

THE GOSPEL MAGAZINE

FEBRUARY 1972

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THE GOSPEL MAGAZINE

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"JESUS CHRIST, THE SAME YESTERDAY, AND TODAY, AND FOR EVER."
"ENDEAVOURING TO KEEP THE UNITY OF THE SPIRIT IN THE BOND
OF PEACE."

"COMFORT YE, COMFORT YE MY PEOPLE, SAITH YOUR GOD."

New Series

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EDITORIAL

Loneliness is a particularly acute problem in big cities. London is notorious for its lonely folk hidden away from the hurrying crowds and lost to view in their bed-sitters and basement flats. But loneliness is not confined to the large cities, nor is it only found in the smaller residences. It can be as real in a village community. It can be as urgent a problem in a stately home.

There are certain types of people who are particularly susceptible, though temperament brings others within the net. There is the widow who has lost her husband or the widower whose wife has died. There is the woman whose children have absorbed her attention and whose departure has left her with a feeling of emptiness. There is the unmarried woman whose friends are all happily settled in their own homes. There are the old people who have outlived most of their friends, and are left isolated in the midst of another generation which neither seems to understand or to care. There is the partner in an unhappy marriage whose loneliness is accentuated by the fact that others are unaware of his or her predicament.

There are of course practical remedies and the Christian, if he is wise, will not despise these. The importance of making the effort to go out and meet people, the need to find some purposeful activity, involvement in service to other needy people, using the home in a ministry of hospitality to other lonely folk—all these are practical measures which may be adopted. But for some, circumstances may rule out some of

these and in any case they are only palliatives and a deeper remedy is needed.

For the Christian the real antidote to loneliness is a full biblical doctrine of God, and an awareness of the implications of that doctrine. The God whom we worship is the triune God. He is Father, Son and Holy Spirit, and it is the doctrine of the Trinity which not only widens the horizons of our worship but speaks to our hearts in our hours of loneliness.

God Almighty is our heavenly Father. The one who is possessed of infinite power and wisdom is the God who cares for us as a father for his children. His love for us blends together sympathetic concern, providential guidance, careful provision and a sensitive awareness of our deepest needs. He is not a coldly detached deity, remote in his transcendence. He is the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ who in grace has adopted us into His family, so that with quietness and confidence we may find in Him our peace and our comfort.

And what does the doctrine say concerning God the Son? He is revealed as the good Shepherd whose love for His flock was seen in His readiness to die for them. But having purchased His flock at such a price He will never forsake them. They are His for time and for eternity. The lonely member of the flock may find in the good Shepherd the sympathetic understanding for which his heart craves.

It is the third person of the Godhead who makes real to us all that the Father and the Son purpose for their people. He 'proceedeth from the Father and the Son' says the Nicene Creed, and so He brings to us the Father's loving care and the Son's redeeming love. As He fills our life, so both the Father and the Son are increasingly real in our experience.

Faith is the basic response of the believer to the truths of God's Word, and so it is as we respond to the doctrine of the Trinity that the Word becomes a rich element in our life. Faith then is a major factor in the battle with loneliness. Let the lonely believer listen to the Word of God. Let him hear the promises of the triune God. Let him respond with glad heart to the gracious overtures of God Almighty.

There is a further element in the believer's response and it is an important one in the matter of loneliness—it is hope! Hope makes the future present. Hope looks forward to the final flowering of the purposes of God. Hope reaches into heaven and rejoices in the glory that shall be revealed. To the lonely believer the call is clear—lift up your heart, for your redemption draws near.

Fear not He is with thee, O be not dismayed;
For He is thy God, and will still give thee aid:
He'll strengthen thee, help thee, and cause thee to stand,
Upheld by His righteous omnipotent hand. (*Richard Keen*)

H. M. CARSON.

POSTSCRIPT

Readers of the magazine have been deeply moved by the dying testimony of Mrs. Bradshaw. We are delighted to say that this has now been issued in booklet form and is available from MR. H. J. BRADSHAW, 38 BRIAN AVENUE, NORWICH NOR 28C. Price 9p post paid (12 copies £1).

People talk about free-will Christians, and tell us of persons being saved and coming to God of their own free will. It is a very curious thing, but though I have heard a great many free-will sermons, I have never heard any free-will prayers. I have heard Arminianism in preaching and talking, but I have never heard any Arminian praying. In fact, I do not think there can be any prayer of that sort; it is a style that does not suit prayer. The theory may look very nice in argument, and sound very proper in discourse, though we somewhat differ from it; but for practical purposes it is useless. The language will not suit us in prayer, and this alone would be sufficient reason to condemn it. If a man cannot pray in the spirit of his own convictions, it shows they are a delusion from beginning to end; for if they were true, he could pray in that language as well as in any other. Blessed be God, the doctrines of grace are as good to pray with as to preach with! We do not find ourselves out of order in any act of worship when once we have the old fundamental doctrines of the blessed gospel of grace.

Persons talk about free-will Christians coming back to Jesus of themselves. I intend to believe them when they find me a free-will sheep that has come back of itself; when they have discovered some sheep, after it has gone from its fold, stand bleating at its master's door, asking to be taken in again. You will not find such a sheep, and you will not find a free-will Christian; for they will all confess, if you thoroughly probe the matter, that it was grace, and grace alone that restored their souls.—C. H. SPURGEON.

The Gift of the Spirit

H. M. CARSON

*A sermon preached on Sunday morning,
18th January, 1970, in Hamilton Road
Baptist Church, Bangor, Co. Down.*

'And when the day of Pentecost was fully come, they were all with one accord in one place. And suddenly there came a sound from heaven as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled all the house where they were sitting. And there appeared unto them cloven tongues like as of fire, and it sat upon each of them. And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance.'

Acts 2 : 1-4.

We continue our studies in the Acts of the Apostles and this morning we turn to the account of the Day of Pentecost when the Holy Spirit came with such mighty power upon the believers as they waited in accordance with the command of Christ, waiting for His promise to be fulfilled.

If you read the gospel account of the beginning of the ministry of the Lord Jesus Christ and Luke's narrative here in Acts concerning the beginning of the church of Christ, you cannot but notice a very close parallel. The Lord's public ministry was inaugurated when He was baptised by John the Baptist in the Jordan. The public witness of the church of Christ was inaugurated when the disciples were baptised with the Holy Spirit on the Day of Pentecost. Now the Lord's ministry began publicly at His baptism but quite clearly prior to that public inauguration He was indeed the Messiah; He was the chosen One of God; He was the eternal Son of the Father; He had been sent to save His people from their sins. But at the Jordan, at His baptism, He was publicly commissioned for the ministry which lay ahead. The voice from heaven came, 'This is my beloved Son in whom I am well pleased'. The Holy Spirit came in bodily fashion as a dove and rested on Him. He already knew the presence of the Spirit. His birth had been because of the supernatural working of the Holy Spirit so that He was born of the Virgin Mary. But at

His baptism He received in a rich full measure the anointing of the Spirit to go out for His ministry.

Now I say there is a parallel here. The disciples already knew the Lord. This was not a group of unregenerate men. After all Peter was there, the Peter who as recorded in Matthew 16, taught by God, had risen to the glorious confession, 'Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God.' There had been failure, of course, there had been miserable failure, but these were basically men who already knew the Lord, and indeed who knew already some moving of the Spirit in their hearts. Remember how Jesus had breathed upon them and said 'Receive ye the Holy Ghost'. So they were already in possession of the Spirit, they already knew something of His power. But on this Day of Pentecost there was something new, which as yet they had not experienced. This was God's public commissioning of the church of Christ. This was, if you like, the inauguration of the gospel age. This was the great day for which the prophets had prepared. So Peter is shortly going to expound the prophecy of Joel, and to say that the prophet spoke of this day and now the prophecy has been fulfilled—the Spirit of God has been poured forth in abundant measure. The Spirit had been present in the Old Testament. He came upon the prophets, He came upon kings, He came upon God's servants. But now there was a rich and full effusion, a great outpouring upon all the people of God such as they had not known before. And with this coming of the Spirit the church of Christ is commissioned publicly and openly by God for the ministry of the gospel age.

This occurrence on the Day of Pentecost is the explanation of the quality of life that you find in the church of the Acts of the Apostles. When you go back to the Acts you cannot but be impressed by the difference, the marked difference, between the church as you see it here and the church as we so often see it at the present time. What are the characteristics of this church? Here are men full of power, full of the Spirit of God, men filled with a rare joyfulness, so that even when they are persecuted and beaten and scourged and stoned, they still rejoice. They are full of joy and full of the Holy Spirit. Men and women possessed with a rare concern for those around them, even when they are scattered through persecution, they are still on the look out for men and women who need the gospel. Wherever they go there is a vibrant quality of holiness about them. And the explanation?—The Day of Pentecost when the Spirit of God came upon the church.

Now there are supernatural accompaniments, miraculous accompaniments of this commissioning or inauguration of the church, just as there were at the Lord's baptism. The voice from heaven, the voice of God speaking, it was supernatural, and so here there are the supernatural signs which accompanied this outpouring of the Holy Spirit. If you read through the Bible you discover that miracles are not scattered haphazardly across the pages of Scripture. The miracles happen at certain points in the story. There are quite sizable passages of Scripture and stretches of history recorded in its pages where there is no particular evidence of miracle. The miracles tend to be grouped at the great points of revelation, at the time of the Exodus for example, when God was delivering His people and taking them out of Egypt and constituting them a nation. Well then, on Mount Sinai and in the wilderness there are miraculous signs. Likewise when there was the conflict between the false religion of Baal and the true religion of Jehovah, when Elijah was standing for the truth, again God attested His Word by miraculous signs. The same thing was true at the time of the Exile, the time of Daniel and Shadrach, Meshach and Abed-nego. It was a time when the hearts of the people of God were liable to faint for fear, everything seemed to have collapsed in ruins around them. Jerusalem was destroyed and the nation was scattered, and God by miraculous signs declares that He is still their God.

So when Christ comes, when the Messiah appears, we may expect to see the miraculous element reappearing, and after the long period of comparative lull, after the closing of the Old Testament, something new begins again. Not only is the Word of God sounded with a new authority—at first John the Baptist and then Jesus begin to preach—but the Word is accompanied by signs, by miracles; by supernatural happenings. Now it is the same in the Acts of the Apostles. This is a new day, this is a new chapter, this is the beginning of a completely new epoch, a new era. This is the age of the Spirit, the day of the gospel. The next great event after the Day of Pentecost will be the Second Coming of the Lord Jesus Christ. And what is inaugurated here at Pentecost is the great day and age of the spreading of the gospel of the grace of God.

So we may expect supernatural accompaniments at such an inauguration of the church of Christ, and here there are three of them. There was the rushing mighty wind from heaven, there were the cloven tongues as of fire, and there were the tongues, the languages in which the disciples spoke. Miracles are not mere wonders, they are not mere empty demonstra-

tions of divine power, they have a meaning, they have a significance. That is why when John speaks about the miracles of Christ he calls them signs, signs which point beyond the happening to the greatness and the glory of the One who wrought the miracle. So here these miraculous accompaniments of the outpouring of the Spirit are intended to make us look beyond the occurrence, beyond the phenomenon, and to ask what is the meaning of it all. What is God saying through these things which He did?

