.* 78, 80) I have attempted to argue that in order to answer this question one must apply the correct method of study to the N.T. That is to say, the interpreter must allow the entirety of the N.T. to unfold according to its own pattern of process and progress. Of prime importance in this pattern is the character of the church and of the individual Christian life. The believer, in other words, is caught up in a tension. He lives in a period of overlapping ages, an interim between the two comings of Christ. On the one hand, he has entered into the powers of the age to come by being in Christ and possessing his Spirit. On the other hand, the 'present evil age' is still here; and the Christian cannot enter perfectly and fully into the enjoyment of his inheritance until Christ by his second coming has destroyed for all time the works of the Evil One. Therefore, any theory of the Christian life which bypasses the believer's continuing struggles and tensions during this interim period, and promises uninterrupted joy in Christ must be adjudged as false in the light of the N.T.'s own witness.

Our enquiry brings us now to consider the theology of pentecost in the N.T.¹ As far as the new covenant revelation is concerned, the theology of pentecost commences with John the Baptist. In his preaching of repentance to Israel, John announces that a Coming One will baptise the nation with the Holy Spirit and fire. Whereas John's own baptism employed the element of water, that of Jesus was to be the Holy Spirit-and-fire² (Mt. 3:11-12; Mk. 1:8; Lk. 3:16). From John's language it is clear that he regarded the baptism of the Coming One as the complement and fulfilment of his own. To put it another way, the purpose of John's water-baptism was to prefigure the Spirit-and-fire-baptism of the Messiah. Dunn summarises the matter as follows: 'John's water-baptism is only a shadow and symbol of the Christ's Spirit-baptism. The contrast between the two baptisms is the contrast between John and Jesus — the antithesis of preparation and fulfilment, of shadow and substance.'³ Thus, the Israelite who repented and submitted to John's water-baptism was prepared to receive the Spirit-and-fire-baptism of the Messiah.

In keeping with such an O.T. passage as Isaiah 4:2-5, John undoubtedly framed his language so as to convey to Israel that the Coming One would apply the Spirit as a burning fire, both to destroy the ungodly of the nation and to purify (save) those who were waiting for the Day of the Lord.⁴ This Day was to be one on which the Lord would discriminate between his covenant people; and it was precisely the task of the Christ to be the baptiser who would inundate Israel with the fire of judgment. No one would escape the ordeal coming upon the nation, for 'the Messiah's baptism with the Spirit and fire will be applied to all, since he is to judge the whole world: for the people of God it will be their refinement for the kingdom . . . for the wicked it will be a consuming power'.⁵

John's prophecy of Jesus as the baptiser of Israel begins to be fulfilled on the occasion of Christ's baptism at the hands of John: in order for Jesus to be the baptiser he must first be the baptised. The scene of our Lord's baptism recalls many associations of Israel from the O.T. For our purposes, however, the thing of critical importance is that Jesus is not only baptised with water, he is as well baptised with the Holy Spirit. This comes in fulfilment of a text such as Isaiah 63:11f; 64:1, where the prophet calls upon God to place his Spirit upon a new Moses (the shepherd of the sheep) to lead Israel on a new exodus. Then he cries, 'O that thou wouldst rend the heavens and come down!' Thus, when Jesus is baptised the heavens are rent and the Spirit descends upon him.⁶

The significance of Christ's baptism for our present study can be summarised in the following points. (1) His endowment with the Spirit is representative. That is, his reception of the Spirit ensures that later on the same Spirit will be poured out on 'all flesh'. This happens by virtue of his identity as the ideal Israelite, the One in whom the people of God are concentrated and find their Head. (2) The coming of the Spirit upon Christ marks the inception of a new creation. This is seen especially in the Spirit's assumption of the form of a dove.⁷ (3) The baptism of Jesus was for him what the day of pentecost was to become for the Church. The words of J. D. G. Dunn are vital in this connection.

Only with the descent of the Spirit does the new covenant and new epoch enter, and only thus does Jesus himself enter the new covenant and epoch. He enters as a representative man — representing in himself Israel and even mankind. As such, this first baptism in the Spirit could well be taken as typical of all later Spirit-baptisms — the means by which God brings each to follow in Jesus' footsteps. Jesus as representative of the people is the first to enter the promise made to the people.⁸

The practical significance of this observation becomes evident as Dunn continues. He notes that Pentecostals are right in recognising that Jesus' anointing with the Spirit was what equipped him for his messianic ministry. He contends, however, that 'empowering for service' is not the primary purpose of Christ's baptism.

