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1968–1969

Edited by

J. I. PACKER

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J. I. Packer, Series Editor

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Part 1
The Manifold Grace of God



1968

1

The Arminian Conflict and the Synod of Dort

John R. de Witt

Christians here and there throughout the world in 1968 have celebrated the 350th anniversary of the convocation of the Synod of Dort. To most people even the name of Dort is probably not familiar, except as connected with a once important seaport and the oldest of the cities of Holland. And in the minds of those who know anything at all about the synod, very often all that remains is something of the odium so long attached to it by reason of the slanders of its enemies. Even so evangelical a writer as Thomas Haweis (1732–1820) could speak of the "rigour and asperity" with which the Arminians were treated, and complain of "the unchristian persecution which followed and drove these men from their churches and their country, into exile and poverty."[1] It is not difficult to imagine what other less friendly critics have said. John Goodwin, for example, the enemy not only of Dort but also of the Westminster Assembly, compared the synod with Herod "when for his Oath's sake, contrary to his mind and desire otherwise, He caused John the Baptist's head to be given unto Herodias in a platter."[2] On the other hand, however, no less an observer than Richard Baxter commented, on the Westminster Assembly: "The Divines there Congregate were Men of Eminent Learning and Godliness, and Ministerial Abilities and Fidelity: and . . . as far as I am able to judge by the Information of all History of that kind, and by any other Evidences left us, the Christian World, since the days of the Apostles, had never a Synod of more Excellent Divines (taking one thing with another) than this Synod and the Synod of Dort were."[3] And William Cunningham goes so far as to say: "The Synod of Dort, representing as it did almost all the Reformed Churches, and containing a great proportion of theologians of the highest talents, learning, and character, is entitled to a larger measure of respect and deference than any other council recorded in the history of the church."[4] That is very high praise indeed!

But, it may be asked, of what concern is such a synod to us? Several answers may be given. The Synod of Dort has a peculiar historical interest for Britain in that, while it was chiefly a Dutch gathering, yet King James I was in fact partly responsible for its very existence! In the years before 1618–19 he joined his powerful influence to that of men in the Netherlands who were demanding the

convocation of a national synod to settle the theological controversies which were disturbing the peace and endangering the newly won freedom of the United Provinces from the Spanish tyranny. The Elector of the Palatinate was James's son-in-law and added his own weight to that of the English king in calling of a synod. And most important of all, when the time came for the synod to meet, James appointed five delegates, all of the episcopal party, who with the other foreign divines that were to attend would have the prerogative of full participation in its deliberations and the right to vote. These were George Carleton, then bishop of Llandaff and afterwards of Chichester; Joseph Hall, afterwards successively bishop of Exeter and Norwich; John Davenant, afterwards bishop of Salisbury; Samuel Ward, the celebrated scholar and master of Sidney College, Cambridge; and Walter Balcanqual, a Scot, but chaplain to the king and afterwards dean of Rochester. Hall became ill after a few weeks and was unable to continue his duties, but was replaced by Thomas Goad, chaplain to the Archbishop of Canterbury. It is worthy of remark that these men all represented the prelatical and not the Puritan party in the Church of England. That Bishop Carleton was prepared to sit as an ordinary (albeit influential and respected) member of a synod convened in the Reformed manner and presided over by a mere presbyter says much about the view of episcopal government which then prevailed in England, a view soon to be altered radically under the direction of men like William Laud with their inflated and un-Protestant notions of the divine right of episcopacy. It is also significant that these Englishmen, a prelate and two prelates-to-be, all signed the Canons of the Synod of Dort. One would have expected such a profession of Calvinism from the heirs of Cartwright and Perkins: the world knows that they were one with their continental counterparts. But that such churchmen could do so is abundant proof that Calvinism remained the predominant theology in the English Church throughout the reign of James I. It was only under his son Charles I that that sad decay began in earnest which was later to bear such bitter and tragic consequences.[5]

But the Synod of Dort retains great importance for religious reasons as well. The history of the Reformed Churches in the seventeenth century and their development since that time can scarcely be understood without reference to the Arminian controversy and its resolution at Dort. This is, of course, especially the case with those Churches which descend from the Dutch Reformation. But it is only slightly less so with others. The Westminster Assembly itself was at certain points clearly influenced by its great continental predecessor, even in terms of internal organization. And quasi-ecumenical as it was, the Synod of Dort has exercised far more influence than one may think would have been the case with

a struggle which was in the first instance an internal, national question affecting only the United Provinces.

Arminianism came to be much more important after its apparent defeat at Dort in 1619 than it had been before, and broadened into a movement of international proportions which affected theological and philosophical thought throughout Western Europe, not only in Holland, but in England, France, Switzerland, and Germany. It was a precursor of liberalism and the Enlightenment, a close ally of Socinianism (Unitarianism), and an introducer of innovations which had a grave and widespread effect. One thinks in this connection of Grotius and his governmental theory of the atonement, for example; and of the Arminianism of the Church of England which contrived at last to defeat Puritanism and stamp out the original Reformed position of the English Reformation.

The definition of doctrinal differences which occurred at the Synod of Dort has ever since been decisive for evangelical Protestantism. “The Arminian controversy,” wrote Philip Schaff, “is the most important which took place within the Reformed Church.”[6] Great numbers of men who perhaps know nothing whatever of the Synod of Dort as such, yet nevertheless continue to think in terms of the categories of its doctrinal pronouncements and are guided by them, either positively (as in the case of the Puritans, men like Jonathan Edwards, C. H. Spurgeon, and others) or negatively (as in the case of John Wesley, Charles G. Finney, and many prominent modern evangelists). Indeed, it is difficult to see how, in terms of the doctrines of grace and the whole of the locus soteriology, these categories can be avoided. But more on this head presently.

James Arminius

To understand what took place in the Low Countries during the first two decades of the seventeenth century it is necessary to go back to Arminius himself and the proximate origins of the struggle associated with his name. We need not here inquire at any length whether there was Arminianism before Arminius. The errors identified as Arminianism are far older than the man himself and can be traced in ancient as well as modern Church history. To be sure, certain figures in sixteenth century Holland can be signalized as furnishing something of the background against which Arminius is to be seen: i.e., Erasmus, Coornhert, Duifhuis, Coolhaes, and others. But we have to do here with a specific movement in the Reformed churches.

James Arminius—latinized from Jacob Hermanson—was born at Oudewater (South Holland) in 1560. His father, a cutler, died while he was still very young,

and his upbringing was undertaken by Theodorus Aemilius, a former Roman priest now converted to Protestantism. Upon his death in 1574, the youth was befriended by one Snellius, a native of Oudewater but professor of mathematics at Marburg. Through Petrus Bertius Sr. and Taffin the court preacher he was registered in 1576 as the twelfth student at the newly established University of Leiden. At the expense of one of the guilds of Amsterdam he was later sent to complete his studies at Geneva, where he sat under Beza, the successor to Calvin, and also at Basel. In 1588 he became one of the ministers of Amsterdam where his work at first met with considerable acceptance. It was not long, however, before the trouble started. Curiously enough, the doctrinal peculiarities of Arminius, those points at which he deviated from the confessional position of the Church, were first detected during the course of his preaching. He was engaged in a systematic exposition of the Epistle to the Romans, and while some were surprised by his explanation of earlier passages, it was especially in connection with Romans 7:14ff. that his teaching roused a storm of protest. Here he suggested that the apostle was speaking, not of the regenerate—as most Reformed exegetes had understood it—but of the unregenerate man, one who is under the law, but knows its weakness and inability to save, and therefore seeks a redeemer: he is not yet a Christian, but stands upon the very threshold of faith. The congregation was in an uproar. Arminius was accused of contravening the confessions and adopting the Socinian interpretation. His senior colleague, Petrus Plancius, a fiery Calvinist and also a famous geographer and patron of Dutch exploratory expeditions, immediately registered protests against him which were investigated by the consistory. Rumor spread throughout the country. In subsequent discussions it became clear that Arminius had difficulties with the Belgic Confession, and especially with article 16 (“Of Eternal Election”). Martinus Lydius, professor at Franeker, Johannes Uytenbogaert, the court preacher, and Jean Taffin, now minister of the Walloon congregation in Amsterdam, intervened as mediators in the dispute, which resulted in Arminius pledging himself to adhere henceforth (as he claimed to have done before) to the words of the confessions. Again, in connection with his sermons on the ninth and thirteenth chapters of Romans exception was taken to his preaching—with respect to the doctrine of election, and also the place of the civil magistrate in the government of the Church; but so careful was he in his manner of expression that his opponents, who were watchful enough, found themselves unable to prove their suspicions against him.

It is significant, surely, that the man’s views were first revealed in this way: not in writing, nor in conversations with his colleagues, but in his public ministry. There is, one may think, a close relationship between theology and

preaching. Theology after all is not something studied in isolation from life; it is not restricted to an ivory tower where a man may be cut off from the Church and the body of Christian people. If theology is sound and biblical, therefore, then preaching will bear the same character; but if there is departure from the truth in the study, in a similar way preaching cannot but be affected. So close is it to the very heartbeat of the Church, so much a part of its most intimate life, that any real assessment of preaching is at once an assessment of the spiritual health of the Church. One wonders, however, whether there have been, or are, many Planciuses to raise protest against unsound doctrine; and still more—and it must be remembered that the Reformation was still young in Holland at this time—whether there are many congregations so alert to what is taught from the pulpit, and at the same time so concerned that it be in accordance with the Word of God, as to be dismayed and alarmed when a minister hints at doctrinal innovations and evidences departures from the truth. A survey of the history of many among even the most prominent evangelical congregations will indicate that people are perfectly capable of sitting under a Calvinist and an outspoken Arminian in direct succession the one to the other, and yet not noticing anything at all, or if they do, not caring about the difference. It ought to be remembered that Arminius himself was anything but an outspoken Arminian, but with Plancius to hear him and the people instructed under his ministry, the very smell of error was more than enough. For the remainder of his time in Amsterdam Arminius lived in relative peace, and did a good deal of constructive work there, but he was never trusted.

In 1602 the plague raged in Leiden, and Franciscus Junius, the celebrated professor of theology at the university there, fell a victim to it. The following year Arminius was appointed to succeed him, much to the distress of many in the Church. At Leiden a conflict soon broke out between him and his senior colleague Franciscus Gomarus, a strong Calvinist and one of the most notable divines of the age, a conflict in which it was evident that Arminius took serious exception to certain of the doctrinal positions in the Reformed confessions. Though now, as before in Amsterdam, he pledged not to contradict these confessions in his teaching and largely adhered to this in his public lectures, he gave certain select students private instruction in the course of which he much more freely voiced his dissatisfactions and doubts. There is no question but that Arminius was a man of deep learning and large gifts. He was a conscientious and faithful student of the Scriptures, and no doubt sincere in his investigations and inquirings after truth. These things are not, however, equivalent to orthodoxy in doctrine—no matter how admirable in themselves; and his success in winning over young men to his own point of view soon became apparent when these

appeared before the classes (presbyteries) for entrance into the ministry. Throughout the few short years left him, Arminius was the storm-center of a theological quarrel which began to affect the whole country. The ruling oligarchy under the leadership of John van Olden Barneveldt supported the Arminians; the great mass of the Protestant population and the ministers demanded adherence to the doctrinal position of the Church. But in this period there remained something vague and intangible about the dispute; the issues at stake were not sharply defined. Arminius refused to give precise, public form to his opinions. Clearly, however, the nature of the Church's relationship to its professed doctrinal position was at the bottom of the trouble.

Arminius is always carefully described, even by his critics, as a grave, sober, consistent Christian against whose life no finger of blame could be pointed. Unquestionably, in private life he was exactly that. But it is an extraordinary view of character and Christian morality that can, on the basis of certain personal traits and virtues, overlook glaring public faults, and, still more, ignore any connection between a man's inner life and his professional, ministerial vows. If it be true—as it certainly seems to have been—that the man pledged himself to adhere in his teaching to the doctrine of the Church (to which he was bound in any case, as one of its ministers), and then set out in private ways to undermine and alter it, he was guilty of a very serious fault indeed. One may object that a man's duty to truth transcends his duty to the Church, or, at any rate, to the teaching of the Church; and that therefore, if a choice must be made, it should be in the interests of truth rather than of dogma and confession. But it is a very rash thing to fly in the face of the confessions of the Church. There are occasions, to be sure, when a man must take his stand upon Scripture and in defiance of false doctrine and the churchmen who uphold it. But if such an occasion arises, he should clearly do that publicly, openly, and by renouncing his obligations and vows; not by duplicity and disingenuousness, in effect circumventing them. In any case, Arminius was not Luther, and the Reformed Church was not Rome.

Vows and subscription to confessions always entail difficulties while men are men. But to deny their legitimacy, and the concomitant necessary to enforce them, is at the same time to plead for a toleration of widely variant opinions and to introduce ecclesiastical lawlessness. And while this may be advisable, and even necessary, in the state, yet it can hardly be so in the Church where men are not simply concerned with the relationships and points of view that characterize all human society, but with divinely revealed truth. Humility there must always be, and awe and reverence before the incomprehensible God. But to acknowledge that is not at the same time to relativize doctrinal truth, or to reject the requirement—clearly laid down in the Scriptures—for the exercise of

discipline. Arminius and his successors were oath-breakers; and to avoid the consequences of this offence, they in effect withdrew themselves from the jurisdiction of ecclesiastical courts, while claiming to continue as good and faithful members of the Church, and placed themselves under the protection of the secular power. There is a remarkable, if perverse, consistency about human nature in respect to these things. Seldom is a man honest enough to withdraw from his office and membership in the Church if his views become incompatible with the constitution of that Church. Instead, he takes it upon himself, by means of a strange line of casuistical reasoning, to convert the Church to his own understanding of truth. Those commonly accepted prerogatives of merely human agencies by which men bound together for a common cause assume power to eject one who no longer accepts that cause seem ordinarily in the view of heretics presumptuous and not binding for the Church. Simple honesty of purpose and ordinary frankness are apparently too much to ask of churchmen who have subscribed to one thing, persist in adhering to another, see nothing inconsistent in their conduct, and seek to infect others with their own delusions.

Growth of the Conflict

Arminius died in 1609, in the midst of controversy, but his mantle was soon taken up by Johannes Uytenbogaert, the court preacher, and a little later also by Simon Episcopius, who had studied under Arminius and in 1612 became a professor of theology at Leiden. In 1610 the Arminians, under Uytenbogaert's leadership, met at Gouda and prepared a Remonstrance (hence they were afterwards called the Remonstrants) in which they first rejected certain positions held by the Calvinists, formulated in such a way as to offer what was rather a caricature than an accurate representation of the Reformed doctrine; and then went on to state in five propositions (the Five Arminian Articles) their own view: i.e., election conditioned on foreseen faith; universal atonement (that Christ "died for all men and for every man, so that he merited reconciliation and forgiveness of sins for all through the death of the cross; yet so that no one actually enjoys this forgiveness of sins except the believer"); the need for regeneration if man is to be saved (here they seemed to be orthodox enough, but, as it later appeared, this was understood in such a way as seriously to underestimate the depravity of human nature); the resistibility of grace ("but with respect to the mode of this grace, it is not irresistible"); and the uncertainty of the perseverance of believers (in respect of this article the Arminians shortly came openly to deny such final perseverance).[7] In the following year the Calvinists responded with a Contra-Remonstrance (hence the name "Contra-

Remonstrants") in seven articles restating the teaching of the Reformed confessions in respect to the doctrines of grace. A conference was held at The Hague in 1611 but led to no agreement (the Collatio Hagiensis).

Subsequent years saw an exacerbation of the controversy which raged throughout the country and was marked by increasing demands on the part of the Calvinists for the convening of a general synod to settle the differences. Though the constitution of the Church called for a synod at least every three years, none had been permitted to meet since 1586.

Prince Maurice, son of William the Silent and Stadholder, remained neutral until 1616 when, under the influence of his cousin the devout Calvinist Count William Louis, Stadholder of Friesland, and at the urging of Sir Dudley Carleton, the English ambassador, he began openly to take the part of the Calvinists; and by the summer of 1617 he was worshipping publicly with the Reformed congregation in The Hague. In that same year he executed a successful coup d'etat against Barneveldt, and determined at long last upon the calling of a synod of the Dutch Church. It was, however, to be a synod unique in the history of Protestantism, for at the urging of James I and others, foreign theologians were to be invited to participate. Invitations were sent out to all the Reformed Churches of Europe, and delegates actually came from England, the Palatinate, Hesse, Zürich, Berne, Basel, Schaffhausen, Geneva, Bremen, and Emden. France was not represented. The men designated to attend—who included Pierre du Moulin and Andre Rivet, two of the most celebrated theologians in Protestantism—were forbidden by the French king to leave the country. Even so, however, the French Reformed Church enthusiastically approved the Canons of Dort and made them binding on their ministers at two separate general synods, in 1620 and again in 1623.[8] But where was Scotland? Surely the Church of John Knox belonged in any international synod of the Reformed Churches? Strangely enough, the same king who so enthusiastically supported Calvinism at home and on the continent of Europe (at least by his words; he was less helpful when it came to tangible military assistance) and was willing that his prelates should take part in a Presbyterian assembly in the Low Countries, was in these very years engaged in subjecting the Church of his northern kingdom to a heartily despised and desperately unwanted hierarchical yoke. The Church of Scotland was not therefore free to take part.[9]

The Synod of Dort

The divines who met at Dort in 1618 constituted an extraordinary gathering of men. Its ranks included fifty-six ministers and ruling elders from the Dutch

Churches, five professors of theology, and twenty-six foreign divines, as well as eighteen political commissioners (not members of the synod) who were to supervise the proceedings and report to the States General. In order to assess the caliber of the assembly one has only to run over some of the names of men who took part in it. Gomarus was there, professor successively at Leiden, Middleburg, Saumur, and now at Groningen; and Lubbertus, of Franeker; Bogerman, the great minister of Leeuwarden who had studied at several continental universities and then at Oxford and Cambridge (under Reynolds and Perkins); Diodati, the learned Italian who taught at Geneva in the school of Calvin; the young Voetius, who had yet to begin his stupendous academic career at Utrecht which was to extend to 1676 and make him perhaps the most influential Reformed theologian in Europe; and Sceltetus, Polyander, Lydius, Alting, Hommius, Triglandius, Meyer, Carleton, Davenant, and Hall. One could go on and on. It is interesting to note that William Ames, the great Puritan who in 1610 had been constrained to flee from King James's England for the sake of his principles, was assigned to Bogerman, the president, as his private secretary. Ames was to have considerable influence behind the scenes.

The synod which the Church had so long demanded met at last on November 13, 1618. At 8:00 in the morning of that day the delegates made their way either to the Great Church where a solemn service of worship was conducted by ds. Balthazar Lydius (the pastor loci) in the Dutch language, or to the Augustinian Church where the local Walloon minister (ds. Jeremias de Pours) spoke in French. Lydius preached to a great multitude from Acts 15, and prayer was offered for the divine blessing upon the work about to begin, "so that the fallen walls and ramparts of Jerusalem might be built up again, and the country brought once more to its former rest, unity, and good estate."[10] Afterwards the foreign theologians returned to their lodgings, from which they were shortly led by various Dutch delegations to the hall where the sittings were to be held: the Gelderlanders accompanied the English, the South Hollanders, the representatives from the Palatinate, and so forth. The hall, the main chamber of the Kloveniersdoelen, or Arquebusiers' Armoury, was an impressive room. The desks and benches had been covered over in green cloth; ink-wells, sand-pots, paper, and pens were provided for each member. Numerous candlesticks and three great chandeliers provided illumination—it is said that twenty-four pounds of tallow were consumed every evening for the lighting. There were also two large galleries for spectators, capable of accommodating four or five hundred people. Throughout the long winter a fire burned continually on the hearth, and in addition each member was furnished with a stoofie or foot-warmer, filled not with coals but with glowing lumps of clay so as to avoid gaseous fumes which

would otherwise cause headaches.[11]

Again ds. Lydius addressed the delegates and led in prayer, after which Martinus Gregorii, president that week of the secular commissioners, rehearsed the reasons for which the synod had been called and then declared the synod in session. Lydius presided until the next day when officers were chosen. Johannes Bogerman of Leeuwarden was elected president (praeses); Rolandus and Faukelius assessors; Damman and Hommius scribes. Bogerman made an impressive figure: he was, we are told, extremely well-spoken, and a man of striking presence; his high, furrowed forehead, piercing eyes, well-formed nose, and magnificent beard which cascaded to his waist, were in perfect harmony with the grave seriousness of his countenance that bore traces of constant bodily suffering.[12] When the moderamen (executive committee) had been chosen, the credentials borne by the Dutch delegates were presented, and the political commissioners indicated that those of the foreign divines had already been received and approved by the States General and the Prince of Orange. All the members were divided into eighteen separate committees: the representatives from the various provincial synods each formed one, the Walloons another, and the professors of theology still another; in addition, each foreign delegation constituted a separate committee. The procedure of the synod was such that on all questions coming before it these committees framed an individual judgment, which was then reported back to the synod as a whole and read out before it. The written opinions were then handed over to the officers who collated them and prepared a final judgment. This was in turn either regarded as resolved at once, or an approbatory vote was taken to that effect. Very probably the method was adopted from the States General, but everyone felt that it was not altogether convenient. Complaints induced a review as the sessions went on—the English especially were unhappy about the dilatoriness which was a necessary consequence of such a method. While all agreed as to the drawbacks this committee structure bore in its train, yet it was undeniably thorough and was therefore followed to the end. For the sake of the foreigners Latin was used throughout the sessions.

The principal item on the agenda of the synod was, of course, the Arminian controversy. After some days of discussion summonses were sent out to thirteen of the Remonstrant ministers: chief among these was Simon Episcopius who, now that Uytenbogaert had gone into voluntary exile, was the leader of his party. They were to appear within fourteen days of receiving written notice.[13] Thereafter, while awaiting the arrival of the Remonstrants, the synod occupied itself with a number of important, but exclusively Dutch, concerns.

On December 6 Bogerman was able to inform the synod that the

Remonstrants had arrived. “At length are we coming to the main Battel,” wrote John Hales, who was there to secure direct information for his curious master the English ambassador. “The Armies have been in sight one of another, and have had some parly.”[14] The Arminians had been cited to appear before the synod to explain and defend their views and then to submit to its judgment as the ecclesiastical court having jurisdiction over them. This, however, was very little to their taste and quite out of accord with their own conception of the synod’s authority. Hence, there followed a long struggle in which Episcopius and his associates conducted themselves as a kind of counter-synod, equal to the Synod of Dort itself. When they entered the hall on December 6 and took their places at the table prepared for them, Episcopius sat at its head opposite Bogerman, and at his side was Bernardus Dwinglo who functioned as the Remonstrants’ scribe. On the following day an incident occurred which was to be typical of the sessions so long as the Arminians were present. Episcopius made a long oration, “überausz künstlich” (Mayer), learned and eloquent but, as many thought, highly impertinent, in which he cast aspersions not only upon the synod, but also upon the States General and by implication upon Prince Maurice himself. When a copy was demanded of him, he at first hesitated, saying he had no fair copy of it, but then acceded. It appeared later, however, that the speech as it was given in omitted the passages which had to do with the political authorities, and Episcopius was accused of lies and deceit, charges he vigorously denied. Whatever the truth may be, it is in any case impossible to exonerate him from disingenuous conduct. The battle continued throughout the ensuing weeks. The Remonstrants persisted in rejecting the authority of the synod to sit over them, regarded it as a party to the dispute and therefore incompetent to judge, demanded that reprobation first be handled rather than election so as to make as odious as possible the teaching of the Calvinists on this point; and when at last they brought in their judgments on the Five Articles of the Remonstrance, they phrased them in such a way as to be more negative than positive, so that the synod must still seek a clear statement of their views.[15]

One can appreciate the plight in which the Arminians found themselves. Their condemnation was a foregone conclusion. No one had any doubt about the way the synod would decide to the doctrinal points at issue. But they were not about to yield. Not all men of conviction, willing to pay any price for the sake of their principles, are to be found on the side of truth. And before a toleration was eventually granted many of these men would suffer exile and want. Their only alternative, therefore, was to obstruct progress as much as they were able, seek on every occasion to cast their enemies into a bad light, and at the same time attempt to put as good a face as possible upon their own positions.

After a month of fruitless efforts to get on with the business at hand, during which time Bogerman conducted himself with a patience and calm restraint that many found remarkable in the presence of what they could only regard as so much obstinacy, there was no choice but to dismiss the Remonstrants. Historians have often faulted the president for his conduct on that dramatic day, January 14, 1619, when he seems for a moment to have lost control of himself, but his exasperation is understandable. Referring to the deliberate misrepresentations and even falsehoods with which the Arminians had treated the synod, he cried: "You are sent away. Go! You began with lies, and you have ended with lies." And then once more he shouted, "Ite! Go!"[16]

Thereafter work was continued, dealing now with the writings rather than the persons of the Remonstrants. The reading of the various judgments (of committees) concerning the Five Articles took place from March 7 to 21, and from March 25 to April 16 the Canons themselves were formulated in ninety-three separate articles. These in turn were signed by all the delegates on April 23, and solemnly promulgated in the Great Church on May 6 before a large congregation. Three days later, after more than six months of arduous labor, the foreign divines took leave of the synod, the Dutch members remaining for another twenty-six sessions, till May 29, largely devoted to the fixing of the text of the Belgic Confession, the formulation of a Church order, liturgy, and so forth.

There has been much talk about the "persecuting Synod of Dort" and a great deal of willful misrepresentation with respect to it. Thus in England a version of the Canons was in wide currency until 1804, a version which had the peculiar pedigree of having been produced by one Daniel Tilenus, himself an Arminian! This edition which paraded as a "favourable abridgment" was in fact a deliberate corruption of the Canons. For example, it states that God has elected to salvation "a very small number of men," and predetermined the rest to condemnation "without any regard to their infidelity and impiety." This was to do nothing other than reproduce the original Arminian caricature of the Calvinist position in the Remonstrate of 1610. The Canons in fact make no such statement at all about the smallness of the number of the elect except to reject explicitly the Arminian charge to this effect in the Conclusion, and insist upon establishing the connection between the decree of reprobation and the fact of human sin and disobedience: With respect to those passed by, "God . . . hath decreed to leave them in the common misery into which they have wilfully plunged themselves . . . not only on account of their unbelief, but also for all their other sins."[17]

So far as persecution is concerned, it is quite true that two hundred Remonstrant ministers were deposed from their offices, of which total eighty were banished, nearly seventy agreed to be silenced and refrain from their

ministry, and forty, upon conforming to the decisions of the synod, were restored to their offices. But one must remember that the Dutch Church was bound to two confessional statements: the Belgic Confession and the Heidelberg Catechism. The Arminians were therefore, while pledged to these statements of the Reformed faith, advocating deviation from them. And it was they, nota bene, who in the years preceding the synod had proved themselves intolerant toward men concerned to uphold the doctrine of the Church. In many instances ministers deposed for heresy by the Church were maintained in office by the magistrates; and faithful ministers supported by the Church were ejected by them. Indeed, the Calvinists were deprived of the use of buildings set apart for their own worship, and constrained to meet where they could, not even then being left in peace. The charge of persecution comes ill from the lips of Remonstrants who, when they could, indulged in it themselves. The issue at Dort, however, was not a suppression of all religions other than the Reformed. Unlike the other countries of Europe, Holland was already the home of oppressed peoples: in 1609 the Pilgrim Fathers had settled in Leiden; and Lutherans, Anabaptists, and even Roman Catholics were tolerated, though not permitted to erect public places of worship. It must be granted that after the synod had met many Arminian ministers were deposed. It must also be granted that at the synod itself the Arminians were not treated as equals, but as those summoned to give an accounting of themselves and to be judged. But this has nothing whatever to do with toleration as such; it is rather a question of whether the Church has the right to enforce its own confessions of faith and insist upon its prerogative of depriving of their places those who deviate from those confessions and teach error instead of truth. The actions of the synod were disciplinary, directed against members and office-bearers of the Church who had involved themselves in heresy and sought to change the constitution of the Church to suit their own opinions. Only those men who themselves are wary of subscription to confessional statements, or who live as already perjured persons, having promised one thing only to believe another, will question the right of a church synod to act determinatively in such a case.

The Canons of Dort

For us the chief interest of the Synod of Dort is its five Canons, which have become known as the five points of Calvinism, or as the five doctrines of grace. It is impossible here to go deeply into the theology of these great truths, but we must, of course, say something about them. Arminianism represented a revival within the Reformed Churches of the semi-Pelagian doctrines which had so long

plagued the history of Christian thought; and while Arminius himself was not unevangelical, yet the subsequent history of the movement clearly demonstrates that when the fall in its total consequences for the whole being of man is not taken sufficiently seriously, and when salvation is not understood to be utterly and completely of divine grace, then the result is inevitably rationalism or worse. The divines of Dort were not concerned first of all with scholastic questions which bore no relationship to life. To them the controversy was not in any sense an academic one. It was utterly practical. In their view, as in that of Athanasius in his struggle against Arianism more than a thousand years before, the ultimate issue was salvation itself. If the Arminians had their way, and their doctrines were introduced into the Church, the end result must be destructive of the Christian doctrines of grace and redemption. Hence, the Canons—the unconditional and gracious character of election; the atonement of Christ limited to the elect of God as to its design and extent; the total depravity of man and his utter inability to any saving good; the irresistibility of the divine grace; and the perseverance of the people of God—were all, in answer to the Articles of the Remonstrance, intended to establish clearly and unmistakably the absolutely gracious character of salvation: that "it is not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth, but of God that showeth mercy" (Rom. 9:16). Arminianism meant synergism: that is, in however evangelical a form in some of its early proponents, it introduced a cooperative element into the effecting of salvation. And each of the doctrines delineated at Dort was directed against the notion of any cooperation, any grounding of God's favor upon something acceptable in the creature, in the extending of grace to sinners.

Dort did not tamper with the responsibility of man, nor did it cancel out the free offer of the gospel. "As many as are called by the gospel are unfeignedly called; for God hath most earnestly and truly declared in his Word what will be acceptable to him, namely, that all who are called should comply with the invitation. He, moreover, seriously promises eternal life and rest to as many as shall come to him, and believe on him." And again: "It is not the fault of the gospel, nor of Christ offered therein, nor of God, who calls men by the gospel, and confers upon them various gifts, that those who are called by the ministry of the Word refuse to come and be converted. The fault lies in themselves."[18] And in no respect did Dort minimize or depreciate preaching and evangelism: "Moreover the promise of the gospel is, that whosoever believeth in Christ crucified shall not perish, but have everlasting life. This promise, together with the command to repent and believe, ought to be declared and published to all persons promiscuously and without distinction, to whom God out of his good pleasure sends the gospel."[19] But it did assert the fundament of salvation to be

that election which is “the unchangeable purpose of God, whereby, before the foundation of the world, he hath, out of mere grace, according to the sovereign good pleasure of his own will, chosen, from the whole human race, which had fallen through their own fault, from their primitive state of rectitude, into sin and destruction, a certain number of persons to redemption in Christ, whom he from eternity appointed the Mediator and head of the elect, and the foundation of salvation.”[20]

Arminianism and Calvinism represented far more, therefore, than a superficial difference of opinion as to certain relatively minor points of Christian doctrine. To be sure, an evangelical Arminian (Wesley, for example) may in respect of the heart of the gospel be very close to a Calvinist; and Arminius himself was far sounder than many later Arminian evangelicals. Thus, unlike Wesley, he did not commit himself to a denial of final perseverance, though his followers did do so, and he seems to have been bound also to that same conclusion by the force of the other theses which constituted his criticism of Reformed theology. Conditional predestination and resistible grace would appear of necessity to imply the possibility of a permanent fall from grace. Nor did Arminius, again unlike Wesley, teach any form of perfectionism. But, I say, there is much more here than a superficial difference between two groups of Christians who underneath share a common commitment to the historic Christian faith. You see, the great problem is that Arminianism involves a quite different conception both of God and of man from that of Calvinism or Augustinianism. A similarity of language at many points may seem to indicate that very little ground separated Gomarus from Arminius, and Episcopius from Bogerman, but the distinction between the two is far from inconsequential and insignificant. And it will not do to plaster it over as though of no importance. One must grant that some variances are permissible within the Christian Church. The Calvinists of the early seventeenth century in Holland themselves granted that very thing. At the Collatio Hagiensis (Conference at The Hague) it appeared that they were willing to tolerate the Arminians on the score of their objection to reprobation, as a truth very much less clearly illuminated by the Scriptures than election.[21] But they could not acquiesce in the toleration of conditional election and resistible grace, for the simple reason that these departures from what they saw to be biblical truth were so serious as to imperil the life of the Church and the salvation of men. Not, of course, that reprobation, as it is to be found in the Word of God, can be lightly dismissed. But it was the dark, the shadow side of the other much more specifically revealed truth of election, unconditional, irresistible, eternal, by the mere grace of God. You see, when the Arminian teaching is granted, and election is thrown, for the cause of it, upon the shoulders of man, there is a serious

diminishing of divine power and authority; there is an indirect challenging of the divine sovereignty; and there is at the same time a cheapening of the divine grace.

Now, it is certainly true that the whole of the Reformed faith is not comprehended in the five Canons of the Synod of Dort. It is far vaster than that, and encompasses the whole of truth within its scope. Calvinism is not satisfied with an adherence to the Scriptures in respect of the locus soteriology, as though that were all it had to say. Nothing is strange to it, and it demands that every sphere of life, every aspect of theology, every element of human experience, be subjected to the authority of the Word of God. “For though we walk in the flesh, we do not war after the flesh: (For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strongholds;) Casting down imaginations, and every high thought that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ” (2 Cor. 10:3–5). It is quite possible, furthermore, for a person to be a doctrinal Calvinist in respect of the five great truths taught in the Canons of Dort, and yet at the same time to be an Anabaptist in respect to religious experience. It will not do, therefore, to identify in any absolute way the doctrines of grace with the whole of Reformed theology. Having delivered that caveat, however, one must go on to say that in point of fact the five Canons of Dort, while they deal principally with soteriology, are much broader in their implications than that, and in those implications touch upon almost every other important point in the body of Christian truth. And not only is that the case, but one must also say further that the attack within the Church and without it upon the truth of the Word of God as defined by Augustine, Calvin, Dort, and Westminster, had generally centered upon those very aspects of divine revelation comprehended in the Canons of the Synod of Dort. Again and again throughout the history of this question, whether by Pelagius against Augustine, by Pighius and Castellio against Calvin, whether by Arminius against Gomarus and Beza, whether by Uytenbogaert and Episcopius against the Synod of Dort, whether by John Wesley against the whole evangelical tradition of Great Britain—and one could go on and on with a list of that kind—the attack has come at these very five points. And the essence of that attack, whether evangelical or rationalistic, has always been an unwillingness on the part of man either to accept himself for what he is, or the high God for what He has revealed Himself to be in the holy Scriptures. Arminianism essentially represents an attack upon the majesty of God, and puts in place of it the exaltation of man. It is a danger which constantly recurs, and must be faced, and must be opposed.

So you see, while the five Canons are not synonymous with Calvinism or the

Reformed faith, yet they are an integral part of it. One cannot be Reformed unless he holds to them; nor can he tamper with any one of them and retain the scripturalness of his faith. They are like five great pillars of truth, upon which rests the salvation of men. Not, certainly, that a doctrine saves. Christ saves! And one does not assault or deny the Christianity of Arminius himself. But one must insist that it is in the truth that men are free; and that truth is in Christ: He is the truth. And still more, Christian experience, the apprehension of that truth which is Christ, is informed, summoned to life, governed, guided, directed, instructed, and in every way subject to the authority of the truths, the doctrines, the great facts about Himself and His plan of salvation, which God has given us in His Word.[22]

2

Arminianisms

J. I. Packer

Within the Churches of the Reformation, the terms Calvinism and Arminianism are traditionally used as a pair, expressing an antithesis, like black and white, or Whig and Tory, or Roman and Protestant. The words are defined in terms of the antithesis, and the point is pressed that no Christian can avoid being on one side or the other. Among evangelicals, this issue, though now 350 years old (if not, indeed, 1900 years old), remains live and sometimes explosive. Calvinism and Arminianism are still spat out by some as anathematizing swear words (like fundamentalism on the lips of a liberal), and there are still places where you forfeit both fellowship and respect by professing either. There remain Presbyterian churches which ordain only Calvinists, and Methodist and Nazarene bodies which ordain only Arminians, and the division between "general" (Arminian) and "particular" (Calvinistic) still splits the English Baptist community. In evangelism, cooperation between evangelicals is sometimes hindered by disagreement and mistrust over this matter, just as in the eighteenth century the Calvinistic evangelicals and John Wesley's party found it hard on occasion to work together. Nor is it any wonder that tension should exist, when each position sees the other as misrepresenting the saving love of God. The wonder is, rather, that so many Christians who profess a serious concern for theology should treat this debate as one in which they have no stakes, and need not get involved.

This paper seeks to understand and evaluate the Calvinist-Arminian antithesis. To that end, we shall address ourselves to three questions. First, what is Arminianism? Second, how deep is the cleavage between it and Calvinism and what has the Bible to say on the matters in dispute here? Third (assuming that by this stage we shall have seen reason to regard Arminianism as a pathological growth), what causes Arminianism and what is the cure for it? Before we tackle these questions, however, one caveat must be entered. Our concern is with things, not words. Our subject matter will oblige us to speak of Calvinism and Arminianism frequently, but it is no part of our aim to revive bad habits of slogan-shouting and name-calling. What matters is that we should grasp truly what the Bible says about God and His grace, not that we should parade brand labels derived from historical theology. The present writer believes, and wishes

others to believe, the doctrines commonly labeled Calvinistic, but he is not concerned to argue for the word. One who has received the biblical witness to God's sovereignty in grace is blessed indeed, but he is no better off for labeling himself a Calvinist, and might indeed be the worse for it; for party passion and love of the truth are different things, and are not always helpful to each other.

What Is Arminianism?[1]

Historically, Arminianism has appeared as a reaction against Calvinism, affirming, in the words of W. R. Bagnall, "conditional in opposition to absolute predestination, and general in opposition to particular redemption."[2] This verbal antithesis is not in fact as simple or clear as it looks, for changing the adjective involves redefining the noun. What Bagnall should have said is that Calvinism affirms a concept of predestination from which conditionality is excluded, and a concept of redemption to which particularity is essential, and Arminianism denies both. The difference is this. To Calvinism, predestination means foreordination, whereas to Arminianism it means only foresight of events not foreordained. On the Calvinist view, election, which is a predestinating act on God's part, means the foreordaining of particular sinners to be saved by Jesus Christ, through faith, and redemption, the first step in working out God's electing purpose, is an achievement actually securing certain salvation—calling, pardon, adoption, preservation, final glory—for all the elect. On the Arminian view, however, what the death of Christ secured was a possibility of salvation for sinners generally, a possibility which, so far as God is concerned, might never have been actualized in any single case; and the electing of individuals to salvation is no more than God noting in advance who will believe and qualify for glory, as a matter of contingent (not foreordained) fact. Whereas to Calvinism election is God's resolve to save, and the cross Christ's act of saving, for Arminianism salvation rests neither on God's election nor on Christ's cross, but on a man's own cooperation with grace, which is something that God does not Himself guarantee.

Arminianism was born in Holland at the turn of the seventeenth century, and synodically condemned by the whole Reformed world at Dort in 1618. In England, an Arminian tradition of teaching lasted into, and right through, the eighteenth century. Arminianism was part of the Wesley family heritage, and John and Charles fought the Calvinists by prose and poetry throughout their evangelical ministry. The Arminian evangelical tradition has been maintained by Methodists and others up to the present day.

It is important to realize that both in its general tenor and in its practical effect

the Arminianism of the "Belgic semi-Pelagians,"[3] as John Owen called the Remonstrants and their supporters, was not by any means identical with the Arminianism of John Wesley, his Arminian Magazine (1778–), and his colleague John Fletcher. The following account of Wesley's doctrine, taken from Fletcher's First Check to Antinomianism (1771), will alert us to the difference:

> He [Wesley] holds also General Redemption, and its necessary consequences, which some account dreadful heresies. He asserts with St. Paul, that Christ by the GRACE of God, tasted death for every man: and this grace he calls free, as extending itself freely to all. He frequently observes with the same apostle, that Christ is the Saviour of ALL men, but specially of them that believe; and that God will have ALL men to be saved, consistently with their moral agency, and the tenor of his gospel. With St. John he maintains, that God is love, and that Christ is the propitiation not only for our sins, but also for the sins of the WHOLE WORLD . . . and with St. Peter, that the Lord is not willing that any should perish, but that ALL should come to repentance; yea, that God, without hypocrisy, commandeth ALL men, EVERYWHERE, to repent.

Thus far, Wesley's position coincided completely with that of the Remonstrants, but Fletcher's next point is this:

> Thus far, Mr. W. agrees with Arminius, because he thinks that illustrious Divine agreed thus far with the Scriptures, and all the early Fathers of the Church. But if Arminius (as the Author of Pietas Oxoniensis affirms in his letter to Dr. Adams) "denied that man's nature is totally corrupt, and asserted that he hath still a freedom of will to turn to God, but not without the assistance of grace," Mr. W. is no Arminian, for he strongly asserts the total fall of man, and constantly maintains that by nature man's will is only free to evil, and that divine grace must first prevent, and then continually further him, to make him willing and able to turn to God.[4]

These sentences point us to the basic difference between the Remonstrant and the Wesleyan Arminianisms. In seeing man's act as contingent so far as God is concerned, and in thinking that moral agency presupposes "freewill" in the special and particular sense of indeterminacy of action, the two were agreed. In claiming that all men actually have power to respond to such revelation from God as reaches them, and that revelation sufficient to save actually reaches every man, whether he hears the gospel or not, they were agreed also. (Historic Calvinism would query all these positions.) But the two Arminianisms divided over the question whether capacity for response to God had been wholly lost at

the fall. Wesley said it had, but held that it was now restored to every man as a gift of grace. The Remonstrants said it had never been wholly lost, and "total inability" had never been a true diagnosis of man's plight in Adam. Sin, said the Remonstrants in effect, has made man weak in the moral and spiritual realm, but not bad: he still has it in him to reach out, however sluggishly, after what is right, and God in fact helps him, powerfully if not decisively, in each particular right choice. Wesley agreed that God helps to actualize an existing capacity in every right choice, but maintained that this capacity only existed now because it had been supernaturally restored to all the race in consequence of the cross. While accepting Remonstrant synergism, in the sense of seeing man's co-operation in right action as something distinct from, and independent of, God's energizing, Wesley insisted that the capacity to cooperate was itself a love gift from God to sinners, and that the Calvinistic doctrine of original sin, as involving loss of this capacity entirely, had not been a whit too strong.

The effect of this difference was to give the two Arminianisms contrasting thrusts. The Remonstrant thrust was to upgrade nature, minimize sin, and recast Christianity as a moralism of grace (that is, a system, like Roman Catholicism, in which grace makes possible saving moral endeavor: in New Testament terms, a Judaizing Christianity which is really "another gospel"). The end of this road, as the century following Dort showed, was Deism—salvation by merit of morality without grace at all. The Wesleyan thrust, however, was explicitly anti-deistic and in intention, if not entirely in effect, anti-moralistic too. Wesley maximized sin in order to magnify grace. He challenged the then standard Anglican moralism, of which he had himself once been a victim, by affirming present justification through faith in Christ alone, and by adding that true Christian morality was the fruit of justifying faith, and that self-abandoning trust was of this faith's very essence. Where Remonstrant Arminianism had been humanistic and rationalistic in motivation, delimiting God's sovereignty of set purpose in order to assert man's autonomy and self-determination, Wesleyan Arminianism was directly religious in motivation—more religious than theological, in fact—seeking only to exhibit the love of God in salvation and the power of faith in everyday life and practice. Remonstrant Arminianism, like later Baxterianism, took a voluntaristic view of faith as essentially commitment to new obedience, a view which assimilates faith to repentance and makes it both look and feel like a human work determining salvation. Wesleyan Arminianism, however, like earlier Reformation theology, both Lutheran and Calvinist, distinguished faith from repentance, defining it as assured trust in Christ, correlative to the witness of the Holy Spirit, and springing from the sense of hopelessness and helplessness which God's law induces. Having thus excluded all self-reliance from the

psychology of faith, Wesley seems never to have seen the oddity of continuing to profess a theology which obliged him to view faith as a man's own work of response to God. There was, in truth, beneath the surface clearness and practicality of his mind a great deal of muddle at the theoretical level. Certainly, however, his view of the nature of faith made his professed Arminianism as fully evangelical, and as little legalistic, as it is possible for a synergistic system to be. We shall mark the difference between it and the Remonstrant position by calling them evangelical and rationalistic Arminianisms respectively.

We shall now glance at their history, taking the latter first.

Rationalistic Arminianism

Rationalistic Arminianism was a revival of the semi-Pelagian reaction to Augustinianism which was developed in the fifth century by John Cassian and Faustus of Ries. It was a movement of recoil from the high doctrine of predestination taught by Luther and Calvin and systematized—perhaps too thoroughly—by Beza. Arminianism emerged in Holland, but not as an isolated phenomenon; similar reactionary theologies appeared at about the same time in England, as we shall see, and in German Lutheranism. It was part of a Europe-wide encroachment on the theology of the Reformation by the rationalism of the Renaissance.

The story is this. In 1589 a brilliant young Amsterdam clergyman, who had studied for a year with Beza in Geneva, Jakob Hermandzoon (Arminius) by name, was asked to answer an attack by a certain Koornhert, of Delft, on the supralapsarian view of predestination. (This was the view that God's election of some to salvation and non-election of others envisaged men, not as fallen, but simply as rational creatures, and so was logically prior in God's thinking to His decision to permit the Fall.) It was assumed that Beza's pupil would hammer Koornhert hard; but Arminius's restudy of the issues led him to agree with Koornhert. The expected reply never appeared. Instead, for the next twenty years till his death in 1609, at the age of 49, Arminius maintained, discreetly but decidedly, the "Arminian" view of election and a semi-Pelagian view of man.

In 1610, a group of his followers issued a public Remonstrance, a manifesto stating on five theological issues "Arminian" views for which they claimed toleration and protection. Eventually the Synod of Dort (1618–19) pronounced against them all, affirming in opposition five counter-theses of its own. These "five points of Calvinism," made memorable by the mnemonic TULIP, are the Total depravity of man in sin (total in extent, of course, not in degree); the Unconditional and decisive character of God's election of sinners to salvation; the Limited scope (but definite and effective nature) of Christ's redemptive

achievement on the cross; the Irresistible and efficacious quality of the grace that leads sinners to repentance and faith; and the certain Perseverance, through divine preservation, of all regenerate persons to final glory.[5] The overall thrust of the Dort deliverances is to make the double point that it is God who saves us by fulfilling His plan of election, and Christ who saves us by His effective purchase of us on Calvary, and that in no sense do we save ourselves: salvation is wholly of the Lord, first to last a gift of free sovereign mercy. A. W. Harrison rightly describes the canons of Dort as "rather one of the classic statements of Calvinism than an exposition of Arminian error";[6] their main value and significance lies in their positive affirmations, which controlled the presentation of the Reformed faith in Europe for a period of more than a century.

Dort having spoken, the Arminians were temporarily exiled; but in 1626 they were able to return and open a theological seminary at Amsterdam, where Episcopius, Curcellaeus (Courcelles), and Limborch, three brilliant men, taught in succession. Philip Schaff's description of Arminianism as standing for "an elastic; progressive, changing liberalism"[7] was, however, true of the Seminary. The continental Arminian school drifted rapidly into undogmatic moralism, of a deistic or Socinian type.

In England, Peter Baro (Baron), a French refugee who had become Lady Margaret Professor for Divinity at Cambridge, caused a stir in 1579 by arguing from the case of Nineveh in the book of Jonah the thesis which in substance Arminius was to maintain ten years later—that "God predestined all men to eternal life, on condition of their faith and obedience."[8] William Barrett preached the same doctrine in 1595, and the resulting explosion caused the nine Lambeth Articles to be composed. These, the nearest English counterpart to the Dort canons, were a semi-official statement of what was then regarded as Anglican orthodoxy on predestination and grace.[9] At the Hampton Court Conference of 1604, John Rainolds, the Puritan leader, asked for the Lambeth Articles to be added to the Thirty-nine, but King James said no.

Soon came a massive reaction away from Calvinism along the lines that Baro and Barrett had marked out. This was due partly to official encouragement of Arminians from the top by Laud and others, partly to the attractive combination of moralism and natural theology put out by the Cambridge Platonists, and partly, no doubt, to the Englishman's congenital instinct toward Pelagianism. After the Restoration, Calvinism had the status only of an oddity maintained by nonconformists: the divines of the establishment were, with very few exceptions, Arminians. One result was the corrupting of the doctrine of justification by faith in the Church of England. The later Reformation teaching that Christ's righteousness imputed was the "formal cause" of justification was replaced by

the Arminian thought of Christ's personal righteousness as the meritorious cause of the present possibility of self-salvation. Faith became not the means but the condition of justification, and was understood moralistically as "all the obedience required by the gospel." This phrase comes from Bishop Bull, who, like Luther, interpreted James as teaching that sanctification was the ground of justification; only whereas Luther concluded from this that James was not fit to be in the Bible, Bull argued that James was the norm, and Paul should be interpreted in line with him.[10] Bull's older contemporaries, Hammond, Thorndike, and Jeremy Taylor, had substantially taught the same, and this view became standard. By Wesley's day the true meaning of justification by faith had been forgotten almost universally in the Church of England.

This brings us to evangelical Arminianism, which had as part of its purpose the restoring of the truth of justification to its rightful place once more.

