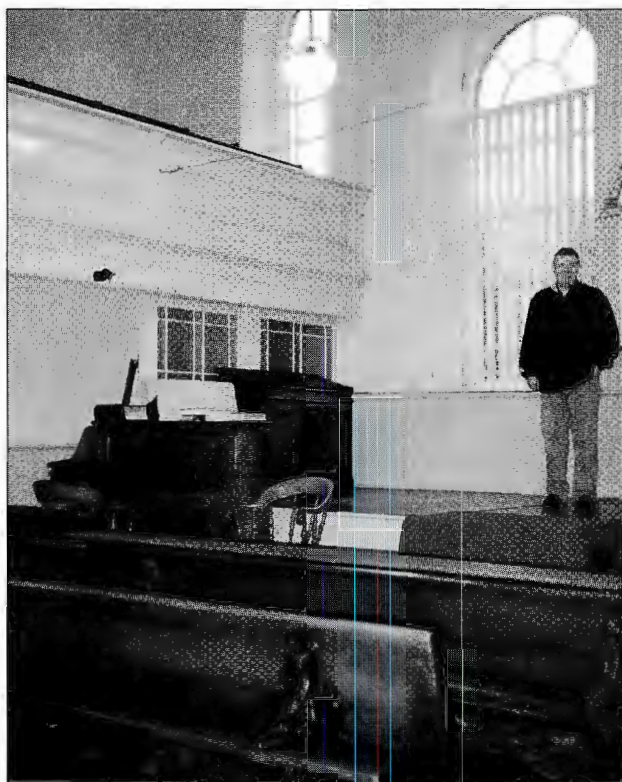


REFORMATION TODAY



MARCH/APRIL 1999

168



Spencer Cunnah (see Carey Conference Report), standing beside the memorial to Evan Roberts which stands in front of Moriah Calvinistic Methodist Church, Loughor. Shown above is the interior of the chapel where the revival began. The chapel seats about 150 while the adjacent church seats 600. In spite of fanaticism and a damaging lack of mature leadership and expository preaching this was an extraordinary revival which added a multitude to the churches. For a detailed account of the 1904 Welsh revival: *Voices from the Welsh Revival 1904-1905* by Brynmor P. Jones, 300 page paperback, Evangelical Press of Wales, 1995.

The Welsh inscription translated reads:

A memorial of the 1904-1905 revival
and

The Revivalist
EVAN ROBERTS
1879-1951

A man of God and the Word of God
Wales the land of revival

All the people in the district on their knees.
What is this?

The hope of a holier era.
Souls turning to God as He deals with them,
Opening the hearts of ordinary people.

Thanks be to God for ever remembering the
dust of the earth.

Repent and you will receive the gift of the
Holy Spirit.
Acts 2:38.

Editorial

Hosea 11 and intense feelings

Jahweh declares that he is in turmoil! His love is becoming agony! Some suggest that these passionate feelings are anthropomorphisms – that is a form of communication suitable for humans. The text of Scripture does not say that. Nevertheless the suggestion is acceptable on condition that the feelings expressed are not denied or diminished in the effect they are obviously designed to produce. Since our God is as high as the heavens, the mechanics of how his feelings function cannot be grasped by us. But that we know he does feel intensely is vital.

The 1689 Confession declares that the Trinity is the foundation of all our communion with God, and comfortable dependence on him (II,3). The issues raised by Hosea 11 suggest that we relate feelingly to each of the three persons. Our religion is more than notion. Ours is a felt religion. Don Carson suggests that impassibility has never been taken by Christian main-streamers to mean that God is a stranger to joy and delight. Correspondence with some main-streamers reveals that there is need to open up, explore and develop the issues raised by passages like Hosea 11.

John Gill – a mixed blessing?

John Gill, the foremost Baptist systematic theologian of the eighteenth century and probably the most prolific Bible commentator and Reformed writer of that century, exercised a pervasive influence for orthodox biblical Christianity. He was contemporary with Whitefield and the Wesleys. The spiritual revival took place against the background of rationalism and deism.

Gill was extremely influential for faithfulness to the Bible. But there is a downside. He taught eternal justification and was a hyper-Calvinist. Naturally assessment of the extent of the damage caused by Gill's errors varies. It is important to learn from a leader's strengths and failings. A balanced perspective of the life and thought of John Gill is provided in the Tercentennial Volume edited by Michael Haykin. Earl Blackburn in his refutation of the doctrine of eternal justification refers to the danger of the recurrence of that error today. Watchfulness is necessary. The mentality of hyper-Calvinism is briefly examined in the article, *John Gill – Eternal Justification*.

Carey Conference Report



From left to right: Thang and Suan, pastors from Burma who are studying at London Theological Seminary, Pal Borzasi who trained at the European Missionary Fellowship School of Theology. Pal is continuing his theological studies in Cluj, Romania, and at the same time is assisting in church planting work among Hungarians

Spencer R. Cunnaah, pastor of Penyrheol Free Church, Gorseinon, Swansea, January 1999

I look forward to the Carey Conference each year! After a busy Christmas and New Year schedule – carol services, evangelistic outreach, special services, children's and youth activities, and all the rest – it comes as a spiritual 'oasis' at just the right time. This year's conference, however, was one of the most stimulating I've attended in ten years as a delegate.

Geoff Thomas of Aberystwyth, whom I regard as my spiritual mentor in many ways, has carved out a niche for himself giving vignettes of important historical figures. His chosen subject this year in the opening address was Klaas Schilder of Holland, who stood firm against the

neo-orthodoxy of Barth when it was not popular to do so, and bravely took a stand against the rise of Fascism when it was dangerous to do so. But Schilder also opposed the concept of common grace, and in his desire to Christianise culture perhaps succumbed to the danger of externalising the doctrines of grace. This was a *tour de force* lasting about one hour fifty minutes. I never once looked at my watch!

The two evening sessions were taken by Mark Dever of Washington D C on the topics of expository preaching in the face of post-modernism, and communicating a sense of sin in the face of post-modernism. After helpfully and

2000 The Carey Conference – 11-14 January

Hayes Conference Centre, Swanwick

Theme: a review of Reformed Baptist history and the way into the new millennium.

Speakers: Michael Haykin (Canada), Thomas Nettles, Jim Renihan and Earl Blackburn (USA), David Kingdon and Geoff Thomas (UK), Conrad Mbewe (Zambia), John Campbell (Australia) and Baruch Maoz (Israel).

The conference is international in character. Our supporters are urged to encourage and subsidise conferences from the continent and abroad as one church helped the three brothers pictured on page 2.



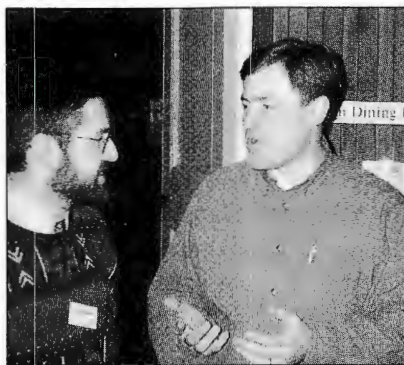
Ray Evans (left) and Bill James who chaired some of the sessions

succinctly defining what post-modernism is – no easy task in itself – he challenged us concerning the opportunities open to us as ministers of the new covenant today to affirm the infallible Word of God in the context of a caring congregation, and to spend time in prayer that God in his wise dispensations, and in the midst of mysterious providences, will speak in grace by the power of his Holy Spirit. His practical suggestions from ‘the trenches of evangelism’ were to

communicate God’s truth while unfolding the meaninglessness of post-modernity; to show God’s love in the Christian community; to confidently affirm to modern men and women that they have a conscience because they are made in the image of God (even if they deny it); and to urgently pray for the Holy Spirit to convict and convert sinners. Thus, while academically demanding, these sessions were earthed in the real world of the pastor/evangelist.



John Currid answering a question on the Hebrew text



David Cooke of Oxford (left) in conversation with Mark Dever

John Currid of Jackson Reformed Theological Seminary stirred and inspired us with two moving morning sessions dealing with texts from the book of Exodus, a book on which he is preparing a commentary. He dealt with the birth narrative of Moses from Exodus chapter 2; the burning bush and the call of Moses from Exodus chapter 3; and, as an addendum, the difficult verses about Zipporah and Gershom in Exodus chapter 4 verses 24 to 26. His expositions revealed a depth of study and understanding which brought many fresh insights from these passages and his treatment of the account of Zipporah's circumcision of Gershom blew my mind as new lines of perception and application seemed to open up everywhere! Linked to these sessions was a late night 'extra', commencing at 9.30 pm on the Wednesday evening, on a biblical response to the framework theory of understanding Genesis chapters 1 and 2. This was a vitally important session because the framework theory seems to be sweeping the board in many seminaries. This theory argues for a

poetic understanding of these chapters, and denies the classic interpretation of creation in six days of twenty-four hours each. His response was well thought out and persuasive.

