

Editorial

At long last this issue of the magazine is ready for its readers! Please accept my apologies for the delay. It is hoped that the next issue will be sent out by the target publication date (i.e. the end of January for the January/February issue).

This issue brings us to the end of our first year of publication. It has certainly been an interesting and sometimes testing experience for those involved in writing and producing this periodical. There have been various challenges along the way, but we are grateful for the encouraging comments, letters and e-mails we have received.

One test of the value of this magazine will come as the first of the subscription renewal requests go out. Hopefully they will all be returned and our readers will continue with us for another year! We need to almost double the number of subscribers before we will be breaking even financially. We are therefore very grateful to those who have supported this ministry with their gifts, enabling us to continue publication without an excessive increase in the subscription rate.

We invite readers to share with us their suggestions for topics which might be covered in these pages, and their ideas for ways in which the magazine could be made more useful and its circulation increased.

With Christmas rapidly approaching, I have been thinking a little about the words of God recorded in Mark 1:11, where He spoke from heaven saying, "This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased." These words of the Father overflow with wondrous meaning when considered in the light of the gospel. They display a love that is wider and deeper than our feeble minds can grasp. What love the Father of all has for this unique Son! No earthly father comes close to matching this love; no human mother dare compare the love she has for her child to the unsearchable reachness of the Father's love for the Son.

John the Baptist's heart must have been moved within him as he heard these words of love breathed from above - the living God declaring the great pleasure He had in the work His Son was doing and the life He was living. What a privilege to have heard those words - much greater than the mighty words of the law thundered from Sinai are these tender words of love spoken beside Jordan's waters.

In these words, the Father expressed the fact He was well pleased that Jesus had taken on human flesh; He was well pleased that Jesus had lived a perfect life thus far; He was well pleased that Jesus had identified Himself with sinners through baptism; He was well pleased that Jesus was fulfilling His representative role as Saviour of sinners. God the Father was well pleased with what His beloved Son had done, was doing and would in the future do. He was following the plan of salvation without which no-one would be saved.

As a Christian are you able to say, "This is my beloved Saviour, in whom I am well pleased"? Have you meditated upon the greatness, goodness and love of Christ towards sinners? Have you wondered that, being in Christ, you are a beloved child of the Father and He is well pleased with you? Does your life reflect your gratitude to Him?

May the Lord bless us over this holiday season with a greater understanding of His love for us in Christ Jesus, and may the coming year provide many opportunities for us to show our love for Him.

News

Bethel Baptist Reformed Church, Tauranga

2001 has been a testing year for Bethel Baptist. Several people moved away from Tauranga for various reasons, a loss that was a blow to a small church. Most significant was Trevor Keam (a founding member) and wife Susan, who left for Auckland and Grace Theological College where Trevor is currently studying. However he has returned every 6 weeks or so to assist in the preaching. There are still 7-8 regular adults plus 5 young children, and they have welcomed visitors from other centres who have joined them when passing through. Although numbers have been small they have been encouraged in God's Word week by week.

Morning services are held regularly every Sunday, and meetings are now held in homes. During the past year Andrew Kerkham began a series on Isaiah, covering chapters 1-11, then began a series on Mark's Gospel. Douglas Murray continued preaching through James. There were also various visiting preachers through the year.

During the Wednesday night prayer and Bible studies, the series on the 1689 Confession was completed in October. Al Martin tapes have also been used. These meetings are now held fortnightly.

Anyone visiting Tauranga is encouraged to join with the fellowship, and details of venues can be obtained from Andrew Kerkham, tel. (07) 544-5375, e-mail akerkham@xtra.co.nz.

Prayer Points

- New people to come and join
- Encouragement and perseverance

Sourced from BBRC Annual Report - October 2001

Trinity Reformed Baptist Church, Hamilton - Annual Church Camp

Friday, 16th - Sunday, 18th November 2001

Trinity's annual camp has been running now for 5 years, held at the Pirongia Forest Park Lodge with its panoramic views of the Waikato countryside. Each year the camp has also attracted some families from the surrounding regions. This year it included some families from Auckland and the Good family from Wellington, as well as those from Trinity.

The aim of the camp is to provide a relaxed atmosphere where people can get to know each other better away from the hustle and bustle of normal weekly routines. The camp aims to cater for the whole family, and so attracts a wide range of children from toddlers through to teenagers (all of whom make the most of the open spaces!). As a result, there is a lot of time for informal activities, such as: bush walks, a flying fox, trampoline, 'no-rules' volley ball, reading, chit chatting, etc.

A highlight of the camp is the Saturday night 'concert' where people can bring along items or skits to present. The pick of the bunch this year was undoubtedly the sleeping-bag imitation of a car wash by some of the teenagers - which sort of disintegrated towards the end (ask someone who saw it!).

Bible studies are held in an informal guided discussion approach, based on questions about a text. This year the topics were "Fellowship with God" and the "Bible". The format is good in that the older children can participate. A mini service is also held on the Sunday morning.

There was some discussion as to where the venue could be for 2002. It was decided to try for a Raglan camp near the beach that would also provide catering. It is hoped we can book

it for late November. Wherever the venue, you are warmly invited to join us in the 6th camp in 2002.

Update on the Burnhams

In the last issue we made reference to Kidnapped missionaries in the Philippines. New Tribes Mission is encouraged but concerned after viewing a recent video of Martin and Gracia Burnham. NTM reports:

“The video, taken by a Philippine reporter, has been made available to the families of the Burnhams. We are encouraged by Martin and Gracia’s expressions of faith and confidence in the Heavenly Father, but their deteriorating health is of deep concern. They appear weak and weary from the six-month ordeal in the hands of rebel extremists... The members of the NTM Crisis Management Team are working tirelessly for Martin and Gracia’s soon release. The families as well as the NTM Crisis Management Team in Manila appreciate your prayers.”

Martin and Gracia, both 42, were kidnapped on 27 May 2001 by Abu Sayyaf from

the island of Palawan in the Philippines. Martin grew up in the Philippines, where his parents have been missionaries for more than 32 years. Gracia is from Kansas. They have been members of NTM since 1985.

Source: *New Tribes Mission web site*
<http://www.ntm.org>

Grace Baptist Mission in Peru

Issue 4 of this magazine carried a feature on Grace Baptist Mission work in Peru. The team there has been able to do much to help the victims of the earthquake on 23 June, particularly those in rural areas where the government is doing little to help. However, GBM reports that the team is facing serious difficulties and Satan seems to be attacking. Please pray that these difficulties will be quickly overcome and problems within the team resolved, so that the work may not be hindered.

Source: *GBM Hot News cassette, November 2001*

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Combined Churches' Fellowship & Study Day

A REPORT BY STEPHEN SMITH

Christians from the two South Island Reformed Baptist Churches and the Evangelical Presbyterian Churches in Christchurch and Ashburton gathered in Ashburton on Saturday 6 October for a time of learning from God's word and fellowship together. This eighth Fellowship & Study Day included three sessions - theology, church history and a preaching session.

The importance of Providence

John LeEVERS of MarchwiEL Reformed Baptist Church in Timaru led the theology session by considering question eleven from Spurgeon's Catechism. This asks, "What are God's works of providence?" Answer. "God's works of providence are his most holy, wise, and powerful preserving and governing all his creatures, and all their actions". The doctrine of providence is of most importance - especially considering recent world events. We learnt that providence in a nutshell is God's maintaining and controlling His creation. Hebrews 1:3 tells us He upholds all things by the word of His power. God's involvement with His creation is vital to its continuing existence and to its continuing function. God maintains our very being, our life; it is all in His hand.

