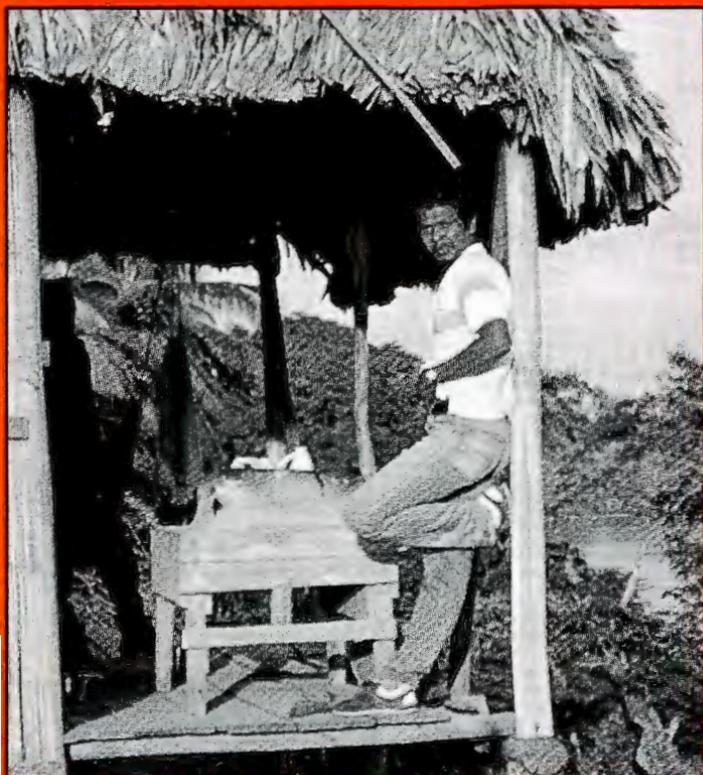


REFORMATION TODAY



(see inside front cover)

NOVEMBER-DECEMBER 1989

112

The Carey Conference for Ministers

2nd-4th January, 1990

College of Ripon and York St John, Yorkshire —

Theme: In Search of Revival

Programme

	9 a.m.	11 a.m.	2 p.m.	4 p.m.	7 p.m.
Tuesday			The life of A. W. Tozer Geoff Thomas	Revival and the unity of the churches Alan Gibson	Revival in its essence Hendrik Krabbendam
Wednesday	Revivals in Scotland 1827 to the present John J. Murray	The forgotten revival and its lessons Paul Cook	FREE TIME	Discussion, prayer and sharing	Revival and prayer Hendrik Krabbendam
Thursday	Revival and preaching Hendrik Krabbendam	Revival and our responsibility Erroll Hulse			

Fee: £45 per person (£10 deposit on application).

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'We should not only pray for, but prepare for a revival. A sudden influx of strange people could seriously unhinge an unprepared church.'

Jim van Zyl.

'I am profoundly convinced that the greatest need in the world today is revival in the Church of God. Yet alas! the whole idea of revival seems to have become strange to so many good Christian people. There are some who even seem to resent the very idea, and actually speak and write against it. Such an attitude is due to both a serious misunderstanding of the Scriptures, and to a woeful ignorance of the history of the Church. Anything therefore that can instruct God's people on this matter is very welcome.'

Dr Martyn Lloyd-Jones.

Front cover: *A scene from Honduras. See News.*

Editorial

Revival in our Global Age

The programme for the Carey Conference for Ministers this year appears on the page opposite.

Jim van Zyl writing on the subject of obstacles to revival in RT 13 challenged us, 'Think of the last fifty years. Consider all the meetings, conventions and campaigns that have been organised. Honesty demands that we admit that only a very small proportion have had anything to do with the subject or need of revival. We have yet to see a major conference where evangelicals will gather and deliberately spend time interceding for a new world-wide outpouring of the Spirit.'

That is true of the Reformed constituency. A grouping within the Baptist Union in England known as the Baptist Revival Fellowship (BRF) has for a number of years organised its annual conference around the theme of revival. More recently that conference experienced, as did the Carey Conference for Ministers, to a lesser degree, a division caused by the charismatic movement. Some charismatics hold the view that their way is the only right way to revival. Such left the ranks of the BRF just as some ceased to attend the Carey Conference. The organisers of the BRF are aware that we must not make a fad of revival. Revival, albeit wonderful, is only one way in which God is glorified. The Lord is very much glorified when we exercise faith in difficult times and persevere in adversity. We only have to think of the pioneer missionaries to see the vindication of this principle.

One reason why we see revival to be important is because of the declining state of most denominations in England. The evangelical cause is already irrelevant as far as society is concerned. Fragmentation continues as

does numerical decline. Unless there is an awakening the situation will become similar to that in Italy, France or Belgium, or even Turkey, which for its size (51 million compared with 55 for the UK), is the least evangelised country on earth.

What is Revival and what is Awakening?

'Revival properly consists in two things: a general impartation of new life, vigour and power to those who are already of the number of God's people; and a remarkable awakening and conversion of souls who have hitherto been careless and unbelieving; in other words it consists in a new spiritual life imparted to the dead, and a new spiritual life imparted to the living' (James Buchanan).

Edwin Orr, who devoted most of his ministry to documenting revivals, suggested an important distinction between the way we use the words 'revival' and 'awakening'. He suggested that 'revival' is something which properly affects the churches. It produces deep repentance and greater holiness with a new release of power in witness and evangelism. 'Awakening' however refers more to the conversion of unbelievers who are 'awakened' from spiritual death and brought to life in Christ.

The Role of Jonathan Edwards

Jonathan Edwards played a key role through his writings on revival and his correspondence with his British counterparts. His treatise on the need for extraordinary prayer for revival based on the promises of Scripture was first published in 1748 (see Works volume 2, Banner of Truth edition, page 278ff and article by Michael Haykin RT 103). This work in particular together with his descriptions of the revival in Northampton and writing on revival in general contri-



Jonathan Edwards

buted greatly toward the Concert of prayer which preceded widespread revivals in Britain and America from 1790 to 1830. Someone has asked, What was the Concert of prayer? It was simply an agreement among groups of ministers and churches to pray at set times (hence concert) specifically for revival.

We do not separate revival from the rest of Christianity as though it is an upper storey superior sphere in which there are no problems. We must not make revival a mystique, or fall into the trap of thinking that we can do nothing effective until awakening comes. Awakening usually comes after the seed has been sown, that is after laborious effort (Psalm 126). Maximum effort in evangelism and missionary endeavour must continue ceaselessly. As we labour we pray that the increase will be given. To refer to Edwards again we should remember that he wrote the most influential Protestant missionary biography ever! I am referring to Edwards' book on the life and diaries of David Brainerd. Note too that when the revival subsided and later when Edwards was dismissed from his church at Northampton, he did not give up

work. Rather he devoted himself to evangelising the Indians and to pastoring a frontier church in addition to ceaseless work with his pen.

Revivals in an International Context

It is helpful to emulate Edwards' example and view revivals in their international context. He thought primarily in terms of New England and Britain, but also, as we see from his book *The History of Redemption*, he looked forward to and encouraged prayer for the conversion of all nations. We can view the countries of the world on a scale far greater than Edwards ever could. It took months for news to reach him. Now we have immediate information by TV and/or in print. If a revival broke out on the Lord's Day in Tokyo, or Brisbane, or Vancouver, or in a smaller town like St John, New Brunswick, Canada, we could have by Fax (page copying by telephonic communication) a full description, just as soon as someone could put it into print.

There is untold spiritual power and inspiration to be gained by hearing about, or reading about, present day awakenings, or better still experiencing a revival in progress first hand. For instance note the connection between the revival in Wales and the revival in Latvia in 1934 as seen in the following facts gleaned from the recently published book *Five Minutes to Midnight*, by T. Omri Jenkins (EP, 120 pages, £4.50).

Thomas Spurgeon, son of C.H. Spurgeon, said of William Fetler of Latvia, 'If my father's seminary had done nothing else than to produce dear Pastor William, it was still worthy of its existence.' William Fetler had visited Wales during the 1904/5 revival, had met Evan Roberts and seen for himself the great evidence of the power of the Spirit in the Principality. He was never the same afterwards. His great burden was that God would send revival to

It is two and a half years since we raised the subscription price of *Reformation Today*. During that time postage rates have soared. Inflation has also caused the printing prices to go up. Reluctantly therefore we will have to increase the subscriptions as from January next year, that is from *R.T. 114*.

We continue to depend upon the gifts of supporters to sustain the work. The magazine is greatly assisted when readers subscribe for friends with gift subscriptions.

Latvia and Russia. He stirred up his people to pray. Their prayers were heard. In 1934 a young Scot, James Stewart aged 24, arrived in Riga, capital of Latvia without invitation and without warning. He was invited to speak. The power of the Holy Spirit was with him. Meetings were begun. These continued for five months. Over 2000 people attended every day.

Stewart declared later that it was not only the size of the gathered crowds that was surprising: 'It was the awful sense of the majesty and holiness of God: it was the liberty of the Spirit.' The meetings sometimes went round the clock with as many people present in the morning as in the afternoon! 'Nobody knew how long a service would last; nobody bothered about the clock; nobody wanted to leave.'

What about Christian Doctrine and Revival?

Jonathan Edwards' theology united a sturdy doctrine of the sovereignty of God with a great emphasis on the person, work and power of the Holy Spirit in experimental religion. Calvinism, whether in Geneva, Hungary, The Netherlands or South Africa, can easily degenerate into a mere academic exercise, an eclectic interest in theology as

an intellectual science, which can become as cold and barren as the Antarctic. By eclectic is meant a setting out of various scholarly opinions and expositions; modernist, neo-orthodox, evangelical or anything else, without any firm commitment to the authority of Scripture or to Christ as Lord.