Other sessions included two on preaching and preparing to preach by Ray Evans, and evangelistic preaching by Gareth Crossley. The call was to Bible-based, God-honouring, Christ-centred, Spirit-empowered, life-impacting preaching, evangelistic preaching being such an urgent need in our generation. Added to this were times of early morning prayer, reports from overseas, discussion and questions, which served to broaden the horizons and give an awareness of the situation facing gospel preachers in many different contexts from Burma to Capitol Hill.

From this report you might be able to detect that I loved "The Carey", and in the light of the fact that special anniversary sessions are pencilled in for next year the dates are already reserved in my diary.

How does God love?

An exposition of Hosea 11 by the editor

When Israel was a child, I loved him (Hos 11:1)

‘There is no more passionate and moving expression of God’s heart than this anywhere in the Bible. God speaks as the loving father of Israel, who called his son out of bondage in Egypt.’¹

In Hosea the prophet Jahweh had a partner in tribulation because, like Jahweh, Hosea experienced a marriage that went tragically wrong. Hosea is urged to persevere with his marriage even to the point of enduring the appalling indignity of buying his wife back with money from the prostitution ring to which she had freely given herself (ch 3). The parallel is clear all the way through Hosea. The Lord loved Israel in spite of Israel’s unfaithfulness and service of the idols of Baal. Hosea is under obligation not merely to tolerate Gomer his wife but to love her just as Jahweh loves erring Israel. That is not easy. It is reflected in names given to at least two of Hosea’s children. The daughter is called Lo-Ruhamah meaning *not loved*, and a son Lo-Ammi, meaning *not my people*. Imagine sending your child to school with the name *not loved*! What is this if it does not reflect tension? I love her! I do not love her! How can I give her up? That was Hosea’s experience. It was Jahweh’s experience.

Kidner comments on the passions of God as exhibited in Hosea 11:8-9: ‘Suddenly the fearful mechanisms of cause and political effect, of national guilt and judgment, of betrayal and estrangement, are interrupted by this passionate intervention, purely from disinterested love. No matter that the Lord may now seem wholly swayed by impulse and emotion: we are nearer a true knowledge of him in such terms than in the bloodless definitions of theological philosophy. Elsewhere Scripture takes ample care of what such definitions seek to safeguard, but it never takes the warmth out of love, the fire out of anger or the audacity out of grace.’

The passions attributed to Jahweh in Hosea raise questions.

How does God love? Does his love turn to hatred? Is there real feeling in God, or is Hosea simply using anthropomorphic language? In other words

is he merely using human speech which condescends to our understanding? If God's love turns or changes to wrath how can we square this with the immutability of God? If God changes his mind how do we square that with the assertion, 'I the LORD do not change' (Mal 3:6)? In considering these issues it is necessary first to appreciate Hosea 11.

I loved him, — but

The heart-rending story described in Hosea 11 concerns the unfaithfulness of God's child. As Israel grew so he drew further and further away from his father. Efforts to safeguard the child are frustrated. 'But the more I called Israel the further they went from me. They sacrificed to the Baals and they burned incense to images.'

The picture is one which parents readily appreciate. We can recall teaching little ones to walk, protecting them from dangers and caring for them when sick. 'I taught Ephraim to walk, taking them by the arms; but they did not realise it was I who healed them, I led them with the cords of human kindness, with ties of love' (11:4). Parents can relate to the pain of a child dearly loved who turns from right ways to evil ways. In our day this would probably include drug addiction and the self-destruction that involves. Parents are torn by love and anger. Jahweh's experience with Israel is analogous. He is disgusted and angry. He will show his wrath. 'Swords will flash in their cities.' But then there is soliloquy as when a person speaks to himself. We are permitted to see through a window into the heart of God.

The pathos can be summarised like this: "I will destroy their cities and end their plans. But how can I give them up? My heart is changed within me; all my compassion is aroused. I will not carry out my fierce anger. In my deeply felt self-kindled compassion towards them my soul recoils from inflicting on them this judgment. The only way that they can be spared such a judgment is if this judgment is displaced from them to myself."

Justice must be maintained if God is to be a righteous God. Jahweh answers, 'For I am God, and not man - the Holy One among you.' He will find a way. A ransom will be found. My people will be turned and will return. 'They will come trembling' (11:11). The chapter illustrates the electing love of God. Even when mankind turns away from their Maker he will not give them up. He is determined to ransom a people for himself.

They are idolatrous, rebellious enemies. But a way is found to draw them back.

How does God love?

When the apostle John affirms that 'God is love' he is referring to the Father (1 John 4:8 and 16). The reference is to the demonstration in practice of the Father's love. As we explore the love of God in the Scriptures we find that God Triune is intrinsically love. He is love in himself and is the origin of all love. There are three ways in which we can appreciate God's love.

First, God loves complacently. The word complacent is difficult. In America 'to be complacent' means 'not to care'. But to be complacent is also used in the sense 'to rest in' which is why I use it. I cannot find a better word. God's love of delight is seen supremely in the Father's love for his Son: 'You are my Son, whom I love; with you I am well pleased' (Luke 3:22). The Father loves the merits and glories of his Son. Christ in turn loves the Father perfectly. He knows comprehensively the perfections and glories of the attributes of his Father. He loves his Father for who he is in himself. We must appreciate that God is Triune love. The three persons are in love with each other. The Holy Spirit who is called the Spirit of love (Rom 15:30) searches the deep things of God (1 Cor 2:10). He loves the Father and the Son perfectly, completely and eternally.

Into the circle of this Triune love the Church is brought to be loved with a love of delight or complacency: the obedience of believers as they are conformed to Christ invites the complacent love of Christ and the Father: 'If anyone loves me, he will obey my teaching. My Father will love him, and we will come to him and make our home with him' (John 14:23). This love of God is well expressed by the prophet: 'The LORD your God is with you, he is mighty to save. He will take great delight in you, he will quiet you with his love, he will rejoice over you with singing' (Zeph 3:17). The Church is in process of being purified and made beautiful as the Bride of Christ and as such is the subject of Christ's love (Rev 21:2). This complacent love of delight of God Triune will be the cardinal feature of the new earth which we call heaven. It will be a world of perfect love.

Second, God loves benevolently. 'The LORD is good to all; he has compassion on all he has made.' 'The LORD is loving to all he has made'

(Ps 145:8, 13). Jesus drew attention to the fact that our Father in heaven causes his sun to rise on the evil and the good and sends rain on the righteous and unrighteous. In spite of the sinfulness and hate of a fallen race God's benevolent love, sometimes referred to as common grace, is expressed for the whole world and that in a multitude of ways (Acts 14:17). Even though it is despised this benevolent love is always in action as Paul points out in Romans 2:4, 'Or do you show contempt for the riches of his kindness, tolerance and patience, not realising that God's kindness leads you toward repentance?'

Third, God loves graciously. He loves in a saving way. This is an irresistible love that overcomes even the fiercest resistance of his enemies. It is this gracious, saving love that is described in Hosea 11. 'My heart is changed within me; all my compassion is aroused—I will not come in wrath - They will follow the LORD; - his children will come trembling from the west' (8-10). The Father will draw them (John 6:44). The love of the Father to save is the love that gave his Son as a propitiation for our sins. There is nothing to compare with it. 'Very rarely will anyone die for a righteous man, though for a good man someone might possibly dare to die. But God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us' (Rom 5:8). This saving love is expressed by Christ himself laying down his life: 'Having loved his own who were in the world, he now showed them the full extent of his love' (John 13:1). This love that saves is a love that is as strong as death, and burns like blazing fire, like a mighty flame. 'Many waters cannot quench it, rivers cannot wash it away' (Song 8:6,7). 'We cannot love anyone into heaven, though we may greatly desire to do so. But the love of Christ, being the love of God, is infallibly effectual. It produces all the good things Christ desires to produce in his people. Christ loves us to heaven. '²

Does God love feelingly?

'My heart is changed within me' (Hos 11:8).³ The passage is one relating deep passion, of love, of disgust, of anger. I will send the sword and devastate this unfaithful people! - no, I will relent, I will not punish you! Calvin puts this all down to a mode of speaking for he says, 'We know that these feelings do not belong to God; he cannot be touched with repentance; and his heart cannot undergo changes,' and again, 'For it must be remembered, that God is exempt from every passion.'⁴

I suggest that Calvin here is locked into scholastic philosophy and not the Bible. Human relationships are not possible without feelings and emotions. We are made in the image of God and the best image of God is Christ who lived a life full of rich emotion. I cannot relate to my computer and if God literally has no feelings then he is like a massive computer. I cannot relate to a machine. I can relate to fellow humans because they are made in the image of God and have emotions.

