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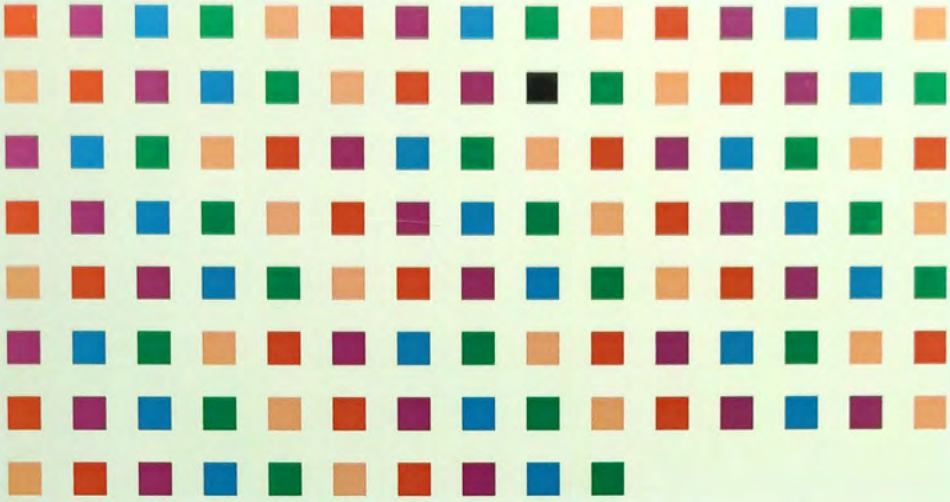


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Editorial

The History of the Church is essentially the story of what God has done through His Son and His gospel, and the Bible often emphasizes the enduring benefits of remembering and referring to what God has done in the past:

- ◊ our safeguard against sin *(Deuteronomy 17:17)*
- ◊ our security in times of trouble *(Psalm 46:8)*
- ◊ our support in times of struggle *(Psalm 77:10)*
- ◊ our strength in times of praise *(Psalm 66:5)*

The emphasis of our meetings in 2011 followed both a spiritual and practical progression commencing with the gospel proceeding to mission and then to the establishing of the gospel within the context of the local church.

"Spurgeon and the Cross" is a subject that will always attract great interest and in March Dr Maurice Dowling emphasised the centrality of the cross in both the influences upon Spurgeon's life and faith and the impact of his ministry.

At our May meeting Dr Ken Scott presented a paper on the life of William Carey. Persuaded that the church is under obligation to obey the Great Commission, Carey's call to evangelize 'the heathen' provoked strong feelings both for and against. His vision, determination and perseverance has had an enduring effect upon the church to go into all the world and preach the gospel.

Dunseverick Baptist Church, located on the North Coast, was founded in 1935 and in October Mr Alastair McCaw, a member of the church, related the various individuals and incidents that have made the church what it is today, with the main emphasis on preaching the gospel, first reaching out to the immediate area and then spreading out along the North Coast combining both Spurgeon's passion for the cross and Carey's passion for mission all for the glory of God.

About Our Contributors

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MD studied languages at Cambridge (where he became a Christian) and Prague. He then did three years at IBC after which he was appointed a tutor (1973). Since then he has taught a wide range of subjects - Old Testament, New Testament, Biblical languages, church history, doctrine, world religions, and even some philosophy. Over the past twenty years he has regularly visited the countries of the former Soviet Union, teaching and ministering in Bible Colleges, seminaries and churches. Maurice is married to Brenda and they have four children. Maurice and Brenda are members of Mountpottinger church where Maurice has served as an elder since 1988.

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Alastair McCaw

Alastair McCaw was born in Dervock, County Antrim in May, 1961 and has been employed in the construction Industry since 1983. Alastair trusted in the Lord in 1979 during a gospel mission conducted by two Faith Mission pilgrims in the village of Stranocum where he now lives with wife Paula and three daughters, Ruth(21), Naomi(18) and Hannah(9). Alastair has been a member of Dunseverick Baptist Church since 1982 and in 2010 published the book commemorating the 75 year history of the Church.