What was God saying through this supernatural accompaniment, the rushing mighty wind from heaven; this wind which came and filled the whole house where they were met together? It was to speak to them of the coming of the Spirit. The emphasis here is that it was a wind *from heaven* and it was from heaven that the Spirit was coming to be poured out upon the church. Now the opening chapter of Acts records Christ's departure from them. As far as His bodily presence was concerned He was no longer there. They had met with Him after His resurrection. He had appeared to them and had pledged to them the reality of His risen life. They had stood with Him on the Mount of Olives when He had been taken up from them into heaven and now the Spirit comes *from* heaven. It is all in accordance with the promises which Christ had already given to them. He said, 'I will not leave you orphans, I will not leave you bereft, struggling on in your own strength, I will come to you'. And the coming of the Spirit is the coming of Christ to His people. This is the gift of the ascended Lord. It is the heavenly Christ, the One who has been exalted as a Prince and a Saviour, it is this Christ who in the Person of the Spirit comes to His people. That is why we can speak at the same time of Christ as being exalted and Christ dwelling in our hearts; Christ at the right hand of the Father and Christ present in the midst of His worshipping people. It is because this heavenly, reigning, transcendent Christ comes to us through His Spirit.

The Spirit comes from heaven and He comes with power. This of course was the obvious significance of this particular sign. Here they are gathered in the building and there is this rushing sound of a mighty wind. It is not a wind outside the building; this was not just a storm blowing up in Jerusalem; this was something utterly supernatural; this wind was blowing within the building where they were assembled. And it came with great power. A strong wind speaks very much of strength and power. The wind can be a tremendously powerful force. We know very little of it here. When you read of tornadoes in

the southern states of America you realise what wind really does mean, and most of our gales here are comparative breezes compared with those. The rushing mighty wind from heaven speaks of this power, this supernatural power of which these men stood in such need. Peter appears as their spokesman, and yet he had been such a failure not long beforehand. Indeed the rest of them were no better than Peter for they had forsaken the Lord and fled, and after His death you find them in an upper room for fear of the Jews. They needed strength and power. And this mighty wind from heaven was a word from God telling them, as Christ has told them not long before, 'You shall receive power after that the Holy Spirit has come upon you, and you shall be my witnesses'.

But the wind spoke of something more than power, it spoke to anyone with an Old Testament background, of life. When God made man in His image, God took the dust of the earth and breathed into man's nostrils the breath of life and man became a living soul. In the Hebrew language the word for spirit and the word for breath are the same. It is the breath, the wind of God, the Spirit of God who brings life. You will remember Ezekiel's vision—looking over the valley of dead bones, there is no life there, no possibility of movement at all. He prophesies to the wind, 'Come, O wind' and the wind comes, the wind of God, the breath of God, the Spirit of God, and in Ezekiel's vision the dry bones become an army clothed with flesh and blood. Well, with this background, the wind filling the house, the wind coming with this irresistible power, would speak to the disciples, not of some impersonal strength, but of the power which comes when a Person dwells among them. It would speak of a life-giving power, because what they were going to experience was nothing less than the very life of God within their souls.

There was another sign. There appeared to them tongues of fire. Fire? Well, that was already associated in their minds with the coming of the Spirit. When John the Baptist had preached, he contrasted the baptism which he was administering with the baptism which Jesus would administer. He says, 'I baptise you with water unto repentance; He shall baptise you with the Holy Spirit and with fire'. And in this prophetic word John was associating the coming of the Spirit with the coming of the fire of God. Now once again, to men of an Old Testament background as these men were, fire would speak of the presence of God. Go back to the call of Moses when he was commissioned in Midian to go and deliver Israel from Egypt; God appeared to him in the burning bush—the bush

which burned and was not consumed. It was in that flaming witness in the wilderness that God made Himself known to Moses. Or see Israel after they had been delivered; they are on Mount Sinai, God is giving them His law from the mountain; the nation is gathered around the mountain, and the whole mountain is ablaze as God comes down in flaming fire making Himself known. Or think of that other vision of Ezekiel right at the beginning of Ezekiel's prophecy, when he sees the chariot coming from the north. What takes the attention is the fact that the One upon the chariot is clothed in flames of fire. So this coming of these flames of fire upon the heads of the disciples was a visible and supernatural token to them that God was coming among them. The Spirit who was to possess them was the Spirit of God. He was the Holy Spirit. When God came to His people, He came, not to lull them into a condition of comfortable spiritual complacency. He came as the Holy Spirit to rebuke them and to chasten them, to convict them of their sin, to call them to repentance, to call them to a life of holiness.

The fire fell also to remind them that God's purpose was to purify them. It recalls the picture that comes in the prophecy of Malachi. It is the picture of the refiner of silver. There he sits with his crucible over the furnace, and as the heat is applied to the silver, so the impurities come to the surface and he skims off the impurities and removes the dross; and he continues heating, and removing the scum, until he can see his own face perfectly reflected in the molten silver in the crucible. This is how God works with His people—purifying, refining, cleansing, that He may see Himself reflected in us. He made man in His own image. Man created in the image of God reflected the God who made him, but man in his sin and disobedience has defaced the image and the great work of regeneration, of renewal, of rebirth, or re-creation, this work is to renew in the people of God that image which has been defaced. So the coming of the Spirit, accompanied as it was by these miraculous tongues of fire, was a word to them that God was going to produce a church in which the image of the Saviour would be reflected. It would be painful—the Spirit does not make holy men and holy women through some light and comfortable process. He comes to purge, to refine, to purify, and sometimes the means He uses are painful, and painful in the extreme. But His purpose is, that refined and cleansed and purified, we might reflect the image of our God.

These flames appeared as *tongues* of fire and I believe there was a significance there. The whole thing after all was asso-

ciated with witness. The Lord had said to them, 'You will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes upon you and you will be my witnesses, you will go out to speak in my Name, you will go out to speak of what you yourselves have experienced'. So the Spirit comes in purifying fire, He comes to make God's presence real to them, so that they might go out and that they might speak. That is why almost at once you find Peter standing in front of the crowd, in front of people of whom formerly he had been afraid and in a city where his Master had been crucified, facing people who hated Christ. Yet he is standing confidently and boldly and with assurance, and he is preaching with authority the gospel of the risen Lord. What has happened? The Spirit of God has come upon him. The Spirit of fire has fallen upon the church, and the church is a witnessing church.

We look at ourselves today and we look at churches across the land, and often we find that we are frozen into silence, we scarcely make a whimper, much less declare with authority the gospel which God has given to us. So often our lips are not opened. We go out and we move among men, we meet them at work or in leisure moments and we will talk about this, that and the other, but so often our lips are silent when we should be speaking on the greatest theme of which any man can speak, the risen Saviour. 'You shall be witnesses'. This was not some commission for the first few years of the Christian era. This is the standing commission given to the church and it is not given simply to one body within the church to whom the Spirit has given the gift of ministering the Word; no, this is a standing word to every one of the people of God. We are all called to be witnesses and it is only as the fire of God falls upon us to melt the coldness of our hearts, only then do we begin to speak in Christ's Name to men and women who sorely need Him.

So we come to the third sign, the sign that has occasioned so much debate, so much discussion, and at times alas, so much controversy in the church. 'They spoke in other tongues'. Now obviously if we are going to deal with this adequately, it is not a case of dealing with it in one part of a sermon. You would have to spend a whole series on it. Furthermore you would have to turn to 1 Corinthians 12 and 14 and consider with the apostle Paul the whole question of speaking in tongues and the allied issue of prophesying. All we can do this morning is simply to look briefly at this third supernatural accompaniment of the outpourings of the Spirit. And let me emphasise—it is one of *three* supernatural accompaniments—

the wind from heaven, the flames of fire, the speaking with tongues. So we must not isolate this one from the others and say, 'Well, you may always expect one but not the others', because the speaking with tongues, the flames of fire, the wind from heaven, are all alike supernatural signs of the presence and the power of the Spirit.

Now whence came this speaking with tongues? Well, it is quite emphatic here—they spoke in these tongues 'as the Spirit gave them utterance'. It was the Holy Spirit who opened their lips and it is the Holy Spirit alone who will open lips to praise God; and it is important to notice here that this speaking with tongues was not in terms of witness or preaching, it was in terms of praise. Those who listened said, 'We hear them speak in our own tongues, the wonderful works of God'. This was not a preaching service. Peter gets up shortly afterwards and he preaches but as far as you can judge he is preaching straightforwardly either in Aramaic which was the current dialect or possibly more likely in Greek which those from all round the Mediterranean world would have known. When he preaches it is a straightforward presentation of the gospel in the ordinary language of the day. This speaking in other tongues was not in terms of preaching and witnessing, it was an act of praise. These men were so overwhelmed by the Spirit of God that their hearts are poured out in praise and thanksgiving. Praise always does accompany an outpouring of the Spirit. In any time of revival when the Spirit of God comes to the church, God's people learn to praise Him. That is why it is very interesting to notice how much of the deep hymns of praise in the church of Christ come from the 18th century evangelical awakening. We have produced lots of hymns in more recent days but alas many of them reflect the shallow spiritual condition into which we have drifted. They are pleasant some of them, the poetry is pleasant in some of them, but as far as doctrinal depth and spiritual reality are concerned so often it is at a very shallow level. But when the Spirit of God comes there is not simply singing as such, there is singing which is wedded to the great truths of the gospel. We hear them speaking of the wonderful works of God.

What are the mighty works of God which should characterise the praise of God's people? Well you find in the Acts in the preaching that they talk about creation. When Paul is preaching in Athens to the sophisticated intellectuals there and when he is preaching to the very ordinary country people in Iconium, he speaks about the God of Creation, the God

who made us. So these men rejoice in God as their Creator. But they rejoice also in the new creation, they rejoice in the coming of the Saviour, in the Incarnation, the coming in the flesh of the Son of God. They rejoice in what He did when He went to Calvary and died. They rejoice and they exult in what is for them the glory of the gospel, that He who died has risen from the dead and is a living Saviour. They rejoice in confident hope. Their gospel is not confined to events that have taken place recently, but all the time their eyes are on the horizon and they are thinking of the coming again of Christ. The One who was despised and rejected of men, He will come again with great power and glory to reign for ever and ever. This is the theme of Christian praise, and these men, swept off their feet by the power of the Holy Spirit, are declaring the wonderful works of God.

Now what was the nature of these tongues? I can only touch very briefly on this subject. I believe we must rule out completely the idea that it was some form of gibberish, that it was some kind of ecstatic speech in which it was largely meaningless. Such speaking in tongues is by no means unknown; it is not unknown even in paganism for men to get into an ecstasy and to pour forth a stream of gibberish. But quite clearly in this passage, this was not gibberish for one very obvious reason. The explanation is given in these terms. There were many pilgrims there. This was a special festival season at Pentecost and men were gathered from wide areas. They were Jews but they came from areas where their natural language was not the language of Judea, just in the same way as today there are Jews gathering into Israel where the national language is Hebrew but they come from England or Germany or Russia or the Middle East, and their home language is the language of the nation where they have been and in which they have been brought up. Well, many of these pilgrims would doubtless speak Aramaic or Greek so they would be able to listen to the preaching of Peter but their home languages were the languages of the lands where they lived. And the point that they notice with wonderment is that listening to this crowd of men—and there was a large crowd of them praising God—they could hear this one and that one praising in a familiar language. They were not all speaking in Aramaic or Greek nor were they speaking with the rather crude northern accent of the Galileans. The Galileans mixed up their gutturals and swallowed their syllables and even to the southern Judean the northern Galileans were a barbaric crowd as far as their mode of speaking was concerned. But

here was a crowd of Galilean provincials, normally with their raw provincial accent, and as they speak this man from Pontus and this one from Rome and that one from Libya can hear their language in the words that are being used. So quite clearly these 'tongues' were not gibberish, these were languages intelligible to those capable of understanding them.