The vindication of Edwards' combination of Reformed and Puritan theology with heart experience is seen in the revivals which he himself witnessed as well as in the spiritual awakenings which his books encouraged. But this is not to assume that revival is the exclusive property of any one evangelical grouping. Present day awakenings highlight very much that that is not the case.

Revival in our Global Age

Our century has seen some of the most extensive awakenings in the history of the Church. These have been taking place in all continents especially Asia, Africa and South America. French speaking Quebec in Canada is a reminder that that continent has not been left out. Romania in Eastern Europe is a reminder that evangelical Christianity can thrive very well under extremely adverse conditions. Western Europe and the Muslim world (Indonesia excepted) must surely be the poorest when it comes to spiritual awakenings in



James Stewart

the second half of the 20th century.

Guatemala (8,400,000) is at present seeing a massive defection from Roman Catholicism. It is estimated that 20 per cent of the population is now evangelical. Not quite on the same scale but nevertheless remarkable is the increase of the evangelical constituency in Brazil (140,000,000) where 16 per cent of the population profess to be evangelical. The Pentecostal denomination, especially the Assemblies of God, forms the great majority.

The tremendous increase in Pentecostal churches has persuaded some that Pentecostal doctrine must therefore be correct. But that is pragmatic thinking and not biblical thinking. (Pragmatic thinking is simply 'what works must be right'. For example if you can make lots of money by deforestation, then deforestation must be right; see Honduras in News section.) Many are awakened spiritually through elementary gospel preaching who later come to recognise the truths of God's sovereignty. That is happening on a large scale for the simple reason that full and mature biblical teaching is not available in many nations or exists only on a small scale.

The interview with Jim Faucett published in this issue is typical of many and illustrates the point well.

South Korea is a nation which has been blessed with robust Christian doctrine from the beginning of missionary endeavour there. Revivals in Korea this century have greatly increased church membership. In South Korea (42,000,000), it is estimated that 16 per cent of the population is now evangelical, mostly Presbyterian. The multiplication of Bible-based seminaries together with a robust zeal for missionary outreach to other nations is one of the most encouraging features of the present day global situation.

An awakening in Ethiopia (35,000,000) has resulted in an increase from 240,000 Church adherents in 1950 to 3,500,000 at the present time.

There are jewels of revival which should encourage us to pray. One such is the small state of Nagaland (910,000) in India.

'Nagaland is unique! It is the only predominantly Baptist ethnic state in the world. Revival dramatically changed the moral and spiritual climate in 1976-78. Almost all Nagas are now Christian. There are probably proportionately more born-again believers in this state than any other in the world. The revival is overflowing to other states' (*Operation World*, 1986, p.225).

Surely this is a time to remember Psalm 2:8, 'Ask of me, and I will make the nations your inheritance, the ends of the earth your possession.'

The Southern Baptist Founders' Conference

The editor apologises for not having prepared the report of this year's conference for this issue. □□□

Jim Faucett, now 37, entered the ministry aged 23. He has worked his way to the Reformed faith from a mildly charismatic and radical dispensationalist background. His testimony, revealed here by way of interview, is typical of others. It tells us much about the power of Reformed literature. It also shows well the need for friends who are not censorious but patient. Hywel Jones and Dick Lucas emerge from the interview with honour!

Introducing Jim Faucett

1. *What is your background and how did you become a Christian?*

I come from a U.S. Airforce family. We travelled across the States and the Philippines when I was young. My parents were not Christians but my grandmother was a devout Bible trusting Southern Baptist who influenced me greatly. During my teen years I was involved with the so-called 'counter culture' of the 1960's and early 70's. I was extremely rebellious and wild both in outlook and appearance. I became a Christian after being visited by members of a local Baptist church who shared the gospel with me in 1972. I was baptised by immersion and soon began earnest Bible study at the Bible Institute run by the church.

This church also had a radio broadcast reaching across the state of Maine, called 'The Bible Speaks' hosted by the pastor, Carl Stevens. Later that year after a church split, a remnant of the congregation formed a ministry which included radio and television broadcasts, the Northeast School of the Bible and 'The Bible Speaks' movement. Property was purchased in South Berwick, Maine in 1973 to house the burgeoning Bible School which had begun in 1972 with 40 students but numbers suddenly multiplied to exceed 300, mostly full-time by the end of 1973. Studies included street evangelism, Sunday School teaching and work in Christian coffee bars. I graduated and was ordained in 1975 at the age of 23



Jim Faucett

when I was already pastoring a church of 60 members in Worcester, Massachusetts, and assisting in a pioneer work on a college campus in Sanford, Maine. In 1976 I came to the UK to assist another pastor in church planting. Since that time I have pastored in Ohio, Massachusetts, and then in North Wales. In addition I have taught at a Bible Institute in Lubbock, Texas.

2. *How did you come to believe in the 1689 Confession?*

I came to embrace the 1689 Confession as a result of studying the Westminster Confession and the Shorter Catechism. I wasn't able to convince myself through a study of the Scriptures that there was evidence for paedobaptism. I had also been reading Reformed authors like R. C. Sproul and Berkhof and became convinced of the Reformed doctrines of predestination and election. Later I found Packer's essay in the introduction to Owen's 'Death of Death' especially helpful, clarifying for me the fact that I'd held unscriptural views on the doctrines of grace, soteriology and sanctification.

3. *Why did you leave 'The Bible Speaks' Church?*

There never has been an 'official' leaving 'The Bible Speaks' for me. I could no more deny the great help, especially with a love for the Scriptures of the ministry of 'The Bible Speaks', than I could deny my own surname. 'The Bible Speaks' ceased to exist as that in 1987 as a result of a case in a Federal Bankruptcy Court. The group is now called 'Greater Grace World Outreach' and is based in Baltimore, Maryland. I still regard the members as dear brothers and sisters in Christ. They are zealous in their love of the Scriptures, worship of Christ, service of God and evangelism of the lost, for which they are willing to make great personal sacrifices.

For myself I can no longer promote many of the doctrines held by the 'Greater Grace World Outreach'. I cannot hold to Dallas-style dispensationalism, to Arminian views of the partial depravity of man, election by foreknowledge of an act of faith, universal atonement, the ability of man to resist grace in salvation. I do not believe that certain gifts are given to validate ministry in this age for example 'a word of knowledge' being taken as a knowledge of how many people in a room are meant to have been touched by a message. Most importantly, I cannot preach the gospel as if Christ is impotently waiting for the powerful sinner to open the door to him.

For me now the gospel is a command for men to believe and repent. I believe now, as the Puritans and Whitefield did, that regeneration or the new birth precedes both repentance and faith. The latter are the inevitable result of regeneration because of the efficacious atonement. Regeneration is not therefore a result of faith *or* repentance. In spite of these differences I want to hold an attitude of loving kindness toward

those with whom I disagree as Whitefield did toward Wesley.

4. *What can we learn from 'The Bible Speaks' movement in Finland?*

'The Bible Speaks' movement has been especially successful in Finland because the American missionary pastor began to train Finnish men for the ministry from the commencement of the work rather than after a church had been planted. So often training is academic only. He trained men and then very soon delegated to them tasks and duties. They in turn are now training others (see 2 Tim 2:2). The pastor also instilled in the people a desire to hear preaching and thus they became zealous for Christ. By example he followed the biblical pattern of training men in a church context to love the Scriptures, to pray alone and together, and to evangelise.

5. *You have been through a great change in your theological outlook. What 'Reformed' attitudes did not help you? And which ones did during the time of transition?*

In the past I have found certain Reformed pastors very much like the Pharisees of old. In 1977 we from 'The Bible Speaks' in England were invited to tea by some of the orthodox ministers and put through severe questioning which in style was like the Inquisition. 'Why are you here?' 'Why don't you work in the existing evangelical churches?' 'Why are you sheep-stealing?' In fact they wouldn't have touched us with a barge pole, let alone have us work with them. In that same year the 'Evangelical Times' printed an article which in effect labelled us as a cult. All sound evangelicals should shun us!

My point here is this: If we were non-Christians then why did they not preach the gospel to us? If we were Christians then why did they not treat us as

brothers who needed restoring? Read Whitefield's letter to Wesley in response to the latter's sermon on free grace. See the broken heart of a loving friend yearning for restoration there. See how long after the sermon that Whitefield waited to publish the letter. Did Whitefield's love for Wesley ever wane, even though they could no longer work together?

More recently I have met Reformed men whose character is shining and exemplary. When I was in Wales, I met Hywel Jones, then a pastor in Borrass Park, Wrexham, now Principal at London Theological Seminary. He was most longsuffering towards me. As I left his house he said, "Let's build bridges between us, not walls." I shall not forget the inward conviction I felt. In London, Dick Lucas was tolerant of my dispensationalism and invited me to attend some Proclamation Trust meetings. He was never condemning, always loving, sometimes humorous saying, "*My dear brother*, do you really expect to go up in this secret rapture of yours?" Meanwhile I saw and heard what a trained expositor is like.

6. *You now lead a church meeting in your own home in London. What teaching method are you using?*

We are currently using the Shorter Catechism so that our people can be systematically taught. Many of us evangelicals have so little discernment. The causes are several: a lack of church discipline; a thinking among Christians that doctrine must be laid aside in order to achieve unity (in short, subjective relativism); a lack of systematic theological teaching and a thinking amongst Christians that they may exist happily apart from a local church. This latter cause has led to an epidemic of parachurch organisations that by and large bleed the brightest and best and also take away the finances from the

Many American readers will know the movement TBS 'The Bible Speaks' which began in the state of Maine in about 1962. Led by Carl Stevens this movement began as the Montsweag Baptist Church, and later the Woolwich-Wiscasset Baptist Church. Expansion was rapid and the work moved to South Berwick, Maine, in 1973, and then with further growth to a large campus in Lenox, Massachusetts, in 1976. This extensive campus was lost in a much publicised lawsuit over money in 1987. It was then that TBS became 'Greater Grace World Outreach' located in Baltimore, Maryland, where there is a church of over 1,000 as well as a Bible College.

