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Andrew Fuller's church in Kettering, Northamptonshire

Front cover picture: Andrew Fuller silhouette

Editorial

WHEN PAUL ARRIVED IN CORINTH TO PREACH the gospel (Acts 18:1-11), he immediately met with opposition from the Jews and redirected his preaching at the Gentiles, some of whom came to faith. Looking at the task ahead in this large, heathen city, he may well have been discouraged. But the Lord told him that he had many people in this city who were his people. God is sovereign and in control. Having received this message, Paul could have decided to take some time off waiting passively for the Lord to act. Instead, Paul took on the work immediately and started teaching the Word of God. He continued this for one and a half years (Acts 18:11). God's sovereignty, if well understood, never leads to passivity, but encourages us for the God-given task.

People like George Whitefield, Charles Spurgeon and Dr Martyn Lloyd-Jones all believed in the sovereignty of God in achieving his purposes, but gave all their time and energy to the work of the gospel. Another famous example is Andrew Fuller. Starting his ministry as a hyper-Calvinist, he came to a biblical understanding of God's sovereignty and human responsibility.

We are very grateful to our associate editor for all the material on the life, ministry and legacy of Andrew

Fuller who went to be with the Lord 200 years ago in 1815. This man was used in a remarkable way by the Lord in his time. The story contains a number of examples of God's amazing providence. We need to think only of how the work of Jonathan Edwards led to a movement of prayer and further revival towards the end of the 18th century which gave rise to the modern missionary movement. Andrew Fuller was one of the key people in this development. In addition, he was used by the Lord to recover the biblical gospel in a time in which it was darkened by hyper-Calvinism. This story stimulates us to keep our focus firmly on preaching the biblical gospel of free grace.

When this gospel is preached in the world as it should be, it will inevitably bear fruit and bring sinners to salvation. Gary Brady gives us an overview of what salvation involves.

This motivates us to a walk in life worthy of our calling, as John Palmer describes in his exposition of the three texts in the New Testament which all speak about walking worthily. May we all pray and work together for the spread of this glorious gospel of salvation throughout the world.

Kees van Kralingen

The Particular Baptists in the 18th Century - Context for the life and ministry of Andrew Fuller

by Michael A G Haykin

ANDREW FULLER (1754–1815) DIED TWO HUNDRED YEARS AGO ON 7 MAY 7 1815. AFTER HIS DEATH HE WAS REGARDED as one of the most important theological figures of the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. C H Spurgeon called him the ‘the greatest theologian’ of his century, and more recently, in a 2004 dictionary article he has been described by E F Clipsham as ‘a man of remarkable achievement ... one of the outstanding evangelical leaders of his day’. Ian Sellers summed up his significance when he stated that Fuller was ‘the greatest original theologian among eighteenth-century Baptists’. Given his theological influence, it is not surprising that the term ‘Fullerism’ was in vogue even before his death. Now Fuller was a Particular, or Calvinistic Baptist. To appreciate his impact on his denomination and further afield, it is necessary to know something about the community in which he lived out his Christian life.

Seventeenth-century roots

Most contemporary Baptists in the English-speaking world trace their roots back to the community of English Baptists known as Particular Baptists—so-called because of their commitment to particular redemption, that is, the fact that Christ died for his elect people. Sometimes they are known as Calvinistic Baptists. Interestingly enough they never described themselves as Reformed Baptists (a term often used today), although they understood themselves as part of the broader Reformed community. Their origins can be traced to 1638, when the first Particular Baptist Church was formed in London



John Bunyan (1628-1688)

under the leadership of John Spilsbury. By 1660 there were some 130 such congregations in England, Wales and Ireland. There is little doubt that they were one of the most spiritually alive denominations in the British Isles for by 1689 they had grown to nearly three hundred congregations. This rapid growth owed much to the zeal and spiritual maturity of pastors like John Bunyan, best known for his *Pilgrim's Progress*. Converted in the early 1650s Bunyan was soon bearing witness to his faith in small villages and hamlets tucked away in rural Bedfordshire, his home

county. In his own account of his conversion and early Christian experience, *Grace Abounding to the Chief of Sinners* (1666), he tells us of his evangelistic zeal. ‘My great desire in fulfilling my Ministry was to get into the darkest places in the Countrey, even amongst those people that were furthest off of profession; yet not because I could not endure the light (for I feared not to shew my Gospel to any) but because I found my spirit leaned most after awakening and converting Work, and the Word that I carried did lead itself most that way; Yes, so have I strived to preach the Gospel, not where Christ was named, lest I should build upon another man’s foundation, Rom 15:20.

‘In my preaching I have really been in pain, and have as it were traveled¹ to bring forth Children to God; neither could I be satisfied unless some fruits did appear in my work: if I were fruitless it matterd’d not who commended me; but if I were fruitful, I cared not who did condemn ... It pleased me nothing to see people drink in Opinions if they seemed ignorant of Jesus Christ, and the worth of their own Salvation, sound conviction for Sin, especially for Unbelief, and an heart set on fire to be saved by Christ, with strong breathings after a truly sanctified Soul: that was it that delighted me; those were the souls I counted blessed.’²

Given Bunyan’s passion to reach sinners for Christ, it comes as no surprise to learn that when Bunyan preached on occasion in London, twelve hundred or so would regularly turn out to hear him on a weekday morning and no fewer than three thousand if he were there on a Sunday!

It is important to remember that Baptist growth during this period came in the midst of the British Civil Wars, which raged from 1638 to 1651, and then state persecution from 1660–1688. In the 1660s and early 1670s a series of laws were passed which made it illegal to worship in any other setting than that of the Established Church and which basically reduced any but Church of England members to second-class citizens. Between 1660 and 1688 Baptists who refused to go along with these laws often ended up paying substantial fines or experiencing life-threatening imprisonment.

Declension in the early eighteenth century

Religious toleration finally came in 1689. The Baptists were now free to plant and build congregations, though it was still illegal for them to evangelise outside of their church buildings. Yet, despite the advent of toleration, the

¹ ie travailed.

² *Grace Abounding to the Chief of Sinners* pp289-291 [John Bunyan: *Grace Abounding to the Chief of Sinners*, ed. Roger Sharrock (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1962), p89].



Cote Baptist Church, Oxfordshire, a fabulous example of eighteenth-century 'domestic' Baptist architecture

denomination as a whole began to plateau in its growth, and in some parts of England it actually went into decline. In 1715 there were around 220 Particular Baptist churches in England and Wales; by 1750 that number had dwindled to about 150.

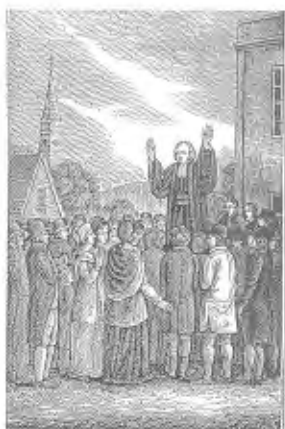
Various reasons for this decline can be cited. For example, since it was illegal for Baptists to engage in mass evangelism outside of their meeting-houses, their money and effort were poured into the erection of church buildings instead of evangelistic outreach. Moreover, prior to the erection of a church building meetings might be held at a variety of geographical locations and thus a congregation could have an impact over a wide area. But once the building was up, members who lived at a distance were encouraged to attend the meetings at the church building and thus in time some members were neglected. So, while the monetary value of the property of the denomination increased, its membership decreased.

Then there was the development of the theological position known as hyper-Calvinism. Genuinely fearful of interfering with the Holy Spirit's work in saving sinners, far too many Particular Baptist pastors refused to urge the lost to come to Christ from the pulpit. Moreover, they were convinced that since salvation is God's work from start to finish, sinners cannot be urged to come to Christ, since that would be urging them to do something that they are unable to do.

An age of revival

Now it is vital to note that while many Baptists were in this state of declension, from the mid-1730s onwards there was a tremendous movement of revival in the transatlantic, English-speaking world, with such leaders as George Whitefield, the leading evangelist of the 18th century, the Wesley brothers, John and Charles, and Jonathan Edwards. As the Spirit of God moved powerfully throughout British society on both sides of the Atlantic, tens of thousands of men and women were shaken out of spiritual slumber and death, and drawn irresistibly to adore and to serve the Lord Christ.

Many Particular Baptists, however, had deep reservations about the revival. The Wesleys, of course, were Arminians and thus beyond the pale for the Calvinistic Baptists. Furthermore, the Wesleys' view of the Baptists was hardly conducive to good relations. Here is Charles Wesley in 1756 speaking about



A nineteenth-century representation of George Whitefield preaching

the Baptists in his diary. In his words they were ‘a carnal ... contentious sect, always watching to steal away our children, and make them as dead as themselves’. However, Whitefield was a Calvinist. Yet, the fervency of his evangelism and his urging of the lost to embrace Christ, their only hope of salvation, prompted a number of Baptist critics to complain of what they termed his ‘Arminian accent’.

Most importantly, the Baptists were disturbed by the fact that the earliest leaders in the revival belonged to the Church of England. Their Baptist forebears, after all, had come out of the Church of England at great personal cost and suffering, and they had suffered for their determination to establish true gospel churches. The heritage that came down to the 18th-century Particular Baptists was thus intertwined with a great concern for proper New Testament church order. Thus, John Gill, the leading Particular Baptist divine up until the 1770s, declared: ‘The Church of England has neither the form nor matter of a true church, nor is the Word of God purely preached in it’. A resolution passed by St Mary’s Baptist Church, Norwich, in 1754 also reveals this attitude. In the minute book for that year we read that ‘it is unlawful for any ... to attend the meetings of the Methodists [ie those who embraced the revival], or to join in any worship which is contrary to the doctrines and ordinances of our Lord Jesus’. Many 18th-century Baptists were thus adamant in their refusal to regard the Evangelical Revival as a genuine work of God, for, from their perspective, it simply did not issue in ‘true gospel churches’.