The baptism in the Spirit, in other words, is not primarily to equip the (already) Christian for service; rather its function is to initiate the indi-

vidual into the new age and covenant, to 'Christ' (=anoint) him, and in so doing to equip him for life and service in that new age and covenant. In this Jesus' entry into the new age and covenant is the type of every initiate's entry into the new age and covenant.⁹

As we continue to trace the theology of pentecost, we find our Lord himself bearing witness to other baptisms which he was bound to undergo. In Mark 10:38f. we hear him saying to the 'sons of thunder' that he is at that moment being baptised. (The present tense is to be stressed.) The point is that his entire earthly sojourn was one of the experiences of sacrifice and suffering, a baptism which every disciple of his must be willing to undergo himself. Again, something of practical value is evident. Jesus uses the very language of baptism to express his obedience unto death.¹⁰ In the words of J. A. T. Robinson, 'the baptism of Jesus is his whole existence in the form of a servant, all that is included in his being upon earth "not to be ministered unto but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many"'.¹¹ Yet the fact that he can speak of such experience as a 'baptism' indicates that his life of sacrifice and suffering is but an extension of his 'baptism' with the Holy Spirit. In other words, Jesus was anointed with the Spirit, but his baptism in the Spirit was only the inauguration of a process which culminated at the cross: that is to say, a lifetime of dying, a resisting of temptation at every point leading up to the consummation of his servanthood in death.

It comes as no surprise, then, that we find him referring explicitly to his death as a baptism upon the cross. In Luke 12:49f we hear him taking up again the language of baptism in fire. He came to cast fire upon the earth (in fulfilment of John's prophecy), yet he must first of all *be baptised* in a fiery judgment at Calvary. We are given to understand that the cross is our Lord's ultimate baptism. He was in one sense baptised at the river Jordan (with the Spirit and water); but his baptism is extended throughout his ministry and comes to its most intensive expression on the cross. His death, then, is to be understood in the pregnant significance of his baptism in the Spirit (as symbolised by John's water-baptism). It is the event which terminates the old covenant and old creation and inaugurates something new. It is a death which is representative of *all* of the people of God and later enables them to die with him (and thereafter be raised in newness of life). It is, in addition, the paradox of baptism in the Spirit: life and death at the same time, a paradox which, as we shall see, is reproduced in the believer's experience of baptism in the Holy Spirit.

It is only by a consideration of what has been said up till now that the day of pentecost makes sense. If any event is to be read in the light of the progression of revelation, it is this one. Accordingly, we are to understand its significance as the pinnacle point of a progression of processes set in motion at the dawn of the N.T. revelation and not as in any way detached from them. It has been a failure to regard the antecedents of pentecost which has resulted in a misinterpretation of its meaning for the present day.

The significance of pentecost in the history of redemption can be summarised in the following terms:

1. It is the Day of the Lord, foretold by the prophets, in its phase of blessing. The prophets of Israel saw that the Day of the Lord would be one both of destruction for the wicked and of salvation for the righteous. At the outset of his ministry, John the Baptist proclaimed that Jesus would do such a thing: 'His winnowing fork is in his hand, and he will clear his threshing floor and gather his wheat into the granary, but the chaff he will burn with unquenchable fire' (Mt. 3:12). The Gospels represent him as engaging in a ministry of separation.¹² He applies the Holy Spirit-and-fire to Israel in such a way that a division is made among the people. This ministry of division reaches its actual and symbolic climax when Jesus hangs between two thieves on the cross, the one confessing and the other rejecting him. Thus, on the cross the destruction phase of the Day of the Lord comes to pass. The one thief who rejects the crucified Jesus is left to bear judgment in his own person. The other thief is represented by the crucified Christ. Jesus dies in his place and thus takes upon himself the destruction which should have consumed this man as well. So it is that the fire of the Day of the Lord falls upon the earth on Golgotha. But this is not the end of the story. Fire again falls to earth, but this time on the Day of Pentecost. In this instance, the fire comes not to signify destruction but the blessing of the purification of the new people of God. Here is a people who have survived the eschatological judgment of God and have entered into the blessedness of his reign in Christ. If it be objected that the 120 in the upper room were believers before pentecost and thus the fire comes upon them symbolising a 'second blessing' of grace, the reply must be that it was not until that day that their faith became *Christian* faith in the proper sense of the term. Peter can refer to this day as the 'beginning' on which 'we believed in the Lord Jesus Christ' (Acts 11:15-17). To be sure, Peter and the others were saved individuals prior to this. Yet even for them something new began on pentecost. It was then that they could be regarded as 'New Testament believers' as opposed to 'Old Testament believers'. The new creation had come just as surely for them as for the three thousand who repented and were baptised on the same day.