We learnt that God's government of all things is not always by direct intervention; in fact direct intervention is the exception rather than the rule. In ordinary circumstances God uses what we call means or second causes. There are some things that follow regular and natural courses like the sun shining daily and the seasons by which we plant and raise crops etc, things that we call the laws of nature, and if we don't recognise them and follow them then we suffer. Another kind of means that God uses in His government of all things and that is the consequences of our choices. The sluggard chooses not to plough and so he does not reap and then he goes hungry, the investor makes a good choice and reaps a profit. Now although these things come about as the result of our free choice, they are still not outside of God's sovereignty and He uses these as part of His sovereign government of all things. We have this comfort then that God is working his purposes out through his providence. No matter how difficult or how perplexing life may be, this truth is there to give us courage and comfort.

Celtic Christianity

Geoff MacPherson, pastor of the Christchurch Evangelical Presbyterian Church, took the history session and did a study on "Celtic Christianity". As a Celt I found this study quite interesting. There has been a revival in Celtic spirituality. Further, Evangelicals and Roman Catholics are laying claim to the Celtic Christians.

The Celtic church was the church that existed in the British Isles before the mission of Augustine in 597AD. The Celts include the Irish, the Scots and the Welsh peoples. The church was firmly established in Britain by the 4th century but it was not necessarily very large. The church included monasteries which were ruled by an Abbott who was either ordained or a layman. Geoff pointed out that the Celtic Christians held to a mix of truth and error. There was little or no worship of Mary and the Saints. These Christians believed in the sufficiency of scripture and the purity of worship. However, of concern is their tendency to Pelagianism and Sabbath (Saturday) observance. Pelagianism emphasises the ability of the human heart to seek for righteousness by itself. It ignores the truth of total depravity (Romans 3) and the deadness of our lost human condition (Ephesians 2). As in any church tradition, we need to evaluate it by the word of God. Our ultimate standard is the Bible.

We then had a break for lunch. During this time there were opportunities for fellowship and to browse the bookstall.

A God worth seeking, praising and serving

Dafydd Hughes of Grace Baptist Church, Christchurch, preached in the final session on Psalm 63. In this Psalm David teaches us that God is a God worth seeking. We are exhorted to continually seek after God throughout our lives. We should value our fellowship with our creator.

We see in the Psalm that God is a God worth praising. His loving-kindness is better than life (v.3). He is also a God worth serving. Our ability to serve is linked to God's power in our lives (see Philippians 4:13). Dafydd quoted Spurgeon: "How strong we are when the Lord works in us by His own right hand, and how utterly helpless if He withhold His aid." The teaching in this Psalm tied in nicely with the studies in Providence. Christians serve, praise and seek after a God who is in control of life's circumstances. Romans 8:28.

As in previous conferences, the teaching blessed our souls and we were able to enjoy fellowship with people from like-minded churches throughout the Canterbury region. I would encourage more of our fellow Canterbury Christians to join us at future gatherings!

The Correct Principle of Biblical Translation

JOHN QUINCY ADAMS

“And the Lord answered me and said, Write the vision and make it plain upon tables, that he may run that readeth it.”
(Habakkuk 2:2)

God's solicitude for man's well-being and eternal salvation is truly wonderful. Having made a revelation of his will, he is anxious that no ambiguity or indefiniteness should obscure his commands from his erring creatures. He wishes to afford to ruined man all the advantages possible, in order that he may be saved from the fearful consequences of his sin and guilt. Hence, he has not involved his duty in mist and uncertainty, but, on the contrary, he has revealed plainly all his moral requirements and positive institutions. In addition to this, he has expressly commanded those to whom is committed the great work of transcribing his will for others, to do it so plainly, that every duty may be recognized with such ease, “that he may run that readeth it.” But alas! alas! the express command of Jehovah has been violated, and his benevolent designs toward our race in a measure frustrated, by the efforts of those with whom the advancement of sect, and the propagation of human dogmas, is of more importance than the glory of God and the salvation of souls.

Translators have not scrupled to bow to the mandate of kings, the dictation of councils, the restrictions of Bible Society boards, and the promptings of sectarian prejudices, until the bare enunciation of the principle contained in the text, has come to be denounced as sectarianism; and faithful obedience to the plain requirements of Jehovah in this respect, is assailed as a close and narrow bigotry. This state of things calls loudly for reform. I present, then, as the *Fifth Feature* of the reform at which Baptists aim,

The Establishment of the Correct Principle of Biblical Translation.

In presenting this theme, let us inquire,

I. *What is the Correct Principle on which Translations of the Holy Scriptures should be made?* To this I reply, that they should be conformed, as nearly as possible, to the

inspired originals. Let it be remembered, that the Bible which we possess is a translation. The words of our English version are invested with Divine authority, only so far as they express just what the original expresses. I present this thought because there is, in the minds of many, a superstitious reverence for the words and phrases of our English version. This being a translation, partakes more or less of the imperfections of the translators; and, in every instance where the original is not clearly and fully translated, it is the word of man, and not the Word of God. The Old Testament was originally written in Hebrew, and the New Testament in Greek. In translating, therefore, into English, or Burmese, or French, or German, or Bengali, or any other language, it is evident to any one, that the Hebrew and the Greek should be the standard to which these translations should be conformed.

It is further evident, that every word, that is capable of being translated, should be rendered into any other language so as to express just what the original did to those to whom it was given. There must be no transfer of a Hebrew or Greek word into English or Burmese, for such a word would be unintelligible to the mere English or Burmese reader; and he must wait till some one, who understands these languages, shall come and explain to him the meaning of such words. Let me illustrate:

Suppose an aged father, a Frenchman, writes a letter of instructions to his children and grandchildren, just as the former are about to emigrate to the United States. The letter is written in the French language, and is readily understood by the children. But the grandchildren grow up in ignorance of the French language, though they understand the English very well. Their parents die and leave the letter in their possession. In order to understand it, they must have it translated. Now suppose the person employed to translate, leaves here and there a word in French - untranslated. Those words would be unintelligible to them. They would be transferred, not translated. In order to be a good translation, the letter must express in English, just what the original expressed in French. So with the Scriptures; the correct principle of translating them is to make them speak to all the nations just what they spake to those who had them from the hand of God - just what the originals express.

That this principle is correct, is evident, also, from the fact that all Protestants, in discussions, appeal not to the translations that have been made, but to the original. They regard the original only as the standard. In the Westminster Assembly's Confession of Faith we find the following: "The Old Testament in Hebrew, (which was the native language of the people of God of old,) and the New Testament in Greek, (which, at the time of the writing of it, was most generally known to the nations,) being immediately inspired by God, and by his singular care and providence kept pure in all ages, are therefore authentical; so as, in all controversies of religion, the church is finally to appeal unto them."¹ And this is the practice of all Protestants. It is evident, then, that

all translations should be made to conform to the original, which is the standard of appeal. But I observe,

II. *This Principle has been Generally Abandoned.* There is no Bible Society, supported by Paedobaptists, that is pledged to the faithful translation of the Word of God from the inspired originals. In England and America the English version, which is acknowledged to have many defects, is made the standard, instead of the original. Nor is this all. Even this is not translated fully into the heathen tongues - some words are transferred, not translated. They are perfectly incomprehensible to those who read them until some one comes and explains them, and he may explain them just to suit his own views.