Evangelical Arminianism

John Wesley learned moralistic Arminianism from his parents as part of the family doctrine. Both Samuel and Susanna had moved out from Calvinistic nonconformity into Arminian Anglicanism, and were sharply hostile to the teaching they had left behind. (The psychology of such hostile attitudes is well known.) A letter from Susanna to John in 1725, when he was twenty-two, states exactly the view of predestination, and of the meaning of article 17 of the Thirty-nine, which he always upheld in later life:

> The doctrine of predestination as maintained by rigid Calvinists, is very shocking . . . because it charges the most holy God with being the author of sin. . . . I do firmly believe that God from all eternity hath elected some to everlasting life, but then I humbly conceive that this election is founded in His foreknowledge, according to Romans 8:29, 30 . . . Whom in his eternal prescience God saw would make a right use of their purses, and accept of offered mercy, He did predestinate. . . . nor can it with more reason be supposed that the prescience of God is the cause that many finally perish than that our knowing the sun will rise tomorrow is the cause of its rising.[11]

However, John's association with the Moravians, which led to his Aldersgate Street experience of 1738, knocked all the moralism and self-effort out of his Arminianism, and brought in its place a clear emphasis on instantaneous justification through faith as part of an instantaneous new birth, without which there was no true religion. As we hinted earlier, Wesley's stress when presenting conversion as the entrance to authentic Christian life (unlike that of some today who would see themselves as Wesley's successors) was on man's utter and helpless dependence on God to give faith and bring about new birth. This was

because Wesley thought of faith, not as decision (to use the modern catchword), but as a compound of trust and assurance, the subjective consequence of the Spirit's inner witness. What the Spirit witnessed to in giving faith was the promise of pardon and adoption as applying to oneself. Calvin, speaking here for all the Reformers, had defined faith as "a firm and sure knowledge of the divine favour towards us, founded on the truth of a free promise in Christ, and revealed to our minds, and sealed on our hearts, by the Holy Spirit."[12] Wesley's teaching on faith represents a return to this, a return from the world of synergism and self-determination to that of monergism and sovereign grace.

It was Wesley's Aldersgate Street experience that determined his view of faith. There, as his heart was "strangely warmed" through the reading of Luther on Romans, he entered into what his Moravian friends had told him that real faith was: namely, assurance of pardon and acceptance through the cross. "I felt I did trust in Christ, Christ alone, for salvation; and an assurance was given me, that he had taken away my sins, even mine. . . ." Habitually (though not with perfect verbal consistency) Wesley taught that this assurance is an integral element in the faith that God gives—the faith, that is, that saves.[13] Repentance was to him faith's precondition, sorrow for sin and reform of manners. Sometimes, indeed, as in his 1744 Conference Minutes, he would describe repentance as "a low state of faith," or as the faith of a servant in contrast with that of a son (compare Gal. 4:1–7; Rom. 8:15–16); his basic thought, however, was that, whereas repentance is a state of seeking God, faith is the state of finding him, or rather of being found by him. A person seeking God can do no more than wait on God, showing the sincerity of his quest by the earnestness of his prayers and the tenderness of his conscience, till the light of assurance dawns in his heart. Such teaching is similar to the Puritan doctrine of "preparatory works," and led to similar practice in counseling troubled souls: it is a far cry from Dutch Arminianism.

Yet Wesley would never let the world forget that he wanted his teaching taken in an Arminian sense, because Calvinism in all its forms was anathema to him; and this caused him much trouble, mostly unnecessary and of his own making. He always caricatured Calvinism in the same three ways—as antinomian, making holiness needless; as restricting the preaching of God's love to the world (for some reason he was always sure that according to Calvinism only "one in twenty" is elect); and as fatalistic, destroying moral responsibility and denying the connection between means and ends in the spiritual realm. At the end of his life he wrote:

> Q. 74. What is the direct antidote to Methodism, the doctrine of heart-

holiness?

A. Calvinism: All the devices of Satan, for these fifty years, have done far less toward stopping this work of God, than that single doctrine. It strikes at the root of salvation from sin, previous to glory, putting the matter on quite another issue. [That is, Wesley takes Calvinism to say that men may be saved without holiness by virtue of their election.]

Q. But wherein lie the charms of this doctrine? What makes men swallow it so greedily?

A. It seems to magnify Christ, although in reality it supposes Him to have died in vain. For the absolutely elect must have been saved without Him; and the non-elect cannot be saved by Him.[14]

Misrepresentations like this, from a godly man who over fifty years had had many Calvinistic friends and abundant opportunity to read Calvinistic books, argue a degree of prejudice and closed-mindedness which is almost pathological. Perhaps John's invincible ignorance (shared by Charles) as to what Calvinism really was should be seen as a lifelong haunting by the ghost of Susanna. At all events, it became a rod for his back, and for the backs of many others too.

Wesley's first anti-Calvinist eruptions were occasioned by troubles in the Fetter Lane and Kingswood Societies in 1740–41. There were some sharp exchanges, and John, with Charles's help, produced a volume entitled Hymns on God's Everlasting Love, in which, along with some vintage Wesley paeans, ditties of this sort were reeled off:

God, ever merciful and just,
With new-born babes did Tophet fill;
Down into endless torments thrust,
Merely to show his sovereign will.
This is that Horrible Decree!
This is that wisdom from beneath!
God (O detest the blasphemy!)
Hath pleasure in the sinner's death.[15]

Comment on the tone and content of such lines, and on the degree of pastoral wisdom which they show as a contribution to domestic debate within a young evangelical movement, is surely superfluous.

For all the inflammatory gesture made on both sides, the 1741 debate died down; but in 1770 came bigger trouble. Wesley's Conference Minutes, wishing to make the point, against real or supposed Calvinistic Antinomians, that salvation through faith is also, and necessarily, salvation in holiness, were so drafted as to appear to teach, Roman-style, that a man's own works are the ground of his acceptance with God. Having reaffirmed that "we have leaned too much toward Calvinism" in playing down the fact that a man must be faithful and labor for life and bring forth works of repentance if he is to be saved, the

Minutes proceed thus:

> Once more review the whole affair:
>
> (1) Who of us is now accepted with God? He that now believes in Christ with a loving, obedient heart.
>
> (2) But who among those that never heard of Christ? He that, according to the light he has, "feareth God and worketh righteousness."
>
> (3) Is this the same with "he that is sincere"? Nearly, if not quite. [The Arminian doctrine of "universal sufficient grace" here comes to the surface.]
>
> (4) Is not this salvation by works? Not by merit of works, but by works as a condition.
>
> (5) What have we been disputing about for these thirty years? I am afraid about words . . .
>
> (6) As to merit itself, of which we have been so dreadfully afraid. We are rewarded according to our works, yea because of our works. How does this differ from, "for the sake of our works"? And how does this differ from secundum merita operum? which is no more than, "as our works deserve." Can you split this hair? I doubt [i.e. I rather think] I cannot . . .
>
> (8) Does not talking . . . of a justified or sanctified state, tend to mislead men; almost naturally leading them to trust what was done in one moment? Whereas we are every moment pleasing or displeasing to God, according to our works . . .[16]

These Minutes sparked off the heated and tragic controversy of the next five years, in which Wesley's lieutenants John Fletcher and Thomas Olivers exchanged fierce literary punches with Toplady, the Hill brothers, and Berridge, while the Calvinist and Arminian segments of the revival movement drifted further and further apart. One comment only, however, is relevant for us: and that is, that it is no more right to dismiss these Minutes as theologically inept (even though the 1771 Conference admitted that they had been upgraded), than it is right, with A. W. Harrison, to call them "apparently innocuous."[17] They are in truth an object lesson on the tensions and incoherencies that necessarily arise as soon as an Arminian, committed as he is to treating man's response to the gospel as a contribution of man's own, and his continuance in grace as contingent on his continued response, tries to state the Reformation doctrine of justification by grace through faith without works. The doctrine he states, whatever he calls it, will appear as justification by works in fact. No man, however confident in manner, can really square this circle. Wesley's various attempts to do so (and he made quite a number) put one in mind of the parody of the Scout song:

They said it couldn't be done:
He said, "There's nothing to it!"
He tackled the job with a smile—
And couldn't do it.

Which brings us to our next section.

The Cleavage between Calvinism and Arminianism

Views differ here. Some maximize the cleavage in terms of theological black and white. In the seventeenth century, for example, Prynne spoke of "Arminian thieves and robbers," and Francis Rous told Parliament that "an Arminian is the spawn of a Papist"; and in the eighteenth century the Wesleys, as we saw, told the world that Calvinism was blasphemous, devilish, and spiritually ruinous. Many since have echoed both estimates, and left the matter there. A more discerning approach, however, is that exemplified by William Ames, one of the periti of Dort, who wrote: "The view of the Remonstrants, as it is taken by the mass of their supporters, is not strictly a heresy [that is, a major lapse from the gospel], but a dangerous error tending toward heresy. As maintained by some of them, however, it is the Pelagian heresy: because they deny that the effective operation of inward grace is necessary for conversion."[18] Ames's words alert us to the fact that Arminianism varies, so that blanket judgments are not in order: each version of post-Reformation semi-Pelagianism must be judged on its own merits. Ames is right. The facts surveyed in this paper show clearly the need for discrimination. Thus, it is surely proper to be less hard on Wesleyanism than on any form of Dutch Arminianism, just because (to the loss of clarity and consistency, yet to the furtherance of the gospel) Wesley's teaching included so much Reformation truth about the nature of faith, the witness of the Spirit, and effectual calling. Wesley's Arminianism, we might say, contained a good deal of its own antidote! Its evangelical and religious motivation, also, puts it in a different class from the Remonstrant position.

But why should Arminianisms vary in this way? The final answer is: not because Arminians are personally erratic, but because all Arminian positions are intrinsically and in principle unstable. Arminianism is a slippery slope, and it is always arbitrary where one stops on the slide down. All Arminianisms start from a rationalistic hermeneutic which reads into the Bible at every point the philosophic axiom that to be responsible before God man's acts must be contingent in relation to him. All Arminianisms involve a rationalistic restriction of the sovereignty of God and the efficacy of the cross, a restriction which Scripture seems directly to contradict. All Arminianisms involve a measure of synergism, if not strong (God helps me to save myself) then weak (I help God to

save me). All Arminianisms imply the non-necessity of hearing the gospel, inasmuch as they affirm that every man can be saved by responding to what he knows of God here and now. The right way to analyze the difference between Arminianisms is to ask how far they go in working out these principles, and how far they allow evangelical checks and balances to restrain them.

On all this, we have just two comments to make.

First, the Bible forbids us to take a single step along the Arminian road. It clearly affirms the positions which Dort highlighted: God's absolute sovereignty; human responsibility without any measure of contingency or indeterminacy (look at Acts 2:24!); and a direct connection between the work of Christ in obtaining and applying redemption. The very name of Jesus is itself an announcement that "he shall save his people from their sins" (Matthew 1:21). It does not tell us that He will make all men savable, but that He will actually save those who are His. And it is in these terms that the Bible speaks throughout.[19]

Second, if we travel the Arminian road, there are three precious things that we necessarily lose. These are: the clear knowledge of God's sovereignty in our salvation, the clear sight of Christ's glory as the Savior of His people, and the clear sense of the Christian's eternal security in the covenant of grace. These are sad, and saddening losses, which impoverish the children of God in the same way that Roman Catholicism impoverishes them. There is more comfort and joy for God's children set forth in the Scriptures than the Roman and Arminian theologies allow them to possess. At this point, at least, Rous's verdict stands: Romanism and Arminianism show themselves to be all too much akin.

We conclude, then, that Arminianism should be diagnosed, not as a creative alternative to Reformation teaching, but as an impoverishing reaction to it, involving a partial denial of the biblical faith in the God of all grace. The lapse is less serious in some cases, more so in others, but in every case it calls for responsible notice and compassionate correction. The logical conclusion of Arminian principles would be pure Pelagianism, but no Arminian takes his principles so far (otherwise one would call him a Pelagian, and be done with it). Calvinists should therefore approach professed Arminians as brother evangelicals trapped in weakening theological mistakes, and seek to help them to a better mind. So we move to our final brief section.

The Causes of Arminianisms and Their Cure

What are the causes of Arminianisms, and what is the cure for them? Satanic malice and the natural darkness of the human mind are no doubt contributory causes of Arminianism, in its various forms; but what has directly produced it in

history is reaction against an image (often incorrect) of Calvinism. Arminians appear as men concerned to do justice to four biblical realities: the love of God, the glory of Christ, the moral responsibility of man, and the call to Christian holiness. The reason why they affirm universal redemption, universal sufficient grace, man's ability to respond to God, man's independence in responding, and the conditional character of election, is because they think these assertions necessary as means to their avowed end. Calvinists believe that the Arminian method of safeguarding these four realities actually imperils them, and can argue strongly to this effect, but they can only expect to be listened to if they are showing equal concern for these realities themselves. And if their Calvinism appears hard, cold, and academic, lacking love for God and man, lacking passion for evangelism, lacking both the tender conscience and the burning heart, they must not wonder if their arguments fail to carry conviction. It is to be feared that much of the Arminianism in this world has been due in part, at any rate, to recoil from an unspiritual Calvinism. We are deliberately, in this paper, avoiding any attempt to generalize about our situation today, but those who find themselves up against Arminianism (or perhaps it calls itself anti-Calvinism) at the present time would do well to ask whether Calvinists themselves have not had something to do with bringing it into being, by not advancing their doctrine with holy and loving attitudes and actions.

How can Arminianisms be cured? Only God can finally set men's heads right, just as only He can ever set our hearts right. But if we, who stand on the Calvinist side, can learn afresh to explain that true theology must be confessional, a faithful echo of the Bible, neither adding nor subtracting; and that the reality of human moral agency and responsibility in a world where God is Lord is one of the mysteries of creation, which we acknowledge, but do not pretend to understand; and that total inability to respond to God is indeed part of the human tragedy; and that the redeeming love of God is not an impotent goodwill that can be thwarted, but a sovereign resolve that not even Satan can stop; and that there is in every regenerate heart a testimony confirming the biblical insistence that it is the Triune God, and He alone, who saves us; and that God in the gospel offers pardon and life to every man who hears it, and that none who hears misses this blessing save by his own unbelief; and that expectant evangelism is every Christian's duty; and that it is the very knowledge that it is God who saves, and that He does not send His word forth for nothing, that upholds our expectancy; and that the reprobates are faceless men so far as we are concerned, so that we can never be sure we have met even one of them—then we may hope to see the children of God returning in increasing numbers from the dry places of Arminianism to the "old paths, wherein is the good way," where

they will find rest for their souls and power for their lives.

3

John Wycliffe: The Evangelical Doctor

David Fountain

The title of this conference allows us to go back to Wycliffe but no further. He was the first Reformer and was described by D'Aubigney as the "greatest of the English Reformers." He deserves the title "The Morning Star of the Reformation." It is good for us to deal with a man in whom we find both the Reformed and Anabaptist elements, and in whom we also see combined intellectual brilliance and a practical concern for the good of God's people. We are aware most of all of his great achievements in the spreading of the gospel.

In many ways Wycliffe was a man in advance of his time by several centuries. Some things he could not see so clearly as the sixteenth century Reformers, but other things he saw far more clearly. The title of this paper is "John Wycliffe: The Evangelical Doctor." This is appropriate since the most important thing about him is his attitude towards the Scriptures. While it is possible for us to look back and see that he fell short of a perfect grasp of all the major doctrines, the extraordinary thing about him was the way in which he moved so remarkably in the right direction. This was surely because he adopted a right approach toward the Word of God. He saw that "the end of the commandment was love out of a pure heart and faith unfeigned." In a day when academic success meant so much his desire was not to win a great reputation but to edify the people of God. We live in a day when the Scriptures are approached in a thoroughly unbiblical manner. Master John Wycliffe has surely much to teach us in his humility of mind and submission to the plain statement of the Word. He anticipated plainly and clearly the sola scripta of the Reformers, but he also applied this in preaching and evangelism. He faced a type of preaching and evangelism that bears comparison with the present day. As we consider the way he handled the sacred text we may feel he is actually speaking to our present situation.

Wycliffe's Life

Wycliffe was born at a very important time in English history. Trevelyan tells us that, "In the second half of the fourteenth century we see for the first time the

modern mingling with the medieval and England herself beginning to emerge as a distinctive nation, no longer a mere overseas extension of Franco/Latin Europe." The English language was coming into general use and was generally understood. Oxford University at this period had come to surpass Paris in its reputation and attainments, and was the leading university in Western Europe. There was a great emphasis on academic qualifications. The Church was ruled by an aristocracy of graduates and this aristocracy was considered useful to the State. Many bishops were no more than civil servants and often royal servants were rewarded with a miter. Such were castigated by Wycliffe and his followers as "Caesarean clergy." It was exceptional for a man to rise to the top, either in the Church or in royal service, without a degree. It is necessary for us to appreciate this veneration for learning in order to understand the tremendous esteem in which Wycliffe was held.

There is considerable uncertainty about Wycliffe's family background, and there is very little at all of a personal nature we can discover about him. Those who study him are impressed by a vast mind and great conviction, rather than by a striking or fascinating personality. He was born in Yorkshire in the neighborhood of Richmond at about 1330 and probably belonged to a modest, land-owning family that bore his name. John of Gaunt was the feudal overlord of that area, and it is likely that there was some association between this fact, and the fact that later he was Wycliffe's patron.

Oxford was altogether different then from now. There were only six colleges in 1360, with less than seventy-five members, but these were mostly graduates. There were about 1,500 undergraduates, mostly clerks of the Church. The academic studies were very exacting. An undergraduate who had started at fifteen would be at least thirty-three before he had completed his training. Only one-third of the starters became Bachelors and one-sixth Masters. All examinations were conducted viva voce, hence the great stress on disputation, in which Wycliffe excelled. Wycliffe was forty before he finished, having allowed his studies to be interrupted by administrative and other duties. Although a Bachelor of Arts at the age of twenty-six, he did not take his D.D. until he was thirty-two. The school-men laid great stress on the practice of disputation: "this exercise is far more useful than reading since by it doubts are resolved. Nothing is perfectly known which has not been masticated by the teeth of disputation. Minds thus sharpened could not but be enquiring."

Wycliffe's name has been associated with three colleges: Queen's, Merton, and Balliol. Between 1356 and 1360 he was elected the Third Master of Balliol. Soon after, he was given the comfortable living of Fillingham in Lincolnshire. This meant he had to resign his Mastership, but he did not leave the university.

He hired lodgings in Queen's College, and later, for a short period, he became Warden of Canterbury Hall. Though he never held an important office in the university he enjoyed enormous prestige. Even his enemies agreed that he was "the flower of Oxford; in philosophy second to none, without a rival in the discipline of the schools." Archbishop Arundel, the enemy of the Lollards, said of Wycliffe, "Wycliffe was a great clerk, and many held him a perfect liver." No one in his many detractors ever accused him of incontinence or self-indulgence. Pride and disappointed ambition are the charges preferred. He was a disciple of Roger Bacon, "Dr. Mirabilis," who had lived at Oxford until 1292, and had grasped and exemplified the experimental method of science. Wycliffe's sermons reveal how broad his studies must have been. They include references to the law of optics, chemical analysis, physiological genesis of sleep, geometrical and arithmetical rules, and national economics. It is evident from the success with which he was able to gather round him a group of able young scholars that he had a gift for inspiring academic discipleship. His earnestness, undeniable learning, single-mindedness, and personal simplicity made him a dominant figure in the University. Like Calvin, he had a meager physique.

None of Wycliffe's precursors could be described as a Reformer. They were all prepared to attack the life of the Church but not its doctrine, and the institution as a whole. The "Vision of Piers Plowman" was very forceful in its exposure of the sins of the clergy, but the whole trend of the poem assumes that the body of Church doctrine was sound. Wycliffe's precursors did a good work but they did not go far enough. Previous to Wycliffe there is no certain trace of any native "heresy." Wycliffe does not so much as refer to the Waldenses. Professor Lechler, in his "John Wycliffe and his English precursors," maintains that it is without all support that there were secret disciples of Waldensian doctrine in England in Wycliffe's day. He makes a strong point when he states that if there had been any foundation for this conjecture, Wycliffe's enemies would certainly have made use of it to their own advantage.

It was something quite new therefore for Wycliffe to make his assault upon the Church itself. He began his attack on the medieval Church by exposing the errors and vices of the mendicant orders. To begin with he had some respect for the friars, because of their early beginnings, and the life of their founder, St. Francis. But in 1360 he published Objections to the Friars. They had never been so generally or so forcibly assaulted before.

In 1365 Pope Urban V attempted to assert his supremacy over England and Parliament resisted the demands made for money. Wycliffe was called upon to champion the national cause against the Pope. In 1374 he was chosen to go to Bruges with John of Gaunt, Duke of Lancaster, third son of Edward III, to

defend the rights of England against Papal encroachments. Wycliffe's views not only appealed to the English Parliament, but to John of Gaunt himself. His involvement in politics gave him prominence but made him enemies. He was intensely patriotic but was no diplomat. Papal action was taken against him. At this point he possessed the confidence of the nation as well as the favor of the king. He was summoned to a convocation at St. Paul's in 1377. John of Gaunt and Lord Percy, Grand Marshal of England, accompanied him, together with a band of armed men. Personal exchanges between Percy, the Bishop of London, and John of Gaunt led to uproar and confusion. Wycliffe was later accused by the English Bishops to the Pope again, because of his association with Lancaster. His writings were considered dangerous. He was summoned to St. Paul's again to be tried for heresy. Richard II's mother interposed on his behalf. In 1378 the great Papal schism diverted his persecutors. He returned to Oxford where he suddenly became ill. There was great joy in the monasteries, but they were anxious that he should recant. Four regents, representing the four orders of friars, accompanied by four aldermen, were deputed to visit their dying enemy. They found him stretched upon his bed, calm and serene. "You have death on your lips," they said. "Be touched by your faults and retract in our presence all that you have said to our injury." Wycliffe was silent, and the monks became confident; but he requested his servants to raise him on his couch. Though feeble and scarcely able to support himself, he fixed his eyes upon them and said with emphasis, "I shall not die but live, and again declare the evil deeds of the Friars." They rushed from his room in astonishment and confusion. His prediction was fulfilled and the remaining years of his life were devoted to his most important work, the translation of the Bible, the propagation of Reformed doctrine, and the sending out of his preachers.

The Peasants Revolt in 1381 was seized upon as an opportunity to blacken Wycliffe's character, and to represent his opposition to doctrines and institutions of the Church as the source of the social revolution that had filled everyone with terror. He himself was not in any way responsible for the revolt, though doubtless the tendency of many of his statements would lead men to recognize they could question the established order of things, and had a right to think for themselves. When William Courtenay, Bishop of London, became Archbishop of Canterbury, Wycliffe's old enemy was given the power he desired to outlaw Wycliffe's views and his followers. He proceeded to do this in a most thorough and comprehensive way, condemning his views, banishing them from the University, and forcing Wycliffe's associates to recant. It is astonishing that Wycliffe himself was exempt from this onslaught. According to Workman, in his John Wyclif, "Nothing more strongly marks the greatness of Wyclif's position

than the reluctance of Courtenay, in spite of his triumph, to push matters to extremes against him."[1]

His last years were devoted to writing, pastoral work, and the sending forth of his preachers. He died on the last day of 1384, two days after a paralytic stroke. Forty years later the Council of Constance, which betrayed Hus, and burned him and Jerome, ordered that Wycliffe's body should be disinterred, burned, and cast into the Swift. We are familiar with the words of one who wrote, "They burned his bones to ashes and cast them into the Swift. This brook hath conveyed his ashes into the Avon, the Avon into the Severn, the Severn thence into the sea, and thus the ashes of Wycliffe are the emblem of his doctrine which now is dispersed the world over."

Wycliffe's Achievements

The great contribution Wycliffe made to the life of the true Church of God was the propagation of sound doctrine, the translation of the Bible into English, and the sending out of his preachers.

His understanding as a thinker and Reformer developed gradually, until at the end he saw all the major doctrines of faith. There still remained, however, certain Romish elements in his thinking. For instance, he did not altogether reject the idea of Purgatory, though this was done by his followers. However, the direction of all his thought was toward the clearer light which was soon to dawn. It is of no little interest that while on the continent at the beginning of the Reformation there developed a cleavage between the Anabaptist and the Reformers, we find in Wycliffe certain elements of both residing. MacFarlane, in his John Wycliffe and the Beginnings of English Nonconformity, puts it firmly when he says that the heirs of the Lollards were not the Anglicans but the Brownists and the Independents: "English Non-conformity owes its origins, humble though these may have been, to Master John Wycliffe." This is clear from Wycliffe's view of establishment: "Let men introduced to the care of souls remember how it was with their predecessors in years before Constantine. With the Master whose Name they bear, and with the Apostles whom they esteem it their honour to succeed, let what they solicit from the magistrates be simply protection."[2]

Wycliffe contended for the complete disendowment of the Church, and insisted that the voluntary offerings of the people should form the only revenue of the Church. He had no place for the doctrine of development. If an institution were not mentioned in the gospels, as for instance the monastic orders, that was in itself a proof that it was not of divine intent. He anticipated the "regulative principle" of Calvin. For Wycliffe, the only check upon individual judgment was

the conformity of the same with the Scriptures. Not even Luther gave the laity such a place in his church system. The sacraments could be administered by any of the predestinate.

It is interesting to note that many of the Lollards did not practice infant baptism. Anabaptist tendencies among the Lollards did not lead, however, to any cleavage when the movement received fresh stimulus from the great Reformation itself. Furthermore, there is no question but that the Reformation itself in England was helped forward considerably by the work that had been going on secretly for over a century. Research undertaken in recent years has confirmed the view of some that the Lollards were far more numerous than has generally been supposed. John Thompson's The Later Lollards gives ample evidence for the survival and continuation of the movement right up to the Reformation itself. Major heresy prosecutions extending over a century, covered a wide area, mostly in the home counties.[3] The recent study made by Dickens in the diocese of York on the presence of Lollards reveals large numbers of Wycliffe's followers far away from the area in which they were said to be largely concentrated.[4] Similar studies in other areas could show us just how extensive was the movement. Margaret Aston's paper in History, published by the Historical Association, on "Lollardy and the Reformation: Survival or Revival?" gives a very helpful insight into the connection between the two movements. She concentrates on the writings of the Lollards and the use made of them by the Reformers.[5] The early Reformers were anxious to show the continuity of Protestant thinking right back to the days of Wycliffe, and republished many of the Lollard writings. Bale and Fox did a great service in this respect.

Wycliffe's followers followed his theology and maintained it right until the Reformation, and there was very little deviation from his views, though there were few well equipped to do more than keep the light burning. His influence on Hus, Rector of Prague University, and consequently upon the Reformation on the continent, was immense. In a Bohemian Psalter of 1572 appears a symbolic picture representing Wycliffe striking a spark, Hus kindling the coals, and Luther brandishing the lighted torch. According to Trevelyan, it is scarcely too much to say that the works of Hus were paraphrases of Wycliffe's writings.

While there were elements in Wycliffe that he shared with the Anabaptists, he was clearly and unimpeachably a Reformer both in doctrine and practice. Early on, he attacked the life of the medieval Church. There was much in it that was amiss, to say the least. His remedy was disendowment, and the preaching of the pure Word of God. He was grieved at the effect of the preaching of the friars on the common people of the land. They had moved far away from their early beginning. They had degenerated, and responded to "the desire for novelty." The

friar-preacher “spreads truth and fiction about the ancients indiscriminately, in such a way as to give pleasure.” The parish priest did nothing to edify his people. At the end of the fourteenth century the Latin in which the Mass was celebrated was unintelligible to most people, and the symbolism of worship had become a science which only the learned could appreciate. Wycliffe’s convictions grew. He saw increasingly the evils in the whole Papal system. His view of the Pope reached its ultimate in his De potestate papae (concerning the power of the Pope). In this, he describes the eleven characteristics of the Anti-Christ and applies them to the Papacy. His language could not be stronger. Wycliffe finally came to believe that the Pope was consistently and always Anti-Christ: “For as much as through his decrees, God’s commandments, by his commandments, Christ’s commandments, by his decrethals, Paul’s epistles, by his canon law, the canonical Scriptures, was vilified, nullified, utterly defaced and debased, the Pope is ‘potissimus anti-Christis’—most especially Anti-Christ.” Needless to say, Luther was grateful to be able to quote from Wycliffe’s writings in support of his own views.

Wycliffe’s achievements have been considered mainly of a negative character in his frontal assault on the Roman Church. It is true that his alternative is rather implicit than explicit. Nevertheless, he came to hold all the basic doctrines so clearly expounded by the Reformers. According to John Stacey, in his John Wyclif and Reform, Wycliffe was called “The Evangelical Doctor” because of his love for the Bible and his constant reference to it.[6] We are aware of the fact that he was responsible for the first translation of the Bible into English. He was assisted in this great work by his Oxford colleagues and he translated from the Latin Vulgate.

It can be shown that Wycliffe’s Bible was the first complete translation in English, and there is no question but that he was responsible for the venture. This was the practical result of the convictions that he developed concerning the authority of Scripture and the needs of the people. He came to see that Scripture alone is our authority, and developed the sola scripta of the reformers in such a way that John Stacey tells us that Wycliffe was a contender for “what is now called Fundamentalism.” Trevelyan tells us, “We find exactly the same devotion to the literal text in Wycliffe and his followers as among the later Puritans.” Wycliffe said, “It is impossible for any part of the Holy Scripture to be wrong. In Holy Scripture is all the truth. One part of Scripture explains another.” He asserted that every text must be understood in the light of the whole truth of the Bible.

Wycliffe described Christ as the proper Author of the Scriptures and deduced thereby the absolute authority of His work: “As the person of one author is to

another, so is the merit of one book to another. Since Christ is infinitely superior to every other man, His book is superior." This being so, he could not give any other explanation of the unwillingness of many to acknowledge the authority of Scripture in any other way than through their want of sincere faith in the Lord Jesus Christ Himself.

When we come to his theology we discover that he followed Augustine, in the matter of sovereignty, but not slavishly. He did not base his predestinarianism, like Augustine, upon original sin but upon the omnipotence of God. He admired Bradwardine greatly, but would not follow him when he understood him to say that God wills that man should sin, and "if God necessitates man to sin, then God is the author of sin." "He has sufficient power to repudiate and to destroy sins, but not to bring them to birth." According to Stacey, his doctrine of predestination was as rigid a one as could be found outside of Calvin. He asserted with Calvin both the absolute sovereignty of God and the responsibility of man.

His view of the bread and the wine of the Lord's Supper has been the subject of much debate. It appears that while denying strongly transubstantiation, he did not finally arrive at a position with which we could wholeheartedly agree. He used certain expressions that some would associate with a doctrine of consubstantiation. However, he advanced on Luther by saying that the glorified body of Christ was in Heaven.

On the question of justification by faith (sola fides) some have questioned whether he grasped this at all. Melanchthon asserted that he was totally ignorant of the righteousness of faith. Since this point is so vital we shall let Wycliffe speak for himself. In Christ Stilling the Tempest he says, "Some men receive Him not to the health of their soul for they were unstable as water, and soon did away Christ's knowledge. But other men were stable as land, who held the knowledge that Christ put in them. And by the ground of such faith they went fully the way to Heaven."

Lechler is wrong when he says that Wycliffe has not even a presentiment of sola fide (faith alone).[7] Buddenseig (in his edition of Wycliffe's De Veritate Sacrae Scripturae) is right when he points out that Wycliffe is not so far from the conception of faith held by Paul and the Reformation as he is generally supposed to have been, and that the great principal thoughts of Luther were "nascent in Wycliffe's soul, though not in the same clearness, depth, and heart-stirring power as in the German." A further quotation from the same passage will demonstrate this point:

> Belief faileth when it worketh not well indeed but is idle as in a sleeping man. No kind of virtue was praised more of Christ than was right belief, for

> it is the ground of all other. May God increase our faith! We by sin enfeeble our faith. And Christ sleepeth oft to us, for such sleeping of our sin. For when winds of man's boast maketh us to dread worldly harms, and floods of tribulations come to us, they make us dread and cry on Christ for to have help for failing in our belief. For we should know that no such case might annoy us but for sin. And if come for our sin, it is just and God's will. Why should we be thus distempered for what is needful to come? Love we God, and do we His will, and dread we no kind of thing but Him, for default in our belief maketh us to dread for such things.[8]

In Wycliffe's The Promise Made to Abraham he says, "If a man believe in Christ, and make a point of this belief, then the promise that God hath made to come into the land of light shall be given by virtue of Christ to all men that make this the chief matter."

Wycliffe's mind developed gradually. The light dawned step by step. It is no wonder it took time considering the darkness around him. Wycliffe's Christology has one remarkable feature. He always and everywhere lays the utmost possible emphasis upon the incomparable grandeur of Jesus Christ as the only Mediator between God and man, as the center of humanity, and our one and only Head.

Wycliffe's Approach to Scripture

We know that Wycliffe held firmly to the doctrine of sola scripta. We shall now see that he made this principle apply absolutely in practice. To him, the Word of God was the seed of life itself. His understanding of the processes of thought was sanctified in his handling of the Scriptures. Wycliffe considered preaching to be more important than any other function of the pastoral office. He engaged in preaching himself and is said to have been the greatest preacher of his day. He preached occasionally in London as well as at Oxford to great effect. It was this very preaching in the churches of London which first stirred the Bishops to take public action. They did not mind his quiet teaching at Oxford, nor his learned judgments given to the king and Parliament, but preaching reached the ears of the masses of the common people.

We are not to think that people in those days were not used to preaching, or that the sending forth of the Lollard preachers was a novelty. There was nothing whatever new about either of these. The mendicant orders were the professional preachers of the day, and it was common for all sorts of people to move around from place to place, whether they were acrobats, minstrels, pedlars, or penny preachers. What was new about Wycliffe and his preachers was his sola scripta in the matter of preaching. Many were familiar with Bible truths, but they were

so mixed up with traditions and fables that it would have been almost impossible for the hearer to distinguish between that which was Scripture and that which was human invention. This is quite understandable, for the friar's ambition was to secure results at the end of the sermon. "If the multitude were amused for the moment and the begging Friar who tickled their ears got his reward of a collection, the end aimed at was gained, and the penny preacher could go on his way rejoicing."

The Dominicans and the Franciscans were specially trained for the work of popular preaching, and they humored the corrupt taste of the time. Allegorical interpretations and applications came into general use and helped men over every objection to the practice. Carrick, in his Wycliffe and the Lollards, describes the preaching of the friars as "not the declaration of the truths and doctrines of the faith, but general harangues on whatever took their fancy, and their great aim was to attract the attention and sustain the interest of their hearers by any means."[9] The Church used the spectacular display of sacred themes very widely. It appeared to them that drama was not only harmless but had an almost infinite power for good. Prior to the Reformation the mystery plays were performed more widely in England than anywhere else. According to Carrick, "The Reformers were at a loss how to regard these highly popular methods of amusing and instructing the people. Wycliffe vigorously and consistently denounced these exhibitions and representations of Bible scenes and people, while Luther declared that 'such spectacles often did more good and produced more impression than sermons.' The position of Wycliffe was that the pictorial and spectacular teaching of the Church should be superseded by the simple preaching of the simple gospel, and that an end should be made of theatrical instruction." What was novel about Wycliffe was that he believed that the preacher should dispense with everything but the Scripture. He strongly censured the evil practice of "not preaching God's Word." According to Lechler, we have no ground to assume that sermons of the kind he censured were not preached from some Bible text.[10] It is rather to be supposed that the preachers, after giving out a text from Scriptures, were nonetheless accustomed to draw the main contents of their sermon from other sources. Here we see Wycliffe's concern for true biblical exposition. He not only objected to the neglect of the Word, but the wrong preaching of the Word when a proper attempt was made. The language of the Scriptures was thrust into the background, and the language of the preacher alone came to be regarded as if he himself were the author and discoverer of God's truth. "This practice," he remarks, "comes from nothing else but the pride of man; everyone seeking his own honour, everyone preaching only himself and not Jesus Christ." Here we have surely exposed the neglect of a

proper opening up of the text and a demonstrating and proving of the interpretation of it such as we find not only in the Apostle Paul in his preaching in the synagogues but in a typical Puritan sermon. Wycliffe blames this type of preaching for the prevailing deadness: “It is a dead word, not the Word of our Lord Jesus Christ, not the Word of eternal life.” For Wycliffe, the Word of God is the indispensable Bread of Life, the seed of regeneration and conversion. Wycliffe repeatedly insisted that the Scripture must be interpreted in a manner consistent with its general sense. He warns against those who are guilty of “tearing the Scriptures in pieces.”

Wycliffe was the model for the Lollard preachers. His sermons were full of Bible truth and so were theirs. According to Lechler their sermons were less of a dogmatic than of an ethical character.[11] Their chief duty was to faithfully scatter the seed of God’s Word, and to expose the gross open sins prevailing in different ranks, and the hypocrisy and erroneousness of the teaching of Anti-Christ and his followers. It must have been a great temptation to Wycliffe to seek satisfaction in a scholarly handling of the Scriptures, but according to Lechler:

> All thinking, every intellectual achievement, was always a way to an end, a means of moral action and work, it never terminated in itself. At no time was it his aim to give his addresses, sermons, etc., an artistic shape, to polish them, to bring them to a certain perfection of form, but to promote the glory of God, the Kingdom of Christ, and the salvation of souls. If only what he said were understood, if his written word were only effective and his action were only valued by any good fruit, then it troubled him little that his style was thought to be without finish or without beauty, or perhaps even wearisome. Wycliffe always communicates himself; his whole personality, undissembled, true and full, as a preacher as well as a writer; he is always the whole man. In him the intellect predominated, but it was harmoniously combined with a powerful and heroic will.

But we are not to imagine that Wycliffe was devoid of feeling. We find that he shows a moral indignation and horror in the very midst of a learned investigation where one is not at all prepared for such an outburst of flaming feeling. At other times, in the very middle of a disputation with opponents, he breaks out into joyful thanksgiving and praise to God that he has been set free from the sophisms by which they are still held fast. Together with this there was an absolute and perfect integrity and unreserved sincerity. He never concealed the changes of opinion through which he passed, openly confessing when he had previously done homage to error. “He grew holy himself with the holy aims which he pursued. His personal character was exalted by the cause which he served, and the cause which he served was never truth as mere knowledge but as

a power unto godliness." "In the collective history of the Church of Christ, Wycliffe marks an epoch chiefly on the ground that he was the earliest personal embodiment of the Evangelical Reformer." It is true that before him many ideas of reform crop up, many efforts were made, but "Wycliffe is the first important historical personage who devotes himself to the work of Church reform with the entire power of a master mind and with the full force of will and joyful self-sacrifice of a man in Christ. It was only after Wycliffe that other living embodiments of the spirit of Church reform, a Hus, a Savonarola, and others appeared on the field; a succession which issued at length in the Reformation of the sixteenth century." Wycliffe made a remarkable prophecy that was literally fulfilled: "I anticipate that some of the Friars whom God shall be pleased to enlighten will return with all devotion to the original religion of Christ, will freely return to primitive truth, and then build up the Church as Paul did before them."

In the last part of this last section we shall look at his Lollard preachers and his views on preaching. His poor preachers were similar to the Friars but dissimiliar in their aims and practices. He trained them, and produced volumes of sermons in English. In his work On the Pastoral Office he gives us a clear understanding of the advice he gave to his preachers:

> By means of preaching Christ creates for Himself heirs of the heavenly kingdom, even while here on earth. It is not you who preach, but the Spirit of the Father which speaks in you and since the works of the Trinity are inseparable, it is the Trinity which speaks.
>
> To the people the gospel must be preached as God commands. The truth must be proclaimed to them even though they receive it unwillingly. Not comedies or tragedies, not fables or droll stories, but simply and solely the Law of the Lord as Christ and the Apostles delivered it: for in the Law, that is the gospel, is hidden the life which is able to quicken the Church. The Lord's Word is the food which sustains it. He who preaches to the people without reading and explaining to them the gospel, gives them a meal without bread. These pseudo prelates set aside the gospel. If they mention the gospel at all, they do not preach it in full. Christ has said, "Go out and proclaim that the Kingdom of Heaven is at hand." One must preach of the Kingdom of Heaven, of the Kingdom of Christ, of the Lord's Advent . . . but above all, of Christ and His incarnation and of the preparation of man for eternal blessedness. As the time is already at hand in which Christ prepares man for obtaining this blessedness, the preacher must exhort his hearers "to set to work" in order to obtain it.

Wycliffe insists that they should adapt their subjects to the comprehension of the hearers. The sermon should be short but complete and told in a right spirit: “If the soul does not harmonize with the words, how can the words have power. If love is wanting in thee, thou art sounding brass and a tinkling cymbal. The sermon should be pointed but not bitter.” His sermons are plain, simple, and include vivid comparisons taken from life. “He must not trouble himself about new fashions in preaching which may arise. The only care must be how to be useful as far as possible to the people.” Wycliffe divided his sermon into two sections. The first usually treats of the meaning of the biblical passage on which the sermon is based; the other, the setting forth of the doctrine with its moral application addressed to the congregation.

The open-air pulpit at St. Paul’s was a great instrument of popular appeal. The friars also had made vernacular preaching the secret of their success, and there were many secular priests that sought to follow their example. It was not a novelty for which Wycliffe pleaded, as in the case of Wesley and Whitefield in Moorfields or Kennington. His insistence on serious Bible exposition was a departure from the current practice of the friars and their popular preachers. Workman calls him a Puritan, and gives us a vivid picture of the expert communicator of the day, the friar preacher: “Manuals for preachers abounded, especially manuals to help in catching the people’s ear. The most popular was called Sleep Soundly! The reference is to the anxious preacher. In Wycliffe’s day collections of tales had passed into systematic treatises for the use of preachers. No tale was deemed too preposterous if only it would hold the people’s attention. The results were assured, the collection was good, the sale of indulgences satisfactory, and the penny preacher could go on his way rejoicing.”[12] Workman deals at some length with the methods of the medieval preacher and the wide popularity of their works as evinced both by MSS and early printed editions. “Only thereby,” he says, “can we rightly appreciate Wycliffe’s beliefs as a preacher, for with all these means of securing interest Wycliffe, Puritan in this as in all else, would have nothing to do. They seemed to him lying and ludicrous, a detraction from the dignity and effectiveness of the message.”[13]

He refused to take a text which was generally nothing more than a pretext, but preferred the older way of Augustine to postillize or expound a chapter. Wycliffe’s poor priests were above all preachers. In Chaucer’s Pore Parson of a Town we read, “That Christes gospel gladly wolde he preche.” He was not simply concerned to expound texts but, as with Augustine, to solve doubts that may arise out of the passage. His poor preachers were not bound by any vow or formal ordination. Buddenseig describes them:

> Barefoot, clad in a long, coarse cloak of dark red colour, which was the symbol of hard labour and poverty, a long staff in hand signifying their pastoral office, they wandered from town to town, from village to village, preaching in churches, chapels, almshouses, where ever they could get a few hearers together. They preached the glory of God's law. Although mocked at by some for their coarse garb and for their manner of teaching, they were beloved by the people, but pursued by the Friars and hated by the monks. Wycliffe believed that a definite call was absolutely sufficient to hold an office in the Church.[14]

Their success is demonstrated by a contemporary chronicler: "In this year the Friars have been deprived of their alms, the mendicants are compelled to work, they are not allowed to preach, they are called 'penny preachers' and 'creepers into houses.' Besides this, the poor preachers write scandalous pamphlets in English, and write down their essays likewise in English." Knighton, Wycliffe's bitter enemy, complained that if you met two people on the street, one would be a Lollard. Doubtless this claim is exaggerated. There were many who hated the Church for what it was, who had no love for God's law. However, their numbers must have been vast.

Let us conclude this paper with an application to our day. With the Puritans this problem of communication did not arise. The friars knew how to reach and teach the people, and the people became very familiar with divine things, but the impact of them was utterly devoid of any spiritual life. There was no clear grasp of the essential message of the gospel, hence no repentance, no salvation. Wycliffe maintained his sola scripta because of his confidence in the power of God's Word alone! This comes out in the introduction to a disquisition on the method of preaching:

> Oh marvellous power of the divine seed which overpowers strong warriors, softens hearts hard as stone, and renews in the divine image men brutalized by sin and infinitely far from God. Plainly so mighty a wonder can never be wrought by the word of a priest, if the heat of the Spirit of Life, the Eternal Word, did not, above all things else, work with it. Many men preach themselves and leave to preach Christ. This ornamental style is little in keeping with God's Word. The latter is rather corrupted by it and its power paralyzed for the conversion and regeneration of souls. God's Word, according to Augustine, has a peculiar and incomparable eloquence of its own, in its very simplicity and modesty of form. A flowery, captivating style of address is of little value compared to right substance. Christ promised to his disciples that it should be given to them what they ought to

say. The how would follow.

We conclude with a quotation on preaching during which he breaks out into prayer. This passage brings us to the heart of the man, and shows the reason for his great usefulness.

> Worldly prelates command that no man should preach the gospel but according to their will and limitation, and forbid men to hear the gospel on pain of the great curse, but since it is the counsel and commandment of Christ to priests generally that they preach the gospel, and as this they must do without leave of prelates, who it may be are fiends of hell, it follows that priests may do the commands of Christ without the leave of fiends. Ah, Lord Jesus, are these sinful fools, and, in some cases, fiends of hell, more witty and mighty than Thou, that true men may not do Thy will without authority from them? Ah, Lord God Almighty, all wise and all full of love, how long wilt Thou suffer these Anti-Christs to despise Thee and Thy Holy gospel, and prevent the health of souls of Christian men. Lord of endless righteousness, this Thou sufferest, because of sin generally reigning among the people; but of thine endless mercy and goodness, help Thy poor wretched priests and servants, that they possess the love and reverence of Thy gospel, and be not hindered to do Thy worship and will by the false feigning of Anti-Christ. Almighty Lord God, most merciful, and in wisdom boundless, since thou sufferedest Peter and all apostles to have so great fear and cowardice at the time of Thy passion, that they flew all away for dread of death, and for a poor woman’s voice; and since afterwards, by the comfort of the Holy Ghost, thou madest them so strong that they were afraid of no man, nor of pain, nor death; help now, by gifts of the same Spirit, Thy poor servants, who all their life have been cowards, and make them strong, and bold in Thy cause, to maintain the gospel against Anti-Christ, and the tyrants of this world.

4

Puritan Eschatology: 1600–1648

Peter Toon

Various fathers of the early Church taught that Jesus Christ would reign on earth either in person or through His saints for one thousand years at the end of the present age. Among the men who interpreted the 1,000 years of Revelation 20 literally were such famous fathers as Irenaeus, Justin Martyr, Tertullian, and Hippolytus. Yet at the Council of Ephesus in 431 belief in a literal millennium was condemned as superstition. The reason for this apparent reversal of belief was the powerful influence of the great Augustine of Hippo, whose explanation of Revelation 20 may be found in book 20 of the City of God. He understood the 1,000 years as a perfect number representing the whole period of years from the time of Christ's first coming to the time of His second coming when the Last Judgment would occur. The binding of the devil in this period is the power of God restraining Satan from using his powers to prevent the elect believing in Christ for salvation. The Bishop of Hippo held that Satan would tempt and test the elect but not stop them from accepting God's offer of salvation. Just before the Second Coming Satan will be loosed for a brief period (Rev. 20:3). This means that there will be a period of intense persecution of the Church at the end of the present age by Gog and Magog (worldly powers and rulers), and though the devil will stop more people entering the kingdom of God he will not be able to cause those who are true Christians to fall from grace or from eternal salvation. While the Church remains on earth the saints and martyrs who died in Christ reign with Him in heaven (20:4). The "first resurrection" is thus to be understood spiritually, that is, being made spiritually alive through regeneration. But the resurrection mentioned in verses 12–13 is to be understood literally as referring to the resurrection of the dead before the Last Judgment.

This Augustinian eschatology which taught that the present gospel age is the millennium and that it is to come to an end with a brief period of persecution, the Second Coming of Christ, the resurrection of the dead, and the Last Judgment, reigned supreme in the Church from 431 to the time of the Reformation. From time to time millenarian movements (described by N. Cohn in The Pursuit of the Millennium[1]) burst into life but they never achieved respectability either in the medieval Catholic Church or in the Lutheran or Reformed Churches of the sixteenth century. John Calvin followed the Augustinian eschatology and had

some strong words to say against millenarianism:

> Those who assign the children of God a thousand years in which to enjoy the inheritance of the life to come do not realize how much reproach they are casting upon Christ and His kingdom. For if they do not put on immortality, then Christ Himself, to whose glory they shall be transformed, has not been received into undying glory (1 Cor. 15:13ff.). If their blessedness is to have an end, then Christ's Kingdom, on which firmness it depends, is but temporary. In short, either such persons are utterly ignorant of everything divine or they are trying by a devious malice to bring to nought all the grace of God and power of Christ, the fulfilment of which is realized only when sin is blotted out, death swallowed up, and everlasting life fully restored.[2]

(It is necessary to state at this point that there was a distinct tendency after Calvin's death to think of the 1,000 years of Revelation 20 as the literal 1,000 years stretching from about the year A.D. 300 to about the year A.D. 1300—this point of view is expressed by Bullinger, Foxe, and Junius in the later editions of the Geneva Bible. Thus the loosing of Satan "for a little season" was being experienced in Europe from about 1300. For the purposes of this article, we shall use the term "Augustinian eschatology" to describe both the authentic view of Augustine and that slightly modified view of his followers in the sixteenth century.)

Against this background of the denial of the future millennium, the remarkable fact is that in 1643, when the Westminster Assembly first met, and even more so from 1648 to 1660, millennial teaching was both common and respectable in England even though a good number of learned divines continued to teach the traditional Augustinian doctrine. William Twisse, the prolucator of the Assembly in its first sessions, was himself a millenarian and so also were the majority of the Independent divines who attended. The influence of these millenarians was, however, insufficient to affect the final wording of the Confession of Faith, which gives the impression of following the Augustinian teaching. Faced with the fact of the popularity of millenarianism in 1643 the historian of dogma is bound to ask the question, "Why did the belief in a future millennium become popular?" And, "What were the factors which helped to make millennial teaching apparently respectable?"

Thus it will be our task first of all briefly to suggest seven factors at work between 1550 and 1650 which helped to create conditions favorable to the growth of a belief in a future period of bliss on earth. After this we shall describe three types of eschatology popular in England between 1600 and 1648 in which

belief in the millennium occurs, and then we shall bring our discussion to a close with a reminder that the traditional Augustinian approach never lost total favor during these years.

An Increasing Interest in the Millennium

1. The view that individual books of the Bible are of equal importance, since all the books are in fact the Word of God, led to careful examination of the books of Revelation and Daniel and to the ascribing to them of as much authority as, for example, the Gospel of Matthew.

2. The Reformation principle that Scripture is to be interpreted according to its plain, literal sense led some to apply this principle to Revelation 20.

3. A revived interest in the writings of the early fathers of the Church (e.g., Irenaeus) led to the discovery that they believed in a future, literal millennium.

4. The view that the Pope was the Anti-Christ, the beast of Revelation 18, and the growing historicist interpretation of Revelation, led to the notion that the millennium of Revelation 20 should follow the events (e.g., destruction of papacy) described in Revelation 17–19.

5. The hope of better days ahead engendered by the social, economic, and religious conditions in Europe in the early seventeenth century. This was the period of the horrors of the Thirty Years War in Europe and the persecution of Puritans by Archbishop Laud in England.

6. The discovery of vast new areas of the world led to the belief that the peoples living there would soon be evangelized and Christ's promise fulfilled (Mark 13:10).