Of course, there were some noteworthy exceptions, but up until the 1770s far too many Particular Baptists seem to have assumed that a revival could only be considered genuine if it preserved and promoted the proper form of the local church. For many these Baptists of the first six or seven decades of the eighteenth century, outward form and inward revival went hand in hand. Their chief preoccupation was the preservation of what they considered the proper New Testament form of church. In their minds, when God brought revival it would have to issue in true gospel churches like theirs.

The dilemma facing these Baptists was not an easy one. They rightly felt constrained to emphasise the New Testament idea of the local church as a congregation of visible saints and assert that the concept of a state church

is antithetical to the whole tenor of the new covenant. Moreover, these were truths for which their forebears in the previous century had suffered much. To abandon them would have been unthinkable. But what then was to be made of the ministry of men like Whitefield and Edwards?

One possible solution would have been for the eighteenth-century Particular Baptists to have viewed the ministry of Whitefield and other Anglican Calvinists in the way that their seventeenth-century forebears viewed the labours of the sixteenth-century Reformers. The latter did not reject the ministry of the Reformers because they were not Baptists. Rather, they recognised that the Reformers had been greatly used by God to bring the Church out of the Stygian darkness of the Middle Ages. Yet, though the Reformers did well, they failed to apply all that the Scriptures taught. As Benjamin Keach said with regard to the Particular Baptist community's recovery of key New Testament principles:

‘Why will not our Brethren keep to the great Institution, and exact rule of the Primitive church? Must we content ourselves with the Light which the Church had in respect of this and other Gospel-Truths at the beginning of the Reformation, — since God hath brought forth greater (to the praise of his own rich Grace) in our Days?’³

Similarly, it could have been recognised that God was indeed at work among the leaders of the revival, but that there were certain areas — in particular, those dealing with the Church and its nature — where they needed greater light.

Baptists seeking revival

These Baptists did not emerge from their spiritual ‘winter’ until the last two or three decades of the eighteenth century. As with the decline of this community, there were a variety of reasons for what amounts to a profound revival among their ranks: there was corporate, concerted prayer for revival; there were calls for repentance; there was the emergence of a much-needed catholicity that recognised that men like Whitefield and Edwards were indeed raised up by God. And central among these reasons was the man Andrew Fuller.

³ Cited James M Renihan, *The Puritan Roots of Reformed Baptists* (unpublished paper, March 12, 1998), p24.

Andrew Fuller: An overview of his life and ministry

by Jeff Robinson and Michael A G Haykin

ASK ANY BAPTIST WORTH HIS OR HER SALT, ‘WHO IS THE FATHER OF THE MODERN MISSIONS MOVEMENT?’ and he or she should quickly answer, ‘William Carey’. That is, of course, the correct answer. But a figure that fewer Christians know is the friend and confidant of Carey who provided the theological rationale that propelled Carey to Bengal, the pastor-theologian Andrew Fuller (1754–1815).

But why was a theological rationale needed? After all, doesn’t the Great Commission of our Lord provide a sufficiently clear warrant to go and preach the gospel to all people? As we have seen in the previous article, the answer to this question was as clear as a continent of mud among far too many Baptists and Congregationalists in the late 18th-century when Carey and Fuller were growing up. During this era in England pastors wrestled with what they saw as a theological conundrum between the doctrine of election and the universal preaching of the gospel, a conundrum that came to be known as ‘The Modern Question’: Is the unregenerate man under spiritual obligation to repent of sin and believe in Christ upon hearing the gospel? And, parallel to that query: Is the gospel minister to call upon such sinners for evangelical faith and repentance?

This question first arose in the ministry of the Congregationalist pastor Joseph Hussey, who answered the question in the negative in his frankly-titled work, published in 1707, *God’s Operations of Grace: but No Offers of His Grace*. Hussey and others were hyper-Calvinists, who rejected the notion of what they called ‘duty faith’, answering the modern question with a resounding ‘no’. Hyper-Calvinism, along with the prevalence of Deism confounded and Socinianism were destructive threats that confounded Baptists and other evangelical denominations during this period in England. It was into this conflicting theological milieu that Andrew Fuller was born.

An answer to hyper-Calvinism

Fuller was born on 6 February 1754, in the village of Wicken, in Cambridgeshire. He was seven years old when his parents moved to the village of Soham, about fourteen miles from Cambridge. Once settled in Soham, they joined the Baptist church in the village. The pastor of this small work was a man named John Eve, who, according to Fuller, ‘had little or



Andrew Fuller (1754-1815)

nothing to say to the unconverted', because he had embraced the hyper-Calvinism described above.

Nevertheless, in the late 1760s Fuller began to experience strong conviction of sin, which issued in a sound conversion in November 1769. He was baptised in April of 1770 and joined the Soham church. Over the course of the next few years it became very evident to the church that Fuller possessed definite ministerial gifts. Eve had left the church in 1771 for another pastorate, and the young Fuller, self-taught when it came to theology, was eventually asked to preach and then called

as pastor on 3 May 1775. The church consisted of 47 members and met for worship in a rented barn.

Due to the fact that John Eve's preaching was essentially the only model of preaching Fuller had ever really known, he initially preached like Eve and failed to urge the unconverted to come to Christ. Increasingly, though, he was dissatisfied with the hyper-Calvinist reasoning behind this style of preaching and its perspective on evangelism. He began to sense that his 'preaching was anti-scriptural and defective in many respects', as he later put it. But how should he preach, then?

The solution was found in the Scriptures. Fuller immersed himself in the biblical models of Jesus' preaching in the Gospel of John and that of the Apostles in Acts. He also read widely in the works of the Puritans of the preceding century and the pre-eminent American author Jonathan Edwards and noted that these historical forebears 'dealt ... in free invitations to sinners to come to Christ and be saved'. This then was the crucible in which he wrote his revolutionary work, *The Gospel Worthy of All Acceptation*.

The Gospel Worthy of All Acceptation and its impact

Two editions of this book were published in Fuller's lifetime, one in 1785 and then one in 1801. The second edition had for its subtitle *The Duty of Sinners to Believe in Jesus Christ*, a subtitle that well expressed the overall theme of the book: 'faith in Christ is the duty of all men who hear, or have opportunity to hear, the gospel'. This epoch-making book sought to uphold the Reformation theme that salvation is by grace alone and faith alone while at the same time attempting to leave preachers with no alternative but to drive home to their hearers the universal obligations of repentance and faith.



Joseph Hussey, from stained glass window in Emmanuel United Reformed Church, Cambridge

The Gospel Worthy provided the theological lynchpin that sent Carey to the nations.

With regard to Fuller's own ministry this book was a key factor in determining the shape of that ministry in the years to come. It led directly to Fuller's whole-hearted commitment to the formation of the Baptist Missionary Society in 1792 — the first missionary organisation for doing cross-cultural missions that was formed in the English-speaking world. Fuller served as secretary of this society for 23 years until his death in 1815.

A pastor-theologian

Fuller tackled the issue of 'The Modern Question' and engaged other theological controversies throughout his ministry, not as a detached academic but as a preacher of the Bible and a pastor in a local church. He served as a pastor of two churches, at Soham from 1775 to 1782 and at Kettering, Northamptonshire, from 1782 until the end of his life 33 years later.

As a result of his early wrangling with hyper-Calvinism Fuller emerged as a robust evangelical Calvinist, preaching a full-orbed gospel that demanded repentance and faith in his hearers. Fuller's theology and preaching were deeply influenced by his reading of the great Jonathan Edwards. So prominent a place did Fuller's expression of 'duty faith' in a Calvinistic framework come to take in Baptist life, his theology became known among nineteenth-century Baptists as 'Fullerism'.

Hyper-Calvinism was not the only issue that Fuller tackled during his ministry. In the 1790s and 1800s, he engaged a theology tied to non-conformist theologian Robert Sandeman. Known as 'Sandemanianism' the central doctrinal tenets of this movement asserted that genuine saving faith amounts merely to an intellectual assent to the facts of the gospel. It was against this 'easy-believism' that Fuller responded in 1810 with *Strictures on Sandemanianism, In Twelve Letters to a Friend*. In this work he argued that faith in Christ makes one a new creature and thus leads necessarily to obedience to God's commands in both heart and conduct.

Fuller participated in another crucial theological debate with the universalist William Vidler, who argued in his *God's Love to His Creatures Asserted*



Jonathan Edwards (1703-1758)

and Vindicated that every single person in history would be saved. Fuller asserted the exclusivity of salvation in Christ in order to refute Vidler's universalism. He did this in a series of letters published in *The Evangelical Magazine* and *The Universalist's Miscellany* which were collected and published together in 1802 as *Letters to Mr Vidler, on the Doctrine of Universal Salvation*. Additionally Fuller debated with General (Arminian) Baptist leader Dan Taylor on the extent of the atonement, defending the Synod of Dort's view of particular (or 'limited') atonement, while remaining on good terms with Taylor.

Preacher of the Word

Above all Fuller was a preacher of the Bible, which he believed to be the Word of God, a Word that should compel every person to seek the Kingdom of Christ. Here is a flavour of Fuller's preaching from a sermon preached on October 13, 1799, at Edinburgh entitled *The Nature and Extent of True Conversion*:

'There are a few who attend a faithful ministry, but are compelled, at one time or other, to remember their ways, and that with pain, shame, and remorse; yet they continue to pursue them. Their consciences are enlightened and awakened, but their hearts remain the same. Therefore they persist in evil, though the road is covered with briars and thorns. The guilt of such characters is greater by far than that of sinners in common. Oh! dread the thought of remembering (your sin) without turning (to Christ). It is possible, too, to both remember and turn, and yet not turn "to the Lord". We may break off our open sins from merely selfish considerations, and not from the love of God.'