But what is the supreme significance of it? I believe you discover it if you look at the nations to whom reference is made. They are nations from the east, from the north, from the south and from the west. This complete list of nations is given, and surely the significance is just this—that from every point of the compass these meeting here are listening to the wonderful works of God. It is in fact God's great reversal of the curse which is recorded in Genesis at Babel when God confounded their languages and scattered the nations on the face of the earth. Their disunity and their division and their scattering was the result of their rebellion and their sin, and God is declaring in the gospel that a great new day is dawning when the judgment of Babel will be reversed; when men and women across the world, sundered by colour, by race, by language, will be gathered in by the preaching of the gospel, by the renewing work of the Holy Spirit, and they shall become 'My people'. It is Christ's words in John 10, 'They shall be one flock under one shepherd'. So the outpouring of the Spirit was the commissioning of the church for this great new task, to go out with this gospel, the gospel of the risen Saviour.

It happened on the Feast of Pentecost, it happened on a Harvest Festival, when they were gathered in Jerusalem to rejoice in the blessings of harvest and they were to learn through this mighty working of God that there was another harvest to be gathered in—not the harvest from the fields and from the vineyards and the oliveyards, but the harvest of men and women. Jesus had said the field is the world and He purposed to send out labourers to gather men and women in to His harvest. The outpouring of the Spirit was therefore the essential prerequisite to going out to gather in the harvest.

The harvest is still being gathered in. The field is the world and men and women around us, and men and women further afield, are perishing without God and without hope. It is the commission, the unchanging commission to the church, the unchanging commission to the individual believer, that we should go and work in the harvest field to gather in the sheaves. Where is the strength, where is the power? The mighty wind from heaven speaks of the power of the Spirit of God.

Concluded on page 95

The Blessed Man in Psalm 1

H. P. WOTTON

In this psalm we have a picture of a happy man, for the word 'blessed' signifies human happiness—'O the great happiness!'

In photography there can be no positive without a negative. And just as we hardly know the value of light apart from darkness, so the happy man must be seen against the background of the miserable negative man who says 'No' to the greatest light—'the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ' (2 Corinthians 4 : 6).

From the words of the psalm—'Blessed is the man that walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor standeth in the way of sinners, nor sitteth in the seat of the scornful' (verse 1)—the godly seems to be the negative man. But he is not, for when two negatives are placed together, as in 'He is not unhappy', we have a positive statement. So when the positive man is said not to be what the negative man is, the happy man is seen more clearly.

Like the negative of a photograph the negative man is the wrong way round, and if he could see we would have to say that he is looking in the wrong direction. The more we look at him the less he looks like a man and so he will continue until he comes out of the dark to take a more positive view of things.

He who walks in the counsel of the ungodly, stands in the way of sinners and sits in the seat of the scornful is surely something less than true man, for when man lost his original state of perfection in which he was made, he lost not only his relationship with God, but his true manhood also. It is only when he comes out of the dark room of unbelief that he finds it again—in the Perfect Man.

Happy, blessed man indeed is he who has come out of unbelief into the glorious light of the Son of God! And just as his previous existence in unbelief—we will not call it life—was a negation, a saying 'No' to the true Light, so his life of faith is a negation, a saying 'No' to everything that partakes of spiritual darkness.

DELIGHT

Now that he has come out of the dark he has light and life. He also has delight. When he was an unbeliever he had things that appeared delightful, but seeing only with the aid of artificial light, he could not see them as they were. Now 'his delight is in the law of the Lord, and in His law doth he meditate day and night' (verse 2). This is wisdom indeed of which the wise man says, 'Her ways are ways of pleasantness, and all her paths are peace' (Proverbs 3 : 17).

His previous listening to the counsel of the ungodly meant that the wool had been pulled over his eyes so that he could not see to walk in the way of Christ's sheep. But now that he is in the light, wonderful things have happened to him.

Though he had occasionally sat by the rivers of water before, they had done him little good. But now that his life is in harmony with the channel—the Book—through which the river runs, things are different. He is no longer an idle on-looker. He is planted by the river so that he is not only cleansed by the Word, but is made fruitful by it also. His delight in the law of the Lord means that 'he shall be like a tree planted by the rivers of water, that bringeth forth his fruit in his season; his leaf also shall not wither; and whatsoever he doeth shall prosper' (verse 3).

A ROOT OUT OF A DRY GROUND

Strangely enough, none of these things could have happened apart from a root out of a dry ground. It is said of the Lord Jesus that 'He shall grow up before Him as a tender plant, and as a root out of a dry ground!' (Isaiah 53 : 2). This may well refer to our human nature, which He assumed when He came into this world.

But this ground was not always dry. When created it was most fertile, bringing forth much spiritual fruit to the glory of God. For God created man upright, and in His own image. Says a Christian writer, 'Seeing God Himself is "glorious in holiness"' (Exodus 15 : 11), surely that spiritual comeliness which the Lord put upon man at his creation made him a very glorious creature. O how did light shine in his holy conversation to the glory of the Creator! while every action was but the darting forth of the ray and beam of that glorious unmixed light which God had set up in his soul, while that lamp of love, lighted from heaven, continued burning in his heart, as in the holy place; and the law of the Lord, put in his inward parts by the finger of God, was kept by him there, as in the most holy. There was no impurity to be seen without, no squint look in the eyes after any unclean thing; the tongue spoke

nothing but the language of heaven; and, in a word, the King's son was "all glorious within", and his "clothing of wrought gold".

But the scene changed when Adam fell into sin. The light went out in him and in his posterity. The ground of his life became dry, bringing forth no fruit pleasing to God. It became fruitful indeed in things pleasing to man: in art, in literature, in science, in military achievements, in amazing inventions. But with all these things, man remained dry and barren towards God, without spiritual life and would have remained so were it not for the Blessed Man.

THE BLESSED MAN

It is not that the Lord Jesus took the *fallen* nature of the dry ground. He 'was made in the *likeness* of men' (Philippians 2 : 7) without man's sin. His birth, life, death and resurrection were absolutely perfect. It was because of this that the dry ground of our humanity became a fruitful tree, giving life to all who are planted by the rivers of living water.

He is the blessed Man, in whom, by whom, and through whom, we receive eternal life. He is the only Man who from His birth until His entrance into glory never did, in any one instance, in any place, or at any time, walk in the counsel of the ungodly, stand in the way of sinners, or sit in the seat of the scornful. He is the only Man whose delight was always continuously in the law of the Lord, so that it was His meat and drink to do His Father's will. He who by virtue of His Godhead was subject to no law, was 'made under the law, to redeem them that were under the law' (Galatians 4 : 4, 5). He kept perfectly God's holy law for those who could not keep it for themselves.

The leaf of this fruitful tree shall not wither, for whatsoever He has done has prospered, and shall continue to do so; and all who are in Him as branches of the true Vine, shall prosper with Him. Abiding in Him, we bear much fruit, for all who are in the blessed Man are blessed in Him, not only here but throughout the countless ages of eternity.

And, says the beloved disciple, 'He that saith he abideth in Him ought himself also so to walk, even as He walked' (1 John 2 : 6).

The Origin of the Savoy Declaration of Faith

PETER TOON

Though the government (in the person of the Lord Protector, Oliver Cromwell) agreed to the meeting of Congregational elders and ministers at the Savoy Palace in September 1658, the assembly was not directly connected or associated with the civil authority. In contrast, the Westminster Assembly of Divines (1643-48) was appointed by the State and directly responsible to the State. The very appearance of a Congregational assembly in London in 1658 was a remarkable fact which immediately raises the basic question as to the actual origin of the Congregational churches and their initial, rapid expansion. Few people twenty years earlier would ever have thought it possible that such an assembly would meet in England. So before we examine the calling and work of the assembly, we must briefly notice the origin of the churches of the Congregational way.

(a) ORIGINS OF CONGREGATIONAL CHURCHES

There is no simple answer as to how congregational churches came into being, except to say that their members claimed that the gathered church was the true, scriptural form for the local society of Christians. The idea of a church being a community, a society of regenerate Christians bound together in fellowship and covenant, and having its own officers (pastor, teacher, elders and deacons), may be found in the writings and the practice of the early English separatists (Barrow, Greenwood, Johnson and Penry, for example). Not only did these courageous souls want to separate from the State Church, they also wished to be completely free of all State interference. Such activity as gathering a conventicle in the days of Queen Elizabeth I and King James I was illegal and so many of the separatists were thrown into prison; a few escaped to Holland where there was some toleration for separatist Christians. The Church of the Pilgrim Fathers was made up of those who escaped persecution in England.

However, few of the leading Congregationalists of the 1650s wanted to trace their ancestry to the separatists (or 'Brownists' as some called them, after Robert Browne who wrote *A Treatise for Reformation without tarrying for anie* (1582)).

They preferred instead to look to the influence of such men as John Cotton, Hugh Peter, William Bridge, Jeremiah Burroughs, Thomas Goodwin, Sidrach Simpson and Philip Nye. Cotton, minister at Boston in Lincolnshire in the 1620s, came to the conclusion that the New Testament taught that the church was a gathered community of saints meeting in a specific locality. Unlike the separatists, he felt that such a church should exist within the parish structure, and that the pastor of the church should also preach in the 'public place' (the puritan expression for 'the parish church'). In other words, he wanted to preserve a close relationship between Church and State. Cotton's views greatly influenced Goodwin, Nye and others and it was Cotton who first coined the expression 'the Congregational way'.

In the *Apologetical Narration* (1644) the five dissenting brethren (Goodwin, Nye, Simpson, Bridge and Burroughs) presented to the Westminster Assembly of Divines and to the Long Parliament a doctrine of the church very similar to that advocated by Cotton. Further, it was principally through his reading of Cotton's book, *Of the Keyes of the Kingdom of Heaven* (1644), which was published by Goodwin and Nye, that John Owen, who became the leading Congregational divine after 1651, adopted the Congregational way. The same year that saw the publication of Cotton's book saw also the beginnings of the powerful influence of the New Model Army, within which there were many 'gathered' churches of officers and men. These churches represented an approach that stretched from separatism on the one hand to a conservative Congregationalism (like that of Cotton) on the other. At the end of the civil wars the soldiers necessarily brought back into their home-towns their separatist or Congregational thinking, and their generals made known similar views at Westminster in the counsels of government. So Independency (which is a word that covers all types of separatism and Congregationalism) became a powerful force in the nation. That Cromwell himself favoured it, was also a distinct advantage.

(b) A CONGREGATIONAL ASSEMBLY IN 1658. WHY?