The British and Foreign Bible Society of England, composed of all evangelical denominations, passed a resolution, on the 1st July, 1833, virtually declining aid to translators of the Bible in foreign languages, unless "the Greek terms relating to baptism be rendered, either according to the principles adopted by the translators of the authorized English version, by a word derived from the original, or by such terms as may be considered unobjectionable by the other denominations of Christians composing the Bible Society."

It had been the practice of the missionaries to *translate* these words, as well as all others. Now you perceive the resolution does not charge them with unfaithful translation, neither does it charge them to faithfully render the words into the language of the heathen; but it requires them to adopt the principle of the English translators, which was to *transfer* and not *translate* certain words, which, if translated, would not yield that support to infant baptism which the transfer of them does.

The American Bible Society, composed of all evangelical denominations, in February, 1836, passed the following preamble and resolution: "As the managers are now called to aid extensively in circulating the sacred Scriptures in languages other than the English, they deem it their duty in conforming with the obvious spirit of their compact, to adopt the following resolution as the rule of their conduct in making appropriations for the circulation of the Scriptures in all foreign tongues:

"*Resolved*, That in appropriating money for the translating, printing or distributing the Sacred Scriptures in foreign languages, the managers feel at liberty to encourage only such versions as conform, in the principles of their translations, to the common English version; at least so far, as that all the religious denominations represented in this

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Society can consistently use and circulate said versions to their several schools and communities.”²

Here, again, you perceive there is an abandonment of the correct principle. That principle requires a faithful translation from the original. But the resolution just quoted requires that the English version, which, as I have before stated, is acknowledged to contain errors of translation, be made the standard. And even this is to be conformed to, only so far as that “all the denominations represented in the Society” can consistently use the versions made from it. These two societies represent pretty nearly the entire Protestant world in England and America. Now any one will perceive, that while such resolutions were in force, no missionary, who was governed by them, could attempt to faithfully translate from the original into the languages of the heathen. Consequently if a word occurred in the Greek which, if translated, would not suit all denominations, it must be transferred, and then the heathen could not understand it till it was explained by a missionary, and he might explain it just to suit his own creed. Instead, then, of having God’s Word, which they would have, if the original was translated, they have in every instance, only the word of man.

Let me, before I leave this division of my subject, exhibit the evils of this course. No principle that is correct can be violated without evil results. We have seen that the correct principle of Biblical translation is violated by all Paedobaptist organizations; we may therefore look for evil as its legitimate fruit. The principle on which they act is, that it is right to make such versions, and such only, as shall teach Paedobaptist sentiments. Because Baptists refused to *transfer* Greek words into the heathen tongues, and insisted on *translating* them, they were thrust out. But, in order to make the Bible teach paedobaptism, it must be mutilated. Let us now look at the fruits of this in heathen lands. The first missionaries, and the first Bible translators, were Baptists. Hence, the first versions made in heathen tongues were faithful translations. After these translations had been circulated, the paedobaptist missionaries began to circulate their versions, in which words relating to baptism, and other words, were transferred. The heathen convert, when he read the translated word, could understand it, and knew what to do. But when he read the transferred word, he could not understand it; he must wait till he could find a teacher to tell him what it meant. If he met a Baptist missionary, he would tell him that the word meant to immerse. Then he would ask, “Why does it not read so?” What could the missionary say? He would have to say, “The translator who produced that version was bound by his Bible Society

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to put that word in." And if pressed for a reason for this, he must tell him of all the differences and disputes among Christians at home.

But suppose he meets a Paedobaptist. He tells him it means to pour, or it means to sprinkle. But the convert would ask him, "Why not put it so? we have words in our language which mean to pour or sprinkle." What would he say? He must give a reason; and he could assign no reason which would not awaken the suspicion of the converted pagan.

Take another case. A Baptist mission has been established; all has been harmonious. A transfer version falls into the hands of the people, and at once all is confusion and distrust, and the cause of Christ is arrested. I present these cases, because it has generally been represented, by Paedobaptists, that the Baptists have introduced controversy among the heathen nations on this subject; whereas, just the reverse of this is the case. It could not be otherwise; for the Baptists were the first to occupy heathen ground, and they had translated the Scriptures into many languages before a Paedobaptist transfer version was made. On these Paedobaptists rests the guilt, not only of mutilating God's Word, but, through this means, of reviving, on heathen shores, those dissensions which have distracted and retarded the cause of the Redeemer at home. Again, another evil of this course is, that it leads to the circulation of versions that teach known and soul-destroying errors. It will be perceived that the rule governing Paedobaptists is one of expediency. They do not require that the Word of God be faithfully translated, but that it be made to suit the majority. All the translator has to do is, to ascertain what is expedient. It may be expedient to transfer other

words, and the rule adopted does not prevent him from doing it. This word may refer to faith, or something else that is fundamental, and the withholding of which may peril the soul. But I need not dwell on what might be; I will simply show what is done. The Spanish Testament employs the words, "Hacer penitencia," as the translation of the Greek word μετανοέω, to express the duty of repentance as enjoined in the original. But

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these words signify "to do penance," and are thus understood by the Spaniards themselves. When they wish to express our idea of repentance, they use the word "*arrepentirse*." Yet this version is circulated and sustained by the American Bible Society. But how did they come to translate it so? Simply by abandoning the correct principle of Biblical translation. Instead of taking the Hebrew and the Greek as the standard, they took the Latin Vulgate, which is a Roman Catholic version, and translated from that; and, as expediency was their rule, they found it expedient to suit the Catholics; and therefore the Pope permits it to be used, while he is mortally opposed to Protestant versions of the Holy Scriptures; and thus the money of Protestants is taken to promote Romanism. Let me here state another fact, that should make the ears of every Paedobaptist tingle with shame. While the American Bible Society was circulating this Catholic version, with money contributed by Protestants, they refused to aid, as they had been doing, the Baptists, in faithfully translating the Word of God, though they were generous contributors to their funds.

In the same Spanish version, printed and circulated by the American Bible Society, Hebrews 11:21, reads thus: "By faith, Jacob, about to die, blessed each one of the sons of Joseph, and *worshipped the top of his staff*." The idea conveyed to the mind of a Roman Catholic by this verse is the worship of an image on the top of his staff; and thus absolute idolatry is sanctioned and propagated by the Society which, with holy horror, withdraws its aid from Baptist missionaries, because they would translate all the Word of God, the words relating to baptism not excepted.

But we push our reasoning a little further. Suppose the Paedobaptists only claim the right to transfer the words relating to baptism. If they have a right to do this, then any denomination has a right to transfer those words, which, if translated, would be fatal to its peculiar views. The Roman Catholic may transfer the Greek word μετανοέω and have Luke 13:3 read, "Except ye *metanoeo*, ye shall all likewise perish;" and the priest can explain it to "do penance;" and the Pope might contribute to the support of a Bible Society that would agree to transfer every word that does not suit him when translated. The Unitarian may transfer Θεος, and have John 1:1 read, "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the word was *theos*;" and the minister can explain it to mean "a superior, intelligent creature." The Universalist may transfer αἰώνιον, τελευτάω, etc., and have Matthew 25:26 read, "These shall go away into *aionion* punishment;" and the minister can explain it to mean "the grave!" Or they can have Mark 9:44 read, "Where their worm *teleuteth* not, and the fire is not *sbennutai*." Then the preacher can explain it to mean, "where their worm 'troubleth' not and the fire is not 'hurtful.'"