However much I may disagree with Calvin at this point I do understand his fear. Calvin is jealous to preserve what we call the impassibility of God in the sense that God is not subject to any pressure outside himself. He is self-determining. He is immutable. He does not change. He cannot be pushed around. God is not subject to distress, mental conflict, anxiety, panic, depression or fear like we are. All experience within the Godhead is something comprehended within his infinite and eternal being. He is not subject to a nuclear accident or a cosmic catastrophe. He knows the end from the beginning (Acts 15:18). He ordains everything (Eph 1:11). He is transcendent. God's transcendence and immutability are fundamental. There can be no compromise when it comes to these realities.

Yet at the same time the Lord has within that framework committed himself to involvement with his people. He is transcendent and immanent. His immanence means that he pervades this world of time and space. Indeed he is wholly involved with his people in time, space and history. This is a Trinitarian involvement which is constant, complete and intense. We accept the assurances of Hosea without having to back-track as Calvin does. We never doubt the immutability of our God. Neither do we doubt his involvement emotionally with us. 'When you pass through the waters I will be with you' (Is 43:2). 'He will quiet you with his love. He will rejoice over you with singing' (Zeph 3:17).

As for God's feelings we are assured that in all our distress he is distressed (Is 63:9). Any one of a thousand symbols could have been chosen when our Lord appeared to Moses in the burning bush. However a bush on fire perfectly expresses the suffering of the Israelites in Egypt. Theirs was a fiery ordeal. The burning bush illustrated well that Jesus was with Israel in their fiery ordeal. He said to Moses, 'I have indeed seen the misery of my people in Egypt. I have heard them crying out because of their slave drivers' (Ex 3:7). He assures us that he feels with us because he has been

tempted in every way, just as we are (Heb 4:15). Fellow-feeling with us in all our trials and joys is through our spiritual union with Christ, a union which is spiritual and comprehensive. The Holy Spirit who indwells us interprets our inexpressible struggles and sufferings because he knows us through and through.

Our contemporary English version of the 1689 Confession of Faith declares in chapter two paragraph one that ‘God is pure spirit, invisible, and without body, parts or the changeable feelings of men’. We do not think of God as having nerve endings like we do. Yet we must not conclude by that he is unable to accompany us through our wilderness journey in sharing every part of our experience on the way. How God feels as God cannot be known to us. After all he is God. He is omniscient and everywhere present. The Holy Spirit comprehends every atom and sub-atom of the world and universe. We know in our experience that he is with us intimately, completely and sympathetically. How do we know? We know because he assures us that it is so. Christian experience corresponds to what he says. We know because his love is poured out into our hearts by the Holy Spirit (Rom 5:5).

Another antinomy?

In order to keep the balance of human responsibility and divine sovereignty Jim Packer wrote a wonderful little book with the title *Evangelism and the Sovereignty of God*. In it he used the term antinomy to describe two things which seem incompatible but in fact are completely in harmony with each other. He uses the illustration of light which apparently consists of both rays and particles – different elements yet light functions perfectly well. Don Carson has pointed to the difficulties involved with the word antinomy and prefers the word tension.⁵ We struggle to find suitable words. Whatever we make of the word antinomy, the illustration that both rays and particles constitute light is helpful because it demonstrates compatibility. Seemingly incompatible elements are in fact compatible. Transcendence and immanence are compatible. God’s emotions are all subject to his all-knowing will. ‘God’s experiences do not come upon him as ours come upon us, for his are foreknown, willed and chosen by himself, and are not involuntary surprises forced on him from the outside.’⁶

According to Don Carson impassibility has never been taken by Christian main-streamers to mean that God is a stranger to joy and delight; it has, rather, been construed as an assertion of the permanence of God's joy, which no pain clouds.⁷ God Triune is presently involved in the emotional lives of his people. This does not mean that there is any extension of Christ's sufferings, his sweating drops of blood in Gethsemane or his agonising on the cross. Christ, having died once, dies no more. But when his people are suffering or dying he comforts and supports them feelingly in their ordeals.

God's immutability is absolute. There is no way we can compromise with Jürgen Moltmann and the process theologians who picture a God who is growing and finding his way. That is a non-starter. Our God is the eternal and immutable I AM. He is the alpha and omega, the beginning and the end. Yet this immutability must not be thought of as an eternally frozen pose but rather as our Creator's moral constancy and consistency.⁸ We glory in the truth that he is the same yesterday, today and forever and at the same time rejoice that he is the God of the burning bush. He is among his people, with his people and in his people. As Father he is teaching them how to walk (Hos 1:3), assuring them, comforting them, healing them, protecting them, pouring out his love into their hearts. Jesus our High Priest prays for us, feels with us, and is beside us in the fiery furnace as he was with Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego. The Holy Spirit indwells us, comforts us, guides us, whispers to us, loves us and prepares us for glory.

Application

Our view of God affects us in every way: intellectual, practical and emotional. If we conceive of God as having no feelings that is bound to have an adverse effect upon us. Christians relate readily to Christ's rich emotional life and take him as their model. That is good but is it adequate? We cannot divide Christ and say he feels in his humanity but not in his deity. Nor can we separate Christ from the Father and the Holy Spirit. If the Holy Spirit has no feelings why then are we exhorted not to grieve him? (Eph 4:30). And as if to heighten the sensitivity of the Holy Spirit Jesus warned that there is no forgiveness for those who blaspheme him. We understand by this not that the Holy Spirit has different divine attributes but rather the reference is to the special area of the Spirit's ministry which

is to convince the world of sin, righteousness and judgment (John 16:8).

The great commandment is that we are to love the Lord our God with all our minds and affections, that is with the whole of our being. For analytical purposes we can divide a person into parts but in reality we cannot separate emotions and feelings from the mind into watertight compartments. We relate to the three persons with all our being. Lukewarmness is repugnant to our Lord (Rev 3:16). We relate to the three persons with all our faculties and by that understand that he is able to relate to us correspondingly. We take the expressions of God's love at their face value. There is no back-tracking or clauses which suggest that God really is incapable of the love he expresses extravagantly.

John Owen's exposition of our love relationship with the Trinity helps us to understand how we relate to each person, the Father in adoption, the Son in a marriage union and communion, and the Holy Spirit as he indwells us to comfort, teach, prompt, guide, impart wisdom, correct and empower.

Since we relate to the three persons in the wholeness of our being made in his image it follows that we will be involved emotionally in activities that are the medium of our relationship with the three. Preaching will be with feeling. Preaching in contrast to lecturing addresses people in the wholeness of their beings. Praying will be passionate. Singing will be fervent. Worship involves feeling. A lethargic congregation can be discouraging. We must make allowance for those naturally reserved, for those fatigued or cast down, for those who for various reasons are inhibited, but the call to worship in the Psalms leaves us in no doubt that we are to stir ourselves to a wholehearted 'feelingful' expression of praise. Let us love our God feelingly not only in public worship but in all aspects of our lives.

References

- 1 New Bible Commentary, 21st Century edition, page 776.
- 2 John Owen, *Communion with God*, Banner of Truth pbk edition, page 63.
- 3 New Living Bible translates 'torn within me', and NASB, 'My heart is turned over within me', and the NKJV, 'My heart churns within me, my sympathy is stirred.'
- 4 John Calvin, *Hosea*, Banner of Truth edition, page 402.
- 5 Don Carson, *How Long, O Lord?* IVP, 1990, page 268
- 6 J I Packer, *God Who is Rich in Mercy: Essays presented to Dr D B Knox*. New South Wales, 1986, page 17.
- 7 Don Carson, *The Gaggling of God*, Apollos, 1996, page 236.
- 8 ibid page 16.

News

Israel



CWI worker Richard Gibson recently married Rita Kerler a Russian speaking Jewess whose Uzbekistani parents settled in Israel. Richard is encouraged by his work in Leeds as he works as a member of Leeds Reformed Baptist Church

Today, under renewed leadership and with three local believers at the helm, Christian Witness to Israel's work in Israel is seeking God's grace for an even more effective ministry. David Zadok, an Israeli-born Jew, was raised in Israel and educated and converted in America. He has been an active member of Grace and Truth Congregation for the last seven years. David is a computer systems analyst and a major on stand-by for the Israeli army. He serves the church as an elder and the Society as chairman of the local governing body. Rev Baruch Maoz has served with the Society since 1974 and for many years led the work on his own. Born in the USA, he immigrated to Israel and was converted while serving in the armed forces. He studied with WEC in Glasgow, where he came to the doctrines of grace and in 1976 participated in the founding of the Grace and Truth Christian congregation (Rishon LeTzion), which he has pastored ever since. He now serves

CWI as Israel field leader. Eitan Kashtan was born and educated in Israel. He and his wife were converted in America and, one year after they returned to Israel, joined the staff of CWI where he was (unbeknown to him) being groomed for his present position as manager of HaGefen, CWI's publishing arm in Israel.