7. The conviction that the loosing of Satan for a little season could not have taken place (as some Augustinians held) in 1300 since, if this were so, the Second Coming of Christ would have occurred before 1600.

Of course those who advocated a literal millennium would not have been conscious of all, or even any, of these religious, social, and psychological factors in their experience; but to some extent we are all children of the age in which we live and we cannot but absorb in large or small degree the ethos of the times in which we live.

Revised Augustinianism

The first type of Puritan eschatology at which we shall look was made popular by Thomas Brightman (1562–1607), a graduate of Queen's College, Cambridge, and rector of Hawnes in Bedfordshire. His commentary on the Book of Revelation was first printed in Latin at Frankfort in 1609 and an English

translation of about 1,000 pages appeared in Amsterdam in 1615. It was entitled A Revelation of the Revelation and was written to expound a Protestant position in reply to the futurist interpretation of Francis Ribera (1537–1591), a Roman Catholic scholar from Salamanca. Brightman's book went through at least six editions within forty years and its influence was great. His exposition of Daniel was also popular. The exposition of the Apocalypse is prefaced by an epistle "to the Holy Reformed Churches of Britain, Germany, and France." In it Brightman stated:

> Hearken diligently a while and receive out of this Prophecy not some obscure signs, but most evident signs that thy Husband is about to arise even now for the answering of thy grief . . . and that thou mayest more fully rejoice, receive withall tidings of the final destruction of the Turks after the subversion of Rome . . . and least anything should yet be wanting to the full heap of joy, here thou mayest know that the calling of the Jews to be a Christian nation is hereunto joyned and withal a most happy tranquility from thence to the end of the world.

Before we look at Brightman's exegesis of Revelation 20, let us notice how in general he interpreted some of the other chapters. He saw the letters to the seven churches of Asia Minor as symbolizing seven periods of Church history. The letter to the church in Ephesus depicted the Church from the apostolic period to the time of Constantine the Great, the letter to Smyrna the Church from then to A.D. 380, the letter to Pergamos from 380 to 1300, and the letter to Thyatira from 1300 to 1520. The letter to Sardis was a prophecy of the Lutheran Churches and the letter to Philadelphia a prophecy of the Calvinist Churches while the last letter to Laodicea described the Church of England which was "neither hot nor cold."

The opening of the seals (chap. 6) and the sounding of the seven trumpets (chap. 8) referred to specific historical events between the Day of Pentecost and 1696. For example, the sixth trumpet referred to the revival of the power of the Ottoman Turks in 1300. The Turkish armaments were represented by John in his reference to fire, smoke, and brimstone (Rev. 9:13–21). Working on the theory that a prophetic day equals one literal year, Brightman deduced from Revelation 9:15 that the power of the Turks would last until 1696. Moving on to chapter 13 we find that the two beasts are seen as two phases of the papacy, before Charlemagne and after him. God's judgment on the papacy is to be found in Revelation 16 where seven vials are described as being poured out by God. The first three vials were fulfilled in the action of Queen Elizabeth turning Roman Catholics out of the Church livings in 1560, the confutation of the doctrines of

the Council of Trent by Martin Chemnitius,[3] and the work of William Cecil in making laws against Jesuits in England. Brightman believed that the pouring out of the last four vials was yet to come but he seemed to have little difficulty in predicting what they would be. He interpreted the fourth (v. 8) as referring to the power of the Reformed exegesis of Scripture confusing and confuting the Roman Catholics, the fifth as the destruction of Rome and the Roman Church system, the sixth as the conversion of the Jews and their subsequent restoration to Palestine, and the seventh as the destruction of the enemies of the people of God (i.e., Catholics and Turks). Let us return for a moment to the sixth vial where Brightman felt that it was the Jews whom John called "the kings of the East." Commenting on verse 12 he wrote:

> The Holy Ghost gives the Jews this magnificent name because it shall be an honourable thing for them in a special manner to return again at last unto this truth to which they had been like dead men before, as also to love and honour that truth with great godliness, holiness, and reverent homage having their unbelieving and obstinate hearts subdued and mollified and all this after so many ages and after such obdurate contumacy of that nation. And besides all this the whole East shall be in obedience and subjection unto them, so that this people are not called kings unworthily.

He emphasized that the Jews were to return to Palestine not to restore their ceremonial worship but to "worship Christ purely and sincerely according to His will and commandment alone."

Turning our attention to his comments on chapter 20 we find that Brightman understood the 1,000 years of verse 2 as a literal millennium which began when Constantine the Great began to reign (early fourth century) until about 1300. In this period Satan was bound in that he was not allowed to make use of the rulers of the Roman Empire to persecute the Church. The loosing of Satan for "a little season" (v. 3) referred to the Turks invading Europe and causing havoc among some churches in the early fourteenth century. The "first resurrection" (v. 5) was the revival of true biblical doctrine immediately after the Turkish invasion; in particular Brightman referred to such early reformers as John Wycliffe, Marsilius of Padua, and John of Jandun. The second 1,000 years (v. 5) began where the first one ended, that is 1300, and therefore stretched forward until the year 2300. During this second millennium (in which Brightman of course lived) biblical truth was to increase in strength and influence throughout the world. Within its years he confidently expected the collapse of the Papacy and its power over Europe (seen in the fifth vial of chapter 16) followed by the conversion of the Jews, the destruction of the Turkish power and empire (Gog and Magog), and

then the glorious state of the Church in the latter days before the end of the millennium. He believed that this period of latter day glory on earth described in Revelation 21 was very near and he could write that “we wait every day while the Anti-Christ of Rome and the Turke shall be utterly destroyed.” Only at the end of the period of the latter-day glory when, as it were, there would be a “new heaven and earth,” would Christ return to earth, the dead be raised, and the Last Judgment occur. Brightman understood the resurrection of the dead in verse 12 of Revelation 20 as meaning the restoration of the Jewish nation. Although he expected the conversion of the Jews to take place before the destruction of Gog and Magog (Turkish power) he seemed to believe that the restoration of the Jews to Palestine would only take place after the destruction of Gog and Magog. Then Jerusalem would become the religious center of the world again, the center of a glorious Church of Christ, in which there would be no tears, no mourning, only peace and bliss. In this time the saints would enjoy close fellowship with Christ and would pray “Come Lord Jesus” (Rev. 22:20).

We are now able to see how Brightman revised Augustinian teaching. Whereas Augustine took the first reference (and the second) to the millennium to refer to the whole of Church history, Brightman took it to refer to the years from Constantine the Great until 1300. Further Brightman understood the second reference to the millennium to be a second millennium, 1300 to 2300, while the Bishop of Hippo had taken it to mean the same millennium as in the first reference. Thus with Brightman we can see how the Reformation principle of the interpreting of Scripture according to its literal sense is working out the reference to eschatology, and in particular, to Revelation 20.

Looking critically at Brightman’s interpretation of Revelation 20, we are bound to state that there seems to be only one millennium recorded there. Furthermore verses 11–15 seem to refer to the Last Judgment, not the rebirth of the Jewish nation in Palestine. However, his poor exegesis did not prevent his commentary being very influential. Those for example who read John Cotton’s three books of sermons based on Revelation and printed between 1642 and 1655 cannot but be impressed by his dependence on Brightman, and those who study John Owen’s sermons before Parliament preached in the years 1648 to 1652 also realize that his interpretation of Revelation follows Brightman’s scheme. The attraction of this revised Augustinian eschatology to seventeenth-century divines was that it seemed to preserve the best of the old and also supply a glorious hope for the future without indulging in talk of a future, literal millennial kingdom, a notion often connected with “wild Anabaptism.”

Conservative Millenarianism

The two men who more than any others, between the Synod of Dort and the Westminster Assembly, popularized a cautious or conservative millenarianism were John Henry Alsted and Joseph Mede. They taught that there would be a future literal millennium but their descriptions of the nature of this kingdom of God on earth were restrained.

John Henry Alsted was born in 1588 in Herborn, a town in the province of Hesse-Nassau. As part of his education he attended classes at Marburg, Frankfurt, Heidelberg, Strassburg, and Basel universities. In 1615 he became a professor in Herborn University and was chosen to represent the local prince at the Synod of Dort in 1618. On his return from Dort he replaced John Piscator as head of the faculty of theology in Herborn. Unfortunately, due to the effects of war and the plague, he had to move to Transylvania for safety and here he eventually died. He was famous in the seventeenth century for his great Encyclopaedia which was used in many universities.

Before the effects of the Thirty Years War were felt in Herborn, Alsted taught a fairly orthodox Augustinian eschatology but by 1627 he had written his Diatribe de mille annis Apocalypticis, which was an interpretation of Revelation 20. It first appeared in English in 1643 as The Beloved City.

In agreement with most modern interpreters Alsted suggested A.D. 94 as the date of the composition of Revelation. He divided the book into seven basic parts. The first vision of chapters 1–3 was of concern to the seven contemporary churches of Asia Minor. The second vision of the scroll dealt with seven seals, chapters 4–6, related to the history of the Church in Europe until A.D. 606. The third vision of the seven trumpets in chapters 8–11 described the state of the Church from 606 until 1517, the year of Martin Luther’s rise to fame. The fourth vision of the woman bearing the child in chapters 12–14 described the Church from the birth of Christ until the year 1517. The fifth vision of the vials in chapters 15–16 related to the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. Alsted held that three of these vials had been poured out by 1627 and the other four would be poured out by 1694, when the millennium would begin. The sixth vision of chapters 17–20 referred to both judgment on the enemies of Christ and the bliss of the Church. The seventh vision of chapters 21–22 was of the heavenly city where the Church will spend eternity.

Alsted’s understanding of chapter 20 may be summarized in a few words. He believed in a future millennium which God would inaugurate by binding Satan and by raising dead martyrs (vv.2–4). During this period of peace on earth (of which Jewish prophets had spoken) the Jews would be converted as well as multitudes of Gentiles. At the end of the millennium of joy and peace the residue

of heathen still on earth would make a final attempt to crush the Church but God would intervene and marvelously crush this heathen Gog and Magog. Then would Christ come, the dead be raised, and the Last Judgment occur. Alsted felt able to set the date 1694 for the beginning of the 1,000 year reign of the saints by calculations based on Daniel 12:11–12. The date of the taking away of the daily sacrifice was, he believed, A.D. 69. To this he added 1290 years (one prophetic day equals one year) and then another 1335 years. This gave the date 2694 which was the end of the millennium, and so 1694 was the date for its beginning.

We must leave Alsted's book now to notice his influence on English divines. According to Robert Baillie, the learned Scotsman, this was considerable. In his A Dissuasive from the Errours of the Time (1645), Baillie lamented that in recent years there had been a rapid growth of millenarian teaching. Indeed, Augustinian teaching prevailed until:

> Only Alsted, after his abode in Transylvania, began in his last times to fall into liking with some parts [of ancient millenarianism], pretending Piscator for his encouragement. Alsted's heterodox writings were not long abroad when Mr. Mede at Cambridge was gained to follow him; yet both these divines were far from dreaming of any personal reign of Christ upon earth; only Mr. [Henry] Archer, and his colleague, Thomas Goodwin at Arnheim, were bold to set up the whole fabric of Chiliasm, which Mr. [Jeremiah] Burroughs in his London lectures on Hosea doth press as a necessary and most comfortable ground of the Christian Religion.[4]

Of the names mentioned by Baillie we shall first notice Joseph Mede as a representative of conservative millenarianism and then Henry Archer as a representative of extreme millenarianism.

Joseph Mede (1586–1638) was professor of Greek at Cambridge. His great claim to fame was his Clavis Apocalypticae (The Key of the Revelation), first published in 1627 but reprinted with many additions in 1632 and 1642 and translated into English in 1643. It proved to be one of the most influential theological books of the century. Alsted's influence upon Mede was between 1627 and 1632 for in the latter year Mede's second edition of the Clavis taught an uncompromising millenarianism.

Mede's belief in a future millennium was firmly rooted in the fact that the Book of Revelation is part of canonical Scripture. "If the Apocalypse be Canonical Scripture, it must needs be granted," he wrote, "that there is such a time to come; or we must deny either Rome, which now is, to be Babylon or the Beast to be Anti-Christ or Antichristendom." He was also well aware that "this dogma of the 1,000 year Regnum was the general opinion of all orthodox

Christians in the Age immediately following the Apostles." He equated the millennium of Revelation 20 with the "Day of Jehovah" spoken of by Jewish prophets. "The seventh trumpet and the thousand years contained therein is that Great Day of the Lord, the Great Day of Judgment, so much celebrated amongst the Jews in all their Writings, and from them taken up by our Saviour and His Apostles. Not a Day of a few hours, as we commonly suppose, but a continued space of many years, wherein Christ shall destroy all His Enemies, and at length Death itself."[5]

At the beginning and the end of the millennium a resurrection will occur. The first resurrection will be that of deceased martyrs who will be raised in order either to reign with Christ in heaven in their resurrection bodies, or, as Mede later affirmed, to reign with the saints on earth. He was confident that the belief in this particular resurrection was in no way contrary to the teaching of the Apostles' or Nicene Creeds. He reminded his readers that there was a resurrection of saints in Jerusalem when Christ rose from the dead (Matt. 27:52–53). The millennium would be preceded by the collapse of the power (although not the total destruction) of Anti-Christ (that is, of the Papal influence in religion and politics) and the beginning of the conversion and restoration of the Jews. Just as Christ appeared from heaven to Saul on the road to Damascus so, held Mede, He would appear from heaven for the conversion of the Jews. He regarded the conversion of Saul as a type of the future conversion of the Jews. Also, like Brightman, he understood the pouring out of the sixth vial (Rev. 16:12) as a reference to the conversion and restoration of the Jews. With regard to the presence of Christ in the millennial kingdom, Mede had the following to say: "The presence of Christ in this kingdom shall no doubt be glorious and evident, yet I dare not so much as imagine that it should be a visible converse upon earth. For the kingdom of Christ ever hath been and shall be a Regnum Caelorum, a kingdom whose throne and kingly residence is in heaven." Although Mede entered into little description of the nature of the millennial kingdom, he did believe that at its close Gog and Magog (the combined forces of the enemies of Christ throughout the world who still are unconverted) will make a final attempt to crush the people of Christ. Their attempt will fail, the dead will be raised, and the glorious Second Coming of Christ and the Last Judgment will occur.

Often both Alsted and Mede have been called premillennialists. This term is not quite accurate, for neither of them teach that Christ will personally appear on earth and be visible to all before the time of the Last Judgment. Mede's reference to the appearance of Christ for the conversion of the Jews is to be seen as similar to Christ's appearance on the Damascus Road. The exegesis of Revelation 20 by

the conservative millenarians was superior to that of Brightman and wholly different from that of Augustine. They confidently believed that the millennium was future and held it would dawn after the events described in Revelation 4–19 had occurred. For them the millennium of Revelation 20:3 and 7 was one and the same period of a literal thousand years when God's saints would reign on earth. As Augustine predicted a period of great persecution at the end of the world, so they predicted a similar period at the close of the millennium.

Mullinger in his History of the University of Cambridge states that Mede's writings on eschatology "won for him the praise of nearly all learned Holland . . . and taking rank for more than a century, as a classic, it [the Key] exerted an influence on theological thought which no English writer of the period appears adequately to have recognized."[6] Earlier we mentioned the names of William Twisse, Thomas Goodwin, Jeremiah Burroughs, and William Bridge as members of the Westminster Assembly and as followers of Mede. To these can be added the majority of Independent ministers and many Presbyterians who lived and worked during the Commonwealth and Protectorate.

Extreme Millenarianism

As Baillie rightly remarked, an early exponent of extreme millennial views was John Archer (given in Dictionary of National Biography as John Aucher). He was pastor of the Independent congregation which moved back to London in 1640 from Arnhem where it had been in exile. Later he conformed to the Church of England and became incumbent of All Hallows, Lombard Street. In 1642 he published The Personall Reigne of Christ upon Earth, which became, as it were, an early textbook of the Fifth Monarchy men. It is interesting to observe that while Brightman, Alsted, and Mede give the impression of having a greater interest in, and seeing a greater relevance to, the Book of Revelation, rather than the Book of Daniel, the extreme millenarians give the opposite impression. This was probably because they believed that they found the doctrine of the Fifth Monarchy to follow the (supposed) Roman rule clearly revealed in Daniel.

Archer held that Christ will rule "in a worldly, visible glory not by tyranny, oppression, and sensually, but with honour, peace, riches, and whatsoever in and of the world is not sinful; having all nations and kingdoms doing homage to him, as the great monarchies of the world"[7] had enjoyed homage. As Adam was given the garden of Eden for his dominion, so the Second Adam has the whole world for His dominion. The clearest teaching in Scripture of this future rule of Christ was, Archer believed, in Daniel 2:31–46. This vision of the image referred to four world empires which would be followed by the empire of Christ. The last of

the empires was the Roman, and the monarchies existing in 1642 were represented in the vision by the toes of iron and clay. These monarchies, of which England was one, were the remnants of the Roman Empire. In the days of these monarchies the Fifth Monarchy will arise and this will be the kingdom of Christ. This is described by Daniel as “the stone which smote the image [and which] became a great mountain and filled the whole earth.”

According to Archer’s scheme, Christ comes to earth three times: first, as the son of Mary, second, to set up His Fifth Monarchy, and third, to defeat Gog and Magog and judge the world. At His Second Coming Christ will destroy the armies of those who oppose His Church, but He will not destroy all wicked men. Also He will raise the bodies of all saints who have previously died. The kingdom thus inaugurated will last for 1,000 years in fulfillment of Revelation 20:4. Society during these years of bliss will not be, as the Marxists dream, classless. The senior citizens will be the apostles followed by Jewish Christians. Palestine will be the center of the world and Jerusalem the capital city. Converted Gentiles will form the next structure of society and will be given higher or lower placing according to their faithfulness while alive. At the bottom of society will be the godless who will act as slaves just as the Gibeonites served the Israelites. Archer stressed both the material and spiritual blessings of the millennium for the saints. At the close of the 1,000 years the godless will form an army (Gog and Magog) and make a last attempt to destroy the saints, but Christ will appear for the third time to destroy them and to judge the world. He also calculated that the Papacy would collapse in 1666, the Jews begin to be converted in large numbers in 1656, and the millennium begin in 1700.

During the 1650s there were large groups of people who adopted and developed Archer’s scheme, and they proved a great problem to Oliver Cromwell and his administration since many of them decried human government and felt their own loyalty was to the forthcoming Fifth Monarchy. Indeed so great was their influence by 1653 that leading Congregational ministers, led by John Owen, sent out a letter to the churches warning them against the wild notions of the Fifth Monarchy movement. The Congregational leaders opposed the opposition to earthly government and the materialistic views of the millennium, not the doctrine of the millennium itself.[8]

Conclusion

Perhaps at this point we should summarize the main ingredients of the three types of Puritan eschatology we have examined. All agreed in the following:

1. That before the beginning of the “Last Days” the power and rule of the

Papacy and the Turks will be broken.

2. That before or during the “Last Days” the Jews will be first converted and then restored to Palestine.

3. That during the “Last Days” there will be either a period of latter-day glory or a millennium of bliss.

4. That the world will end with the Second Coming of Christ, the resurrection of the dead, and the Last Judgment.

It was expected that the first three of these would occur in the seventeenth century.

Today, over three hundred years later, though the Turkish Empire has gone and a part of world Jewry has returned to Palestine, the Papacy remains, the Jews are unconverted to Christ, and the future time of glory seems improbable of fulfillment. Recently, since the last Jewish-Arab war, the suggestion has been made that the rebirth of the nation of Israel is a fulfillment of prophecy and a preliminary event before the conversion of the Jews to Christ. Our study has shown that this suggestion is in fact the reverse of the Puritan view, which held that the conversion precedes the restoration. Indeed the whole question as to whether the rebirth of an unconverted Israel nation is prophesied in the Bible is so difficult that we cannot look at it here. The future conversion of the Jews bringing in or accompanying a worldwide turning to Christ is also a complex subject which we cannot attempt to examine now. In both these matters so much depends upon one’s exegesis of such Old Testament passages as Ezekiel 36:16–38.

The great exegetical problems surrounding the hope of a time of latter-day glory or millennium leads us on to consider the Augustinian position. Such divines as Robert Baillie in his A Dissuasive from the Errours of the Time (1645) and Thomas Hayne in his Christ’s Kingdom on Earth (1645) firmly deny the idea of both a future millennium and the restoration of the (converted) Jewish nation. Nevertheless they do not deny the conversion of great numbers of Jews to Christ in fulfillment of Romans 11:25ff. Baillie wrote: “We grant willingly that the nation of the Jews shall be converted to the faith of Christ, and that the fullness of the Gentiles is to come in with them to the Christian Church, and also that the quickening of that dead and rotten member shall be a matter of exceeding joy to the whole Church.” This conversion of the Jews was to occur through the normal preaching of the gospel. Baillie never intimated that any period of latter-day glory would come in by the conversion of Jews; rather Hayne reminded his readers of Paul’s word in 2 Timothy 3:1–5, and Baillie advised them to read Augustine’s City of God.

We find that the Westminster Confession of Faith (chaps. 32–33) clearly

follows the Augustinian teaching while the Larger Catechism, in the answer to question 191, calls upon people to pray for the conversion of Jews. Yet the call for prayer for the Jews is followed by the prayer that Christ would hasten the time of His Second Coming. This fact, and the actual scriptural references given, lead us to state that there is no suggestion of a period of latter-day glory or of a millennium connected with the conversion of the Jews. The idea seems to be that, though their conversion will certainly enrich the Church, the Church will remain in a world which hates Christ and His gospel. Thus we find that the Augustinian eschatology of some leading seventeenth century divines as well as certain divines of the previous century[9] is expanded by the inclusion of the belief in the future conversion of the Jews, a doctrine which Augustine does not seem to have taught.[10]

5

John Fletcher: An Arminian Upholder of Holiness

David R. Smith

In 1771 John Fletcher placed upon record his opinion that even as God had raised up St. James among the early Christians to defend orthodoxy against the encroachments of Antinomians, so He had—in the eighteenth century—raised up John Wesley for the same purpose! We may never know if Mr. Fletcher wrote such sentiments in order to increase the weight of his personal defense of Mr. Wesley against the charges of heresy by Walter Shirley, or if he was inwardly convinced of this forthright statement. What we do know is that when Fletcher died in 1785, the vast majority of the evangelicals in Western countries wept at the loss of one who had lived so holy a life that a divine translation (after the fashion of Enoch) would not have seemed inappropriate. For, although he had a miserable opinion of himself and of his labors, others waxed eloquent when they described his character. John Wesley wrote that "he had known many excellent men, holy in heart and life. But one equal to John Fletcher I have not known, nor do I expect to find another such on this side of eternity." If this appears to be mere praise, which had to be bestowed upon a departed faithful friend, we must not forget that such language was used by almost all other Christians who knew Fletcher. Joseph Benson, a member of the staff at Trevecca College, wrote that "perhaps a more holy man never appeared in this country." Fletcher's wife Mary (née Bosanquet), herself a most devout woman, said that she "never did behold anyone more dead to the things of this world . . . all his union with me was so intermingled with prayer and praise, that every employment, and every meal, was—as it were—perfumed therewith." Robert Hall wrote that "Fletcher is a seraph who burns with the ardours of divine love, and seems habitually to have anticipated the rapture of the beatific vision." Gilpin, a neighboring vicar in Shropshire, wrote in his Biographical Notes that "examples of deep humility are uncommon, but among the rarest examples of this, Fletcher must be allowed a distinguished place."

However, even a flood of character references must not make us presume more than we ought, if they are from people who were personal friends of John Fletcher. It should not be assumed that his godliness was genuine without first taking into account the views of those who had opposite theological opinions, and also of those who had been his enemies. Well, then, what did his opponents

say of him? The Calvinist Henry Venn said, “Fletcher was a luminary: a luminary did I say? He was a sun. I have known all the great men for these fifty years; but I have known none like him. I was intimately acquainted with him, and was under the same roof with him once for six weeks; during which time I never heard him say a single word which was not proper to be spoken.” The editors of The Theological and Biblical Magazine wrote, “Whatever difference of opinion may be entertained respecting some important points of doctrine, which the late Mr. Fletcher publicly maintained, we believe that there is but one opinion as to the exalted piety of this eminent Christian. His humility, disinterestedness, affection, zeal, and heavenly-mindedness, have perhaps, seldom been equaled; and few, we believe, can rise from a perusal of his life story without being ashamed of their own unprofitableness, and adoring the riches of Divine Grace, which were so extraordinarily manifested to this man of God.” The editor of The Eclectic Review was no less forthcoming, for he wrote: “In whatever period he had lived, to whatever department of Christians he had belonged, he would have shone in the religious hemisphere, as a star of the first magnitude.” Now, after his opponents, let us see what his enemies said of him following his death. The local newspaper, reflecting the general opinions of the local gentry and chief readers, took a great deal of space to comment upon the vicar who had been the cause of so much criticism earlier. Instead of finding fault, now the newspaper spoke eloquently of “this great character” of “exalted piety,” whose labors “will never be forgotten” in Madeley. And the very ones who had sought to drive him out of the town, because of his effect upon the vices of the neighborhood, gave liberally to erect a monument on which they had inscribed such words as these: “His unexampled labours will long be remembered . . . with uncommon zeal and ability . . . many believed his report, and became his joy and crown of rejoicing. ”

In other words, from these quotations (which represent many others which could be given) it appears that John Fletcher’s outstanding sanctity (as The Oxford Dictionary of the Christian Church puts it[1]) was recognized by friend and foe alike, even if grudgingly. Therefore, we may assume that the godliness—for which this man will ever be remembered—was not simply the creation of those of like mind, but was genuine and made an impact upon others. Having established, as far as one is able to do at this distance, the fact of Fletcher’s godliness, we must reflect why we are considering this particular Arminian, and why the subject of holiness has any reference to the general topic of the Synod of Dort. It so happens that John Fletcher was appointed the first President of the Countess of Huntingdon’s College at Trevecca, on the grounds of his ability and example, almost exactly 200 years ago. Also, it is true to say that whenever the

Arminian/Calvinist controversy is discussed, the name of John Fletcher must arise because of the considerable views he has offered on this matter. The subject of holiness has been chosen out of all the possible ones since this was the cornerstone of his arguments relating to the Calvinian position, in a way that will be explained. I hope to show that he was an upholder of biblical holiness in his personal life, and that this was why even Calvinists felt free to thank God for his life and witness, but that he also sought to uphold general principles of holiness in every sphere in which he moved.

Fletcher's Background

John Fletcher was born in Switzerland in 1729, into one of the most respected families in the Canton of Berne. His education and upbringing helped to mold the general character of a lad who, from the earliest years, had an obvious regard for the sovereignty of God. He spoke French and German fluently at fourteen years of age, and within a further two years was well acquainted with both Hebrew and Greek, and also had the rudiments of English. He had a tender conscience and gentlemanly habits throughout his teenage years, and showed such a constant desire to please God that his parents took it for granted that he would become a minister of religion.

Switzerland had been represented at the Synod of Dort, just over one century previously, but there is little to suggest that this country had been much influenced by the Remonstrance controversy. The land of Fletcher's birth was constitutionally Calvinistic, and so this young student would learn of Arminianism in only a scholastic way, and be taught that this was a rival system of theology. It was not until he met the Wesleyan Methodists in London that he came face-to-face with people who were deeply religious and yet were not Calvinists. At school in Geneva, he took a theological course to comply with the wishes of his family, and here the tenets of Reformed doctrine were expounded to him. He reveled in these studies, not only because he had a natural aptitude for devotional things, but also because he wished to know more about the Lord of whom he spoke so often. Only one thing distressed him: he found it immensely difficult to comprehend that the Father of the Lord Jesus Christ would deliberately choose to condemn souls, from eternity for eternity.

Before we exclaim that he had misunderstood basic doctrine, if he saw things in this way, let us bear in mind that he was not yet twenty years of age and that he knew nothing of biblical salvation. If we need to direct any criticism at anyone, we may do better to forget young Fletcher for a moment and consider the state of the Church in his country at that time. Whenever we read of an

unconverted person being accepted as a theological student, we should ponder upon the system which permits this to happen. Later in life, John Fletcher considered all Calvinism on the basis of what he had seen in the Swiss Church in his early years. We may reply that this was not true Calvinism (if Calvinism at all), but we have to accept that it went under that name, despite its philosophical character and spiritual deadness. He finally informed his tutors that he would be unable to preach about reprobation to future parishioners, and that—also—he had a growing sense of unworthiness at the thought of taking holy orders and administering the sacraments. Unsure of which career to follow, and unwilling to disgrace his family, he quickly decided to follow in his father's footsteps and join the Army.

However, Fletcher was prevented from becoming an officer in every Army to which he applied, and soon afterwards came to England, where—in due course—he met the Methodists. After a long season of deep conviction of sin, he was regenerated in a remarkable way and wasted no time in seeking ordination and entry to the ministry. From the time of his leaving Geneva until the day of his conversion, it is said that he "was anxious to possess every moral perfection," and took great pains to acquire dignified behavior on all occasions. This does not mean that he was a typical teenage idealist who ignored realities and lived with his head in the clouds. John Fletcher had too clear a view of the doctrine of depravity to be an idealist; he just wanted to be a good Christian. It had not then dawned upon him that one becomes a Christian after passing through experiences of conviction of sin, repentance, and so on. Despite his theological training, and church membership preparation classes, he had the idea that a Christian is one who lives a good life after baptism. On the other hand, knowing that he had been born in sin, he knew that he would have to apply himself to the task of becoming godly with no small effort. The testimonies to his life, in those days, amply prove that he spared nothing in these efforts to redeem himself. Also, he was spurred on in these resolves by two factors: first, it seemed logical to him that God's children should have a recognizable affiliation to their Creator, and, second, he was distressed by the general behavior of many in Switzerland who stated that they were "elect believers." When, later in life, he visited Switzerland, some of his former tutors and many of the clergy confessed to him, and to their congregations, that through his preaching they had been touched by the power of true religion for the first time. To say that Fletcher was distressed by the behavior of many professing Christians does not imply that there was no love for godliness in Switzerland. It is simply that there was a covering of orthodox religion, but little heart experience; the average person was as much in darkness as a heathen, but outwardly there was a veil of Christianity. Fletcher's

visit to his homeland in 1770 did much to arouse the clergy to seek personal experiences with God. The oldest minister in Nyon said, when the day of Fletcher's departure drew near, "How unfortunate for this country; during my life it has produced but one angel of a man, and it is our lot to be deprived of him."

So, we have a picture of an earnest young man who realized that genuine Christianity ought to change people, and should show in their lives, from day to day. One of the things which concerned him greatly was this: why do not church members radiate the joy and life which were such obvious features of the New Testament Christians? He could not understand why orthodox Protestantism was so lacking in vitality. He was sad about the fact that some leaders of the Christian community were no better than profligate sinners, but he was quite distressed that the best of the Christians of his acquaintanceship were far from being "on fire." In this confused state of mind, he determined to be on the lookout for any who had a "spiritual glow," and decided that he would join any company of Christians who enjoyed divine favor and appeared godly.

We can see that there was an element of logic here which would prove attractive to any zealous young man, but we must also recognize that this was an immature decision which could have led to disaster. Fortunately, the hand of the Lord seems to have been upon him, for this intention to link up with people who showed signs of true religion did not take him into the arms of any of the extremists who thronged England at that time, but to the very people who could speak to his case with appropriate care. It would be easy to find fault with John Fletcher at this point, and show that he acted from a false theological position, in believing that true spirituality must always produce sound doctrine, and that apparent deadness in Church circles is a proof of false doctrine. This would be unfair, however, in view of his age and the state of affairs then. We must not forget that Fletcher was born into one of the most confusing centuries that modern man has suffered. The whole of Europe was on the boil, in every aspect of life. This was the age of the freethinkers, of industrial development, and of revolution. Anyone who could read was familiar with the views of Voltaire and his associates; change was on every hand; the whole of life was confusing. However, more than this, as far as Fletcher was concerned, Switzerland—although pleasant enough for the rich—was far from being a land of liberty. There was considerable civic corruption, the press was known to be censored, torture was normal in the prisons, the peasants were without political rights, and it was dangerous to speak one's mind openly. Many of Fletcher's contemporaries moved out of their own country in search of personal freedom. It was natural for him to be affected by the spirit of the age. In those circumstances, we must not

be surprised to find someone so intent on seeking a true experience of God that any company seemed to be more congenial than that of mere professors of religion who discussed the major matters of faith without any sign of compassion.

Fletcher among the Methodists

In any case, when John Fletcher entered the ranks of Methodism, the split between Whitefield and Wesley had been "healed" long since. Although it is true that he joined the Wesleyan Methodists and not the Calvinistic Methodists, these two bodies were then enjoying a season of fraternal respect. From 1745 to 1770 there was comparative peace between the two parties, and exchanges of pulpits by them were commonplace; John Fletcher was as much influenced by Whitefield as by the Wesley brothers, and was never ashamed to say so. He soon became acquainted with all the leading evangelicals up and down the country, including the Countess of Huntingdon, and was as much in the company of Calvinists as Arminians. It would be foolish to say that this was the beginning of Fletcher's mistakes in the realm of doctrine, or to suggest that he was guilty of loose thinking so far. His simple logic (which always seemed to be so important to him) may have been misplaced through zeal, but it would be unwise to say more, at this point.

What we can ask now, however, is this: Why did he take sides with the Arminian branch of the Methodist movement, and why did he remain an Arminian all of his life considering that he was so great a Bible student and so intimate with God in prayer? If the Calvinistic system of theology is the true one, how is it that so godly a man can miss the way? How can anyone who was so familiar with the Holy Scriptures, and with the writings of Calvin, Luther, Flavel, Owen, Bunyan, and Henry be so misled? Is the answer that he thought that he knew more than these famous divines? Did he consider himself in a class above these other godly men? We must ask such questions, if we are to understand this interesting man. One reason why he did not embrace the whole Calvinistic system is because he did not ever lose the early aversion that he gained concerning the estate of lost souls. Even when he reassessed this matter in the light of the teaching of the Reformers, as distinct from that of eighteenth century theologians who expounded the teaching of the Reformers, he hesitated. He was not able to visualize God as a master who bestowed favors regardless of the behavior of man.

The other major reason why Fletcher could not identify himself with the Calvinistic system was connected with Antinomianism. Rightly, or wrongly, he

felt that Reformed doctrines encouraged loose thinking about holiness. His early years in Switzerland showed him that the true Church had three enemies, apart from the natural one of heresy; these were Antinomianism, Phariseeism, and Laodiceanism. He maintained that as Calvinism was taught, these three enemies of the Faith were encouraged, and not put to flight. He suggested, therefore, that Calvinistic theology should be reformed to take this defect into account, or else there would be a constant tendency away from it, by those who hold that holiness is an essential facet of scriptural salvation.

Fletcher sought to prove this point by alluding to the writings of those who had taught the Calvinistic system since the Synod of Dort. He had plenty of material to work on, since all of the sermons of Tobias Crisp had just been reprinted by those who were pleased to circulate these views. John Fletcher knew that Dr. Crisp had been a godly man who was anxious only for the glory of Christ, and he also knew that there had been a flood of literature which assessed the Crispian theories and which settled the matter in an orthodox way. However, he was faced with the fact that these sermons had been reprinted, without any alteration, and so the readers of his generation would lap up ideas which had been such a source of embarrassment to Richard Baxter in the last century. Further, he conjectured that Crispian theories were the natural outcome of a theological system which could run to this extreme, because the doctrines relating to behavior were not sufficiently guarded; the demand for the Crispian sermons was proof that many of the Calvinists of his day preferred doctrine which permitted Antinomianism. It seemed to him that the Calvinistic system needed reform if it were to uphold holiness as a biblical principle with which the new man in Christ ought to adhere.

It may be worth our time to consider, at this point, what were the salient doctrines of Tobias Crisp which Fletcher thought were a source of encouragement for Antinomianism, since they will show us the way in which Fletcher was thinking about this whole subject of holiness. The theories which most disturbed him were these: that the elect are justified in eternity for eternity; that the elect know of their acceptance with God when they gain inner assurance, regardless of their personal behavior; that there is no need to preach repentance in the heralding of the gospel; that Christ became a sinner; and that God takes pleasure in the damnation of sinners from eternity for eternity. As we have seen, John Fletcher knew that some of these views were explained and altered in the lifetime of Dr. Crisp, but that they should ever have been stated in such lucid terms, and read by ordinary people who were remote from theological controversies, forced him to the conclusion that Calvinism needed a protective fence of added teaching in regard to ethics. You will recall that Joseph Hussey

died before John Fletcher came on the scene, but there were two famous hyper-Calvinists alive throughout this new Crispian controversy, namely John Gill and John Brine. Fletcher knew, from personal experience, that these two ministers lived exemplary lives and so he could not suggest that extreme Calvinism must always produce Antinomianism. In fact he did not do this, and was always most gracious in his treatment of those who took the opposite point of view, even going so far as to suggest that they graced their doctrines more than he did his own! However, he did not cease to show that doctrinal Antinomianism produced improper behavior in the lives of those who sat under this teaching, even if the expounders of such views were thoroughly godly men.

It is also worth our time to recall that John Fletcher did not enter the field of controversy without what he thought was a good reason. He did not attack any other person's views until, on a point of honor, he was forced into the arena of public debate by the denunciation of John Wesley, in 1771. Although Fletcher had known that there were divisions in Methodism before he joined the movement, and although he was aware of tensions in some circles, he always knew that Whitefield and Wesley would produce harmony and concord if permitted to do so. When Whitefield died, however, he realized that the old wounds could be opened again easily and that the gracious George would not be there to pour oil on the situation. He determined to do all that he felt was in his power, in order to heal any forthcoming breach. It is possible that the Countess of Huntingdon encouraged him in this resolve, for she had written recently to the effect that Fletcher was one who could "maintain peace and unity in the household of God." Be that as it may, the blow fell quickly; before the death of Whitefield could be remembered at an anniversary, the chaplains of the Countess had accused John Wesley of "dreadful heresy" because of the wording of the Methodist Conference Minutes of 1770. One gains the impression that these gentlemen expected a quick solution to the controversy and were surprised when a number of leading ministers hurried to the support of Wesley. They may have expected John Fletcher to take sides with them, for only a few months previously Wesley had censured Fletcher for associating with the Calvinistic Methodists too much, and—after all—Fletcher was the president of Trevecca College! Fletcher surprised everyone by not only taking sides with Wesley, but also by taking up his pen to defend Wesley in a spirited correspondence which lasted over four years. In his opinion, Wesley was being pilloried as quickly as was decently possible after the death of Whitefield. On the other hand, the Countess of Huntingdon was seeking to emphasize that orthodox theology was Calvinian and not Arminian. So, despite his imperfect grasp of English, Fletcher wrote a flood of letters, pamphlets, books, and tracts (most of which remain to this day)

because he could not be silent when a friend was in need of support, and not because he wished to become an author, or split Methodism any further. His gracious firmness and polite logic produced a helpful apology from the Countess who "wished to retract what more deliberate consideration might have prevented, for we would as little wish to defend even truth itself presumptuously, as we would submit servilely to deny it."

So then, we have established that John Fletcher was not willing to be labeled a Calvinist unless, and until, Calvinism was restated in terms which would put to death any apparent support for Antinomianism, Phariseeism, and Laodiceanism. It would be fair if we now glanced at the other side of the coin and asked why he felt able to be called an Arminian, since the followers of this system could not boast of being any more godly than the other party!

In actual fact, he was unhappy about the dilemma of being either one thing or the other! He felt that the way that the Synod of Dort had been organized was unfortunate since it had resulted in evangelicals taking sides either with Calvinism or Arminianism. He blamed this on the Arminians who, he wrote, "provoked the Calvinists, by refusing to clear up the doctrine of election first." If they had not been so stubborn, he said, the Calvinists would not have been so severe and the result may have been more helpful to succeeding generations. He was of the opinion that the teaching of Arminius needed to be restated just as much as did that of Calvin—though for different reasons—and that the Synod of Dort could have accomplished this, if only there had been a gracious reasonableness on both sides. He could see that, from the point of view of the Calvinist party, the Remonstrance views were heretical, but he did not think that the Calvinists of that day were working from the correct premise. In other words, John Fletcher was an Arminian because he was not able to embrace Calvinism as it was expounded, but would have joined the Calvinistic party gladly if they had conceded some ground. They refused to do this, for reasons which were obvious to them, and so he remained an Arminian to his dying day. It is impossible to read the life story of Fletcher, however, without noticing that his theological position shifted in the direction of Calvinism slowly, but surely. It is as though he sought to prove his point, repeatedly, only to move nearer to the views of his opponents with every tussle. Clearly, his friendship with such notable men as Howel Harris, Henry Venn, William Williams, John Newton, and George Whitefield brought him to see that Calvinists need not be so dry and lifeless as those he had known earlier in Switzerland. His Arminianism was a reaction to what he called Phariseeism, Antinomianism, and Laodiceanism, and may well have never come to much if he had been reared in an evangelical environment.

However, despite his Arminianism, John Fletcher became increasingly

anxious about certain tendencies in the Arminian wing of the Church of England. For example, as he wrote to Walter Shirley, some Arminians had an unbiblical view of the Fall of Man. As far as he was concerned, the total depravity of man is “the leading principle of Christianity.” He wrote that “if you take away the doctrine of the Fall, the tower of truth which was built by Jesus Christ is no longer founded upon a rock; the stately fabric collapses instantly and leaves behind nothing more than dry morality.” Fletcher could not conceive of any system of theology neglecting this important theme, and was so concerned about the matter that he preached on this subject every Sunday morning for several months, and then had the sermons printed and bound into an eighty-six-page booklet, which he distributed to every one of his parishioners. In this booklet, he proved to his readers, by the use of thirty-six arguments, multitudinous biblical quotations, repeated references to the Thirty-nine Articles, and many snippets from the Homilies, that they were absolutely depraved and thoroughly lost! Also, he was unhappy with some so-called Arminian movements in the century which appeared to ignore the need for experimental religion and gave too much place to faith in the matter of regeneration. So, it will be seen that John Fletcher did not consider Arminianism to be a fool-proof substitute for Calvinism, and was not altogether happy about being called an Arminian. However, if one must be in either one camp or the other, then he would be in the camp of Arminius. And, certainly, by virtue of his opinions concerning predestination, this was the only possibility open to him!

Fletcher’s Views on Holiness

We now come to the main subject before us, and consider his views about holiness in the life of a believer. We have seen that he had sensitive views about the nature of God, from very early years. He spoke to people about their need to live moral lives from the time that he could form words into sentences. Also, we have seen that he practiced what he preached, and that it was the testimony of countless believers of his generation that if any man came close to the highest standard of holiness, then John Fletcher did. If his attacks on Antinomianism had not been backed up by the sheer godliness of the man, his words would have died a speedy death and would have had no value after he had passed from earthly view. All that he said was borne out by his life, however, and this did much to add value to his exhortations and pamphlets.

Fletcher held the opinion that there is a principle plainly stated in the Bible concerning God’s intentions about the holiness of His children. He traced this principle through the Old Testament and also through the New Testament. Not

only did God say that Israel should be a holy nation, but He said that individual believers should be holy and without blemish before Him. Not only could Fletcher see a clear biblical principle, but he considered that the Holy Scriptures have commanded God's children to be holy, in every generation. So far, very few will disagree with Fletcher, because even if we do not like his theology, as long as we have faith in complete holiness through imputation, we will see no great heresy thus far. The division came when Fletcher expounded what he meant by "holiness" and when he described the "means" whereby man achieves this virtuous state. Many found his exhortations an embarrassment, and some thought that he carried his point too far, but none who knew his Owen dared to disagree on the need for holiness, since that great writer had earlier said that "not only does God require holiness indispensibly in all believers, but this is all that He requires of them, or expects from them; for it comprises the whole duty of man."

However, before we come to the description which he gave of essential holiness, we will examine the four reasons why he believed that this is so important. First of all, he thought that holiness is the outer proof of one's inner salvation—it is the only reliable evidence of a claimed experience. He felt that the following verses were ample proof of this: Matthew 7:16–18; Galatians 5:24; James 2:18; and 1 John 3:3. Second, he thought that personal holiness is the scriptural way by which we show Christ that we love Him. Whereas he could have said that we prove our love for Christ by evangelizing—to some effect—he said that holiness does this, and felt that the following Johannine verses upheld his opinion: John 16:15, 21, and 23; 1 John 5:3; 2 John 6. Then, Fletcher felt that personal holiness is the most effective way of influencing the unconverted, or—at any rate—a lack of personal holiness is an excellent way of keeping needy souls from Christ. He did not find it easy to prove this point from biblical references, but reasoned that Matthew 5:16 and 1 Peter 3:1–2 confirmed the matter. Finally, he thought that holiness is the biblical way by which a man is made ready for heaven and a meeting with the Lord. He quoted many verses to substantiate this view, including: Matthew 5:8; Galatians 5:19–20; Ephesians 5:5; Hebrews 12:14; and Revelation 21:27.

What is holiness, in the words of Fletcher? Is it a mighty experience, with instantaneous virtues, or is it a gradual process which commences at the time of regeneration and progresses throughout the life of the believer? He thought in terms of scriptural expressions, and so he described a holy man as being one who is fully grown, transformed, unblameable, obedient, sanctified, filled unto the fullness of God, and walking worthily of the Lord unto all pleasing. According to John Fletcher's own life story, and personal experience, the heights of holiness are not reached in a blinding moment (though he would not say that

this could not happen if God chose so to do), but as a result of a pilgrimage, during the course of which the believer denies himself daily, shuns sin, puts off the old man, fears the Lord, obeys God's Word, puts on the new man, sets his mind on heavenly things, and with all humility and soberness of mind, follows after holiness. It would be wrong to picture Fletcher as the founder of a holiness movement which reduced godliness to an instantaneous experience received by a single act of faith, especially since John Wesley started to preach Christian perfection nearly twenty years before Fletcher was converted. All the facts point to his seeing personal holiness as the outworking of the power of God in a human life which has responded to the commands of Christ readily, and not as an instantaneous experience.

If we study Fletcher's life, we come to the conclusion that a holy man does not claim that he is no longer a sinner; he is more aware of being a sinner than ever before, but (because of the new characteristic, which owes its origin to regeneration) he is not at peace with his sinful nature. He knows that he is not better than the meanest sinner, and gives others the impression that he is only too aware of it. In 1776, we have a glimpse of his inner struggles (despite his disputations upon the problems of Romans 7) in a letter containing these words: "There are three sorts of people I must attack continually, the Gallios, the Pharisees, and the Antinomians. I do not forget, however, that the Gallio, the Simon, and the Nicholas within, are far more dangerous to me than those outside. In my own heart, that immense field, I must first fight the Lord's battles and my own." Fletcher was too fond of the phrase "grow in Grace" to be a defender of instantaneous holiness, and for this reason found the term "sinless perfection" nauseating.

Let us consider now the means used by Fletcher to promote holiness in his own life, and then the advice which he gave to others. The means used can be separated into four parts, even though the first three ought to be one only, since they have to do with the Trinity. The experience of sanctification for Fletcher was a work of the combined Trinity, and in his view personal holiness is the outcome of this divine work in one's life, to which had been added (by the grace of God) the believer's works of obedience.

The work of the Father included not only the general dispensation of grace and providential care, but also the chastisement of Fletcher; this shows most clearly during his long illness, and in the account of his death. The work of the Holy Spirit involved not only the revealing of truth, the inculcation of moral attitudes, and the bearing of the spiritual fruit, but also the energizing of Fletcher; he spoke often of this last factor and urged believers not to neglect this (he thought in terms of outpourings of the Holy Spirit inwardly as well as

outwardly). The work of the Lord Jesus Christ consisted of a High Priestly ministry together with the influence of example through intimate union with Fletcher; he referred constantly to the intimate moments which he spent with Christ, in prayer, and of the benefit he gained from such seasons of communion. The fourth means was his own daily ready obedience toward the commands of God's Word, as he read, waited upon God, and worshipped with the people of God. In other words, for Fletcher, holiness was the result of seeking Christ by the help of the Holy Spirit, doing what Christ asked of him, and trusting Christ to accomplish the impossible in him.

Although a Calvinist may find some of this description disagreeable, he will know that (in general terms) there is considerable truth here. Doubtless this is because Fletcher fed upon the Puritans and leaned heavily upon such writers as Leighton, Henry, Bunyan, Hopkins, Owen, and Flavel in his efforts to appreciate the lengths and breadths of personal godliness. His view of the influences of the grace of God and providence in the life of a believer were wholly Calvinistic; his views on the effect which divine chastisement makes seem to be identical to those of Flavel; his insistence that the Holy Spirit should not be ignored, in the realm of holiness, was matched by none other than John Owen. If a Calvinist wishes to find fault with his views on the need for union with Christ, on the grounds of extremism, it should be remembered that the saintly Robert M. McCheyne said, "Wherever you go, make it manifest that your holiness comes from union with Christ." There is little doubt that Fletcher's views on the subject of perseverance were not wholly Calvinistic, because of his idea that a believer's works contributed to his eternal security. However, his views of "fighting the good fight of faith" were not far removed from those of J. C. Ryle.

We may assume, therefore, without much anxiety, that John Fletcher's godliness (which is the feature of him that outlives his influential writings) was a biblical godliness, and not simply the sum total of good breeding, stoicism, mock-humility, and mysticism. In fact, we can thank God for his godliness (as many Calvinists did do then) since it stems, so obviously, from his Calvinian approach to this particular subject.

The problem, for Calvinists, comes when one studies Fletcher's writings on the subject of holiness, for he took two steps which cut across Reformed thinking. The first of these was a doctrine which he called "Second Justification by Works," and the second was his support of John Wesley in the use of the term Christian Perfection. Fletcher's doctrine of a second justification was not a resurrected Pelagianism, nor a denunciation of the orthodox doctrines relating to salvation; it was an attempt to stalemate the effects of deadness, formalism, and fanaticism in religion. The best criticism of this would be that Fletcher allowed

his extensive powers of reason to make over-much use of such texts as 1 Timothy 6:19 and Romans 2:6–7. His zeal for the honor of God, in the face of confusion and heresy, made him forget that our status with God depends on the work of Christ alone, and not—in any way—on our ethical achievements. As Professor John Murray has put it, “The attainment of the goal is not on the meritorious ground of perseverance, but through the divinely appointed means of perseverance.” If one should ask why so godly a man, who was so well-read, was able to make such a mistake, we can only answer that (when it came to the final analysis) he was not a Calvinist! On the other hand, if anyone is seeking to maintain Arminianism in a state of zeal—both for God and for good works—then Fletcher’s doctrine of a Second Justification is the logical tool to use!