Now this would be as justifiable, as for the Paedobaptist to transfer βαπτίζω, and then explain it to suit his own views. And further, if Paedobaptists have a right to withhold a

part of God's Word, because a part is opposed to their teachings, then Rome has a right to withhold all, because all is opposed to her teachings; and again Protestantism is found bolstering up Popery. I proceed to show,

III. *The Baptists aim to Restore and Establish the Principle of the Text.* Baptists only desire to know and to teach God's commands - and they desire that all others may know them. They aim, therefore, in giving the Bible to the world, to follow the Divine requirement given in the text: "Write the vision and make it plain, that he may run that readeth it." In all their efforts to spread the Gospel, they have endeavored faithfully to translate the Word of God, from the original, into the language of the people; seeking to make it so plain, that if a copy of their translation should fall into the hands of a person who has no living teacher near him, he could ascertain from it all the commands of God. The instructions given to their missionaries by the Baptist Board of Foreign Missions, are as follows:

"Resolved, That the Board feel it to be their duty to adopt all prudent measures to give to the heathen the pure Word of God in their own languages, and to furnish their missionaries with all the means in their power to make their translations as exact a representation of the mind of the Holy Spirit as possible.

"Resolved, That all the missionaries of the Board who are, or who shall be, engaged in translating the Scriptures, be instructed to endeavor, by earnest prayer and diligent study, to ascertain the precise meaning of the original text, to express that meaning as exactly as the nature of the languages into which they shall translate the Bible will permit, and to *transfer* no words which are capable of being literally *translated*."

What a contrast does this present to the resolutions adopted by the Paedobaptists! To this principle of faithful translation, the Baptists have always strenuously adhered. Efforts have been made to induce their missionaries to abandon it, but these have been in vain. When their versions have been translated, and ready for the press, money has been offered to print, if they would conceal a part of God's Word, by transferring certain words. On the 17th of April, 1836, at a meeting of the managers of the American Bible Society, the sum of \$5,000 was appropriated to the Baptist Board of Foreign

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Missions, to promote the circulation of the Scriptures in foreign tongues, which “money would be paid over, if our foreign versions were conformed, in the principles of their translation, to the common English version;” that is, *transfer*, and not *translate*, the words relating to baptism. The grant was conscientiously refused. Efforts of a similar kind were made by the British and Foreign Bible Society to procure the transfer of the words in the Bengali version. But all was in vain; the Baptists loved the correct principle too well to abandon it for the hope of a mere temporary advantage, which would, in the end, paralyse their efforts in the conflict with error. If these versions of the Baptists had been proved *unfaithful*, it would have been different; there would then have been some show of reason in the course pursued by the Paedobaptists. This, however, was not the case; their great *defect* was, that they were not so mutilated as to make it possible for Paedobaptists to teach their views to the heathen. Or, if Baptists had mutilated God’s Word to make it teach their own sentiments, it would have been different. But they were never guilty of this, nor have they even been charged with it. How then did the Paedobaptists seek to justify themselves? Why, they raised the cry that they were *sectarian* versions; which, when examined, simply means, that the faithful translation of God’s Word teaches just what Baptists practice, and condemns the practice of Paedobaptists.

But, neither smiles nor frowns, threats nor bribes, flattery nor slander, can move us from our attachment to God’s Word, and our obedience to his requirement to give his will, faithfully translated, to all the nations of the earth. Our conflict with error may be long, but we have no doubts as to the final issue. God has honoured, and will honour, those that honour him; and in no way can we honour him more highly than in a firm and constant adherence to faithful translations of his Holy Word.

From what I have submitted, it will be perceived that sprinkling, and infant baptism, have led to this desire for the mutilation of God’s Word; and that those who adhere to this perversion of God’s ordinance, are giving their sanction to the abandonment of the correct principle of Biblical translation. Their example, their influence, and their money, go to support these mutilated versions. Further, I remark, that the Paedobaptist rule of nontranslation of certain words, like their appeal to tradition, paralyzes their power to combat Humanism. How can they condemn the Popish practice of denying the Bible to the people, when they adopt the very principle of Popery? The Roman Catholic priest can say: “We only keep back what is opposed to our practice, and you, Paedobaptists do the same.” What could a Protestant Paedobaptist translator say to this?

Surely, this question about baptism is not so insignificant, seeing it involves such great consequences! If the magnitude of a thing is to be judged of by its results, it is certain that the question of baptism is one of vast importance. As such, I urge the

investigation of it upon every honest man. At all events, from the printed resolutions which I have quoted, all must perceive that the correct principle of Biblical translation is with the Baptists.

In concluding this lecture, I invite your attention to one or two inferences from the text: "Write this vision and make it plain, that he may run that readeth it." I infer, that all we are to believe and practice is made plain in the Word of God, unless obscured in the translation. Infant baptism, therefore, either was never commanded by Jehovah, or else it has been obscured in the translation of his Word; for none, with the teaching of the Bible alone would ever discover it to be their duty to have children baptized. Those, therefore, who practice infant baptism, ought strenuously to contend for a faithful translation, that the obscurity which conceals this duty from the common reader may be removed. But I find that Paedobaptists oppose faithful translations; I therefore conclude that God never commanded infant baptism.

I infer, again, that we are to follow that which is plainly taught in the Bible, rather than what is doubtful. The Romanist may tell me that I ought to pray to the Virgin Mary, and seek the intercession of the saints; but while I read the plain declaration of God's Word, "There is one God, and one Mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus," I will follow the Bible, and let the Roman Catholic go. The Unitarian may tell me, that Christ is not God; but while I read the plain declaration of God's Word, "I and my Father are one," "He that hath seen me, hath seen the Father," I will follow the Bible, and let the Unitarian go. The Universalist may tell me that there will be no future punishment; but while I read the plain declaration of God's Word, "these shall go away into everlasting punishment," I will follow the Bible, and let the Universalist go. So, too, the Paedobaptist may tell me that infants ought to be baptized; but while I read the plain declaration, "He that believeth and is baptized, shall be saved," "Repent, and be baptized every one of you," I will follow the Bible and let the Paedobaptist go. Our duty is plain; for God has said, "Write the vision, and make it plain upon tables, that he may run that readeth it."

This article is taken from John Quincy Adams' book, Baptists, the only thorough religious reformers, published in 1876. C. H. Spurgeon used this as a textbook in his Pastor's College, regarding it as the best Manual of Baptist principles he had met.

Notes:

1. *Westminster Confession*, chap. i. sec. 8.
2. These resolutions still govern the Society in its appropriations.

A speaking tour of New Zealand - from Timaru to Auckland - made by Erroll & Lyn Hulse

Marchwiel Reformed Baptist Church, Timaru

report by John & Joan Leavers & Stephen Smith

It was a special joy for us personally to renew fellowship with Erroll and Lyn Hulse. Timaru is so far off the beaten track (would we be the world's most southern Reformed Baptist church?) that visitors of the calibre of Erroll and Lyn are a rare treat.