The Assembly met after the death of Oliver Cromwell, but since it was planned and approved by him before he died its actual meeting was not connected with his death nor with the political and religious situation that ensued. The only real clues that we have as to why the Congregationalist brethren thought it right to have an assembly are found in the speech which Thomas Goodwin made after the Conference to Richard Cromwell. Part of it went as follows:

The rise of our meeting was at the last Oxford Act [the ceremonies which closed the academic year], where many of us ministers being present (more than at any time before) we appointed September 29 for this our more general meeting at the Savoy, which was made known to and approved by your royal father.

We desired in the first place to clear ourselves of that scandal, which not only some persons at home, but of foreign parts, have affixed upon us, viz. That Independentism (as they call it) is the sink of all heresies and schisms. We have therefore declared what hath been our constant faith and order, to be published to the world. And to shew our harmony with the most orthodox at home and abroad, we have expressed our assent to that Confession of Faith which is the latest and best [Westminster Confession]; the sum of the Confession of all Reformed Churches, to which also the Churches of Scotland and New England have given their assent; namely the Articles of Religion approved and passed by both Houses of Parliament after advice had with the Assembly of Divines, to which Confession for the substance of it, we have unanimously and through the grace of Christ, without the least contradiction, assented and agreed.

We have also with the same unanimity declared in matter of Order (that is, in church constitution and government) and have set forth the main of our Principles and Practice; in which what we differ from our brethren will appear. We have also laid some foundations of agreement with them, which we have from our hearts desired and endeavoured. Here three reasons are adduced for the calling of a conference: first to vindicate the good name of the Congregational brethren and churches; second, to show that in doctrine the Congregational churches were at one with other Reformed Churches; and third, to explain the nature of Congregational church polity. The decade from 1648 to 1658 had seen a proliferation of sects and heresies and the opponents of the Congregational way had seen fit to equate Congregationalism with these. John Owen himself wrote three books during 1657-8 to defend those who practised the Congregational way from the charge of schism. Yet it must be acknowledged that some of the separatists on the left wing of Independency—Fifth Monarchy men, for example—had done the cause a lot of harm by their radical and anarchical activities against the government.

(c) THE ORGANISATION OF THE SAVOY ASSEMBLY

On or about 12 July 1658 a group of Congregational ministers who held places of honour in Cromwell's 'State Church' and who included Owen (Dean of Christ Church), Goodwin (President of Magdalen), and brethren from London and East Anglia met at Oxford to consider, it seems, a general request for a national assembly of representatives (messengers) from the churches. They decided that such a meeting would be in the best interests of the churches and that the place of meeting should be London. To the elders of the churches in London was delegated the actual arrangements of the conference. They in turn authorised George Griffith, preacher at the Charterhouse, to write in their name to leading (i.e. well-known) Congregational ministers throughout the country, in order to ask for their help in making known the assembly to the churches in their counties. (No public directory of churches existed at this stage!)

We know that Griffith wrote his first letter on 20 August and in a week or so all his letters were despatched. Unfortunately no copies are extant. However, Francis Peck in his *Desiderata Curiosa* (1779) prints some of the replies and they came from many English counties as well as from Wales. They were addressed not to Griffith, as one would expect, but rather to Henry Scobell, Clerk to the Council of State. Does this mean that the assembly was government sponsored after all? The answer to this is 'no' and the problem is perhaps resolved by the information that Scobell was an elder of the Congregational church meeting in Westminster Abbey, whose pastor was John Rowe. It seems that Griffith and Scobell agreed to use the government postal system (with the consent of the Protector?) in order to facilitate the receipt of replies from distant places. Many letters would ordinarily have been sent from all parts of the country to the Secretary of the Council of State and a few extra ones in the post would not have caused any administrative difficulty.

This system, however expedient, did have its drawbacks! Vavasor Powell, the Welsh evangelist, to whom Griffith had written, felt obliged to express his views concerning the assembly with some caution, 'not knowing', as he put it, 'to what hands my letter might come or what construction might be put thereon, so near to court'. Indeed, the letters are worthy of study as reflecting some of the concerns and worries of the Congregational ministers in the month of August 1658.

(d) THE ACTUAL WORK OF THE ASSEMBLY

Unfortunately we know little about the way in which the assembly worked. In the preface to the document produced by the assembly we learn that on the first day the messengers 'debated what to pitch upon', that is, what strategy to follow. According to the historian of Puritanism, Daniel Neal, the first day also included prayer and fasting. Probably also, Philip Nye, a man of 'uncommon depth', was chosen chairman. A committee was appointed made up of Thomas Goodwin, Philip Nye, William Bridge, William Greenhill, Joseph Caryl (all members of the Westminster Assembly) and John Owen. Neal tells us that whilst these six 'were employed in preparing and putting together the articles of their confession, the synod heard complaints, and gave advice in several cases which were brought before them, relating to disputes or differences in their churches. The particular heads of doctrine agreed to by the committee were presented to the synod every morning and read by George Griffith, their scribe. There were some speeches and debates upon words and phrases, but at length all acquiesced'.

The work took about 12 days in all and these included two Sundays. On one of these Thomas Jollie, a minister from Lancashire, was the preacher. He described how he 'preached before them with acceptance and found much of God's presence in the meeting, and of His grace in the management of matters from first to last'. Another minister, James Forbes from Gloucester, declared some years later that 'it was a kind of heaven on earth . . . to all who were present. Such rare elaborate speeches my ears never heard before, nor since. We had some days of prayer and fasting, kept from morning till night'.

The statement of faith produced by the committee and approved *nemine contradicente* (no one objecting) by the assembly followed in the main (as Goodwin's speech quoted above makes clear) the *Articles of Religion* approved by the English Parliament in 1647. These were in essence the same as that which we know as the Westminster Confession of Faith; the main difference apart from the title is the absence of Chap. XXX 'Of Church Censures' and Chap. XXXI 'Of Synods and Councils' in the *Articles*. Except in the chapters on 'The Gospel', 'Repentance', 'The Church' and 'The Civil Magistrate' the *Savoy Declaration* follows the *Articles*; virtually twenty-eight chapters are the same in both documents. A study of the chapters which are virtually completely re-

written provides one with some of the distinctive emphases of the Congregational way.

The distinctive emphases of Congregationalism are also clearly stated in the *Declaration of Church Order* which was attached to the *Declaration of Faith* and approved by the assembly. The thirty articles on church order show no dependence on the famous *Cambridge Platform* (1648), the classic statement of New England Congregationalism. Rather they reflect the practice of those English Congregational churches which were closely associated with 'public places' (parish churches), that at Yarmouth, for example, where William Bridge was both town preacher and pastor of the gathered church. Not a few of the ministers at the Savoy Assembly held livings in the Cromwellian State Church and so this had to be reconciled with the doctrine of the gathered church. Article XIV seeks to resolve this by stating that though a Congregational incumbent should preach in the public place and seek to evangelise the parish, he should not be forced to give the sacraments to any but the regenerate. But by statements such as this the assembly declared that it represented the right wing of Independency and spoke for conservative Congregationalism. It did not represent either Arminian Congregationalists (e.g. John Goodwin) or Calvinistic separatists.

(e) EPILOGUE

Copies of the *Declaration* were printed and at the first opportunity Thomas Goodwin led a delegation to present one to the Protector. In the printed version was a preface, written, it is believed, by John Owen. The preface explained the need for a confession of faith and for religious toleration for those who taught orthodox theology. Further, the differences between the *Declaration* and the *Articles of Religion* were explained. There is also a section, which is difficult to interpret, in which Owen explains on what legal basis English Protestant Christianity is based.

Unlike the *Westminster Confession*, the *Savoy Declaration* has never been adopted by any religious denomination. Today few Congregationalists have heard of it; even fewer have read it. One interesting fact, however, remains worthy of mention: according to Iain Murray, *The Puritan Hope* (1971), the chapter 'On the Church in the *Declaration* more faithfully represents puritan eschatological thinking than the equivalent chapter in the *Westminster Confession*. Perhaps, we may

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Doctrinal Definitions

PAUL TUCKER

THE DOCTRINE OF MAN

1. His Origin

Our understanding of the doctrine of man affects our conduct and behaviour. There are two attitudes to the origin of man. There is first of all the attitude of human philosophy which does not accept the biblical testimony but seeks to find an explanation in scientific philosophy and theory. We shall not in our study be concerned with extra-biblical ideas concerning man's origin. We shall therefore concern ourselves with the other approach to this theme, that of the Word of God.

There are the atheists who believe in atheistic evolution. The fact that the world and man exist at all, they say, is just the result of fortuitous arrangement. They speak learnedly of 'natural selection of the species' and 'the survival of the fittest' until finally through interminable ages and changes and processes man at length emerges.

Then there is the theistic evolution. There are philosophers who do not accept the Bible and yet believe in 'the First Cause' as they call it. They do believe in God and teach that He placed a germ in the primordial protoplasm and then in some vague way He superintended it through the millenniums until eventually there existed this being and creature known as man.

The Word of God runs completely counter to both of these attitudes. It dismisses the atheistic evolutionist in the few words, 'The fool hath said in his heart there is no God'. How matter and life can possibly exist without an original cause is surely beyond imagination. Every effect must have some adequate cause. How can anything real and active exist without some creator at the back of it? But what about the theistic evolutionist? Many ministers are theistic evolutionists. They believe God injected the original germ of life, and allowed it to develop in a vague way until ultimately man appeared. They believe that man has evolved from the animal and is related to the ape and the creatures of the earth. That, I think, is the general teaching of our theological colleges, though there are exceptions. Now the Word of God

does not allow for that explanation, but clearly teaches that man is the result of the direct and immediate creatorial handiwork of God. Once we deviate from the teaching of Scripture we find ourselves in great difficulty. Supposing man had come through some process over the millenniums, the first question is at what point did he cease to be an animal and become a man with the image of God upon him? The second problem is that you would not have just one single man emerging but you would have many men emerging at slightly different periods in different eras. Now at what precise point do these creatures cease to be animals and become man made in the image of God? Let us go further. The Bible teaches that man was made upright and perfect, but he fell. But any theory of evolution must teach that man has developed and has not deteriorated. So where are you going to place the fall if you accept even theistic evolution? If you accept evolution you cannot accept the atonement of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. You are compelled to believe in some kind of progression, some kind of development. You must then believe that when a man sins it is just his animal instinct that is being expressed whereas the Bible teaches that man was made holy and upright, that he has sinned and become a rebel against God and is responsible for his conduct. How are you going to account for the Lord Jesus Christ Himself? Is He a product of evolution? There may seem to be certain difficulties in respect of the origin of man but they are more apparent than real. Wherever the Scripture touches upon biology or physiology or human psychology, it is accurate in every detail.

In Genesis we have the Holy Spirit telling us in simple language that God is the Creator. As this Bible is not written for scholars but for sinners, we do not expect some learned treatise at the beginning of Genesis. If that were so then the Bible would be completely unintelligible to the vast majority of people in the world. It is written in simple, holy language so that we can understand, not the intricate details, but the basic truth which it is necessary for us to know.