The leaders of the movement are evangelical in the basic doctrines. In soteriology they reject the five points of Calvinism except perseverance. They are dispensationalist. The style of worship is similar to that of many charismatic churches. They believe that tongues have ceased but the majority of the other gifts continue. With regard to the baptism of the Spirit the movement is now orthodox. The notion that there is 'a distinct *second blessing*' is rejected.

churches. All of this has led to a great dullness of hearing and an inability or lethargy towards spiritual teaching.

7. *What are your aspirations for the future?*

I hope to continue to be able to feed God's flock wherever the Lord chooses. To facilitate this I am travelling to the US to study at Reformed Theological Seminary for just the winter term and taking some courses by correspondence from Columbia Bible Seminary as well.

Editor's note on 'Towards a Biblical Understanding of the Law'

There was a good spirit at the Carey conference when Bob Sheehan gave the address which we publish in this issue.

Bob Sheehan reports some extreme positions. Our experiences vary a great deal. I must live a sheltered life. The debates I have heard with both sides represented have been very polite and charitable.

It may be helpful to remember that the Puritans went much further in tangible biblical exposition than we have. While we have produced occasional articles they produced whole books! Mention might be made of just a few books which appeared during the years of the Westminster Assembly. Note the colourful titles used. *Antinomianism Anatomised* (1643) by John Sedgwick, *Assertion of Grace* (1644), which was attacked by Anthony Burgess in his *Vindiciae Legis* (1646), but defended again in the book *A Re-assertion*. John Saltmarsh published his book *Free Grace* in 1645. Thomas Gataker of the assembly was then stirred up to write his book titled *A Mistake* (1646). That was answered by Saltmarsh in his

book *Reasons* (1646). But Gataker responded in the same year with *Shadows without Substance*. Not deterred the following year Saltmarsh published *Sparkles of Glory*. In the meantime Henry Denne wrote *Man of Sin Discovered* (1645), and he was answered by Thomas Bedford in the treatise *An Examination* (1646). Richard Baxter wrote *Aphorisms* in 1649 which drew fire from John Cranston in the book *Aphorisms Exorcized!* (1653) and for good measure another title *Free Justification* by William Eyre (1654). The Westminster Assembly assigned Daniel Cawdrey and Herbert Palmer the task of expounding on the moral nature of the fourth commandment, which they did in two substantial volumes, but I cannot give the date because the last time I perused them was in the British Museum, but from memory it was 1647.

In my view we have not attained the depth of analysis or theological penetration of the Puritans but I do not want to lose out on Christian love and unity with those who would differ.

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8. *What are your views about our responsibility to pray for revival?*

I am convinced from my past experience in the US and in England that God blesses us tremendously when we pray. In Maine 'The Bible Speaks' grew phenomenally after years of meeting daily for morning prayer. About twelve met every morning at 5.30 a.m. for an hour of prayer before proceeding to work. Many of us lingered and ate breakfast together while discussing the

Scriptures and how they were to affect our lives. We experienced an explosive increase in conversions subsequent to that. Then later in England we repeated this procedure of early morning prayer every day and came to know a remarkable and sudden increase in conversions subsequently. It is misguided to think that God will revive a people who find no time to commune with him from the heart.

This material formed the substance of a paper presented at the Carey Conference for Ministers by Bob Sheehan who is Pastor of the Welwyn Evangelical Church. It was well received by those on both sides of the debate.

Towards a Biblical Understanding of the Law

The prominence given to the law of God in the Old Testament makes its role under the new covenant an issue of considerable significance. Christians of all traditions have been vexed by the issues involved, but none have been more concerned to understand the exact requirements of God concerning his law than those of the Reformed tradition. This study is an attempt to contribute to the present highly polarised debate in Reformed Baptist circles.

Debates over law no new thing

The history of Particular, or Reformed, Baptists reveals a long-standing and intense division of opinion over the role of the law of God under the new covenant. The records of the seventeenth century Particular Baptist Associations reveal some differences of opinion on this matter, particularly relating to the Sabbath.

Some allege a clear distinction between the 1644 or First London Confession of Faith and the 1689 or Second London Confession of Faith. It is argued that the 1644 Confession presents the gospel or teaching of Jesus as the sole rule of the believer's life, whereas the 1689 Confession also requires the moral law or Ten Commandments to be obeyed.

In later history the Gospel Standard Churches tended to reject the place of the moral law in the believer's sanctification, which brought their preachers into conflict with those of the Spurgeonian tradition.

In the light of Reformed Baptist history, we should not be surprised that the debate has arisen again in the twentieth century. It does suggest that understanding the New Testament view of law is complex rather than obvious.

The main issue

The main point of contention needs to be grasped. Those in the 1689 tradition assert that the law may be divided into the ceremonial, civil and moral. They believe the ceremonial and civil aspects of law are fulfilled in Christ, but that the moral law or Ten Commandments are binding on the believer for sanctification.

Those in the 1644 tradition may, or may not, accept the three-fold division of the law, but assert that all the law is abolished, because it is fulfilled in Christ, and is, therefore, irrelevant to the believer's sanctification.

Correct attitudes

Before the main issue can be discussed, comments must be made on related but non-doctrinal matters. Often it has not been doctrine that has been most significant in this debate. People have been driven from one side of the debate to the other more by the wrong attitudes of those engaged in debate than by the force of arguments. This is reprehensible, and a great cause of shame to those responsible.

1. The dangers of legalism

Some followers of the 1689 Confession have had a tendency to Pharisaic legalism over minutiae. This is illustrated by the minister away on a preaching engagement and receiving hospitality in a godly home. The minister noted the lady of the house peel a potato, boil it and serve it with his dinner. He refused to eat a potato peeled on the Sabbath! On his next visit, the lady cooked the potato in its skin and served it. The minister cut it open, ate its contents and left the skin. The bemused housewife asked a question. "Why is it Sabbath-breaking to eat a potato peeled before boiling but not a potato peeled after boiling?" Why indeed?! Such legalism can be multiplied many times. It neither honours God nor encourages listening to the 1689 heritage.

Those who claim allegiance to the ethos of 1644 can also, however, be legalists. They reject the binding nature of God's law but make their own. This is illustrated by the man who went to a restaurant with some of his 'liberated' brothers. He waited before the meal to give thanks. His companions rejected the idea with astonishment. They were not going to fulfil the legalistic duty of thanksgiving. They were free from legalism, but living by the new rule, 'Never give thanks before a meal.' Too many reject the law of Moses but require everyone to believe and practise in *their* way. They have rejected Old Testament rules to live under their own rules.

2. The danger of papalism

The 1689 position of law has a number of defenders who are arrogant, pugnacious and self-assured. They feel they have this problem worked out. If someone has the impudence to question their comments on law they are attacked. "You have a problem with the law? People who have problems with the law are criminals and need to be punished. Out of my sight! Out of my church! You have a hostile spirit." Such men consider all questioning as hostile, all attempts to raise problems as rebellion. They drive people away from their position, not because their arguments are weak, but because they are hard, aggressive and convinced of their own infallibility.

Not that some of the 1644 claimants are necessarily any better. 1689 men have no monopoly on pride, aggression and self-confidence. Let someone suggest that there could be some place for law in the life of the believer and he will be bombarded with a set of chronic clichés and outrageous accusations. "So, you don't believe the gospel? You don't believe in justification by Christ alone and sanctification by Christ alone? Don't you know that the regenerate heart needs no rules? You are going to be saved at Calvary and sanctified at Sinai, are you?"

Don't you believe the Christ-centred gospel? You know nothing of sovereign grace." Under such onslaughts the questioner protests, "I only asked!" However, to question those men is sin. You accept what they say, believe their way and obey their way or are dismissed as not believing the gospel.

It is tiresome to hear people on both sides of this debate suggesting that all the legalism and all the papalism is one-sided! The damage caused to the Reformed Baptist cause by pugnacious protagonists on both sides is immense. A great deal of repentance is needed for harsh, conceited attitudes that despise and destroy the flock. God have mercy on us!

The strands of New Testament teaching

The teaching of the New Testament on law is complex, but I would suggest that there are four strands of teaching, all of which must be given their full weight:

1. Law is a definable era of history

It is recognised on all sides that the word 'law' has a variety of uses in the New Testament. One of these uses is to define the period between Moses and Christ. There were people who sinned in Adam before the law came. There was a covenant with Abraham 430 years before the law was added. Law came by Moses; grace and truth by Jesus Christ (Rom 5:12-21; Gal 3:17-19; Jn 1:17).

By the coming of the law the Old Testament people of God were distinguished from all other people on the earth as especially belonging to God. The law defined Judaism, the beliefs, practices and worship of the Jews (Ex 19:5-6; Lev 18:1-5).

The people of the ancient world had no difficulty in recognising Jews. Haman's anti-semitism was easy to implement because the Jews had diverse customs from everyone else. Their hairstyles, clothing, fields, festivals and customs marked them out as Jews (Est 3:8; Lev 19:19,27f).

The essential Jewishness of Old Testament law is recognised even after the Lord Jesus had come. The Council of Jerusalem did not impose Judaism on the Gentiles. They asked for the observance of some rules so as not unnecessarily to offend the Jews (Acts 15:1-5, 19-21, 28-29).

When Paul returned from his missionary journeys to Jerusalem, James was concerned because, although he accepted that Gentiles did not have to accept Jewish customs, it was reported that Paul encouraged *Jews* to abandon Jewish customs. To allay the fears of the converted Jews on this point, he went to the Temple with those under Jewish vows (Acts 21:20-26).