2. The church is baptised in the Spirit just as her Lord had been some three years earlier. He entered the new era by himself in order to bring his people into the same state of affairs. As those who are to be conformed to the image of God's Son, the new Israel follows her Lord in the way he himself has gone. Thus, the church's experience of the Spirit becomes the same as Jesus' experience of the Spirit.

It is an experience which means, first of all, the life, liberty and joy of the Holy Spirit. It means, most pointedly, the life of the resurrection, eternal life in all of its ramifications and implications. Secondly, it is an experience which develops in stages. Jesus received the Spirit on two occasions: his baptism and his resurrection, the former occasion paving the way for the latter. So it is with the church. The outpouring of the Spirit on pentecost is a down payment on an even

greater measure of the Spirit's presence in the resurrection of the body in the Last Day.¹³ It is, in the third place, an experience coloured by the overlap of the ages. This follows from its development in stages. Our Lord received a baptism of the Holy Spirit before his endowment with the same Spirit 'without measure' (Jn. 3:34).¹⁴ Yet in the interval, his experience of the Spirit was simultaneous with assault by the Devil, weakness and finally death, until such time as he 'died to sin' and rose in newness of life (Rom. 6:4,10). So it is with the Christian. His experience of the Spirit can never be construed in terms of unmixed blessedness. There is, in the words of Paul, a 'dying of Jesus' which must be carried about in the body in order that the 'life of Jesus' may be manifested in the same body (2 Cor. 4:10). Indeed, 'We who live are always being given up to death for Jesus' sake, so that the life of Jesus may be manifested in our mortal flesh' (v. 11). We see, then, that the paradox of the Spirit's presence as simultaneous life and death is brought over from the experience of Jesus to that of his people. 'Between Master and follower there is a certain unity of experience and destiny. There is an inclusiveness of the latter in the former.'¹⁵ Moreover, it is *only* those who know the fellowship of Christ's sufferings who experience the power of his resurrection (Phil. 3:10), and *only* they will attain to the resurrection of the dead (v. 11).

3. The essence of the pentecostal experience is repeated in the conversion of individuals. It is here that an important distinction must be made. There are to be distinguished in this experience dispensable and indispensable elements. To put it differently, aspects of pentecost are abiding and normative for every generation of Christians, while others are attendant features which may or may not accompany its extension beyond the first disciples. On pentecost and several times afterward the experience of the Spirit was attended by tongues and prophecy (Acts 2:4; 10:45f; 11:15; 19:6). Yet this is not an invariable pattern. Acts 8:14; 11:19f; 16:14,30f. establish that the Spirit could be given apart from the manifestations of the other occasions. In addition, when Peter is called upon to justify his preaching to Gentiles (Acts 10:1f.) he relates not the *glossolalia* (tongue-speaking) of Cornelius and his family but the inner meaning of the event, i.e., God's gift of the Spirit to non-Israelites. The 'circumcision party' caught the point well enough. Their conclusion is that God has granted the Gentiles '*repentance unto life*' (Acts 11:15-18). This is pentecost in its quintessential meaning: men passing from death to life, men being translated from the kingdom of darkness into the kingdom of God's dear Son.

The evidence of the book of Acts is confirmed by at least two other passages in the N.T. Romans 5:5 takes up the language of pentecost in its reflection upon what God has done in Christ for the sake of sinners. Paul relates that hope does not put us to shame, because God's love has been *poured* into our hearts through the Holy Spirit who has been given to us. The verb 'poured' is precisely the one used in Acts 2:18,33 to speak of the descent of the Spirit upon the church at pentecost. More importantly, Paul connects the verb directly with the Holy Spirit in his movement of bestowing God's love on the believer. *At heart*, this is

pentecost and nothing else: sinners for whom Christ died coming to know and embrace God's love for them. This is the salvation event of pentecost as extended to those near and to those far off, as many as the Lord our God shall call to himself.

In a similar vein, 1 John 2:20 can speak of Christians as anointed by the Holy One. In view of everything we have seen of the theology of pentecost in this article, the reference of John is unmistakable. The O.T. spoke of an Anointed One who would come and take charge of the kingdom of God: he is the Christ, the Anointed of the Lord. When Jesus appears he is anointed with God's Spirit and assumes the functions of the King of Israel. Later his church is anointed with the same Spirit and enters into his reign. John, then, tells his readers that they can distinguish the antichrist because they have experienced the day of pentecost. Later John is so bold as to say that his readers cannot sin, they have been begotten of God and his seed abides in them (1 Jn. 3:9). John's choice of 'begotten' is reminiscent of that passage in his Gospel where Jesus equates entrance into the kingdom with birth by the Spirit (Jn. 3:3-8). The parallel is clear enough to warrant the conclusion that the anointing of the Holy One is birth from above by the Spirit. In speaking of the pentecostal anointing of the Christian, John leads us to believe that this is none other than the birth which is from God.