CWI is presently occupied in a number of exciting projects: 1. The first full *Modern Hebrew Bible*, a translation which is meant to help Israeli children read, understand and love the Word of God in their own language; 2. Israel's only full curriculum Sabbath School material; 3. Books on the Bible, theology and Christian history written originally in Hebrew and for a Jewish Christian readership; 4. Translations of helpful Christian books such as *Pilgrim's Progress*, *Knowing God*, *The Mystery of Providence*, *The Pursuit of Holiness*, Pink's *The Sovereignty of God* and an abbreviated version of *Calvin's Institutes*; 5. Quarterly magazines for Christian adults and children. Further such projects are contemplated, including the writing of a Bible commentary in Hebrew.

Results of a poll taken regarding Israeli public opinion indicate that a majority of the Israeli public opposes the proposed law which seeks to abolish the right of Messianic Jews to disseminate their faith.

Siberia

In RT165 Roger Weil described his journeys in Siberia. In January this year he returned from further travels there. In a recent incident he heard that a group of

Mafia had visited a pastor's home and demanded money. The pastor resisted their intimidation and pointed out that he lived humbly and could not submit to their threats, whereupon they left.

One reason for Roger's visit was to check whether food parcels were arriving safely. He found that they had arrived and that they brought much joy to needy families. One young man he visited said, 'It was such a surprise to suddenly receive an unexpected parcel from the West. How did they know of my need? The parcel spoke of loving Christians who care for us and this was even more precious than the welcome food that it contained!' To one not used to meeting extremes of poverty face to face it was a bit of a shock, but Russia today has become very much a 'Third World' country unable to help the unemployed or the widows in their distress. He visited many needy families to encourage them with a small gift of food and financial help. Those in deepest need wept for joy and he found this especially hard to handle, not having experienced it before.

The spiritual work is expanding. Souls are being converted. Help is being given to five full-time workers. More are needed.

Macedonia

From Branko Trajkovski we learn of progress toward the publication of the new Macedonian Bible. The printing of this Bible is due to take place in Holland. The translation is complete of William Hendriksen's *Survey of the Bible*. Funding has come from Australia but more is needed before printing can proceed. Altogether nine books are ready to be published in Macedonian.

Persecution is common. One young friend who has become a believer is threatened with death by his family but he continues firm in his faith. A younger student has been beaten several times and his brother put a knife to his throat. His Bible and Christian literature were confiscated. At one point he had to escape and was hidden in a flat for two days. His family and police searched for him. Eventually an agreement was made with the police for him to return home but to keep his Bible but on condition that he did not attend church until his university studies are complete.

Branko eagerly looks forward to *RT* which he reads with delight. He expresses interest in translating Erroll's book on the Puritans into Macedonian when it is ready.

Uganda



Robin and Margaret Bird

Robin and Margaret Bird 'retired' three years ago after 40 years in publishing and distributing Christian literature. They have certainly accumulated skills in book business. Knowing of the book famine in Africa they determined to do something about it. Working from their home in Hampshire they set up a system of supply in co-operation with six publishing houses who caught the vision. The whole idea is to make the books available at

prices that can be afforded in African countries. Among the recipients are pastoral training institutions, missions, bookshops, libraries and churches. Robin and Margaret's first African visit was to Uganda in 1995. Since then they have supplied ten other countries with books which now total over 25,000. More recently they have included French titles in distribution to Francophone nations.

South Africa

During the period when most South Africans take their summer holidays, two Grace conferences were held in January. One is held in the north in Gauteng (Transvaal) at Mount Grace Hotel where 192 attended and the other in Western Cape attended by just over 60. Both venues are idyllic in setting with an atmosphere of tranquillity helpful to pastors who are burdened with the additional tensions of the crime wave which vexes the nation.

According to a number of men who had attended the conferences before, this one was the best. It was the 7th and has now been established as not only fast growing, but perhaps the most significant pastors' conference in South Africa. Wayne Mack of the USA ministered on the subject of counselling in which he has specialised. Meanings of shepherding were opened up and expanded as 'restoring' and 'mending' broken lives. In three sessions Conrad Mbewe opened up the subject of the pastor as a man of study who at the same time is a priest who obtains from the Lord the message of the hour. Martin Holdt preached on the necessity of purity in the preacher and outlined six devastating consequences of sexual immorality.

Generous sponsorship of the conferences by businessmen has been a major factor in building up the ministry of the Grace conferences. Support of this kind is vital in a country like South Africa, where there are so many economic disparities, so that less privileged pastors can participate. A nationally representative meeting is to take place to plan future conferences with a view to improvements. It is important to recognise how effective ministers' conferences can be for the life of local churches.

London, England

The Westminster Conference 1998

Over 280 people gathered in the Lloyd-Jones Hall of Westminster Chapel in December for the latest in the series of conferences that have been running since the early 1950s. The title of the Conference was 'Triumph Through Tribulation' and the six papers generally focussed around this theme.

Erroll Hulse began by giving an overview of the Puritan period, providing thumbnail sketches of the best-known of these men of God and their achievements, placing them within their historical context. Derek Thomas, visiting from Mississippi, spoke on the preaching of John Calvin on the book of Job and provided profound insights into the significance of this often mysterious book. Further valuable lessons on the sometimes perplexing dealings of God with his people in providence were gained as Iain Murray handled the topic of the Puritans and suffering and John J Murray opened up a study of Flavel's exhaustive treatment of the subject in his book *The Mystery of Providence*. The first day was brought to an end as Bruce Jenkins gave a delightful view of the



Geoff Thomas at the Westminster Conference

warm heart and pastoral love of John Newton revealed in his many letters. The conference concluded with an inspirational paper on the writer of the very fine hymn, 'Great God of wonders', Samuel Davies, given by Geoff Thomas.

The conference for 1999 is arranged for December 7th and 8th, again at Westminster Chapel, and will bear in mind the turn of the Millennium, shortly to be celebrated.

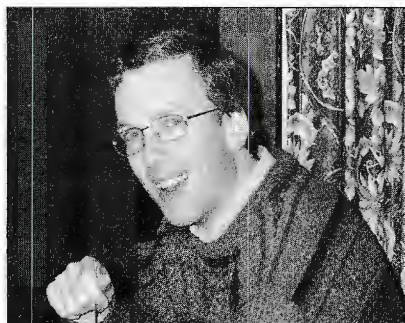
Details of the conference and papers given in 1998 (as well as in previous years) may be obtained from the Secretary, John Harris, 8, Back Knowl Road, Mirfield, West Yorkshire, WF14 9SA, UK.

Brazil

Andrew King has been pastor of Haywards Heath Evangelical Free

Church, Sussex, England, for 10 years. He, his wife Cora, Becky (13) and Tom (11) are well known at the annual Carey Family Conference which has been largely organised by Andrew for the last five years.

Following ministry in Brazil, particularly at the FIEL Ministers' Conference near Sao Paulo in October 1997, Andrew has felt a call to Brazil. He has expository gifts which are needed in the context of



Andrew King

large numbers of churches where there is a very evident lack of structured, doctrinal and applicatory preaching.

The proposal is that the King family should settle at first in a small Baptist church in Florianopolis in the South of Brazil to gain a grounding in the Portuguese language and Brazilian culture.

Financial support is needed to supplement that which will be provided by HHEF Church and like-minded churches are invited to respond to this worthy missionary endeavour. The Kings will be working with UFM Worldwide, 47A Fleet Street, Swindon, Wilts SN1 1RE, UK tel: 01793 610515

The Kings' e-mail address: Andrew_Lawrance@msn.com

John Gill – a Sketch of his Life

Editor

John Gill was born at Kettering, Northamptonshire, on November 23rd, 1697. His father, a godly man and a deacon in the Particular Baptist church at Kettering, made his living through the wool trade. From an early age John was studious. By the age of eleven he had learned Greek and Latin. The schoolmaster insisted that all his pupils, even those from dissenting families, attend the parish church. Thereafter John continued his studies on his own. He procured his own grammar books and taught himself Hebrew.