However, the second step which he took has given John Fletcher a bad name with Calvinists ever since; he published a book on the subject of perfection, in support of Wesley’s doctrine on that subject. Even if he only did this at the request of Wesley, in order to correct and amplify Wesley’s teaching (which we must admit that he did do), it is still regretable that this book was written. It is possible that he would not have launched out into print on this subject if he had not desired to answer the publications of some who were opposed to perfection, but the reason behind it all is far from clear. We can bemoan this book, however, on several grounds: for one thing, the use of the word perfect (even if—as he pointed out—it occurs more often in the Bible than predestine) must make for trouble, if it is used in connection with human holiness. For him to press the use of this word was the same as to divide the evangelicals of his century still further. For another thing, no matter how you view the Wesleyan doctrine of perfection, and regardless of the zeal with which you propagate it, there must be problems. As Samuel Chadwick (no foe of holiness) later put it: “There is certainly some ambiguity in Wesley’s teaching.” But, worse that this, Fletcher could only confuse people by preaching not only justification, in the way that he did, but also perfection after the fashion of Wesley, and a second justification by works as well! The three things could not go hand in hand, as we can prove from his own letters, in one of which he wrote: “Meritorious, justifying righteousness is finished and brought in, and your works can no more add to it than your sins can diminish from it.”

Perhaps, the main reason why we should be sad about the publication of his treatise on perfection is as follows: Fletcher was first and foremost a preacher, and not a writer. When he stood up to give a discourse, it was as if an apostle had returned; he enjoyed an obvious divine unction which none could deny. When he sat down to write he relied on his vast reading (“I have consulted many masters”) and simple logic. This impressed even his opponents and confounded

his atheistic parishioners, but it has left us with a dilemma. As one of his best friends put it: “I would rather have heard one sermon from Mr. Fletcher, than read a volume of his works. His words were clothed with power, and entered with effect. His writings are arrayed in all the garb of human literature, but his living word soared on eagles’ flight above humanity. His writings, though enlightened, are but human; his preaching was apostolic.”

This does not mean that we must come to the conclusion that John Fletcher was a confused zealot who was guilty of loose thinking; it means that he was not a Calvinist! He began from the wrong basis, having been distracted from orthodoxy by so-called Calvinists who presented a living faith in the deadest of ways. However, just because John Fletcher felt that he could not embrace the whole Calvinian system does not mean that he should be despised or ignored. He has much to offer in any Arminian/Calvinistic controversy and must ever be remembered as one of Arminianism’s brightest stars.

In any assessment of Fletcher these points should not be overlooked: first, he had experienced what might be called “dead Calvinism,” but he did not live long enough to experience “dry Arminianism.” If he had done, he would have learned that although Calvinism without experimental religion becomes Phariseeism, his own doctrine of a Second Justification by Works, for Arminians, also produces Phariseeism, if it is unaccompanied by experimental religion! Secondly, John Fletcher was born into the most philosophical reformed country of his century; he was the kind of man, with suitable natural abilities, whom God might have used more extensively in Switzerland, if he had not run away from the stifling religious culture. Was he a chosen vessel for the reviving of his homeland, and is that why his ministry was so remarkably blessed whenever he went there? If so, it is tragic that he was allowed to react in the way that he did; he might have been one of Calvinism’s noblest sons. However, whatever the truth of the matter, John Fletcher upheld the biblical principle of holiness in his personal life and sought to uphold it in general. If Arminianism can produce such godliness, what hopes are there for us![2]

6

William Williams and Welsh Calvinistic Methodism

D. Martyn Lloyd-Jones

Let me start by giving some kind of explanation as to why I am dealing with this subject; it is quite a simple one. Last year I should have been doing what I am going to do tonight, because it was the 250th anniversary of the birth of William Williams. He was actually born at the end of 1717. But I felt constrained to deal with the question of Sandemanianism first. It came in a kind of logical sequence in my own mind with regard to the addresses that I have been delivering at the close of this conference, and I suddenly realized that it would make quite a good introduction to this subject tonight, because the greatest proponent against Sandemanianism in Wales was none other than William Williams. So it has seemed to me to be right to give this address this year. It does also serve, I trust, as an interesting link with what has been before us almost throughout this conference because I shall be dealing with Calvinism and Methodism and what I shall say will, in a sense, perhaps, help to sum up the various matters that we have discussed together.

I am not going to say very much about William Williams himself. One could not attempt to deal with him without taking a whole evening, because he was such a many-sided man, who stands out as one of the three, or perhaps four, great leaders of Methodism in Wales in the eighteenth century. Daniel Rowland was the outstanding preacher, as we heard last year. Howel Harris was the great exhorter and the great organizer. But William Williams was a many-sided man.

We think of him instinctively first and foremost as a great writer of hymns, and he was, I would say, supreme in this matter. Certain literary authorities in Wales, who are not Christians themselves, are ready to grant that he is, in their judgment, the greatest of all Welsh poets. This is something of very real significance because here you have such an outstanding, natural poet, now, under the influence of the Spirit, writing these incomparable hymns. An indication of his place as a writer of hymns, and indeed a writer of prose in addition, is the fact that the University of Wales Press is in the process of republishing his complete works. Two volumes have already appeared. So we are dealing with a very remarkable man, a man of very unusual ability.

In addition to being an outstanding poet and writer of hymns he was also, we can say, the theologian of Welsh Calvinistic Methodism. He showed that in his

attack upon Sandemanianism, but he showed it in many other ways positively. He was the theologian of this group of three or four men, and he showed great ability there. He would give his theology sometimes in verse and sometimes in prose. But in many ways I would say that the greatest of all his gifts was the gift which he had of instructing the little societies or companies of Methodists that used to meet together. He was acknowledged by everybody to be supreme in this matter. He wrote a book which he called Drws y Society Profiad[1] or The Door to the Experience Society, or The Door to the Society in which experiences are dealt with. It is quite a classic. I had intended at one time to devote my whole paper to that, because it might be very useful and instructive for us in this phase through which we are passing at the present time, when we have little groups of Christians meeting together for fellowship in different parts of the country. The early Methodists had to face that problem. They had new converts whom they formed into societies. The question, then, was how could they be instructed? They needed leaders; they might be good men but still they would not know how to handle people. Well, Williams wrote the book in order to instruct them and to guide them as to how to do this all-important work.

There, then, are the outstanding characteristics of this man. He was born, as I have said, in 1717, and was converted while quite young under the ministry of the great Howel Harris. Williams intended to be a doctor, and he was preparing to become a medical student. As he was going home one day, quite heedlessly and thoughtlessly, he saw a crowd of people listening to a man. He joined them; it was Howel Harris preaching. There and then he was converted and immediately, almost, felt a call to the ministry. Eventually he was ordained as a deacon in the Church of England, and as such he was one of the men present at the first great Association held by the Calvinistic Methodists in Wales in 1743 with Whitefield presiding.

Calvinistic Methodism?

These are the main facts about Williams. You can see how easily one could spend the whole time with him, but I propose to look at him as one of the leaders of the Calvinistic Methodists, and particularly in Wales. Our theme then is going to be “Calvinistic Methodism.”

I have often found during the years that people, both Arminians and Calvinists, have regarded this term as a contradiction in terms. “Calvinistic Methodism?” they say, “This is impossible, it is a contradiction.” I remember speaking at an anniversary in a church not so far from here about twenty-five years ago. I said I was glad to be present as a Methodist and as the representative

of Whitefield and Calvinistic Methodism. And the then minister of that church said that he regarded this as a contradiction in terms. Well, that was because he was seriously defective in his understanding of the term Methodism. But there are others, on the other side, who have been astounded at this. The term Methodism on the continent in particular is a dirty word, and there are Calvinists who dislike any association between Calvinism and Methodism. Again this is due to a serious defective understanding, as I hope to show, of both Calvinism and Methodism. So it is clear that this is a subject that has a good deal to tell us at the present time.

The best way of approaching it, I think, is for me, first of all, briefly to outline how Calvinistic Methodism ever came into being. We have to start, of course, with the rise of Methodism. Consider first the condition of England at that time, when Methodism really began in the 1730s. The Church of England was generally Arminian. You remember the famous dictum of the great Lord Chatham with respect to the condition of the Church of England. He said that she had Calvinistic Articles, a Romish liturgy, and Arminian ministers. And that was an accurate description. She was not only Arminian but also spiritually asleep.

What about the other churches? Presbyterianism had ceased to be. There had been a Presbyterianism in England, but it had become Arian in its doctrine. The Westminster Confession of Faith does not guarantee that you cannot go wrong doctrinally. It was the Presbyterians who went most astray and became guilty of Arianism, and Presbyterianism literally died. The Presbyterian Church of England which we have today is something quite new which only started in the last century. As regards Congregationalism, these Arian tendencies for a while even affected people like Isaac Watts and Philip Doddridge. The Congregationalists had also been affected by the hyper-Calvinism, to which reference has been made, and we have been reminded also that among the Baptists there was this hyper-Calvinistic teaching.

That was the condition in England in general. In Wales it was very similar. The Church of England was in the same condition in Wales as in England. In the Nonconformist bodies there was an occasional good man here and there; we must not depreciate them. The Methodists in their enthusiasm, and perhaps William Williams himself, tended to do so. In his “Elegy” on the death of Rowland and of Harris he tends to give the impression that there was no light at all. There were good men, but unfortunately these good men were given to argumentation and disputation among themselves, so that from the standpoint of a live spirituality they did not count very much.

It was into that kind of condition in England and in Wales that Methodism

came. How did it come? I cannot, obviously, go into detail. As regards England the real origin and genesis is to be found in the Holy Club that was founded in Oxford, mainly at the instigation of Charles Wesley. The story is well known. However, the Holy Club in and of itself would never have led to Methodism. The real beginning of Methodism is found in the mighty experience through which Whitefield passed in 1736, and through which the Wesley brothers passed in May 1738. In Wales Methodism was quite independent and spontaneous. Welsh Methodism owes nothing to English Methodism. It started before that in England, in 1735, with the conversion of both Howel Harris and Daniel Rowland, and again, quite independently. They had never heard of each other and knew nothing at all about one another. But the Spirit of God dealt with these two men in a most amazing way, and it was only in 1737 that they met and came together.

That is how Methodism began. At first they were all one—in England and in Wales when they eventually met and came together. There was one Methodism, including all these men to whom I have referred. But then, as we have already been reminded, a division came in and Methodism divided into two groups, Calvinistic and Arminian. In Wales they were all Calvinists. In England they were not all Calvinists. On the Calvinistic side you have the great names, Whitefield, Berridge, Toplady, Romaine, and the two Hill brothers, Rowland Hill and Sir Richard Hill, and also the Countess of Huntingdon. On the Arminian side there were the Wesleys, John Fletcher, Thomas Olivers, and various others.

These are historical points which are of considerable interest. The Methodism in Wales was entirely Calvinistic. The Wesleys visited there but they did not have any churches there until the beginning of the nineteenth century. But again I would emphasize this fact—that we have a Methodism that is common to both. This is a basic point. Actually the term Calvinistic Methodist in Welsh emphasizes this very strongly, for it is not Calvinistic Methodism, but Methodism-Calvinistic. And so you have Methodists-Wesleyan. The Methodism comes first, and the other is an adjective describing the particular type. At first they all worked together, but, owing to the division, it was Whitefield who became most intimately associated with the men of Wales, and he was actually the moderator of their first association in 1743.

What Is Methodism?

We must now face this question—What then is Methodism? Let me first answer negatively. It is not primarily a theological position or even a theological attitude. Methodism was not a movement designed to reform theology. It was not

at all. Actually in Welsh Calvinistic Methodism they did not have a catechism or a confession of faith until the next century—emphasizing this point, that it was not primarily a theological movement. We must not think of it in terms of theological reform.

What was it then? Well, Methodism is essentially experimental or experiential religion and a way of life. I think that is an adequate definition of it. What produced this? How did this ever come into being? The answer is that it was born of a number of things. The first was the realization that religion is primarily and essentially something personal. This was the thing that came to all of them. They all became aware of their own personal sinfulness; they underwent conviction of sin, and it was an agonizing process. But they all experienced this terrible need of forgiveness. This became a burden to them—both parties. Then there was also a great desire for a knowledge of God—a direct knowledge of God: not to believe things about God—they had already got that—but the desire to know God. “This is life eternal, that they might know Thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom Thou has sent” (John 17:3). All this led on then to a desire for assurance of sins forgiven.

Many have probably read the account of the first meeting between Whitefield and Harris in Cardiff in 1739. The first question that George Whitefield put to Howel Harris was this: “Mr. Harris, do you know that your sins are forgiven?” He did not ask him, “Do you believe that sins can be forgiven?” or “Do you believe that your sins are forgiven?” for various reasons, but, “Do you know that your sins are forgiven?” And Harris was able to say that he had rejoiced in this knowledge for several years. This again was a point that was common to all of them—assurance of salvation, assurance of sins forgiven.

The next thing that was common to all types of Methodism was the desire for “new life.” So you had that great emphasis on the doctrine of regeneration and rebirth. You know how they were all influenced by the book of Henry Scougal, The Life of God in the Soul of Man.[2] This was their longing and desire. Whitefield preached constantly on regeneration, and so did the others. You remember that he even had to be corrected on this point, actually by the Wesleys, though he had gone before them. They felt that he was not making enough of justification by faith. It was this tremendous emphasis on the need of a new birth, a new beginning.

The next thing I have to stress is the emphasis which they all placed on “feeling.” They were very concerned about what Whitefield once called a “felt” Christ. They were not content with orthodoxy, correct belief; they wanted to “feel” Him. They laid tremendous emphasis upon the place of feelings in our Christian experience. This I could illustrate at great length. Unfortunately there

are only two of Williams's hymns in the Congregational Hymnary, and they are translations, of course. You get there no true idea of his greatness as a hymn-writer and as a poet. He cannot be translated. In his hymns you have an incomparable blend of truly great poetry and perfect theology. We have, "Guide me, O Thou great Jehovah," and "O'er the gloomy hills of darkness," but one of the greatest of all his hymns has been translated like this, and it is so typical of Williams:

> Speak, I pray Thee, gentle Jesus!
> O, how passing sweet Thy words,
> Breathing o'er my troubled spirit
> Peace which never earth affords.
> All the world's distracting voices,
> All the enticing tones of ill,
> At Thy accents mild, melodious,
> Are subdued, and all is still.

And he goes on:

> Tell me Thou art mine, O Saviour,
> Grant me an assurance clear,
> Banish all my dark misgivings,
> Still my doubting, calm my fear.
> O, my soul within me yearneth
> Now to hear thy voice divine;
> So shall grief be gone for ever,
> And despair no more be mine.

Now that is so typical of him. There are endless hymns by him on that theme in the Welsh hymnbook. He wanted to "feel" these things. He believed, but he was not satisfied with that; he wanted to know.

Of course you get the same note in the English Methodist hymn-writers in exactly the same way. Let me give one example out of the writings of Toplady:

> Object of my first desire,
> Jesus crucified for me;
> All to happiness aspire
> Only to be found in Thee:
> Thee to please, and Thee to know,
> Constitute my bliss below;
> Thee to see, and Thee to love,
> Constitute my bliss above.
> Lord, it is not life to live
> If Thy presence Thou deny;
> Lord, if Thou Thy presence to give,
> 'Tis no longer death to die:
> Source and giver of repose,
> Only from Thy smile it flows;
> Peace and happiness are Thine;
> Mine they are, if Thou art mine.
> Whilst I feel Thy love to me,
> Every object teems with joy;
> May I ever walk with Thee,
> For 'tis bliss without alloy:
> Let me but Thyself possess,
> Total sum of happiness:
> Real bliss I then shall prove,
> Heaven below and heaven above.

And as you read Toplady's Diary[3] you find this kind of thing emphasized repeatedly.

That brings me to say just a little more about this whole question of assurance, because in many ways it was the distinguishing mark of Methodism and the same thing that was common to Methodism. They divided over holiness teaching, as we have already been reminded, and over other matters, but here there was this great unity, this teaching concerning assurance. What was it? It was this, that our assurance of salvation is not only, and not merely, something that is to be deduced from Scriptures. They agreed that that was a part of it. I would say that the bulk of evangelical people today, in this and other countries, stop at that. That is their only assurance, that which you deduce from the Scriptures. "Whosoever believeth on Him is not condemned." So they say, "Do you believe in Him?" "Yes." "Well very well, you are not condemned, and there is your assurance. Do not worry about your feelings," and so forth.

Now Methodism taught the exact opposite. That is the point at which you start, and you can go on and test yourself in terms of teaching of the first epistle of John. As you do so you will get a better assurance, an assurance which will save you from a kind of "believism," or an intellectualism that just says that it believes and accepts all this, and which emphasizes the importance of evidences of new life. But these men were concerned to go on to a further source of assurance, which to them was the one that they desired and coveted above everything else. That was the direct witness of the Spirit Himself to the fact that they were the children of God. So they made much, of course, of Romans 8:15–16, and also in Galatians 2:20: "The Son of God, who loved me, and gave Himself for me," and so forth.

This, I repeat, was common to all of them. We are all familiar with the experience of John Wesley in Aldersgate Street on May 24, 1738, to which reference was made yesterday. "My heart was strangely warm, and I did know that my sins even mine, had been forgiven." William Williams made a great deal of this. Let me give two quotations to establish this point. I am translating out of his book, The Door (or "Entry" if you like) to the Experience Meeting—the Experience Society. He was giving instructions to the men in charge of the societies as to how they should question and catechize and cross-examine the people who were anxious to be admitted to the societies, and, indeed, how they should examine the experiences of those who belonged to the societies. He drew a distinction between the way in which you questioned and catechized young members, new members, and the way in which you catechized older members. He says: "You must not expect as much of the light of faith, and certainly amongst those whom you are receiving for the first time, as you must expect

amongst those who have been in for some time”—although he goes on to say that “sometimes you will get a shock and you will find that people’s early experiences are very much better than their later experiences.” However, that is his main point of distinction—that you do not expect as much light and clarity and certainty from the young convert as you do from the older one.

How, then, do you question and examine the young convert? This is one of his ways of putting it—that the examiner is to say to the young convert, “Though you have not yet received the testimony of the Spirit (to your salvation, of course), nevertheless are you seeking God with your whole heart, and this as the main rule of your life? Not by fits and starts or occasional touches of conviction —Is this the main thing in your life?” But notice how he starts: “Though you have not yet received the testimony of the Spirit.” Then when he comes to the way in which they should question the older men he says, “You must examine them concerning the clarity or the clearness of their testimony, how they first received their testimony, whether they have lost any of it or not.” Then he tells them to ask: “Has this testimony which you have in your own spirit been doubled by the Holy Spirit?” That is the term he used—“doubled.” In other words, that was Williams’ view of “the Spirit Himself also beareth witness with our spirits that we are the children of God” (Rom. 8:16). Our spirit tells us this, “the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba Father.” But the Spirit, as it were, doubles it, seals it, guarantees it, gives an extra, an overplus on top of it, confirms it. That is the term which he uses with regard to these older converts.

That was their teaching, and, of course, it was their own experience. This comes out very clearly in the case of Daniel Rowland, who having come to see the doctrine of justification by faith as he had heard it preached by Griffith Jones at Llanddewi Brefi, still did not have certainty about it. But one day when he was reading the litany at the communion service in his own church in the village of Llangeitho, suddenly the Spirit came and did this “doubling”; and he knew. And it was from then on that he began to preach in that amazing way and with that amazing power, of which Ryle writes in his famous book on The Christian Leaders of . . . the Eighteenth Century.[4] The same thing is very clear in the case of Howel Harris. Howel Harris, being convicted of sin on the Sunday before Good Friday 1735, got an assurance at Whitsun. But it was only three weeks later that he had this “doubling” by the Spirit, and that was the thing that made him an evangelist. They taught this, and they taught people to expect this, not to be satisfied with anything less, as my quotation from Williams’s book has already shown you.

I go on from this to add another very vital point about them all—Methodism in England and in Wales and in all parties. They met together in little groups or

classes; whatever you may like to call them. What did they do there? Well, the main thing they did was to state their experiences to one another, and to examine one another's experiences, and to discuss them together. They told of the Lord's dealings with them, what had happened to them since they last met, of anything remarkable that had occurred to them, and so on. This was the main element in these societies; that is the thing that Williams treats of in that book to which I have referred—this great emphasis on experience, an on assurance, on this "felt" element. They were primarily "experience" meetings. Indeed I think we are justified in using this term, that the thing that characterized Methodism was this pneumatic element. Over and above what they believed there was this desire to feel and to experience the power of the Spirit in their lives.

All this was expressed in their lives, about which they were so careful and so meticulous. They were taught to be so, and were examined in order to make sure that they were so. That is the picture of their life in their societies. These people, under the preaching, had undergone an experience, and they had made application to join the Society, and they had been received; and that is how it went on.

One other great thing we have got to emphasize is their evangelistic zeal; and again it was common to all of them. Who can decide as to which had the greater evangelistic zeal, John Wesley or George Whitefield? You cannot answer the question. They both had it. And it seems to me that both these branches or divisions of Methodism showed exactly the same zeal and enthusiasm in this desire to bring their fellow men and women to a knowledge of God's salvation in Christ Jesus, and that they were equal also in the success which they attained.

All this was common to all Methodism. Then there came the division. When I say that they had these things in common, "and then," it sounds as if I were saying that from there on they did not have them in common. But they did. After the division all that went on, all that remained common; but they became divided into those two groups, the Arminian and the Calvinistic.

The question has often been asked as to why this ever happened. I remember it being asked in a final meeting at this conference a number of years ago. The answer is very difficult. I suppose in a sense it cannot be answered. Dare I make one suggestion? (We might very well have this as a topic for discussion some time.) Is there even a national element in this? I mean by that, that it has something to do with national characteristics. I am not going to go into this, I am simply asking a question. What is the place of nationality in these matters? Can you allow it any place all?

Let me just say this before I leave the matter. I have always felt that John Wesley was about the most typical Englishman of whom I have ever read. I

could substantiate what I am saying. However, we do know this, and we have been reminded of it already, the Church of England at that time was thoroughly Arminian. The Wesley family, the father and the mother, had become Arminians, and were proud of it. Not only that, there is very interesting evidence brought forth by Professor Geoffrey Nuttall to show that Arminianism had had a particular vogue in the village of Epworth, where the Wesleys of course lived. So they had been brought up and nurtured in a thoroughly Arminian atmosphere. No doubt that has a great deal to do with it, if not most. But in Wales, as I have reminded you, the whole thing was entirely different, and they were all Calvinistic.

It is interesting to notice that they only became Calvinistic after a while. They all started as Methodists, but in Wales they became Calvinistic. Howel Harris tells us this quite plainly, in extracts out of his own diary as to how he became a Calvinist. The same thing is true of Whitefield. Whitefield "became" a Calvinist. I am not going into the details as to when, but the fact is that he became a Calvinist. I believe that in the case of Rowland and Harris in particular, and probably also in the case of Whitefield, it was their study of the Thirty-nine Articles and of the Puritans, that brought them to this position. However, the fact is that they became Calvinistic, and in Wales they remained purely Calvinistic until the end of the century.

What Is Welsh Calvinistic Methodism?

We come now to look at the characteristics of Welsh Calvinistic Methodism. These are quite clear. First and foremost there was the great preaching. That was the outstanding characteristic. I am one of those who believe that Calvinism should always lead to great preaching; and when it does not I query the genuineness of the Calvinism. You cannot have great preaching without a great theme; and they had that great theme, and so you had great preaching all over the country. And the great characteristic of the preaching, as of the life, was warmth, and enthusiasm, and rejoicing. Some of them went through an early phase in which they tended to be a bit legalistic; but it did not last long and the other element came through.

Welsh Calvinistic Methodism was also characterized by singing. Williams produced most of the hymns, and the people would sing them to some old tunes and ballads. Moreover, there was often great shouting during the preaching. They would interrupt the preacher, they would cry out their "Amens" and "Hallelujahs," and sometimes the excitement was quite marked. This great joy and rejoicing and singing and assurance was the great characteristic of Welsh

Calvinistic Methodism.

The other thing that one must mention, because it is of such vital importance, is that they had a succession of revivals. I trust it is not necessary for me to define and describe the word “revival.” I know that in some countries the word revival has now come to mean the holding of an evangelical campaign. This is not revival! In a sense I cannot think of anything that is further removed from revival than just that—man-made, man-organized series of meetings. That is not it! Revival is “a visitation from on High,” an outpouring of the Holy Spirit. They had a whole succession of them. One of the great revivals in that eighteenth century broke out as the result of the publishing of a new hymnbook by this man William Williams in 1763. The very publication of the hymns and the fact that the people began to sing them led to one of these new outbursts. There had been a period of dryness and of aridity, because, unfortunately, there was a quarrel even among the Welsh Calvinistic Methodists. It is a blot on their story. It was almost entirely a personal matter, but not entirely so. But it seems to me, the more I have read about it, that it was a clash of personalities, as so often happens, alas, in the Church, between Rowland and Harris. Harris undoubtedly had also been going astray somewhat in his doctrine, and this had happened about 1751–53. Following that there had been this period of dryness, but then William Williams’ new hymnbook came out, and as the people began to sing these great expressions of theology a revival broke out.

The hymns of William Williams are packed with theology and experience. That is why I once, in giving a lecture on Isaac Watts, ventured to say that William Williams was the greatest hymn-writer of them all. You get greatness, and bigness, and largeness in Isaac Watts; you get the experimental side wonderfully in Charles Wesley. But in William Williams you get both at the same time, and that is why I put him in a category entirely on his own. He taught the people theology in his hymns; as they sang the hymns they were becoming familiar with the great expressions of the New Testament doctrines of salvation and the glory of God. But this element of “revival” is something I want to emphasize, because it was a peculiar feature of Calvinistic Methodism. You had activity among the others, and occasions when there was a movement of the Spirit; but they were much less frequent and they were not so clearly “special” visitations as was the case among the Calvinistic Methodists.

Those, then, were the great characteristics of Calvinistic Methodism. It seems to me that it might be of some help if we now considered this question: Was this an entirely new phenomenon? Is the Calvinistic Methodism of the eighteenth century something without antecedents? I suggest that it is not and that there were precursors of this. Again I think we are dealing here with a most interesting

point—the relationship of this Calvinistic Methodism to what had gone before. Where do we get hints or adumbrations of this previously? Well, I have always felt that you get a good deal of it in the saintly Hooper, Bishop of Gloucester, martyred in the time of Queen Mary I. The same is true also of John Bradford. You get there the same stress upon feeling and the same warmth. Let us not forget that these two were really the first two Puritans though the name was not then used. We are in grave danger of forgetting the Puritans of the sixteenth century in our concentration on those of the seventeenth century, but let us never forget that but for them the seventeenth century Puritans would probably never have come into being. I find in these first Puritans something more akin to Calvinistic Methodism than one finds even in those who are sometimes described as the "Pietistic" Puritans, such as William Perkins and others like Lewis Bayly and so on. These were men who put their emphasis on practical and pastoral theology. They were interested in the application of the Law of God in the life of the believer. They put this great emphasis upon "practicing" it. So you get their "casuistry" and their dealing with "cases of conscience." That does lead to a kind of piety, but it is not the same thing as you have in Calvinistic Methodism. There, the emphasis was on the teaching of the Law and its application in the daily life of the Christian. Of course I am not excluding the other element altogether, I am talking about the main emphasis; whereas in the Calvinistic Methodism the great emphasis and stress was upon "experience."

When you come to the next century you get something that is similar to, though not identical with Calvinistic Methodism in people like Walter Craddock and Morgan Lloyd, as he is called in English. But they were more mystical. It is wrong to say of these Calvinistic Methodists that they were mystics. There is a mystical element in them; you cannot exclude it; but you cannot classify them with the mystics. They were suspicious of and opposed to mysticism as was shown in their opposition to the quietism that became such a characteristic of the Moravians. And yet, surely, there is a true Christ-mysticism which we must not exclude, and which I maintain you get in the Apostle Paul himself, as well as in many others throughout the centuries.

There is much about people like Walter Craddock and Morgan Lloyd that seems to suggest what blossomed so fully in the eighteenth century. They were entirely different from the Quakers. They did not just believe in an "inner light" and tend to depreciate the Scriptures. No, they had this great theological content as well. I have often felt that you get something of the same thing appearing here and there in John Flavel and Thomas Brookes—touches of it. But it seems to come in as "touches"; it is not given the centrality that it is given in the Calvinistic Methodists. Personally, I would not hesitate to describe the

Jansenists, including the great Blaise Pascal, as Calvinistic Methodists before their time. And certainly I would say that there is more of an affinity with some of the men in Scotland, such as William Guthrie and even before him, Robert Bruce and John Livingstone, than there is with the bulk of English Puritans.

This is a most interesting point. We know that these Calvinistic Methodists read the Puritans a great deal. They fed on them. Puritan writings were their food next to the Bible, and they learned a great deal from them. Yet I am suggesting that Calvinistic Methodism was not a mere continuation of puritanism. A new element has come in—this emphasis upon the feeling aspect, the revival aspect, and this whole matter of assurance, all the things I have been describing as the essence of Calvinistic Methodism. I venture again to suggest that Jonathan Edwards must be called a Calvinistic Methodist. You have the same combination in Edwards. I know the brilliant intellect tended to obscure this at times, but I would say that essentially Jonathan Edwards as a type was a Calvinistic Methodist though actually a Congregationalist.

When you come to the continental pietists, again we are in a slight difficulty. There were affinities, clearly in the case of Spener, Francke, and people like that, and the Moravians. We know the association between the Moravians and the Methodists especially at first. They did separate and go apart for certain reasons, but from the beginning they were aware of something in common, and what was in common was again this very thing which I have been trying to emphasize as being the main characteristic of Calvinistic Methodism.

Some Lessons

Let us now attempt some kind of assessment, or attempt to draw out some lessons from all this. We have been dealing with the history of this Methodism that split in two directions, and yet in a sense kept together right through and in spite of the divisions. What are the lessons?

The first, it seems to me, is the grave danger of hardening our terms. We are ever in danger of so “hardening” the terms that in the end they come to stand for something which is no longer true of the original. It is assumed today that if you use the word Methodist you are speaking of Arminians. That is the general assumption, that you are speaking of John Wesley and his followers. It is to me ridiculous that a religious denomination in the country should call themselves The Methodists. They have no right to do this. It is not true historically. But this is the sort of thing that happens and terms become hardened.

It also shows us the danger of party spirit. Labels generally lead to a spirit, and we must avoid this as Christian people. We must avoid this hardening and

rigidity which leads to a wrong spirit and lands us eventually in a position in which we are tempted to ask, as people have asked before us: “Can any good come out of Nazareth?” God save us and preserve us from ever becoming victims of that terrible spirit.

But there is another lesson that may be of great value to us at this present time through which we are passing. We are in an age of change, and there is no doubt that in a few years the religious situation in this country is going to be very different from what we have known, and there will be new groupings of Christian people. The many will doubtless be in one “Territorial Church” together, or even in a “World Church.” There will be others who will not. And the problem will arise for those who do not belong to a “Territorial Church” as to what they are going to call themselves, the problem of “denominations.” We are familiar with all these terms—Congregationalism, Presbyterianism, Baptists, and so on—and the multiplicity of divisions and names that our friends in America know so much better than we do. But I am raising this question now: Is it not time that we put an end to all this, and that we cease to use and to bandy about these names of men? I know the difficulty. The argument is: “Well, you have got to call the church something, you have got to show how one differs from another.” But I am raising the question as to whether you should do that; whether we should not merely as the result of all we have been considering in this conference, and all we know about the history of these matters, decide that in future all we put on the notice boards of our buildings is—“Christian Church.”

If a man should come and say to me, “But what do they teach in there?” I would reply, “Go in and listen.” Why should we put up a notice that is going to exclude people? Let it be known that the gospel is going to be preached here. That is what a church is for. Let them go in, let them listen; they will soon find out what is being preached, and they can then decide for themselves whether they are going there again or whether they are not. Why is it necessary that we should harden the things about which we disagree, and on which we differ, and harden them to the extent of “placarding” the thing? It has caused great confusion to the world outside always. And we know that it is doing so at this present time. Is not this one of the greatest hindrances of all in evangelism? In other words, are we not guilty of the sin of schism in this very respect? And we are adding to it by putting up these labels. All we need to announce is that this is a Christian church, a place where the gospel is preached. Can we not leave it at that?

But having said that let me come to more particular statements with regard to my assessment of Calvinistic Methodism. First of all I would say that Calvinistic Methodism is true Methodism, and the only “true” Methodism. Why do I say

that? I say so because I assert that Arminian Methodism is inconsistent with itself in the following ways. It starts by emphasizing “grace.” The Arminian Methodists claimed and still claim that they were preaching “grace.”

> His only righteousness I show,
> His saving grace proclaim,

says Charles Wesley in a well-known stanza. They laid great claim to this. But then it has become equally clear, has it not, that they introduce works again, with their whole notion of free will, and the part that the man himself plays. I have never found an Arminian who can satisfactorily interpret I Corinthians 2:14: “The natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, for they are spiritually discerned.” Their difficulty is this. They say, “Quite right: All men by nature are sinners.” They believe in depravity. But then they go on to say that God in His grace has given this power to believe and accept the gospel to “all men.” That, therefore, means this: that all men now are spiritual, whereas Paul says quite plainly that all are not spiritual, that you have “carnal” and “spiritual” men. So if you say that grace is given to “all,” it must follow that all are spiritual, because it is the only grounds on which they can possibly believe and accept this gospel and not regard it as “foolishness.” So while they start with grace they go on to deny it.

Secondly, though they emphasize—I am dealing still with Arminian or Wesleyan Methodism—the rebirth and regeneration, they then go on to deny it by saying that we can lose it. Rebirth is the action of God, and yet they say that we can undo this and we can lose it. From this it follows—and you get it in its extreme form, of course, in the Salvation Army, which came out of Arminian Methodism—that you can be regenerate today and unregenerate tomorrow, and regenerate again, and back and forth. This whole notion of “falling from grace,” and coming in and out of salvation, is surely a fundamental denial of the doctrine of regeneration.

The same thing applies to their teaching concerning assurance. What is the value of an assurance that you can lose? I mean by that, what is the value of an assurance of salvation if you can lose your salvation? If your persistence in grace and in salvation is dependent upon you, where is your assurance? Can you rely upon yourself? Would any man be eventually saved if it were left to us to persevere in grace? It is not a doctrine of assurance. It leaves it all back with me, and I am in all the uncertainty that I was in before. Of course, that is why so many turn to the Church of Rome, where you hand it over and the Church looks after it for you. It is because you cannot possibly do it yourself. The Church of Rome does not offer you assurance of salvation. What she says is, You cannot

get it, but leave it to us and we will put it right for you. And then you get all the paraphernalia that characterizes that Church, by which they tell you they are going to do this. So the whole emphasis of the Arminian Methodist upon assurance is nullified.

I would sum up this section like this. One of the greatest proofs of the truth of the doctrines emphasized by Calvin, what is known as "Calvinism"—though I have already said I do not like these terms—is John Wesley. He was a man who was saved in spite of his muddled and erroneous thinking. The grace of God saved him in spite of himself. That is Calvinism! If you say, as a Calvinist, that a man is saved by his understanding of doctrine, you are denying Calvinism. He is not. We are all saved in spite of what we are in every respect. Thus it comes to pass that men who can be so muddled, because they bring in their own human reason, as John Wesley and others did, are saved men and Christians, as all of us are, because it is "all of the grace of God" and in spite of us.

Calvinistic Methodism is the true Methodism for those reasons. But in addition to that, Calvinistic Methodism saves Methodism from degenerating into mysticism. There is always this danger. Put your emphasis on feeling, upon the "felt" aspect, and you are already in danger of degenerating into mysticism, or into a false asceticism, or into a kind of "illuminism." And all these, of course, have made their appearance in history. But Calvinistic Methodism saves us from that because of its great emphasis upon the doctrines. Here, you have got the doctrines, but in addition you have got this other element, the "felt" element; it is a perfect combination of both. Not only does it guarantee our doctrinal correctness, it also saves us in the realm of experience itself from many aberrations, which have often ended in what seems to me to be nothing but a kind of Spiritism. Calvinistic Methodism saves us from that. So I argue that Calvinistic Methodism is true Methodism.

Secondly, I argue that Calvinistic Methodism is also true Calvinism. I want to show that a Calvinism that is not Methodist as well is one which we need to examine carefully. Calvinism without Methodism has certain dangerous tendencies, which we must recognize. If we do not we are in a very dangerous position.

Calvinism without Methodism tends to lead to intellectualism and scholasticism—that is its peculiar temptation. The result is that men talk more about "the Truth we hold," rather than about "the Truth that holds us."

Another danger which Calvinism without Methodism is prone to is that confessions of faith, instead of being subordinate standards, tend to be the primary and supreme standard, replacing the Bible in that position. I am only talking about tendencies, and not saying that this happens to all Calvinists.

Officially we say that these confessions are the “subordinate standard”; the Bible comes first, then these. But there is always a danger for the Calvinist to reverse the order.

A question arises here—it has already been suggested in one of our discussions. It is the whole question of the rightness of preaching from and through the catechism rather than preaching through and from the Bible itself. I am simply putting it up as a question which we need to examine. The Calvinistic Methodists did not preach through the catechism. Their whole tendency was to say—as was the tendency of Charles Haddon Spurgeon—that you should not even preach a series of sermons but that each sermon should be “given” to you, that you look to God for your sermons. I mean by that, that you look to God for your text and the message you are to deliver. That was the emphasis of Calvinistic Methodism. So I put it in this general way by saying that there is at any rate a danger that we may change the position of the confession, and it ceases to be the “subordinate” standard.

A third danger always, as a tendency in Calvinism unless it is corrected by Methodism, is to discourage prayer. This is a very serious matter. The Calvinistic Methodists were great men of prayer, and their churches were characterized by prayer meetings—warm, moving prayer meetings, which would sometimes last for hours and where great experiences would come to people. I am suggesting—and I could produce facts—that Calvinism without Methodism tends to discourage prayer. I have known Calvinistic churches in which they have no prayer meeting at all, and in which prayer is really discouraged.

Lastly, Calvinism without Methodism tends to produce a joyless, hard, not to say a harsh and cold type of religion. I am saying this is a tendency. All this results from intellectualism of course; and the more the intellect dominates the less joy there will be, and a hardness, and a coldness, and a harshness, and a bigotry tend to come in. I had almost said that Calvinism without Methodism tends to produce “dead Calvinism.” But I am not saying that. Why not? Because I regard the term dead Calvinism as a contradiction in terms. I say that a dead Calvinism is impossible, and that if your Calvinism appears to be dead, it is not Calvinism, it is a philosophy. It is a philosophy using Calvinistic terms, it is an intellectualism, and it is not real Calvinism.

Why not? Because true Calvinism not only does justice to the objective side of our faith and our whole position, it does equal justice to the subjective; and people who cannot see this subjective element in Calvinism seem to me to have never understood Calvinism. Calvinism of necessity leads to an emphasis upon the action and the activity of God the Holy Spirit. The whole emphasis is upon what God does to us: not what man does, but what God does to us; not our hold

of Him, but “His strong grasp of us.” So Calvinism of necessity leads to experiences, and to great emphasis upon experience; and these men, and all these older Calvinists were constantly talking about “visitations,” how the Lord had appeared to them, how the Lord had spoken to them—the kind of thing that we have seen Toplady expressing in the hymn already quoted and in his Diary. They also talked about “withdrawings.” Why have those terms disappeared from among us modern Calvinists? When have you last spoken about a “visitation” from the Spirit of God? When did Christ last make Himself “real” to you? What do you know about “withdrawings” of the Spirit, and the feeling that your Bridegroom has left you and that He has not visited you recently? This is of the essence of true Calvinism, and a Calvinism that knows nothing about visitations and withdrawings is a caricature of Calvinism. I object to its using the term with respect to itself.

But more, Calvinism leads to assurance, and assurance of necessity leads to joy. You cannot be assured quietly and unmoved by the fact that your sins are forgiven, and that you are a child of God, and that you are going to Heaven: it is impossible. Assurance must lead to joy. Not only that, knowing this leads to prayer. God is my Father. I am adopted. I know Him. I have an entrance, and I want to go there. I want to speak to Him and I want to know Him. This is true Calvinism. And that, of course, leads to a love of His Word. You meet Him in the Word. The Word instructs you as to how to find Him; it helps you to understand the visitations and the withdrawings. You live on the Word. Nothing so drives a man to the Word of God as true Calvinism.

Then, in turn, as I have been trying to say, true Calvinism is bound to emphasize the element of revival, the “giveness” of the activity of God, the visitations of God. It is only since the decline of Calvinism that revivals have become less and less frequent. The more powerful Calvinism is the more likely you are to have a spiritual revival and reawakening. It follows of necessity from the doctrine. You cannot work up a revival. You know that you are entirely dependent upon God. That is why you pray to Him and you plead with Him and you argue, and you reason with Him. These Fathers used to do this. How different is our approach to the condition of the Church today from that which was true of these Fathers and their successors for several generations. Today we look at the situation and we say, “Well, things are very bad, everything is going down—what shall we do? We had better have an evangelistic campaign.” So we call a committee together and we begin to organize and to talk about what is going to happen in a year’s time or so.

Calvinistic Methodists did not look at the problem like that. This is how they looked at it. They said, “Why are things like this? What is the matter? We have

offended God, He is grieved with us, He has turned His back on us. What can we do about this? We must get down on our knees and ask Him to come back, we must plead with Him." And so they would use the kind of arguments you find Moses using in praying to God in Exodus 33, or such as you get in Isaiah 63. They would reason and argue with God, and say, "After all, we are Your people, not those others. Why do You not come back to us? We belong to You, Your name is involved in all this." They would plead the "promises" with God, they would agonize in prayers until God heard them and visited them again.

This is Calvinism. Nothing so promotes prayer as Calvinism. Calvinists who do not pray, I say, are not Calvinists. These things follow the one the other as the night follows the day. The true Calvinist is concerned about revival. Why? Because he is concerned about the glory of God. This is the first thing with him. Not so much that the world is as it is, but that the world is behaving like this, and that God is there. It is God's world, and they are under God. The glory of God! This is the great thing which dominates all the thinking of the Calvinist. So he is waiting, and longing, and pleading with God to "show" this glory, to show this power, to arise and to scatter His enemies, and to make them like the dust, and to show the might of His almighty arm. This is Calvinism. They want this. They are zealous, and they are jealous, for His name.

At the same time, having an understanding, through their doctrine, of the condition and the state of the unregenerate, they become burdened about them also, and they are anxious to do everything they can to bring them to a knowledge of salvation in Christ Jesus. And when this happens it ends in—what? Well, in great praise and thanksgiving.

My argument is that cold, sad, mournful, depressing Calvinism is not Calvinism at all. It is a caricature; something has gone wrong somewhere. It is mere intellectualism and philosophy. Calvinism leads to feeling, to passion, to warmth, to praise, to thanksgiving. Look at Paul, the greatest of them all. We should not talk about "Calvinism"; it is Paul's teaching. He tells us that he wept. He preached with tears. Do you? When did we last weep over these matters? When did we last shed tears? When have we shown the feeling and the passion that he shows? Paul could not control himself, he got carried away. Look at his mighty climaxes; look at the way in which he rises to the heavens and is "lost in wonder, love, and praise." Of course, the pedantic scholars criticize him for his anacolutha. He starts a sentence and never finishes it. He starts saying a thing and then gets carried off, and forgets to come back to it. Thank God! It is the truth which he saw that led to these grand climaxes of his, and it is bound to do so. If we understand the things we claim to believe we are bound to end in the same way. "Who shall separate us from the love of God?" And the answer is: "I

am persuaded”—and in the language of the Welsh Calvinistic Methodists it is much better and stronger—“I am certain.” It is sure, it is certain, “that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.” Or listen to him again at the end of Romans 11, “O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God.” How often have you had that “O” in your preaching—you Calvinists? Calvinism leads to this “O!”—this feeling, this passion. You are moved to the depths of your being, and you are filled with joy, and wonder, and amazement. “O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and of the knowledge of God! How unsearchable are His judgments, and His ways past finding out!”—and so on. Or take the same thing at the end of Ephesians 3. These are men dominated by a sense of the glory of God, and who are concerned about his praise.

In other words I am arguing that the first Christians were the most typical Calvinistic Methodists of all! I am just describing them to you. Not only the great apostles—Paul and others—but the people, the ordinary people—joy and rejoicing, praising God and thanking Him always “from house to house” as they ate their bread together. Peter can say of Christians whom he has never met that he is certain that this is true of them: “Whom having not seen, ye love; in whom, though now ye see Him not, yet believing, ye rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory.” That is first century Christianity! It is also the very essence of Calvinistic Methodism. It leads to praise and thanksgiving and rejoicing. It always leads to something like this:—

We praise, we worship Thee, O God,
Thy sovereign power we sound abroad:
All nations bow before Thy throne,
And Thee the eternal Father own.
Loud alleluias to Thy Name
Angels and seraphim proclaim:
The heavens and all the powers on high
With rapture constantly do cry,
O holy, holy, holy, Lord!
Thou God of hosts, by all adored;
Earth and the heavens are full of Thee,
Thy light, Thy power, Thy majesty.
Apostles join the glorious throng
And swell the loud immortal song;
Prophets enraptured hear the sound
And spread the alleluia round.
Victorious martyrs join their lays
And shout the omnipotence of grace,
While all Thy Church through all the earth
Acknowledge and extol Thy worth.
Glory to Thee, O God most high!
Father, we praise Thy majesty,
The Son, the Spirit, we adore,
One Godhead, blest for evermore.

* * *
Glory be to God, the Father,
Glory be to God the Son,
Glory be to God the Spirit,
Great Jehovah, Three in One,
Glory, glory—[that was the great shout of the
Calvinistic Methodists]
While eternal ages run.

Part 2

By Schisms Rent Asunder



1969

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German Pietism and the Evangelical Revival

John D. Manton

In presenting this paper one must recognize the fact, at the outset, that the words “Pietism” and “pietistic” are no longer popular words. Not only are they rarely used, but when they do appear, they almost invariably carry a pejorative meaning so that many Reformed Christians are prejudiced against Pietism, regarding it, in the words of Concise Oxford Dictionary (1964) as “pious sentiment, exaggeration or affectation of this.”

There has even been a tendency, of late, to attribute to “Pietism” what properly belongs to “Quietism,” i.e., a complete withdrawal from the world or a district of “good works” as part of a believer’s duty toward his fellow men.[1]

I hope to demonstrate that such an understanding of Pietism is both woefully inadequate, and, indeed, utterly false. This paper gives, in very broad outline, an account of the rise of German Pietism in the seventeenth century and its consolidation under its two most eminent leaders, P. J. Spener and A. H. Francke. Then follows a brief survey of the influence exerted by Zinzendorf and the Moravian Brethren upon the English leaders of the eighteenth century Evangelical Awakening, in particular the Wesleys. Finally, there is an assessment of the strengths and weaknesses of German Pietism, from a twentieth century Reformed point of view.

A paper of this kind must necessarily be selective, and must leave out of consideration large areas of what is, after all, a vast subject.

German Pietism has received considerable attention from German theologians and historians representing a wide spectrum of opinion. Literature on the movement is still being produced, and recent researches by such scholars as Martin Schmidt and Erich Beyreuther, to name only two, have brought fresh material to light.[2] Most of this work, however, has remained in the original German and is therefore not easily accessible to English-speaking readers. One recent work in English deserves to be mentioned, however: F. Ernest Stoeffler, The Rise of Evangelical Pietism (1965).

The impact of the Moravians on the early Methodists is well covered in English, one specialist study being that by Clifford W. Towlson, Moravian and Methodist (1957).

The Rise of German Pietism

During the century which followed the Reformation, the complaint was increasingly heard in both the Lutheran and the Reformed Churches on the continent of Europe, that the Reformation had been one solely of doctrine and church polity, without producing a Reformation in the lives of Church members. The German Reformed Church, which was found predominantly in the north of the area now known as Germany (at that time a collection of largely autonomous states each under its own ruler) was very deeply indebted to the Netherlands for many of its ideas, first because of the firm hold the Reformed faith had taken in the Netherlands—it was no accident that the famous Synod of Dort was held there in 1618, second because of the geographical and linguistic proximity of Holland and Northern Germany, and third because the Thirty Years' War which devastated the German states between 1618 and 1648 left Holland comparatively unscathed, and dominant both culturally and economically over her exhausted neighbors.[3]

Now there was in the first half of the seventeenth century considerable interchange between the English Puritans and the Dutch Reformed. They were linked, of course, by their common Calvinism, and numerous English Puritans took refuge in Holland from persecution at home, probably the most eminent being William Ames, a pupil of William Perkins. Ames was forced to flee from England through the enmity of Archbishop Bancroft, and eventually (1622) became Professor of Theology at Franeker. Under the Latin form of his name, Amesius, he wrote voluminously and has been called "the first theologian of Reformed Pietism." His debt to Perkins is very marked; he shares Perkins's practicality of thought, and just as Perkins had taught in his Golden Chain: "Theology is the science of living blessedly for ever," so Ames began his Medulla Sacrae Theologiae (1623) with this sentence: "Theology is the doctrine of living unto God."[4] This statement may be said to represent the essence of what the Pietists believed.

Holland herself produced many generations of godly men, in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, who shared this same concern, that the Reformation of doctrine should be completed by a Reformation of life.[5] To mention only two or three out of many: William Teelinck (d. 1629) has been called "the Father of Reformed Pietism" and had been deeply influenced, significantly enough, by staying in an English Puritan home in 1604; the great Voetius himself (d. 1676), who for half a century was a giant among theologians and who insisted that a believer's life should conform to the requirements of the law of God; J. van Lodensteyn (d. 1677), like Voetius a Professor at Utrecht, with a great pastoral

concern for his students and renowned as both preacher and hymn writer; and William à Brakel (d. 1711) who in 1700 produced a massive work entitled Redelyke Godtsdienst (The Reasonable Service of God), concerning which Stoeffler says: “All that the Pietists on both sides of the channel had ever thought and said was here summarized and put into the language of the people. It is safe to assume that had it not been for the language barrier the younger Brakel would have achieved the distinction of being one of the outstanding Pietistic theologians of Europe and America.”[6]

Jean de Labadie (d. 1674) is a somewhat enigmatic figure in the history of Reformed Pietism.[7] A former Jesuit, converted through the study of Calvin’s Institutes, he held pastorates in Geneva and London before settling in Middelburg, Holland. Here he aroused so much opposition from his Synod on account of the criticisms he directed against the intellectualism and moral indifferentism of the Reformed Church and particularly its ministry, that in 1669 he was expelled, and proceeded to set up his own religious community in Amsterdam, from which numerous evangelistic treks were made into the surrounding territories, including northwest Germany, by his own “Labadist” preachers, whom he trained in his own seminary. His movement was highly influential for two decades, and his program for the reform of the pastorate (published 1667) is remarkably similar, in its general tenor, to Spener’s program which was to be published, from within German Lutheranism, only eight years later. Spener is known to have been influenced by Labadie, and to place the two men side by side highlights some of the common features of Pietism, whether Reformed or Lutheran, and also some of the diversities which existed within the movement. Here it must suffice to point out that Labadie’s Pietism forced him to separate from his Church, while in Spener’s case Pietism had no such effect.