Fuller died on 7 May 1815. But his legacy continued to exert a massive influence in the century after his death. Charles Haddon Spurgeon preached the same evangelical Calvinism as Fuller and regularly referred to him. James Petigru Boyce, founding president of The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, counted Fuller as a significant theological predecessor of his theological position.

While many know Carey, perhaps Carey would not have become so famous had it not been for the modern missionary movement's theologian, Andrew Fuller, who helped free Baptists and other evangelicals from unbiblical theological notions and drive them to take the gospel to every tribe, tongue, people, and nation.

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Andrew Fuller timeline

1754	6 February	Born at Wicken, Cambridgeshire
1761		Family moved to Soham, Cambridgeshire
1769	November	Converted
1770	April	Baptised and joined the Soham Church
1775	May	Ordained pastor
1776		Married Sarah Gardiner of Burwell, Cambridgeshire
1781		Finished <i>The Gospel Worthy of All Acceptation</i>
1782	October	Moved to the Baptist Church in Kettering, Northamptonshire
1785		<i>The Gospel Worthy of All Acceptation</i> published
1792	23 August October	Sarah Fuller died Baptist Missionary Society formed at Kettering
1793	June	William Carey and John Thomas sent to India
1794	December	Married Ann Coles of Ampthill, Bedfordshire
1798		Awarded an honorary DD from Princeton
1799		The first of five visits to raise funds for the Baptist Missionary Society to Scotland
1805		Awarded an honorary DD from Yale
1811		John Keen Hall appointed Fuller's assistant
1815	7 May	Died at Kettering

Andrew Fuller – The Qualifications and Encouragement of a Faithful Minister¹

He was a good man, and full of the Holy Spirit, and of faith; and much people was added to the Lord (Acts 11:24).

BEWARE ALSO, BROTHER, OF NEGLECTING SECRET PRAYER. THE FIRE OF DEVOTION WILL GO OUT IF IT BE not kept alive by an habitual dealing with Christ. Conversing with men and things may brighten our gifts and parts; but it is conversing with God that must brighten our graces. Whatever ardour we may feel in our public work, if this is wanting, things cannot be right, nor can they in such a train come to a good issue.

It is no breach of charity to say, that if the professors of Christianity had more of the Holy Spirit of God in their hearts, there would be a greater harmony among them respecting the great truths which he has revealed. The rejection of such doctrines as the exceeding sinfulness of sin, the total depravity of mankind, the proper Deity and atonement of Christ, justification by faith in his name, the freeness and sovereignty of grace, and the agency of the Holy Spirit, may easily be accounted for upon this principle.

My dear brother, of all things, be this your prayer, ‘Take not thy Holy Spirit from me!’² If once we sink into such a way of performing our public work as not to depend on his enlightening and enlivening influences, we may go on, and probably shall go on, from one degree of evil to another.

Though religious visits may be abused, yet you know, brother, the necessity there is for them, if you would ascertain the spiritual condition of those to whom you preach. There are many faults also that you may discover in individuals which it would be unhandsome, as well as unfriendly, to expose in a pointed manner in the pulpit, which nevertheless ought not to be passed by unnoticed. Here is work for your private visits. And, in proportion as you are filled with the Holy Spirit, you will possess a spirit of love and faithfulness, which is absolutely necessary to successful reproof. It is in our private visits also that we can be free with our people and they with us. Questions may be asked and answered, difficulties solved, and the concerns

¹The full title of the sermon from which this has been taken is *The Qualifications and Encouragement of a Faithful Minister Illustrated by the Character and Success of Barnabas* and can be found in *The Complete Works of the Rev Andrew Fuller*, revised Joseph Belcher (1845 ed.; repr. Harrisonburg, Virginia: Sprinkle Publications, 1988), Works, I, 135-144. This sermon was preached at the ordination of Robert Fawcner at Thorn, Bedfordshire, on October 31, 1787.

² Psalm 51:11.

of the soul discussed. Paul taught the Ephesians, not only publicly, but ‘from house to house’³. Now it is being full of the Holy Spirit that will give a spiritual savour to all this conversation. It will be as the holy anointing oil on Aaron’s garments, which diffused a savour on all around him. ⁴

I think it may be laid down as a rule, which both Scripture and experience will confirm, that eminent spirituality in a minister is usually attended with eminent usefulness. I do not mean to say our usefulness depends upon our spirituality, as an effect depends upon its cause, nor yet that it is always in proportion to it. God is a Sovereign and frequently sees proper to convince us of it in variously bestowing his blessing on the means of grace. But yet he is not wanting in giving encouragement to what he approves wherever it is found. Our want of usefulness is often to be ascribed to our want of spirituality, much oftener than to our want of talents. God has frequently been known to give success to men of inferior abilities, when they have been eminent for holiness, while he has blasted others of much superior talents when that quality has been wanting. Hundreds of ministers, who, on account of their gifts, have promised to be shining characters, have proved the reverse; and all owing to such things as pride, unwatchfulness, carnality and levity.

Time would fail me to speak of all the great souls, both inspired and uninspired, whom the King of kings has delighted to honour: of Paul and Peter and their companions; of Wickliff [ie John Wycliffe] and Luther and Calvin, and many others at the Reformation; of [John] Eliot and [Jonathan] Edwards and [David] Brainerd and [George] Whitefield and hundreds more whose names are held in deserved esteem in the Church of God. These were men of God. Men who had great grace, as well as gifts, whose hearts burned in love to Christ and the souls of men. They looked upon their hearers as their Lord had done upon Jerusalem, and wept over them. In this manner they delivered their messages, ‘and much people were added to the Lord’.

³ *Acts 20:20.*

⁴ *See Psalm 133.*

A Circular letter to the churches of the Northamptonshire Baptist Association

by Andrew Fuller

THE PROMISE OF THE SPIRIT, THE GRAND ENCOURAGEMENT IN PROMOTING THE GOSPEL: A CIRCULAR LETTER TO THE *Churches of the Northamptonshire Baptist Association (June 1810)*¹

Dear brethren,

... The success of the gospel in the times of the apostles is ascribed to the influence of the Holy Spirit as its first or primary cause ... If the success of the Gospel were owing to the pliability of the people, or to any preparedness, natural or acquired for receiving it, we might have expected it to prevail most in those places which were the most distinguished by their morality and most cultivated in their minds and manners. But the fact was that in Corinth, a sink of debauchery, God had ‘much people’²; whereas in Athens, the seat of polite literature, there were only a few individuals who embraced the truth. Nor was this the greatest display of the freeness of the Spirit: Jerusalem, which had not only withstood the preaching and miracles of the Lord, but had actually put him to death—Jerusalem bows at the pouring out of his Spirit; and not merely the common people, but ‘a great company of the priests, were obedient to the faith’³.

... Consider, brethren, the dispensation under which we live. We are under the kingdom of the Messiah, fitly called ‘the ministration of the Spirit’⁴, because the richest effusions of the Holy Spirit are reserved for his reign, and great accessions to the church from among the Gentiles ordained to grace his triumphs. It was fit that the death of Christ should be followed by the outpouring of the Spirit, that it might appear to be what it was, its proper effect; and that which was seen in the days of Pentecost was but an earnest of what is yet to come. To pray under such a dispensation is coming to God in a good time. In asking for the success of the Gospel, we ask that of the Father of heaven and earth in which his soul delighteth, and to which he has pledged his every perfection, namely, to glorify his Son.

¹ This tract first appeared in 1810 as a circular letter of the Northamptonshire Baptist Association, which was sent out to its various member churches. Fuller wrote it, and his good friend John Sutcliffe (1752–1814) of Olney signed it on behalf of the Association, being the Moderator for the annual meeting that year. The tract is reproduced from *The Complete Works of the Rev Andrew Fuller*, revised Joseph Belcher (1845 ed.; repr. Harrisonburg, Virginia: Sprinkle Publications, 1988), III, 359–363.

² Acts 18:10.

³ Acts 6:7.

⁴ 2 Corinthians 3:8.

The Theological Kinship of Andrew Fuller and Charles Spurgeon

by Steve Weaver

AT THE END OF HIS LIFE ANDREW GUNTON FULLER (1799–1884) WROTE A BIOGRAPHY OF HIS FAMOUS FATHER, Andrew Fuller (1754–1815). He apparently sent a copy to the most famous English Baptist preacher of the latter half of the nineteenth century, Charles Haddon Spurgeon (1834–1892). Spurgeon responded with a ‘thank you letter’ that survives. The letter’s importance lies in that it reveals how highly Spurgeon regarded Andrew Fuller as a theologian. The letter states in part:

‘I have long considered your father to be the greatest theologian of the century, and I do not know that your pages have made me think more highly of him as a divine than I had thought before. But I now see him within doors far more accurately, and see about the Christian man a soft radiance of tender love which had never been revealed to me either by former biographies or by his writings.’

Spurgeon clearly admired Fuller and read books both by and about him. From time to time in his sermons Spurgeon alludes to an incident from Fuller’s life as an illustration of some biblical truth. On 19 July 1863 Spurgeon was preaching from Romans 10:10 on ‘Confession with the Mouth’ at the Metropolitan Tabernacle in London. During the sermon he reflected on his reading ‘the life of good Andrew Fuller’ the previous day.