Paul made the same differentiation between Jews and Gentiles in his epistles. They were at enmity with each other because the law with its ordinances divided them. The Jews despised the Gentiles for not having the law. The Gentiles hated the Jews for insisting on being different. However, through the death of Christ the hostility was broken down. The law was abolished so that men were no longer divided into Jew and Gentile but in Christ were Christians – one new people in one new body, the Church (Eph 2:11-22).

The coming of Christ has abolished the law as a means of dividing humanity into Jew and Gentile and of defining the nature and practices of the people of God. God's people are not Jewish nor Gentile but new creatures (Gal 6:15-16). No gospel preacher is to rebuild Judaism by insisting on obedience to the law. That era has passed. Christ has come. Cannot everyone on both sides of the debate accept that Judaism and Gentilism are not our message? Christ and Christianity are!

2. Law is an age of promise and preparation

Closely related to the first strand of teaching, but not identical with it, is the role of law in the Old Testament age as a type, picture, promise and preparation for the Messianic age. The law did not merely distinguish the people of God from the nations; it also foreshadowed the work of Christ.

No portion of Scripture is more devoted to demonstrating the temporary, preparatory character of the law than the letter to the Hebrews, and particularly, the seventh to tenth chapters. The law is a shadow of the things to come, but not the substance, which is found in Christ.

The burden of the writer to the Hebrews is to demonstrate that, although Judaism had its central Temple, its priests, vestments, sacrifices and altars, we, under the gospel, have none and **need** none.

We do not enter the central sanctuary at Jerusalem with our worship. We enter heaven itself. We do not have an altar in our churches, for our altar is Calvary. We look around for no priest in our assemblies, for we disclaim all other priests but Christ. We bring no sacrifice to pay for our sin, for Christ has offered himself a sacrifice once for all. The whole Old Testament order was pregnant in foreshadowing the work of Christ our Saviour.

To hanker after Judaism with its forms of worship and practices, to ape its behaviour as is done by Roman Catholicism, Anglo-Catholicism and Eastern orthodoxy, is to despise and deny the finished work of Christ. We do not want the copy when we have the original, promise when we have fulfilment, shadow when we have substance, picture when we have reality, the swaddling clothes when we have the baby.

Christianity is a declaration that the age of promise and preparation has gone. Christ has come. The worship of God and acceptance with God is no longer pre-figured and full of promise but is fulfilled and full of Christ. Surely there is no disagreement over this?

3. Every man and woman has a law relationship with God

None of us would deny that one of the privileges of the Jews was to be given the law. Their lives, their sins, their judgment are all related to it. Their whole history is bound up with it (Rom 2:17f; 9:4; 2:12, 16).

It has to be recognised that the Gentiles did not possess this law. In that sense they were without the law (Rom 2:12). However, although not possessing the

fulness of the law, they do have the work of the law, its fundamental requirements, written on their hearts. They have a God-given sense of right and wrong, of duty to God and duty to man. They live, sin and are judged in the light of this. Their consciences and thoughts witness together as to what they ought to do and have failed to do (Rom 2:13-15).

No one is lawless. What is explained more fully to the Jews is fundamentally understood in its basic principles by the Gentiles. Our Lord left us in no doubt as to what these fundamental principles are. The whole Old Testament hangs on them. They are our duty to give total love to God and to love one another as we love ourselves (Matt 22:37-40).

The law of God is holy, righteous and good (Rom 7:12). All law works in the same way. It sets out our duty and requires obedience. It promises approval to obedience and punishment to disobedience (Gal 3:12). Either internally (in the case of the Gentile), or internally and externally (in the case of the Jew), the law issues God's demands to humanity. All are required to give full obedience to these commands.

However, in fallen man the law has other effects. It not only defines sin but it encourages it. When the sinner is faced with a demand he is provoked by his sinfulness to disobey. When he is faced by a prohibition he wants what is forbidden. The law which would benefit him if obeyed becomes an agent provocateur to his sinful nature which is hostile to God (Rom 7:7-8).

In this way, the fact that he is a sinful creature, a breaker of the law and hostile to its demands, is emphasised. His self-confidence dies. He is convicted of his utter sinfulness and knows his need to be rid of his obligation to obey the law and to pay its penalty (Rom 7:7-13).

The law requires complete obedience or punishment for every human being. No human being has given the required obedience. No human being can contemplate the punishment without concern. The New Testament resolves this dilemma through the doctrine of redemption.

Christ the sinless Son of God was born subject to law, under its obligation, in order to redeem those under law. He alone perfectly fulfilled the law of God to be sinless and have righteousness. It is this righteousness that is imputed to believing sinners so that they are considered to have fully obeyed the demands of the law (Rom 1:16-17; 3:21-31; 5:12-21; Phil 3:5-11). Christ has lived a righteous life for us.

Christ died to bear our sins in his body. He took the curse of the law upon himself and paid its penalty in full. Believing sinners have no punishment to endure for their lawlessness because Christ has endured it for them (1 Pet 2:24; Is 53:5-6; Gal 3:10-14).

Christ has taken all our law obligations and fulfilled them. Through the death of Christ, the Christian has died to the law. He has a new relationship with God,

this time based on grace not law, the law-keeping of another, not his own. No Christian is under law but under grace. No Christian is accepted because of what he has done but because of what Christ has done (Rom 5:12-7:6).

Surely this is common ground to both sides in the dispute over law? Are not all men under a law relationship to God by nature as creatures? Are not all men condemned by law through their practice as sinners? Is not salvation a deliverance from a law-relationship to a grace relationship? Christ has changed it all.

4. Law as moral principle

There are those who feel that all that needs to be said has been said. However, we may not ignore a fourth strand of biblical teaching. The Christian is free from the law as definitive of Judaism, as promise, and as the basis of his relationship with God but he is not lawless. The law still has an authority over and effect on the life of the Christian as the following passages indicate:

a. Romans 13:8-10

Paul taught that whatever commandments exist, they all can be fulfilled by love. However, that is not the same as claiming that law is unnecessary where love exists. Love is not the abrogation or replacement of the law but its fulfilment. Law sets out the duty. Love is the method or means of obeying the law.

Paul did not say that the Jews used to have commandments but the Christians have love. Rather he said that whatever commandments the Christians have can be obeyed by love. It could be illustrated by saying that a man may have many creditors but he can sometimes pay them all with one cheque which will be divided to meet his obligations to each. Our duty to each of God's commands is fulfilled by love.

b. Ephesians 6:1-3

In teaching the family and social duties of Christians, Paul commanded children to obey their parents. He did not say to them that if they had been Jewish children they would have been required to give obedience by law and also have been given a promise of blessing in Israel. Rather, he told them to obey their parents because the command to honour them is a first commandment (i.e. of primary importance) with a promise. In accordance with the internationalisation of the Church under the new covenant Paul did not promise the children long life and blessing in the land of Israel (Deut 5:16) but blessing and long life on the earth.

Without any sense of impropriety Paul applied the requirements of Old Testament law to New Testament children making appropriate modifications to the context. It is noticeable that a commentary written from the anti-law perspective totally by-passes any comment on this portion of the passage. Those opposed to the continuing authority of the law in the life of the believer have a real problem with these verses.

c. 1 Timothy 5:18

It is sometimes argued, even by those who advocate the continuing relevance of Old Testament law in the believer's life, that it is only the moral law or Ten Commandments that are binding. This is, however, an inadequate statement of New Testament teaching. We have already considered the command, 'You shall love your neighbour as yourself'. This is not one of the Ten Commandments but a Levitical law (Lev 19:18), yet it is still binding.

In the same way, when Paul wrote to Timothy about the financial support of teaching elders, he declared it to be scripturally required by reference to the law of Moses (Deut 25:4) and the teaching of Jesus (Luke 10:7). The law quoted was not one of the Ten Commandments yet was still binding.

The question is: How did Paul use that Old Testament law, and does it reveal any principle helpful to us? The law quoted by Paul was in a list of miscellaneous laws. It concerned the requirements to allow an ox treading out grain to eat some of it. This cannot be applied to elders in a literal sense. The moral principle involved in the commandment applies. He who works must be allowed to gain a living from his work. Paul consistently uses the moral principle in this way (cf. 1 Cor 9:7-12).

Far from any Old Testament law being obsolete under the new covenant, every Old Testament law has a moral application which needs to be considered in understanding our whole duty to God. Few of us would teach our people that it is sinful to wear clothing made from two types of material (Lev 19:19), but does not that text give us an important moral principle against confusion, disorder and mixing together things which differ (cf. 1 Cor 14:40; 2 Cor 6:14f)?

In writing to Timothy on the matter of ministerial pay, Paul did not give the words of Jesus greater authority than the words of Moses, nor did he set the two against each other. He viewed them as complementary proofs of the case he argued. For Paul it was not law versus gospel on this issue but law in support of the gospel.

d. James 2:8-13

James also believed that harmony exists between the law and the gospel in the life of the believer. In his concern over the favouritism being shown to the rich and the maltreatment of the poor in the churches, he commanded the Christians to keep the royal law according to the scripture, 'You shall love your neighbour as yourself'.

Some argue that this is a royal law because taught by Christ and that this is, therefore, a gospel command. This is not true. Jesus taught that this command was the second greatest commandment in the law and was one of the true foundational commandments on which the whole Old Testament revelation depended (Matt 22:34-40). There is nothing more Old Testament than this. Yet James tells Christians they act correctly when they obey this law.

James furthermore warned these Christians that if they did not obey this command they would be law-breakers. It would be inadequate to keep other commands and ignore this one. They should seek to keep the law because they would be judged by the law of liberty (vv. 9-12).