Other Reformed influences which came to bear on Lutheranism, and thus on Spener himself, were as follows: the ministry of a Dutchman, Theodor Undereyck, in the Ruhr District in the 1660s—his use of conventicles within his own church impressed Spener deeply; the hymns of one of Undereyck’s converts, Joachim Neander (author of “Praise to the Lord, the Almighty”) who, although he died at the age of thirty, became a leading Reformed hymn writer; and some of the writings of English Puritans, particularly Lewis Bayly’s Praxis Pietatis—this name may well be significant!—and Richard Baxter’s Saints’ Everlasting Rest.

Stoeffler’s succinct account of the results of the Pietist movement within the Reformed Church is worth quoting in full:

> While the Pietistic dream of reforming the Reformed never succeeded, it

> could hardly be doubted that the perfectionistic ideals of this reform party brought about significant changes in the life of the Church. It was responsible for an emphasis upon effective, religiously significant preaching such as is seldom found in territorial Churches, together with a similar emphasis upon pastoral work which is equally unusual under such surroundings. Many of the classes and synods began to stress catechization, to a degree unknown since the early days of the Genevan Reformation. Church discipline, which had been exercised almost solely with regard to faith and order, was oriented to include the daily conduct of Church members. A devotional literature was created such as continental Protestantism had never known because its need had not been recognized. Family worship was encouraged and free prayer found a place among the printed prayers. In fact prayer was encouraged as perhaps never before within the Reformed Churches. Even conventicles, carefully supervised by the clergy, were authorized by various ecclesiastical bodies. For the first time since the days of Geneva the Reformed Churches knew of genuine religious awakenings such as the one in Friesland in 1672, where a group of pastors entered together upon an evangelistic venture with noticeable results. Last, but not least, the matter of training an effective ministry, interested in piety as well as doctrine and polity, was given serious attention. The result was the later development of theological seminaries.[8]

Now these events within the Reformed Church had not left the Lutheran Church untouched. The century and a half from the death of Luther (1546) to about 1700 has been known as the period of "Orthodoxy" within this Church;[9] the Confession of Augsburg (1530) had been followed in 1577 by the "Formula of Concord," and three years later the Confession, the Formula, and several other documents such as the Schmalkald Articles, Luther's Catechism, etc., were adopted as the official "Symbolic Books" of Lutheranism, and a process of entrenchment behind these standards took place. Unfortunately, however, insistence upon "pure doctrine" tended to become an end of itself; religion became equated with correct theological formulation; dogmatics took on an increasingly abstract character, and polemics became the order of the day not only in university faculties, but in the pulpits of the land. The "heresy-hunt mentality" took a firm hold, and in general, orthodoxy was esteemed far above godliness.[10] The irony, indeed the tragedy of the situation, was that the great doctrine which had liberated Luther from his spiritual bondage, namely justification by faith alone, was the very doctrine which re-imposed bondage upon his followers. At the risk of over-simplification, the situation may be explained as follows: those aspects of the doctrine were emphasized which were

external to man, especially the judicial act of God in declaring the sinner righteous; moreover this was linked very closely with infant baptism (Luther himself had not been entirely without blame here!), so that the passivity of the human subject came to be stressed with great force. God's grace was mediated to men through hearing the Word and receiving the sacraments (the confessional remained in widespread use within Lutheranism until the early years of the eighteenth century), and it is difficult to avoid the impression that the Roman concept of "Mother Church" had been taken over almost unchanged into the Lutheran system. Meanwhile, the "inward" accompaniments of justification tended to be neglected, such as regeneration, the indwelling of the Holy Spirit, active faith, growth in grace, sorrow for sin, and so forth. Such was the fear of relying on works for salvation that even the good works resulting from salvation were regarded with suspicion or even hostility, so that early Lutheran piety tended to turn its back on the world in quietistic fashion, and "too often the doctrine of justification by faith was made a substitute for a holy life, or, what is worse, an excuse for an unholy one."[11]

This was the situation against which Lutheran Pietists set their face, and although the term Pietist did not make its appearance until 1670—when it was first used as a nickname for Spener and his followers—numerous men had written and preached against these evils for nearly a century, the most influential being Johannes Arndt, whose four volumes entitled Of True Christianity had been published in the early years of the seventeenth century. Arndt was read in countless Lutheran homes up and down the land; he had some very distinguished disciples on the theological faculties of Rostock and Strassburg Universities, and till well into the eighteenth century was considered one of the true spiritual fathers of Lutheran Pietism. The work which has made Philipp Jakob Spener famous—Pia Desideria (1675)—was in fact an introduction to a new edition of Arndt's sermons. Spener gives a six-point program of reform, which became, so to speak, the rallying cry of Lutheran Pietism. Here are his six points, with comments in each case:

1. Pastors should endeavor to preach from the whole Bible in the course of their ministry and should gather true believers into conventicles to feed them on the Word, and fathers should gather their families regularly around the Bible. Spener always made it clear that much as he respected the Lutheran Symbolic Books, they were only subordinate standards, not necessarily infallible, and always open to correction from the Scriptures. This attitude led to bitter attacks upon his orthodoxy being made by some of his fellow Lutherans, but for Spener the important thing was that the Bible should be spread abroad among the people. Conventicles were the most efficient way of achieving this in the

Church, and Spener hoped that from them would come “ecclesiolae in ecclesia” which would ultimately restore Presbyterian functions within the Church. In this hope, however, he was to be disappointed.

2. The priesthood of all believers should be reemphasized. Conventicles would further this by encouraging lay participation, and Spener wished to break down what he considered to be the unbiblical and Romish distinction between clergy and laity. In this, of course, he was able to appeal directly to Luther; he regretted, however, that Luther’s successors had so far forgotten the doctrine of their founder as to invest the clergy with hierarchical powers, turning them into “lords over God’s flock.”

3. True Christian faith should be presented as “the faith that worketh by love.” It was not just intellectual assent to a theological system. Conversion to Christ was needed, and without this no amount of theological knowledge was of any account. Spener believed that the confessional, properly used and safeguarded, could help toward impressing on the people the need for inward and outward holiness, i.e., its use was primarily for pastoral examination.

4. Ministers in particular should avoid undue involvement with polemics since this was feeding the people with stones not bread. The way to deal with unbelievers or with heretics was not so much to argue with them as to pray for them. True believers should treat them kindly, not harshly, and above all should ensure that they themselves were setting a good example of Christian living. Spener himself knew what it was to be dealt with harshly (on one occasion, for example, the highly orthodox University of Wittenberg published an attack on him accusing him of no less than 264 errors!) but in his own personal gentleness toward his opponents he was well ahead of his time.[12]

5. Theological courses for would-be ministers should be drastically revised. Students should be introduced to the great godly writers of the past such as Tauler, à Kempis, and Arndt and should learn to practice godliness in their own lives. More moral surveillance of students was needed; it is interesting to realize that in Spener’s day students had a “public image” which was far from enviable: they were notorious for their drunken, brawling habits, and Spener was concerned particularly that theological students were, on the whole, not noticeably different from the rest. He saw this as evidence that many of them were unregenerate, and he regarded it as an evil that such men were entering the ministry of God’s Church. He created a great stir by insisting, as a basic principle, that no one could be a proper pastor, theologian, or divinity teacher without being born again; for this, like Francke and John Wesley after him, he was roundly condemned by many of his fellow churchmen as an “enthusiast.” Martin Schmidt sees this insistence of Spener as one of the keys to his whole

thought, and in an article on the Pia Desideria published in 1951 he says, “Everything comes down to the individual being born again.”[13]

Before he died, in 1705 , Spener had the satisfaction of seeing and contributing to the foundation of a new university (Halle), where his younger follower and successor, A. H. Francke, held the Chair of Divinity, and where many hundreds of theological students showed evident signs of being truly born of God, through the godly endeavors of Francke and his colleagues.[14]

6. Preaching should be edifying, not clever. Spener made the most of the fact that many cathedral-like gothic churches having been destroyed during the Thirty Years’ War, the rebuilt Churches were much more modest and homely, with simple architecture, flat ceilings, white-washed walls and colored woodwork, and above all better acoustics. He abandoned the traditional stilted, erudite pulpit diction and adopted a direct, simple style of preaching which eschewed barren theological controversy and insisted on the need for conversion to Christ, a holy life, a humble submission to God’s Word, and the duty of “men whose hearts God had touched” to speak often one with another.[15] He would, in short, have agreed with Philip Doddridge, half a century later: “May I remember that I am not to compose an harangue to acquire to myself the reputation of an eloquent orator, but that I am preparing food for precious and immortal souls, and dispensing the sacred gospel which my Redeemer brought from heaven, and sealed with His blood.”[16]

It had been when he was principal minister in Frankfurt (1670) that he had formed new converts and inquirers into so-called “Collegia Pietatis,” and this appears to be the origin of the name Pietist.[17] There seems, incidentally, to be no clear evidence of a link between these “Collegia Pietatis” and the religious societies which were coming into being about this time in England, even though one of the prime movers in England was a German, Anthony Horneck, preacher at the Savoy Church, London.[18] It appears rather that conditions in the Lutheran Church of Germany were at this time so similar, in certain important respects, to those obtaining in the Church of England, that similar phenomena appeared, spontaneously and independently, in both. At any rate, Spener knew nothing of what was happening in England until 1678, when he heard the news from a Lutheran minister, Breckling, a resident in Amsterdam.

In the 1690s the leadership of the Lutheran Pietist movement passed from Spener to his younger contemporary, August Hermann Francke, one of the most brilliant men of his day. It was Francke who was to put into practice many of the reforms proposed by Spener, and to spread Pietism all over Germany, to Scandinavia, Eastern Europe, including Russia, the Middle East, the Far East, and North America.[19] The focal point of the movement shifted to Halle, about

100 miles southwest of Berlin, where Francke managed to hold down three normally full-time positions: professor at the newly-opened university, from which many hundreds of young men, having been won for Christ, spread their faith abroad, either as ministers or missionaries; minister of the church at Glaucha (a poor district of Halle, at that time just outside the town wall), where Francke was diligent in both preaching and catechizing, with results which provoked the envy and, sad to say, the bitter jealousy of his fellow ministers in the town; and founder of a great orphanage and school complex, which began from the small gifts which well-wishers dropped into a collecting box affixed to the wall of the living room in his manse.

In the early years, the orphanage work was kept going solely by prayer and freewill offerings, and John Wesley, when he visited the vast buildings shortly after his conversion in 1738, referred to them as "that amazing proof, that all things are still possible to him that believeth."[20] He goes on:

> There is now a large yearly revenue for its support, beside what is continually brought in by the printing-office, the books sold there, and the apothecary's shop, which is furnished with all sorts of medicines. The building reaches backward from the front in two wings for, I believe, 150 yards. The lodging-chambers for the children, their dining-room, their chapel, and all the adjoining apartments, are so conveniently contrived, and so exactly clean, as I have never seen any before. Six hundred and fifty children, we were informed, are wholly maintained there; and 3,000, if I mistake not, taught. Surely, such a thing neither we nor our fathers have known, as this great thing which God has done here.

Kingswood School at Bristol, the projected Newcastle Orphanage, Howell Harris's community at Trevecca, and G. Whitefield's orphanage in Georgia, all owe a great deal to the inspiration of Halle,[21] and it is of considerable interest to English Christians to note that George Müller, himself a German, was deeply impressed while staying in Francke's institution 100 years after the latter's death, and explicitly acknowledges his debt to Francke's godly example.[22] The great buildings can still be seen in Halle to this day.

The schools founded by Francke catered for a wide cross section of the community, including girls (a revolutionary venture at that time!), orphans, professional men, and the nobility. The whole work was one of the wonders of Europe and was frequently visited by distinguished persons, including some of the crowned heads of Europe.

There was a particularly close link between Francke and the King of Denmark, who, when looking for suitable missionaries for Danish colonies overseas, turned to Halle to supply the needed men. The result was the formation

of the Halle-Danish Missionary Society which sent missionaries of many nationalities, including English, all over the world.

In 1700 Francke was elected a corresponding member of the newly formed Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge, in London.[23] This marked the beginning of half a century of reports on the work done from Halle reaching the English-speaking public through SPCK channels, for after Francke's death in 1727 the reports were continued by his son Gottlieb August Francke, who succeeded his father as director of the Halle Foundation. In 1703 Anton Wilhelm Böhme, a young Lutheran minister, was sent to London from Halle and eventually became German chaplain to Queen Anne's Consort, Prince George of Denmark. Two other activities kept him fully occupied: helping the hundreds of German Protestant refugees who, on their way to a new life in North America, broke their journey in London and were frequently destitute; and translating into English all the literature which was sent to him from Halle. He was, in fact, Francke's personal representative in England.[24]

Samuel Wesley, the father of John and Charles, used to receive the regular reports of the Halle-Danish Missionary Society, through the SPCK, and at one time offered himself for missionary service with the Halle-Danish Society.[25] His wife Susanna used to read to her family the accounts of the work done by Ziegenbalg and Plütschau, the first missionaries of the Society to settle in South India.[26]

It was in all probability Böhme who produced the original translation of two works known to the Wesleys: Francke's tract "Nicodemus: a treatise against the fear of man," which Charles Wesley lent to George Whitefield when the two men met for the first time, at Oxford, and Francke's Pietas Hallensis (original title: Segensvolle Fussstapfen des noch lebenden und waltenden, liebreichen und getreuen Gottes, 1701) in which he tells the moving story of God's work in the erection of the Halle orphanage. We know that John Wesley took both these works with him to Georgia in 1735.[27]

The Moravian Brethren and Methodism

Of all Francke's pupils, none achieved such fame as Count Nikolaus Ludwig von Zinzendorf,[28] who was pupil for six years (1710–1716) at the Halle school for the nobility. Spener, his godfather, had taken him in his arms shortly after Zinzendorf's birth in 1700, and had dedicated him to the cause of the Gospel, and now in the formative years ten to sixteen he saw Halle Pietism from close quarters. He was very unhappy and unpopular at the school—both teachers and pupils seem to have regarded him as a prig—but he himself admits that, living in

Francke's own house, as he did, and dining at Francke's table, he met missionaries and heard missionary work discussed, so that his own enthusiasm for the world-wide spread of the Gospel was aroused, and thereafter never left him.[29]

In 1722 he opened his estate at Berthelsdorf in Saxony to German-speaking refugees from Moravia—members of the so-called Unitas Fratrum movement which had been founded in the mid-fifteenth century, had undergone successive periods of persecution and respite, and had moved in doctrine in a generally Lutheran direction. After the loss of their last Bishop, the distinguished J. A. Comenius, who had died in exile in Poland 1671, the movement had come near to extinction, but under the leadership of Zinzendorf it not only revived, but soon became a force to be reckoned with wherever Protestants were to be found. The Moravian settlement at Berthelsdorf was given the name "Herrnhut"—the Lord's Watch.

The year of A. H. Francke's death, 1727, marked in some ways the high point of Halle Pietism, and although after that date it was by no means a spent force, yet in retrospect one can see that, certainly by the late '30s, the impetus in foreign missionary work, for example, had shifted to the Moravians. Beyreuther regards the Moravians as the natural successors to the Halle Pietists, and says Zinzendorf "stands on the shoulders of Francke."[30]

J. E. Hutton holds a similar view: "Without Zinzendorf the Bohemian Brethren (an older name for the Moravian Brethren) would probably never have returned to life; and without the fibre of the Bohemian Brethren, German Pietism would have died a natural death."[31]

In 1733 the first company of Moravians to set sail for America were in the charge of August Gottlieb Spangenberg,[32] who had at one time been a teacher at Halle University, and who was eventually to be Zinzendorf's successor—a remarkably talented man with a strong practical bent, and a deep love for the Savior. He and his fellow Moravians formed a settlement on the banks of the Savannah River in Georgia, and he was therefore close at hand when, in the spring of 1736, the good ship Simmonds arrived from England, carrying a second batch of Moravians under their leader, David Nitschmann, and, of course, John and Charles Wesley, Benjamin Ingham, and others. John Wesley's experiences on that voyage, his realization of his own spiritual shortcomings in comparison with his Moravian fellow passengers, and his study of the German language in order to converse with them, are so well known that they need not be dwelt upon here; Wesley gives all the details in his journal,[33] showing how Spangenberg probed deeply into Wesley's soul, how the practical faith and godliness of the Moravians in Georgia led him to see the inadequacy of his own

religious profession, and how, on his return to England, the Moravian Peter Böhler[34] taught him the truths of saving faith in Christ, instantaneous conversion, assurance, and sanctification. Wesley's own "heart-warming" experience took place as he listened to a passage much beloved by German Pietists, i.e. a section from Luther's Preface to the Epistle to the Romans.[35] Space forbids a study of Wesley's work in translating thirty-three of the best German Pietist hymns into English,[36] nor can we follow him when, shortly after his conversion he paid a visit to Germany, taking care to call at both Halle and Herrnhut.[37] Wesley retained a love for Böhler and Spangenberg throughout his life, but from 1740 onward the two movements were to go their separate ways, probably as a result, in large measure, of the clashing personalities of Wesley and Zinzendorf.[38] It would appear that aspects of Methodist organization such as the conference and the band-system owe their inspiration to the Moravians, whose discipline and methods of instruction were consistently admired by Wesley.[39] The real weight of Moravian influence on the Evangelical Revival is to be found, however, not in these areas, but in the personal contacts which John Wesley—and indeed Charles—enjoyed in the years just preceding and just following their conversion in 1738.

It is to be noted that the Moravians exerted far more influence on the Wesleys than upon George Whitefield. Indeed, Whitefield wrote in 1753 a fierce attack entitled An Expostulatory Letter to Count Zinzendorf, which reached a second edition, was circulated not only in this country, but in Germany too, and, because of its allegations of Moravian corrupt practices, particularly in the sphere of money, very nearly put an end to the Moravian's cause in England. He deplored some of their modes of worship, regarded them as more German than scriptural (John Wesley had also leveled a similar charge at them, complaining that "they follow Luther, for better, for worse"[40]), and accused them of being crypto-Papists.[41] On the other hand, Whitefield never had anything but admiration for the Moravian's predecessors and contemporaries, the Halle Pietists, and frequently acknowledges his indebtedness to the example of faith left behind by A. H. Francke in building and maintaining his great orphanage. Furthermore, Whitefield corresponded with Francke's son and successor at Halle, and over the years collected and sent many thousands of pounds for the relief of German Protestant refugees.[42]

German Pietism's Weaknesses and Strengths

Among the weaknesses must be reckoned the following:

1. Indifference to the Church as an institution, with a visible order,

government, discipline, and so forth. The movement as a whole tended to ignore these matters—largely, of course, because of the institutional churches' resistance to the Pietists' message—and to develop into "ecclesiolae in ecclesia." Much modern evangelicalism has this same tendency, and Klaas Runia has no hesitation in tracing it back to Pietism.[43]

2. Indifference to large areas of biblical doctrine, a tendency to concentrate on conversion and the subjective experience of the individual in salvation, at the expense of much else.[44] The "Doctrines of Grace" are far from prominent in Pietism.

3. A shift of emphasis from God to man. It has often been said that the eighteenth century Enlightenment is the direct successor of Pietism in the sense that Pietism made man's experience a vital subject of study. Runia[45] pursues this thought further and accuses Pietism of producing, in the long term, "liberalism à la Schleiermacher" and "the present neo-liberalism of a Bultmann, a Tillich, a Robinson and a Van Buren"—an unduly harsh judgment?

Nonetheless, one must recognize the following as some of the strengths of Pietism:

1. Emphasis on heart religion, with the twin truths of the necessity for personal, saving faith in Christ and for a personal Christian experience.

2. Insistence on "active faith," to which the Halle Orphanage, schools, and missionary center are perhaps the most impressive testimony. True Pietism is the antithesis of "Quietism" at this point.

3. Insistence on the need for truly edifying preaching, teaching, and writing, by converted men. "Home" religion is to be encouraged as well as "Church" religion, and catechizing is a vital handmaid to preaching.

4. Emphasis on the Church's duty to preach the gospel to the unconverted, both at home and abroad. The Moravians did it so successfully that in 1792, the date often regarded as the beginning of the modern missionary movement, William Carey, himself a Calvinist, faced his fellow Baptist ministers in Kettering, threw down on the table some numbers of a Moravian publication which was the first-ever English missionary magazine, and exclaimed: "See what the Moravians have done! Can we not follow their example, and in obedience to our heavenly Master go out into the world, and preach the gospel to the heathen?"[46]

8

The Doctrine of Justification among the Puritans

J. I. Packer

"The confession of divine justification touches man's life at its heart, at the point of its relationship to God; it defines the preaching of the Church, the existence and progress of the life of faith, the root of human security, and man's perspective for the future."

So Professor G. C. Berkouwer[1] evaluates justification as set forth by Paul and re-apprehended at the Reformation: a truth which all the reforming leaders in Germany, Switzerland, France, and Britain, and all the confessions which they sponsored, were at one in highlighting, and which they all saw as articulus stantis vel cadentis ecclesiae—the point on which depends the standing or falling of the Church.

Luther, the pioneer, predicted, as a sure inference from what he knew of Satanic strategy, that after his death the truth of justification which he had been so instrumental in making known would come under stronger attack, and theology would develop in a way tending to submerge it once more in error and incomprehension. We find Puritan writers voicing a similar sense that the doctrine was very vulnerable, and only grace could keep it from being lost. It is worth setting out their reasons for thinking this.

First, they said, justification is a gospel mystery—a matter, that is, of divine revelation by grace. As such, it is doubly humbling. It humbles pride of intellect, because it could never have been guessed or worked out by unaided religious reason, and it humbles moral pride by assuming that all men are hopeless and helpless in sin. Naturally, people resent this, and, as Robert Traill said with abiding truth in his masterly Vindication of the Protestant Doctrine concerning Justification (1692), "this enmity in men to the wisdom of God, is . . . a temptation to many ministers to patch up and frame a gospel that is more suited to, and taking with, and more easily understood by such men, than the true gospel of Christ is."[2] The mystery of justification is thus threatened constantly by human pride.

Second, justification is a climatic mystery, like the top rung of a ladder which

you reach via the other rungs, or the keystone of an arch supporting, and supported by, the bricks that flank it. Wrote Traill: “All the great fundamentals of Christian truth, centre in this of justification. The trinity of persons in the God-head; the incarnation of the only begotten of the Father; the satisfaction paid to the law and justice of God, for the sins of the world, by His obedience, and sacrifice of Himself in that flesh He assumed: and the divine authority of the scriptures, which reveal all this, are all straight lines of truth, that centre in this doctrine of the justification of a sinner by the imputation and application of that satisfaction.”[3]

Traill’s point, in context, is that to deny justification is to deny these other realities too;[4] but the contrary point, that to query them is to lose justification also, is no less true. This has happened in our own day; misbelief about biblical authority, God’s wrath, and the atonement, has removed for many all basis for asserting justification in the biblical sense. Thus heretical theology becomes a second threat to the mystery of justification.

Third, justification is a spiritual mystery, which only the enlightened conscience of the man convicted of sin can appreciate. “The theme of justification hath suffered greatly by this,” complains Traill, “that many have employed their hands and pens, who never had their hearts and consciences exercised about it.”[5] In the preface to his classic work, The Doctrine of Justification by Faith (1677), John Owen puts the positive point thus:

> It is the practical direction of the consciences of men, in their application unto God by Jesus Christ, for deliverance from the curse due unto the apostate state, and peace with Him, with the influence of the way thereof unto universal gospel obedience, that is alone to be designed in the handling of this doctrine. And therefore, unto him that would treat of it in a due manner, it is required that he weigh every thing he asserts in his own mind and experience, and not dare to propose that unto others which he doth not abide by himself, in the most intimate recesses of his mind, under his nearest approaches unto God, in his surprisals with dangers, in deep afflictions, in his preparations for death, and most humble contemplations of the infinite distance between God and him. Other notions . . . not seasoned with these ingredients . . . are insipid and useless.[6]

The “light, frothy, trifling temper” of the 1690s seemed to Traill a major hindrance to right thinking about justification. (What would he have said had he lived in our day?) Spiritual frivolity, lacking seriousness and experience in approaching God, thus threatens the mystery of justification from a third angle.

Fourth, justification is a life-giving mystery, the source of all true peace of conscience, hope, love, joy, holiness, and assurance. Therefore the Puritans, like

Luther, saw Satanic hostility as a fourth threat to the mystery of justification; for they knew that the adversary of God and God's people must wish to suppress a truth so productive of glory to God and good to men.

Fifth, justification is a contradicted mystery. Justification by works is the natural religion of mankind, and has been since the Fall, so that, as Traill says, "all the ignorant people that know nothing of either law or gospel," "all proud secure sinners," "all formalists," and "all the zealous devout people in a natural religion" line up together as "utter enemies to the gospel."[7] The Puritans saw that trio of theological relatives, Pelagianism, Arminianism, and Counter-Reformation Romanism, as the bastard offspring of natural religion fertilized by the gospel. So (to take one for many)Traill writes: "The principles of Arminianism are the natural dictates of a carnal mind, which is enmity both to the law of God, and to the gospel of Christ; and, next to the dead sea of Popery (into which also this stream runs), have since Pelagius to this day, been the greatest plague of the Church of Christ." Again: "There is not a minister that dealeth seriously with the souls of men, but he finds an Arminian scheme of justification in every unrenewed heart."[8] Natural religion is thus a fifth threat to the mystery of justification.

My personal agreement with the Puritans in all this will be clear from the way I have put their position. I believe that in equating the Reformation doctrine of justification with that of the New Testament, and in their analysis of the dangers and conflicts to which it stood exposed, they were profoundly right, and it is from this standpoint that I shall now attempt to trace out ways in which the Reformation doctrine both developed and declined in the Puritan period—that is, for our purposes, from the last quarter of the sixteenth century (the age of Perkins) to the end of the seventeenth (the last publications of Owen, Baxter, Goodwin, and others of their generation). The developments, as we should expect, come from circles where the fires of spiritual vitality burned bright; the decline took place under influences which were rationalistic, naturalistic, and in the long run hostile to evangelical piety, though claiming to operate in its interest. We take the developments first.

The Development of the Doctrine

Luther's account of justification was not analytical. His concern was to declare the fact that the living God justifies sinners through the cross as the heart of the gospel, and he expounded justification as God's gracious answer to man's desperate question, "How may I find a gracious God? What must I do to be saved?" The Puritans, standing at this point in the mainstream of second and

third generation Reformed theology, took over Luther's emphasis and added to it a further interest, namely a concern to grasp accurately the place and work and glory of the Lord Jesus Christ in our salvation. If Luther's concern was evangelical and a function of preaching, this further concern was doxological and a function of worship. (Both concerns, of course, derive directly from the New Testament, and they are complementary, not contradictory.)

The Reformers' exposition of justification boiled down to the following seven points:

1. Every man faces the judgment-seat of God, and must answer to God for himself. The Church cannot shield him from this.

2. Every man is a sinner by nature and practice, a nonconformist so far as God's law is concerned, and therefore can only expect God's wrath and rejection.

3. Justification is God's judicial act of pardoning the guilty sinner, accepting him as righteous, and receiving him as a son.

4. The source of justification is grace, not human effort or initiative.

5. The ground of justification is Christ's vicarious righteousness and blood-shedding, not our own merit.

6. The means of justification, here and now, is faith in Jesus Christ.

7. The fruit of faith, the evidence of its reality, is a manifested repentance and a life of good works.

The occasion of the later Reformed development was controversy with Romanism and Arminianism. This prompted closer reflection on the nature of the saving union between Christ and Christians, and led to development of thought at the following three points:

1. The ground of justification. The Council of Trent had defined justification as inner renewal plus pardon and acceptance, the renewal being the basis of the pardon, and had gone on to affirm that the "sole formal cause" (unica formalis causa) of justification, in both its aspects, was God's righteousness (iustitia) imparted through baptism as the instrumental cause.[9] "Formal cause," in the language of the schools, denoted that which gave a thing its quality (thus, heat was the formal cause of a thing being hot, or having the quality of hotness). The thesis therefore was that the ground of our being pardoned was the quality of actual divine righteousness infused into us: God declares us righteous, and not liable to punishment for our sins, because we have been made genuinely righteous in ourselves. In the more biblical terminology of Protestantism, this was to make regeneration, or the commencement of sanctification, the ground of justification. In reply, a host of Reformed divines, continental and British, episcopal and nonconformist,[10] drew out at length the position already made

explicit by Calvin,[11] that the "sole formal cause" of justification is not God's righteousness imparted, but Christ's righteousness imputed; and to make their meaning more clear they drew a distinction between Christ's active obedience to God's law, in keeping its precepts, and his passive obedience to it, in undergoing its penalty, and insisted that our acceptance as righteous depends on the imputing to us of Christ's obedience in both its aspects. The same point was pressed against the Arminians, who held that faith is "counted for righteousness" because it is in itself actual personal righteousness, being obedience to the gospel viewed as God's new law. The argument against both Romans and Arminians was that by finding the ground of justification in the believer himself they ministered to human pride on the one hand, and on the other hand robbed the Son of God of the glory which was His due. It is not enough, the Reformed writers held, to say that without Christ our justification would be impossible; one must go on to say that it is on the ground of His obedience, as our representative and substitutionary sin-bearer, and that alone, that righteousness is reckoned to us, and sin cancelled.

Though the phrase "formal cause," and the distinction between active and passive obedience, do not appear in the statement on justification in the Westminster Confession, nonetheless this statement is a classic indication of the precision and balance of thought, as well as the polemical thrusts that were learned in these exchanges.

> Those whom God effectually calleth He also freely justifieth; not by infusing righteousness into them, but by pardoning their sins, and by accounting and accepting their persons as righteous; not for anything wrought in them, or done by them, but for Christ's sake alone; not by imputing faith itself, the act of believing, or any other evangelical obedience, to them as their righteousness; but by imputing the obedience and satisfaction of Christ unto them, they receiving and resting on Him and His righteousness by faith; which faith they have not of themselves; it is the gift of God.[12]

2. Regeneration and justification. Roman theologians attacked the Reformers from the first on the grounds that in denying inner renewal and subjective righteousness to be any part of justification they were affirming that justification can exist without regeneration and faith without good works. Roman thinking was evidently ruled by the typical legalist assumption that if good works do not bring salvation, but salvation is given freely without them, then no reason for doing them remains. The Reformers' reply, that it is the nature of biblical faith, which is a gift of the Holy Spirit, to be active in good works all the time, made little impact: theological understanding and spiritual perception of the Holy

Spirit's work in the believer were alike lacking on the Roman side. The Puritans found themselves facing this same Roman polemic, and with it the Arminian thesis that justifying faith is, in the last analysis, not only man's act but also his work, an independent achievement of which prevenient grace, though the necessary precondition, is not the effective source. On this basis, of course, no divine guarantee that faith will work by love can exist. Thus the Arminians appeared to Reformed thinkers to be playing into Rome's hands at this point: Rome complained that justification according to Protestants was divorced from subjective renewal, and Arminianism admitted that faith might fail to produce good works every time.

The Puritans' response to this situation was twofold. First, they reaffirmed the Reformers' point, that "faith . . . the alone instrument of justification . . . is . . . not alone in the person justified, but is ever accompanied with all other saving graces, and is no dead faith, but worketh by love."[13] Second, they emphasized that justifying faith is given by God through effectual calling, which includes regeneration—that is, vitalizing union with the risen Christ through the sovereign work of the Spirit, from which, as a work of new creation, flows the sinner's response to the gospel. (Rightly did George Smeaton describe Puritan divinity as "a theology of regeneration cultivated and expanded as a topic in itself," a theology of which "it was the prominent peculiarity to bring out the distinction between nature and grace."[14]) This emphasis both answered the Romans, by showing that though justification and regeneration are distinct the former cannot take place without the latter, and dealt with the Arminians by showing how completely man's faith is God's gift.[15]

3. The covenant context of justification. The Puritans developed what has been called "covenant theology"; they saw this as the scriptural setting in which the jewel of justification by faith should be exhibited. They defined the gospel as declaring "the Covenant of Grace; whereby (God) freely offereth unto sinners life and salvation by Jesus Christ, requiring of them faith in him, that they may be saved; and promising to give unto all those that are ordained unto life his Holy Spirit, to make them willing and able to believe."[16] They valued this covenant concept, first, because it links God's promise to save believers with His purpose to bring His elect to faith; second, because it gives justification its place in the "golden chain" of stages in God's saving purpose (election, redemption, and effectual calling going before; sanctification and glorification coming after); third, because it brings into sharp focus the saving ministry of Christ, as mediator and federal head of His people. The Westminster Confession embodies Puritan covenant theology in its classical form. Its biblical correctness is something which the student of the Scripture proofs adduced by the Confession

may safely be left to estimate for himself.

The final element in the Puritan development of the doctrine of justification was to safeguard it against misstatement within the Puritan camp. Chapter 11 of the Westminster Confession wards off two such aberrations. The first is that justification is from eternity, i.e., before faith. William Twisse, first prolocutor of the Assembly, had maintained this as part of his case against Arminianism, but in addition to being unscriptural the idea is pastorally disastrous, for it reduces justifying faith to discovering that one is justified already, and so sets seekers waiting on God for assurance instead of exerting active trust in Christ. The trouble here was the assimilating of justification to election, and the Confession deals with it by drawing the correct distinction: "God did, from all eternity, decree to justify all the elect . . . nevertheless they are not justified until the Holy Spirit doth in due time actually apply Christ unto them."[17]

The second misconception was that God takes no notice of the sins of the justified. This was the position called "Antinomian" by the orthodox, which created a major stir in the 1640s.[18] In their zeal to magnify the liberty, peace, and joy of the man in Christ, the Antinomians (none of whom were front-rank theologians) had largely lost sight of two distinctions: that between God's law as a covenant of works and as a rule of life, and that between justification and adoption, or God's relationship to believers as Judge and as Father. Hence their failure to see, and say, with adequate clarity that the moral law still binds believers, as expressing God's will for His adopted children, and that the Father-son relationship between Him and them will be spoiled if His will is ignored or defied. The Confession says what is necessary. "God doth continue to forgive the sins of those that are justified: and although they can never fall from the state of justification, yet they may by their sins fall under God's fatherly displeasure, and not have the light of His countenance restored unto them, until they humble themselves, confess their sins, beg pardon, and renew their faith and repentance."[19]

The Decline of the Doctrine

Now we turn to the sadder side of the picture, and trace out those influences which distorted the doctrines of justification in England, and progressively robbed it of its proper influence, even among the Puritans themselves. This part of our story deals with two movements: Arminianism, and the Neonomianism (so-called) of Richard Baxter.

Arminianism, as broached by Jacob Hermandzoon (Arminius) at the turn of the sixteenth century, formulated in the Remonstrance of 1610, and taught by

Episcopius, Curcellaeus, and Limborch at the Remonstrant Seminary in Amsterdam, was essentially a denial of some basic Reformed assertions.

The first denial relevant to our theme was that already noticed, namely that man's act of faith is wholly God's gift.

The second relevant denial was that there is a direct correlation in God's plan between the obtaining of redemption by Christ's obedience, active and passive, and the saving application of redemption by the Holy Spirit—direct, that is, in the sense that the former secures and guarantees the latter. The Arminian alternative was that the atonement made salvation possible for all but not necessarily actual for any. This involved abandoning the concept of the atonement as substitutionary¸ for substitution is, by its very nature, an effective relationship, securing actual immunity from obligation for the person in whose place the substitute acts:

> Payment God will not twice demand,
> First from my bleeding Surety's hand
> And then again from mine.

Grotius' famous, or infamous, theory of the atonement as an example of punishment was one of several ways in which the Arminian conception was spelled out.

The third relevant denial was that the covenant of grace is a relationship which God imposes unilaterally and unconditionally, by effectual calling, saying to His elect, "I will . . . and you shall. . . . " The Arminian alternative was that the covenant of grace is a new law, offering present pardon on condition of present faith and final salvation on condition of sustained faith.

The fourth relevant denial was that faith is essentially fiducial (a matter of trusting another, and what he has done). The Arminian alternative was that faith is essentially volitional (a matter of committing oneself to do something, i.e., live by the new law which Christ procured).

The fifth relevant denial was that the ground of justification is Christ's righteousness imputed. The Arminian alternative was that faith itself is the ground of justification, being itself righteousness (obedience to the new law) and accepted by God as such. Appeal was made to the references in Romans 4:3, 5, 9 (cf. 11, 13) to faith being reckoned for righteousness, though the absence from Romans of the "new law" idea, the insistence that the Christian's righteousness is God's gift (5:15–17), and the repeated emphasis that sinners, though ungodly (4:5, 5:6–8), are justified through Christ's blood irrespective of their own works, makes this exegesis really impossible.

Arminianism made small inroads into the Puritan ranks: the only Arminian Puritan of ability was John Goodwin, author of Imputatio Fidei (on Romans 4),

An Exposition of Romans 9, Redemption Redeemed, and The Banner of Justification Displayed.[20] But Caroline Anglicans, Cambridge Platonists, and later Latitudinarians took up with Arminianism, linked to a strong anti-Calvinistic polemic, and after the Restoration the mainstream of English Christianity flowed in this channel. Typical of the later outlook was the (unhappily) influential Bishop Bull, who interpreted Paul by James and understood both as teaching justification by works (faith being, on Bull's view, "virtually the whole of evangelical obedience," and thus a work in the fullest sense).[21] Arminian doctrine of this kind led inevitably to a new legalism of which the key thought was that the exerting of steady moral effort now is the way to salvation hereafter. The meaning of faith as trust in Christ's person and work was forgotten; the experiences of conversion and assurance were dismissed as "enthusiasm," dangerous to the soul; and present justification ceased to be an issue of importance or interest.

One effect of the Arminian controversy on the Continent was to spark off the mediating theology of the "new Methodists" of Saumur seminary. This teaching, pioneered by the Scot John Cameron, who taught at Saumur from 1618 to 1621, was developed by Moise Amyraut and has gone down in history under the name of Amyraldism. A. W. Harrison calls it a "half-way house between Calvinism and Arminianism";[22] it adopts the Arminian view of the covenant of grace and indefinite (universal) redemption, but retains the Calvinistic belief in particular election, effectual calling, and final preservation. Its importance for our story is that Richard Baxter, perhaps the greatest of Puritan writers on Christian practice, advocated a version of it, which as a result of more than forty years' campaigning by him in its interest became both popular and notorious in England and Scotland at the turn of the seventeenth century. In the 1690s it was referred to as "Baxterianism" and (because of the prominence it gave to the "new law" idea) "Neonomianism."[23]

Baxter's view sprang from natural theology; he thought Bible teaching about God's kingdom and rule should be assimilated to contemporary political ideas, or, as he put it, that theology should follow a "political method." God should be thought of as governor, and the gospel as part of His legal code. Our salvation requires a double righteousness: Christ's, which led to the enacting of God's new law, and our own, in obeying that new law by genuine faith and repentance. Faith is imputed for righteousness because it is real obedience to the gospel, which is God's new law. Faith, however, involves a commitment to keep the moral law, which was God's original code, and every believer, though righteous in terms of the new law, needs pardon every moment for his shortcomings in relation to the old law. Jesus Christ, who procured the new law for mankind by

satisfying the prescriptive and penal requirements of the old one, should be thought of as Head of God's government, enthroned to pardon true believers. Into this "political" frame of concepts, learned mainly from the Arminian Hugo de Groot (Grotius), Baxter fitted the Amyraldean soteriology.

Baxter was convinced that those who held the ground and formal cause of our justification to be the imputing to us of Christ's own righteousness (i.e., his fulfillment of the precept and penalty of the moral law) were logically committed to Antinomianism, on the "payment-God-will-not-twice-demand" principle. At this point in his thinking (though not elsewhere) Baxter assumed, with his Roman and Socinian contemporaries, that law-keeping has no relevance for God or man save as work done to earn acceptance and salvation, so that if the law has been kept once in our name, no basis remains for requiring us to keep it a second time in our own persons. It is an odd mistake to find him making; but he never got his streak of legalism out of his theological system. Naturally, his conviction on this point (of which he made no secret) led to vigorous debate at several periods in his life, including, sadly, his last months on earth, when by assaulting as Antinomian the reprinted sermons of Tobias Crisp (first in a Pinner's Hall lecture, and then in The Scripture Gospel Defended) he effectively wrecked the "happy union" between Presbyterians and Independents almost before it had been contracted.

The Crispian controversy produced much heated writing, but the best contribution was the coolest—Robert Traill's Vindication of the Protestant Doctrine Concerning Justification, and of Its Preachers and Professors, from the Unjust Charge of Antinomianism: In a Letter from the Author, to a Minister in the Country.[24] Quietly but effectively Traill made the two points which really scupper Baxter's scheme. First, the scheme demonstrably fails to come to terms with the representative headship of Christ, the second Adam, as this is set forth in Romans 5:12ff. It is, of course, on this unique federal relationship between Christ and His people that the imputing to them of His righteousness is based. Then, second, the scheme is so artificial as to be spiritually unreal; for a sinner pressed in conscience by the burden of uncleanness and guilt finds relief, not by reminding himself that his faith is evangelical righteousness according to the new law, but by looking to the cross of Christ. "My Savior's obedience and blood Hides all my transgressions from view." Talk of one's faith as one's righteousness at such a time is at best a frivolity and at worst a snarl.

Nor is this all that needs to be said. Baxter was a great and saintly man; as pastor, evangelist, and devotional writer, no praise for him can be too high; but as a theologian he was, though brilliant, something of a disaster. On his "political" theology, viewed as an attempt to explicate Bible teaching, the

following points have to be made:

1. The “political method” is itself rationalistic. To make concepts of monarchy, legislation, and ideal government, borrowed from the world of seventeenth-century political theory, into a straitjacket for the scriptural proclamation of God the King and Christ the Lord, is not merely quaint; it is theologically vicious, and has bad effects all along the line.

2. The “political” idea of sin is of transgression and guilt, analogous to crime. This externalizes sin, so that its indwelling power in the individual, and its demonic corporate influence, are under-stressed.

3. The “political” idea of Christ as Head of God’s government rather than of His people, and of His death as one presupposition of our sins being remitted rather than the procuring cause of it, and of the remission of sins itself as public pardon rather than personal forgiveness, makes the Lord Jesus seem remote to a degree, and more like a Judge than a Savior. It obscures His substitution for us on the cross, and plays down His sympathy for us from the throne.

4. The “political” idea of faith as allegiance and commitment loses sight of the dimension of self-despairing trust: faith appears less as the outstretched empty hand of a spiritual bankrupt than as the signing on of a resolute volunteer, a work of some strength and merit.

5. The “political” idea of God in a real sense loses God. It is important to see this. Baxter follows Grotius in maintaining that when God purposed to glorify Himself by restoring fallen man, He carried out His plan not by satisfying the law, but by changing it. A new law was brought in, which waived the penal requirement of the original law. This assumes that the demand for retribution in the original law was not grounded in the nature of God, but only in the exigencies of government. What is at issue here is the divine holiness. Reformed theology sees both the precept and the penalty of the law of God as a permanent expression of God’s eternal and unchangeable holiness and justice, and argues that God does not save sinners at His law’s expense; rather, He saves them by satisfying His law on their behalf, so that He continues to be just when He becomes their justifier. Baxter’s scheme makes the wrath of God against sin something less than a revelation of His abiding character, and so opens the door to the idea that benevolence is really the whole essence of his moral being: an idea made explicit by the liberalism of a later age.

Thus Baxter, by the initial rationalism of his “political method,” which forced Scripture into an a priori mold, sowed the seeds of moralism with regard to sin, Arianism with regard to Christ, legalism with regard to faith and salvation, and liberalism with regard to God. In his own teaching, steeped as it was in the older affectionate “practical” Puritan tradition, these seeds lay largely dormant, but

later Presbyterianism in both England and Scotland reaped the bitter crop. It is sadly fitting that the Richard Baxter Church in Kidderminster today should be—Unitarian. What we see in Baxter is an early stage in the decline, not simply of the doctrine of justification among the Puritans, but of the Puritan insight into the nature of Christianity as a whole.

Conclusion

So, after more than a century of clear gospel light, Arminianism brought darkness back to the minds of conformists and Baxterianism did the same for nonconformists. Natural theology and religious moralism triumphed in England, and, just as Luther had foreseen and Traill feared, the Scripture doctrine of justification was for a time lost to view—until the day when a tremendous voice rang across the country elaborating sermon scripts such as this:

> Are any of you depending upon a righteousness of your own? Do any of you here think to save yourselves by your own doings? I say to you . . . your righteousness shall perish with you. Poor miserable creatures! What is there in your tears? What in your prayers? What in your performances, to appease the wrath of an angry God? Away from the trees of the garden; come, ye guilty wretches, come as poor, lost, undone, and wretched creatures, and accept of a better righteousness than your own. As I said before, so I tell you again, the righteousness of Jesus Christ is an everlasting righteousness; it is wrought out for the very chief of sinners. Ho, every one that thirsteth, let him come and drink of this water of life freely. Are any of you wounded by sin? Do any of you feel you have no righteousness of your own? Are any of you perishing for hunger? Are any of you afraid ye will perish for ever? Come, dear souls, in all your rags; come, thou poor man; come, thou poor distressed woman; you, who think God will never forgive you, and that your sins are too great to be forgiven; come, thou doubting creature, who art afraid thou wilt never get comfort; arise, take comfort, the Lord Jesus Christ, the Lord of life, the Lord of glory, calls for thee. . . .O let not one poor soul stand at a distance from the Saviour. . . . O Come, come! Now, since it is brought into the world by Christ, so, in the name, in the strength, and by the assistance of the great God, I bring it now to the pulpit; I now offer this righteousness, this free, this imputed, this everlasting righteousness, to all poor sinners who will accept of it. . . . Think, I pray you, therefore, on these things; go home, go home, go home, pray over the text, and say, “Lord God, Thou hast brought an everlasting righteousness into the world by the Lord Jesus Christ; by the

> blessed Spirit bring it into my heart!" then, die when ye will, ye are safe; if it be tomorrow, ye shall be immediately translated into the presence of the everlasting God; that will be sweet! Happy they who have got this robe on; happy they that can say, "My God hath loved me, and I shall be loved by Him with an everlasting love!" That every one of you may be able to say so, may God grant, for the sake of Jesus Christ, the dear Redeemer; to whom be glory for ever. Amen.[25]

Whose voice? Why, George Whitefield's: a man who knew, and could express, what the Scripture gospel of justification by faith is all about. With him a new chapter opened in British Christianity—but that is another story, beyond the scope of this paper.

9

The Death of Presbyterianism

Hywel R. Jones

In two recent issues of the Journal of the Presbyterian Historical Society,[1] the problem of "Presbyterian continuity" is raised. What is being referred to by this epithet is the apparent lack of homogeneity between the Presbyterianism of the nineteenth and seventeenth centuries on the one hand, and the seventeenth and sixteenth centuries on the other. This serves to remind us that we are not dealing with a static rigid entity. Presbyterianism in England was a movement which developed or declined according to one's viewpoint.

In the attempts which have been made to relate seventeenth- and nineteenth-century Presbyterianism, two major approaches become evident. A. H. Drysdale sought to establish a basic continuity in his standard work on the Presbyterians in England, subtitling it rather significantly Their Rise, Decline and Revival.[2] After describing the eighteenth century as "a poisonous fungus," he refers to some seventeenth-century congregations which did not become Independent or Unitarian, and affiliated themselves to the Presbyterian Church of England as it was constituted in 1836, thus substantiating his subtitle.

On the other hand, a basic disjunction has been posited. H. S. Skeats and C. S. Miall state that after 1689 "the denomination vanished as suddenly as it had arisen, and, excepting in literature, has left little trace of the greatness of its power."[3]

Last year, a book appeared from the Unitarian wing, compiled by four authors and entitled The English Presbyterians: From Elizabethan Puritanism to Modern Unitarianism.[4] Again, the subtitle is revealing, as in the book a line of development is claimed between Presbyterians and Unitarians. Drysdale is taken to task for his stricture on eighteenth-century theology, and Unitarian historians like E. M. Wilbur are chided for not owning their Presbyterian forebears. Some of the "best" elements of Presbyterian Puritanism are preserved in Unitarianism, it is claimed, namely a "parish" outlook and service to the community in all its needs. This is a typical twentieth-century religious value judgment, but there is much valuable information in this book.

Clearly then, something happened in Presbyterian circles in the eighteenth century which causes a slight flutter to modern Presbyterians,[5] and indeed to

anyone who does not view flat contradictions as synthesizing parts of a larger whole. What did happen? What factors were at work? Can a pattern be traced in its decline? Did Presbyterianism become extinct in the eighteenth century, or was it a case of a landslide so massive that there would have been no Presbyterianism in the nineteenth century had there not been a transfusion of Presbyterian blood from north of the border?

The roots of Presbyterianism in England go back to the Continental Reformation, and first appear in the Elizabethan era. In order to appreciate what took place in the eighteenth century, we must select some facts from earlier periods. We shall deal with our subject under four heads: the emergence, ascendancy, exclusion, and disintegration of Presbyterianism.

The Emergence of Presbyterianism

Thomas Cartwright voiced Presbyterian ideals in Cambridge in 1570, and clashed with Whitgift. With the Queen obstructing the desires of Parliament for further reform, the scene was set for the 1572 Admonition to the Parliament.[6] This was an important year because it saw the establishment of the Wandsworth classis.[7] This was a presbytery in a local parish and not extending over a number of churches.

The decade 1573–1583 saw three movements come to the fore. First, there was the growth of “Classes” or “Conferences” where the “Brethren” met to discuss the demands of the “Common Book.” Such were held in Warwickshire, Essex, Cambridgeshire, Norfolk, Northamptonshire, and Oxfordshire. Secondly, more parish presbyteries came into existence, for example the well-known one at Dedham. Thirdly, a Book of Discipline was compiled and laid before the London Conference in 1584. This did not appear in English until 1644, but it was soon circulated, appearing in manuscript form in 1587. It was subscribed at the Warwickshire Assembly in 1588, and within two years had been signed by over 500 clergy.