Erroll and Lyn spent an evening with the Marchwiel Reformed Baptist church. It was good to hear about the wider work of the Reformed Baptists throughout the world. Because Erroll travels extensively and so has a good knowledge of the wider church scene, and as editor of *Reformation Today*, he was able to share something of the needs in relation to world missions.

Erroll opened up Isaiah 62:6-9 to us, urging us to give ourselves no rest from intercession and to give God no rest until He makes His church the praise of the earth. He shared his burden for both evangelism and revival. He mentioned that whereas the Spirit of God, in previous centuries, has worked mightily in the West, now He is working in the East. The church in the West is small and often man centred and worldly. However, in many eastern lands the church is committed to the Word and is growing rapidly. Erroll challenged us to pray to God for revival and "give Him no rest" in this matter.

Grace and Truth Family Bible Conference - Christchurch

report by John & Joan Leavers & Stephen Smith

Erroll was scheduled to take three meetings in Christchurch. The first was a meeting for Elders and their wives held at Dafydd Hughes' home. Ministers and some wives from a number of evangelical and reformed churches met together for lunch, and then Erroll spoke to us on *Learning from Martin and Katie Luther*. It was a lively and informative talk which appeared to be enjoyed by all with profit.

In the evening the two plenary conference sessions were held.

At the first session Erroll spoke on *Justification through an Alien Righteousness*. As there were quite a number of children present, Erroll accommodated his language to them catching our attention by painting vivid word pictures of alien extra-terrestrial visitors! This well illustrated the main thrust of his message which was to emphasise the objective nature of our righteousness. We cannot earn it and do not deserve it, it is a gift given to us in grace. It is Christ's righteousness imputed to us and received by faith alone.

In the second session at the conference, Erroll spoke on *Sanctification*. He expounded the first section of Romans 6. This passage describes sanctification as being in union with Christ. It is also called holiness. The Lord Jesus works in a man by the Holy Spirit using the Word. He both washes the believer from his sins by the blood of Christ and separates him from his love of sin. The believer is given a new nature – he is united with Christ.

Perhaps the finest book ever written on Holiness, and the relationship between holiness and justification, is J. C. Ryle's *Holiness*. Essential reading for all Christians!

Tapes of the two evening sessions in Christchurch are available from Grace & Truth Ministries, P.O. Box 8979, Christchurch, by completing and returning the enclosed order form.

Wellington Reformed Baptist Fellowship Miniconference

report by Chris Good

The Wellington Reformed Baptist Fellowship was delighted to be able to host its first ever conference, with Erroll Hulse speaking on the theme, *Past & Present*. About 15 attended, including a few people from a local Baptist church and one or two interested Reformed Presbyterians.

In Session 1, *Learning from Baptist History*, Erroll outlined early Baptist history, with an emphasis on Baptist distinctives. Some discussion followed regarding the difference between 'ordinary' and 'Reformed' Baptists. (During this session there was a huge deluge of rain that made it difficult to hear - the irony of such an out-pouring during a Baptismal message was not lost on us!).

Session 2, *How to Be Biblical and Contemporary*, focussed primarily on the issue of worship - and the need to maintain the difficult balance between biblical faithfulness while at the same time allowing for flexibility of expression in a manner relevant to those in the church and contemporary society. The motto of clarity in essentials and charity on non-essentials would sum up the emphasis. Also, the need to think of the church as a body and what is best for it, rather than me as an individual was also stressed.

In all, there could have been a stronger emphasis on Reformed distinctives given some who were there. Nevertheless the messages were still useful. Feedback from the conference has been positive, and we hope it may be the first of many more in the future.

Tapes of the two sessions are available from Tony Howard, 10 Pempsey St, Silverstream, Upper Hutt. Tel: (04) 973 7003 or e-mail: t.n.howard@paradise.net.nz.

Grace & Truth Family Bible Conference - Auckland

report by Michael Drake

Two words summarise my impressions of the Auckland conference: encouragement and fellowship.

It's nearly 30 years since Erroll Hulse first came to New Zealand: he was an encourager then and he is an encourager still! Then his ministry led to the establishment of the first reformed Baptist Church in New Zealand. This time members of at least eight Reformed Baptist churches and fellowships could be found in the meetings. What a wonderful testimony to the grace of God.

Unexpectedly the conference was moved from the planned school hall into a much smaller library. Yet in the providence of God that proved to be an ideal venue - intimate and just big enough for the numbers attending. There was a comfortable unity in the meetings, the teaching was stimulating, and time with friends refreshing. Erroll commented on a number of occasions that he had felt great liberty in his speaking, and those of us listening sensed a similar refreshing in God's presence.

What better venue than a library for the first session on *The Christian's Dual Citizenship*? That first session on Friday night set the pattern for a series of addresses that combined biblical exposition, personal experience and historical anecdote in a manner that was a help to all of us. As Baptists we hold unequivocally to the separation of the institutions of state and church, but our dual citizenship is equally certain. Some of us are citizens of two countries on earth and as a result can have two passports. In the same way, we are 'passport holders' of citizenship on earth and in the kingdom of God. To serve God we must be active and faithful in both kingdoms, and we must carry our Christian hope, faith and citizenship into our earthly service.

At the second session on Saturday afternoon we were *Learning from Martin and Katie Luther*. What a lively, spiritual couple they were! Erroll began with a review of Luther's life and ministry, which on its own is an inspiration to the generations of Christians that have followed him. But as Katie came into his life, his character and ministry took on a freshness and humanity that are a delight to examine. Together they

served God, and examined together they are an example of the way we ought to live and work for our Saviour. What can we learn from them? Zeal, hospitality, a willingness to talk about spiritual issues with mature and immature alike, tenderness in love, robustness in mutual support... the list goes on. But they should not be studied only for their example: we should simply delight in their love, life and work, and give thanks to God for them.

Among Luther's characteristics was a determination to be contemporary, and our speaker left us in no doubt that he, too, is committed to contemporaneity. His Saturday evening topic, *How to be Biblical and Contemporary at the Same Time*, was one that could have challenged the unity of any conference - but Erroll's enthusiasm and balance left us in no doubt that there is a biblical balance to bring to our worship and life today! Running through his call for inclusion of modern hymns and songs (by all means using those of substance and meaning - there is no necessity, he assured us, to succumb to the trite and vain), Bible translations that can be understood, and a Christian vocabulary that communicates with people in our community was a parallel call for compassionate consideration of one-another. The elderly and the conservative (they are not necessarily the same!) can graciously allow for and join in the singing of modern hymns and even choruses - and the young and modern (they too are not necessarily the same) can sincerely and profitably sing the older hymns favoured by some brothers and sisters. This was no merely theoretical study: Erroll commended the contemporary hymn book *Praise!* from which he drew examples of balanced and biblical hymns.

On Sunday morning a number of the Auckland Reformed Baptist Churches came together for worship, with Erroll speaking on *Sanctification: the Christian's Full time Business*. The title says it all: as God's people on earth we must devote ourselves to a closer walk with God. On Sunday evening we returned to the historical theme: *Who Are the Puritans and What Do We Owe to Them?* Drawing on the work behind his book, *Who Are the Puritans?* he demonstrated their usefulness for practical example, balance and experience.

We were treated to a shared tea on Saturday and lunch on Sunday, efficiently organised by our hosts the North Shore Reformed Baptist Church, with help from Emmanuel Church and others. And of course there were books, books and more books for sale at 'encouraging' prices. But, strangely one thing was missing. Our guest speaker is the founder and editor of the international Reformed Baptist magazine, *Reformation Today* - yet not a single copy was to be seen.