Aged about twelve John was converted through the ministry of William Wallis, the founding pastor of the Baptist church attended by his parents. Gill postponed his baptism to the age of nineteen partly because he sensed pressure from others to enter the ministry and he felt the impropriety of that before he was mature enough. As it was he began to exercise his gifts as a preacher and expositor of the Scriptures soon after his immersion in a river near Kettering. With the good favour of fellow church members at Kettering he moved to the village of Higham Ferrers where he boarded with the local minister John Davis and assisted in the ministry. Here he met Elizabeth Negus



John Gill

whom he married in 1718. She was to labour as his helpmeet for 46 years. After a brief period back in Kettering as assistant minister in his home church, Gill was invited to preach with a view to becoming pastor at Goat Yard Chapel, Horsleydown Lane, Southwark. There was serious division in the church over the call to Gill, not because of doctrine, but some opposed one so young and untried. However on March 22, 1720 John Gill was inducted as the pastor.

Visitors to London can easily locate Horsleydown Lane, a small street about 200 yards long running parallel to Tower Bridge Road just south of the Thames River and under the

afternoon shadow of Tower Bridge. To the south Tower Bridge Road joins New Kent Road, leading directly to Spurgeon's Tabernacle at Elephant and Castle. That is a distance of about a mile and a half from where Goat Yard Chapel used to be.

Gill's phenomenal writing career began in 1724 with the publication of a funeral sermon. His exposition of the Song of Solomon was published in 1728. By 1729 a circle of friends, impressed by the ministry of Gill, sponsored him to give a weekly Wednesday evening lecture at Great Eastcheap. For 27 years Gill was to fulfil this additional ministry. Many, if not most of his writings, including his four volume treatise *The Cause of God and Truth* (his defence of Calvinism), his *Complete Body of Doctrinal and Practical Divinity*, and his treatise on Justification, were first given at Eastcheap. Gill was the first Englishman to complete a commentary on the whole Bible. Matthew Henry and Matthew Poole both died before they had finished their commentaries on the whole of Scripture.

In 1748 the University of Aberdeen in Scotland conferred on Gill the degree of Doctor of Divinity, well deserved since he was an expert in Rabbinics and oriental languages. When the deacons of his church congratulated him on his DD he thanked them and

commented, 'I neither thought it, nor bought it, nor sought it.'

In 1752 Gill wrote a series of articles on perseverance and predestination in answer to the Arminian teaching of John Wesley. Gill's prodigious literary output was only possible with the support of a devoted household. Elizabeth was fully supportive of her husband even through the illness she suffered for the last nine years of her life. She bore a number of children but only three survived infancy and one of these, a daughter, died aged only twelve. She had been converted at the age of ten. Toward the end of her life Elizabeth was an invalid. She died in 1764 aged 67. Gill did not remarry.

His very large library was situated on the second floor of his home. In summer he would be at work between 4.00 and 5.00 am, later in winter. He maintained family worship in the mornings and evenings. He was affable in conversation, robust in health and unlike the stern portrait that is commonly reproduced his demeanour evidenced inward joy and peace of mind.

John Gill was loved by his flock and when he died after a long pastorate most of the members had known no other pastor. After two years of steady decline, in which he could only preach on average once a week, he passed to his eternal reward in 1771 aged 73. He was buried in Bunhill Fields.

John Gill – An Appreciation

The Life and Thought of John Gill (1697-1771) - A Tercentennial Appreciation, edited by Michael A G Haykin, 1997, Brill (Leiden, New York, Köln), 236 page hardback.

In his introduction Michael Haykin points to the fact that the Calvinistic Baptists formed one of the most spiritually vibrant Christian communities in the British Isles. At the time of their first Confession of Faith in 1644 there were only seven congregations. By 1660 there were more than 130. Growth continued, not in so spectacular a fashion, but nevertheless by 1715 there were about 220 churches. By 1750 the number had shrunk to about 150. Various reasons can be put forward for this decline. The distortion that 'it is not the duty of the unregenerate to believe in Christ' is attributed to John Gill and his friend John Brine (1703-1765) and this error is postulated by some as a prime reason for the decline. We need to reserve judgment until we can assess the overall situation. This book provides an excellent appreciation of the stature and strengths of John Gill. It is only within that framework that we can make a fair assessment of the damage which emanated from his errors.

Ten further chapters follow by different authors. First comes an excellent 42 page biography of Gill by Robert Oliver who, while describing the virtues of his subject, nevertheless argues that Gill should be viewed as a high- or hyper-Calvinist. Richard Muller looks at the way in which Gill sought to mediate seventeenth-century Reformed theology to a theological world increasingly uneasy with systematic theology. He skilfully

places Gill in the tradition of Reformed scholastic theology. John Gill's teaching on believers' baptism is summarised by Stanley Fowler. This shows Gill at his best in a thoroughly cogent overall exposition of the subject. Gill affirmed the continuity between Johannine and apostolic baptism. He argued that communion should be limited to those baptised by immersion.

Raymond C Ortlund, Jr explores John Gill as interpreter of the Old Testament and begins by reminding his readers that Gill's *magnum opus* was his massive verse-by-verse commentary on the whole Bible. Taking Psalm 68, with special attention given to verse 18 as an example, Ortlund shows Gill's skill as a Hebraist and comments on his principles of interpretation.

Thomas K Ascol reminds readers that Gill was the first Baptist to write a complete systematic theology. He 'was nothing if not a systematic theologian... He was self-consciously and unapologetically an exegetical theologian. His system grew out of his exegesis' (p 113). Gill was a profound Rabbinical scholar. For instance in his comments on 1 John 5:7 he cites testimony from the Arabic, Ethiopic, and Syriac versions and consults the early Church fathers, Athanasius, Jerome, Cyprian and Tertullian, the Latin Vulgate, the London Polyglot Bible, and the Alexandrian and Complutensian Greek manuscripts. Gill maintained that Jesus as a Jew was thoroughly immersed in the Jewish thought and traditions of his day.

Prof Tom Nettles of Southern Seminary, Louisville, while conceding that there are elements of hyper-Calvinism in Gill,

especially with regard to his understanding of the free offer of the gospel, nevertheless argues that in his preaching he differed little in substance and fervour from such giants involved in the eighteenth-century awakening as George Whitefield. In his chapter Nettles describes the controversy between Gill and John Wesley over Arminianism, the perseverance of the saints and predestination.

Curt Daniel, currently pastor of Reformed Bible Church, Springfield, Illinois, who earned his Ph D at the University of Edinburgh, where he wrote his doctoral dissertation on hyper-Calvinism and John Gill (1983), contributes a valuable chapter to the book on the subject, 'John Gill and Calvinistic Antinomianism'. It is valuable because it sets out clearly the development of antinomian doctrine. While clearly affirming Gill's hyper-Calvinism he absolves him of antinomianism. Daniel reminds us that the Gospel Standard denomination in England takes its name from the distinctive tenet that the gospel and not the law is the standard for faith and practice for the believer. He highlights the fact that the Gospel Standard Baptist denomination greatly reveres Tobias Crisp (1600-1643), John Gill and William Huntington (1745-1813). Nevertheless there are significant differences between them. Crisp and Gill believed that the moral law was a rule of life for the believer. Huntington did not. Gospel Standard writers have lamented that Crisp believed in the free offers of the gospel whereas Gill did not. Tobias Crisp and Gill held to eternal justification.

The theme of Gill's spirituality is opened up in a masterly fashion by Gregory A Wills, in a chapter titled, 'A fire that burns within; the spirituality of John Gill'. John Gill wrote an outstanding commentary on the Song of Solomon. This began as a series of sermons in 1724 and appeared as

a book in 1728. The exposition expresses the reciprocal love between Christ and his redeemed people. In this he reveals a deeply spiritual mind. Gill maintained that the essence of Christian living was loving Christ.

Sharon James describes Gill's views of 'the weaker vessel', women, marriage and divorce. Gill accepted that the Early Church appointed deaconesses but he did not get ecstatic about that possibility! On divorce Gill taught that marriage can be dissolved on account of adultery or wilful desertion and held that those legally divorced are free to remarry. The reader is struck by the huge contrast between Gill's times and our own when divorce is rife.

In the chapter, 'The ecclesiology of John Gill', Timothy George reminds us that over the course of his long and prolific career, Gill was drawn into numerous disputes and theological debates with Unitarians, Arminians, Anglicans, Methodists and Deists, not to mention some of his fellow-Baptists and other dissenters. Needless to say Gill advocated church membership for those who sustain a credible profession of faith. Each member was required to agree to a covenant declaring loyalty and practical integration with the other members, 'bearing with one another's weaknesses, failings, and infirmities, and particularly to pray for one another'. The church maintained a strong confessional basis and required agreement of all the members with the articles of faith as prerequisite to membership.

Anti-missionary Baptist groups in England and America made Gill their champion which is depressing to say the least, yet as this volume suggests, there is much that is positive about Gill.