Now here is one way in which you can prove the scientific accuracy of the early chapters of Genesis. Even the evolutionist, whether he is an atheist or a theist, acknowledges that man is the last and most superior of the species, the last to appear on the scene, the crown and apex of creation. He will tell you that there never will be any creature superior to man upon the earth. Now that is what the Bible tells us. There are two accounts of the creation of man. The liberal theologians, the modernists, say that we have here two contradictory accounts

of the creation. One answer is that in chapter one we have a general statement concerning creation. But in chapter two Moses goes into greater detail and he shows us how God set about creating first a man and then a woman. Again, go back to chapter 1 and you will see that man is set there in relation to the universe. But in chapter 2 there is a detailed account of the physical construction and the spiritual constitution of man.

Now there are one or two things I want to say and the first is—Here in Genesis 1 and 2 we are confronted with the fact of the unique origin of man. Notice the importance of man's creation.

1. *It is the result of a divine council and meeting* (1: 26). Here is God engaged in conversation. There is a council meeting in eternity. This stresses the singular nature of man, for God did not hold a council when thinking in terms of other parts of His creation.

2. *He is the immediate creation of the Triune God.* It was not that he gradually became the creature that he is but that there was a time when he did not exist, and God stepped in and formed and fashioned him and breathed into him and he became a living soul. Three times over in verse 27 of chapter 1 the word 'created' is used. There is this amazing insistence upon the immediacy of the act. N.B. 2 : 7. (We are not to think of pulverised dust; it means the red soil, the clay.) There is this plural usage in verse 26, 'Let us make man in *our* image'. There is no question about it in the light of further revelation. Here is the Triune God at work. To whom is God speaking? Is He speaking to the angels? They were not made in God's image! He is speaking, surely, to the other members in the Godhead. This is stressed in chapter 2 : 7 where in the Hebrew this reads 'lives'.

3. *Man has been created and was originally created in the divine image.* That comes again and again in this account (1 : 26, 27). We have it again in Genesis 9 : 6; 1 Corinthians 11 : 7 and James 3 : 9. Look at these words 'image' and 'likeness'. What do they mean? Most scholars agree that these words are almost interchangeable but there is just a slight variation. Dr. William Evans in his systematic theology has this definition—'Image means the shadow or outline of a figure while likeness denotes the resemblance of that shadow to the figure'. In what sense was man made in the image or likeness of God? It does not mean that man is like God in a physical sense, for the simple reason that God is not physical. God is spirit and dwells in light.

(a) The likeness between man and God is first of all *a mental likeness*. What are the elements of the personality? Thought, emotion, freedom and will. All these qualities belong to God. When man was created, he was created with a knowledge of God. He had a capacity to know God. In the New Testament there is this emphasis upon the image of God and knowledge. See Colossians 3 : 10. When we are born again we are enlightened in our understanding and we come to know God. That is the one great thing that distinguishes man from an animal. A man can know, he has consciousness, he has self-determination, and is capable of knowing God and of having fellowship with God.

(b) *It is a moral likeness*. God is holy and righteous, and when man was created he was created holy and righteous and upright. See Ephesians 4 : 23-24. When we are born again, we have a new nature which is created in righteousness and true holiness and we recover in that new nature what Adam forfeited when he fell into sin, so the divine image is a moral likeness.

(c) *It is a social likeness*. God, with regard to His nature, is a social being. God is triune. 'Whom shall I send and who will go for us?' God is love and manifests His love within the Trinity, the love of the Father for the Son and so on. God so constituted man as to be a social creature, as to need companionship and fellowship, and someone whom he could love, someone who could return and reciprocate that love. In the beginning man's need for companionship was first of all met by his fellowship with God. Then God saw that man needed something on his own level as well, and so woman was made to be a helpmeet. And that is why the family is so important, because every true family on earth is but a reflection of that glorious illustrious family in the Trinity, the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. That is also why, when family life disintegrates in a nation, the very principles of morality are being disrupted and the nation will go down to moral bankruptcy.

(d) *There is a royal likeness*. Man was made to have dominion. God is sovereign, God is the creator, God is almighty, but because man is made in His image and likeness, man too is destined to rule. And all this lust for power among dictators is but a perversion of this inherent original instinct. Man was made to rule over, and not to be in subjection to, the lower orders of creation.

2. The Unity of the Human Race (*Psalm 8 and Hebrews 2*)**I. THE UNITY OF THE RACE**

Strictly speaking, it is not accurate for us to refer to the 'races' of the world, because in God's eyes there is but one race, though there may be many nationalities and divisions of humanity. The teaching of Scripture is that the entire population of the world has sprung from a single parentage (Genesis 1 : 27). The phrase 'replenish the earth' there means 'fill the earth full'. You will see therefore that marriage is an ordinance given before the fall and that family and the intimacy of sexual relationship was something sacred and holy.

You recall there was the flood and there was a vast extermination of many peoples, but God began all over again through Noah. If you turn to Genesis 9 : 18-19 you will notice 'and of them was the whole earth overspread' so that the continuity of the unity of the race from Adam was conserved through the seed of Noah. Many evolutionists are prepared to acknowledge that the human race sprang from one source. There was a time when they were talking about different centres of creation but the tendency today is to speak of the one source from which humanity has sprung. That is the explicit teaching of the Old Testament. It is confirmed by our Lord Jesus Christ in the New Testament. See Matthew 19 : 4. It is declared by the Apostle Paul in Acts 17 : 26 'of one blood all nations of men . . .' There are four major blood groups and the interesting thing is that each group is found in every nationality. It is just a confirmation of the clear teaching of Holy Scripture.

The unity of the race is also proved by universal sin and by the need of salvation. The fact of this unity is the basis of the Apostle Paul's teaching concerning the fall and concerning God's provision of salvation. The whole thought of Paul on this matter is worked out in Romans 5, beginning in verse 12, 'for that all have sinned'. The sin is inherited by all Adam's posterity and death, the consequence of sin, passes upon all men in that all men have sinned. They have all sinned potentially in Adam, they have all sinned actually through an inherited fallen nature which they have expressed because they are the children and descendants of Adam. Again see Romans 5 : 19. This is what the theologians call the solidarity of the human race. You are either in Adam, a partaker of Adam's guilt and condemnation and doom, or else through the new birth and through justification by faith you are taken out of Adam and you are planted in Christ, the last Adam, and you are partaker of Christ's righteousness and holiness

and glory. See also I Corinthians 15 : 22. This emphasises the importance of the unity of the race in respect of this Gospel of salvation.

If there are people outside of Adam, people who came into existence with no relation to Adam, then we may expect them to be in the world without sin because they would not be involved in the fall. But the whole teaching of Scripture is that every man upon the face of the earth is a sinner and is involved in the fall. Again, if there were people who sprang from some source other than the Adamic source, they would not be in need of salvation, and yet the teaching of Scripture is that every man upon the face of this earth is in need of salvation, for 'there is none righteous, no not one', 'there is not a just man upon the earth that doeth good and sinneth not'. So that the whole doctrine of salvation stands or falls in the unity of the race.

II. THE CONSTITUTION OF MAN

What is man? That is a great and important question. What is there about man that marks him out; what are his component parts? There are two particularly erroneous views concerning man in the world today. The first is that man is exclusively material and is just a very highly developed and intelligent animal. But, it teaches, he is just material and physical and nothing more. The Communists, of course, propagate that doctrine. The other erroneous view is that he is divine. And so there are those who teach that man has 'a divine spark' as it is called. They say that he is a child of God by inherent right simply because he is a man. Now according to Scripture these views are both erroneous. Man is more than material. Man is made up of two parts, the physical and the spiritual, and these are brought together in Genesis 2 : 7.

1. *The Material Part of Man.* A chemist has shown that there are sixteen major chemicals in man's body, each of which can be found in the soil. We all know that given enough time the physical body after death does disintegrate and return to dust. Here we see the material aspect. The Bible does not go into detail as to how God fashioned man. How long it took we cannot say. There are those who believe that the 'days' mentioned in Genesis 1 and 2 are days of 24 hours duration. There are others who hold that these days represent a very lengthy period of time and that in chapter 2 the word 'day' is used of the entire week's work (chapter 2 : 4). They point out therefore that this is a flexible term and draw attention to the fact that the sun and moon that govern the 24-hour day were not created until the fourth day. So the day may

constitute a lengthy period. But the emphasis is that God superintended and was responsible for the fashioning of this body so that though man has this relation to the earth, yet he is a lofty creature. See Psalm 139. 'I am fearfully and wonderfully made.' As we go through the Scriptures we find that nowhere is the body minimised.

It was not God's purpose that man should die physically. Death is never regarded in the Scripture on the human level as anything other than a disruption and a disaster because God's purpose for man was not that the soul and the body should be separated. Undoubtedly, had the fall not occurred, man would have been transfigured into something higher and loftier. We read of the tree of life. Man would have partaken of that and lived for ever. Indeed the Gospel itself looks forward to a day when the soul and the body will be reunited at the second coming of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.

2. *The Spiritual Part of Man.* God breathed into man 'the breath of life (Hebrew 'lives'), and man became a living soul'. There are those who say that this simply means that man was animated with the life principle like any other animal. But it must mean more than that! Here surely is a suggestion of the entire Trinity at work, God breathing into man 'the breath of lives', and man sustaining a relationship to each of the members of the Trinity. He is related to the Father who is the Creator, the Lord Jesus who is the Revealer of God and who walked with man in the garden, and the Holy Spirit who takes that temple of clay and makes it a temple for His indwelling. Man died the day he partook of the tree of knowledge of good and evil. He did not die physically but spiritually, but how could he have died spiritually if he was not already alive spiritually? He must have been alive with the Holy Spirit in a unique sense in order to die spiritually.

The whole emphasis here is upon the soul, the spiritual part of man. Bible students question whether a man is bipartite or tripartite. If we think of man from the standpoint of his nature, then he has two parts; he is body and he is soul, or spirit. But if you want to go further and examine the immaterial and spiritual part of man, then that spiritual part of man is spoken of as soul and spirit. See Hebrews 4 : 12; I Thessalonians 5 : 23. If you go through the Scriptures carefully you will find that there are times when the terms soul and spirit are used interchangeably. There are other occasions when it is impossible to distinguish between the functions of the soul and the spirit. Generally speaking, the soul has to do

with the appetites, desires, affections and will, whereas the spirit has to do with the understanding and worship, e.g. I Samuel 18 : 1; Matthew 26 : 38; Luke 12, 'Soul take thine ease, eat, drink and be merry'; Numbers 21 : 5; Job 23 : 13. But when we come to the spirit we find that again and again the spirit in a peculiar way is connected with the mind and understanding. See Job 32 : 8; Isaiah 29 : 24; Proverbs 29 : 11; Ezekiel 11 : 5. We cannot really separate the soul from the spirit, for only God can do that through the two-edged sword of His Word as He searches the depths of our personality. The two are really one, the soul and the spirit go to eternity and the body goes to the grave. A man takes his appetites into eternity. See Luke 16 : 19-31. The rich man took his unbridled passion with him when he went to eternity but there was nothing to gratify it. That's hell!

It is very interesting to notice that when we read of regeneration in the New Testament it is always in the realm of the mind and spirit. 'That which is born of the Spirit is spirit'; 'His Spirit beareth witness with our spirit that we are the children of God'; 'God is Spirit and they that worship Him must worship Him in spirit and in truth'; 'I pray God that your whole spirit and soul and body . . .' That is the divine order. There is a renewed and regenerate spirit that purifies the soul so that there is expressed through the body characteristics and qualities that commend the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ.