Tapes of the five Auckland sessions are available from Grace & Truth Ministries, P.O. Box 8979, Christchurch, by completing and returning the enclosed order form.

Tongues Revisited

A REVIEW ARTICLE BY CHRIS GOOD

It is not often a New Zealander makes a unique contribution to evangelical theology, but in this book layman Renton Maclachlan has managed a new contribution on the issue of biblical tongues - a topic about which there has been much spoken and written, but rarely with new clarity being given.

The book is divided into two parts. Part 1 deals with the theological and biblical issues. Part 2, reflecting the layman's concern for practical application, looks at the implications for church life. There are extensive endnotes for those wanting a more detailed analysis.

Part 1

Tounges = Languages

Renton argues that the main focus of the tongues debate should be on the fact "tongues" are human languages, rather than on the issue of whether they have ceased (a secondary matter). This is because 99.9% of today's 'tongues' speakers admit that their utterances are ecstatic babble, not languages. If biblical tongues are normal human languages, then the modern phenomenon is invalid, regardless of whether the 'gift' has ceased or not (which becomes a separate issue). Sadly, too few non-Charismatic writers have focussed on the fact that tongues are human languages and so greatly weaken and confuse their case. Renton ably demonstrates that biblical tongues are indeed actual human languages from the relevant passages, in chapter 3, while responding to a range of objections commonly raised in chapter 4.

In chapter 6 Renton also shows the relevance of the principles of 1 Corinthians 12-14 to multilingual church situations, arguing that this was most likely the situation in the Corinthian church. This is a useful application in today's increasingly pluralistic world.

A Third Way?

Where I'm forced to part company with Renton is over the issue of whether this tongue speaking is simply people speaking languages they already know (Renton's 'Third Way'), or a revelatory gift of speaking knowledgeably in an unlearned human language.

Acts 2

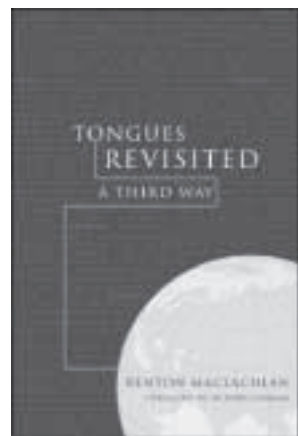
Renton's exegesis relies heavily on a lot of assumptions in Acts 2 (for example: that 'house' refers to the temple precincts; that the Hebrew diaglossa was being used and that tongues means 'other than Hebrew' in this context).

Although Peter corrects the crowd's incorrect perception of drunkenness, he doesn't correct the presumably accurate observation that the 120 were largely Galileans. Renton's argument that people simply began to speak with joy in the non-Hebrew Greek and/or Aramaic *lingua franca* seems not to go as far as the text suggests. There the range of ethnic origins, and by implication the languages, is very wide and emphasised. (Note the emphasis on their "own language" in Acts 2:11 - which suggests the 120 spoke in local dialects rather than just Greek or Aramaic). It is quite unlikely that the small band of disciples would be so diverse prior to Pentecost. Certainly, the crowd's reaction seems to support the conclusion that they spoke in unlearned languages - a conclusion held by commentators since earliest times. This is further supported in Acts 10 - 11 where the tongues are significant enough to be compared to Acts 2 (cf. 11:15-17). Does Renton propose that in all this time Peter had heard no-one else speak spontaneously in their own native language? No! The text itself speaks of a unique "gift" that acts as a sign to Peter that God accepts Gentiles (11:15-17).

1 Corinthians 12-14

Renton's approach here does throw some useful light on certain aspects. For example, when Paul says he speaks in tongues more than all, he may be simply meaning he speaks in other languages more than all. Also - a person is not to speak unless an interpreter is present - if it is known languages, then this is easily known beforehand and readily explicable, but hard to account if neither speaker nor interpreter know the language beforehand.

Renton basically argues that the "spirituals" are natural abilities used by God (e.g. helps, etc.) Hence tongues are reduced to multilingualism and prophecy to preaching. But the list in 12:8-10 seems to include specifically supernatural and/or revelatory abilities ('common' gifts - like helps, administration, etc. - are not mentioned). This emphasis by Paul is readily understandable if the Corinthian problem is the exaltation of those gifts perceived as overtly supernatural,



and hence more 'spiritual'.

Renton's reduction of prophecy is especially concerning. A word study of prophecy reveals that prophecy is *not* merely preaching, but is an immediate inspiration of new revelation "which cannot be known by natural means"¹ (whereas preaching/teaching uses existing revealed truth). Tongues is always associated with prophecy. I would agree with Victor Budgen² that tongues is inspired, infallible prophecy in another unlearned language.

If this is true, Renton's (admittedly tentative) interpretation of 1 Corinthians 13 has problems. Because of his definition of 'tongues' as 'messages in other languages' (i.e. multilingualism) - which obviously continues today - the implication is then created that prophecies and knowledge must also continue. As a result, these all have to be reinterpreted as an uninspired 'bringing of a message' to avoid a charismatic conclusion. He then reinterprets 'ceased' as the fact that all individual messages/sermons end/finish but maturity is seen in love that endures forever. However - such a view of 'ceased' is so obvious as to be a truism. (Indeed, even the Word of God brings a message when it is read, but it doesn't 'cease' when we stop reading it. It is everlasting!) It is also difficult to see why, on this thesis, tongues would be seen as a mark of an exalted spiritual status by the Corinthians.

The context in 1 Corinthians 13, however, seems clearly to be a contrast between the partial nature of specific revelations (i.e. in the form of the revelatory gifts of prophecy, tongues and knowledge) against its mature/perfect/complete/clear expression (i.e. in completed Scripture). This brings the cessation of all revelations, and reveals the priority of the fruits over the temporary gifts of the Spirit.

Much of Renton's interpretation rests on the supposition that tongues are normal human languages, rather than the issue of learned versus unlearned. The main area of divergence is that if it is unlearned, then 'interpretation' would be a gift of perfect inspired translation of a known tongue, which is why prayer would be needed for it.

In the final analysis, it looks unlikely that Renton's third way of normal learned languages is supported by the texts.

Part 2

Part 2 of the book looks at the implications of the exegetical findings.

The first and most obvious implication of Renton's exegesis is that the current phenomena of tongues is not genuine, but spurious, and consequently must originate in human (psychological) or demonic sources. This position is not popular, but must be

Continued on page 28

Book Reviews

Books reviewed here are available from *Grace & Truth Publications*
(see page 3 for contact details and postage rates)

Seeing the Invisible

Ordinary People of Extraordinary Faith

Faith Cook

Evangelical Press

Paperback 159 pages ISBN 0-85234-407-4

G&T price: \$23.95

It is sometimes tempting to think wistfully of 'the good old days' when life was simpler and the pressures to be conformed to this world were less troublesome than we find them to be here and now. Any such illusions are quickly dispelled in these moving accounts of men, women and a child who loved and served God despite severe hardships and, in some cases, outright persecution.

The appeal of this book lies in its simplicity. Here are brief, readable accounts of the lives of ten people we might never meet otherwise. As the title indicates, the people whose stories are told here are just like us – ordinary people. They may have lived before our own times, but we must never think that living a life of obedience to God was somehow easier for them than for us.