Editor

John Gill – Eternal Justification

Editor

There is no doubt that John Gill was a foremost scholar and writer in his times and was especially esteemed by the Baptists. Gill must be given credit for standing firm on the great central truths of the faith, especially so when we remember that that period was one of great doctrinal instability. During that time many were falling away into Unitarianism. However Gill's influence meant that his hyper-Calvinism, which can be traced back to John Hussey¹, had wide-reaching effects.

In 1729 Gill persuaded his church to replace their Confession of Faith which had been authored by Benjamin Keach. Gill prepared a new Confession, *The Goat Yard Chapel Confession*. Keach's reflected the teaching of the Puritans and *The 1689 Baptist Confession of Faith*. Gill was moving away from the 1689 Confession and preparing the way for his own teaching. Article 8 of Gill's Confession concerns Justification. In it no reference whatever is made to faith. This is a red light which warns us of the error of Gill's doctrine of 'eternal justification' which is set out in his book *Justification: Doctrine of Justification by the Righteousness of Christ*. This was first written in 1730. A fourth edition was published in

1756. Gill removed all reference to faith in the doctrine of justification.

Gill's treatise on Justification is divided into eight sections. Part five is devoted to the time at which justification takes place. Gill was obviously aware that he was advancing a view out of line with the accepted position.

Gill set out to prove first that true justification is antecedent to any act of believing. It happens before any act of faith. Second, justification by, or at, or on believing, is not properly justification. Thirdly, Gill sought to answer objections against his doctrine of eternal justification. He identified the act of justification with the decree of God to justify the elect. God's will and decree to justify the elect is God's justification of them. He was aware that he was advancing doctrine that was out of line and sought support in William Twisse and Thomas Goodwin.

Goodwin develops the doctrine along three lines. First there is the origin of justification in the eternal decrees of God. It is this first part that pleased John Gill. The second part of justification is the procuring of it by the work of Christ. The resurrection of Christ from the dead was the confirmation that justification had actually been procured. This is clearly stated

by Goodwin.² He then goes on to assert that the first two parts of justification existed only in the Head of the Church, that is Christ. The third part of justification is the application of it to the believer and this only transpires on believing. Justification is consummated and becomes a reality when the sinner believes in Christ. Goodwin says of this momentous instant, the instant of faith, 'This is that great and famous justification by faith which the Scripture so much inculcates.' He then cites 1 Corinthians 6:11 and Romans 5:9 as proof texts. 1 Corinthians 6:11 in the NIV reads, 'And that is what some of you were. But you were washed, you were sanctified, you were justified.' These verbs are in the aorist tense most suitable to affirm definitive acts which are time events. This expresses the fact that justification is a space/time event. The sinner is a child of wrath until that wrath is removed when he is joined to Christ by faith (Eph 2:3).

The key to understanding hyper-Calvinism

Gill's doctrine of eternal justification provides the key to understanding the mentality of hyper-Calvinism. He fell into the trap of human rationalism, a kind of deism in which God is conceived of as preparing all that comes to pass including the programming of man, and then departing to leave the programme to

run. The result of this thinking is that we are reduced to the role of spectators. We are not making history. We are simply watching history.

However we are to live according to God's revealed will not his decretive will: 'Secret things belong to the LORD our God, but the things that are revealed belong to us and to our children forever' (Deut 29:29). Our 1689 Confession warns in chapter 3 paragraph 7 that the 'high mystery of predestination needs to be handled with special prudence and caution', and in paragraph one of the same chapter there is a three-fold safeguard against human rationalism with regard to the decrees of God. Firstly in no way is God the author of sin and nor does he share the responsibility of sin with sinners. Secondly the will of man is not violated. Thirdly the working of second causes is not put aside but rather established.

Gill affirmed that sinners do *not* have a duty to savingly believe or trust in Christ as Saviour. Gill made this clear when he wrote, 'Though men have lost the power of believing and are shut up in unbelief God may justly require them to give credit to and believe whatever revelation he is pleased to make. As to those texts of Scripture, I know of none that exhort and command all men, all the individuals of human nature, to repent and believe in Christ for salvation. They can only at most concern such persons that are under the gospel

dispensation and in general only regard an external repentance and reformation or historical faith in or assent to Jesus as Messiah.³ Gill maintained a distinction between natural and spiritual repentance and accommodated and interpreted texts which exhort all men to repent as referring not to saving repentance but to natural repentance and reformation.

These views led Gill to deny the free offers of the gospel as Hussey had expressed in his treatise. Gill declared, 'That there are universal offers of grace and salvation to all men I utterly deny, nay I deny that they are made to any, not to God's elect; grace and salvation are promised to them in the everlasting covenant, procured for them by Christ, established in the Gospel and applied by the Spirit.'⁴

Cornelius van Til highlighted the important factor of time.⁵ Every moment has significance. The divine plan does not render history meaningless. Rather, history has meaning, not in spite of but because of, the counsel of God who controls whatever comes to pass. Change and transition are real and significant because God has planned for them to be real and significant.

The three persons of the Trinity are fully involved in the drama of redemption in a deeply personal way. Nothing is settled until it actually

happens. That God is personally involved in the action is seen over and over again. For instance King Hezekiah is told by the LORD through the prophet Isaiah that he is finished. He is to die, in fact will soon be dead! Hezekiah did not respond by agreeing that this was eternal predestination. Rather he prayed fervently against the Lord's decision. Isaiah hardly walked more than a couple of hundred yards when he was commanded to return to Hezekiah and tell him that the LORD had changed his mind! The LORD has been influenced by Hezekiah's repentance! Many such instances are on record. Thus Moses succeeded in his intercession to turn the LORD back to Israel. These changes in the world do not mean God's plan is changing but rather all changes are included in his overall plan which is not known to us.

References

- 1 Joseph Hussey (1659-1726) began his ministry by asserting the free offers of the gospel but then over-reacted to the rise of Arminianism and asserted with a treatise *God's Operation of Grace but No Offers of Grace* (1707) that the gospel is to be addressed, not to the unregenerate but only to the regenerate.
- 2 Thomas Goodwin, *Works*, vol 8, page 136.
- 3 Gill, *Cause of God and Truth*, page 87, also Robert Oliver, *Hyper-Calvinism among Baptists in England*, Baptist Conference in Orlando, Florida, 1997.
- 4 *ibid*, Oliver.
- 5 John M Frame, *Cornelius van Til – An Analysis of his Thought*, 460 page pbk, P and R, 1995, cf. page 215ff.

The Doctrine of Eternal Justification

Earl Blackburn

The doctrine of eternal justification, simply stated, is that the justification (or the declaring righteous) of elect sinners took place in eternity past. It is held by some sincere Calvinists who desire from the depths of their hearts to give God alone all the glory for the salvation of sinners. It is their desire, along with other true Calvinists, that the pride of man be humbled and the so-called free will of man be abased. As the revival of the doctrines of grace and the faith of the Reformation in the United States grows, this teaching finds a susceptible audience zealous to defend God against all comers. It is my contention that those who believe in eternal justification, while holding to *Sola Scriptura*, have gone beyond Scripture and allowed unrestrained human reasoning to prevail.

The Primitive Baptists, the spiritual heirs of John Gill and those among whom I grew up in North Carolina, USA totally deny regeneration, the new birth, conversion, effectual calling and vital union with Christ. According to them, why should one have to be born again if he was eternally justified in Christ in eternity past? Quoting 2 Timothy 1:9-10, they believe that all the gospel does is bring to light that which was already done in eternity past. History proves that those who emphasise eternal justification eventually begin to minimise effectual calling and vital experiential union with Christ. Biblical experience is soon passed by or minimised. Great harm is done because Scripture is dealt with in an unbalanced way, resulting in damage to souls.

Most readers of this journal will hold firmly to the doctrine of justification by faith as it is defined in *The 1689 Confession of Faith*. On that basis I would suggest that every reference to justification in Scripture refers to God the Father's action taking place in time. In every case it is effected at a specific moment in a person's life making him a new person in Christ. The references to justification are: Matthew 12:37; Luke 18:14; Acts 13:39; Romans 2:13; 3:20,24,26,28,30; 4:5,25; 5:1,9,16,18; 8:30; 1 Corinthians 6:11; Galatians 2:16, 3:8, 24; Titus 3:7.

I would marshal ten reasons for rejecting the doctrine of eternal justification as follows:

1. If the elect were justified before the foundation of the world, why is there not one single verse stating such?

2. All of the above verses dogmatically show that one is justified when one believes with the God-given gift of faith, not before.

3. Louis Berkhof correctly states that those who believe in eternal justification do not 'properly distinguish between the divine purpose in eternity and its execution in time, nor between the work of Christ in procuring and that of the Holy Spirit in applying the blessings of redemption' (*Systematic Theology*, p517).