There is, then, a difference between the heart and essence of pentecost and those manifestations which at times accompanied it in the N.T. In the vocabulary of our systematic theology, the baptism/anointing/sealing of the Spirit is to be identified with conversion and regeneration. The reality envisaged by this working of the Spirit is not a *second* blessing but *the* blessing of Abraham which has come upon all who have faith (Gal. 3:14). A comparison of Galatians 4:4 with Romans 8:15-16 is sufficient to instruct us that the blessing of Abraham is sonship to God through the Spirit of God, a privilege enjoyed by *all* of God's people. This dimension of Paul's teaching sheds a considerable amount of light on his pronouncement about the 'sealing' of the Spirit (Eph. 1:13). It is significant that Paul writes of 'the Holy Spirit of the promise'. That is to say, the Holy Spirit who was promised by the prophets as the great fulfilment of God's plan of salvation. When we glance back at Galatians 3:14, the outstanding phrase is seen to be 'the promise of the Spirit'. A comparison of the two texts is to this effect: the sealing of the Spirit is one and the same with that working whereby one becomes a son of God. Thus, Paul's point in Ephesians 1:13 *cannot* be that of a second experience of grace known only by a segment of the Christian church. This sealing must be the possession of all the sons of God procured by Christ who redeemed us from the curse of the law, having become a curse for us (Gal. 3:13). Furthermore, Ephesians 1:14 contains an idea which is virtually synonymous with sealing, namely, the 'down payment' (*arrabon*) of the Spirit. Every believer is guaranteed an inheritance in glory. That glory is to consist of an unprecedented display of the Spirit's power in the new creation. Hence, the Christian — every Christian — may be assured of his stake in the

world to come, because a portion of that blessedness has already been made his by the imparting of God's Spirit to him.

In drawing this phase of our study to a close, it is to be underscored again that the theology of pentecost is all important. Pentecost *is* our salvation. It is the high point to which all the prophecies of the old covenant looked. It is, moreover, *the* unifying of the church, with all of its diversity, in Christ. It is by *one Spirit* that all have been baptised into *one body* (1 Cor. 12:13). The tragedy of our day is that the unifying baptism of the Spirit has been misinterpreted and effectively turned into the occasion of division and strife rather than the effectual working in the measure of every part. Rather than access in one Spirit to the Father, a Corinthian spirit of party pride and boasting in gifts has become the hallmark of many who claim to have been baptised in the Holy Spirit. How we need again to desire earnestly the more excellent way of the higher gifts.

Notes

¹ Perhaps the finest treatment of the theme is chapters 2, 3 and 4 of J. D. G. Dunn's *Baptism in the Holy Spirit*, London, SCM, 1970.

² On 'Spirit' and 'fire' as one complex element of the messianic baptism see Dunn, *Baptism*, p. 11 and John Owen, *Works*, III, p. 77.

³ Dunn, *Baptism*, p. 19.

⁴ Cf. Malachi 3:1-6 and Calvin's comments on the passage, *Commentaries on the Twelve Minor Prophets*, V, p. 572.

⁵ G. R. Beasley-Murray, *Baptism in the New Testament*, p. 38.

⁶ H. B. Swete notes that in Mark's version of the baptism the term for 'rend' is the same as in his account of the tearing of the veil of the temple. As we shall see, this implies that a process begun at the baptism culminates at the cross. H. B. Swete, *The Holy Spirit in the New Testament*, p. 44.

⁷ On the point see Owen, *op. cit.*, p. 75 and George Smeaton, *The Doctrine of the Holy Spirit*, p. 9.

⁸ Dunn, *Baptism*, p. 32.

⁹ *ibid.*

¹⁰ Notice how this entire context is heavily laden with references to the cross, esp v. 45.

¹¹ 'The One Baptism,' *Twelve New Testament Studies*, p. 160.

¹² Luke 12:49f; John 9:39 are representative of the separation motif in the past historical ministry of Jesus. Matthew 24:36-43; 25:31-46 speak of a future eschatological consummation of the same ministry.

¹³ The highest mode of existence for a man is that of 'spiritual body', according to 1 Corinthians 15:44-46. That is, a body wholly possessed and specially created by the Holy Spirit.

¹⁴ This statement of John the Evangelist is spoken from the perspective of the resurrection.

¹⁵ P. E. Hughes, *The Second Epistle to the Corinthians (New London Commentary)*, p. 142.

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