A mortal blow was dealt to the Presbyterian cause in May 1577 by an edict suppressing the “Prophesyings.” Elizabeth banned these, and soon Archbishop Whitgift actively prosecuted the edict by the Test Articles and the High Commission. Large numbers of ministers were suspended over a wide area. The tyranny of the bishops, the lessening of the Roman Catholic threat by the defeat of the Armada, the Mar-prelate tracts, and the threat of banishment to any non-conforming person, all combined to smite a virile Presbyterianism, hip and thigh, and it more than halted ever after. Indeed, one may wonder whether its spirit was ever the same again.

The Ascendancy of Presbyterianism

The acceptance of the Solemn League and Covenant bound the Long Parliament to uphold the reformed religion, uproot popery and prelacy, and to establish a Presbyterian polity in the Church. This was not the eager will of the nation as in Scotland, but the price to be paid for Scottish military help against Charles I who had appealed to the Irish for aid in the Civil War. In March 1646 an ordinance was enacted by Parliament to establish Presbyterianism throughout the land. Technically it was in the ascendant; but it was a hollow victory and did not last very long. The rise of Cromwell and with him the Independents, and the might of the army soon laid the hopes of the Presbyterians in the dust. But it must be said that Presbyterianism was suffering from two weaknesses at this time, and these will reappear later in the story.

First of all, Presbyterianism had no real hold at grassroots level on the country as a whole. C. E. Surman has shown by his researches in Classical Presbyterianism in England 1643–1660[8] that Presbyterianism had been planted on a wider level than was once thought. However, the front was not as formidable as it appeared to be. There were some who upheld the principles of Scottish Presbyterianism, but there were many who viewed it as a price to be paid. There had been no government in the Church since 1642, and some felt that they could delay no longer, though dissatisfied with particular points. This was true of the ministers at Lancaster.[9] There was a lack of settled ministers and so difficulties arose over selecting elders, with the resulting lack of effective discipline.

Secondly, Presbyterianism was not as sure of its own ground as one might expect. There were divisions in the camp to which attention was drawn at the time; and also doubt was cast on the precise nature of sixteenth century Presbyterianism. To begin with, it was common for the word Presbyterian to be synonymous with Puritan in the 1640s. Richard Baxter wrote: “Any man that was for a serious, spiritual way of worship (though he was for moderate Episcopacy or liturgy) and that lived according to his profession, was commonly called a Presbyterian as formerly he was called a Puritan.”[10] This may help to explain why the sermons preached before the Long Parliament do not call for the establishment of Presbyterianism according to divine right. They repeatedly urge the need for godly preachers. Professor G. Yule submits on this basis that following the defeat of Presbyterianism in the 1590s its emphasis changed to more spiritual matters, and “questions of Church government receded into the background.”[11] This is surely an exaggeration, but it has its element of truth.

Though the Scottish commissioners did sway a body of opinion in their favor

under pressure, there were far more who were against the kind of episcopacy under which their forefathers had suffered, than there were those who opposed the very principle of a hierarchical episcopate in the Church. This had become evident in the response to Archbishop Ussher's Reduction of Episcopacy.[12] Baxter agreed to this, and so did Burgess, Marshall, Vines, and Gataker. Baillie wrote in 1640 of "a great faction" supporting Ussher's views,[13] and again, "All are for reducing them (the Bishops), but their utter abolition, which is the only aim of the most godly, is the knott of the question."[14] Again he writes: "Presbytery is with this people considered to be a strange monster."[15] How could he say this?

It seems that such criticism was directed against two matters, namely, the readiness to submit to the Erastian intrusion of Parliament, and the reluctance to accredit the demand that individual congregations be required to submit to superior jurisdiction. With regard to the first matter, Parliament claimed the right to veto the decisions of the Assembly, and wrote to the Assembly saying, "The same principles that settle in Presbyteries by divine right . . . undermine the foundation of all appeals to Parliament."[16] Baillie called 1646 Ordinance "a lame Erastian presbytery."[17] With regard to the second matter, John Bastwick in Independency Not God's Ordinance published in 1645[18] referred to the English scheme as "Presbyterian Government Independent" as distinct from the Scottish scheme "Presbyterian Government Dependent." He complained that the former restricted the classical and provincial assemblies to a merely advisory role.

The publication in English of the Book of Discipline in 1644 indicated the divergence between English and Scottish Presbyterianism. There a distinction was drawn between "the sacred discipline of the Church described in the Word of God," and "the synodical discipline gathered out of the synods and the use of the Churches." In the 1644 publication, this distinction was endorsed by the printing of the former in black letters, the latter being merely "profitable," and open to emendation "as far as it is not expressly confirmed by the authority of Holy Scripture." The presbytery in a local church was the basic unit of church government, and the desired scheme of classes, synods, and assemblies was grounded on a moral obligation, e.g., "Wherein, albeit no particular Church hath power over another, yet every particular Church of the same resort, meeting and counsel, ought to obey the opinion of more Churches with whom they communicate."[19]

In this same period two books appeared which further confused the issue. Both opposed the Scottish system, and at the same time quote Cartwright by way of support. One was a reprint of William Bradshawe's English Puritanisme[20] in which the autonomy of the local congregation was stressed within the principles

of Cartwright's Book of Discipline. This book was greatly praised by William Ames, and had a wide influence.

The other was by the five Independents present at the Westminster Assembly, and entitled An Apologeticall Narration.[21] Reference is made in this to Paul Baynes's Diocesans Tryall,[22] which upheld parishional as against diocesan or provincial churches. Cartwright had used the word Church in an ambivalent sense[23] (referring to the Church universal and local), and so Independents came to rest under his wing. Sidrach Simpson could declare that the term Independent originally applied to those who stood for Presbyterian government. Thomas Goodwin wrote in the Apologeticall Narration: "We believe the truth to lie and consist in a middle way between that which is falsely charged on us, Brownism, and that which is the contention of these times, the authoritative presbyterial government in all the subordinations and proceedings of it."[24]

In England, at this time, men were thinking and drawing tentative lines on Church polity, with their differences, rather than campaigning for positions already polarized. Baxter wrote after 1662 of Presbyterianism as having been "but a stranger here . . . I found that most (that ever I could meet with) were against the jus divinum of lay elders, and for moderate primitive episcopacy."[25]

The Exclusion of Presbyterianism

In 1660, Ashe, Manton, and Calamy were asked by some in Scotland for their view of the future course of religion in England. Their reply is most revealing, coming as it did before the Act of Uniformity, and indicating the course Presbyterians followed for the following thirty or so years. This is what they wrote and how they thought.

> The general stream and current is for the old prelacy in all its pomp and height, and therefore it cannot be hoped for that the Presbyterian government should be owned as the public establishment of this nation, while the tide runneth so strongly that way; and the bare toleration of it will certainly produce a mischief, whilst papists and sectaries of all sorts will wind themselves under the covert of such a favour: therefore no course seemeth likely to us to secure religion and the interests of Christ Jesus our Lord, but by making presbytery a part of the public establishment, which will not be affected but by moderating and reducing episcopacy to the form of synodical government, and a mutual condescendency of both parties in some lesser things which fully come within the latitude of allowable differences in the Church.[26]

There are two lines of thought here which supply the key to Presbyterianism

in this period, and pave the way for its subsequent disintegration, and the figure of Richard Baxter is involved in both. First, they realized that the return of the king meant the end of their hopes for a national Church on a "presbyterian" basis. The Declaration of Breda and the meeting at the Hague gave the Presbyterians grounds for hoping that their scruples would be favorably entertained. On this basis they planned a policy, and this is the second line of thought here. They desired to make as many concessions as they could in return for the tempering of the hierarchical episcopate. This could enable them to remain in the Establishment. They did not want to be tolerated outside.

When the Presbyterian leaders met the king, Baxter urged that union could easily be achieved "by making only things necessary to be the terms of union, by the true exercise of Church discipline against Sin, and by not casting out the faithful ministers." Ussher's scheme for a reduced episcopacy, which was discarded by the Long Parliament and the Westminster Assembly was advanced by the Presbyterians in July 1660 as such a basis. Repeated attempts were made to affect such a comprehension: for example, the Worcester House Declaration between the Convention and the Cavalier Parliament, and the Savoy Conference, Sir Robert Atkyns' Bill, the interview with Bishop Wilkins following Black Bartholomew.[27] August 24, 1662, as Pepys forecast, "made mad work among the Presbyterians."

Even after the Act of Uniformity and Ejection, the desire for comprehension in the Establishment continued, and it had a sad, two-fold consequence.

First of all, the Presbyterians became divided among themselves about the matter. Opposing reactions to the Five Mile Act brought two parties into being, dubbed "Dons" (Bates and Manton were among these), and "Ducklings" (these included Annesley and Janeway). The Dons became somewhat alienated from the Independents who wanted a toleration outside the Church; at times they even worked against each other.

The Royal Indulgence of 1672 pleased the Independents, but it divided the Presbyterians who supported its withdrawal in the following year. Their feelings are expressed by Philip Henry:

> It is a thing diversely resented, as men's interests lead them; the conformists displeased, the presbyterians glad, the independents very glad, the papists triumph. The danger is . . . lest the allowing of separate places help to overthrow our parish order, which God hath owned, and to get divisions and animosities among us which no honest heart but would rather should be healed. We are put hereby . . . into a trilemma, either to turn independents in practice, or to strike in with the conformists, or to sit down in former silence and sufferings . . . till the Lord shall open a more effectual door.

> That which . . . he then heartily wished for was—That those who were in place, would admit the sober nonconformists to preach sometimes occasionally in their pulpits; by which means he thought prejudices would in time wear off on both sides, and they might mutually strengthen each other's hands against the common enemy—the papists, who he foresaw would fish best in troubled waters. This we would choose much rather than to keep a separate meeting. But it could not be had.[28]

Their hopes of one established national Church with its parish system were dashed. Only in particular congregations could government by elders be retained, and no higher Church courts were possible. The parity and presbyterial ordination of ministers was retained, and the latter became the badge of Presbyterianism. Baxter wrote in 1668 of the Presbyterians: "Their congregations were, through necessity, just of independent separating shape and outward practice, though not upon the same principles."

However, even if there had been no repressive legislation following the Restoration, one may wonder whether in 1662–88 the Presbyterians would have attempted to establish their particular polity, such was their antipathy to being tolerated outside the Establishment. There was therefore not as much to be eroded later as there might otherwise have been. Presbyterianism was largely a movement of thought and concern.

Secondly, a theological difference came to light among the same men, and it divided roughly into the same parties. This forms the prelude to the Antinomian controversy, and the background to the Salters Hall Divide of 1719 which signaled the evidences of a disintegration already at work in Presbyterianism. Here again the influence of Richard Baxter was potent and that in two directions.

On the one hand, a less detailed credal statement was regarded as being a sufficient basis for Church purposes. In 1654, at the Committee set up by Oliver Cromwell to draw up fundamentals to serve as the basis on which toleration could be exercised, Baxter suggested "The Creed, the Lord's Prayer, and the Decalogue alone as our essentials and fundamentals, which at least contain all that is necessary to salvation."

He was criticized for this on the grounds that such terms were wide enough to include "Papists and Socinians." His reply is reputed to have been "So much the better." He further wrote: "Two things have set the Church on fire, and been the plagues of it above one thousand years. 1. Enlarging our creed and making more fundamentals than God ever made. 2. Composing (and so imposing) our creeds and Confessions in our own words and phrases. . . . O what mischief hath the Church of Christ suffered by the enlarging of her creed. . . . Every new article that was added to the Creed was a new engine to stretch the brains of believers,

and in the issue to rend out the bowels of the Church."[29]

On the other hand there was a relaxing of the Calvinism of the Westminster Assembly. Though Baxter respected Dort and Westminster, he had from early days been an open critic of High Calvinism which he termed Antinomianism. He confessed his approval of "Amiraldus's way about universal redemption and grace."[30] As in Amyraldianism, Baxter rejected double predestination (reprobation) and maintained the universal accessibility of God's grace. Justifying faith was viewed as including obedience. He wrote: "As the accepting of Christ for Lord . . . is as essential a part of justifying faith as the accepting Him for our Saviour, so consequently sincere obedience . . . hath as much to do in justifying us before God as affiance."[31]

In addition, Baxter, instead of speaking of man's reason as fallen, gave it the position of accrediting what was revealed truth or not.

Far-reaching intellectual movements came to the fore in the Restoration era, the Cambridge Platonists, who appealed to and for "Reason" and "Virtue" as being the sum-total of Christianity; the Latitudinarians were influential churchmen who eschewed theological intricacies and concentrated on the "duty of man"; the writings of John Locke who, practically speaking, substituted reason for revelation, and the skeptical Deists who showed how "fallen" reason was, albeit indirectly. It was impossible for religion to be immune from such epidemics. In point of fact, the inconsistencies and defections of Baxterian theology and practice became the weapons in hands less conservative than Baxter's of tearing down Presbyterianism in the eighteenth century.

Under the Indulgence of 1672 a Merchants' Lecture was instituted at Pinners Hall for Presbyterians and Independents.

Baxter came under bitter attack after preaching four sermons there. The dispute was raised again in 1687 when Thomas Cole, an Independent, preached at Pinners Hall, and two years later when some sermons of Tobias Crisp were reprinted by his son Samuel. In the introduction to the book, Baxter was criticized, and in the contents was the Antinomianism to which he deeply objected with its teaching on justification before faith, and God seeing no sin in His people. This caused internal divisions among the Presbyterians, and marked them off still further from the Independents. When he next preached, Baxter accused the signatories, among whom were some of his friends, of "hanging out a sign to show where Jezebel dwelt." He followed this with a book entitled The Scripture Gospel defended . . . against the Libertines. Each succeeding lecturer took up opposing sides and the debate was prolonged.

Dr. Daniel Williams, who assumed Baxter's mantle, entered the fray in his defense with a book entitled Gospel-Truth Stated.[32] A nine-year pamphlet war

resulted. The controversy turned on the place of the law and obedience in the matter of salvation.

All this did not augur well for the “Happy union” and the Common Fund. The case of Richard Davis precipitated the collapse of the London Union. The 1691 Heads of Agreement[33] was a compromise basis in which neither side disavowed what the other could not accept, but on which they could cooperate. Dissension was rife between September 1692 and April 1695 when the London Union came to an end, though it continued in other parts of the country. When Williams was voted out of the Pinners Hall lectureship, the remaining Presbyterian leaders left en masse and set up a lecture at Salters Hall on the same day and hour as the other.

The Act of Toleration passed in 1689 dealt the death blow to any hopes that might have remained among the Presbyterians of being reunited with the Establishment. From now on, it was obvious to themselves as well as to all that their path lay outside the Establishment. However, they had been repressed from without by the Clarendon Code, restrained from within by their fear of sectarianism and love of national solidarity. In addition, they had tolerated doctrinal equivocation and defection in their midst, and had squabbled with the Independents. These enervating factors boded ill for the future.

The Disintegration of Presbyterianism

The factors which have just been noted contributed toward the downfall of Presbyterianism. They can be gathered together and related to the two major points of the Church’s polity and discipline, and the Church’s doctrinal purity.

In connection with the former, Calamy revised Matthew Sylvester’s cumbrous but valuable life of Baxter. In the introduction to this revision which appeared in 1702, Calamy described contemporary Presbyterianism in terms which he confessed as being tantamount to a “mere independent scheme.” He says: “Each worshipping society must determine for itself all necessary circumstances. . . . Synods still have their use in a way of consultation, admonition and advice to repress disorders, determine differences and regulate by consent such things as are of common concernment.”[34]

By way of reply, Benjamin Hoadly drew attention to the fact that Calamy was attempting “at once to defend the cause of the Ejected Ministers, and to propose a scheme as is as little agreeable to their main cause as that of the Established Church.”[35] However, it must be remembered that there were men still living who had been ejected in 1662, John Howe was one of them, and he warmly commended the work. Only Dr. Daniel Williams disagreed with Calamy, and he

did so privately.

This is a factor worth bearing in mind in the attempted diagnosis of the disintegration. Seeing that in a Presbyterian church, no authority was vested in the church meeting, a minister had a free hand in what he preached. If the trustees were men of the world, as so often they were, the minister was untouchable. The English Presbyterian minister was freer, in point of fact, than his Scottish counterpart, because there was no Synod or assembly before which he could be legally summoned to answer for his beliefs.[36] This comes to light in the Salters Hall issue—the absence of an effective government in the Church was equivalent to the lack of a bulwark and a court of appeal.

With regard to the doctrinal purity of Presbyterianism, some factors need to be noted. In Calamy's work already referred to, there is evidence that within the Church at large (the Presbyterians thought in these terms) room was found for a good deal of latitude of belief. Locke's letter concerning toleration had influenced Calamy, and now there was a reluctance to discipline the heretic within the gate, as well as the tolerating of those outside. In 1713, Calamy recommended John Fox who had difficulties about the doctrine of the Trinity and about subscribing to the Thirty-nine Articles, to refrain from doing so, as he had done, and trust the omission would not be uncovered. Calamy upheld the doctrine of Scripture against Le Clerc and the doctrine of Trinity, but would not discipline young men who were open to newer ideas.

There were some who found it impossible to hold their footing in Baxterianism and, instead, stood firmly and consciously in Arminianism. There was Joseph Standen in the West Country, Samuel Bourn who refused to subscribe to the Assembly Catechism 1711, Joseph Dodson, and Nicholas Billingsley. In A View of the Dissenting Interest in London . . . from 1665 to December 25, 1731, we read a description of the heterdoxy of the time as, "Very often first manifested in their attacking the divine decrees by applauding the doctrine of universal redemption as a sentiment that is full of benevolence; from thence they appear fond of pleading the cause of the heathens, and of the possibility of salvation merely by the light of nature in a sincere improvement of the powers and faculties of men; and by degrees these charitable sentiments produce a small opinion of revelation, and of the necessity of it in order to salvation. . . . No wonder they became hereupon sceptics and amongst other truths the doctrine of the Trinity is with them a matter of jest and ridicule."

Locke's Essay Concerning Human Understanding[37] was becoming the textbook of dissenting academics. Joshua Oldfield used it in London from 1699, Thomas Dixon in Whitehaven in 1710, and Samuel Jones was also using it at Tewkesbury. Here Presbyterian ministers were trained and churches would be

affected as a result.

Baxter was assured that Scripture alone made safe from attack everything essential to Christianity. Scripture and tradition not only walked hand in hand: they were inseparable. They were soon divorced, however, and that under the pose of adhering to Scripture alone. In 1695, Locke wrote The Reasonableness of Christianity as Delivered in the Scriptures[38] and drove a wedge between the Christianity of the Scriptures and that of the creeds. His paraphrases of the Epistles were intended to consign the commentators and the "puritan lecture" to oblivion by appealing to "St. Paul himself." In 1707 John Mill's New Testament[39] with its 30,000 variant readings appeared, and placed the supreme standard in the realm of doubt. Then in 1712, Samuel Clarke published his Scripture-doctrine of the Trinity,[40] and, along with William Whiston's Primitive Christianity Reviv'd, it was dubbed "Arian."[41]

These two factors of a lack of government in the Church and the presence of error combined in the Salters Hall issue of 1719. Samuel Clarke's book had influenced a minister named James Peirce, and in the year following its publication he moved to Exeter. There the Trinitarian controversy arose, and the Exeter Assembly failed to deal with the matter. The thirteen trustees wrote for advice to the London ministers who (Calamy was among them) replied that respected ministers of the district should be consulted, and so seven were chosen. They were all orthodox and so Peirce wrote to London to John S. Barrington for aid who was a member of the Committee of the Three Denominations. Barrington submitted some "Advices" to the Committee which sought to establish the need for adequate witnesses for a case of heresy in future, and that Scripture alone and not a human creed should be in the text of orthodoxy. After argument and alteration, the Committee gave its approval, but determined to place the "Advices" before the full body of London ministers. This met on February 24, 1719, and the debate revolved around whether a clause (sent by seven from Exeter but omitted by the Committee) requiring subscription to the Trinity should be inserted or not. A decision was finally taken and the clause was excluded by a majority of four. The triumphant non-subscribers were largely composed of Presbyterians, and though Arianism was not a denominational matter, it was largely in control of the Presbyterian congregations, so that the difference did harden, by and large, into denominations.

Churches were taking up their positions on either side of the divide, and men were gravitating toward whichever side harmonized with their particular views or feelings. It would be well for us to grasp that though the issue was precipitated by a statement regarding a particular doctrine, the issue that

emerged was much larger and concerned subscription to a detailed doctrinal statement in principle, or freedom to enquire. John Humfrey spoke of his attitude to Luther, Calvin, the Westminster Assembly, and the Synod of Dort in the following words: “I will not captivate my understanding to any of them.”

The results of this attitude began to be heard in Presbyterian pulpits from Nathaniel Lardner, Edward Sandercock (formerly Independents), Samuel Chandler, and George Benson in London; Henry Winder and John Brekell in Liverpool, Josiah Owen at Rochdale, Samuel Bourn at Birmingham. Another manifestation of this liberal attitude appeared in the critical revisions of the Westminster Catechisms by Strong of Ilminster in 1735, and Bourn in 1736. The latter revised Strong’s work and it appeared in 1738, signed by leading Presbyterians, and Drysdale called it “the first manifesto of the Arian party.” It also smacked of Arminianism. These were used with children instead of the Catechism. John Taylor of Norwich was an influential figure in this decline, and his predictions for the future of Presbyterianism were the exact reverse of what he stated. He wrote:

> If the Dissenters stand firm on liberty and love, . . . if they refuse all party schemes and stand upon the basis of universal Christianity; if they allow the free study of the Bible and encourage the labours of their honest and learned men; if they are steadfastly determined to establish their faith, practice and worship on the Word of God alone, as it shall from time to time be made known to them . . . then they will act to their own true principles. . . . But if ever they abandon liberty and love; if they stiffly adhere to party names and schemes; . . . if they discourage the honest and learned men that would throw in more light and truth among them, they will become weak and dwindle into nothing.[42]

In this the dissenting academies, out of which Joseph Priestly the militant apostle of Unitarianism emerged, had an influence. As a result, churches were affected as free-thinking ministers were appointed by wealthy trustees. In 1770 there were at least 500 Presbyterian congregations in England, but by 1812 there were less than half and the majority of these were Unitarian. The four northern counties were comparatively unscathed, but here the Scottish tradition was strongest.

English Presbyterianism at its best and most promising was smitten down by Elizabeth and her bishops. Thereafter it struggled with its discipline, and then with its discipline and doctrine, until discipline became impossible and doctrine eroded. To claim that it died cannot be sustained if by “death” we mean total extinction, but it is a perfectly justifiable description if we mean that it became utterly helpless in the areas where it persisted, to recover itself. The

Presbyterianism to be seen in England today is the result of the resuscitatory measures of the Scots in the nineteenth century.

10

Joseph Alleine

Elizabeth Braund

In June, 1669, Archbishop Sheldon directed that returns should be made of all Nonconformist Conventicles known to be held in the various Dioceses of Canterbury.

This followed directly upon several years of bitter persecution of nonconformists under the so-called Clarendon Code. These persecuting laws in the main consisted of four statutes. The terms of the 1661 Corporation Act excluded from municipal office all but Royalist Anglicans. In 1662 the Act of Uniformity led to the ejection of Puritan ministers, traditionally estimated as some 2,000. The Conventicle Act, passed in 1663, stipulated that not more than five adults might meet for any religious purpose "in other manner than as allowed by the liturgy" under pain of heavy fines, imprisonment, or even transportation. This was followed in October, 1665, by the Five Mile Act, imposing more stringently than ever an oath of non-resistance and passive obedience on ejected ministers. Those who refused it were forbidden to come within five miles of any corporate town, except to pass through it, or any place where they had previously ministered—thus exiling them to remote country districts.

It is true that in 1667 the Conventicle Act expired, but this led rather to confusion than to much relief for nonconformists, since the Conventicle Act of Queen Elizabeth's reign was still on the Statute Book, and other existing laws could be—and were—invoked at will.

This then was the background to the situation in which the 1669 returns were made to Archbishop Sheldon. They show plainly that far from dissent having been crushed out of existence, as had been the penal laws' design, in many areas conventicles were numerous and large. One such area was the Archdeaconry of Taunton in Somerset, where forty of the seventy-three Somerset ministers ejected in 1662 were still preaching in the county despite the persecuting laws. Moreover they had been joined by sixteen other ejected ministers from the neighboring counties, and a careful study of the returns further indicates that these men were organized in preaching bands with regular circuits. What the returns do not record is the name of the man who more than all the others was responsible for this state of affairs. For in November, 1668, Joseph Alleine had

died at the early age of 34.

Today Alleine is probably best known (where he is known at all) as the author of An Alarme To The Unconverted—or To Unconverted Sinners,[1] of which Calamy wrote in 1702: “Multitudes will have cause for ever to be thankful for it.” The first edition in 1672 sold 20,000 copies, and when it was reprinted three years later under the title of A Sure Guide To Heaven,[2] 50,000 were sold. According to Emanuel Green’s bibliography of Alleine’s Works, eight editions of the Alarme appeared before 1700, and four more under the title A Sure Guide to Heaven. At least fourteen editions appeared in the eighteenth century, and eleven or more in the nineteenth century.

For all its subsequent popularity, however, it was not for this book that Alleine was famous during his lifetime or in the years immediately after his death. He was known to his contemporaries first and foremost as a man of outstanding godliness and zeal for the Lord, whose ministry was exceptionally used of God in his lifetime.

In this paper I shall try to present some picture of the man himself and his ministry in the midst of one of the most varied and at times difficult periods that Christians have lived through in this country. In particular, I shall look at the years of Alleine’s nonconformity, since it was in this brief period (six years in all) that his gifts were most extensively used and his ministry most widely felt.

The main sources of material are Joseph Alleine’s own works, though I shall not refer directly to the Alarme since it is easily available; other contemporary writings; and documents in the Record Office, Lambeth Palace Library, Taunton Castle, and Taunton and Somerset Archives.

Alleine’s Childhood and Student Days

He was born early in 1634, a year after Laud became Archbishop of Canterbury and set about his rigorous policies of insisting upon absolute conformity of the clergy to the Prayer Book, of reintroducing certain practices in the worship of the Church which had been abolished at the Reformation, and of doing all that he could to put an end to Puritanism. By the time Alleine was old enough to enter the ministry the vital religious principles at stake in the ’30s, which literally became life and death issues in the ’40s, had been resolved—at least for the moment—by the triumph of the Parliamentary and Puritan causes. The period of his childhood thus coincided with years of cataclysmic changes in the life of the nation. But, except in a general sense, he was too young at the time fully to enter into the issues at stake, and while the storm clouds gathered, and broke over the nation, the horizon of Alleine’s life was largely bounded by his

home.

This was in Devizes in Wiltshire where his father Tobie Alleine was a Cersey weaver, who ran his own small business and supplemented his income by taking over the tenancy of the market house where he was responsible for weighing wool and yarn. But throughout the ’30s and ’40s trade was depressed and Tobie Alleine was more than once in financial difficulties. If the Alleine family was not wealthy, however, it was respected, and by 1640 Tobie Alleine was one of the town’s Chief Burgesses and the word gent was beginning to be added after his name.

He is described by his cousin, a Puritan minister, as “an outstanding affectionate, prudent and signally humble and experienced Christian.” He and his wife ordered their family life in typical Puritan manner, and for Joseph, a sensitive little boy with a lively imagination, this meant that no matter how great the upheavals going on in national life, he had the basic security of a home in which there was cohesion and order, resulting from the whole of life, in all its aspects, being viewed as under the Sovereignty of God, and regulated according to His Word.

It was a disciplined but happy home, and like other Puritan fathers, Tobie Alleine superintended his sons’ spiritual knowledge, and also encouraged their general education. He soon discovered that Joseph was not only intelligent but that he loved learning, and while the other children played, he was usually to be found deep in a book, oblivious to all that was going on around him. His power of concentration was unusual in so young a child, and augured well for his future schooling. But the outbreak of war when he was only eight disrupted ordinary life in Devizes and for the next three or four years whatever schooling was possible was only carried on in the most distracting circumstances.

Initially, Devizes was held for Parliament, but early the next year the town fell to the Royalists. Heavy fines were levied, goods were commandeered, the town’s ordinary government was dislocated, and for several years trade was almost at a standstill. Like most cloth-workers, Tobie Alleine suffered substantial business losses during the war, and the last year of it brought an even greater loss to the family with the death of the eldest son, who had lately become a Presbyterian minister. His death made a profound impression on Joseph, then eleven years old; the more so because it came shortly after a turning point in his own spiritual experience. His family had lately begun to notice that he was “very diligent in private prayer and so fixed in that duty that he would not be disturbed or moved by the coming of any person accidentally in the place of his retirement.” This and “other traits of a serious and gracious spirit” convinced his parents that he had come to a vital and personal knowledge of the Lord Jesus Christ as his

Savior and Lord. A further effect of his conversion followed his brother's death, in that he now "earnestly desired to be brought up with a view to succeeding him in the work of the ministry." With characteristic singleness and strength of purpose, in spite of the difficulties of the time, Alleine was never to falter from that aim.

His desire was furthered in 1646, when plague broke out in Devizes and Tobie Alleine moved his family to the village of Poulshott, a few miles away. The rector of the village was William Spinage, a Puritan and a scholar who had attracted a number of young men to live at the Rectory and study there prior to going to the University. In this company Alleine was able to continue his studies to such good effect that in 1649, when he was sixteen, he was awarded a place at Lincoln College, Oxford. Accordingly at the beginning of the Hilary term he set out along the Download road for Oxford: a well-built handsome youth whose intellectual ability and serious Christian desires were already united in one ambition—to be a worthy minister of the gospel.

Oxford, under the Commonwealth, was admirably suited to Alleine's purpose. Matthew Henry, writing of his father who was a contemporary of Alleine's at the University, recalls that he would "often mention with thankfulness to God, what great helps and advantages he had there in the University, not only for learning but for religion and piety. Serious godliness was in reputation and beside the public opportunities they had, there were many of the scholars that would meet together for prayer and Christian conference to the great confirming of one another's hearts in the fear and love of God and the preparing of them for the service of God in their generation."

When Alleine first arrived at the University, life there was just beginning to settle down after the upheavals of the past years. The Royalist Heads of Colleges, who for two years had defied the authority of the Parliamentary Commission sent to restore order, had at last been ejected and that intrepid squatter, Mrs. Fell, wife of the Vice-Chancellor, had been carried from the Deanery which she had refused to leave.

The new Heads of Colleges numbered many able scholars, and from 1650 when Cromwell became Chancellor and John Owen an energetic Vice-Chancellor, a vigorous constructive policy was pursued which caused even the Royalist Clarendon to observe that it "yielded a harvest of extraordinary good and sound knowledge in all parts of learning."

In such an environment Alleine's lively mind was stimulated and he began to show considerable versatility. He developed a keen interest in anatomy and some skill in scientific experiment. He became competent in Greek, Latin, and Hebrew, and made a special study of Natural Theology. He also took a lively

part in debates, showing ability in presenting his case clearly.

But with so much to interest and stimulate him, Alleine was not deflected from his main purpose of studying for the ministry. He shared the Presbyterian emphasis upon academic studies as part of his preparation, and regarded some intellectual capacity as an essential mark of a minister's calling. But natural gifts had to be kept in their rightful place, in subordination to the Word and the Spirit of God, and even as a student it was obvious that Alleine's chief concern was not with head knowledge. It was said of him that he seemed "to set God always before him and, wherever he was, laboured to live as in His presence." He once advised another student, "Study God and study yourself closely, and pursue holiness more than learning, though both these together make a happy constellation."

It was undoubtedly Alleine's desire for spiritual growth, as well as for biblical teaching, that caused him after a year to move from Lincoln College to Corpus Christi. Even at such a time Corpus had a reputation for an unusual degree of piety. This was mainly due to its President, Dr. Edmund Staunton, who was to exercise a strong influence over Alleine's future development. A Presbyterian divine and a member of the Westminster Assembly, Staunton was a noted biblical scholar—once described as "a walking concordance." But he was also, and pre-eminently, a man of personal godliness and of prayer. He was, wrote a friend, "the most praying Christian that ever I was acquainted with."

At Corpus, Staunton's great concern was that good scholarship should go hand in hand with piety, and one of the Fellows of the College at this time has left an illuminating glimpse of the life which Alleine found there. Staunton, he writes, "set up a divinity lecture every Lord's Day early in the morning in the College Chapel, for the initiating and exercising the elder students in order to the work of the Ministry. He constantly catechized the younger sort publicly in the chapel every Saturday. . . . He preached once or twice every Lord's Day and had every week a meeting at his own lodgings for prayer and spiritual conference, as well for the members of the College as others, when he himself always bore the principal part. . . . He was constantly present in public duties of worship in the chapel morning and evening, observing all and reproving any that were negligent or remiss."

In this atmosphere Alleine threw himself into his studies and imposed a strict self-discipline, which he was to retain for the rest of his life. It is at least questionable whether the rigorous routine he followed at Oxford, though it appeared to do no harm at the time, may have begun a process which was to wear out his body ahead of time. However that may be, what does emerge clearly is the wholeheartedness with which he sought to prepare for his future

ministry. Details of his daily routine at this time emerge from a letter he wrote later, after his marriage, to a college friend who had jokingly asked for an account before changing his own state. “You would know the inconveniences of a wife,” Alleine replied, “And I will tell you. First of all, whereas you used to rise constantly at 4 in the morning or before, she will keep you till about 6. Secondly, whereas you used to study 14 hours a day, she will bring you to 8 or 9. Thirdly, whereas you were wont to forbear one meal a day at least for your studies, she will bring you to your meat. If these be not mischief enough to affright you, I know not what you are.”

Alleine took his B.A. degree in 1653 and was made a College Tutor soon afterward. He proved a gifted teacher and would have been elected a Fellow had not a College Chaplaincy fallen vacant. This was the lesser position but Alleine decided to take it since as a College Chaplain he would have some pastoral ministry among the students and would conduct prayers in the Chapel.

Already, too, he was beginning to show a zeal for the salvation of the lost which was to be so outstanding in his later ministry. Like Dr. Staunton, he visited the poor and sick in and around Oxford doing what he could to relieve their wants as well as to preach the gospel to them. He also anticipated George Whitefield and the Wesley brothers by visiting Oxford jail regularly to preach to the prisoners, despite the danger of disease.

But, full as his days were, Alleine was not yet settled in his life work. His desire was still for a pastoral ministry and in August, 1654, he visited his father’s cousin, Richard Alleine, the greatly loved Puritan Rector of Batcombe in Somerset, to ask his advice. While there he also met Richard Alleine’s daughter, Theodosia, and thereafter he had no plans for his future that did not include Theodosia too.

Richard Alleine was a convinced Presbyterian and held high views of the calling and office of a minister. He was impressed by his grave young cousin’s evident godliness. But still he was only twenty-one and Richard Alleine was not going to use his influence precipitately on his behalf, nor did he hold out hopes to the young couple of an early marriage. Joseph accordingly returned to Oxford in an unsettled frame of mind, and he had not long been back when a very tempting offer was made to him. Under the Commonwealth and Protectorate, there were good opportunities for able and personable young Christian men, and Alleine had come to the notice of certain senior members of the University, who had made his name known in influential circles. The result was that he was offered “a very honourable preferment” with excellent financial and other prospects. For several days Alleine wavered. He wanted to be settled and in a position to marry Theodosia, but his heart was not at rest and finally he refused

the offer. Writing afterward to Theodosia he relates his feelings: “Though I am apt to be unsettled and quickly set off the hinges yet methinks I am like a bird out of the nest, I am never quiet till I am in my old way of communion with God, like the needle in the compass that is restless till it be turned towards the Pole.”

Alleine’s letter to Theodosia was written in a mood of bitter self-criticism that he should have allowed material temptation to unsettle him. There was in it an element of excess which was to become more balanced with later maturity, but it does bring to us the intensity of this young man’s longings after God and hatred of anything in himself that came between:

> How long shall I spend my days in wishing and desiring, when my glorified brethren spend theirs in rejoicing and enjoying? . . . How cautious must I be to keep me from danger, how apt am I to be troubled with the cares and fears of this life, molesting myself with the thoughts of what I shall eat, and what I shall put on and wherewithal I shall provide for myself and mine, when your souls are taken up with nothing but God and Christ, and ’til your work to be still contemplating and admiring that love that redeemed you from all this. . . . Oh! when shall I come and appear before Him? Alas, what do I here? This is not my resting place. My treasure is in Heaven, and my heart is in Heaven. Oh, when shall I be where my heart is?

There is no mistaking the passion of such an outpouring. Alleine’s was a temperament that knew no half-measures, and gripped and moved by the realities of the spiritual realm, “he was,” according to an Oxford contemporary, “like fire, warming, refreshing, quickening.”

The following spring of 1655 Alleine received another offer much more to his liking. It came from the Vicar of Taunton, an old friend of Richard Alleine, who wanted an assistant minister. The only thing against the offer was that it promised very little money and, in fact, Alleine’s income was never to exceed £80 a year and for much of the time it was only half that sum. Having thought it over, Alleine wrote to Theodosia at some length and in his letters sets out clearly the principles on which he decided his life’s ministry. Briefly they are as follows:

1. A man’s life consists not in the abundance of the things that he possesses, and where a man has least material goods, he may be more cast upon God’s faithfulness and become more truly dependent upon Him.
2. In making a decision, they should not first ask: What is it worth a year? Is the maintenance certain? And what is the cost of living there? These things must be considered, but they need first to think: What good am I like to do? What good am I like to get?
3. If they seek first the Kingdom of God and His righteousness and leave other

things to Him, they shall not lack.

4. What is wanting in the means, God will make up in the blessing. Writes Alleine: “This I take for certain truth, while a man commits himself and his affairs to God and is in a way that God put him into, now if he have but little income, if he have a great blessing, that’s enough to make it up. Let others take their course and we will take ours, to wait upon God by faith and prayer and rest in His promise; and I am confident that is the way to be provided for.”

Alleine had made up his mind that he would not accept any offer without Theodosia’s free consent, but having received this, he accepted the post of Assistant Minister at the Parish Church of St. Mary Magdalene, Taunton, and took up his appointment in the summer of 1655.

Alleine as a Minister

At the outset of his ministry Joseph Alleine was ordained at a meeting of the Presbyterian Classical Assembly held at Taunton.

This highlights the curious religious situation existing during the Protectorate. The Prayer Book service was banned by law. The Westminster Assembly’s Directory for Worship had come into use in 1645 and a Parliamentary ordinance of 1648 had, in theory at least, instituted Presbyterian Church order and government throughout the nation. But the rise of a powerful Independency since then had put an end to that in practice, and it was only ever partially instituted. Under Cromwell an established Church was maintained. Clergy who insisted upon the Prayer Book were removed, as were certain others whose life and conduct were deemed unfit for ministers of the gospel. But no enquiry was made as to whether ministers within the Established Church were Presbyterians or Independents (which included Baptists) provided they satisfied the Commission of Triers that they were orthodox in doctrine and fit persons to be ministers.

Toleration was not confined within the Established Church, and some Independents and Baptists ministered in “gathered” churches outside it. As for the Quakers and extreme sectarians, while they obeyed the laws of the land and allowed others to worship freely (the Quakers were continually getting into trouble for not doing this), they came within Cromwell’s comprehensive policy of toleration. In fact, whereas hitherto (and again in future) when religious problems arose, the question for the State was when and how it should enforce by law a uniformity of church worship and discipline, under Cromwell the position was reversed and for the first time the law was used to enforce

toleration.

This does not mean that there were no religious problems under the Protectorate. With the rise of many vociferous sects and with the strong passions of the time, there were. But in Taunton during these years, there were less religious troubles than in many places. This was largely due to George Newton, the Vicar of St. Mary Magdalen, and his assistant, Alleine.

Newton, who had been Vicar since 1631, was a staunch Puritan, outspoken during Laudian days and of considerable influence in the town. As a Presbyterian he had been one of six signatories of a strongly worded petition to Parliament for the setting up of Presbyterianism throughout Somerset, which design was only ever partially implemented. But he was a man of temperate spirit, and spoke out against bitterness and factions wherever he saw them. By the time Alleine came to assist him he was elderly and had bad health. He was also much involved with affairs in the town. The congregation at St. Mary Magdalen was large, including many of the prominent families in the town and neighborhood; and the parish took in most of the town. After Alleine had been ordained and had received a certificate from the Triers, Newton shared the preaching and administration of all ordinances jointly with his young assistant, and as time went on left the bulk of pastoral work to him.

Alleine thus had a heavy responsibility for a young man in his early twenties. For the next seven years he was to minister within the established Church with outstanding success, but we shall only look briefly at this period in order that we may consider more thoroughly the years of Alleine's nonconformity. In any case, though the outward circumstances of the two periods differed drastically, Alleine's ministry was in fact consistent throughout.

1. First, we note the seriousness with which Alleine regarded his call to the ministry and his ordination. This, he believed, was binding. To those who laid hands upon him, he wrote years later reminding them that they had then "made us publicly promise that we would never from fear of any persecution, desist from preaching the gospel." And writing to his people from prison years later he reminds them of his ordination and how "I told you in the close of what I spake before the laying on of the holy hands upon me—'most gladly do I take up this office with all the persecution, affliction, difficulties, and tribulation and inconveniences that do and may attend it,' and blessed be God I am through His goodness of the same mind still."

2. The supreme object of Alleine's ministry was never in doubt. It was to preach Christ—to lead people to a vital, saving knowledge of Him—and to teach and build them up to live to His praise and to the glory of God. His constant plea, reiterated in various forms over and over again, was simply this: "Brethren,

I preach not myself, but the Lord Jesus Christ and myself your servant for Jesus' sake. Give him your hearts and I have my errand. I am but the friend of the Bridegroom and my business is but to give you to understand His love and to join your hearts unto Him."

3. It was this great object that led Alleine to a life of extraordinary zeal, as with all the ardency of his nature he sought to lead others to a vital knowledge of the Lord and to spend himself to the glory of God.

Such a desire to use himself fully in the Lord's service caused him and his wife—a true partner for him—to move from the vicarage, where they lived for a while with George Newton after their marriage, to a home of their own. They were childless, and his wife recounts: "We took a house and I having been always bred to work, undertook to teach at school, and had many tablers and scholars, our family being seldom less than 20 and many times 30, my school usually 50 or 60." Under the spiritual direction of Alleine, who loved children and was always concerned for them, it seems that many in their school and home were truly converted.

In spite of the demands of such a household, Alleine did not neglect his own soul or his pastoral ministry. The self-discipline begun at Oxford was continued, and whatever he might say about getting up later, his wife assures us that he was much troubled if ever he heard any tradesmen at work before he was up and at prayer, and would say, "O how this noise shames me! Doth not my master deserve more than theirs." It was his constant practice to begin the day with four hours given to prayer and meditation, before calling his household for family worship. He studied every morning, and after dinner visited on five afternoons a week, catechized at the Free School every Saturday morning, took one or two midweek evening meetings at St. Mary Magdalen, and for the rest went out preaching in the villages as often as he could.

Even at this stage in his life, when the religious scene was encouraging, Alleine lived with a sense of urgency, and when his wife expostulated with him for working so hard and wished to see more of him, he said: "Ah my dear, I know your soul is safe, but how many more that are perishing have I to look after. O that I could do more for them." "Value precious time," he would say, "while time doth last and not when it is irrevocably lost." "Our Saviour made religion His business (Luke 2:49) and how busy was He! . . . He went up and down doing good—and what put Him upon this earnest diligence? The sense of the shortness of His time (John 9:4)."

Alleine was not however simply an activist who lived upon his activities. Ardent—passionate—yes—but throughout his life and in his writings there runs a streak of Christian mysticism—a mysticism that was Christ-centered and

biblically oriented—that longed to know more and deeper communion with God. Newton, who knew him better than most, observed acutely enough that "had not his zeal for God's glory and the salvation of souls engaged him so much to an active life he could even have lived wholly in divine contemplation." The mainspring of his labors in fact was not a liking to be active, but a sense of divine realities. "Love is a busy grace," he once observed, and he advised his people: "Often think with yourselves, what a reasonable thing it is that you should with all you have serve the Lord. Shall not the servant trade for His master with whose goods he is entrusted? Is it not for Him that you fetch every breath?"

It was Alleine's firm conviction that a minister's first duty—and greatest privilege—was to preach the gospel and to expound the Scriptures among those to whom he was called to labor. "Lord!" he exclaims, "how unworthy am I, everlastingly unworthy of this glorious dignity." This conviction explains why he gave all his time, energies, and gifts so unstintingly to his pastoral ministry, among ordinary country folk, and apart from one treatise on natural theology, written in Latin and so far as I know unpublished, wrote nothing that did not spring directly from a pastoral context.

With regard to his evangelism, we are told that he was "infinitely and insatiably greedy for the conversion of souls." We shall find plenty of evidence for this later; meanwhile Baxter's opinion is of some interest, in that he believed that Alleine's fervent thirst for souls was a means, under God, of his great success, since—Baxter observes—"be men's parts never so great, I seldom have known any man do much good, that was not earnestly desirous to do good. If he longs not for men's conversion, he is seldom the means of converting many. For there is a certain lively seriousness necessary in all our studies, to make our sermons suitable to their ends, and in all our preaching to make them fit to reach men's hearts, without which they are as a blunted knife. . . . And though God can work miracles, and therefore can work without means, yet that is not His ordinary way."

Certainly Alleine's preaching was characterized by fervent desire to present his message—and above all his Lord—in a manner that would reach the people. In order to do this he deliberately avoided academic forms and literary style, making use of his intellectual training and natural gifts indirectly rather than directly. That is, he expounded his doctrine and prepared his sermons with carefully ordered sequence of thought, and used his ability in debate for holding up all possible objections—and then answering them in plain, forthright—sometimes pithy—language that went straight home to his people. And not to their heads only. He applied what he said closely and with a passion that made

people feel he was ready to give his very life for his convictions. And, in fact, time and again the power of the doctrines so took hold of him as he preached that he would be carried away from his argument for a while, lost in praise and wonder—only to return and plead with renewed urgency for his people to give themselves wholly to such a God and Savior.

We get some idea of how Alleine taught his people to set out upon their Christian lives from an outline form of covenanting with God which he prepared and which was so widely used that Richard Alleine included it in part 1 of his Vindiciae Pietatis.[3] Alleine advised people to enter into solemn written Covenant with God after their conversion—not as a necessity but because he believed, from his own experience, that it helped them to remember their high calling and strengthened them against temptation. Before doing so, however, he asked them to set time apart to consider all the terms of God's covenant and to search their own hearts. Then, "in the most solemn manner possible, as if the Lord were visibly present before their eyes" they were to open their hearts to the Lord, acknowledging their own hopelessness and trusting only in Jesus Christ and His merits. That done, they should solemnly covenant—in writing—not to allow any known sin, and sincerely to desire grace to forsake all that is dear in the world rather than to follow sin. The vows which follow include: "I do here take Thee the Lord Jehovah, Father, Son and Holy Ghost for my portion and chief good: and to give up myself, body and soul, for Thy service, promising and vowing to serve Thee in holiness and righteousness all the days of my life. . . . I renounce mine own worthiness and do here avow Thee for the Lord my Righteousness. I renounce mine own wisdom and do here take Thee for mine only Guide. I renounce mine own will and take Thy will for my Law."

The main emphasis of Alleine's teaching ministry was always the same. It was firstly, through exposition of Scripture, to direct men and women to a deeper and more realized knowledge of God and the Lord Jesus Christ—in heart as well as head—and from this to exhort them to live worthy of their calling and to thirst after holiness. Hear him as he preaches:

> Labour that Holiness may become your nature and religion your business. . . . Brethren, let God's work be done by you, not by the by, but as your greatest business. Confine not religion to your knees, but carry on an even-spun thread of holiness through your whole course. It is the disgrace of religion that Christians are so unlike themselves unless it be when they are in holy duties. This wounds religion to the quick, when it shall be said of professors, these men indeed will pray like Angels, but for aught we can see, they are as peevish as other men, and as hard in their dealings, and make as little conscience of their words as others do. Beloved, do not think

> religion lies only, or chiefly, in prayer, hearing or reading, for you must be throughout religious. . . . Herein consist the excellency and the difficulty of religion, when you have the baits of intemperance before you, then to hold the reins hard and deny your flesh; when you have provocation before you, then to bite in your passions and bridle your unruly member; when you have dealings with others then to do unto them as you would have them do in like case to you. In this I say lies the excellence of religion.

He was under no illusions that this was easily achieved and called for daily self-examination which, he declared, "will make you live holily and die comfortably; but if you let things run long, you will be all at a loss." Alleine believed this to be so important that when he was later imprisoned he wrote out detailed questions for his people from which we see that he endeavored to promote holy living in every part of his people's life, and indeed his own declared aim for himself was: "That not only my praying, preaching, alms, etc. . . . but even my eating, drinking, sleeping, visits, discourses, may all be done as unto God."

He emphasized the importance of family worship and catechizing, and his tract on family godliness instructs heads of families in great detail as to their duty and exhorts them to "Let religion be in your families not as a matter by the by (to be minded at your leisure, when the world will give you leave) but the standing business of the house. Settle it upon your hearts that your souls are bound up with the souls of your family. They are committed unto you and if they be lost through your neglect, they will be required at your hands."

One of the most important features of his pastoral ministry was the use he made of catechizing, publicly in the church, and privately in families in the course of his visiting. Pastoral visitation had not been practiced in Taunton, or in the district around, for many years. This made it hard going to begin with, but undaunted Alleine went regularly from door to door through every street in the parish. His method was to send a courteous note beforehand to say he was coming. When he arrived he would gather the household together and, according to their need, would teach and explain from the Westminster Assembly Catechism. So great was his success that other ministers began to think seriously of doing the same. In spite of his youth, Alleine was already looked on as one of their leaders, and at a Classical Association meeting it was decided to ask him to write some guiding principles on the practice of catechizing. From those which he prepared, we learn Alleine's own principles in the work. He assumed it to be "the unquestionable duty of all the ministers of the Church of Christ to take heed to all the flock God has made them overseers of and to teach not only publicly but from house to house." They should try to do this in a way that is both

pleasing to God and profitable for the people. Their manner should be with compassion, prudence, courtesy, patience, “being gentle to all men and bearing with rudeness and dullness,” “with plainness, not betraying their souls to Hell for want of closeness in our dealing with them.” Alleine advised the ministers to enquire into the people’s knowledge; into their daily living; and into their spiritual states. Finally, he said, they should always leave people with some particular spiritual teaching and help, “often repeating these till they remember.”