‘I was noting when reading yesterday the life of good Andrew Fuller, after he had been baptised, some of the young men in the village were wont to mock him, asking him how he liked being dipped, and such like questions which are common enough now-a-days. I could but notice that the scoff of a hundred years ago is just the scoff of to-day.’

This is likely a reference to Fuller’s account in the memoir of his early life compiled from two series of letters written to friends. This memoir formed the basis of the nineteenth-century biographies of Fuller by his son Andrew Gunton Fuller, John Morris and John Ryland, Jr. Spurgeon’s familiarity with the life of Fuller and the popular stories about him that were circulating in the nineteenth century served him well for illustration purposes throughout his ministry.

But Spurgeon not only used anecdotes from Fuller’s life in his preaching, he also thoroughly imbibed the theology of Fuller. In his expansive treatment

of the theology of Spurgeon titled *Living By Revealed Truth*, Tom Nettles assesses that Spurgeon 'would agree with the confessional commitment of Andrew Fuller'. Nettles cites from a sermon in which Spurgeon said he did not consider a man 'faithful to his own conscience, who can preach simply the doctrine of sovereignty, and neglect to insist upon the doctrine of responsibility'.

Spurgeon: The Fullerite?

Throughout his ministry Spurgeon was accused of being a Fullerite, a badge he wore with honour. On one occasion early in his ministry Spurgeon preached that God heard the prayers of the unregenerate. He was strongly rebuked by some of 'the brethren' who 'were of the "very sound" sort'. As he said of them elsewhere, 'They believed in Calvinistic doctrine, not as I do, reckoning sixteen ounces to the pound, but allowing eighteen or nineteen ounces, and those extra ounces were not good for the people to feed upon'.

'Possibly, you doubt whether natural cries are heard by God; let me assure you that they are. I remember saying something on this subject on one occasion in a certain ultra-Calvinistic place of worship. At that time I was preaching to children, and was exhorting them to pray, and I happened to say that long before any actual conversion I had prayed for common mercies, and that God had heard my prayers. This did not suit my good brethren of the superfine school; and afterwards they all came round me professedly to know what I meant, but really to cavil and carp according to their nature and wont. "They compassed me about like bees; yea, like bees they compassed me about!" After a while, as I expected, they fell to their usual amusement of calling names. They began to say what rank Arminianism this was; and another expression they were pleased to honour was the title of "Fullerism"; a title, by the way, so honourable that I could heartily have thanked them for appending it to what I had advanced. But to say that God should hear the prayer of natural men was something worse than Arminianism, if indeed anything *could* be worse to them.'

Spurgeon considered 'Fullerism' to be an honourable title and something for which he would thank his opponents for attributing it to him.

A Vital Distinction

So it is clear that Spurgeon identified himself favourably with the terms 'Fullerite' and 'Fullerism', but how did his Fullerism manifest itself in his preaching ministry? The first work by Fuller which the young Spurgeon read would have been Fuller's *Antinomianism Contrasted With the Religion Taught and Exemplified in the Holy Scriptures* that he read a few weeks before his baptism in 1850. In this book, Fuller emphasised the importance of holy living

as a duty for a Christian. Fuller argued that human beings were responsible before God for their actions by distinguishing between moral and natural (or physical) ability/inability:

‘It is undoubtedly true that the Scriptures represent man by nature as unable to do any good thing; that is, they declare that an evil tree *cannot* bring forth good fruit; that they who are evil *cannot* speak good things; that they whose eyes are full of adultery *cannot* cease from sin; that they who are in the flesh *cannot* please God; finally, that they whose hearts are attached to their idols, or to the mammon of this world, *cannot* serve the Lord. This doctrine, if properly understood, is of great account in true religion. Hence arises the necessity of our being created anew in Christ Jesus ere we can perform good works; and of our being continually kept from falling by the power of God. He that has the greatest sense of his own weakness and insufficiency to do anything as he ought, will be most earnest in crying to the strong for strength, and most watchful against the temptations of the world. It is thus that “when we are weak, then are we strong”. But if this doctrine be confounded with physical inability, and understood to excuse the sinner in his sins, it is utterly perverted. If the connexion of the above passages were consulted, they would be found to be the language of the most cutting reproach; manifestly proving that the inability of the parties arose from the evil dispositions of their own minds, and therefore had not the least tendency to render them less accountable to God, or more excusable in their sins; yet such, in spite of Scripture, conscience, and common sense, is the construction put upon it by Antinomianism.’

Fuller learned this distinction through his reading of Jonathan Edwards’ philosophical and theological masterpiece, *Freedom of the Will*. Fuller would make use of this distinction to argue against two characteristics of the hyper-Calvinism of his day — antinomianism and the denial of the free offer of the gospel.

In Fuller’s most influential work, *The Gospel Worthy of All Acceptation*, which was subtitled in its second edition: *The Duty of Sinners to Believe in Jesus Christ*, Fuller used the Edwardsean distinction to argue that the inability of sinners to come to Christ is not because of a ‘physical’ or ‘natural inability’, but because of a ‘moral inability’. This means that sinners do not lack the physical ability to respond to the gospel, but the desire to do so. Therefore, they are morally responsible and culpable if they fail to do so. All sinners have a duty to believe in Jesus Christ and therefore Christians have a responsibility to declare the gospel to everyone indiscriminately. Spurgeon, who learned to hate antinomianism as a new Christian by reading Fuller, would employ the distinction widely in his preaching. He would do so, just as Fuller had, both against antinomianism and to stress the duty of sinners to respond to

the gospel message. On 23 October 1881, in a Sunday morning sermon on 'Without Christ – Nothing' from John 15:5, Spurgeon simply declared that the doctrine of moral inability of the unregenerate was a 'doctrine I most firmly believe'. On 3 July 1864 Spurgeon had gone into more detail on the distinction between moral and natural inability in a sermon titled, 'A Bad Excuse is Worse Than None' from Luke 14:18, 'And they all with one consent began to make excuse.'

"Well", says one, "I cannot trust Christ, I cannot believe him." You talk Latin, brother; you talk Latin. "No", you say, "I do not talk Latin." Yes, you do. I will translate that word into the English for you. It means, "I will not." When you say, "I cannot", it means, "I will not"; and understand, whenever the minister says, "You cannot", he means, "You will not"; for he does not mean that you have any natural inability, but that you have a moral inability caused by your love of sin — a wilful inability. "I cannot," is the Latin, but "I will not", is the English of it.'

Spurgeon not only used the distinction between moral and natural ability to argue for the duty of sinners to repent and believe the gospel, he also used the distinction to refute an antinomian view of the law. In a Sunday morning sermon on 'The Perpetuity of the Law of God' from Matthew 5:18 preached at the Metropolitan Tabernacle on 21 May 1882, Spurgeon used the Fuller/Edwards distinction between moral and physical inability to show that men are not free from their responsibility to obey the law of God.

'It has been said that man's moral inability to keep the perfect law exempts him from the duty of doing so. This is very specious, but it is utterly false. Man's inability is not of the kind which removes responsibility: it is moral, not physical. Never fall into the error that moral inability will be an excuse for sin. What, when a man becomes such a liar that he cannot speak the truth, is he thereby exempted from the duty of truthfulness? If your servant owes you a day's labour, is he free from the duty because he has made himself so drunk that he cannot serve you? Is a man freed from a debt by the fact that he has squandered the money, and therefore cannot pay it? Is a lustful man free to indulge his passions because he cannot understand the beauty of chastity? This is dangerous doctrine. The law is a just one, and man is bound by it though his sin has rendered him incapable of doing so.'

This evidence can be multiplied many times over from Spurgeon's voluminous sermons. There is ample evidence to demonstrate that Spurgeon thought as a Fullerite. He not only proudly identified himself as such, he utilised the same distinction between moral and natural ability/inability made by Fuller to argue as Fuller had for the duty of sinners to respond to the gospel message in repentance and faith and to refute any sense of antinomianism.

Fuller's Legacy

The distinction between physical and moral ability enabled Fuller and Spurgeon to hold both a high view of divine sovereignty and a strong view of human responsibility. The legacy of Andrew Fuller is that his theological emphases not only fuelled the modern missionary movement, it also underlay the evangelistic preaching ministry of Charles Haddon Spurgeon. Perhaps a recovery of the theology of Andrew Fuller and Charles Spurgeon can motivate similar movements and ministries today.

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Carey Conference 2016

THE NEXT CAREY MINISTERS CONFERENCE IS SCHEDULED TO TAKE PLACE 5-7 JANUARY 2016 AT THE HAYES Conference Centre in Swanwick, Derbyshire. The main speaker is Mike Bullmore, Senior Pastor of CrossWay Community Church, Chicago. Other speakers include Gary Brady, Dr Dan Strange, Hicham El Mostain, Andrew King and Phil Heaps. Julia Jones will lead the women's sessions. The overall theme of the conference is 'The Gospel and the Church'. Registration is now open through the website: careyconference.org.

Reading Andrew Fuller

by Michael A G Haykin

THE FIRST TEXT THAT I EVER READ BY ANDREW FULLER, IN THE MID-1980S, WAS HIS ‘THE PROMISE OF THE SPIRIT the Grand Encouragement in Promoting the Gospel’ (1810), a circular letter that he wrote for the Northamptonshire Baptist Association. Every year at its annual meeting the Association, like other Baptist Associations, would ask one of its pastors to pen a small tract that would then be printed and sent out to all of the church members in the Association. This particular one is a fabulous little piece that introduces a number of themes dear to Fuller’s heart: the worldwide spread of the gospel; the necessity of the empowerment of the Holy Spirit; and a concern on how to live with hope in the last days. It is one of a number of circular letters that Fuller wrote during his life for the Association. They are an excellent introduction to Fuller’s writing and thought. Other circular letters that should be read include his ‘Causes of Declension in Religion, and Means of Revival’ (1785) — a helpful overview of the subject of revival — and ‘The Practical Uses of Christian Baptism’ (1802) — a superb treatment of the meaning of baptism.