The psychology of the fall is very interesting. God breathed into man the breath of lives and Adam, in communion with God and indwelt by the Spirit, found that his whole life was controlled by his spiritual relationship to God. When man sinned the spirit no longer exercised control and the soul assumed the lead. We know that the woman was deceived by the serpent but that Adam was not deceived. Why, then, did he sin with his eyes open? You will remember the excuse he gave to God, 'the woman whom Thou gavest me . . .' Here is his soulish affection. Now it is beginning to dominate. Then he dies in the realm of the spirit and from that moment he is dead to fellowship with God, dead to holiness, to heavenly desires. The soul and passions, corrupted, polluted, are now governing his entire personality. That is true of every unregenerate man or woman. And when we are born again by the Holy Spirit, He comes to us in order to reverse this process, that in the realm of the spirit we may become regenerate, that our affections and desires may be crucified, that the whole life might now once more be brought under the sovereign sway of the Holy Spirit.

'Pastor, What is the Difference?'

W. PAYNE

Today we hear names and titles used in religious circles which have rarely been heard in years. 'Calvinism', 'Arminianism', 'Reformed Theology', 'Hyper-Calvinism', etc., these terms are cropping up in most unexpected places.

There are many reasons to be thankful that interest is being shown by Christian people in these terms, but it is very important that the man in the pew know *what they stand for*, and *how* and *why* they have arisen.

Discerning Christians realise that preachers are sometimes very different in the message they preach and in the methods they use. They hear one man referred to as a 'Calvinist', and another man referred to as an 'Arminian', and many people in our day are beginning to ask, 'Pastor, what is the difference?'

The purpose of this article is to answer that question in some degree. Obviously this is not an exhaustive investigation; it is anything but that. While it will be very apparent which position I accept as one reads through the article, yet this is not an attempt to present biblical evidence for that position; I endeavour to do that in preaching and teaching, and perhaps in other articles. It is simply an attempt to explain, in a way that the average Christian can understand, the origin and significance of some of these terms.

I. THE REFORMATION

In order to have a proper perspective and understanding of these terms which have been mentioned we should go back to the time of the Reformation.

The 16th century witnessed the greatest upheaval in the religious world since the time of Pentecost. What is now usually referred to as the Protestant Reformation took place at that time, and it was an event of tremendous significance. Most evangelical Christians regard the Reformation as a glorious movement brought about by the Spirit of God, and

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give heartfelt thanks for it. The time of the Reformation was indeed a time of great spiritual blessing, and while it was a time of upheaval and debate, and sometimes even of violence, yet it was a time when multitudes were converted to Jesus Christ and brought into the light of the Gospel.

The Reformation is most closely identified with such great men of God as Martin Luther (1483-1546), John Calvin (1509-1564), Huldreich Zwingli (1484-1531), John Knox (1505-1572), etc. The basic desire of these men, and of the Reformation, was to bring the churches back to Apostolic Christianity, from the corruption of Romanism.

One of the 'watchwords' of the Reformation was 'scripture alone'; the Reformers called the people away from Roman tradition and superstition, and back to the Bible, the Word of God, as the only infallible authority for the Christian faith. The Reformation, then, was an attempt to return to Apostolic Christianity, to Apostolic doctrine, to Apostolic preaching, and as such it was greatly blessed of God.

As multitudes were converted through the labours of the Reformers and their helpers, they were established into churches throughout Europe. The need was felt to give expression to the doctrines which the 'reformed churches' (as they were often called) believed and taught, and so the great creeds of the Protestant churches began to appear. The Reformers themselves wrote much concerning the Christian Faith for the instruction and edification of their converts.

Probably the greatest theologian of the Reformation was John Calvin. This man was greatly used of God and his labours were prodigious. He wrote excellent commentaries on almost every book in the Bible, and early in his career wrote the 'Institutes of the Christian Religion', which had a great influence in establishing the young churches of the Reformation. In the 'Institutes' Calvin expounded the major doctrines of the Christian faith, and this great work still remains today as one of the finest expositions of Christian truth.

The Reformation movement was so successful under God's blessing that 'reformed churches' were soon established in most European countries, including England, and though there were many difficulties and upheavals the churches flourished. While there were differences of opinion on matters such as the Lord's Supper, and aspects of church government, the churches of the Reformation were one with respect to the great fundamental truths of the Bible, and especially in those truths relating to God's work in the salvation of men.

The Reformation churches preached a God Who is sovereign, a humanity that is in every part corrupted by sin, and a salvation that is altogether of grace.

II. THE REACTION OF ARMINIUS AND THE SYNOD OF DORT

In the latter part of the 16th century, however, a minister in Amsterdam, Holland, by the name of Jacob Arminius, began preaching certain things that were contrary to the confession of the Reformed churches of his country. Inasmuch as Arminius, like all the other ministers, had pledged to uphold and preach the doctrines set forth in the confession, this was a serious offence, and he was challenged concerning it.

Although he again pledged to uphold the Reformation doctrine it was not long before his preaching revealed that he had departed from the position of the Reformation, especially in the area of God's work in salvation. Great controversy ensued, and although Arminius died in the middle of the conflict his followers continued to promote his teachings in opposition to the confessions of the Reformed churches. The proponents of these anti-Reformation teachings became known as *Arminians*, the name being taken, of course, from Jacob Arminius, and in 1610 they drew up a document in which they set forth five doctrinal 'articles' in the area of soteriology (the doctrine of salvation) exactly opposite to the teaching of the Reformers. These articles were known as the 'five remonstrants'.

The Arminians stated: (1) that God's election was based upon the fact that God 'foresaw' that a man would repent and believe of his own 'free will'; (2) that Christ's death did not actually secure the salvation of any man in particular, but simply made it possible for all men to be saved; (3) the need for regeneration (however, further explanation of this revealed that even here they did not agree with the Reformers as to the nature of regeneration, or the depravity of human nature); (4) that God's grace could be resisted totally; that is, that God might 'try' to convert a man but might fail; and finally, (5) that a Christian might after all be lost again after being once saved.

In 1618 a great council was called in the Dutch town of Dort, in order to examine the teachings of the Arminians in the light of the Word of God. Representatives from all the 'reformed' churches of Europe were present, including a number from England. After more than six months of careful deliberation the 'synod' issued its findings and decision. The teachings of Arminius were shown to be without true biblical foundation, and the 'five remonstrants' were answered by five

articles of scriptural truth set out by the synod. It should be kept in mind that the synod was composed of the finest preachers and theologians of the Protestant world of that day.

The churches of the Reformation declared (1) that man's nature was totally affected by sin, which meant that his will was affected by sin, and was in bondage to his sinful nature, and therefore his salvation did not arise out of his 'free will'; (2) that God's election was not conditioned by foreseen faith in man, but was 'according to the good pleasure of His will'; (3) that Christ's death secured, and made certain, the salvation of the elect, purchasing for them all the gifts (including repentance and faith) that were necessary to it, and that it was restricted in its intent to them only; (4) that God's grace always secured its designed end and (5) that God's elect would persevere in faith and holiness unto the end, they being kept by the power of God.

It is important to notice that these were not new teachings but the doctrines upon which the Reformation had been built. Just as the teaching of Arminius became known as Arminianism, so the position of the reformed churches and the synod of Dort became known as 'Calvinism', and the five articles that were presented in opposition to the new teaching of Arminius became known as the 'five points of Calvinism'.

Calvin's name was linked with these doctrines simply because he was the foremost theologian of the Reformation movement and had most ably and systematically set forth the biblical doctrines preached by the Reformers. These doctrines did not originate with him; they come directly from the Word of God itself, and they had been ably expounded centuries before the Reformation by the great Augustine.

III. CALVINISM

The five points of Calvinism simply set forth the work of the Triune God in the salvation of sinners—election by the Father, redemption by the Son, regeneration by the Spirit. These great truths are flanked by the need of salvation, the total depravity and inability of man, and the result of God's work in the soul of man, i.e., perseverance in the faith. *Thus they deal with the very heart of the gospel and the Christian faith.* Calvinism sets forth the sovereignty of God in man's salvation, without detracting from man's responsibility. Arminianism presents man's will as sovereign, and divides the credit for salvation between God and man.

Dr. J. I. Packer states:

'The difference between them (Calvinism and Arminianism) is not primarily one of emphasis, but of content. One

proclaims a God who saves: the other speaks of a God who enables man to save himself. One view (Calvinism) presents the three great acts of the Holy Trinity for the recovering of lost mankind—election by the Father, redemption by the Son, calling by the Spirit—as directed towards the same persons, and as securing their salvation infallibly. The other view (Arminianism) gives each act a different reference (the objects of redemption being all mankind, of calling those who hear the gospel, and of electing those hearers who respond), and denies that any man's salvation is secured by any of them. The two theologies thus conceive the plan of salvation in quite different terms. One makes salvation depend on the work of God, the other on a work of man; one regards faith as part of God's gift of salvation, the other as man's own contribution to salvation; one gives all the glory for saving believers to God, the other divides the praise between God, who, so to speak, built the machinery of salvation, and man who, by believing, operated it.' (Introductory essay to *The Death of Death*, by J. Owen.)

It is not the purpose of this article to attempt to prove the scripturalness and the truth of Calvinism. This has been done ably by preachers and scholars down through the years.

'Calvinism', then, is simply a 'nickname' for the biblical teaching of the Reformation, and especially the 'five points' already referred to. Because it is simply a setting forth of the teaching of the Reformers, Calvinism is also known as 'Reformed Theology'. Arminianism, however, is a reaction against that teaching, and a denial of the five points.

It is simply a fact of history that 'Calvinism' has been the heart and marrow of the teaching of the great Protestant denominations in Christendom, with the exception of the Wesleyan Methodists. The Lutheran denomination might also prefer to be included in the exception, but it should be realised that in following Melancthon in his 'synergistic' theology they departed from Luther's conviction, as his writings and their earliest creed reveal. The great historic doctrinal confessions of the churches, such as the Presbyterian Westminster Confession, and the Baptist Second London Confession, give clear testimony to the truths of 'Calvinism'. The 39 Articles of the Anglican church have a definite 'Calvinistic' emphasis. The majority of the greatest evangelists, preachers, and theologians who have graced the Christian church have all rejoiced in a clearly preached Calvinism.

Apart from the Reformers already mentioned, we think of such men as Hugh Latimer, John Owen, Joseph Alleine, John Bunyan, Jonathan Edwards, George Whitefield, David Brainerd, William Carey, Charles Spurgeon, Horatius Bonar, Murray McCheyne, and a host of others. These men, on fire for God, and mightily used of God, had grasped the glorious biblical truths nicknamed Calvinism. We are reminded of a statement by Spurgeon, when he once said:

“It is no novelty, then, that I am preaching; no new doctrine. I love to proclaim these strong old doctrines that are called by nickname Calvinism; but which are surely and verily the revealed truth of God as it is in Christ Jesus. By this truth I make a pilgrimage into the past, and as I go, I see father after father, confessor after confessor, martyr after martyr, standing up to shake hands with me. Were I a Pelagian, or a believer in the doctrine of free-will, I should have to walk for centuries all alone. Here and there a heretic, of no very honourable character, might rise up and call me brother. But taking these things to be the standard of my faith, I see the land of the ancients peopled with my brethren, I behold multitudes who confess the same as I do, and acknowledge that this is the religion of God’s own church.” (Sermon on Election from the text of 2 Thessalonians 2 : 13, 14.)