It is obvious that the whole bent of Alleine’s ministry was pastoral rather than polemical, and for some time after the Restoration in 1660, he continued his day-to-day ministry, taking little part in the religious controversies that were developing once more. Like other moderate Presbyterians he desired terms that would allow for comprehension within the Established Church. With his pastoral heart he was concerned for the people entrusted to his care and what would happen to them if he left them, and determined that he would not allow himself to separate for small or dubious matters. As weary months of cat-and-mouse negotiations and debates went on in London between Bishops and Presbyterians, Alleine, like many others, knew long hours of perplexity and heart-searching and prayer. But when at last the terms of the Uniformity Act were known, his perplexity ended. On seeing the clauses demanding unfeigned assent and consent to everything in the revised Prayer Book, the demand for reordination at episcopal hands, and the demand to renounce the Covenant, it was plain to him that he could not conform. On August 24, 1662, he therefore publicly bade farewell in the church to a sorrowing people.

Alleine as a Nonconformist

The problems and perplexities of those ministers who refused subscription to the Act of Uniformity did not end with their ejection, and during the next months men all over the country had to decide what to do next.

It has already been mentioned that seventy-three ministers were ejected from Somerset alone, and these included George Newton and the Vicar of Taunton’s other parish church. Where conforming clergy were put into the livings of silenced ministers, they often failed to preach biblically or to live in a godly manner. But by no means all the vacant livings were filled at once, and at Alleine’s trial, nine months later, it was stated that no minister had been settled in Taunton “for three-quarters of a year together, nor any service of God at all in the public congregation for very many weeks successively.”

Thus Alleine and his brother ministers were in the heart-rending position of seeing their people either without any shepherd at all, or in the care of those who

gave the impression of being but hirelings. On the other hand most of the ejected ministers, like Alleine, were poor men without private means and with family responsibilities. They had already given up their means of livelihood and their homes. Now, since the Act clearly forbade them to preach, should they not obey the magistrate as Scripture commanded and keep silent?

Initially the great majority of ejected Somerset ministers ceased from preaching altogether and from carrying on any pastoral ministry. It is clear, however, that Alleine had thought through the issues involved even before St. Bartholomew's Day and was already firmly persuaded that the ejection of ministers did not absolve them from preaching the gospel. He was therefore resolved to go on preaching (though not in a church) until he was sent to prison or banished, and typically enough, he lost no time in putting his resolution into effect. His wife loyally supported him, though we may imagine the cost that lay behind her brief statement, "at which time we sold off all our goods, preparing for gaol or banishment, where he was desirous I should attend him, as I was willing to do, it always having been more grievous to me to think of being absent from him than to suffer with him."

Alleine states the reasons and principles behind his decision in a pamphlet—A Call to Archippus[4]—which he wrote from prison the following year, to persuade his brother ministers to follow the same course. It is written courteously, and in Alleine's form of addressing the ministers as "Fathers and Brethren," we have a reminder of his youth—he was still not thirty. In it he emphasizes preaching as the minister's first duty, and exhorts silent ministers to reexamine themselves and their commission in the light of such Scriptures as Colossians 4:17; Acts 4:29; Acts 20:23 and following; 1 Timothy 4:16 and 5:21; 2 Timothy 2:3, 4, 5 and 4:1–2; Luke 9:62; Proverbs 29:18; Philippians 1:17; Hebrews 12:3; Nehemiah 4:11; 2 Corinthians 6:4–7.

Alleine's clear-sighted grasp, even at this early date when the position was still confused, of what would happen if a sound teaching ministry was withheld from the people, is revealed by the questions which he proceeds to put to the ministers. The main thrust of these is as follows:

1. Do they in their hearts think that the present ministry will keep up the power of godliness? "O that we could charitably believe it! But who can deny their senses!"
2. Are they sensible of the famine in the land? "If you are sensible of the famine, surely the voice of God to a withholding minister is like Lamentations 2:19 'Arise, cry out in the night: . . . pour out thine heart like water before the face of the Lord: lift up thy hands toward Him for the life of thy young children,

that faint for hunger."

3. Will it not impair the honor of their profession if the people show more courage and resolution than their leaders?
4. Will not a great part of their people be in danger of running to extreme sects, which are still active, if their own ministers sit still?
5. Did they have their commission, office, and authority from the magistrate, and is their power in, and relation to, the Church of a civil stamp? He writes, "We know the Magistrate doth not pretend to this; and if none but Christ did, nor could commissionate you, can any but He discharge you? Or can the relation between the Church and you (if divine and spiritual) cease upon this interposition of a power merely political? If the Magistrate did not constitute and cause this Relation how can he make it to cease?"

Alleine recognized that this was so much at the heart of the issue that he goes into possible objections in depth. To the argument that they are prohibited from preaching by the magistrates, his reply is that this was the apostles' case over and over again: "Why should we not answer with them 'It is better to obey God than man?' Are not God's forbidden messengers yet charged by Him to speak without fear (Acts 5:20)?" But it could be argued that if the apostles had not continued, all preaching would have ceased, whereas the same was not true of the present time. To this Alleine retorts: "If we have a ministry that does not do the work of a ministry, converting and edifying—how little better we are than if we had none."

He then goes on to deal with another type of object, namely that if ministers set up in private and draw people from the established churches, it will be a great cause of separation. "The separation be upon others," declares Alleine, "who when we were quietly settled in the administration of Church ordinances, in a more pure and reformed sort, are come in upon us and have possessed our places and pulpits. We continue still but in the same station, and the same work, watching over our flocks, only the place is altered . . . ;" and further "The most commendable endeavours after Christian unity must be conjunct with a study of gospel purity and the power of godliness."

Having dealt at considerable length with such arguments and objections, Alleine comes to the conclusion that many of these are, in truth, so many excuses to mask the real cause of the ministers' silent fear of persecution. His method of dealing with this is to point them to the Lord Himself and to the Word of God: "Brethren, hath Christ suffered for us, and have we such a cloud of martyrs, and shall we shift off our work for fear of persecution? Let us humbly request you but to view the encouraging promises that Christ has made to

sufferers for His Name. Are not these the very things which we have over and over preached and pressed on our people? And shall we make them believe by our flinching? . . . Are these things true, or are they not? If not, why have we taught them? If they be, why do we not live up to them?"

Alleine's words, however searching, were the more acceptable in that all to whom he addressed himself knew that he was not urging others out of mere intellectual apprehension of truths, but was speaking out of those convictions which, while based on scriptural study, had already been applied in his own life and experience.

One further group of arguments which Alleine used to the ministers underlines his own involvement in the situation. These concerned existing opportunities. At the time of his ejectment, Alleine had asked God to allow him three months freedom, to establish and encourage his people, before he went to prison. In the event, he was given nine months. During that time he not only taught his own congregation in Taunton, preaching from house to house but also rode out among the villages to congregations whose ministers had left them. Indeed nothing demonstrates more plainly the primary importance which Alleine attached to preaching than the fact that at this time, when expecting arrest daily, he put aside all his usual studies to give himself wholly to preaching. This he did some fourteen times a week, and despite the strain of the circumstances, was able to testify that he had never before known such supplies of God's grace or preached with such power and freedom. Others have recorded the signal blessing upon his ministry in those months when hundreds flocked to hear him.

It was out of such experience that Alleine could say to the silent ministers, "Never had you such an open and effectual door for the doing good to souls, whether for conversion or edification. Now the hearts of the people cleave to you more than ever, if you lose them not by your own neglect. Now they see the difference between the hay and stubble of the present materials and the gold and silver that you did build with. . . . How hungry are their souls, how do they hang upon your lips, how far will they travel, how early will they rise, how hard will they venture (glory be to God, we speak what we know). Verily the field is even white to the harvest."

Alleine's freedom inevitably came to an end. He was arrested on May 26, 1663, on a charge of illegal preaching and being present at a riotous assembly, and sent to Ilchester Prison. His arrival at the prison was typical of the man. On being told that the jailer was out and that he must wait, Alleine made such good use of his time that when the jailer at last returned he was infuriated to find his prisoner preaching from the prisons steps to some 200 people.

Ilchester had an evil reputation for typhus—and flooding from the nearby

river. Alleine was spared the latter danger, however, as the room into which he was thrust was at the top of the building immediately beneath the roof which sloped so low that when the prisoners lay in bed they could reach up and touch the tiles. These retained their heat long after sunset, and even though the prisoners removed panes from the windows to let some fresh air in, it was still hot and breathless. For, at the time of Alleine's arrival, there were already more than seventy people occupying the room.

He spent two months in prison before coming up at the Sessions. There the charges against him were not proved, but instead of being acquitted he was returned to jail to await the August Assizes. The mockery of a trial which was eventually held in Taunton Castle is recounted in full, with notes in the handwriting of Alleine's counsel, in a manuscript later found among Richard Baxter's papers. Apart from revealing the role of paid informers and the near panic of the authorities who saw plots against the Crown in every meeting, the main points of interest for us are Alleine's defense of the validity of his office of minister, and his determination to give no pledge that might prevent him from preaching in the future even though failure to do this should cause him to remain in prison. The transcript brings before us the scene in the Assize Hall with a robed judge on the bench and Alleine at the Bar.

Judge: When were you made a minister?
Alleine: Eight years since.
Judge: By whom?
Alleine: By the Presbytery.
Judge: Who gave them power to ordain?
Alleine: My Lord, they have that power by virtue of their office as they are ministers of Christ.
Judge: Your ordination is nothing worth. You are no minister.
Alleine: My Lord, I hope you will not assert that which shall overthrow all the ministry of the whole Christian Protestant world, except here in England, for your Lordship is not ignorant that they have no other ordination than by the hands of the Presbytery, just as I have.

The result of the trial was a foregone conclusion. Alleine was found guilty and returned to prison for a year, all but three days.

It was certainly not a wasted year, and so great were the pressures on his time that Alleine had to get up even before 4 a.m. to ensure time for prayer and meditation. His days were spent seeing a continual stream of visitors who were allowed in—or not—according to the jailer's whim. He took over preaching to the felons in the prison, and when after several months he was moved to an

annex in the town, he was—strangely enough—allowed to hold meetings on Sundays and in the week when hundreds attended. His pastoral heart was also concerned about the children and young people in the neighborhood, and he had tracts distributed to teach them the basic doctrines of Scripture. Added to all this were his writings. First and foremost Alleine was always a pastor, and his main concern in prison was not for himself but for the people whom he had left behind in Taunton and elsewhere. What would become of them now that he was no longer there to strengthen and encourage? At any time they might have to suffer worse persecution. Would they stand?

These were the thoughts that led Alleine to write not only A Call To Archippus, but several practical helps for his people. One of these was the "Synopsis of the Covenant," which was later inserted in Heaven Opened, the third part of Richard Alleine's Vindiciae Pietatis. It is recorded that, in the next century, James Harvey came upon this synopsis shortly before he died and said, "it was the richest piece he ever read in his life."

Certainly the synopsis brings out, perhaps more vividly than in anything else he wrote, the essential characteristics of Alleine—passionate feeling and a lyrical quality that takes fire as he contemplates divine truth, allied to a mind submitted to and with a clear grasp of Scripture foundations and an ability to choose and present his material.

In this synopsis Alleine gathers up the rich provisions of God for the believer, and presents them dramatically. First, the Voice of the Herald prepares the Way. This prologue reaches its climax when the Voice of the Lord is heard—"Hear, O ye ends of the earth, the mighty God, the Lord hath spoken. . . . Behold, I establish my Covenant between me and you. By my holiness have I sworn. . . ." And then follow an array of glorious promises from the Scriptures, in rich profusion yet harmoniously arranged in an ordered sequence which extends over the whole range of the believer's relationship with God and covers his every need.

This then was Alleine's way of practical encouragement to his suffering, persecuted people. He did not commiserate with them or relate his own even worse plight. Rather, he lifted their eyes heavenward away from their own weakness and confused circumstances to the almighty strength and faithfulness of God. Can we imagine the impact upon people left without leaders and in the midst of dangers and suffering when confronted by page after page of such glowing passage as this:

> Behold, O ye sons of men! Behold and wonder. Be astonished O Heavens! . . . This day do I by covenant bestow myself upon my servants. I will be

> your God. Nothing in the world is so much your own as I. The houses that you have built, that you have bought are not so much yours as I am. Here you are tenants at will, but I am your eternal inheritance. . . . I will be all to you that you can wish. I will be a friend to you. My secrets shall be with you and you shall have all the freedom of access to me and liberty to pour out all your hearts into my bosom. . . . I will be a Physician to you. I will heal your backslidings and cure all your diseases. . . . I will be a Shepherd to you. Be not afraid of evil tidings, for I am with you. . . . You shall not want, for I will feed you. . . . The keeper of Israel never slumbers—I will guide you with mine eye. . . . I will be a Sovereign to you. Fear not the unrighteousness of men, I will judge your cause. . . . let them curse, I will bless. . . . I will be a Husband to you. In loving kindness and in mercies will I betroth you unto me for ever. . . . I will be an everlasting portion to you.

And on and on it goes. Is it any wonder that Alleine was himself carried away as, finally, he represents the believer's triumph in God's covenant: "O happy soul, how rich art thou! What a booty have I gotten! O what can I wish more! How full a charter is here! . . . Bless the Lord, O my soul. O had I the tongues of men and angels, all were too little to utter my Creator's praises."

But Alleine was too good a pastor only to point his flock to God, without teaching them to work out their high calling in their daily living. While in prison he therefore wrote a detailed explanation of the Assembly's Catechism—question by question—which he particularly intended for use by heads of families.[5] He wrote out, too, the list of Rules for Daily Examination, to which I have already referred and had them distributed to everyone to whom he had ministered. Most important of all and most far-reaching in their influence, he wrote letters to the people who were so much on his heart. For, if he might not preach personally to them, he could at least send them a weekly sermon in letter form. And in fact, these letters reveal Alleine the preacher more plainly than his existing sermon notes, for in these letters he was not writing material to preach from, but was preaching as he wrote, and the whole man is involved—mind and heart. It is indeed this quality of warmth and feeling, allied to his teaching, that kindled the hearts of men and women long after Alleine's death. For they were printed and reprinted more than once before the close of the century,[6] and in the eighteenth century, when among others John Wesley reprinted them four times, and in the nineteenth century abridgments and versions were printed.

The basic emphasis of the letters is consistent with the rest of Alleine's ministry, as he recognized himself: "The prison sounds forth to you the same doctrine that the pulpit ever did," he writes. Moreover they reflect that note of immediate concern for the souls of men and women that runs through all that he

did. He sums it up himself: “My heart’s desire and prayer for you is that you may be saved. This is that which I have been praying and studying and preaching for these many years and this is the end of my venturing and suffering and writing at the present time. . . . Do not wonder why I follow you so pressingly, why I call upon you so frequently: let not my importunity be grievous to you. . . . Christ did not bethink His blood, and shall I bethink my breath or ink too dear in order to your salvation?”

Although the detailed message and application of the letters vary, Alleine’s method is constant. Here as elsewhere, he does not launch straight into a discussion of contemporary issues, but rather urges his people to look at these in a true prospective by presenting the doctrines of God and the work of the Lord Jesus Christ in redemption and then exhorting believers to view all their problems in the light of these.

Over and over again he urges believers to meditate upon who God is and what the Lord has done as a way of stirring themselves up to live worthily: “Live daily in the praises of your Redeemer,” he writes, “be much in admiring God and studying the worthiness, excellency, and glory of His attributes. Let your souls be much taken up in contemplating and commending His glorious perfection and blessing yourself in the goodly portion you have in Him. Live like those that have a God—and then be disconsolate if you can.”

And again—the same note: “O the provision God hath made for your continual joy and comfort. Dear brethren, do but understand your own blessedness, happy men that you are if you did but know and consider it. Who would count himself poor and miserable that hath all the fulness of the Godhead for his. Sound in this deep—can you find any bottom? Tell me the longitude and latitude of the infinite goodness and mercy of the eternal deity. If you can do this, you may grasp at your own happiness. Oh Christians, live like yourselves, live worthy of your portion, of your privilege and your glorious prerogatives!”

Alleine never leaves his exhortations in general terms. Throughout the letters his application is close and searching. He is particularly concerned that none shall rest in a false peace, and presses them to make sure of their position and “to look to it that you build upon the Rock, that you be sure in the foundation work. . . . ” “Brethren,” he writes, “I see great trials coming, when we shall see professors fall like leaves in the autumn, unless they be well settled.” “Let none of you conclude that because you are of the suffering party, therefore all is well. Look to the foundation, that your hearts be soundly taken off from every sin and set upon God. . . .” “You must every one of you stand shortly before the judgment seat of Christ and be tried for your lives. O try yourselves first. ’Tis easy to mistake education for regeneration, and common conviction and

illumination for conversion, and a partial reformation and external obedience for true sanctification. Therefore I beseech you to examine whether you are in the faith. Prove your own selves."

In order to help them to examine themselves Alleine attempts in the course of the letters to strip away every false prop or deceit that may be keeping people from resting in faith solely upon the finished work of Christ in redemption. He does not stop at pointing out blatant sins, but exhorts people to "examine not only what is done but whence 'tis done, look to the root as well as to the fruit. Eye not only your actions but your aims." His great fear is lest any should stop short at outward profession, and he reminds them again and again "That godliness is a heart work, it goes deep and spreads far." It may be that in his comprehensive tests for the people to examine themselves by, Alleine tends at times to give an impression that their salvation itself is dependent upon a high degree of sanctification. Let me quote one example:

> If you will be put out of doubt whether you are His sheep or not, you must try it by this certain mark that Christ sets upon all His sheep, even your sanctification. You that will stand to this trial, answer me truly and deliberately to these questions. Do you hate every sin as the sheep doth the mire? Do you regard no iniquity in your hearts? Do you abstain from sin out of fear or out of dislike? Is there not some practice that you are not willing to know is a sin for fear you should be forced to leave it? Do you love the commandment that forbids your sin? Again, how do you stand affected towards holiness? Do you love it? Do you hunger and thirst after it, and desire it more than any temporal good? Do you choose holiness, not out of bare necessity because you cannot go to Heaven without it, but out of love to it and from a deep sense that you have of the surpassing excellency and loveliness and beauty of it? If it is thus with you, you are the persons that the Lord Jesus Christ hath marked for His sheep.

I do not think that Alleine was here or in other such passages intending to belittle the doctrine of justification. There is much in his teaching on justification by faith alone. But he was fearful of antinomianism and of false peace. We have to remember too the circumstances in which he wrote. He was in prison—shut away from his beloved flock, yet longing ardently that they should be kept from the temptations which he well knew would assail them in such times: longing too that they should press on in holiness rather than relapse into that lukewarmness for which Alleine's temperament had little sympathy at the best of times, and still less at present. "Away with this lukewarm profession," he writes from his prison. "Away with this heartless, listless, lifeless religion. As good not at all, as not to purpose. Never dream that lazy wishes and idle complaints and

key-cold prayers will carry it. O quicken yourselves, call up all your powers, and put you every man his strength to this rope."

In many of his letters he encourages people to meet often together in order to stir one another up, and he implores heads of families to keep up regular worship and catechizing in their households. "Be so much the more vigorous in your families, by how much the more you are deprived of your public helps. Christians, be advised by me, and let Satan be disappointed in this design. He thinks to break the Church of Christ. Oh but now let every family be a Church." Let them all, he urges, make sure that they are living the whole of their lives, in every aspect unto God. And let them serve one another. For with Alleine there was never any danger that piety would become ingrowing: "Piety without charity," he told his people, "is but half of Christianity or rather impious hypocrisy." "Serve your generation with your might while you have time. You have but a very little time to bring God any glory here, or to do your friends any good; now up and be doing. What! But one cast for eternity and will you not be careful to throw that well?"

Alleine hardly refers in the letters to his own suffering and then only to praise God for His mercies in and through them. "I am fully satisfied," he writes a month after being returned to prison from the Assizes, "in my Father's good pleasure. . . . Verily, all is true that I have told you of the all-sufficiency of God, of the fulness of Christ, of the satisfaction of the promises, of the peace, tranquility, content, security that is to be had in a life of faith."

It was never possible for him to dwell for long upon the Lord Jesus Christ, without his soul being kindled, and in declaring the glories of Christ to his people from the prison we constantly glimpse into his own soul: "O the riches of Christ's love," he exclaims at the end of one of the letters, "when shall I end if I suffer my soul to run out its length, and my running pen to enlarge according to the dimensions of this boundless field of divine love."

"Alas that our souls are so narrow, that the waters are so shallow within. How little, how very little, would our love be if He had it all. And have we any of this little to spare for Him? O that we might love Him with our little all."

By the time that Alleine was at last released from prison the position of Nonconformists had deteriorated considerably. Government fears of rebellion persisted and paid informers abounded. In May, 1664, the Conventicle Act had been passed, and in future those attending religious meetings—other than in the Established Church—could expect imprisonment or heavy fines.

Notwithstanding all this, no sooner was Alleine back in Taunton again than such numbers came to hear him preach that he soon had to divide his regular hearers into four separate societies and to preach and teach them separately.

At the same time, people from villages for miles around were begging him to come to preach to them, and every week he rode out, despite his own danger—for there were soon warrants out for his arrest again—to as many as he could. We are told that he was now more urgent than ever with the unconverted and that he particularly pressed believers to meet together in companies in order to strengthen one another, “letting the world know they could live comfortably on God alone, on His attributes and promises, though they should have nothing else left.” But that year in prison had taken its toll of Alleine’s health. One day, three months after his release he collapsed after riding sixteen miles to a meeting but insisted on preaching so as not to disappoint the people. He was seriously ill for two months after this, and then, though somewhat recovered from his first illness, he entirely lost the use of his arms for some six months, during which he could neither write nor dress nor feed himself. Yet incredibly enough—and in spite of the doctor’s protestations—he continued preaching all this time throughout the week and twice on Sundays.

Alleine was also concerned in another work. He seems to have seen more clearly than others in that area the vital need to maintain a sound preaching and teaching ministry among the Christians who were left without regular ministers. He was well aware that the times were getting worse, and that the days of opportunity for preaching might be very short. Accordingly, with all his remaining energy he set about organizing his fellow ministers, a number of whom had been persuaded by his arguments to adventure themselves with him. He was the pioneer and leader of this preaching band. It was he who more than any other had gone out among the scattered Christians. He knew who they were and where they might meet, and now he formed these conventicles into regular circuits and encouraged his brethren to form bands of three or four to take oversight of each circuit and to preach according to rota—the biggest conventicles having the greatest number of preachers to visit them. It is of some interest that when in 1672 the Declaration of Indulgence was issued—by which meetings and ministers might be licensed, 178 meetings were licensed that year in Somerset, many of them under the same names and addresses as those which had been gathered under Alleine and held in the darkest persecution.

Besides encouraging ejected ministers, we also have evidence that Alleine was involved and probably the prime mover in at least three ordinations in the worst days of persecution after the passing of the Five Mile Act. The evidence comes from the Rev. George Trosse’s autobiography and a further narrative of his life by Isaac Gilling. Trosse was for years a minister of the gospel in Exeter. He had begun preaching soon after the Restoration and he relates how an ejected minister of Exeter—one of Alleine’s preaching band—urged him to be ordained.

Trosse eventually agreed, and he writes: “Hereupon I took a journey to Somerset and there with two more was ordained by five or six able and pious divines. These persons heard our Theses, examined us strictly in some difficult points in divinity and then we delivered our confession of faith and so they proceeded to ordain us. Mr. Joseph Alleine of Taunton was the person who prayed over me at that solemnity.”

An unsolicited testimony to Alleine’s success in gathering ejected ministers around him occurs in a letter, dated July 15, 1665, (and now in the Record Office) from two Deputy Lieutenants for Somerset to the Secretary of State, Lord Arlington. After reporting the arrest of some 120 people at a great conventicle it continues, “My Lord, what causes this letter is that amongst them we took eleven nonconforming ministers who all live in or near about Taunton and there are near as many more in the town who do continually preach up and down. . . . ”

The arrests were in fact made at a house outside Taunton where a number of people had met for a time of Thanksgiving before Alleine set off for Devizes to drink the mineral waters near there for his health’s sake. The upshot was that instead of journeying to Wiltshire, Alleine and his friends spent the next three months in prison at Ilchester. With what spirit he bore this second imprisonment appears from an address he gave to his fellow prisoners on the morning they were due to be released.

1. They were to remember their prison comforts with thankfulness to God and go home praising Him.
2. Their experience should deepen their dependence upon and confidence in God: some of them had gone to prison without the means to pay for their food there, or to maintain their families, yet all had been taken care of.
3. Such mercies should influence their love to God.
4. As a result of what they had learned, they should now learn to love one another the more.
5. And to live strictly knowing that curious eyes would be upon them.
6. They must not revile their persecutors.
7. Nor must they let their acknowledgment of God’s mercies degenerate into proud, vain-glorious boasting or carnal triumph.
8. And another timely warning—They must take care not to load others with censures who had not been to prison. “You know,” declared Alleine, “all are not of the same mind as to the circumstances of suffering, and all have not gone the same way. Far be it from any of you that you should so far forget yourselves as to be unmerciful to your brethren. God forbid that you should

increase in censures, instead of increasing in charity."

9. Lastly he made a plea to the prisoners' friends: "My desire is to our friends that they will help us in our praises. Our tongues are too little to speak forth the goodness and the grace of God. Love the Lord the better, praise Him the more. . . . O that the praises of God may sound abroad in the country by our means. . . ."

Alleine's faith, which had enabled him to give praise in trial after trial, was soon put to an even severer test. This came, not from arrest, but illness. His second imprisonment had damaged his health still more, and though he continued preaching for some eighteen months despite the Five Mile Act, at last in 1667 he was persuaded to go to Dorchester, in Dorset, to consult a well-known doctor. Hardly had he arrived when he was taken so acutely ill that he was expected to die. He lost all use of his arms and legs and for several months lay almost lifeless while his wife nursed him day and night, first in a lodging and then in the home of a hospitable believer. At last he began to improve and anxious visitors arrived to see him from Taunton. What struck them most was that he who had been so unceasingly zealous and active in all the years they had known him should now be lying helpless with evident patient contentment. When they commented on this he answered simply: "What, is God my Father, Jesus Christ my Saviour, and the Spirit my sweet friend, my Comforter and sanctifier and Heaven my inheritance; shall I not be content without limbs and hands? Through grace, I am, fully satisfied with my Father's pleasure."

Here then in this period of complete helplessness we have confirmation that Alleine was no mere activist, living upon his activities, but his tireless zeal like his patience in suffering sprang from contemplation of divine truth and known, felt communion with God: "My dear friends," he told his visitors, "I feel the power of those doctrines I preached to you on my heart. . . . I have lived a sweet life by the promises and I hope through grace can die by a promise. It is the promises of God which are everlasting, that will stand by us. Nothing but God in them will stead us in a day of affliction."

Alleine's active life was done. At least he was never again able to move about freely—though on his sickbed he was still concerned for his people in and around Taunton, and although he could no longer write himself his wife wrote to them at his dictation. From one of these letters we see how Alleine in his helplessness was still taken up with praising the love of God: "Who in all this earth should admire and commend this love if I should not?" He exclaims from his sickbed: "I feel it, I taste it, the sweet savour thereof reviveth my soul, it is light to mine eyes and life to mine heart; the warm beams of this blessed Sun, O

how they have comforted me and ravished and refreshed me in body and soul! And shall not I praise that love and grace that has done all this for me? My heart is enlarged but I told you paper could not hold what I have to speak of the goodness of the all-gracious God in which I live!"

Some improvement in his condition enabled him to be taken back to Taunton in a horse litter early in 1668. Once there, people flocked to visit him, and what little strength he had was spent in counseling and encouraging them. But his condition deteriorated again and in July as a last desperate remedy he was taken again in a horse litter to Bath for the waters there.

Alleine and his wife both knew that he was dying. But in spite of convulsions, weakness, and semi-paralysis Alleine was not idle. A number of his friends were in Bath at the time, including Richard Fairclough—an ejected minister—and John Howe of Torrington. Both testify to the extraordinary effect of Alleine's presence in the town.

It seems that he was carried daily—he could not walk—to the Bath, and such was his reputation and their awe at his wasted appearance, that the gentry gathered around to hear him—as morning after morning he preached the gospel from the Bath and—we are told—did not spare his application and reproofs to sinners, with the result that a number were converted. As if that were not enough, on his way home each day Alleine got his chairmen to carry him to the various schools, where he spoke to the children and distributed his Explanation of the Catechism. When not visiting the schools, he was carried to visit the poor and widows of Bath, and on these visits gave materially as he was able and told them the way of salvation. Then on Sundays, he and his wife had between sixty and seventy children in their lodging for instruction. Is this the first Sunday School we hear of? He also found time and strength to promote a scheme for catechizing throughout Somerset and Wiltshire, and with a friend printed 6,000 copies of the Assembly's Catechism at their own cost.

A letter dictated at this time to a very old and dear friend gives us a last insight into his frame of mind and heart:

> As to temporals, I have lack of nothing, and as for spirituals I abound and superabound, and the stream of my comforts has been full and running over; the joy of the Lord has been my strength at weakest, and in the multitude of my thoughts within me, His comforts have refreshed my soul. I have found God a satisfying portion to me, and have sat down under His shadow with full delights and His fruit is most sweet to my taste. . . . O my friend, let us exalt His name together. He is my solace in my solitude, He is my standing Comforter, my tried Friend, my sure Refuge; my safe Retreat. He is my paradise, He is my Heaven, and my heart is at rest in Him . . . and

whither should I go but unto Him?

Five days later Alleine was with his Lord, and on November 17, 1668, a crowd of many hundreds defied the laws to follow him to his resting place in St. Mary Magdalen Church in Taunton, where today a tablet reads—

> "Here Mr. Joseph Alleine lies
> To God and you [that is, Taunton] a sacrifice."

Conclusion

Alleine was thirty-four when he died. As we have seen, the sole of his ministry had been centered in and around Taunton. Yet even in his lifetime, his influence had been felt far more widely. What then were the qualities of this man who was so used of God, and whose writing, particularly the Alarme, has been used to convert and build up so many during the last centuries? He was not a great or prolific writer, and he refused an entrance to influential circles in favor of a pastoral ministry.

Perhaps he is best summed up in that phrase of his Oxford friend who said when Alleine was still a student: "He was like a fire, warming, refreshing, quickening."

Alleine was of a naturally ardent disposition. What is most striking about him is the way in which, having come to a clear grasp of biblical truth, all the passionate intensity of his being was channeled into his one great aim of living unto God. We have seen that this was no glib phrase to him. There was a totality about his life in which he strove to bring every part into conformity with God's revealed will and to please Him. And there was an urgency about the way he lived. Some may say that he lived at too great a rate and wore himself out. But at least we may say with certainty that God was pleased to bless and honor his life and ministry in an exceptional way. It is attested by all his contemporaries that the power of the Spirit was upon his preaching. Both his life and his ministry were also marked by a consistency that was independent of outward circumstances. We have seen how these varied—between the encouraging days of his settled ministry, the dark days of persecution and imprisonment, and the long months of helpless suffering. Yet through all these there sounded the same note of lyrical joyfulness and praise—of glorying in a great and holy God and in the love of a known and felt Christ—and a longing to bring others to such knowledge, that led him to give of his utmost for the souls of men, women, and children. Again, perhaps some may question the intimate expressions and experimental emphasis of some of his outbursts—but these sprang from the heart of a man who knew his God, who delighted to meditate upon divine truths, and whose faith rested securely upon biblical foundations.

What would Alleine's application of his message be for us today? From the consistency of his ministry in the varied circumstances that beset him we may conclude that it would not have changed. May we not hear his voice examine us, in his oft repeated emphasis:

> Beloved we lose unutterably for want of considering, for want of viewing our own privileges and blessedness. O man, is Christ thine, and yet dost thou live at a low rate and comfort? Is thy name written in Heaven, and yet dost thou not rejoice? Shall the children of the Kingdom, the candidates of glory, the chosen generation, the royal priesthood, be like other men? O Christians, remember who and whence you are. Consider your obligations. Put on a better pace. Bestir yourselves, run, and wrestle, and be strong for the Lord of Hosts, and earnestly yet peaceably contend for the faith once delivered to the Saints.

Does the example of Alleine's life not challenge us, as he tells us: "I cannot say I have already attained, but this is that my heart is set to learn, that in all that I do, whether sacred or civil actions, still I may be doing but one work and driving on one design—that God may be pleased by me and glorified in me."

Finally, we have Alleine's prayer for the ministry in the dark, confused days at the end of his life. Would it be so different today?

> O Thou Shepherd and Bishop of souls, the great and good Shepherd of the sheep, that gavest Thyself for them, that gavest Thy ministry to them, for the perfecting of Thy saints, for the edifying of Thy body, quicken Thy forgetful stewards to look to the pinching wants of Thy distressed family. Awaken Thine under-shepherds. Call up Thy watchmen to watch over Thy flock by night, that the beasts of prey may not devour them. . . . Behold how Thy flock is scattered, and few search or seek after them, so that they become a prey to every beast of the field, because there is no shepherd. . . . O, give us again the men after Thine own heart, and set Thou up shepherds over us, that we fear no more, nor be dismayed, neither be lacking, as Thou hast promised. So we Thy people, and sheep of Thy pasture, will give Thee thanks for ever, and praise Thy name to all generations. O Lord, Thy people say Amen. Let all Thy ministers say Amen. Lord Jesus, say Thou Amen.

11

Can We Learn from History?

D. Martyn Lloyd-Jones

There is nothing, perhaps, that has so detracted from the glory of God as the history of His people in the Church. That is why I am going to deal with this subject of learning from history. Hegel's famous dictum reminds us that "we learn from history that we learn nothing from history."

Now as far as the secular world is concerned, that is undoubtedly perfectly true. The history of the human race shows this quite clearly. Mankind in its folly and stupidity goes on repeating the same old mistakes. It does not learn, and it refuses to learn. But I will not accept this as being true of the Christian. My contention is that the Christian should learn from history, that because he is a Christian it is his duty to do so, and he must rouse himself to do so.

My basis for saying this is the teaching of the Bible itself. How often do we find, for instance, in the Book of Psalms that the Psalmist, in order to enforce his lesson and to make his appeal to the nation, recapitulates their history in order to show that the error into which people were falling again is precisely what their forefathers had done. And you remember how in the New Testament, in the Book of the Acts of the Apostles, Stephen's famous defense of himself before the Council was really just a recapitulation of history in order to bring out his point. There is also an account of Paul doing the same in Acts 13.

All this surely indicates that the Christian should learn from history. The real trouble with the world is that it cannot think straightly. But the Christian should, and it is therefore his duty to learn in this way. My argument is that it is always essential for us to supplement our reading of theology with the reading of Church history. Or if you prefer it, that we should at any rate take our theology in an historical manner. If we do not, we shall be in danger of becoming abstract, theoretical, and academic in our view of truth; and, failing to relate it to the practicalities of life and daily living, we shall soon be in trouble. How many of us who are in the ministry went into a church with theoretical ideas, not aware at all of the practical problems and difficulties? But we soon had to learn that what seemed so plain and clear in theory could not be done in practice because of the state and condition of the people. Now it seems to me that if we are careful to learn the lessons of history, and to supplement our reading of theology by that, we shall already be prepared, and we shall avoid many of the pitfalls and the

dangers into which we shall inevitably fall if we do not do this.

This is my introduction to what I am going to do. I am going to take a general view of the history of the Church, particularly in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. I want to emphasize that I am going to take a "general" view. In this conference we spend a good deal of our time, and rightly so, in dealing with particular problems and particular questions; but there is a danger that if we do not from time to time take a more general view, we may well "miss the woods because of the trees." In any case it is sometimes more comfortable to be dealing with particulars than to look at the general situation. But I believe that we are living in an age in which it is very important that we should take this general view.

It is obvious, is it not, from the history of the Church that at different times and in different epochs certain particular questions have had unusual prominence. We are all familiar with the facts that in the early ages, for instance, it was the question of the Person of our Lord and the doctrine of the Trinity that were uppermost, and had to be fought out. At other times there have been other subjects that have stood out more prominently. But at the Reformation the first great and immediate question was the doctrine of justification by faith, as we have already heard in this conference several times. But it is interesting to notice that you cannot isolate these things; they are all interrelated. So almost immediately that problem led to another, the problem of the Church and the nature of the Church. All these different doctrines belong to a whole, and whichever you may start with sooner or later you will arrive at the others. Thus the problem of the Church was a very prominent one in the sixteenth and the seventeenth centuries.

By today there is no question at all but that this is the biggest problem and the most urgent of all. The Ecumenical Movement is compelling us to consider it constantly. In addition to that, we are undoubtedly living at one of the great turning points of history. I sometimes have a fear that we who are evangelical, of all people, are most guilty of failing to realize this. We are so immersed in our local situations, or in our particular fields of study and of interest, that we are not alive to the fact that we are at one of these great climactic points of history. Indeed I have said before, and I say again, that it seems to me that the Church has not been in the position that she is in today since the great era of the Protestant Reformation and the century that followed it. Therefore we can do nothing better than to take a general view of the history of those two centuries and learn certain vital lessons from that history.

The Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries

I need not take any time in painting the background or in explaining why the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries were such a great climactic age. Up until then, speaking generally, the Church in the West, at any rate, had been one and united. Then came the Protestant Reformation. Going further back, before Constantine brought the Roman Empire into the Church in the early fourth century, the unity of the Church had been expressed in terms of faith and worship and a kind of spirit, or "inner spirit." But with the coming in of Constantine, and what followed, the institutional element became much more prominent, and the Church from there on became an institution and was governed as such by its hierarchy. So that you had a very rigid kind of Church government, exercising discipline and control, excommunicating, punishing by death and so on. But with the Protestant Reformation came the great division in the Church in the West into the Roman Catholic and the new Protestant Church. The Protestant Reformation seemed to shatter the idea of the unity of the Church as being something vitally important, and therefore, immediately, the Protestants were charged with schism.

But—and this is the thing that I want to deal with in particular—the really important thing from our standpoint is what happened after that. That original division led to a whole succession of divisions, with the result that the Roman Catholics have always said that there is something inherently wrong in Protestantism, and that it is fissiparous in its very nature and being, that its history has proved this. This has been the charge that they have brought against Protestantism constantly, and there are many Protestants today who are concerned about the success of the Ecumenical Movement and who repeat the charge.

Very well, let us look at the facts. I think we have to admit immediately that the facts seem to be on the side of that charge. You start with Luther and the movement connected with him over against Roman Catholicism. But history shows that very soon there were divisions even among the Lutherans, and right up till about 1580 and the Formula of Concord there were constant wrangles and difficulties and groupings within Lutheranism itself. In addition to that you had the Reformed Church coming into being in Switzerland, and looking particularly of course to Calvin and Geneva; and added to this, the various divisions and subdivisions of the Anabaptists. That was the general picture on the Continent.

Coming to our own country, you had the formation of the Church of England. But very soon other divisions began to appear. I do not want to take too much time on this, but eventually a position was reached in which you had those who were Church of England practically in the full sense of the term, and in addition,

Puritans, Presbyterians, Brownists, Separatists, Barrowists, Anabaptists, and later, Quakers, Levellers, Diggers, and many other sects which arose during the time of the Commonwealth. In fact, endless divisions came into being.

The history of the Church of Scotland shows this perhaps still more clearly, and it takes a real expert to be able to follow the various divisions and subdivisions and ramifications. There are books which have charts showing this. When we come to modern times and look at the United States of America, a few years ago I know there were at least 261 different Protestant denominations. (I do not know what the latest figure is.)

Those then are the sheer facts of history. What do we say about this? How did this happen? What is the explanation of this? A very general explanation, I think, is that this was due to the fact that the Protestant Reformation liberated men and taught them to think for themselves. When you have been under the bondage and tyranny of a rigid system and you are suddenly given freedom, it is almost inevitable that you should get certain excesses. But that is only a very general explanation, and I want to address myself to this problem: Can we justify what has happened in Protestantism? Are the Roman Catholics right in what they say about us?

The first answer to that is, of course, that the Roman Catholic Church herself is in no position to bring this charge against Protestantism. Before the Reformation ever came about there had been schisms and divisions and even separations in the history of that very church. Even before Constantine came in there were divisions that occurred. They were regarded as heresies and some of them lasted many centuries, the Novatianists, the Donatists, and many others; and there was always a running quarrel between what became the Church of the East and the Church of the West. The idea that Rome had always been recognized as supreme, and that there were no problems and no divisions, is simply not true to history.

The same continued even after the fourth century and right up to the Protestant Reformation. But Rome, of course, had such tremendous power that she could in a sense contain these divisions. I always feel that the analogy which is helpful at this point is the analogy of the political situation in this country. The great characteristic of the Conservative Party is that she can contain her divisions and subdivisions. The Liberals and the Labour people bring them out into the open and expose them to the public. The Conservative Party does these things among themselves and nobody knows what is happening; but when you get behind the scenes you find that there are as many divisions as anywhere else. That, then, is the answer to the Roman Catholics, and we need not be troubled about that. What is of concern to us is, can we justify what has happened in any

way?

I will now give you my thesis. The division between Roman Catholic and Protestant I am prepared to defend to the death, but the other divisions, I am prepared to assert, were sinful. They were manifestations of schism and all involved in them were guilty, and we are guilty, in the sight of God.

Let us proceed to substantiate this contention. The extraordinary thing about all that happened in Protestantism, and happened so quickly, is that, apart from the Anabaptists and the various sects, they were all really concerned about comprehension. This is the enigmatic factor which seems to me to come out so strikingly as one reads this history and keeps on rereading it from different angles—they were all seeking for comprehension. Take Luther for instance: this was his great concern. Luther was afraid that these divisions would lead to the loss of the whole of the Protestant Reformation, that the princes and the powers seeing this happening would be annoyed, and everything that he had fought for, and had suffered for, and had contended for, would be completely lost. So he was very concerned about comprehension, and particularly within his own group.

In the same way, as I am going to show, Calvin was very concerned about Protestant unity from his angle; and when you come to this country, Anglicanism and Queen Elizabeth I were of course dominated in their thinking by the idea of comprehension. Hence their Acts of Uniformity and so on. And as we have been reminded in this conference, the Presbyterians held exactly the same view. All these people wanted one national Church. That is even true of the Congregationalists at the time of the Commonwealth. It was only later that they ceased to believe in this. Up until the end of the Commonwealth and the Restoration this was the great idea, the idea of comprehension. Here, you see, is this extraordinary fact that while all of them were claiming to aim at the idea of comprehension they nevertheless divided in this extraordinary manner.

The question we have to ask then is this: What was it that caused these divisions? What were the factors that operated to nullify this great idea of comprehension? I have tried to tabulate them, trusting as we look at them that we can receive guidance for our day, and situation, from this particular history.

The first cause of trouble as I see it, the first thing that hindered Protestant union, was the idea of national churches. Now it is not at all surprising that they should have thought of it in that way, because reform tended to take place independently in the different nations and countries. Not only that, but in all these countries there was the time-honored connection and relationship between the Church and the State. So when they broke with Rome it was almost instinctive for them to think in terms of their own national position. They did not

want to divide up, but they desired to separate from Rome, and they all viewed it within the sphere of their own knowledge. So they all tended to do it in a national way. You find the city-states in Switzerland doing exactly the same thing. They were concerned about themselves primarily, and because of this old and traditional relationship between the Church and the State, the Church tended to take the form of a national or state church. That happened not only on the continent but also here in England, and in Scotland, and in various other places. In the case of England, the kings and queens became the head of the Church as well as the head of the State. This is a most important factor; and one cannot understand this particular history without seeing that very clearly.

In the second place certain national characteristics operated very powerfully. Here, of course, is something that one could take up and deal with at length. I am not going to do so now because of lack of time. Should this factor operate at all? What is the place of national characteristics in the Christian life, and especially in connection with the Church?

Well the fact is that this has been a very important factor in the case of England. There was a natural independence of spirit and a national consciousness before the Reformation. England had several times objected to the power and the influence of the Pope over her church. There had been many movements in this direction and many protests. A national spirit was arising in most European countries and nations at that time, and therefore when the Church separated from Rome it was quite natural for them to do so in their own particular way.

But, in addition to this, I believe that national characteristics operated in many ways. This is a subject which needs to be discussed in greater detail, but it is surely difficult to evade the conclusion that the ecclesiastical differences in different countries have been the result of these differing national characteristics. Let us take as an illustration the difference between England and Scotland. The typical Englishman has a dislike of definitions; the glory of the British Empire to him was that it had not got a written Constitution. It had just happened and with the principle of empiricism enthroned her chief glory was that she had “muddled through.” I do not want to make too much of this, but there is this innate dislike of over precision and too much definition. I am speaking about the average Englishman; there are exceptions, but they are very much exceptions. It is surely very clear that at the time of the Reformation and in the Elizabethan period this national characteristic operated in England. The “via media” appeals to the Englishman: he likes the idea of compromise, he dislikes extremes and excesses and over-precise definitions.

I am not criticizing, I am describing; and I am asserting that we have to bear

all this in mind, and that if we fail to do so we shall not be learning the lessons of history. I am suggesting that with regard to the danger today of basing too much of our discussion upon Confessions drawn up at that time we tend to neglect this particular factor; and we do so of course to our own confusion.

The Scots, on the other hand, are very different in this respect. They like definitions, and precision and exactness. They demand them, and insist upon them. The whole outlook, the mentality, is a different one. This is something that I could work out in terms of other nations like the Dutch, etc., in exactly the same way. One must not go too far with regard to all this. I know that there is the danger of trying to explain everything in terms of psychology and so on. I once remember reading a book by a man who said he could explain everything in terms of geography. He did not hesitate to explain John Calvin in terms of the cold climate of Geneva. You know the theory that the further south you go the more likely the people are to be Catholic, the more north the more likely they are to be Protestant! At that point, of course, it becomes ridiculous; all I am asserting is that you cannot exclude this particular factor of these general characteristics of people.

This is not only true of nations, this factor is very important also with regard to individual persons. Temperment comes into these matters, and I defy you to exclude it. I am quite sure that a great deal of the trouble in the sixteenth century was due to the personality of Martin Luther. He was a giant of a man, he was a kind of volcano, and so different from John Calvin. Luther was not systematic in the way that Calvin was; he was not governed by reason to the same extent. There was something explosive about the man, and as I am going to show, in certain details this really is a most vital part of the explanation of what I would regard as a tragedy. But I must be fair to Luther. His own history influenced him, perhaps unconsciously. If you read the history of the Lutheran Church from, say, 1518 or 1520 right on to 1580 you will find that Luther was in great trouble over the question of condemning people and excluding them from the fellowship of the Church. I have no doubt but that this was largely due to the way he himself had suffered at the hands of the Roman Catholic Church. He had a horror of doing to others what had been done to him. He at any rate was intelligent enough to see this, that if you fought for freedom against a rigid system you must at all costs avoid becoming a dictator yourself. He was aware of this, and I believe that at certain times it made him hesitate to condemn where perhaps we might think he should have condemned.

But then, in addition to that, his views on the “hiddenness” of the Church, and the “hiddenness” of the Word of God, and the markedly spiritual element in his whole outlook and teaching, militated against his defining things as clearly as

Calvin, and putting his ideas into practice in the matter of discipline. I leave it at just that, taking the one example of Luther. There are many other men who appear in the history of that time, and many since, whom one could use in exactly the same way. I am asking this basic question, let me remind you, as to whether things of this nature should influence the Christian position. My contention is that they should not; but I am asserting that they have done so.

But let us look at a third factor—politics! Here, of course, was a most potent factor in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. What was really the explanation of Luther's violent antagonism to the Anabaptists? Surely there is no question at all about this. It was his fear, especially after the Peasants' Revolt, that the views and activities of these people whom at first he had rather liked, would jeopardize the whole of the Reformation. He knew the reaction of the princes and governments, so he did everything he could to prevent this. But that was a political motive.

In the same way, it seems to me, the case can be made out very clearly that Melancthon—a very different kind of man—in drawing up the Augsburg Confession was very largely governed by a political motive. The Roman Catholics were saying that Protestantism was heretical, that Protestants were departing from the Christian faith, and that the Emperor and the various Princes should therefore oppose it. So Melancthon's primary concern in drawing up that Confession was to prove that Protestantism was not heretical, that really it was teaching very much the same as the Roman Catholic Church had been teaching except for certain things. This was his emphasis. So if we forget this and stand too rigidly behind that Confession, as the Lutherans did afterward, and ignore this particular factor in history, namely political considerations, we shall be taking a false view of the Augsburg Confession. The same thing, of course, is equally evident, and more so, in connection with the Huguenots.

But when you come to this country this factor is still plainer and clearer. The person who really determined the character and the nature of the Church of England was none other than Queen Elizabeth. I do not think there is any question about this. A recent book, Elizabeth and the English Reformation, by Haugaard,[1] is most illuminating in this respect. It deals particularly with the crucial Convocation of 1563, and the history leading up to it. In many other books one can read about the influence of Walsingham, and of Burleigh himself, and of the Earl of Leicester and others who were more or less favorable in general to the Puritans. But the point is that the dominating factor was the political one. Elizabeth was in an extremely difficult position. She was especially afraid of France, so she had to keep on the right side of Philip of Spain. On the other hand the Roman Catholics said that she was illegitimate, that she was a

bastard. She naturally disliked that, and so at that point she was against the Roman Catholics. The result of all this was that Elizabeth was always engaged in a balancing exercise. She felt that if the Puritans were given their head, and the Church was allowed to go in that direction, then the Roman Catholics would of necessity be alienated and everything might be lost. But she did not want to go too far on that side either, because she knew that if she gave the impression that she was too favorable to the Roman Catholics she would be annoying the great body of her people.

The principle that emerges so clearly is that she was governed by these political motives and ideas. I believe it can be stated further that in her own nature and temperament she was a true daughter of her father, and that her sympathies were very largely on the Catholic side. There is much evidence that can be produced and adduced to demonstrate that. But above all else she was concerned about her throne, and about her whole position and that of the country. We should give her very great praise as a statesman; but we are concerned about the nature of the Church.

But when you come on to James I and Charles I, all this is much more obvious. They held the view “No bishop, no king,” and that determined all their thinking and behavior. The political factor came in so powerfully on that side; but we have to admit that it came in on the side of the Puritans also. People like Hampden and Pym and others, on constitutional grounds, and on political grounds, were opposed to these sovereigns, and there developed a mixture of motives. The religious and the political became bound up together, and the issues became confused; and having at the back of it all this idea of comprehension, and of a national Church, the real spiritual element was generally overridden, it seems to me, by the political one. It is agreed by many historians that the real reason why the Solemn League and Covenant was signed by England in 1643 was political expediency. The English did not want to do this, but the parliamentary army was doing very badly and they needed help; so they had to turn to Scotland. The Scots saw their opportunity, and they laid down this condition: they bargained, and they won the bargain.