I take the 'law of liberty' (v. 12) to be the gospel, for in the first chapter it is used in that context. It is the word of truth (v. 18) that they need to hear, receive and obey. Elsewhere that 'word of truth' is called 'the gospel of salvation' (Eph 1:13). They are to live by the laws of God because they will be judged by the gospel. The two are in harmony (cf. 1 Tim 1:8-11). Because God has given us so much in Christ we are to live to please God.

e. Hebrews 8:10-12

The writer to the Hebrews quoted the promises of the new covenant as outlined by the prophet Jeremiah (31:31-34). Alongside total forgiveness, personal knowledge of the Lord and adoption, was the promise of God to write *his* laws on the minds and hearts of his people.

Here writers opposed to the continuance of the law in the life of the believer are in great difficulties. They tentatively suggest that several things could be meant by 'my laws' — perhaps the laws given by Christ — but they have to concede that it could have reference to the Ten Commandments. This begrudging concession is remarkable and decisive. There is a tacit recognition that God's laws are written on the minds and hearts of believers and that to limit this to laws given by Christ is unwarranted. If God has caused his laws to be written on the minds and hearts of his children they must be foundational to the believer's sanctification and not irrelevant! Christ's blood has effected the new covenant. All the blessings of this covenant, including God's laws, belong to all believers (1 Cor 11:25).

Conclusion

Those men in the 1689 tradition must be very careful about their attitudes. They must avoid at all costs emphasising law in such a way that they Judaize Christianity and turn it into little more than Judaism plus forgiveness.

Those men in the 1644 tradition must be very careful about their attitudes. They must avoid at all costs devaluing law so that holiness is undermined and Christianity turned into little more than forgiveness for continuing sinners.

Let both acknowledge that the supreme need is love for God and a whole-hearted delight in his commandments (1 Jn 5:3), and that the servant of the Lord is meekly to instruct his opponents, not consign them to perdition (2 Tim 2:24-25). Reformed Baptist disagreements over law are in-family arguments, not Paul versus the Galatian heretics!

News



Larry and Bonnie Secrest

Puerto Rico

Larry and Bonnie Secrest shown above were featured on the front cover of the last issue. They are working to plant a church in Ponce. Puerto Rico is closely allied with the US. The alternatives of independence and becoming a state of the USA are hotly debated. Already over 1.5 million Puerto Ricans live in the US, 60 percent of those in New York. The population of Puerto Rico is 3,400,000. The Secrests have two children, Jonathan and Jeremy. Their address is: B-38 Urb. Mercedita, Ponce, Puerto Rico.

Fiji

It is important that we report bad news as well as encouraging news. Vijay Chandra writes to say that the extension work into which he has poured much time and energy has terminated because families are migrating on account of political pressures. I have written to Vijay reminding him that his teaching ministry will not be lost because those who leave for other countries take their faith with them. The tension between the indigenous Fijians and the Indians seems to be increasing again. It is important that we pray for Vijay to persevere in his work among the Indians, even more so in a time of stress.



Bob Strain

Brazil

Bob Strain, pastor of Faith Reformed Baptist Church, Media, Philadelphia, has just returned from the annual conference for ministers and Christian leaders sponsored by Editora Fiel, and held in Agua de Lydolia. Jay Adams and Bob Strain were the principal speakers. Dr Adams spoke four times on the subject of preaching and four times on counselling. Bob addressed the subjects of discipleship and Christian character in eight sessions. All had to be presented in Portuguese through an interpreter.

325 attended representing 16 denominations. Since Brazil is about half the size of South America it is not surprising that some took 70 hours by bus to reach the conference centre. Pastor Strain reports that there is an appetite for the truth of God with its application to life.

Editora Fiel has a fine selection of books and this combined with the ministry of the annual conference has tremendous potential for reformation in the enormous land of Brazil.

St Helena

There could hardly be a more isolated island than St Helena made famous through Napoleon's exile there. There are

only 6,000 inhabitants. Andrew Coates (address: Baptist church, Box 52, Jamestown, St Helena Island, South, Atlantic Ocean) pastors the Baptist church on the island. Previous pastors have stayed for short periods of time which has left the church in a poor condition. Andrew and Carol (who is a medical doctor) have three children. The work is lonely and exacting. Family Coates have been members of the Emmanuel Baptist Church in South Africa where Martin Holdt is the pastor. Encouraging letters mean a lot to those who work in isolated places.

Kenya

Keith Underhill writes from Nairobi (address: P O Box 57907, Nairobi), to report that the new building has been opened which is a great step forward in the work. Including children about 150 now attend on the Lord's Day. David Straub has visited Kenya to be present at the opening. He ministered at the Pastors' Conference attended by about 25. There is an excessive tendency to superficial evangelicalism in Kenya which can only be remedied by systematic and expository preaching.

David Straub and Keith were able to visit Mombasa where they considered with pastors in the area the spiritual needs of the coastal peoples who are almost all Muslim. They also visited other provinces to encourage pastors. Keith reports that he is working above his resources of energy and urgently needs gifted help. We look forward to a full report of the situation from David Straub 'Missionary Update' (address: P O Box 289, CARLISLE, PA 17013, USA).

Honduras

Featured on the front cover is a picture of Honduras published with permission of TEAR TIMES, the current issue of which tells of the battle of 40,000 indigenous Indians who are threatened to become 'ecological refugees' as deforestation advances to destroy their land and turn it

into a desert. At the present rate of destruction the finest rain forests in Central America will be wiped out in 2 years. Present in the country are Christians who care and who are struggling against the advance of short term unscrupulous commercial interests. Tear Fund is an evangelical agency which began in England 21 years ago to meet the challenge represented by the disaster areas of the world, not by immediate relief only, but by helping destitute people to build up their own means of livelihood. Tear Fund has grown in a phenomenal way. The story is told in Tear Fund's 21st special birthday issue. The annual budget is 14 million pounds (22 million dollars), only 6.5 per cent of which is spent on home administration. The address is: TEAR FUND, 100 Church Road, Teddington, Middlesex, TW11 8QE.

Palma, Majorca, Spain

In RT 108 we featured the ministry of Joaquin Ranero. During August over 100 from all over Europe attended a field conference of the European Missionary Fellowship at Welwyn Evangelical Church, where Bob Sheehan is the pastor. It was during one of the evening services that pastor Ranero suffered a heart attack. He died shortly afterwards. It had been his wish to die in a service and that in England where he would be afforded a funeral free of eccentric burial practice. Omri Jenkins, leader of the EMF, led in the funeral service at Welwyn Evangelical Church which was conducted in both Spanish and English. Pastor Ranero leaves a widow and three married children. He was an artist of national repute in his earlier years and used that gift to support himself as he worked to plant a church in Palma. In recent years he was used to bring the Gipsy church of Palma into the doctrines of grace. He also ministered to prisoners in Palma jail where the Lord honoured his ministry with conversions. Pastor Ranero will be sadly missed. Let us pray earnestly that mature leadership will be raised up to continue the work.

Fellowship Forever!

Since we are made in the image of God we can be sure that the business of the eternal world is fellowship; knowing, loving, and enjoying God Triune for what he is in himself and knowing, loving and enjoying him as we relate to him our Creator, and as we appreciate the vastly wonderful new cosmos he will have made. All activity in the new earth will involve fellowship. God himself as three Persons in One is a relationship of fellowship. Fellowship will be total and continuous sharing since all that is done will be in complete and blissful unity with the three Persons of the Trinity.

Furthermore there will be unabated sharing or fellowship with each other for there will be no schisms and divisions. There will be no more secret plottings, no mafia, and no more assassinations. We will be in perfect unity and harmony with each other. There will be perfect trust in a universality of fellowship: no locks and keys, no burglaries, no need to dial 999! (In Britain that is the emergency number we telephone when an ambulance, fire brigade or the police are needed).

Since God in the very nature of his being is fellowship, and the eternal world will be fellowship, it follows that we should be clear about this subject. Especially should we be clear about the place of fellowship in the churches. I will open up the theme as follows:

1. The Nature of Fellowship,
2. The Fellowship of the Trinity,
3. The Fellowship of the Apostles,
4. The Fellowship we have with Christ,
5. The Fellowship we have with each other (in outline only),
6. The Fellowship of the Eternal Kingdom.

1. The Nature of Fellowship

The word *koinonia* (from *koinos*, common), means things in common, that is a communion or a participation. 'The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not a participation in the blood of Christ?' (RSV). The verb *koinoneo* means to possess together. The primary meaning of the words derived from the root *koin* means to share. Always implied is the idea of active participation. There is the cooperation of the receiver as well as the action of the giver. Some examples will help us grasp the central concept of sharing conveyed by the term *koinonia*.

Says Paul, 'I want to know Christ and the power of his resurrection and the fellowship of sharing his sufferings, becoming like him in his death' (Phil 3:10);

‘God, who has called you into fellowship with his Son Jesus Christ our Lord, is faithful’ (1 Cor 1:9).

‘He has given us his very great and precious promises, so that through them you may participate (literally, you might become sharers or participators) in the divine nature’ (2 Pet 1:4).

The idea of participation or sharing is used not only of virtue but also of evil. Frequently the Jews were guilty of rejecting the prophets. Jesus rebuked the Pharisees by reminding them of their saying: ‘If we had lived in the days of our forefathers, we would not have taken part (been sharers) with them in shedding the blood of the prophets’ (Matt 23:30).

2. The Fellowship of the Trinity

Foundational to all our religion is the nature of the Triune God who is fellowship. God is not a lonely nomad. He is not a being living in freezing isolation. There is the Godhead of three Persons who exist in a communion of love and light. Each Person is possessed of all the attributes of deity, transcendent attributes of almightiness and omniscience, and personal attributes. While each Person equally possesses eternally and infinitely all the attributes of deity, each is distinguished by a variety of works performed. The Son is eternally begotten of the Father and has taken manhood to himself. The Spirit proceeds from the Father and the Son.