Then, a must-read is Fuller’s *Memoirs of the late Rev Samuel Pearce* (1800), where we see the heart of Fuller’s piety in what he admires most about his close friend Samuel Pearce — what Fuller calls Pearce’s ‘holy love’ for God and humanity. What is critical about this work is that it delineates the spiritual ambience of Fuller and his circle of friends. Fuller’s *The Gospel Worthy of All Acceptation* (1785, 1801) is also a must-read. This is Fuller’s superb demolition of hyper-Calvinism and his presentation of the biblical grounding for passionate preaching to the lost. It is essential reading as it lies at the foundation of the modern missionary movement. William Carey’s mission to India had for its theological rationale this work by Fuller.

A second key work of apologetics is Fuller’s *Strictures on Sandemanianism* (1810), in which Fuller responds to an intellectualist view of faith that had particularly harmful spiritual effects. There were a number of major theological responses to the errors of Sandemanianism, but Martyn Lloyd-Jones believed that this work of Fuller was the key rebuttal of this system.

Fuller's dependence on his mentor Jonathan Edwards is very evident in this work. Although Fuller became renowned in his day for his apologetics, he never lost his pastoral focus. This focus is clearly seen in his sermons — see especially his *The Nature and Importance of Walking by Faith* (1784), *The Qualifications and Encouragement of a Faithful Minister illustrated* (1787), and *The Nature and Importance of an Intimate Knowledge of Divine Truth* (1796). His dozen or more ordination sermons are also a superb delineation of how an eighteenth-century Calvinistic Baptist viewed the ministry.

All of these texts can be conveniently found in either a three-volume edition of his works — *The Complete Works of the Rev Andrew Fuller*, ed. Joseph Belcher (1845 ed.; Harrisonburg, VA: Sprinkle Publications, 1988) — or the one-volume *The Works of Andrew Fuller* (1841 ed.; Edinburgh/Carlisle, PA: The Banner of Truth Trust, 2007). The author's *The Armies of the Lamb: The Spirituality of Andrew Fuller* (Dundas, ON: Joshua Press, Inc., 2001) introduces Fuller's piety through a series of edited texts from his writings and letters.

With regard to secondary sources, the best of recent Fuller biographies are those of Peter J Morden, *Offering Christ to the World: Andrew Fuller (1754–1815)* and the *Revival of Eighteenth-Century Particular Baptist Life* (Carlisle, Cumbria: Paternoster Press, 2003) and Paul Brewster's *Andrew Fuller: Model Pastor-Theologian* (Nashville, TN: B&H Academic, 2010). Finally, John Piper has an excellent lecture on Fuller at the Desiring God website: 'Holy Faith, Worthy Gospel, World Vision: Andrew Fuller's Broadside Against Sandemanianism, Hyper-Calvinism, and Global Unbelief' (2007; <http://www.desiringgod.org/biographies/holy-faith-worthy-gospel-world-vision>).

An update from Italy by Paolo Patuelli

I was asked to write a few lines about the current state of Reformed Baptist Churches in Italy.

If I go back in time, I can read about Italy in 1989 (RT109), 'In spite of the overall weakness that prevails there are some encouragements. One of them is the way the Holy Spirit is moving in a reforming way among the Brethren Assemblies. Recently in Padua ... a centre called IFED (Institute of Evangelical Formation and Documentation) was set up' (p20). After 26 years I can give you some good and some bad news.

The bad news is that the 'overall weakness' is still prevailing. Despite the best of intentions, missionary activities are being born but often die within a few years, and are then replaced with new ones for various reasons. Sadly missionaries are very rarely able to help existing churches; generally speaking it seems as if they are strategically forbidden or actually unable to do it. This leads to a proliferation of churches, which creates confusion inside and outside the evangelical world. Some missionary activities have changed direction over time, pursuing sometimes one and then another initiative. Churches in Italy often have a limited historical perspective and do not have a clear confession of faith. Unity or division between churches is frequently decided on a personal basis, rather than on doctrinal grounds.



Paolo Patuelli addressing the Carey Conference 2015

culturally used to it: temporary foreign rulers; the impression that the new is always better than the old; and neighbouring cities in epic rivalry. Thirty years of history give us reason to describe Italy as a large cemetery of good initiatives with some waste of time, energy and resources; especially in the area where I come from. Nonetheless we look at these events with renewed hope.

This is nothing new for the Italian scene; we are historically and

But I also have to mention good news. And it is this: the encouragements of 26 years ago have blossomed in concrete progress. It is probably superfluous to mention that among the features of God's work there is continuity, reliability, stability, and we have also been witness to these peculiarities of God's work in Italy. The 'IFED' mentioned in RT109 in 1989 grew, and today they give courses in three places across Italy (Padua, Rome and Caltanissetta) and 250 students are involved in a 5-year theological training. It is nice to know that hope from 26 years ago has been consolidated and has a continuous impact on the churches through training (courses), to theological research (journal, *Studi di teologia*), to provide an alternative to the culture (Theological Conferences).

The 'reforming way among the Brethren Assemblies' sadly did not work. So the churches called to this reformation had to leave the Brethren Assemblies, and this gave to some of them the freedom, over time, to adopt the 1689 Baptist Confession of Faith. These churches recently united in a fellowship named CERBI (*Chiese Evangeliche Riformate Battiste in Italia*). This is the only confessional expression in the Italian reformed world; the other independent churches have no historical confession of faith. CERBI seems to be the only significant reformed grouping, in contrast to general independentism.

CERBI's churches also express a dynamic missionary vision: church planting, training and mutual support. They are integrated into the broader fabric of Italian evangelicalism as the reformed pole. They are not the only 'Reformed Baptist' churches in Italy, but they are the only ones publicly defining themselves as such.

It is surely a challenge everywhere in the world to keep alive the heart of '*reforma semper reformanda*'. It is a challenge to be grounded in Sola Scriptura, staying on the shoulders of giants, in a constant effort to read the times and preach the gospel in such a way that it may be heard by people around us. And if you think about a country like Italy, which had no real opportunity of reformation, who gave its best reformers to Europe (Peter Martyr Vermigli, Turretin, Zanchius), and collected a number of martyrs because of faithfulness to the Scriptures in front of the Inquisition of the Counter-Reformation; this *reforma reformanda*, in Italy, sounds like an oxymoron. Nonetheless we trust not in what may capture our sight, rather we put our faith in the grace of God, who is able to bring life to a dead land.

I would like to share with you also a personal encouragement. My past experiences with missionaries (in Italy) are not the best. I often thought there was a limit concerning their approach to mission. Instead, coming to England I was greatly encouraged at the Carey Conference some years ago, learning about a different approach. The main idea was to invite people from other countries in order to be trained in England, and then send them back

to their own countries. This, in my opinion, avoids a number of missional problems. And this seems to be the vision of the London Theological Seminary where I am currently studying.

Pray with us that God may give us the blessing to see a reformation today in Italy; unity among the churches grounded in the Scriptures but also around a common sharing of a historical Confession of Faith. Pray for IFED, for the CERBI churches, for the Reformed Baptist pastors who live in a 'Post-Brethren' mentality, where no support is given to the pastor, who is therefore often busy with a secular full-time job, fighting for time for training, pastoring the church and for reading good literature.

Brazil: news from Bill and Mary Barkley

Many readers will have heard about the publishing ministry of Bill and Mary Barkley in Brazil under the name of PES. They have published many books by Dr Martyn Lloyd-Jones and others in Portuguese. These books have found their way all over the Portuguese-speaking world. The following is an extract of their latest prayer letter:

'The work of PES (Selected Evangelical Publications) progresses at "full steam ahead". We rejoice in the privilege of still having a part in the preparation of good books for this great country – and indeed for all Portuguese-speaking countries.

'At present Bill is helping in the revision of what we hope will eventually be 18 new titles by PES. Fourteen of these are by a dear brother who was a real help to Bill in his first year at London Bible College – Norman Shields (Belfast). Some who receive this letter may remember him. At 90 he is still going strong!'

Please remember in your prayers these dear friends who are all well advanced in age, but still active in the Lord's work.

USA

Following the decision of the Supreme Court in the USA on same-sex marriage, Kevin DeYoung, senior pastor of University Reformed Church in East Lansing, Michigan, published 40 questions for Christians now waving rainbow flags. They are published on The Gospel Coalition website and in the August edition of *Evangelicals Now*. These are very penetrating questions making every Christian think hard and deep about what the Bible says in relation to this topic.

New Books

The following new books have appeared recently:

- Reformation Heritage Books continue to add volumes to their series of smaller booklets under the general title of ‘Cultivating Biblical Godliness’. New additions are:
 - o Ryan M McGraw, *How Should You Deny Yourself?* ISBN 978-1-60178-425-4
 - o Joel R. Beeke and Michael A G Haykin, *How Should We Develop Biblical Friendship?* ISBN 978-1-60178-381-3
- Ryan M McGraw (ed), *The Foundation of Communion with God. The Trinitarian Piety of John Owen* (Grand Rapids: Reformation Heritage Books, 2014) ISBN 978-1-60178-339-4
- Joel R Beeke, *Fighting Satan. Knowing His Weaknesses, Strategies, and Defeat* (Grand Rapids: Reformation Heritage Books, 2014) ISBN 978-1-60178-411-7
- Thomas Haweis, *The Communicant’s Spiritual Companion* (Grand Rapids: Reformation Heritage Books, 2014) ISBN 978-1-60178-383-7. Note that Haweis was one of the leading ministers of the eighteenth-century Evangelical revival within the Church of England, chaplain to the Countess of Huntingdon, and one of the founding fathers of the London Missionary Society
- Jeremy Walker, *Passing Through. Pilgrim Life in the Wilderness* (Grand Rapids: Reformation Heritage Books, 2014) ISBN 978-1-60178-387-5
- John Blanchard, *Truth for Life. A Devotional Commentary on the Epistle of James* (EP Books, 2015), ISBN 978-1-78397-114-5
- Sean Michael Lucas, *J Gresham Machen* (EP Books, 2015), ISBN 978-1-78397-057-5
- James Wright, *Martyrs of Malatya. Martyred for the Messiah in Turkey* (EP Books, 2015), ISBN 978-1-78397-113-8

Please notice that we are not able to supply these books; consult your own bookshop.