The only group of any consequence who historically were not Calvinists were the Wesleyan Methodists, and they adopted a modified form of Arminianism.

Sad to say, however, it has often been the case that men have let slip their grasp on truth with the passing of generations. This is true as we consider the last few centuries. Arminianism is much more palatable to the natural mind; it is not as crushing to human pride; it is much nicer and easier medicine to take from man’s viewpoint!

In the 18th and 19th centuries the Christian church received great onslaughts from rationalism and humanism, and in grappling with the new challenges from these foes, foolishly let slip the strong old doctrines of the church. Arminianism gained the ascendancy in many of the great denominations and the old faith was well nigh abandoned except for a ‘remnant’. For the past 100 years the great truths of ‘Calvinism’ have been virtually forgotten by the evangelical world, though with some notable exceptions, but there are hopeful signs that God is reviving His truth again and bringing many to realise that the man-centred teachings of Arminius are no

substitute for the truth which our forefathers so gloriously declared.

As we have already stated, because Calvinism was the teaching of the Reformation it is often called 'Reformed Theology', and because of its emphasis on the grace of God it is often called the *Doctrines of Grace*. Calvinism, Reformed Theology, and the Doctrines of Grace, are all the same thing, and present the truth of God's sovereignty in every sphere, and particularly in the sphere of salvation. Steele and Thomas¹ present a very helpful table to enable us to compare the two systems:

THE FIVE POINTS OF ARMINIANISM

1. *Free will or human ability.* Although human nature was seriously affected by the Fall, man has not been left in a state of total spiritual helplessness. God graciously enables every sinner to repent and believe, but He does so in such a manner as not to interfere with man's freedom. Each sinner possesses a free will, and his eternal destiny depends on how he uses it. Man's freedom consists in his ability to choose good over evil in spiritual matters; his will is not enslaved to his sinful nature. The sinner has the power to either co-operate with God's Spirit and be regenerated, or resist God's grace and perish. The lost sinner needs the Spirit's assistance but he does not have to be regenerated by the Spirit before he can believe, for faith is man's act and precedes the new birth. Faith is the sinner's gift to God; it is man's contribution to salvation.

2. *Conditional Election.* God's choice of certain individuals to salvation before the foundation of the world was based upon His foreseeing that they would respond to His call. He selected only those whom He knew would of themselves freely believe the gospel. Election therefore was determined by or conditional upon what man would do. The faith which God foresaw and upon which He based His choice was not given to the sinner by God (it was not created by the regenerating power of the Holy Spirit), but resulted solely from man's free will. It was left entirely up to man as to who would be elected unto salvation. God chose those whom He knew would, of their own free will, choose Christ. Thus the sinner's choice of Christ, not God's choice of the sinner, is the ultimate cause of salvation.

3. *Universal Redemption or General Atonement.* Christ's redeeming work made it possible for everyone to be saved

¹ *Calvinism Defined, Defended, Documented*, Presbyterian and Reformed Publishing Company.

but did not actually secure the salvation of anyone. Although Christ died for all men, only those who believe in Him are saved. His death enabled God to pardon sinners on the condition that they believe, but it did not actually put away anyone's sins. Christ's redemption becomes effective only if man chooses to accept it.

4. *The Holy Spirit can be Effectually Resisted.* The Spirit calls inwardly all those who are outwardly called by the Gospel invitation. He does all that He can to bring every sinner to salvation. But inasmuch as man is free, he can successfully resist the Spirit's call. The Spirit cannot regenerate the sinner until he believes. Faith (which is man's contribution) precedes and makes possible the new birth. Thus man's free will limits the Spirit in the application of Christ's saving work. The Holy Spirit can only draw to Christ those who allow Him to have His way with them. Until the sinner responds, the Spirit cannot give life. God's grace, therefore, is not invincible; it can be, and often is, resisted and thwarted by man.

5. *Falling from Grace.* Those who believe and are truly saved can lose their salvation by failing to keep up their faith, etc. Not all Arminians have been agreed on this point, some have held that believers are eternally secure in Christ—that once a sinner is regenerated he can never be lost.

THE FIVE POINTS OF CALVINISM

1. *Total Depravity or Total Inability.* Because of the Fall, man is unable of himself to savingly believe the gospel. The sinner is dead, blind and deaf to the things of God; his heart is deceitful and desperately corrupt. His will is not free, it is in bondage to his sinful nature, therefore he will not—indeed he cannot—choose good over evil in the spiritual realm. Consequently it takes much more than the Spirit's assistance to bring a sinner to Christ—it takes regeneration by which the Spirit makes the sinner alive and gives him a new nature. Faith is not something that man contributes to salvation, but is itself a part of God's gift of salvation—it is God's gift to the sinner, not the sinner's gift to God.

2. *Unconditional Election.* God's choice of certain individuals unto salvation before the foundation of the world rested solely in His own sovereign will. His choice of particular sinners was not based on any foreseen response or obedience on their part, such as faith, repentance, etc. On the contrary, God gives faith and repentance to each individual whom He selected. These acts are the result, not the cause, of God's choice. Election therefore was not conditioned upon

any virtuous quality or act foreseen in man. Those whom God sovereignly elected He brings through the power of the Spirit to a willing acceptance of Christ. Thus God's choice of the sinner, not the sinner's choice of Christ, is the ultimate cause of salvation.

3. *Particular Redemption or Limited Atonement.* Christ's redeeming work was intended to save the elect only, and actually secured salvation for them. His death was a substitutionary endurance of the penalty of sin in the place of certain specified sinners. In addition to putting away the sins of His people, Christ's redemption secured everything necessary for their salvation including faith which unites them to Him. The gift of faith is infallibly applied by the Spirit to all for whom Christ died, thereby guaranteeing their salvation.

4. *The Efficacious Call of the Spirit or Irresistible Grace.* In addition to the outward general call which is made to everyone who hears the Gospel, the Holy Spirit extends to the elect a special inward call that inevitably brings them to salvation. The external call (which is made to all without distinction) can be, and often is, rejected; whereas the internal call (which is made only to the elect) cannot be rejected; it always results in conversion. By means of this special call the Spirit irresistibly draws sinners to Christ. He is not limited in His work of applying salvation by man's will, nor is He dependent on man's co-operation for success. The Spirit graciously causes the elect sinner to co-operate, to believe, to repent, to come freely and willingly to Christ. God's grace therefore is invincible; it never fails to result therefore in the salvation of those to whom it is extended.

5. *Perseverance of the Saints.* All who were chosen by God, redeemed by Christ, and given faith by the Spirit are eternally saved. They are kept in faith by the power of Almighty God and thus persevere to the end.

A Calvinist, then, is one who accepts and preaches these 'five points' as setting forth biblical truth in those areas dealt with. However, it is a sad fact that in our day (when, it must be acknowledged, a great deal of ignorance abounds in the area of theology and church history) that people who teach these 'five points' are often branded as 'Hyper-Calvinists' and this term is used as a strong reproach.

IV. HYPER-CALVINISM

Therefore we need to ask, *What is a 'Hyper-Calvinist'?*

The word 'Hyper' indicates a 'going beyond', 'further than the proper bounds'; it indicates an extreme, beyond the norm; and indeed there is such a thing as Hyper-Calvinism, but this can hardly be an acceptance and preaching of the 'five points',

for looking historically and accurately at Calvinism the 'five points' are the norm.

In a very real sense Arminianism and Hyper-Calvinism share a basic factor in common. They both try to apply human logic to the divine revelation. The Arminian reasons this way—'because men are commanded to repent and believe the gospel, they must therefore have the ability within themselves to do so' (they fail to apply the same logic to God's command to men to keep His law). From this bad logic they derive their doctrine of free will. The Hyper-Calvinist reasons this way—'because men do not have the ability within themselves to repent and believe the gospel, therefore there is no point in commanding them to do so'. Both these groups are correct until they get to their 'therefore', and then human logic and deduction takes over; but unfortunately they go beyond what is revealed in the Scriptures.

The Calvinistic, biblical position takes the truth from both these statements and holds them both without trying to make them 'logical'. Men are commanded to repent and believe the gospel, and they are responsible to God to do so; men are unable in and of themselves to repent and believe because of their sinful nature. This is the dilemma into which the grace of God enters, according to His purpose of election, and by the mighty power of the Spirit, those for whom Christ died are made alive, and brought by the gospel to repentance and faith in the Saviour. This is the miracle of God's salvation!

The Hyper-Calvinist grasps the truth of man's inability, and the truth that God will certainly save His elect, but he wrongly deduces from this that there is therefore no necessity to preach the gospel to every creature, and to engage in efforts to reach the lost.

His 'logic' in going beyond the Scriptures brings him into an unbiblical position where he ceases to see the necessity of using God-ordained 'means' to produce the God-ordained goals. This sad fact often produces a lack of evangelistic zeal and missionary activity among Hyper-Calvinists, and a lack of compassion for the lost.

Coupled with this fact we may say that the Hyper-Calvinist not only does not see the necessity for preaching the gospel to every creature, but considers it wrong to urge repentance and faith upon sinners indiscriminately. It is sometimes expressed this way, that the Hyper-Calvinist does not believe in 'duty faith' and 'duty repentance'; he does not believe that all men should be invited to come to Christ. In contrast to this, the historic Calvinist does most certainly believe that it is the duty

and responsibility of all men to repent and believe even though they have, through sin, lost the ability to do so; and the Calvinist does not hesitate to bid all men everywhere to repent, and to invite every man to trust the Saviour.

True Calvinism therefore is not opposed to evangelism and missionary activity, for it recognises that the elect must be saved through the gospel, and like Paul, the Calvinist puts the question "How shall they hear without a preacher?" Again, if it is the duty of all men to repent and believe, then all men must be told of this responsibility. The fact that true Calvinism is not opposed to evangelism and missionary work is attested to by the great names of history who have gone to the ends of the earth to proclaim the gospel and who were Calvinistic in their theology. The names of John Eliot, David Brainerd, John Paton, William Carey and George Whitefield suffice to make the point.

Hyper-Calvinism is also characterised by the view that God's decree of election is viewed without reference to the Fall of man, that is, the Hyper-Calvinist believes that God created some men with the express purpose of damning them simply as creatures, and not as sinful, fallen creatures.

Historic Calvinism, on the other hand, has always presented God's decree of election as a most gracious decree against the background of the Fall of man. Out of a race already on the way to hell because of its own sin, God graciously wills to choose a great multitude out of sheer mercy and grace. God does not damn men for nothing, says Calvinism; He damns them because of their sin.

Another characteristic that has been seen in some (though not all) Hyper-Calvinists is 'Antinomianism'. This word means 'against or opposed to the law'. It represents the idea that the moral law is not binding on the Christian, and some have indeed claimed to be God's elect, and on the basis of this claim have then proceeded to live as they pleased, disregarding the Word of God and bringing great reproach on the cause of truth.

Historic Calvinism, following the Bible as its guide, has also insisted that the fact of election is always revealed in holiness of life, and has strongly condemned the antinomianism of some Hyper-Calvinists.