Somebody was asking in one of our discussions—if I may digress for a moment—why it was that there was a failure to impose Presbyterianism in the seventeenth century whereas Protestantism had been imposed in the sixteenth century? I think the answer to that is quite simple. In the sixteenth century you had a tyrant like Henry VIII in control; and the power of the Crown and of the Throne was so tremendous that they could enforce anything. But when Presbyterian became official and the attempt was made really to make it permanent, there had been a rebellion, a revolution; the king was being fought,

and the army was becoming more powerful. The king was eventually beheaded and the army gained control; and the army, with Cromwell, was mainly Independent. It was they, very largely, who would not endure this imposition of Presbyterianism. And, later, in 1660 we must not forget the conservatism of the English mentality, and its liking of ceremonial, its liking of titles and names. This is one of the few great countries left in the world that has a monarch. That is not an accident, it is typically English. A fondness for kings and queens, a liking for titles and names is a part of the whole outlook. The Welsh, for instance, are a peasant people and they have never had the veneration for titles that is found so commonly in England. You cannot exclude this kind of thing, and it did turn out to be a very powerful factor. The English did not like these upstarts who were getting into positions of authority. They preferred, and had always had, a king in control, and while they had more or less endured Oliver Cromwell, when his two sons did not turn out to be too successful they turned with great relief even to such a man as Charles II. They were encouraged, unfortunately, in doing that, as we know, by the Scots who, deceived by the duplicity of Charles, thought that there was a real opportunity of establishing Presbyterianism, or at the very least modifying episcopacy very considerably in that direction.

Added to this there is the whole question of tradition. I have already been referring to it—a dislike of change. This manifested itself particularly over the question of episcopacy. It was partly also responsible for the desire to hold on to certain ceremonies which had been taken over from the Roman Church, modified I know, but still essentially Romish ceremonies. But episcopacy stands out. You cannot read the history of 1560 to 1640, or even to 1660, without seeing that the one great stumbling block to every attempt at comprehension was ultimately episcopacy. This was the rock on which they all struck and at which they all foundered in a sense.

Take, for instance, those attempts that were made to get a modified episcopacy. This was all very good. But Archbishop Usher’s attempt and all others failed. And then after the Restoration when Clarendon got into control, and the exiled bishops came back, episcopacy was flying high and ruled and governed. Everything was in its hands, and so you had the Great Ejection of 1662 and all the other persecutions with which we are familiar.

Then we come to the fifth great cause of these tragic divisions; and that was the trouble over the definition of fundamentals. To put it in other language it was the trouble concerning the line of division between essentials and nonessentials in connection with the Christian faith. Or, to put it in yet a different way, it was a desire for uniformity in too much detail. This, to me, is one of the great and most

important lessons of that hundred years.

Let me give an example or two. Take Luther, for instance, and in particular Luther's view of the sacrament of the Lord's Supper. This is surely one of the great tragedies in the history of the Church, this division between the Lutheran and the Reformed Churches. It was almost entirely due to a division on this one thing. There were other differences, but I am satisfied by the evidence produced by those historians who say that the cause of the collapse at the Colloquy of Marburg in 1529 was really this one thing. Luther himself drew up fifteen points or articles, and Zwingli and Oecolampadius, who was there with him on the other side, accepted fourteen of the points in their entirety, and had even accepted part of the fifteenth. But Luther took up his bit of chalk, you remember, and wrote on the table, "This is my body"—not that it "represents" it, it is it—and so wrecked the conference on his notion of consubstantiation.

Luther wrecked the whole prospect of comprehension or of Protestant unity on this one thing, on this one particular. As somebody has put it so well, "The sacrament of communion became the apple of discord." It is a terrible thing, but it is true. And Luther as the result of this attacked Zwingli and his followers violently, and Calvin also. He said the most outrageous things about them. I am not at all sure but that at that point one can almost invoke medical illness in the case of Luther. There seems to be some evidence for that. However, that is doubtless another dangerous thing to say; but you cannot even exclude that. These are the historical factors that come in and determine men's decisions and their attitudes. However, the whole prospect of union was wrecked, and the whole situation became hardened over this one thing.

There is a very tragic footnote to this. Luther just before his death in 1546 read a little book by John Calvin which bore the title A Little Treatise on the Holy Supper of our Lord,[2] and having read it this is what he said to Melancthon: "In this matter of the Sacrament we have gone much too far, I will commend the thing to the Lord. Do something after my death." Pathetic, is it not? But it was too late, the damage had been done; and though he had now come to see that they had gone much too far, the position had become hardened. Later it became even worse and the whole prospect of unity vanished because after the Formula of Concord of 1580 this became part of the exclusive and irreformable system of the Lutherans. That led to the hardened orthodoxy against which there arose the movement associated with the name of the Pietists.

One of the Puritans of the seventeenth century made a very acute remark on all this. He said: "Witness the bickering between some Lutherans and Calvinists, as they are by some nicknamed, which have given religion since the last Reformation thereof a greater blow than all the thunderbolts of Rome together."

That was his view of the division between the Lutherans and the Reformed, that it had done greater harm to true religion than all the thunderbolts of Rome together.

That is but one illustration out of many that could be adduced from the history of England and Scotland, and what became the United States, of this tendency to insist upon particulars which I am suggesting are nonessentials. It was part of this whole problem of deciding what is essential and non-essential, what is fundamental and what is not fundamental. It was the failure to arrive at this decision, this conclusion, in a charitable manner that so often wrecked every attempt at true evangelical and Protestant unity.

Yet, and in spite of all I have been saying, the astonishing thing is that the ideal of Protestant union was fought for during this whole period in a most remarkable manner. William Farrel, the man who persuaded John Calvin to stay in Geneva, was most concerned about this and he fought for this. Bucer, or Butzer, again was outstanding in his concern and his striving for Protestant union. And as you know, Bucer had a great influence upon John Calvin and in many ways influenced him in this same direction. With regard to the dispute and difference of opinion on the sacrament of the Lord's Supper what Bucer said about this was that the dispute was "only a matter of words"—and surely he was right. Calvin, on the same topic, said that the difference "was not very grave."

But, most interesting and important, let me remind you of some of the manifestations of this desire for Protestant unity on the part of John Calvin. In spite of the vituperative and unkind things that Luther said of Calvin, Calvin's references to Luther were always not only gentle but generous and full of expressions of admiration. But listen to Calvin writing to Melancthon: "Let us mourn together the misfortunes of the Church, yet rejoice that we cannot be utterly overwhelmed." Listen to him writing to Bullinger on the sacrament: "If we could only talk together for half a day we would agree without difficulty." That is John Calvin. He is a much maligned man.

Calvin wrote to Matthew Parker, Queen Elizabeth I's Archbishop, in 1560 urging him to induce the Queen to convoke a general assembly of Protestant ministers to frame a plan of worship and government not only for the Church of England but for all the Reformed and evangelical Churches. He urged her to do this; and you remember his famous statement, that he was prepared to cross oceans, and so on, to do anything he could to help in this respect. The reply that he got to that was that the Church of England would retain its Episcopate, which Matthew Parker argued derived not from Rome but from Joseph of Arimathaea! That is how that ended.

Then you are aware, I trust, of Calvin's advice to the Puritans in this country

who wrote to him. They asked his advice as to whether they should stand out on the question of episcopacy and of ceremonies in England; and though it may surprise you, Calvin told them not to stand out on that. He did not believe in episcopacy, but he was so concerned about Protestant unity that he could just see that perhaps in the peculiar circumstances of England—perhaps he was a bit of a psychologist and knew something about these national characteristics—that they should not stand out on these particular things. They did not accept his advice, but that was the advice that he actually did give to them. Let it be said to the honor of Cranmer that he tried to call a conference in the days of Edward VI to deal with this matter, again encouraged by Bucer, who was by then Professor of Theology in Cambridge.

Here, you see, during all these times of divisions and ramifications and subdivisions there was this great effort after Protestant unity. It is very interesting to notice that the last two great results of this seeking for Protestant unity were, first the Authorized Version or Translation of the Bible, and the other was, of course, the Westminster Confession of Faith. That was the last expression of this concern about unity—Protestant evangelical unity in this country. But alas, it all came to nothing, and Milton could complain that "new presbyter" was very similar to "old priest."

Lessons and Conclusions for Today

There, then, is a very hurried review of the history. Let me try to draw some lessons and conclusions from all this. My whole contention is that our situation today provides us with an opportunity such as the Church has not had since the Protestant Reformation. I want to go further. I suggest that in the light of this history we are in an altogether better and more advantageous position than our forefathers were in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. On what grounds do I make that assertion? I do so on the grounds of the tremendous differences between our position and theirs. One is that politics is no longer the dominating factor that it was then. It really did dominate then. It had been the traditions throughout the centuries—Church and State—and almost inevitably they were driven to do what they did, as I have tried to show. That is no longer the case.

Not only that, there is an increasing manifestation of a desire to separate Church and State, not only in other countries but even in this country. But more than that, we are living in an age when nationalism of the type that you had in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries is no longer present. We are living in an international age. Even the proposal and the desire to have the European Economic Community is a manifestation of this. There is a readiness now to

surrender certain elements of national sovereignty which as far as I know has never existed before. All this is a part of the climate in which we are living, so that our position is very different. Then in the religious realm there is all this talk and activity with respect to ecumenicity.

I argue, therefore, that we have a new freedom of maneuver which our Protestant Reformers did not have. We have possibilities that they never had. They were bound by what they had inherited in a way that we are not. Say what you like about this age, there is a freedom of maneuver possible today which I am not aware of as having existed at any other time. And so the question that I would address to you is this—and I am concerned at the moment merely to ask questions—Have we got the same burning desire for Protestant evangelical unity as Calvin and the others whom I have mentioned had? It is our duty to have it. Division in the Church is a scandal. Schism is a deadly sin. The ideal for the Church has been put by our Lord Himself in John 17; and we have other similar passages in the New Testament. If we have not a burning desire and longing for this unity of true believers, I say we are false to the New Testament. So we must examine ourselves. If they in their extraordinary difficult situations and circumstances had this desire, how much more so should we have this desire.

What then are we to do? Once more I am only going to put forward some matters for your consideration and deliberation. Each one of these matters, of course, would take a long time in and of itself, so I am only going to give some headings. The first thing I suggest is this, that we really must say farewell once and for ever to the idea of a national Church. There has been no national Church in this country since the Restoration; that finished at the Great Ejection. Every Act of Toleration has been a denial of the national Church idea—the recognition of Nonconformists, and ultimately Roman Catholics in the 1820s. This has put an end to it in actual fact, though of course, it is a characteristic of this country to say “yes” and “no” at the same time. You have it and you do not have it.

Now that may be allowable in politics, but I am asking in the name of God whether it is right in the realm of the Christian Church. That is the question that I am putting. I suggest that there is all the difference in the world between the idea of a national Church and the recognition of the churches in a particular country. “The churches” in a particular country is inevitable, that is right. You have to have a minimum of organization, and naturally churches in a country will work together and operate together; but that is totally different from the idea of a national Church. So I suggest that is the first move, to get rid of that notion.

Then the second step will be this—we shall have to face squarely this question of the definition of fundamentals and essentials. Here I start with two negatives. We do not take the position, I assume, as evangelicals, that was taken by Dr.

Samuel Johnson. He said: “For my part, Sir, I think that all Christians, whether Papists or Protestants, agree in the essential Articles and that their differences are trivial and rather political than religious.” The great lexicographer could sometimes talk nonsense! That is, of course, something we do not even waste time in considering.

But we also have to reject, it seems to me, the position of Richard Baxter. He said that all who accept the Apostles’ Creed as a summary of belief, the Lord’s Prayer as a summary of devotion, and the Decalogue as a summary of duty are truly Christians and members of the Catholic and universal Church of Christ. That, as was pointed out to him when he said it in a conference to which I shall refer in a moment, would have included Papists and Socinians into the fellowship of the Church, and so it was turned down.

What we have to do is this: we have to discover a position between—the borderline if you like—between “a binding condemnation spoken in the name of the whole Church, and an arbitrary hereticising in the name of a scholastic pedantry.” Let me put that in other language. We have got to avoid the extremes of “an unrestrained or unrestricted laxity and an egotistical rigour.” Those are the extremes between which we have to work—an unrestrained laxity and an egotistical rigor. As I have tried to show, it was the failure to draw that line that led to so much of the trouble during the century which we have been considering.

What is the next step? Well, it seems to me that there is this broad division still, as there was at the time of the Protestant Reformation, between the notion of a general comprehension with Rome, modified but Rome nevertheless, included on the one hand, and an evangelical attitude toward the Church on the other hand. This is the big broad distinction. You had it at the time of the Reformation, but unfortunately, as I have tried to show from the history, they divided up and Protestantism became fragmented. I am suggesting that we now have another opportunity of restoring the true position. There is this big, broad division—the Catholic view, the comprehensive view, the all-inclusive view on the one hand, and the evangelical view which is more restricted and particular on the other hand.

Then, having laid down that broad distinction, I am suggesting that the next step is that we must avoid the danger of being bound by tradition, that we must even avoid the danger of being legalistically bound by the confessions of faith that were drawn up in the sixteenth and the seventeenth centuries. We must remember that the confessions are only subordinate standards. They are not of equal authority with the Scriptures, and we must be careful lest we allow ourselves to be jockeyed into positions in which we are just defending the

confessions of those two centuries at all costs and not facing the realities and the practicalities of the situation in which we find ourselves in this present age and generation.

The American Presbyterians seem to me to provide us with a most instructive and excellent example at this point. The American Presbyterians in the eighteenth century did not hesitate to modify the Westminster Confession. They modified it over the question of the relationship between the Church and the State. They wanted a wholly free Church, a Church that was entirely free, so they modified chapter 20, section 4, chapter 23, section 3, and chapter 30, section 1, of the Westminster Confession.

Now that, to me, is spiritual and biblical thinking. The Westminster Confession was not divinely inspired, and we must be free. We must use these confessions of faith as guides and not allow them to be tyrants. They are not to be rigid codes which we must never vary or change in any respect. Let us use them, let us thank God for them, but let us claim that as Christian people we are born again, that we have the Spirit, and are equally capable of determining the teaching of the Scriptures and the true doctrine with regard to the Church. We must remember that in all these confessions—I trust I have brought this out—there was that historical element; there was the factor of the historical condition at that time because of their peculiar circumstances, and therefore I argue that it would be wrong for us to insist upon adhering to them always in all points and details. We have got to recognize the historical element, and so must examine the confessions in the light of Scripture. The Church must go on being Reformed and she must continue to put herself under the Scriptures.

There is surely a great misuse of the confessions today. Some are dishonestly paying lip-service to them, and then, as has been pointed out, just throwing them into the museum. And there are others, it seems to me, who are fighting a rearguard action by hiding behind them. It is a matter of ecclesiastical policy sometimes rather than truth. I suggest that these are two very bad uses of the confessions and that the honest thing to do is to examine them in the light of Scripture, and to realize that God calls upon us to do this in our day and generation, even as He called upon the Protestant Reformers to do so and the Fathers in the seventeenth century.

I am urging this for this reason, that if we do not avoid the mistake into which they fell we shall also fail; and we have to avoid, in particular, this tragic mistake of going to extremes and insisting upon particulars which are nonessential in a rigorous manner. Take what we have been hearing in this conference this year. Are we not all agreed that the story is a tragic one—the Christian Church divided up, all the troubles and the persecutions and the misunderstandings and the

alienations? We are “the Body of Christ,” the custodians and the guardians of the Faith, and people are dying and going to hell around and about us. It is a tragic story, and we ought to be ashamed of it. I say that the call to us is to learn these lessons and to avoid the mistakes into which they fell. There are many distinctions which we must bear in mind, and which I can merely mention. But we must learn to distinguish between error and heresy, between false teaching and a mistaken belief.

Let me quote Melancthon at this point: “It is possible that we should tolerate as brothers Christians who err but who do not defend the error; yet those cannot be regarded as brothers who promote and defend teachings that have no scriptural foundation.” In other words, you see, there is to be a fundamental division, and I am suggesting that it is still the fundamental one, the division of Catholic and Protestant or a comprehension that includes the Roman Catholics on the one hand and the evangelical, truly Protestant, position on the other. There is this dividing line—“we cannot regard as brothers those who promote and defend teachings that have no scriptural warrant.” I believe we are back very much in the position of the Reformers of the sixteenth century, except that we have this additional factor of modernism and liberalism, and so on, which they did not have to contend with, and which really should not constitute a problem to us at all, for it is not a gospel in any sense. Where then do we draw the line?

Let me quote some of the Puritans. Take Robert Harris: “I will not undertake to define what is so merely fundamental and absolutely necessary to salvation as that without it there is no hope. This much I am sure: First, the fundamentals are fewer than many of both sides make them. Secondly, that every lean-to and superstructure doth not raze the foundation.” They talked about “lean-tos” you see in the seventeenth century! Robert Harris was a member of the Westminster Assembly. He says there that he is quite convinced of this, “that every lean-to and superstructure doth not raze the foundation.” That is the thing to watch, that you do not raze the foundation: then you can be more tolerant about these lean-tos. He says, “Men of humble and of sincere hearts, though differing in opinion can and do walk together, pray together, and love one another.” Surely that is something to which our hearts must respond.

Charles Hulme said: “But for those differences that are among us, whatever they be, let us rather strive to pray them less than argue them more.” Are we ready to say “Amen” to that? Here is another member of the Westminster Assembly—“Let us rather strive to pray them less than to argue them more.” Again he goes on: “However, for the difference between us and our brethren that are for Independency ’tis nothing so great as you seem to conceive it. We do but with Abraham and Lot take several ways. We are, as Abraham speaks,

“brethren” still, and as they were ready to rescue each other on all occasions against the common enemy, our difference ’tis such as doth at most but ruffle a little the fringe and not in any way rend the garment of Christ.” And, surely, this is the position. These differences are about “fringes.” I am talking about true evangelicals—nobody else. The differences are about “fringes” and they “do not rend the garment of Christ.”

Is there any kind of practical proposal therefore that I can put before you? There is, and with this I close. In 1654 Oliver Cromwell—with his idea of Toleration—and the Parliament called upon the divines to define what should be tolerated or indulged among those who profess the fundamentals of Christianity. In effect they said, we have all these divisions and sects and groups; what are the fundamentals of Christianity on which we can have fellowship together? So a committee was set up and the members of the committee were these: Mr. Richard Baxter, Dr. John Owen, Dr. Thomas Goodwin, Dr. Cheynel, Mr. Marshall, Mr. Reyner, Mr. Nye, Mr. Sydrach Simpson, Mr. Vines, Mr. Manton, Mr. Jacomb. As I said earlier, Baxter tried to short-circuit the whole proposal at the beginning by saying that nothing was necessary but the Apostles’ Creed, the Lord’s Prayer, and the Commandments. But that was rejected. Then they proceeded to work, and they produced sixteen articles which they felt stated the fundamentals on which, and on which alone, true fellowship is possible between Protestant evangelical people. Here they are:

1. That the Holy Scripture is that rule of knowing God and living unto Him which whoso does not believe cannot be saved.
2. That there is a God who is the Creator, Governor and Judge of the world, which is to be received by faith, and every other way of the knowledge of Him is insufficient.
3. That this God who is the Creator is eternally distinct from all creatures in His Being and Blessedness.
4. That this God is One in Three Persons or subsistences.
5. That Jesus Christ is the only Mediator between God and Man without the knowledge of whom there is no salvation.
6. That this Jesus Christ is the true God.
7. That this Jesus Christ is also true Man.
8. That this Jesus Christ is God and Man in One Person.
9. That this Jesus Christ is our Redeemer, who by paying a ransom and bearing our sins has made satisfaction for them.
10. That this same Lord Jesus Christ is He that was Crucified at Jerusalem, and rose again and ascended into Heaven.

11. That this same Jesus Christ being the only God and Man in One Person remains for ever a distinct Person from all saints and angels not-withstanding their union and communion with Him.
12. That all men by nature were dead in sins and trespasses, and no man can be saved unless he be born again, repent and believe.
13. That we are justified and saved by grace and faith in Jesus Christ and not by works.
14. That to continue in any known sin upon what pretense or principle soever is damnable.
15. That God is to be worshipped according to His own will, and whosever shall forsake and despise all the duties of His worship cannot be saved.
16. That the dead shall rise, and that there is a day of judgment wherein all shall appear, some to go into everlasting life and some into everlasting condemnation.

There were the sixteen points. We have the authority of Richard Baxter for saying that it was Dr. John Owen who worded those articles, that Dr. Goodwin and Mr. Nye and Mr. Simpson were his assistants, that Dr. Reynolds was the scribe, and that Mr. Marshall, a sober, worthy man did something, but the rest were little better than passive.

Now these articles were designed and intended to exclude not only Deists, Socinians, and Papists, but also Arians, Antinomians, Quakers, and others. What I am asking is this: Cannot we accept those as the fundamentals? Are those not sufficient? We remember, of course, that bishops, deans, and so forth, had been abolished at that time, and therefore did not need to be mentioned; and also that they did not have to contend with a “higher critical” attitude to the Scriptures. They were agreed also in their attitude toward “tradition.” Their object was to define the irreducible minimum on which evangelical people could work together. We, today, need to elaborate some of these statements in view of our peculiar circumstances; but, still, I suggest, we should seek the minimum definition and not the maximum. Then, united on that basis, we can as brethren work together, and meet together for discussion of the matters on which we differ, and for our mutual edification.

Notes

Chapter 1, The Arminian Conflict and the Synod of Dort

1. Joseph and Isaac Milner, The History of the Church of Christ . . . with a Further Continuation to the Present Times, Extracted from The Rev. T. Haweis' Church History (London, 1840), p. 1024.

2. John Goodwin, Redemption Redeemed (London, 1651), p. 396. Augustus M. Toplady suggests that Goodwin intimated that the members of the synod "had before the commencement of their synodical business, taken an oath to condemn the Arminians at all events" (The Works of A. M. Toplady, new ed., 6 vols. [London, 1825], 2:237). Goodwin does not go quite so far, but says he sees the "Interest and Obligation of an Oath working much after the same manner."

3. Richard Baxter, Reliquiae Baxterianae (London, 1696), 1.73.

4. William Cunningham, The Reformers: And the Theology of the Reformation (Edinburgh, 1862), p. 367.

5. H. Hensley Henson comments: "Perhaps the most striking indication of the closeness of the ties which the common dread of Rome created between the Church of England and the other Protestant Churches is the fact that Anglican divines took their places with the members from the United States at the national synod at Dort, summoned in 1618 with the scarcely concealed intention of crushing the Arminians" (Studies in English Religion [London, 1903], p. 28). And again: "When James I died in 1625, Calvinism was still the prevailing belief of religious Englishmen, but there was an anti-Calvinist movement among the clergy which had advanced with extraordinary quickness, and would drive a wedge between the mass of the laity and the more important clergy" (ibid., pp. 29–30).

6. Philip Schaff, A History of the Creeds of Christendom, 3 vols. (London, 1877), 1:509.

7. These may be found in Peter Y. De Jong, ed., Crisis in the Reformed Churches: Essays in Commemoration of the Great Synod of Dort, 1618–1619 (Grand Rapids: Reformed Fellowship, 1968), pp. 207–209; and also, abridged, in Schaff, A History of the Creeds, 3:516ff.

8. Schaff, A History of the Creeds, 3:514.

9. One Scot was included among the members of the synod, but not as a minister of the Church of Scotland: Balcanqual, son of a strongly Presbyterian father, was himself an Episcopalian. David Calderwood, the canonicus and historian of the early Scottish Reformed Church, in 1618 published a pamphlet under the name of Hieronymus Philadelphus, sharply critical of the fact that Scotland was not represented. This only aggravated his already strained relations with King James. David Calderwood, in F. W. Grosheide, G. P. Itterzon, and J. Overduin, eds., Christelijke Encyclopedie, 6 vols. (Kampen: Kok, 1956), 2:75.

10. H. Kaajan, De Groote Synode van Dordrecht in 1618–1619 (Amsterdam: De Standaard, 1918), p. 69.

11. Ibid., pp. 70–71.

12. H. Bouwman, "De bereeken's van de Synode van Dordrecht," De Dordtsche Synode van 1618–1619 (Geref: Traktaatgenootschap, 1918), p. 35; Kaajan, De Groote Synode, p. 52; De Jong, Crisis in the Reformed Churches, pp. 39ff.

13. Others were Bernardus Dwinglo, Johannes Arnoldi Corvinus, Eduardus Poppius, Henricus Hollingerus, and Carolus Niëllius. Kaajan, De Groote Synode, pp. 81ff.; De Jong, Crisis in the Reformed Churches, pp. 220–21.

14. John Hales, op. cit., p. 402.

15. Even A. W. Harrison, generally rather more than sympathetic toward the Arminians and perhaps excessively dependent on Arminian sources, is constrained to admit: "If we consider that the attitude of the Synod, and especially that of its President, towards the Remonstrants was overbearing and unfair we must remember that it was not without provocation. The Remonstrants challenged the validity of the synod itself, adopted an attitude of equality towards their judges and claimed the right to expound their own case in their own way in spite of all arguments and warnings." The Beginnings of Arminianism to the Synod of Dort (London: University of London, 1926), pp. 329–30.

16. Harrison, The Beginnings of Arminianism, p. 329; Kaajan, De Groote Synode, p. 171; Hales, op. cit., pp. 461–62.

17. See the "Life" of Bishop Davenantg in his An Exposition of the Epistle of St. Paul to the Colossians, trans. and ed. Josiah Allport (London, 1831), pp. xviii–xix. Harrison gives further information about Tilenus. The Beginnings of Arminianism, pp. 83, 164, 391, 401.

18. Canons of Dort, 3, 4.8–9.

19. Ibid., 2.5.

20. Ibid., 1.7.

21. Ibid., 1.7, 15. Cf. A. D. R. Polman, "De leer der verwerping van eeuwigheid op de Haagse conferentie van 1611,"in G. C. Berkouwer, Ex Auditu Verbi: Theologische Opstellen Aangeboden aan Prof. Dr. G. C. Berkouwer ter Gelegenheid van zijn vijfentwintigjarig Ambtsjubileum als Hooglerar in de Faculteit der Godgeleerdheid van de Vrije Universiteit te Amsterdam (Kampen: Kok, 1965), pp. 176–93; and also the critique in De Jong, Crisis in Reformed Churches, pp. 33–37.

22. The literature on the Synod of Dort is vast, but in the main not easily accessible to English readers. The works cited above will provide an introduction. One may also refer to the following: William Cunningham, Historical Theology, vol. 2 (Edinburgh, 1864), pp. 371–513; L. H. Wagenaar, Van Strijd en Overwinning (Utrecht, 1909); J. J. van der Schuit, De Dordtsche Synode en het Supra-lapsarisme (Dordrecht, 1937); C. van der Woude, Sibrandus Lubbertus, Leven en Werken: In het Bizonder naar zijn Correspondentie (Kampen: Kok, 1963); H. H. Kuyper, De Post-Acta . . . van de Nationale Synode van Dordrecht (Amsterdam, 1899).

Chapter 2, Arminianisms

1. Compare my introduction to John Owen, The Death of Death in the Death of Christ (London: Banner of Truth, 1959).

2. W. R. Bagnall, in Jacobus Arminius, The Writings of Arminius, 3 vols., trans. James Nichols and W. R. Bagnall (1853; reprint ed., Grand Rapids: Baker, 1956), 1:iii.

3. John Owen, A Display of Arminianism, in The Works of John Owen, ed. William H. Goold, 16 vols. (1850; reprint ed., London:

Banner of Truth, 1965), 10:6.

4. John Fletcher, First Check to Antinomianism (1771), in The Works of . . . John Fletcher . . . of Madeley, 2:232–34.

5. For the Remonstrance, see Henry Scowcroft Bettenson, ed., Documents of the Christian Church (London: Oxford University, 1943), 11.iv; Philip Schaff, The Creeds of Christendom, 1:516ff. (summary and discussion). The Latin canons are in Sylloge Confessionum (Oxford, 1827), pp. 405ff.; and Schaff, The Creeds of Christendom, 3:550ff., with a partial translation. No full English translation seems to exist.

6. A. W. Harrison, The Beginnings of Arminianism to the Synod of Dort (London: University of London, 1926), p. 93.

7. Schaff, The Creeds of Christendom, 1:509.

8. Ibid., 1:659.

9. For the Lambeth Articles, see Charles Hardwick, A History of the Articles of Religion (London, 1859), chap. 7 and app. 5; Schaff, The Creeds of Christendom, 1:658ff., 3:523.

10. The statement quoted from Bishop Bull is in Harmonia Apostolica (1670) (L.A.C.T., 1:57), and is cited from C. FitzSimons Allison, The Rise of Moralism: The Proclamation of the Gospel from Hooker to Baxter (New York: Seabury, 1966), p. 121. Allison's book is an illuminating study of the corruption of the doctrine of justification in the seventeenth century.

11. Letter from Susanna Wesley to John Wesley (1725), in Luke Tyerman, The Life and Times of the Rev. John Wesley, M.A., Founder of the Methodists, 2d ed., 3 vols. (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1872–1875), 1:39–40; Harrison, Arminianism, pp. 189–90; Martin Schmidt, John Wesley: A Theological Biography (London: Epworth, 1962), 1.87–88.

12. John Calvin, Institutes of the Christian Religion, 3.2.7.

13. Compare this definition of faith, from the 1744 Minutes: "First, a sinner is convinced by the Holy Ghost, 'Christ loved me and gave himself for me.' This is that faith by which he is justified or pardoned the moment he receives it. Immediately the same Spirit bears witness, 'Thou art pardoned; thou hast redemption in his blood.' And this is saving faith, whereby the love of God is shed abroad in his heart." Cited from Maximin Piette, John Wesley in the Evolution of Protestantism, trans. J. B. Howard (London: Sheed & Ward, 1938), p. 423.

14. John Wesley, Works (London, 1829), 8:336.

15. John and Charles Wesley, Hymns on God's Everlasting Love, 2d ed. (1756). The phrase "horrible decree" is Wesley's tendentious rendering of John Calvin's description of God's decree of election and reprobation as "horribile"—meaning something awesome, making one tremble, but not something repellent. Calvin, Institutes, 3.23.7.

16. Cited from Colin W. Williams, John Wesley's Theology Today (London: Epworth, 1960), pp. 61–62; Wesley, Works, 8:337–38.

17. Harrison, Arminianism, p. 206.

18. William Ames, De Conscientia, 4.4, Q.4; cited in Latin by William Cunningham, Historical Theology: A Review of the Principal Doctrinal Discussions in the Christian Church since the Apostolic Age, 2 vols. (1870; reprint ed., London: Banner of Truth, 1960): 2:378.

19. For a demonstration of this, see Owen, The Death of Death.

Chapter 3, John Wycliffe: The Evangelical Doctor

1. Herbert B. Workman, John Wyclif: A Study of the English Medieval Church (Oxford: Clarendon, 1926).

2. Kenneth B. MacFarlane, John Wycliffe and the Beginnings of English Nonconformity (London: English Universities, 1952).

3. John A. F. Thompson, The Later Lollards, 1414–1520 (Oxford, 1965).

4. A. G. Dickens, Lollards and Protestants in the Diocese of York, 1509–1558, University of Hull Publications (London: Oxford University, 1959).

5. Margaret E. Aston, "Lollardy and the Reformation: Survival or Revival?" History 49 (1964): 149–70.

6. John Stacey, John Wyclif and Reform (London: Lutterworth, 1964).

7. Gotthard Victor Lechler, John Wiclif and His English Precursors (London, 1878).

8. R. Buddenseig, in John Wyclif, John Wyclif's De Veritate Sacrae Scripturae, ed. R. Buddenseig, 3 vols. (London: Wyclif Society, 1905–1907).

9. J. C. Carrick, Wycliffe and the Lollards (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1908).

10. Lechler, John Wiclif.

11. Ibid.

12. Workman, John Wyclif.

13. Ibid.

14. Buddenseig, in Wyclif, John Wyclif's De Veritate Sacrae Scripturae.

Chapter 4, Puritan Eschatology: 1600–1648

1. Norman Cohn, The Pursuit of the Millennium: Revolutionary Millenarians and Mystical Anarchists of the Middle Ages (London: Paladin, 1970).

2. John Calvin, Institutes of the Christian Religion, 3.25.

3. Martin Chemnitz (1522–1586) was a Lutheran theologian and the author of Examen Concilii Tridentini.

4. Robert Baillie, A Dissuasive from the Errours of the Time (London, 1645), p. 224.

5. Joseph Mede, The Key of the Revelation Searched and Demonstrated Out of the Naturall and Proper Characters of the Visions, in The Works of J. Mede (London, 1675), pp. 602ff.

6. J. Bass Mullinger, A History of the University of Cambridge (London, 1888), vol. 3.

7. John Archer, The Personall Reigne of Christ upon Earth (London, 1642), p. 2.

8. See Peter Toon, "Advice to the Churches in 1654," Gospel Magazine (Dec. 1968).

9. For example, Caspar Olevianus, De Substantia Foederis (Geneva, 1585), pp. 154ff.

10. I am grateful to Professor R. Clouse of Indiana University, the Rev. A. Dallison of Aberdeen, the Rev. I. Murray of Dulwich Village, and Mr. Lewis Lupton of Chiswick for their kind help.

Chapter 5, John Fletcher: An Arminian Upholder of Holiness

1. F. L. Cross, "Fletcher, John William," The Oxford Dictionary of the Christian Church, ed. F. L. Cross (London: Oxford University, 1957).

2. For further reading in secondary sources (in alphabetical order by author): Joseph Benson, The Life of the Rev. John W. de la Flechere . . . (London, 1804); Robert Cox, The Life of the Rev. John William Fletcher, Late Vicar of Madeley, Shropshire, 2d ed. (London, 1825); Thomas E. Gill, The Life of Mrs. Fletcher (London, 1845); Joshua Gilpin, Biographical Notes on Fletcher (1794); Wilfred M. Hopkins, Fletcher of Madeley (King's Lynn, 1898); George Lawton, Shropshire Saint: A Study in the Ministry and Spirituality of Fletcher of Madelay (London: Epworth, 1960); Frederic William Macdonald, Fletcher of Madeley (London, 1885); Jabez Marrat, The Vicar of Madeley, John Fletcher: A Biographical Study (London: Kelly, 1902); Mary Bosanquet, The Life of Mrs. Mary Fletcher, Consort and Relict of the Rev. John Fletcher . . ., ed. Henry Moore (London, 1818); E. E. Phelps, The Power of a Holy Life (1870); [J. Randall], A Short but Comprehensive Sketch of the Lives and Usefulness of the Rev. J. W. and Mary Fletcher (Madeley, 1879); Abraham Scott, "The Life of John Fletcher," in John Fletcher, Works of the Rev. John Fletcher, ed. Abraham Scott (London, 1830); T. A. Seed, John and Mary Fletcher: Typical Methodist Saints, Library of Methodist Biography (London: Kelly, 1906); Oswald J. Smith, The Lives of Brainerd and Fletcher (London: Marshall, Morgan & Scott, 1965); Luke Tyerman, Wesley's Designated Successor: The Life, Letters and Literary Labours of the Rev. John William Fletcher (London, 1882); John Wesley, Life of the Rev. J. W. Fletcher (London, 1786). See also the entry for Fletcher by J. H. Overton in Dictionary of National Biography (1889), 19:312–14; the obituary in The Gentleman's Magazine 55 (1785); and the entry in Christian Biography (1853). For works by Fletcher, see The Works of . . . John Fletcher . . . of Madeley, 7 vols. (London, 1826); Christian Letters (1779); and Christ Manifested: or, The Manifestations of the Son of God, ed. David R. Smith (Letchworth: Garden City, 1968).

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2. Henry Scougal, The Life of God in the Soul of Man (London: Inter-Varsity, 1961).

3. Augustus Montague Toplady, Diary and Selection of Hymns of Augustus Toplady (Leicester: Harpenden, 1969).

4. J. C. Ryle, The Christian Leaders of England in the Eighteenth Century (London, 1868); abridged reprint ed., Five Christian Leaders of the Eighteenth Century (London: Banner of Truth, 1960).

Chapter 7, German Pietism and the Evangelical Revival

1. E.g., H. F. R. Catherwood, The Christian Citizen (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1969), pp. 11–13.

2. E.g., Martin Schmidt: "Speners Pia Desideria," Jahrbuch der Kirchlichen Hochschule Berlin 3 (1951); "Das Hallische Waisenhaus und England im 18. Jahrhundert," Theologische Zeitschrift 7 (1951); "Speners Wiedergeburtslehre," Theologische Literaturzeitung 76 (1951); "England und der deutsche Pietismus," Evangelische Theologie 13 (1953); "Spener and Luther," Luther-Jahrbuch 24 (1957). Erich Beyreuther: "Vom Ursprung des deutschen Pietismus," Evangelische Theologie 11 (1951); "Augustus Hermann Francke und die Anfänge der ökumenischen Bewegung (Leipzig, 1957); Werden und Reifen des jungen Reichsgrafen (1957); Zinzendorf und die sich allhier beisammen finden (Marburg an der Lahn: Francke, 1959).

3. Cf. James I. Good, History of the Reformed Church in Germany, 1620–1890 (Reading, PA, 1894), p. 11.

4. F. Ernest Stoeffler, The Rise of Evangelical Pietism (Leiden: Brill, 1965), pp. 50–51.

5. See H. Heppe, Geschichte des Pietismus und der Mystik in der Reformierten Kirche namentlich der Niederlande (Leiden, 1879). The introduction contains a brilliant delineation and comparison of Pietism and Mysticism.

6. Stoeffler, The Rise of Evangelical Pietism, pp. 156–57.

7. Heppe, Geschichte des Pietismus und der Mystik, pp. 240–374; Stoeffler, The Rise of Evangelical Pietism, pp. 162–68; Albrecht Ritschl, Geschichte des Pietismus, 3 vols. (Bonn, 1880–1886), 1:194–268.

8. Stoeffler, The Rise of Evangelical Pietism, pp. 178–79.

9. See Andrew Landale Drummond, German Protestantism since Luther (London: Epworth, 1951); Horst Weigelt, Pietismus-Studien, vol. 1 (Stuttgart: Calwer, 1965), pp. 27–28.

10. See August Tholuck, Das kirchliche Leben des siebzehnten Jahrhunderts (Berlin, 1862), pp. 41–83. This is the second and final volume in Tholuck's monumental work Vorgeschichte des Rationalismus.

11. Stoeffler, The Rise of Evangelical Pietism, p. 236.

12. Cf. Ritschl, Geschichte des Pietismus, 2:144–50.

13. Schmidt, "Speners Pia Desideria," p. 76.

14. See Beyreuther, A. H. Franke 1663–1727, chap. 10.

15. Drummond, German Protestantism since Luther, pp. 56–57.

16. Cit. Charles Stanford, Philip Doddridge, D.D. (London, 1880), p. 129.

17. Cf. Weigelt's discussion of the origin of the term. Pietismus-Studien, pp. 19–20.

18. See E. Braund, "The Religious Societies," Evangelical Magazine 12 (1961): pp. 23–24.

19. See Beyreuther, A. H. Franke und die Anfänge, passim. An English biography of Franke is Heinrich E. F. Guericke, The Life of Augustus Herman Frank (London, 1847). Two volumes by Gustav Kramer are standard works: (1) Beiträge zur Geschichte August Hermann Francke's enhaltend den Briefwechsel Francke's und Spener's (Halle, 1861) and (2) August Hermann Francke: Ein Lebensbild, 2 vols. (Halle, 1880–1882).

20. John Wesley, John Wesley's Journal, July 1738.

21. See J. H. Stringer, Seventeenth Century Influences on the Evangelical Revival of the Eighteenth Century (London Bible College Annual Lecture, 1955), p. 11; Richard Bennett, The Early Life of Howell Harris (London: Banner of Truth, 1962), pp. 85–86;

John Richard Andrews, George Whitefield: A Light Rising in Obscurity (London, 1864), pp. 38–39, 72; George Whitefield, George Whitefield's Journals (London: Banner of Truth, 1960), p. 334.

22. George Müller, The Diary of George Müller, ed. A. J. Rendle Short (London: Pickering & Inglis, 1954), pp. 21, 45–47.

23. See Schmidt, Das Hallische Waisenhaus, pp. 39–40.

24. See Kramer, August Hermann Francke, 2:58–59.

25. Proceedings of the Wesley Historical Society, vol. 11, p. 3.

26. Wesley, John Wesley's Journal, Aug. 1, 1742.

27. Stringer, Seventeenth Century Influences, p. 11.

28. A. G. Spangenberg's biography of the Count appeared in 1772–1775; the English translation in 1838. Cf. J[oseph] E[dmund] Hutton, A History of the Moravian Church, 2d ed. (London: Moravian, 1909); Gerhard A. Wauer, The Beginnings of the Brethren's Church (Moravians) in England: A Chapter of the Commerce of Thought between Germany and England (London: Moravian, 1901).

29. Cit. Kramer, August Hermann Francke, 2:106.

30. Beyreuther, A. J. Francke und die Anfäge, p. 209.

31. Hutton, A History of the Moravian Church, pp. 390–91.

32. Ibid., pp. 286–87.

33. Wesley, John Wesley's Journal, Oct. 17, 1735, and onwards.

34. Hutton, A History of the Moravian Church, pp. 293–94.

35. Philipp Jakob Spener, Pia Desideria, ed. Kurt Aland (Berlin: de Gruyter, 1940), 34.1; Spener, Der hochwichtige Articul von der Wiedergeburt: Dero Ursachen, Mittel, Art, Pflichten, Wurden, Kennzeichen und ubrigen dahin gehorigen Materieu . . . in sechs und sechzig Wochen-Predigten . . ., 2d ed. (Frankfurt am Main, 1715), p. 153.

36. For a detailed analysis of John Wesley's translation work from the German, see J. L. Nuelsen, John Wesley und das deutsche Kirchenlied, History of Methodism, vol. 4 (Historical Society of the Methodist Episcopal Church of America, 1938).

37. See Wesley, John Wesley's Journal, June-August, 1738.

38. See Clifford W. Towlson, Moravian and Methodist: Relationships and Influences in the Eighteenth Century (London: Epworth, 1957), pp. 77–78.

39. Ibid., pp. 184–95, 236–38.

40. Wesley, John Wesley's Journal, June 15, 1741.

41. Hutton deals at length with the so-called Battle of the Books. A History of the Moravian Church, pp. 332–66.

42. See Andrews, George Whitefield, pp. 123, 311–12, 321, 423.

43. Klaas Runia, Reformation Today (1968): 40–41.

44. Ibid., pp. 41–42.

45. Ibid., p. 43.

46. Hutton, A History of the Moravian Church, p. 252.

Chapter 8, The Doctrine of Justification among the Puritans

1. G. C. Berkouwer, Faith and Justification (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1954), p. 17.

2. Robert Traill, Vindication of the Protestant Doctrine Concerning Justification, in The Works of the Late Reverend Robert Traill, 3 vols. (Glasgow, 1795), 1:313.

3. Traill, Vindication of the Protestant Doctrine, p. 332.

4. "The forsaking of the doctrine of justification by faith in Christ's righteousness, hath been the first step of apostasy in many, who have not stopped till they revolted from Christianity itself." Ibid., p. 333.

5. Ibid., p. 332.

6. John Owen, The Doctrine of Justification by Faith (1677), in The Works of John Owen, ed. William H. Goold, 16 vols. (1850; reprint ed., London: Banner of Truth, 1965), 5:4.

7. Traill, Vindication of the Protestant Doctrine, pp. 313–314.

8. Ibid., pp. 321, 329.

9. Decrees of the Council of Trent, 6.7, cf. 5.5. Both are translated in C. F. Allison, The Rise of Moralism: The Proclamation of the Gospel from Hooker to Baxter (London: S.P.C.K., 1966), pp. 213–14. Allison has assembled much thought-provoking material about the doctrine of justification in the seventeenth century.

10. Among the Anglicans were Richard Hooker; Bishops George Downame, John Davenant, James Ussher, Robert Hall, Thomas Barlow, John Bramhall, William Beveridge, and Thomas Tuloly. Among the Presbyterians and later non-conformists were Anthony Burgess, John Owen, and Robert Traill.

11. "It is entirely by the intervention of Christ's righteousness that we obtain justification before God. This is equivalent to saying that man is not just in himself, but that the righteousness of Christ is communicated to him by imputation, while he is strictly deserving of punishment. Thus vanishes the absurd dogma, that man is justified by faith inasmuch as faith brings him under the influence of the Spirit of God, by whom he is rendered righteous." John Calvin, Institutes of the Christian Religion, 3.11.23. See also Calvin's discussion of session 6 of the Council of Trent, in his Tracts and Treatises, 3 vols. (1844; reprint ed., Edinburgh: Oliver and Boyd, 1958), 3:108ff., especially pp. 114–21.

12. Westminster Confession of Faith, 11.1.

13. Ibid., 11.2.

14. George Smeaton, The Doctrine of the Holy Spirit, 2d ed. (Edinburgh, 1889), pp. 327–28.

15. In the Westminster Confession, "Of Effectual Calling" (chap. 10) precedes "Of Justification" (chap. 11). The first two sections of chapter 10 read as follows: (1) "All those whom God hath predestinated unto life, and those only, he is pleased, in his appointed and accepted time, effectually to call, by his word and Spirit, out of that state of sin and death in which they are by nature, to grace and

salvation by Jesus Christ; enlightening their minds spiritually and savingly to understand the things of God; taking away their heart of stone, and giving unto them an heart of flesh; renewing their wills, and by his almighty power determining them to that which is good; and effectually drawing them to Jesus Christ; yet so as they come most freely, being made willing by his grace." (2) "This effectual call is of God's free and special grace alone, not from any thing at all foreseen in man; who is altogether passive therein, until, being quickened and renewed by the Holy Spirit, he is thereby enabled to answer this call, and to embrace the grace offered and conveyed in it."

16. Westminster Confession of Faith, 7.3.

17. Ibid., 11.4.

18. A clear if unsympathetic summary of Antinomian tenets, viewed as so many deviations from Reformed orthodoxy, is given in James Buchanan, The Doctrine of Justification (Edinburgh, 1867), pp. 171ff. The main Antinomian authors were John Eaton, Henry Denne, Robert Towne, John Saltmarsh, and (in the view of some) Tobias Crisp.

19. Westminster Confession of Faith, 11.5.

20. John Goodwin: Imputatio Fidei (London, 1642); An Exposition of the Ninth Chapter of the Epistle to the Romans (London, 1653); Redemption Redeemed (London, 1840); The Banner of Justification Displayed (London, 1659).

21. George Bull, Harmonia Apostolica, Library of Anglo-Catholic Theology (Oxford, 1842), 1:58; quoted in Allison, The Rise of Moralism, chap. 6, "The Theology of George Bull."

22. A. W. Harrison, Arminianism (London: Duckworth, 1937), p. 111. Amyraldism is evaluated (under the name "Post-redemptionism") in B. B. Warfield, The Plan of Salvation, rev. ed. (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1935), pp. 90–96.

23. Cf. Peter Toon, The Emergence of Hyper-Calvinism in English Nonconformity, 1689–1765 (London: Olive Tree, 1967), chap. 3, for details of the story.

24. Robert Traill, Vindication of the Protestant Doctrine Concerning Justification, and of Its Preachers and Professors, from the Unjust Charge of Antinomianism: In a Letter from the Author, to a Minister in the Countrey (London, 1692).

25. George Whitefield, Sermons on Important Subjects: By the Rev. George Whitefield, A.M. (London, 1832), pp. 207ff.

Chapter 9, The Death of Presbyterianism

1. Journal of the Presbyterian Historical Society, May 1965 and 1969. One of the articles is George Yule, "Some Problems in the History of Presbyterians in the Seventeenth Century" (May 1965).

2. A. H. Drysdale, History of the Presbyterians in England: Their Rise, Decline and Revival (London, 1889).

3. Herbert S. Skeats and Charles S. Miall, History of the Free Churches of England, 1688–1891 (London, 1891), p. 248.

4. C. Gordon Bolam et al., The English Presbyterians: From Elizabethan Puritanism to Modern Unitarianism (London: Allen & Unwin, 1968).

5. Journal of the Presbyterian Historical Society, May 1965 and 1969.

6. Iain H. Murray, ed., The Reformation of the Church: A Collection of Reformed and Puritan Documents on Church Issues (Edinburgh: Banner of Truth, 1965), p. 85.

7. Cited from Drysdale, History of the Presbyterians, p. 143.

8. Charles E. Surman, Classical Presbyterianism in England 1643–1660.

9. Thomason Tracts, E.371.

10. Richard Baxter, Reliquiae Baxterianae (London, 1696), 1.278.

11. Yule, "Some Problems in the History of Presbyterians."

12. James Ussher, The Reduction of Episcopacy . . . (Edinburgh, 1689).

13. Robert Baillie, Letters and Journals, 2 vols. (Edinburgh, 1775), 1:286–87.

14. Ibid., 1:303.

15. Ibid., 2:117.

16. H.M.C. Portland, 1:296ff.

17. Baillie, Letters and Journals, 2:362.

18. John Bastwick, Independency Not God's Ordinance (London, 1645).

19. Murray, The Reformation of the Church, p. 179.

20. William Bradshaw, English Puritanisme: Containening the Maine Opinions of the Rigidest Sort of Those That Are Called Puritanes in the Realme of England (London, 1605).

21. Thomas Goodwin et al., An Apologeticall Narration (London, 1643). [By the 5 independents present at the Westminster Assembly.]

22. Paul Baynes, The Diocesans Tryall (London, 1621).

23. Cf. Janet G. Macgregor, The Scottish Presbyterian Polity: A Study of Its Origins in the Sixteenth Century (Edinburgh: Oliver and Boyd, 1926); and Journal of the Presbyterian Historical Society, 2:128.

24. Thomas Goodwin, Apologeticall Narration (1643), cited in Bolam et al., The English Presbyterians, p. 41.

25. Baxter, Reliquiae Baxterianae, 1:3.

26. Robert Wodrow, The History of the Sufferings of the Church of Scotland from the Restoration to the Revolution, ed. Robert Burns, 4 vols. (Glasgow, 1828–1830), 1:54.

27. See Roger Thomas, "Comprehension and Indulgence," in Geoffrey F. Nuttall et al., eds., The Beginnings of Nonconformity (London: James Clarke, 1964).

28. Cited from Matthew Henry, The Life of the Rev. Philip Henry, ed. J[ohn] B[ickerton] Williams (London, 1839), chap. 6.

29. Baxter, Reliquiae Baxterianae, 2:523.

30. Ibid., 1:110.

31. Richard Baxter, Aphorisms of Justification (1640), pp. 69, 72.

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