It is impossible to conceive correctly of God without embracing the truth of the Trinity as revealed in Scripture. We should note the ‘other person-centredness’ of each Person. Each Person is interested in the other two. Our attention in the Gospels is focused largely on the relationship between the Father and the Son. God is love. We see this in the love the Father has for the Son and the love shown to the Father by the Son, especially a love of obedience under the most gruelling circumstances imaginable. Toward the end of his ministry Jesus prepared his disciples for the advent of the Holy Spirit who would take his place.

In the execution of redemption we observe the work of the Father who purposes, the Son who redeems, and the Holy Spirit who regenerates and sanctifies believers. The three Persons can never be divided, yet are utterly distinct in their work. The three Persons act concurrently in will and purpose. From first to last the mind and will of God Triune is a relationship of the Three in One. God is fellowship, a fellowship of perfect love, holiness and blessedness (joy). God is a personal communion in which all knowledge and wisdom are shared.

We cannot understand ourselves unless we understand the Trinity for we are made in the image of the Trinity. God said, ‘Let us make man in our image’ (Gen 1:26). We are made not to be self-centred but for companionship. We are gregarious by nature. As ‘other person-centredness’ is characteristic of the

three Persons of the Trinity so we find our fulfilment not in self-centredness but in God-centredness and other people-centredness.

3. The Fellowship of the Apostles

When Peter and John went into the empty tomb and scrutinised the evidence of the resurrection of Jesus (*theoreo* to observe carefully, Jn 20:6), they had in common and shared a testimony which was stupendous. We did not see what they saw. They saw that the physical body of Jesus had gone right through those graveclothes which were left neatly behind. Likewise when Peter, James and John witnessed the transfiguration they shared in something unique to themselves. We have to rely on them that they are telling the truth about what they saw. Peter boldly proclaims that they were eye-witnesses of his majesty. Not only eye-witnesses but 'ear-witnesses'. They heard the voice from the Majestic Glory, saying, "This is my Son, whom I love: with him I am well pleased" (2 Pet 1:16-17).

The apostles as a group shared what we now call 'the apostolic testimony'. They were called with the specific purpose of being witnesses of the perfect life, sacrificial death, glorious resurrection and ascension into heaven of our Saviour.

Why were rugged fishermen from Galilee chosen to be apostles and not university professors from Jerusalem? Surely men who could stand up to rigours of outdoor life were preferable? But there is the further factor of sound hearing and clear eyesight. Our salvation depends on the truthfulness of the apostolic testimony. The apostles were rugged men. Two of them were called sons of thunder. Peter did not need a microphone on the day of Pentecost! These apostles from Galilee were rightly depicted by the Renaissance painters as men with hair on their chests. They were men of keen eyesight. They were not cloistered scholars. They were incapable of inventing clever stories. They were not Jeffery Archers, that is skilled novelists producing popular stories. They were chosen for their ability to testify plainly and clearly what they had seen and heard which is exactly how John asserts the matter when he writes, 'We proclaim to you what we have seen and heard, so that you also may have fellowship with us. And our fellowship is with the Father and with his Son, Jesus Christ. We write this to make our joy complete' (1 Jn 1:3,4).

The assumption of human nature by the Son of God is the most stupendous event of history. Angels desire to study it. Those who witnessed it were amazed at it. It will be the subject of devout enquiry and adoring wonder to the whole intelligent and holy creation throughout eternity. Only a limited number could gaze closely on that central figure. The privilege was given to the chosen few called to be apostles.

That apostolic fraternity formed a fellowship from which we receive the factual accounts and explanations of the incarnation. When we embrace the testimony of the apostles we join them in fellowship. Polycarp (c.70-155/160), bishop of

Smyrna and martyr, was able in a literal way to fellowship with the apostle John. Imagine all the questions you would like to ask an apostle about Jesus. Though we are unable to have direct fellowship as Polycarp did, we still have fellowship with the apostles. That fellowship is ours when we accept and trustingly believe in Christ as he is portrayed by them.

Through the fellowship of the apostles we come into fellowship with Christ and through him into fellowship with the Father. In this way our joy is complete.

4. The Fellowship we have with Christ

The most momentous of all events in the life of the Christian is that moment when he is united through new birth with Christ. In that moment he receives Christ's righteousness, his justification from God the Father, and his adoption into the family of God. Also he receives the gift of the Person and work of the Holy Spirit. By the Spirit everyone united to Christ is baptised into the body and all in that body live by the power of the Holy Spirit (1 Cor 12:13).

It is ridiculous therefore to talk about some Christians having the Spirit and others not. It is because some have thought of the Holy Spirit as a mere generating power rather than as a Person that that kind of thinking has become common. Either you are married to a person or you are not. A Christian does not have bits and pieces of Christ or bits and pieces of the Holy Spirit. A Christian is one who has been baptised into the Name of the Father, and the Name of the Son, and the Name of the Holy Spirit. The 'Name' of God in Scripture stands for all that God is. We are baptised into God Triune which means that we are identified with him unreservedly. Immersion is a fitting symbol because the believer is united with Christ in the totality of his death, resurrection and life. Justification, adoption and positional sanctification know of no degrees. You cannot be half justified any more than you can be half in Christ. Paul never wrote to all those 'half joined to Christ', but always described all believers as being 'in Christ'.

When united to Christ we receive all the benefits of his finished work at once, not a ration now, with instalments to accrue later on depending on our progress. 'By one sacrifice he has made perfect forever those who are being made holy' (Heb 10:14).

It is through union with Christ that our fellowship with the Father and the Spirit is sustained. Our union with Christ is both federal and vital. It is federal in the sense that he acts on our behalf and guarantees all our rights and privileges. It is vital and spiritual in the sense that we never cease to receive the benefits of his ministry which he sustains as our shepherd, our prophet, our mediator, our high priest and our king.

The union that we enjoy with Christ is a union which involves our entire persons. Thus several illustrations are used to describe this union: the union of a

foundation with the superstructure as in a building (Eph 2:21,22; 1 Pet 2:4-6), a vine and its branches (Jn 15:1-5), the union of a head and a body as in the human frame (Eph 4:15,16; Rom 12:4,5; 1 Cor 12:12-27), the union that there is in marriage (Eph 5:31), and the union that there is between Adam and his descendants (Rom 5:12-21).

Our union with Christ has been called a 'mystical' union. This is because it could never have been known unless revealed by the Lord himself. But there is another reason why it is called 'mystical'. That is because when we have exhausted all the means of analogy or illustration available, this union transcends incomparably all other unions for closeness and glory.

Fellowship with the Trinity is established on the basis of what we receive when we are united to Christ, namely the perfect righteousness of our Redeemer imputed to us, union with the Trinity, adoption, and the gift of the Person and work of the Holy Spirit. The quality of that fellowship unlike justification and adoption is a relative thing. It can be rich or we can feel deserted. Like progressive sanctification fellowship knows development and growth in experience and quality.

There are three aspects of our ongoing fellowship with Christ which we need constantly to be aware of. Firstly we fellowship or share with Christ in bearing his image, second in sharing his and our sufferings, and thirdly we fellowship with him by sharing in his sonship.

Firstly we fellowship with Christ in bearing his image.

The whole end of the purpose of the Father as outlined in Romans chapter 8 is that those who love God should be conformed to the image of the Son. We are partakers (*koinonoi* sharers) in the divine nature. When the Son of God took manhood to himself he guaranteed the immortalisation and deification of our humanity. Not for a moment are we to think that we become part of God for in his essence God Triune is apart. To safeguard this the Savoy Confession (copied by the 1689) added a clause, 'although they are not made thereby one person with him.'

What is this deification? It means that every believer in his own individual character and personality becomes like Christ in the graces of humility, holiness, love, compassion, meekness, gentleness, patience and goodness. This is something which is unselfconscious. It is never a matter of a Christian saying to himself, 'I will show them how humble I am!' It is rather a steady outworking of the principle declared in 2 Corinthians 3:18, 'And we who with unveiled faces all reflect the Lord's glory, are transformed into his likeness with ever-increasing glory, which comes from the Lord who is the Spirit.'

In Christ manhood is glorified with the glory the Son had with the Father before the world was (Jn 17:5). The glory of the Godhead is continually pouring itself

into the humanness of Jesus. From the fulness of his grace we have all received one blessing after another. Our union with the Lamb not only guarantees the restoration of our humanness to its original pre-fall condition but also a perfect individual Christlikeness for every redeemed person.

There is great enjoyment in viewing Christlikeness in believers. Holiness is a beautiful quality. The more believers advance and mature the greater the enjoyment. As Thomas Watson puts it, progressive sanctification causes the angels to fall in love with the saints.

Secondly we fellowship with Christ in his sufferings and our sufferings.

The institution of the communion table ensures that we always fellowship with our Lord in his sufferings. His sufferings alone were vicarious (on our behalf) and atoning. We are grateful to him on that account. We are also comforted because from time to time we suffer because of our allegiance to him.

We also fellowship with Christ in all our own sufferings irrespective of their cause or nature. Like a little child who runs to mummy or daddy every time there is a danger or a fall, so we run to Christ with all our hurts and bruises, our fears and alarms, our economic crises, our spiritual trials, our guilt for sins committed, our sorrow for omissions, our tiredness, all our sicknesses and then, when the end comes, we attempt more than ever before to be completely enveloped by him.

In all our pains and afflictions we are comforted by the fact that nobody has ever suffered like him and nobody knows more about the whole catalogue of woes than he. He is the book of Job. He is the book of Lamentations. 'I want to know Christ and the power of his resurrection and the fellowship of sharing his sufferings, becoming like him in his death' (Phil 3:10).

Thirdly we share with Christ in his sonship.

Following this last thought we find the passage in Hebrews declares that it was through his sufferings that the Head of the Church brought many sons to glory. It is through his work that the redeemed are brought into one and the same family. So Jesus is not ashamed to call them brothers. He says,

"I will declare your name to my brothers;
in the presence of the congregation I will sing your praises."

And again,

"Here am I, and the children God has given me."