Other factors might be added, but enough has been said to show that Hyper-Calvinism is as distinct from Historic Calvinism as is Arminianism. They are both extreme positions, though of course opposite extremes; they are both departures from the biblical position, and both suffer from the

insistence of applying human logic where human logic has no right to be!

V. WHAT DIFFERENCE DOES IT MAKE?

The question often asked is, what difference does it make? While I certainly would not advocate Christians breaking off fellowship over these matters, we must recognise that it does make a difference which view one takes.

We may say immediately that it matters simply from the viewpoint that God's people should be concerned to know the true doctrine of the Word of God. Every true Christian should want to know what the Bible really teaches, and should approach the Scriptures in a submissive spirit, ready to accept all that is plainly revealed. Our problem is that often we are prepared to believe only what we want to believe. We ought not to approach the Bible with the attitude 'what do I like best, what appeals to me?' but 'what saith the scriptures?' It is our duty as Christians to study the scriptures and to receive all their teaching.

However, it matters further in that our doctrinal viewpoint will generally affect our attitude to God. A grasp of Reformed Theology will give a person a proper sense of the majesty of God. It has been said that a Calvinist is one who has 'seen God'. The one who said that was not inferring a physical sight or vision, but meant that with the 'eyes of the understanding' he had perceived the greatness of God. His soul had been overwhelmed with the consciousness of God's glory. Reformed teaching presents God as being truly 'high and lifted up', and the one who has grasped these great biblical truths stands in awe of a sovereign God, a God of awesome holiness, of infinite power, of solemn majesty, before whom he and all creation must bow in deep reverence and humble adoration.

The truth of sovereign grace produces a spirit of reverence in the soul; it instills a right fear of God; not a fear in the sense of terror which would drive us away from God's presence, but fear in the sense of sonlike reverence and respect. This is the kind of fear which produces good behaviour in the house of God, and which causes a person to hate the idea of sinning against such a God. I suggest that this right attitude towards God is sadly lacking in many churches today, and I suggest that this is related to the fact that the old doctrines calculated to produce it have been forsaken or neglected.

Furthermore, an understanding of the doctrines of grace will produce a profound thankfulness for our salvation that nothing else can. This is not to say that an Arminian is not thankful for his salvation; God forbid. But one who sees these things

from an Arminian standpoint must always be conscious (if he is a thinking person) that some of the credit can rightly go to him. While God provided salvation, it was his (the sinner's) decision that really clinched the deal; it was his right exercise of his independent will which ultimately saved him. The difference between him and those who are lost is not something which God did, but something he did.

The Calvinist cannot agree to such assertions; he sees his salvation as 'all of grace'. It was God who saved him from first to last—God the Father by choosing him, God the Son by redeeming him, God the Spirit by quickening him. While recognising the necessity to believe, and knowing that we are justified by faith, the Calvinist realises that even that faith was the very gift of God to him. He sees the blood of Christ as not just making salvation possible, but as actually securing his salvation—he sees Christ bearing all his sins, standing in his room and stead, and fully satisfying God's righteous claims against him. He is overwhelmed by the glory of the cross and like Toplady he cries:

From whence this fear and unbelief?
Hast Thou, O Father, put to grief
Thy spotless Son for me?
And will the righteous judge of men
Condemn me for that debt of sin
Which, Lord, was laid on Thee?

If Thou hast my discharge procured,
And freely in my room endured
The whole of wrath divine,
Payment God cannot twice demand,
First at my bleeding Surety's hand
And then again at mine.

Complete atonement Thou hast made,
And to the utmost farthing paid
Whate'er Thy people owed;
How then on me can wrath take place,
If sheltered in Thy righteousness
And sprinkled with Thy blood?

Turn then, my soul, unto thy rest;
The merits of thy great High Priest
Speak peace and liberty;
Trust in His efficacious blood,
Nor fear thy banishment from God,
Since Jesus died for thee.

The Calvinist recognises that God could justly have left him in his sins; He could have passed him by and left him to suffer the just rewards of his sins; but instead, in saving mercy, He 'commanded the light to shine in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ'. Thus a grasp of these truths prostrates the soul before God 'lost in wonder, love and praise', that such a God should sovereignly save such a sinner!

It makes a difference also in that a grasp of the doctrines of grace causes the believer to give equal glory to each of the persons of the Trinity for their work in the plan of salvation.

The dominance of Arminian theology in our generation has produced great emphasis on the work of the Son (which in itself is a good thing, of course), but it has almost totally overlooked the work of the Father and the Holy Spirit, and this is not good. Our God is the Triune God, and we must honour the Father and the Spirit, just as we honour the Son, or else we grieve the Lord God.

Because the Father's prerogative in election has been denied, and the Spirit's work in regeneration has been greatly perverted, the honour and glory due to these divine persons is not given. Biblical Calvinism, presenting the harmonious working of the Trinity in salvation, gives due emphasis to the Father's work of election, the Son's work in redemption, and the Spirit's work in regeneration. Thus we are caused to admire the wisdom and the greatness of the Triune God, and His marvellous salvation.

VI. EVANGELISM

It matters what position we take on this issue when it comes to the work of evangelism.

Arminianism has a tendency to drive men to methods, while Calvinism drives men to God. If it is God who sovereignly saves people through the use of His truth, then the need is for us to make known the truth, to get it out to everyone we can, and fervently to seek God's face for the supernatural power of His Spirit to apply His truth to the hearts of sinners.

However, if we are persuaded that 'God has done all He can', that 'God can do no more', and that 'it is now all up to you', then we are going to spend our time thinking more about men than about God. Our thoughts will centre on how we can persuade that sinner to take the necessary independent step that he must take before God can help him. The sinner must be persuaded to 'allow God' the chance to come in and do something. So the average modern evangelical, motivated (perhaps unknowingly) by Arminianism, is constantly looking

for 'new soul-winning methods' and techniques by which the sinner may be persuaded. Obviously if God can do no more, and the sinner must be persuaded to 'allow God', then why waste time praying to God to do something which we've already concluded He cannot do? And so our attention, instead of being taken up with God, is taken up with men and methods.

There will be a great difference in the preaching of one who believes as we have just described, and the one who preaches in the assurance that the Spirit of God will do His own work of applying Christ's redemption to God's elect in His own time and way; and that the Spirit, and only the Spirit, by means of the truth, can open blind eyes, unstop deaf ears, and cause men to repent and believe the gospel.

Still thinking in the field of evangelism, an understanding of the truth of Calvinism will keep a person from superficial views of conversion, and from this angle the position we take will make a difference.

Arminianism, with its emphasis on the ability of the human will and man-devised methods, has come to view salvation solely in terms of a 'decision'. This 'decision' is usually registered by responding to an 'altar call', or going through a given procedure in a counselling room, and once this decision is registered it is confidently asserted that another soul has been born again. But the appalling 'drop-out' rate in modern evangelicalism; the omission of vital aspects of truth (e.g. depravity and repentance); the evident lack of conviction of sin, and many other things cause one to wonder if this truly is biblical conversion. Or have we, because of our desire to appear successful, deceived ourselves into accepting a sub-standard 'Christianity' which will not stand up under the searching eye of the Word of God, and which will avail nothing in the day of judgment?

Calvinism will deliver one from such superficial views of conversion, for it sees conversion not simply in terms of a 'decision', but as the work of the Spirit of God, first of all convincing of sin, enlightening the mind in the knowledge of Christ, and then renewing the will so that the sinner receives the whole Christ as Saviour and Lord. Furthermore, Calvinism insists on evidence in the life as the great test of the reality of the profession. It is by our fruits, not by our decision, that we must be known. Historic biblical Calvinism has always strongly emphasised human responsibility, the responsibility of a sinner to repent and believe the gospel; but it also emphasises the necessity of a divine work within the soul, and the

absolute necessity of the evidence of this being seen in the life.

In modern evangelism, when a 'firm decision' is recorded, although the subsequent life reveals nothing of the 'new creature in Christ', it is regarded as almost a heresy to suggest that regeneration has not taken place. Rather a number of theories are invented to explain this unfortunate state. But to insist firmly that the person is not a Christian is unthinkable! This sad situation simply confirms the deluded souls in their unrenewed state, assuring them that heaven is theirs, while they are on the broad road that leads to destruction.

One of the crying needs of the hour is for evangelicals to return to a biblical view of conversion. It will be a humbling procedure, for we will have to acknowledge that we are not enjoying the great blessing that we have perhaps been claiming, and that our churches are not experiencing the mighty ministry of the Spirit as we would like to think.

Finally, let me say that our viewpoint in this matter will make a difference with respect to our perseverance in the Lord's service. All evangelical Christians admit that the service of Christ, though glorious, is not easy. There are disappointments and discouragements. Many a Christian worker has given up because of these things, and in these circumstances Arminianism has no comfort to offer, for nothing is assured. Success hangs in the balance. The stubborn human will may frustrate our every effort!

But the truths of sovereign grace are a great comfort to the Christian worker. He knows that 'no man can come unto me except the Father which hath sent me draw him'; but he also knows that 'all that the Father hath given me shall come unto me'. It was the truth of sovereign grace, for instance, that enabled Paul to persevere in the difficult work in Corinth, for God had told him 'be not afraid but speak; and hold not thy peace; for I am with thee, and no man shall set on thee to hurt thee for I have much people in this city' (Acts 18 : 9f). We labour, knowing that the Father has given a people to His Son, and that through the witness and labours of God's people, under the blessing of God's Spirit, Christ 'shall see of the travail of His soul and be satisfied'. Victory is assured because the outcome depends, not on man's will, but on God's will. As Martin Luther wrote:

And though this world with devils filled,
Should threaten to undo us,
We will not fear for God hath willed
His truth to triumph through us.

We live in a world that has been conditioned to want the spectacular and the dramatic. This, we are told, is the 'now generation'. They want instant results!

We openly confess that the Calvinistic viewpoint seems to be in contrast to this. The patient exposition of scriptural truth is far less dramatic than great campaigns and 'scintillating evangelists'. Leaving the Spirit of God to fulfil His ministry is far less spectacular than being able to publish lists of decisions! Yet it is the conviction of this writer that, in the long run, the well-being and spiritual health of the Church of Christ at large depends on a return to the doctrines of grace and the proclamation of them in the power of the Spirit throughout the world.

Like the Reformers, we need to come back to the Bible, and all the Bible, and the Bible alone. We need a return to biblical theology and biblical preaching. May God revive His truth in these days, and may He be pleased to revive His work.

Concluded from page 61

Who has the holiness for such a task? The flame of God coming upon the disciples is a reminder of the purifying work of the Spirit. The tongues speak of the worldwide diffusion of the gospel, committing every one of us to the task of so living, so praying, so working, that this gospel shall be made known to the far ends of the earth, so that by God's grace it may become gloriously true

'Jesus shall reign where'er the sun
Doth his successive journeys run.'

O that God in His mercy might again upon the church today, in our need and in our weakness and our barrenness, pour out His Holy Spirit.

Concluded from page 70

conclude, the drafting committee at the Savoy were more able eschatologists than was the committee in the Jerusalem Chamber at Westminster.

FOOTNOTE: The Savoy Declaration has been reprinted (with an extract from the original preface by John Owen) by Evangelical Press in conjunction with the Evangelical Fellowship of Congregational Churches. It costs 15p and is obtainable from 136 Rosendale Road, London, S.E.21.

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