The people in these chapters include a pedlar, preachers, a young missionary to Korea (martyred at the age of 26), a volunteer slave, a Scottish Covenanter, wives and mothers, a widow and Bible Class teacher and even a twelve-year-old girl. That they lived centuries ago does not in any way diminish our ability to identify with them in their struggles or in their experiences of

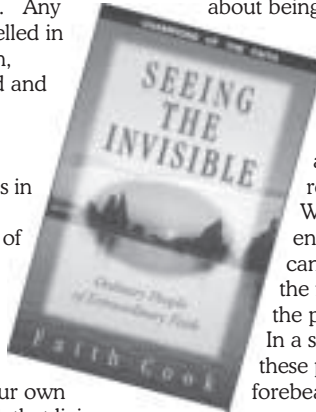
the goodness and providence of God.

The story of Elizabeth Bunyan's love and care for her new husband John and his four young children, one of whom was blind, is a challenge to those of us whose service to God is largely within our families. How many of us would have had the courage to press on in the face of the loss of a baby, a husband's unjust imprisonment for twelve years and severe financial hardship? There was certainly nothing sweetly romantic about being married to John Bunyan!

The Bible is full of accounts of the real people who are our spiritual ancestors, and it seems that for many of us these are among the most easily remembered parts of God's Word, and the parts which encourage and challenge us: we can identify with the struggles, the failures and the triumphs of the people God chose as His own. In a similar way, the accounts of these people, who are also our forebears in the family of God, give us cause to reflect on our own walk with Him.

As Derek Prime, in his foreword to this book, concludes: "My hope and prayer are that God may graciously use the inspiration of these ten lives to prompt us to read more Christian biographies. As we take a good look at the example of godly men and women, may their faithfulness instruct and inspire us."

Jill Marshall



God Gave Wine

What the Bible says about Alcohol

Kenneth L Gentry Jr.

Oakdown Books

Paperback 168 pages ISBN 0-9700326-6-8

G&T price: \$34.95

Some time ago a Christian began attending our church having left another because the pastor had refused to interpret the qualifications for church officers in 1 Timothy 3 as prohibiting the consumption of alcohol. When this person found that our church also would only condemn the abuse of alcohol and not its use *per se*, we were likewise deemed an unsuitable congregation in which to serve and worship God. For many sincere Christians today, a church's position on the consumption of alcoholic beverages has become the measure of its orthodoxy.

There are three views among Christians regarding the consumption of alcohol: the prohibitionist view which holds that the Bible outlaws the drinking of alcohol *in toto*; the abstentionist view which teaches that, while not prohibited by Scripture, it is the duty of Christians to completely abstain from consuming alcoholic drinks; and the moderationist view which maintains that alcoholic beverages are acceptable for Christians if taken in moderation. All three groups condemn drunkenness.

Given the seriousness of the subject, Kenneth Gentry's book is a welcome aid to understanding the biblical data. Written in a gracious though uncompromising style, it interacts with literature from the different camps, revealing the weaknesses and inconsistencies in the arguments of the prohibitionists and the abstentionists, and demonstrating the strength of Scriptural

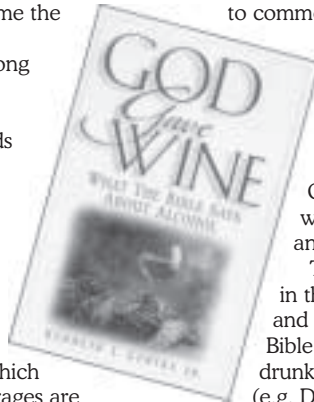
support for the moderationist approach to alcohol consumption.

The opening two chapters of the book introduce the debate and present the biblical teaching against alcohol abuse, about which there is no disagreement. The third and fourth chapters then proceed to consider the key Hebrew and Greek words in the Old and New Testaments, with careful examination of relevant passages. Chapter 5 tackles specific texts which the prohibitionists and abstentionists allege undermine the moderationist argument, while Chapter 6 looks at the subject of Christian liberty, with a clear explanation of Romans 14. The book's emphasis is on what the Bible says about Alcohol consumption, and, while not claiming to be exhaustive, the final chapter demonstrates how biblical principles apply

to common objections to the

moderationist position: What about the potential alcoholic? How much is too much? Isn't alcohol hazardous to health? Isn't drinking alcohol contrary to Christian witness? and, Wasn't wine diluted with water in ancient times?

There is a glaring inconsistency in the arguments of prohibitionists and abstentionists. In a number of Bible passages gluttony and drunkenness are both condemned (e.g. Deuteronomy 21:20; Proverbs 23:21; Matthew 11:19), yet while these Christians infer from this that alcohol should not be drunk at all, they do not teach that food must not be eaten at all! Furthermore, while alcohol can be abused, so can food, sex, wealth, authority, etc., yet the Scriptures do not prohibit any of these. As Martin Luther aptly stated: "Do not suppose that abuses are eliminated by destroying the object which is abused. Men can go wrong with wine and women. Shall we then prohibit and abolish women?"



How Can I Be Sure

Frank Allred

Grace Publications

Paperback 125 pages ISBN 0-946462-57-7

G&T price: \$14.95

Many Christians struggle with assurance: "How can I be sure I'm a real Christian?" is the question which plagues them. Frank Allred, a retired Anglican minister, provides a helpful analysis of the reasons for the insecurity made manifest in the question, together with constructive comments and practical pointers to the solution of the problem.

This book is literally saturated with Scripture, and the troubled Christian will be challenged and encouraged by a careful reading of its eight insightful chapters. The first three chapters deal with the problem, symptoms and causes of insecurity respectively. Then follows a very helpful chapter examining the reality and danger of false security, before the author proceeds to consider the experience, basis, means and blessings of assurance in the final four chapters.

I personally found the final chapter on the blessings of assurance a great encouragement. Allred's comments, interwoven with Scripture, on patience, contentment, humility, courage, consistency, usefulness, joy, thankfulness and peace will inspire those who have no particular struggle with assurance, as well as informing those who do.

This book would be a valuable addition to any home or church library.



Dear Readers,

Christmas will soon be here, and I imagine you're looking forward to opening your presents. Perhaps you'll have a Christmas tree covered with tinsel and ornaments; underneath there will be a heap of parcels wrapped up in pretty paper, and on Christmas morning you'll gather around the tree with your family and enjoy finding out what you've been given.

In the middle of all this excitement it can be easy to forget what Christmas is all about. As you play with your new toys or eat Christmas sweets, the birth of a little baby in a small town far away and long ago doesn't seem very real or important. I expect that at least one of your Christmas cards will have a picture of the baby Jesus, lying in a manger with sheep and cows or donkeys looking on. He'll probably have a smile on his face, and even the animals will look happy. It's a pretty idea, but think about it for a moment.

Have you ever been on a farm? They're not usually the cleanest of places, are they? And animals are often dirty creatures. When I was growing up, my best friend lived on a farm and I

spent a lot of time there. There was an old barn where the cows were kept in winter, and where all the hay was stored. We loved to play in the hay, moving the bales around to build walls and make little houses. It was great fun - but it was dirty and dusty, and I don't think I'd have chosen to put a baby in the feeding trough from which the cows ate their hay.