We never share deity with Christ but we do share likeness of character and we do share all the privileges of sonship, adoption being the highest privilege we enjoy and sonship being the apex of redemptive grace. (See article on adoption RT 105). Our fellowship is equally with the Father who shares himself with us and all his creation with us.

‘Now if we are children, then we are heirs, heirs of God and co-heirs with Christ, if indeed we share in his sufferings that we may also share in his glory’ (Rom 8:17). The glory we share is our spiritual union with the Trinity. We will enjoy the complacent love of the Father (Zeph 3:17). The glory of our bodies will be of the same kind as the glory of Christ’s body (Phil 3:21). The glory will include the enjoyment of a shared possession; the regaining of the lordship of paradise lost by Adam; the ‘worshipful’ sharing of the new heavens and the new earth. By ‘worshipful’ I mean, as I showed at the beginning, that we will enter into the full appreciation of God’s creation with him and serving him, and never apart from him. The glory we will share with Christ is to reign with him and be led by him to springs of living water (2 Tim 2:12; Rev 7:17).

5. The fellowship we have with each other

The fellowship we are to cultivate with each other is of the same exalted and glorious kind or nature that exists in the Trinity. There can be no dispute about that since Jesus refers specifically to the trinitarian fellowship as the model for our relationships with each other when he prays for the unity of the Church (Jn 17:21-24).

That means that we could hardly exaggerate the importance of this subject. The practical application of it all lies right here in the maintenance and development of fellowship with each other. Following the teaching so far a separate exposition is required if justice is to be done to these points:

- (1) Since sharing is by nature very close and at Pentecost the believers shared everything in common, how far should we go in sharing material possessions? How can we be good stewards of our money for the church at home, abroad, and also for compassionate concerns like Tear Fund?
- (2) Since ours is fellowship with the apostles how should we view modernist teachers who attack the apostolic testimony?
- (3) How much time should we devote to fellowship in the local church? How can we balance this with all our other responsibilities? What are the means of grace in a local church specially designed to promote and improve mutual love, unity and fellowship?
- (4) What measures are provided in Scripture to maintain personal fellowship and restore sharing when relationships break down?
- (5) What provisions are suggested in Scripture when a group of leaders or elders abuse authority thus causing schism in the body and between other churches?

6. The Fellowship in the Eternal Kingdom

What will we do in heaven? Perhaps it is better to ask, What will we do on *the new earth*? To many heaven simply conveys the idea of sky. Perhaps it is better to talk about the new earth rather than use the word ‘heaven’. Some think of heaven as a state of passivity and peace in the stratosphere. When this subject is debated in secular circles fear is expressed that heaven will be painfully boring.

The 1689 Confession and Fellowship

The 1689 Confession devotes a chapter to 'The Fellowship of the Saints'. The page of definition devoted to Fellowship in the Confession concentrates first on union with Christ as the foundation of all spiritual sharing. Then as the logical outcome of that union, the Confession concentrates on the union shared by all believers. The page concludes with a major paragraph pointing to our obligations in promoting 'mutual well-being, in both spiritual and temporal matters'. That includes the obligation to 'relieve one another in temporal concerns'.

It is vital that we distinguish clearly between the intermediate state and the state of the new heaven and the new earth (Rev 21:1). Apart from what we glean from the parable of the rich man and Lazarus and statements such as Hebrews 12:22-24, we know very little of the activities of 'the spirits of righteous men made perfect'. Since the redeemed await reunion with their bodies it is suitable that we think of them in spiritual and heavenly terms.

When we come to the subject of the eternal kingdom we need to think in terms of the literal resurrection of the body. Jesus emphasised that he would sit down to eat and drink with us in his kingdom (Lk 22:16, 18 & 30). We will live on the new earth as humans, not as angels. Christ took manhood to himself, not to rid us of our bodies and turn us into spirits, or to make us angelic beings, but that he might redeem our humanity (Heb 2:14-18). So what will be the human activities of the new earth?

An important principle or doctrine underlies the answer to this question. It is the doctrine of our union with Christ. In his resurrection body he is the guarantee of our future glorified humanity. Since we are human we can be sure that our habitat and our occupations will be wholly consistent with our humanity. Our first parents were given work to do. It is not possible to know to what extent we might be involved with the care of a renewed cosmos, not to mention the care of a great city, the New Jerusalem. We can be fairly sure that we will be able to glorify God our Creator by truly appreciating the vast wisdom and splendour of his creation. In our age of increasing urbanisation only a minority are able to explore unspoiled territories while only the economically and intellectually elite have the opportunity to probe into the wonders of nature or science. And then at very best only a microscopic part of creation is comprehended by any one individual.

The word 'unspoiled' should be used with caution. Viewing a beautiful garden one gardener declares, "See what God and I have done!" The other replies, "You should have seen it when God did it himself!" Yet it is vastly evident that the cosmos is exquisitely lovely. Every aspect pleases, only man is vile. Sinful man desecrates the creation. He makes it ugly. The graffiti of our cities reminds us of the desperate nature of the fall and of sin.

The paramount place of fellowship as an integral part of our being is seen by the catastrophic effects of the fall which was in effect a breach or rupture with God. Fellowship ceased. An ocean of misery has resulted. Redemption is all about reconciliation: the restoration of fellowship with our Creator. This restoration brings us not only into harmony with the three Persons but into harmony with the creation, so in the glorious resurrection state of the eternal kingdom we will correctly relate the creation to our Creator. We will not, as Jeremiah suggests, be trying to wrest away the creation from its sustainer in order to hack out an independent state of our own (Jer 2:13).

What will be the activities of the new world?

We know that there will be special times of worship (Is 66:22-24). In a new book 'Probing Heaven' (Baker Book House, 466 pages), John Gilmore explores some aspects of activity in the coming world and especially concentrates on the aspect of singing. Revelation shows the diversity of singing for angels and men. Choral singing is essentially an act of fellowship.

We can be sure that there will be many other activities. How can we be sure? The answer lies in the diversity of the creation already revealed. In every sphere we observe that God in his nature is a God of diversity. We see this throughout creation. We see it in the animal kingdoms. We see it pre-eminently in the human race. This diversity is also seen in the seasons and in the way we use time.

In our glorified bodies we will enjoy heightened powers of intellect and body and relative to that a suitable environment is being prepared for us. Will effort be needed? The exercise of our minds and intelligence is an essential and integral part of our humanity. So effort will be required. What if our effort falls short of what it should be? Is not missing the mark one meaning of sin? We know that we will love perfectly and that may be the primary reason which will preclude the possibility of sin. But we do not have to worry about that since we are not supposed to supply all the answers. Did not Paul assert, 'No eye has seen, no ear has heard, no mind has conceived what God has prepared for those who love him' (1 Cor 2:9). There is description in the Word both of heaven and hell. It is appropriate to warn about the terrors of hell which is the antithesis of the kingdom of love. Details about eternal hell are clear and warnings frequent.

In our present fallen world the most joyful and loving fellowship is sometimes experienced. This is a foretaste of the superlative joys of fellowship which will reign in the coming kingdom. Since it will be a fellowship sublime with the Trinity and with each other, we can appreciate then the high premium placed upon love and unity by our Lord and his apostles. To that matter, as already intimated, we seek to return in a future issue.

Chris Passerello comes from California. He has worked in England for about six years. He and his wife are members of the Jennyfield Evangelical Church, Harrogate. Chris stems from a charismatic background and first came to the doctrines of grace through reading J.I.Packer's *Introduction to The Death of Death* in the Death of Christ, by John Owen, and also Luther's *Bondage of the Will*.

The Importance of Family Worship

Chris Passerello

The challenging question, Do you maintain daily lively family worship? was asked in RT 105. The question is of tremendous importance. With many pressures coming from all angles it is so easy to neglect this exercise. My response is one family's humble attempt to list some helpful ways to maintain family worship. However, since literature plays such a prominent role in this subject I will confine myself to recommending and discussing books. Obviously I have to be selective as it is not possible to mention all the valuable books available. As it is this article will run over to the next issue.

It is important to stress the place of prayer in family worship but if justice is to be done to that subject it would need a separate article. My hope is to stimulate variety and profit in this vital exercise of family devotions.

The Scriptures

These are of course of primary importance. From as young as three we have encouraged each child to sense participation by having his or her own Bible open. As the youngest one learns to read there can be progress from single words to sentences. Sometimes one reads the passage or else we read round verse by verse. Discussion follows. Dad asks questions such as, What do we learn about Jesus in verse five?

Participation is encouraged from the youngest age and before they could read our children enjoyed relating back the substance of the Scripture portions read.

Our normal method is to read our way through an entire book of the Bible passage by passage, but sometimes we will concentrate on a particular topic and select appropriate passages.

We do not belong to any fixed school with regard to Bible translation and only personal preference disposes our recommendation of *Precious Moments Bible, New King James Version* (Thomas Nelson Publishers, \$19.95) This is certainly a Bible children enjoy to own. The illustrations by Samuel Butcher are attractive and appealing to children and parents. There are 186 'devotionals' (an interpretation with application). For the most part these are helpful though some of the interpretations are questionable.

Catechisms

Another help to family worship has been the use of a catechism. We began to memorise one question and answer each week from the *Westminster Shorter Catechism* when our older children were five and seven years old. As with the Scripture passage we discuss the catechism answer to ensure that there is understanding along with memorisation of 'sound words'.

The Shorter Catechism with Scripture Proofs

The Banner of Truth Trust, 32pp paperback 30p (\$0.85). Our family favourite. The answers are simple but not simplistic, succinct enough to be recited by children and meaty enough to teach adults. It is helpful that most of the answers are complete self-contained sentences. In many other catechisms this does not pertain so that the answer makes no sense apart from the question.