African Pastors' Conferences Update

To encourage praying, both in petition and thanksgiving, we intend to publish brief statistics for recent APCs and from time to time give cumulative totals. Please remember that behind these figures are individual pastors with much need of your prayers, individual local churches many of which pray will be moved by the Spirit from dysfunctionality to glorifying Christ, and books provided which need to be read and become transformative in men's ministries.

Zambia, Lusaka - July 2015 - 75 delegates - Books provided: 886 -
Cumulative total over 3 years 245 delegates

Zambia, Ndola - July 2015 - 53 delegates - Books provided: 1011 -
Cumulative total over 2 years 307 delegates

Upcoming conferences:

Malawi	August 2015	Lilongwe, Blantyre, Monkey Bay, Karonga
South Africa	September 2015	Muledane, Mbhokoto, Hammanskraal, Soweto
South Africa	October 2015	East London, Bloemfontein + two others yet to be arranged
South Africa	November 2015	Kwa Mashu, Empangeni, Mseleni
Lesotho	November 2015	Maseru

Please give thanks for the work Blake Cassel has done as Conference Manager for APC. He returns to the US on September 1st. Pray for John Divito as he continues to raise funding in the USA prior to coming as Conference Manager in December and for Dr Grave Singo from Zambia who will be interim Conference Manager from September to November.

The theology of how God saves people

by Gary Brady

SYSTEMATIC THEOLOGIES USUALLY HAVE A PLACE FOR THE WORK OF THE HOLY SPIRIT (PNEUMATOLOGY). Within or alongside that category they often have a place for salvation or how God saves (soteriology). They also write of the application of redemption. John Murray's *Redemption Accomplished and Applied* deals with Christ's work on the cross and our present subject.

In order for them to be saved the Spirit does many things in a person's life and it is useful to try to set out in some sort of order what those things are. The Latin term *ordo salutis* (order of salvation) is often used for this or, more poetically, the *armilla aurea* or golden chain. The order is not necessarily a temporal one. Some things happen contemporaneously. There is a logic to the order nevertheless.

With a renewed stress on the believer's union with Christ, some have reacted against such ordering. However, John Fesko (*Theology of the Westminster Standards* 258) notes that union and an *ordo salutis* are compatible and the latter is not a late development in Reformed Theology. Robert Letham (*The Work of Christ*, p80) sees union with Christ as 'the foundation of all the blessings of salvation.' He says 'Justification, sanctification, adoption and glorification are all received through our being united to Christ.'

There is room for debate over what is in the chain (eg should the saints' perseverance be included) and the order of the different links (eg repentance then faith or faith then repentance) but most Reformed theologians would agree on around eight or nine links in the order we have them here. In this article we want to focus on regeneration and conversion but will mention other links too.

Romans 8:29-30 states: *For those God foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the likeness of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brothers. And those he predestined, he also called; those he called, he also justified; those he justified, he also glorified.*

The verse contains a golden chain assuring us that God works all things together for the good of his children in such a way their salvation is certain. Inevitable links ensure this. All those *foreknown* by God are *predestined to be conformed to the likeness of his Son*. All who are *predestined* are *called*. All who are *called* are *justified*. All who are *justified* will be *glorified* in heaven. Paul mentions several links in the chain but not necessarily all.

Predestination

It is clear that all who are saved are firstly foreknown and predestined. God's foreknowledge is best understood as his setting his love on certain individuals, before the world's creation, in eternity. Having loved them before time, he predestined them to one day come to resemble his Son Jesus Christ. He predetermined this would be so. This does not begin to come about, of course, until a person is born, then regenerated, converted and so on.

It is important to remember that behind it all are election and predestination. No-one can know whether God has chosen and are predestined him by somehow enquiring into the records of heaven but we do know that all who are foreknown and predestined are one day called and (though Paul does not mention them here) regenerated, sanctified and adopted too.

Effective calling

In the gospel there is an external or general call that goes out to all people to repent and to trust in Jesus Christ in the light of the gospel and so be saved. To reject it is inexcusable.

There is also an internal or special call, an effectual or effective call. It is an irresistible call from God in which, by his grace, sinners previously unwilling are made willing to come to Christ. Becoming a Christian is not about volunteering. God effectively calls his people to himself as he wills.

The general call may be heard many times before there is an inward and effective call. God's Word is the outward means and the Spirit works within enabling the person to hear, then respond. Those who hear this call pass from the state of sin and death in which we all are by nature, to a state of grace and salvation through Jesus Christ.

Effective calling and regeneration

Effective calling and regeneration stand in the closest relation. Some say they are the same thing. Others see calling as preceding regeneration. Still others say calling follows regeneration.

In some traditions unwarranted attempts are made to drive a wedge between these two in order to explain why children from Christian homes, baptised as infants, often stray very far from the kingdom before coming to salvation. For example, the Dutch leader Abraham Kuyper writing on *The Work of the Holy Spirit* spoke of regeneration as *the implanting of the life principle* and suggested it is followed by *the keeping of the implanted principle of life*, the internal call often coming only later.

Logically regeneration must precede the internal call, but it is best to see the two as simultaneous temporally. We are describing what is almost the

same thing in two different ways. The bestowing of life and the bestowing of the ability to respond to the gospel are almost identical. When Jesus raised Lazarus there was a point where he gave Lazarus life and a point where Lazarus responded to his call. There was no observable time lapse between the events.

Being born again leads to a life of obedient holiness. The parallel effective call leads to fellowship with Christ and holy living. An obvious difference between the two is that one is conscious of calling but not of new birth.

Regeneration

The word regeneration can be used in a broader sense for salvation (as in James 1:18 and 1 Peter 1:23) but we use it here to refer to being born again (John 1:13; 3:5, 8). In his *Systematic Theology* (p469) Louis Berkhof called it 'that act of God by which the principle of the new life is implanted in man, and the governing disposition of the soul is made holy.'

There is something mysterious and unfathomable about this act of God. It is inward and secret but nevertheless a real thing that becomes discernible in due time. It involves an inward change of quality or nature within the person involved.

New birth happens in an instant but has eternal consequences. It is something great, something radical, a supernatural and divine act. It restores and transforms. Although it is a universal change in that it affects the whole soul, it is still an imperfect change in that it does not of itself make anyone perfect or give them the ability to be perfect.

The Bible refers to regeneration in terms of new birth but uses a variety of other pictures: being washed; having the law of God written on mind and heart; having your heart circumcised; being newly planted, newly created or raised from death; passing from darkness into light and entering a new world; setting out in a new direction; being baptised with the Spirit and being irresistibly drawn to God. (See eg 1 Cor 6:11 and Tit 3:5; Jer 31:33; Deut 30:6 and Rom 2:28,29; 1 Pet 1:23; Eph 2:5; 2 Cor 5:17 and Gal 6:15; 1 Pet 2:9 and Col 1:13; John 8:12; Acts 1:5; John 12:32). God intends all these pictures to add to our understanding of regeneration and we do well to reflect on them.

Conversion

When using the word regeneration in its narrower sense it is important to carefully distinguish it from conversion, which consists of repentance and faith. In his *Outlines of Theology* A A Hodge wrote that regeneration (communication of spiritual life) is God's act and conversion (turning from sin to God) is our act and a consequence of the divine influence.

His student, the Southern Baptist James P Boyce, was unsurprised that people fail to distinguish the two. In his *Abstract of Systematic Theology* he calls regeneration 'the work of God, changing the heart of man by his sovereign will, while conversion is that act of man turning towards God with the new inclination thus given to his heart'.

Question 9 of the Southern Baptist John A Broadus' *Catechism of Bible Teaching* asks, 'Does faith come before the new birth?' It answers, 'No, it is the new heart that truly repents and believes.'

'Saving belief of the gospel' was for the Presbyterian theologian R L Dabney 'the first and most uniform action of the new-born soul' (*The Believer Born of Almighty Grace, Discussions* Vol 1).

In more recent times R C Sproul has spoken of the dramatic moment in his life when, to his surprise, he saw a professor write on a chalkboard, 'Regeneration precedes faith'. It was a shock to the system for the young seminarian who, until then, had thought in terms of faith leading to rebirth and justification. Going back to his Bible he found the professor was right. Not only that, but he discovered that men like Augustine, Luther, Calvin, Edwards and Whitefield taught the same.

It is being born again that makes repentance and faith possible. It is not that by repenting and trusting in Christ we are born again but that by being born again we are enabled to repent and trust in Christ. We have criticised Kuyper above but writing of regeneration in his *The Work of the Holy Spirit* he helpfully draws attention to the way some old Scottish theologians spoke of the implanting of the faith-faculty (regeneration) followed by faith-exercise and faith-power. Certainly, without the faith-faculty, the exercise of faith and its power cannot be known.