Spurgeon and the Cross

Maurice Dowling

Will the real Mr Spurgeon stand up, please? The Spurgeon I present in this paper is based principally on a wide selection of the vast number of sermons published in the *New Park Street Pulpit* and the *Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit*, and it deals specifically with the theme of the work of Christ. It would be impossible to cover every reference to the Cross in these sources, let alone the many other publications which issued from Spurgeon's pen, but even from a selection it is clear that, from the beginning of his preaching career just after his conversion in 1850 right to his death in 1892, Spurgeon's theology and preaching were constantly and consistently marked by the 'crucicentrism' which, as David Bebbington has taught us, was (and is) a major feature of evangelicalism.[1]

The Spurgeon we know is the Spurgeon in print. What is impossible to recapture is the impact of his spoken words on the original hearers (although we are now helped to a small extent by a dramatised portrayal of his life available in a DVD produced by Christian Television Association[2]). All the accounts of Spurgeon's life stress the dramatic impact which the 'boy preacher' had on the London of his day and the range of reactions to him among his contemporaries right to the end of his life. Owen Chadwick's comments are probably a fair example of the mixed attitude of many people both then and now:

> "Spurgeon was a very extraordinary man. It is less astounding that he gathered a congregation of 4,000 to 5,000 than that he kept it so long. He had little personal magic and commanded devotion only from intimates. Outside the pulpit he was fat, podgy, unimpressive."

And Chadwick ascribes to Lord Houghton, one of the distinguished literary and society figures of Victorian Britain, a remark to the effect that Spurgeon put him in mind of a barber's assistant.[3] We don't have Mr Spurgeon's physical presence, but reading the sermons now one is struck not only by the strength of his theology but also by the nature and quality of Spurgeon's language: the many biblical, classical and historical allusions, and occasional Latin phrases [4] – all of which modern

congregations might find hard to identify – and generally a form of language which at times we would probably find remote and indeed unnatural or stilted. Of course, people do not write or speak English as they did in the nineteenth century (witness, for example, the Brontë sisters or Mark Twain). In part this remoteness may be due to the editing process, but there is no reason to doubt that Spurgeon in the pulpit often expressed himself in a very florid and dramatic style – and not least on the subject of the Cross – nor that his congregations found his words riveting. What is also not in doubt is that he became both 'a personality of national standing' and 'a man who bestrode the globe'.[5]

Spurgeon and the Puritan tradition

In a sermon of 1873 Spurgeon reports: 'I have found myself dubbed in the public prints by the honourable title of *Ultimus Puritanorum*.' [6] His sardonic comments indicate that he would not have claimed the title for himself but he often expressed admiration for and indebtedness to the Puritan tradition, 'the old-fashioned puritanical theology, the gospel of Calvin, the gospel of Augustine, the gospel of Paul, the gospel of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ'.[7] The Puritan influence on C H Spurgeon is obvious. One feature of the Puritan legacy is the high value placed on preaching itself, and particularly the message of salvation through Christ alone. The shift of focus from the altar to the pulpit is an obvious product of the Reformation. In his study of the Zurich Reformer Ulrich Zwingli, G R Potter comments:

> "The great age of the sermon was just opening: it was to be the most powerful instrument of the coming century. The word was power." [8]

Of the Swiss Reformer himself Potter says: 'Even more than Luther, Zwingli valued preaching very highly and was indefatigable in the pulpit.' [9] Furthermore, he adds that, from the beginning of his ministry in Zurich, Zwingli's preaching

> "... was already, as it always remained, basically and fundamentally Christ-centred. The Cross, and all that it meant, was never absent: the tidings were of eternal salvation." [10]

The English Puritans were very much kindred spirits of Zwingli and their preaching activities (the 'prohesyings') 'did more than any other agency to propagate and establish the new religion in Elizabethan England.' [11] A recent study of Jeremiah Burroughs (c.1600-1646) emphasizes the high view of preaching which 'stemmed from the Puritan belief that it was *the* method that God ordained in Scripture to fulfil his purpose.' [12] In particular, 'the Puritan preacher never left his hearers without clear directions how to escape out of the misery of sin and avoid the wrath of God...Christ alone as the all-sufficient One is to be found in a multitude of Puritan sermons under a vast array of topics.' [13] The greatest of Puritan classics, John Bunyan's *The Pilgrim's Progress*, was a book which Spurgeon knew well from childhood, and to which he

refers time and again in his sermons. In his biography Peter Morden refers to a claim made by Spurgeon that he had read it at least a hundred times.[14] One often overlooked feature of Bunyan's book is its 'crucicentrism' – it is the Cross alone which makes the Pilgrim's journey (the old meaning of 'progress') possible.