4. The decrees of God, while eternal, are of none effect until they are realised and worked out in time. *Without the shedding of blood there is no remission [of sins]*, says the Word (Heb 9:22, cf Lev 17:11). The decree of God for the redemption of the elect was not actualised until the sinless blood flowed from the veins of the Lord Jesus at the cross and was effectually applied in time and space by the Holy Spirit.

5. Those who believe in eternal justification confuse predestination with justification. In the covenant of redemption the Father chose and predestinated who would be saved and justified, the Son came to earth incarnated and secured on the cross that which the Father planned, and in time the Holy Spirit effectually applies the saving cross work of Christ to elect and predestinated sinners who then believe and are justified. This is the order taught by the infallible Word of God.

6. If sinners were actually justified in eternity past, then what about effectual calling and glorification, which are part of redemption? Were the elect effectually called in eternity past instead of being called in time? What about glorification? Were elect sinners actually glorified even before they were born? Are we who believe upon Christ and think ourselves numbered among the elect actually glorified in the physical presence of God with a heavenly body at this very moment, even though we are alive and on the earth? In the mind and purpose of God, all the elect are sitting in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus (Eph 2:6); but they do not have their glorified bodies and have not been perfectly transformed into Christ's likeness, free from sin. I am not glorified, but I shall be; just as God purposed that I would be before the foundation of the world.

7. If justification warrants being spoken about from eternity past, then there is no reason why we should not speak of a creation from eternity, before it actually happened. The same is true for the incarnation of Christ, his crucifixion, resurrection, second coming, etc; all before he actually came in the flesh and actually did these things.

8. If we, who believe, were justified in eternity past, why do the Scriptures teach that we were under condemnation when we were in a state of unbelief? (John 3:18) How can we be under condemnation if we were already justified? Along the same lines, Ephesians 2:3 states that we who now believe were once 'children of wrath even as others'. How could we be 'children of wrath' if we were eternally justified?

9. The doctrine of eternal justification is contrary to the biblical order of Romans 8:29,30. In the inspired order given in this passage, justification stands between the two acts of God in time, namely, calling and glorification, which begin in time but are completed in eternity future. (NB Even though called, justified and glorified are in the past tense, this is proleptic, intimating the certainty of their accomplishment. A proleptic aorist represents the *de facto* certainty of future achievement and causes something to appear as if it were already given and completed, even though it has not been.) These three together, justification, calling and glorification, are the results of foreknowledge and predestination, which are explicitly shown as being in eternity past. What right does anyone have to go contrary to the plain meaning and divine order of Scripture?

10. Eternal justification minimises the most glorious event in human history - the cross of Christ. When did Christ actually die? Many who believe eternal justification claim that he died before the foundation of the world, quoting Revelation 13:8. They let this one verse interpret the entire New Testament, rather than letting the whole of the New Testament interpret this one verse; this is eisegesis instead of exegesis. What about the accounts of Christ's death recorded in each of the four Gospels, which show him actually dying in time? Did the Saviour die twice, once in eternity past and another in time almost 2,000 years ago? I believe not. Peter, in preaching on the day of Pentecost, states that Christ was 'delivered by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God' in eternity past, but this did not take place until he was 'taken, and by wicked hands was crucified and slain' in time (see Acts 2:23). It is not without reason that the account of the crucifixion is given four times in the New Testament and that the bulk of the Gospel narratives focus on Christ's last few days upon the earth. Why? Because Christ's death on the cross in time, not in eternity past, is central to all of God's redemptive purposes! That is why Paul could say, 'God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world has been crucified to me, and I to the world' (Gal 6:14).

I conclude with a simple observation, namely that the doctrine of eternal justification has no biblical foundation.

(Scripture quotations throughout are from the New King James Version.)

An Inspiring Testimony

A review article by Sharon James

The Examinations of Anne Askew. ed. Elaine V Beilin, Oxford University Press, 1996, 198pp, pbk, £12.99.

In the famous *Acts and Monuments* of 1563 (better known as the *Book of Martyrs*), John Foxe included an account of Anne Askew. She was born in about 1521, in a prosperous family in Leicestershire. She seems to have been forced into a respectable marriage, as Foxe comments she 'could have lived in great wealth and prosperity'. Instead, when she was converted to the Protestant faith, her husband appears to have driven her from home and away from her two children. She went to London, to join up with other Protestants. It seems that she had some connections at court, and knew some of the ladies connected with Queen Catherine Parr. At this time, Henry VIII's bishops were actively persecuting Protestants in London. Anne was arrested and accused of heresy. Before her death Anne Askew wrote an account of the two interrogations she had been subject to. Even though tortured, she managed to answer the questions put to her with clarity, modesty, even ironic wit.

A Protestant apologist, John Bale, quickly published her account of her 'Examinations' accompanied by a commentary of his own. The two-part work was published in the Protestant Duchy of Cleves in 1546 and 1547, and copies were smuggled into England. John Foxe included her written testimony in his Latin (1559) and English (1563) editions of his *Acts and Monuments*. This fine book, edited by Elaine Beilin, includes the entire original text of John Bale's edition of the *Examinations*, the section on Askew from Foxe, a detailed introductory essay, detailed notes, and also two devotional poems written by Askew while she was imprisoned. Sixteenth-century spelling has been retained (I have modernised the spellings in the quotations below).

By openly converting to Protestantism Anne Askew ended up challenging the whole religious and political establishment of the day. The central question in her *Examinations* was whether she accepted the Catholic claim

of transubstantiation. She rejected that, and she also refused to inform on any member of the court. 'Then they said there were of the council that did maintain me. And I said no. Then they did put me on the rack, because I confessed no ladies or gentlewomen to be of my opinion, and thereon they kept me a long time. And because I lay still and did not cry, my Lord Chancellor and Master Rich took pains to rack me [with] their own hands, till I was nigh dead... Then the lieutenant caused me to be loosed from the rack. Incontinently I swooned, and then they recovered me again. After that I sat two long hours reasoning with my Lord Chancellor upon the bare floor, whereas he with many flattering words persuaded me to leave my opinion. But my Lord God (I thank his everlasting goodness) gave me grace to persevere, and will do (I hope) to the very end... Then was I brought to an house, and laid in a bed, with as weary and painful bones as ever had patient Job, I thank my Lord God thereof. Then my Lord Chancellor sent me word if I would leave my opinion I should want nothing. If I would not, I should go forth to Newgate and so be burned. I sent him again word, that I would rather die than to break my faith. Thus the Lord open the eyes of their blind hearts that the truth might take place. Farewell, dear friend, and pray, pray, pray' (127, 132).

Her written testimony composed just before her death read: 'I, Anne Askew, of good memory, although my merciful father hath given me the bread of adversity, and the water of trouble, yet not so much as my sins hath deserved, confess myself here a sinner before the throne of his heavenly majesty, desiring his eternal mercy. And for so much as I am by the law unrighteously condemned for an evil doer concerning opinions, I take the same most merciful God of mine, which hath made both heaven and earth, to record, that I hold no opinions contrary to his most holy word... But this is the heresy which they report me to hold, that after the priest hath spoken the words of consecration, there remaineth bread still... But they both say and also teach it for a necessary article of faith that after those words be spoken, there remaineth no bread, but even the self same body that hung upon the cross on Good Friday, both flesh, blood and bone. To this belief of theirs, say I nay. For then were our common Creed false, which says that he sitteth on the right hand of God the father almighty, and from thence shall come to judge the quick and the dead. Lo, this is the heresy that I hold, and for it must suffer the death... But as concerning your Mass, as it is now used in our days, I do say and believe it to be the most abominable idol that is in the world. For my God will not be eaten with

teeth, neither dieth he again. And upon these words that I have now spoken, will I suffer death' (138, 139, 140-1, 144).

On the 16th July, 1546 crowds gathered in Smithfield, London to witness the execution by burning of four Protestant 'heretics'. Three men were killed: John Adams a tailor, John Lasselles, a gentleman of the court of Henry VI, and Nicolas Belenian, a priest. The fourth victim was the 25 year old gentlewoman: Anne Askew. John Foxe in his *Acts and Monuments* wrote: 'It happened well for them that they died together with Anne Askew. For albeit that of themselves they were strong and stout men, yet through the example and prayer of her, they being the more boldened, received occasion of more greater comfort, in that so painful and doleful kind of death, not only beholding her invincible constancy, but also oftentimes stirred up through her persuasions, they did set apart all kind of fear' (192). The horror aroused by the brutal treatment of this woman once more meant that the authorities had only managed to serve the cause of Reformation by their harshness.