A Catechism for Boys and Girls

Carey Publications Ltd, 24pp paperback 90p (\$1.50). This is a simpler catechism which can be used for very young children and as a supplement for older ones. The usefulness would be increased if all the answers were complete sentences. Some are but not all, for example the answer to question 3 is: For his own glory. A better answer would be: God made me and all things for his own glory.

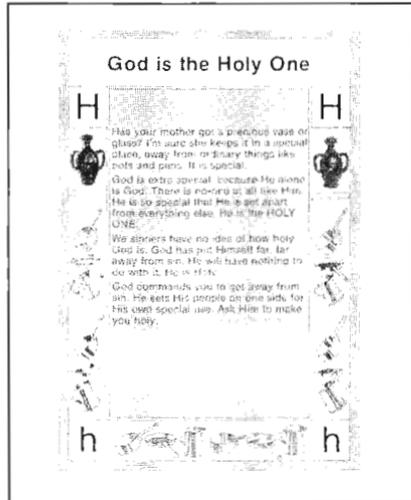
Music Books

We have profited in hymn singing. While learning several hymns we used to open our hymnal every night carefully following the progression of the notes. To this end it is helpful where the words are printed within the music bars. Even before the children could read music they soon understood when one note was higher or lower and the number of musical notes per syllable. Now that we have committed our favourite hymns to memory we only use a hymnal to learn a new hymn or revise an old one.

The choice of hymnal is very personal. Most will naturally choose what is used at their church. Others will enjoy the one they grew up with or that which introduced them to their favourite hymns.

Trinity Hymnal

Great Commission Publications, 746pp hardback. This is the hymnal we use in



This page is copied from Susan Harding's book for children, Tell Me About God, Banner of Truth

our home. It is produced by the Orthodox Presbyterian Church and is solidly reformed and evangelical. It includes 730 hymns, plus the Ten Commandments, psalter selections, the Westminster Confession of Faith and Shorter Catechism and other useful sections.

Christian Hymns

Evangelical Movement of Wales, hardback. Another useful evangelical and reformed hymnal. It contains 901 hymns and doxologies.

Grace Hymns

Grace Publications Trust, hardback containing 848 hymns and doxologies.

The Book of Praises

Carey Publications Ltd, 110pp. Paperback or spiral. This is a useful collection of 70 Psalms rendered in modern English. The use of this book will help families to appreciate the rich doctrines and religious feelings contained in the Psalms.

Book Reviews

Trusting God: Even When Life Hurts

Jerry Bridges, 215 pp., NAVPRESS, 1988.

This is another fine book by the author who also penned *The Pursuit of Holiness*. The subject of the current book is the Providence of God. Throughout the

book Bridges leads the reader to understand that 'God is completely sovereign, that he is infinite in wisdom, and is perfect in love'. It is only these truths which can persuade us to trust God in times of adversity. Bridges firmly believes that the learning of these truths is not to be left to the times of adversity, but must be learned and believed before adversity strikes. With these truths stored in his heart and mind the

Story Bibles

The use of a story Bible (more correctly, Bible story book) is helpful at times. However, one must guard against the temptation to allow the story Bible to completely replace the use of Scripture during family devotions. Story Bibles tend to be selective in the material they present and their text is a combination of paraphrase and interpretation. We find it helpful to view the story Bibles as a type of children's commentary or series of expositions. Viewed as such, they will not be allowed to replace the Scriptures as the primary focus in family worship.

My Bible Story Book

Dena Korfker, Kregel Publications, 512pp., paper, \$7.95. The children enjoy this book because the stories are short and well written, and the type is large enough to be easily read by a child. The book runs the course from Genesis 1 to Acts 28 in two hundred and sixty nine readings (plus one reading for Revelation) in about five hundred pages. At the end of each reading there is a useful 'Were You Listening?' section with three or four questions about the reading. The illustrations are line drawings which add to the attractiveness of the book.

The Lion Children's Bible

Pat Alexander, illustrations by Lyndon Evans, Lion Publishing, 256 pp., hard-back, £4.95. The colourful illustrations



This page is copied from Susan Harding's book for children, Tell Me About God, Banner of Truth

cover about half of each page and succeed in keeping a child's interest. The stories, covering much of Genesis through Acts, are designed to present the 'one story' of the Bible, the story of God's dealings with mankind. This is a book children are bound to enjoy.

In a future issue we will consider another helpful volume on the Bible as well as a number of other very helpful books for children including the one by Susan Harding from which pages have been copied as illustrations. □□□

believer has the weapons at hand to ward off doubt and bitterness.

In explanation of God's sovereignty Bridges presents the case for God's control over people, over nations, and over nature (with a separate chapter for each). There are no mistakes or accidents in history. God is consistently implementing his eternal plan in the time and space of human history. All events, big and small, public and private, are being woven together to produce the reality which God has prepared for his creation.

Bridges then gives us a chapter in which he addresses the relationship between God's sovereignty and man's responsibility. He carefully guards against a 'Christian fatalism', and clearly guides the reader along the path of obedience to God's revealed will and submission to his secret will.

Under the heading of 'the infinite wisdom of God' Bridges reminds us that not only is God carrying out his plan for the world, but that he has chosen the best methods and means for accomplishing that plan. Our God doesn't select a good way to reach his goals, he selects the best way.

It is 'the perfect love of God' which will encourage us to remember that no matter how painful our present situation is, it is a situation brought to us for our good. God never acts towards his children out of an attitude of hatred or even apathy. There may be painful discipline in our lives but it is always the discipline of a loving Father who is working for us, not against us.

A recurring theme throughout the book is 'God controls all events for his own glory and the good of his people'. The child of God can rest assured that all things which affect his life are the outworking of God's intention to conform him to the image of Christ.

I have only one criticism of the book — it is a criticism of scope rather than error. Bridges does not address the issue of God's sovereignty over conversion. The reason for this is that the book is intended primarily to describe God's Providence toward those who are already believers. The book would have been richer had Bridges dealt with God's Providence in leading us to conversion and his sovereign grace in accomplishing our conversion.

Even with my one complaint, I cannot recommend this book too highly. In many ways Bridges is a modern day example of the Puritan authors whom he loves to quote. He has that uncanny ability to simply explain complex truths while avoiding triteness and oversimplification. He presents the reader with deep doctrine while all the time maintaining an attitude of devotion toward God and practical concern for his reader. *Chris Passerello.*

Dispensationalism: Today, Yesterday and Tomorrow

Curtis I. Crenshaw and Grover E. Gunn. Footstool, Memphis, 1987

Both of the authors of this book are graduates of Dallas Theological Seminary, the bastion of American dispensationalism. They describe their emotional commitment to the doctrine as being typical of many American Christians and like many adherents, they never questioned the key issues involved or read opposing views. Crenshaw says: 'My knowledge of covenant theology was second hand and faulty'. While helping to translate an Old Testament interlinear, he found himself the only dispensationalist on the translation team. He found the covenant theologians more than worthy foes. Like many of us who were dispensationalists, he had never read the covenant theologians first hand.

When I began reading this book questions had already begun to arise for me concerning the way we dispensationalists assigned much of the Old Testament and much of the teaching of Christ to another 'economy', a Jewish time that would be revived later, a time where the elect would again offer blood sacrifices in the Great Tribulation.

I began to ask how it was that Jesus offered the Messianic Kingdom to the Jews and how it was that the Church was merely a sort of parenthetical afterthought. Why, I wondered, was the Sermon on the Mount, a huge portion of Christ's teaching, relegated to another economy? Why was this teaching not for me now? Why were Christ's commandments and the Ten Commandments not of equal force for the Christian believer? Then I bought this book, at first thinking that this was another trite attempt to disprove dispensationalism that had already been rebuked and thwarted by the likes of a Walvoord or a Ryrie. But it was not trite; it began as a lovingly worded letter to dispensationalist brethren. It began in a spirit of humility.

The system of dispensationalism rests on several faulty towers. If one is removed the structure collapses like a milking stool with a leg kicked away. One of these pillars is the so-called literal hermeneutic with which those holding opposing thoughts are whisked away as modernists with the phrase, 'they do not advocate a literal hermeneutic'. Crenshaw absolutely points out how crucial this is to the dispensationalist: 'If one understands a literal hermeneutic one way, Israel could not refer to the Church nor vice-versa; but if literal is explicated differently, then Israel and the Church could be identified or at least overlapped. This latter concept of literal would certainly rule out a pre-tribulational rapture of the Church, since such a concept is predica-

ted on the Church being removed so God can finish with 'Israel'. From this point, Charles Ryrie's definition of the literal hermeneutic is compared to the apostle's hermeneutic. Crenshaw explains some of the problems that dispensationalists have with Matthew's interpretation of Hosea 1:11, 'Out of Egypt did I call my son'. The verse obviously refers to both Christ and Israel (Ex 4:22) making Matt 2:15 a typological fulfilment of the Hosea passage. Crenshaw points out that in Matthew 2 alone there are four different uses of OT Scripture: direct v.5, typical v.15, analogical v.17,18 and according to sense v.23. In each instance save for the 'literal' or direct, Matthew says prophecy was fulfilled.

Two further pillars crumble as Gunn shows that the Church and Israel are one elect people and that dispensationalists, in order to maintain their many distinctions must hold to two new covenants rather than the one mentioned in the Scriptures. This leads to an examination of the famous 'parenthesis' theory of dispensationalism: that no Old Testament prophecy points to the Church (including Joel 2), and that the Church is a sort of divine afterthought occurring after the Jewish rejection of Christ's offer of the Messianic Kingdom.

Because of these arguments and many others so well presented by Crenshaw and Gunn, I began to search the Scriptures. I began to ask questions about the many distinctions and theological contortions I had to execute in order to maintain my view of doctrine. It began to be clear that I had been subjecting the scriptures to the dispensational system. I began to search the Reformed Confessions and books by Reformed authors as well as some of the Puritans.

This book should prove a decisive one for many others caught up in dispensationalism.
Jim Faucett

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