Acts 16:14 tells us that Lydia, as she listened to Paul preaching, *The Lord opened her heart to respond to Paul's message*. It was when the Lord worked in her heart to open it that she was able to respond to the message with faith and repentance.

We are almost never able, if ever, to detect any delay between regeneration and conversion but it is important to recognise that it is new birth that leads to repentance and faith, not the other way round. One writer compares the difference between actually turning on a tap and the moment the water starts to come out. We do not normally distinguish the two; one follows so closely on the other, but there clearly is a logical difference, just as there is between being born again and conversion.

It is important to keep the two separate in our minds as new birth is *monergistic* – something God does alone, and conversion is *synergistic* – it involves our co-operation with God. There are plenty of exhortations in the

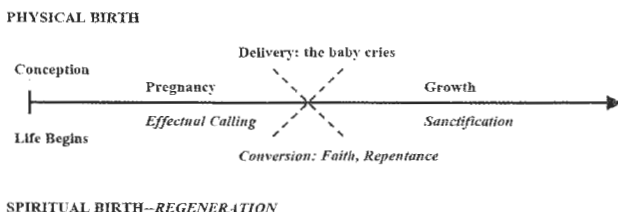
New Testament to repent and believe but none to be born again. What Jesus says in John 3 is not a command. Faith and repentance are themselves God's gifts, of course, as 2 Timothy 2:25 and Ephesians 2:8, 9 make clear. They are impossible without him. Nevertheless, at the same time, they are things that men and women themselves do.

For Puritan Thomas Adams, 'Repentance is a change of the mind and regeneration is a change of the man' (*Puritan Golden Treasury*).

To quote Kuyper on *The Work of the Holy Spirit* again, 'The first *conscious* and comparatively co-operative act of man is always *preceded* by the original act of God, planting in him the first principle of a new life, under which act man is totally *passive* and *unconscious*.'

In a helpful little book, *Spiritual Birthline: Understanding How We Experience the New Birth*, Stephen Smallman presents a diagram paralleling physical and spiritual birth.

(See <http://www.birthlineministries.com/resources/Understanding%20the%20New%20Birth%20-%20Smallman.pdf>)



Conception, pregnancy, delivery and growth are matched to regeneration, effectual calling, conversion and sanctification. Conversion which corresponds with the way at delivery a baby cries. Conversion then is not the beginning of life but, as it were, when the baby cries for the first time. Erroll Hulse has used a similar analogy somewhere: 'Spiritual life is the consequence of spiritual quickening. The baby cries because it is born; it is not born because it cries'.

Repentance and faith

Repentance is the negative part of conversion. It deals with the past, and involves consciously turning away from sin. It includes an acceptance that I am a sinner, sadness for sin and a change of mind and purpose. An inward change leads to outward changes.

Saving faith is the positive part of conversion. It looks to the future. It includes acceptance of the truth found in God's Word, a personal assent to it and personal trust in Jesus Christ as Saviour and Lord.

God also puts the Holy Spirit within and makes a person holy, a man of

God. This comes through regeneration, sanctification and glorification. It is at the new birth that 'sin receives its death-wound, though not its death' (A W Pink *Studies in the Scriptures* Vol 5). The other two cannot follow without it.

Justification and adoption

Regeneration and justification are inseparable but distinct. Both are absolutely necessary. Without a pardon we have no right to heaven; without the change we would not be fit for heaven.

As sinners two basic problems confront us. On one hand, there is our guilt; on the other, there is our pollution. It is a little like the problem of how to help a man who has been in trouble with the police many times before and has broken the law once again. He needs not only to atone for crimes already committed but a way needs to be found to stop him engaging in criminal activity again in the future.

Our problem is both our relationship with God and our sinful nature and character. We need not only to find God's pardon but also to be renewed within so that we do not go on sinning as we have in the past. We have spoken of how God brings about the latter; there is also the matter of forgiveness.

Justification

This has been covered in a previous article by Benedict Bird (see *RT266*). When God restores sinners to himself, he forgives them so that they are pardoned, all their sins being cancelled and their guilt removed for ever. He imputes righteousness to them instead of guilt. Justification is the opposite of condemnation. It brings about a change in one's legal standing before God. By means of justifying grace God the Judge makes a person right before him. The sinner is clothed, as it were, in the robe of Christ's perfect righteousness. Though every sinner deserves condemnation, all who trust in Christ are found righteous through him.

Justification is obtained when 'having been brought to lie in the dust as an empty-handed beggar, faith is enabled to lay hold of Christ' (A W Pink *Studies in the Scriptures*, Vol 5). It is as the repenting sinner believes that he receives a full and free pardon.

God does two things then. In Wesley's words 'he breaks the power of cancelled sin' and 'sets the prisoner free'.

Adoption

More than that, in what Murray calls 'the apex of grace and privilege' (*Redemption Accomplished and Applied*) God legally *adopts* each believer as his son and heir. Writing on Colossians 1:12 Calvin says, 'The Spirit

of regeneration is the seal of adoption.’ Writing on regeneration Puritan Stephen Charnock speaks of new birth giving us the *nature* of sons, while adoption gives us the *privilege* of sons. Normally a father will not legally adopt his son by birth, yet there is a sense in which God is our Father in both senses.

New birth, like sanctification, happens within a man’s heart and affects his whole life. Justification and adoption happen outside of a man and affect his standing before God.

Baptism

Baptism is not normally included in the *ordo salutis* but is a subject very much connected with the subject of salvation.

Romans 6:1-11 speaks of baptism and associates it with the new spiritual life Christians have. It says that all *who were baptised into Christ Jesus were baptised into his death*, and concludes, *We were therefore buried with him through baptism into death in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, we too may live a new life. If we have been united with him like this in his death, we will certainly also be united with him in his resurrection. For we know that our old self was crucified with him so that the body of sin might be done away with, that we should no longer be slaves to sin.*

The final admonition is to count yourselves dead to sin but alive to God in Christ Jesus.

Similarly, Colossians 2:11, 12 says, *In him you were also circumcised, in the putting off of the sinful nature, not with a circumcision done by the hands of men but with the circumcision done by Christ, having been buried with him in baptism and raised with him through your faith in the power of God, who raised him from the dead.*

Paul no doubt has Spirit baptism in mind in such places but water baptism is also in view. Baptism and regeneration must in no way be thought of as the same thing, of course. However, baptism being something done to you by another, a once and for all thing and a symbol of union with Christ, is a very good picture of new birth.

We do not suppose that baptism can bring about or promote salvation. Rather, water baptism is a sign and seal of regeneration. We baptise believers on the basis that the washing of new birth has already taken place in the life of the one passing through the waters.

Progressive sanctification

Sanctification will be covered in a future article. Here we note that it is to do with being or becoming holy and there are two sorts – definitive and

progressive. One is like a full stop, the other like a line going upwards. The moment a person becomes a Christian there is a sense in which he is holy as he is now set apart to God (1 Cor 6:11: *But you were washed, you were sanctified, you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and by the Spirit of our God.*)

Hebrews 10:10 teaches the same thing. However, there is also an ongoing or progressive sanctification that results in increasing holiness. Hence Hebrews 10:14 speaks of Jesus, by *one sacrifice making perfect for ever those who are being made holy.*

If progressive sanctification is a line or a river, regeneration is a full stop or a fountain that coincides with definitive or initial sanctification. The new birth is the first gleam of dawn; sanctification is the shining ever brighter till the full light of day (Prov 4:18). Paul speaks of believers being chosen to be saved *through the sanctifying work of the Spirit and through belief in the truth* (2 Thess 2:13), but he could equally have spoken of new birth and faith.

Regeneration is the point where the line of progressive or ongoing sanctification begins. In his book *Saved by Grace* Anthony Hoekema says, 'The two are related to each other as initial newness and progressive newness'. He points out, by way of example, how one thing that should happen when a person is born again is that he should love his brother (1 Pet 1:22, 23: *Now that you have purified yourselves by obeying the truth so that you have sincere love for your brothers, love one another deeply, from the heart. For you have been born again*). New birth has led to purity and sincere love for fellow Christians. This must now be capitalised upon by seeking to love one another deeply, from the heart.

In his 1866 hymn *God the Spirit we adore thee* Samuel J Stone gets the balance right when he prays:

Author of our new creation,
Giver of the second birth,
May Thy ceaseless renovation
Cleanse our souls from stains of earth,
And our bodies ever be
Holy temples meet for Thee.

Walking Worthily

by John Palmer

WHAT MOTIVE DOES GOD GIVE CHRISTIANS IN THE NEW TESTAMENT FOR HOLY LIVING? IT MIGHT be thought that this question was easy to answer. Are we not told that God commands, ‘Be holy, for I am holy’ (1 Peter 1:16)? Peter takes this up to tell us to walk ‘with fear’ (v17). Yet comparing scripture with scripture, we find this is not the only motive we are taught to have. So in Romans 12:1-2 we are commanded to live aright to God ‘in view of God’s mercies’. The Lord Jesus tells us that we will keep his commandments because we love him (John 14:15). Other motives can be discovered. It is correct to conclude that the answer to the question is multi-faceted.

Three times in his letters Paul speaks of Christians ‘walking worthily’ (*axiōs peripatesai/peripatein*). Is this one more motive? No – it’s three! For the object – of what or of whom we are to walk worthily – differs in each instance. So this paper simply explores a little the ‘worthy walk’ of the Christian. Perhaps it could be subtitled: ‘Fulfilling God’s purpose for your Christian life’, or ‘How not to let God down before the watching world’. This is only a brief overview of the main thrust of these deep texts.

1. Walking Worthily of God (1 Thess 2:12)

We’ll start with the earliest of the three relevant letters. The text reads, from v11, *For you know how, like a father with his children, we exhorted each one of you and encouraged you and charged you to walk in a manner worthy of God, who calls you into his own kingdom and glory*’ (ESV).