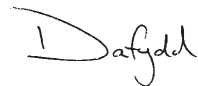
When Jesus was born, it wasn't in a sparkling clean hospital room, or even a comfortable bedroom at home, but in a dirty, dusty place where animals were kept. I know that in poorer countries that wouldn't be unusual even today. But we should remember who Jesus was: He was God - the King of kings who lived in glorious splendour. The Apostle Paul, in Philippians chapter 2, says that even though He was God, Jesus willingly became a man - not rich like a king, but poor like a slave. And it all started in a 'stable' in Bethlehem, not in a palace in Jerusalem. Paul goes on to say that Jesus did this in order to die on the cross.

While we enjoy all the excitement of Christmas, we mustn't forget that the presents we give and receive are supposed to remind us that God gave Jesus as a gift to His people. It wasn't an easy, comfortable life that Jesus lived, even as a baby. And it ended in a cruel death when He took the punishment for His people's sins on the cross.

So this Christmas, think about Jesus born as a baby in that poor dirty place; think about Jesus dying as a man on that cruel cross; and think about your sins which have made you an enemy of God. By believing

that Jesus came to die for your sins, you can become a child of God instead of being His enemy. When you talk to God about your sins, telling Him you're sorry and want to be forgiven because of what Jesus did, you will be given a place in God's family. Now that's a gift worth getting excited about!

With best wishes,



Kids' Corner

William Williams of Pantycelyn 1717 - 1791

STEPHEN TURNER

Surely one of the most striking features of the landscape to the observant and curious visitor to Wales, are the numerous and very large chapels. Some enjoy the companionship of a congregation, but others stand quite empty and are in disrepair. Many are to be found in places where there appears to be nobody around. Why were they built? And when? What great event years ago, caused them to be put up? And were they once full?

The answers to those questions lie in the extraordinary events that took place in Wales in the 18th century. For from the 1730s to the close of the century, remarkable changes took place in the Church.

William Williams was at the forefront of those changes. I remember the day in 1981 when I stood in the graveyard of the Anglican Church in Talgarth in Wales, and found the particular grave which we know was used by a very young preacher to stand on. It was his father's grave and the preacher was the remarkable Howell Harris. William was standing at the back of that crowd who listened and that day he was converted. That occurred in 1738.

William subsequently became a leading figure in the great religious revival which effected the Principality, together with other parts of the United Kingdom and New England. The leaders of the movement in Wales were members of the Anglican Church and despite the difficulties they experienced in their relationship with it, they considered themselves to have never left the Church. William was of this movement which became known as the Calvinistic Methodists which might seem to many today to be a contradiction in terms. We tend to associate Wesley's theology with Methodism, however, in Wales, Methodism was always linked with Calvinism and this was in the main because of the profound influence of George Whitefield on the leaders in Wales. Owing to his ministry in England, Methodism there too, should never be understood as a purely Wesleyan affair. Whitefield was the outstanding leader of the Calvinistic wing of the Revival and was, for this reason, always appointed as the Moderator of the men in Wales whenever he happened to be with them. But one must not assume from these remarks that the leaders in Wales lacked personal commitment to Calvinistic theology.

One of the most pleasant parts of my study of Calvinistic Methodism in Wales, and William Williams in particular, was to visit private homes where an extant letter of

Williams' was treasured, and the National Library of Wales in Aberystwyth where so much original material is kept, and the British Museum for first prints of his hymns. All of his written material which we now have access to, his hymns and letters, attest to the fact that he was completely committed to the Reformed faith. And the same may be said of the other two great leaders, Howell Harris and Daniel Rowland.

Their being described as Methodists points up the fervour and enthusiasm of their religious convictions. Williams' book, *The Experience Meeting*, which Mrs Bethan Lloyd-Jones translated into English, gives us a wonderful insight into that spiritual earnestness. Orderliness was generally preserved, however, public expressions of affection for fellow believers, jumping for joy and the singing of hymns many times over, were not unusual in their meetings. Besides these things, exceptionally large numbers of people would often come together to hear the preachers, sometimes in most remote parts. I will never forget visiting the village where Daniel Rowland lived and served, and looking around at its smallness and isolation and wondering that long ago, thousands would congregate there to hear him preach and to receive the Lord's Supper.

On these occasions often large numbers were converted. No public appeal would be given. But the preaching was "with a demonstration of the Spirit's power", it was highly persuasive and people were led to believe. Eventually, because of the difficulties with the Church of England, those large chapels I spoke of, were built to house the unprecedented numbers of those who believed.

Richard Baxter wrote of order in the Church, "better disorderly preserved than orderly destroyed", and this remark has bearing on the discipline of the Church during the Revival. The leaders of the movement did not forbid public expressions of exuberance, although they did rule against deliberate exhibitionism. And of course intense emotions were to be expected where the Word came to them "as the Word of God".

A greater problem for them were their theological differences. These most often had to do with the person of Christ. In their quest to give Him the greatest glory they sometimes gave the impression of confusing the person of the Son with that of the Father. Their language could be quite startling - "No less than God was crucified". Among themselves they argued to avoid errors of theology and these differences at times led to divisions and unhappiness.

Today their high view of Jesus, His person and His work for and especially in and with the believer should fill us with admiration. They had a most spiritual view of their union with Him.

I think that today our only contact with Williams would be through His hymn, "Guide me O thou great Jehovah", which I saw in its first publicised form in The British Museum. But that is not to say that he does not now speak to us. For his life and long

ministry within Wales has effected subsequent generations and that tide of believers in turn has touched us and helped to shape our Christian thought.

When reading of him, one cannot help feeling, if only that wonderful time of extraordinary blessing could be repeated. His house, letters, hymns, his grave and the various accounts of his ministry stand among us, and these relics, shadows, should arrest our hearts and make us want to see God save so wondrously, in our time and place.

Tongues Revisited (continued)

held if we are to be faithful witnesses against error. However, Renton encourages us to reach out and challenge charismatics rather than write them off, as many are sincere but mistaken believers. (To illustrate this, Renton includes an appendix from a retraction testimony by Robert Baxter, a leading prophet of the 19th century Irvingite Movement.)

Chapter 11 ("Grace in Times of Conflict") is an excellent chapter in itself offering guidelines for behaviour in a theological controversy, especially in a local church context.

A second appendix on the dangers of false dualisms that are endemic in much contemporary Evangelical thinking is included.

All in all Renton's book is a useful contribution to the debate that challenges all sides to look afresh at the biblical grounds for their position.

Notes:

1. 'Prophecy' in *Vine's Expository Dictionary of New Testament Words*.
2. Victor Budgen, *Charismatics and the Word of God*, (Darlington: Evangelical Press, 1989).

This book was reviewed in *Grace & Truth Magazine*, Issue 4 - July/August 2001, pp.5-6.

Tongues Revisited

A third way

by *Renton Maclachlan*

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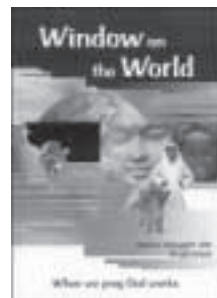
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The articles in this magazine reflect the body of biblical doctrine summarised in the 1689 Baptist Confession of Faith. Contributors are allowed reasonable freedom in the exposition of those truths; the editors do not necessarily endorse every view expressed.

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Cover Picture

The latest edition of *Operation World* is an excellent resource for Christians, providing information on the countries of the world to assist in prayer for the work of missions.

See inside back cover for further details.