John Bale and John Foxe both found the martyrdom of this woman to be a striking example of the activities of Satan. They believed that Satan in the personification of the Antichrist (Rome) was attempting to destroy 'the offspring of the woman' (i.e. the true or Protestant Church). The engraving which accompanied Bale's edition was of a young woman dressed as one of the martyrs of the early church, holding a martyr's palm in one hand, the Bible in the other, and trampling down the great Beast, or Antichrist, who is wearing the papal tiara. Bale and Foxe used the witness of Anne Askew as a 'singular example' of God-given courage and faith: a sign that the true Church cannot and will not be overcome by Antichrist.

The first-hand personal testimony of Anne Askew deserves to be read anew in our day. Various aspects call for comment. Firstly, Anne was highly articulate, assured, and confident, which exposes the myth sometimes perpetrated of Christian women in a 'patriarchal' age, being timid, passive or weak. Secondly she was transparent in her certainty of spiritual realities. She endured torture and death because she was convinced that death is only the end of all suffering, and the entry to a new life with Christ. Thirdly, she exhibited a meek and forgiving spirit towards her persecutors, which was truly Christlike. We welcome this careful and accurate reproduction of her testimony: a testimony which should not be forgotten.

Book Notices

Creating a Christian Worldview

Abraham Kuyper's Lectures on Calvinism, by Peter S Heslam, Eerdmans/Paternoster, 300 pp, pbk.

Abraham Kuyper: A Centennial Reader, Eerdmans/Paternoster, edited by J D Bratt, 498 pp, pbk.

These two works, from the same publisher and appearing at the same time, are a treasure. Heslam's book ought to be on every pastor's bookshelf. It has been marketed as a study of Kuyper's 'Stone Lectures' delivered at Princeton University in 1898, but it is so much more. Before it systematically delves into each of the six lectures, the book provides a substantial biography of Kuyper, and also a description of his travels in the U.S.A.

The study hits a high watermark, however, when it analyses Kuyper's influential definition of Calvinism. A great read.

The second work is a selection of Kuyper's writings in various areas of life, such as church, politics, and education. It forcefully demonstrates Kuyper's correct view of Calvinism as a worldview, in which all of life is affected by it. To be honest, it is a tougher read than the book by Heslam. However, there are some great nuggets to be unearthed by the Reformed Christian.

John Currid

The Oxford Dictionary of the Christian Church

ed. F L Cross and E A Livingstone, Oxford University Press, 1997, 1786 pp, hardcover, £70.00.

The first edition of *The Oxford Dictionary of the Christian Church* appeared in 1957, the second edition in 1983 and this is the updated version, with 6,000 entries and over 480 contributors. It is an indispensable reference work, containing clear and accurate entries on all the churches and denominations, all aspects of the calendar and organisation of the Church, a great deal of material on patristic scholarship, and several biographical entries. Many entries contain a brief bibliography. I have often consulted it, and not yet been let down.

Sharon James

The Oxford Dictionary of World Religions

ed. John Bowker, Oxford University Press, 1997, 1111 pp, hard cover, £30.00.

This is another indispensable reference work in one book, a careful and accurate source of information about all the world religions. John Bowker writes in the

Carey 1999

Carey Family Conference – 14-21 August 1999

Visiting speaker: Roland Eskinazi of South Africa

For brochure providing details please contact David Jarrett, Penglais, 6a Soar Close, Croesyceilog, Cwmbran, NP44 2PD. Telephone 01633 866214.

preface, 'Vague impressions of religion can do great harm, not least by giving offence to the adherents of religion by seeming to be casual about the things that matter to them' (vii). We do ourselves no favours if we make references to other religions in a way that is inaccurate or ill-informed. I have found occasion to refer to this book in various contexts: from the study of missionary history on the one hand to the need to respond to what is going on in the classroom of the local primary school on the other. As with the above mentioned volume, I have not been disappointed.

Sharon James

The Claims of Truth: John Owen's Trinitarian Theology

Carl R Trueman, Paternoster Press, 267 pp, pbk.

Dr Carl R Trueman in writing a preface to *The Claims of Truth: John Owen's Trinitarian Theology* explains that he is writing as an 'historian of ideas' and not as a theologian. His three years of

extensive research have resulted in a book which will prove of exceptional value to all those who have an interest in Owen's writings and desire a clearer understanding of the heart of Owen's theology. So that Owen's thought can be better appreciated the author draws upon the historical, intellectual and philosophical context of the seventeenth century. He makes the point that until we understand Owen in his historical context we are not in a position to argue whether Owen's thought and method were right or wrong. By recognising his theological treatises as a force and product of the seventeenth century means the kind of insight that can only be gained by 'seeing beyond the trees to view the forest'.

Trueman argues that Owen's task of defending Reformed orthodoxy was more complex than that which had confronted the Reformers because the seventeenth-century heresies were more closely aligned with Reformed theology and with Scripture.

The author provides an explanation of the real meaning of Owen's



Roland Eskinazi (left), pastor of the Germiston Baptist Church, South Africa, with Ronald Kalifungwa pastor of the Lynnwood Reformed Baptist Church, Pretoria, and Conrad Mbewe, pastor of the Kabwata Baptist Church, Lusaka, Zambia. Roland Eskinazi has agreed to be the visiting preacher at the Carey Family Conference – August 1999

apparent use of Aristotle as well as a most fruitful discussion of Owen's views on the proper biblical approach to theology. Owen's doctrine of God, Christology, and the nature of Christ's satisfaction are opened up. Throughout, the Trinity is shown and repeatedly underlined as the starting point of all Owen's theology. Trueman explains that, for Owen, God as Triune forms the one essential basis for his plan of salvation.

At a time when many Christians are revisiting Owen, a work that sets out to replace any mythological Owen with the real man of his own day is overdue.

Christian Basics

Dr John Hall, 46 pages, £1.75 (post free) cheques with order to: Onesimus Books, PO Box 463, Bristol BS99 1DH.

This is a useful tool for evangelism and in teaching new Christians in home groups or on a one-to-one basis. There are twelve sections which prompts the idea of a chapter per week over a three month period. An introductory and instructive cassette on the use of this booklet by its author is available from the same address at £2.50 post free. Dr Hall is pastor of Grace Evangelical Church, Westerleigh, near Bristol.

Fiona Vaughn

Editor

Editor
Assistant Editor
Associate Editors

ERROLL HULSE, 75 Woodhill Road, Leeds LS16 7BZ
 BILL JAMES, 9 Epsom Road, Leamington Spa CV32 7AR
 DAVID KINGDON, UK, JIM VAN ZYL, SA
 TOM NETTLES, USA, JOHN CAMPBELL, AUSTRALIA
 DON GARLINGTON, MICHAEL HAYKIN, CANADA

Rates

1 year £12.00 – 2 years £20.00

Subscriptions
 UK & EUROPE

1 year £12.00 – 2 years £20.00

IRISH REPUBLIC

1 year \$20.00 – 2 years \$35.00

AUSTRALIA

1 year \$25.00 – 2 years \$45.00

NEW ZEALAND

1 year \$19.00 – 2 years \$32.00

USA

1 year \$15.00 – 2 years \$27.00

BRAZIL (USA \$)

1 year \$21.00 – 2 years \$37.00

CANADA

1 year R60.00 – 2 years R110.00

SOUTH AFRICA

1 year \$30.00 – 2 years \$50.00
 (Singa \$)

SINGAPORE
 AND MALAYSIA

1 year Rp. 30,000 –
 2 years Rp. 50,000

INDONESIA

(Please make cheque payable to Momentum CL)

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

For airmail add £4.50 sterling equivalent p.a.

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

"Reformation Today" is registered as a charity no. 1017000

Bound volumes available: 91-110 and 111-130 each £22 or \$35, 131-148 £25 or \$40, post free

cut here

SUBSCRIPTION FORM

Tick

Please send to:

Reformation
 Today

1 year	<input type="checkbox"/>
2 years	<input type="checkbox"/>

Name:

Bound

91-110	<input type="checkbox"/>
--------	--------------------------

Address:

Volume

111-130	<input type="checkbox"/>
---------	--------------------------

131-148	<input type="checkbox"/>
---------	--------------------------

I enclose Your name and address:

Please enclose gift card Yes/No

Please send me a receipt Yes/No

RT

1999

No.168

Mar-Apr

CONTENTS

- | | | |
|----|---|----------------|
| 1 | Editorial | |
| 2 | Carey Conference Report | Spencer Cunnah |
| 5 | How does God Love? – Hosea 11 | Editor |
| 13 | News | |
| 17 | John Gill – a Sketch of his Life | Editor |
| 19 | John Gill – An Appreciation | Editor |
| 21 | John Gill – Eternal Justification | Editor |
| 24 | The Doctrine of Eternal Justification | Earl Blackburn |
| 27 | An Inspiring Testimony
– a review article | Sharon James |
| 30 | Book Notices | |