We surely need to pause right there, for adoration. God calls us, guilty rebel sinners, into his own kingdom and glory. What love and grace are here! Whatever he asks of us as a response, how can we say anything but a willing ‘yes’ to whatever it might be? This call is God’s effectual call, in our souls, bringing about his eternal electing purposes to save us from sin and hell. We are to be different because he has made us different.

First, he has called us into his kingdom. We are God’s subjects, under an obligation to live for him in a fallen world. We must obey him, even when this brings persecution. *We must obey God rather than men*, said the apostles (Acts 5:29). Of course, there is not always a conflict between the two. The laws of most lands follow God’s Law in forbidding murder or theft. We should not have a problem with obeying such. Indeed, the Bible assumes that as a general rule Christians who are presenting their bodies as

holy living sacrifices will be able to be subject to the governing authorities while they do this (Rom 12:1-2, 13:1). Yet we are to do so, always, as conscious subjects of God, determined to uphold his name. 'I will not steal, because I am a subject of God.' Then, when our obedience to God leads us into having to face persecution, we will say, 'I will not do this... [whatever the authorities sinfully command], because I am a subject of God.' The learnt motive of obedience to God as King in each situation in daily life will override the temptation to compromise. We pray 'Your kingdom come,' and must always turn it into, 'And let it come consistently, Father, in my life today.'

Then, God has called us into his glory. 'The glory of God' is a large scriptural concept with different aspects, which we cannot consider in detail here. What we need to see is this: in 2 Corinthians 3:18 we learn that our fellowship with God in Christ by the Spirit means that we see God's glory, as in a mirror, and are being increasingly changed into it, made more glorious. This is the work of sanctification. It will be completed when we are glorified, completely changed into the image of Christ, in perfect holiness (1 John 3:2). So John goes on in verse 3: *Everyone who has this hope in him purifies himself even as he [Christ] is pure.* This means, in Paul's terms here in 1 Thessalonians, that a true believer wants to be glorious like Christ, and rejoices that he will be one day – and so does not want to do anything that mars God's glory now. How should we live now? In a way that is worthy, for a being who is going to be made like Christ one day, and counts this his highest privilege. This is our motive for mortifying sin in our bodies now. Sin is behaviour which is unworthy of who we are, and what we will be, by God's grace. So, Paul continues, *Brothers, we ask and urge you in the Lord Jesus, that as you received from us how you ought to walk and please God ... that you do so more and more* (1 Thess 4:1). How should we thus live? In sanctification (v3); in holiness (v7). 'More holiness give me.'

2. Walking Worthily of the Lord (Col 1:10)

The Lord is Christ Jesus. What is it to walk worthily of him? This and the following two verses tell us:

a) *Fully pleasing to him* (v10). We walk in a relationship. Christian obedience can never be reduced to simply 'obeying the rules', even if we do so because they are Christ's rules. We obey his commandments because we love him (John 14:20-21) who now dwells in us and manifests himself continually to us (John 14:20-21). In Colossians 2:6 we are told that just as we received him, we are to 'walk in him'. The intimate spiritual relationship that each believer has with Christ means that we want to please him.

b) *Bearing fruit in every good work* (v10). This relationship produces lives that are reflections of the Lord who ‘went about doing good’. So should we. This is not a matter of reputation, though good deeds cannot be hidden (Matt 5:14-16). It must be a matter of reality. A work is only truly good if we do it as to the Lord.

c) *Increasing in the knowledge of God* (v10). The Lord came to enable us to know God. To walk worthily of him, we must be people whose great delight is to know God, as his was (see for example Matt 11:25-27). Jesus knew the Father perfectly, from all eternity. We have to get to know him better, for our own benefit, but also because this is part of the ‘spiritual wisdom and understanding’ which leads to worthy walking.

d) *Strengthened with all power, according to his glorious might, for all endurance and patience [longsuffering]* (v11). How hard it is to endure trials, and to put up with sinners. How much harder must it have been for the sinless Son of God. Yet he did so perfectly. How? By God’s power, given in answer to earnest prayer (Heb 5:7). To be worthy of being called by his name, we must do the same.

e) *With joy giving thanks to the Father, who has qualified you to share in the inheritance of the saints in light* (v11-12). The Lord Jesus told us to rejoice that our names are written in heaven. If we give the impression that our holy walk is merely a stoical endurance of hardship and a joyless slavish obedience, hoping that we will be rewarded one day, we are not walking worthily.

How does this walk come about? In v9 we are told. We must be *filled with the knowledge of his will in all spiritual wisdom and understanding, so as to walk worthily*. Where do we find God’s will? In the Bible. Many go astray here. They interpret this verse, and others like it, to mean that there is a mysterious effect whereby, the more a Christian has ‘spiritual wisdom and understanding’, the more they can understand God’s hidden will for their lives, and so go through life without making mistakes.

Doubtless, wisdom and understanding help us to make fewer stupid decisions. We are told to seek wisdom for this purpose (James 1:5). However, the text before us does not teach us to seek out God’s hidden will, or decree, for our lives, and then obey it. Rather, it tells us to follow God’s revealed will of precept as found in the Bible.

Now the Pharisees were good at doing this – outwardly. Why was their obedience unacceptable to God? It was outward, not from the heart. They thought that in their own mental strength they could understand God’s will and so do it. They did not humbly seek spiritual wisdom and understanding.

To walk worthily, therefore, we must be humble before God. We must

thank him for a complete and plain Scripture. But we must also always be crying to him to fill us with spiritual wisdom and understanding, so that we can rightly apply that Scripture, in each moment of each day, faced with decisions and temptations and trials. Otherwise we will stumble often – but he is able to keep us from stumbling (Jude 24).

3. Walking Worthily of our Calling (Eph 4:1)

Having expounded the greatness of our salvation in the first half of the letter, Paul says, ‘I *therefore*, a prisoner for the Lord, urge you to walk in a manner worthy of the calling to which you have been called.’ This calling has been explained in the earlier chapters. 1:18 speaks of ‘the hope of his calling’ (KJV) which is the ‘riches of his glorious inheritance in the saints’. It is the hope of being glorified together with Christ, as in Colossians, but expressed differently. We are called therefore, here and now, to be ‘holy and blameless before him in love’ (Eph 1:4); to walk in the good works that God has prepared beforehand (Eph 2:10); to live as members of the household of God (Eph 2:19).

In order to do this, and walk worthily of this great calling, we must exhibit attitudes of love and peace toward fellow believers in the church, our own church first of all, but also in the wider church. These are attitudes of:

- ‘all humility, and gentleness’ (Eph 4:2) – like the Lord (Matt 11:29)
- with longsuffering (putting up with imperfect people), which means ‘bearing with one another in love’ (Eph 4:2)
- eagerness to ‘maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace’ (Eph 4:3).

This last point – the motive – Paul expands in vv4-6. The Holy Spirit has given us spiritual unity. We are one body, indwelt by one Spirit. By this Spirit we were all called, into the one hope that belongs to our call (as 1:18). There is one Lord Jesus Christ; one faith in him; one baptism into his name. There is one God and Father of all, who rules over all, and works through us all, for by his Spirit he is in us all. These things are true, so to walk worthily of our calling, this unity must be maintained, by each of us, as far as is possible. We must exhibit this bond in peace toward all Christians, as far as we can. We must be eager to do this.

The opposite of this is, in pride and impatience, to cut ourselves off from, despise, and needlessly criticise, those who also are walking in a Christian manner, but disagree with us about certain doctrines or practices. We must oppose those who seek to break this visible union of Christians. We must oppose those who, instead of walking worthily of their calling, walk as the Gentiles, in open sin, and thus bring disgrace on Christ and his Church

(Eph 4:17-19). We must oppose those who claim to be believers, but are false teachers. But within the Church, love, peace and unity must rule. This is the unity which displays the reality, presence, and continual grace of the one Triune God, who has called us to himself.

Conclusion

To walk thus worthily of God, the Lord, and our calling requires deep and continuous effort. How far such a walk is from those who teach 'New Evangelicalism', which we might call 'soft evangelicalism' – claiming the benefits of salvation, without teaching or displaying the obedience which evidences true salvation; for true salvation includes being delivered from the power of sin which imprisoned us, and deep mourning over our continual falls into various sins. If we are true believers, let us settle for nothing less.

Book review: A short book on the Psalms

Prayers on the Psalms. From the Scottish Psalter of 1595. With introduction by David Calhoun (Edinburgh: Banner of Truth, 2010), ISBN: 13: 978 184871 095 5

The Scottish Psalter of 1595 was unique in that it contained a series of prayers on the Psalms. Regarded as 'one of the little-known devotional treasures of the Scottish Church' these prayers breathe the spirit of humble confidence in God in the midst of trouble and persecution. Presented here in slightly updated form they are sure to suggest much matter for prayer in public, private, and family worship.

Our founding editor Erroll Hulse provides this review:

This is a pocket-size paperback book of 148 pages. This includes a 35-page, delightful, heart-warming introduction. Each psalm is accompanied by an uplifting, reviving prayer, based on the psalm.

I am buying a dozen copies as this little book forms a perfect present. The prayers prompt the reader to compose his or her own prayers. The following is my intercession based on Psalm72:

'Omnipotent, loving Father, who by your amazing grace has adopted us into your family, I plead that your saving gospel will so spread that the prophecy of Malachi will be fulfilled that: "From the rising of the sun to the setting of the same, in every town and village pure worship will ascend through Jesus Christ your beloved Son, our Saviour who, together with the Holy Spirit form One God eternal and for ever to be adored and served."

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