In yet another important respect Spurgeon can be seen as the heir of the Puritans. In his study of seventeenth-century English Puritanism John Spurr speaks of 'the oppositional nature of the Puritan, an individual fundamentally at odds with the world'.[15] This sort of comment might further the common misconception that Puritans were simply fault-finders, the 'awkward squad', but Spurgeon for one felt that in contemporary theology and church life there was indeed much that had to be opposed, and so it had always been. For him one of the inspiring figures of Church History was – and Spurgeon quotes the traditional Latin tag – *Athanasius contra mundum*.[16] The phrase is found, significantly enough, in a sermon of 1887 when Spurgeon was already long convinced that, amongst other issues, the doctrine of the atonement now needed to be defended as stoutly as the Alexandrian Patriarch had defended the deity of Christ.[17]

Spurgeon and Rome

Hostility towards Roman Catholicism was another aspect of the Puritan tradition which Spurgeon shared. Spurr writes that for Puritans:

> "The Church of Rome was one of Satan's strongholds and puritans saw Roman Catholicism as the epitome of the unholy... [The] absolute identification of the papacy with Antichrist was characteristic of Puritans. And as the [seventeenth] century advanced and the Church of England became less insistent on the identification, the Puritans were consequently more clearly defined by their holding fast to this belief."[18]

Spurgeon's earlier sermons in particular include many negative comments about 'the thick darkness of Rome',[19] 'the abominations of Rome'.[20] Catholic priests are 'the shavelings of Antichrist'.[21] 'No man shall take precedence of me in my abhorrence of the thrice accursed doctrines of the harlot of Rome.'[22] Many of Spurgeon's negative comments have a historical context relating to the stand which the sixteenth-century Reformers took against Rome. However, he is also concerned about the influence of Rome in his own day. In the famous (or notorious!) 'Baptismal Regeneration' sermon of 1864 he says: 'It is a most fearful fact, that *in no age since the Reformation has Popery made such fearful strides in England as during the past few years*.'[23] Spurgeon was by no means alone in thinking like this. Many English Protestants – of whatever colouring, but particularly evangelicals – were shocked by the increase in the government's grant to the Catholic seminary at Maynooth in 1845, and even more by the so-called 'papal aggression' of 1850-51 when Pope Pius IX restored the hierarchy of the Catholic Church in England and Wales.[24] The latter episode, which

occurred about the time of Spurgeon's conversion and the commencement of his preaching ministry, is mentioned in passing in one of his sermons of 1861:

> "We shall have to do battle in our new Tabernacle more nearly with that old enemy of the church, the Scarlet Beast: Rome has built one of its batteries hard by our place, and there is one who styles himself, "Archbishop of Southwark". Well, we shall have to do battle against him, and woe to thee Babylon! Woe to thee Babylon. Let but Christ be preached and where is Anti-Christ? Let the cross be lifted up and away with your crucifixes." [25]

The last remark draws attention to what is often Spurgeon's chief complaint against Roman Catholicism. Roman teaching, he believed, obliterated the uniqueness and the true significance of the Cross. 'Papist' religion undermines the value of Christ's sacrifice because such religion 'is merit and payment from beginning to end'.[26] The veneration of the crucifix is for him symbolic of Rome's obscuring of the true meaning of Christ crucified and risen, as well as being an example of her idolatry.[27] The doctrine of purgatory is another example of Rome's failure to understand and to teach the true meaning of the Cross.[28] Rome, he says in a sermon of 1878, has 'set up the mass in the place of the sacrifice of Christ, and her priests in the room of the one Great High Priest'.[29] In a sermon of 1870 he says:

> "The Romanists tell us that they continue to present the sacrifice of Christ in the unbloody sacrifice of the mass; but this is a mere invention of their priests. Our Lord once appeared to put away sin, and thereby perfected for ever them that are sanctified; what are ye at, ye pretenders to His name, would ye add to what is perfect? Do ye put sin away again after the Great High Priest has put it away once for all? Away, ye sons of Antichrist!" [30]

Referring to Genesis 4 in a sermon of 1872 he commends those who bring the kind of sacrifice which Abel offered, namely those who rely on the Lamb of God prefigured by Abel's offering; on the other hand,

> "... unto any who bring a bloodless sacrifice, such as the Cainites of Rome foolishly do when they offer the unbloody sacrifice of the mass, unto them hath God no respect, and never can have." [31]

Similarly in 1886:

> "Look how that fable of the church of Rome concerning her unbloody sacrifice of the mass really insults the one great sacrifice of Calvary, and sets it on one side." [32]

It is bad enough that Rome should be teaching such errors and that her hierarchy should have established itself anew in Britain, a land that is no longer as 'enthusiastically Antipapal' [33] as it once was. What makes matters worse is the 'quackery' of Ritualism,[34] the influence of the 'doting ritualists',[35] 'those cubs of the old Roman monster'.[36] Ritualism is 'Anglicized Popery';[37] it 'has now grown to be undisguised Popery'.[38] Rome and 'the Puseyites' are 'two harlots' making a league

together, both of them 'apostate churches'.[39] In 1879 Spurgeon warns of dire consequences if, amongst other ills, 'a bastard popery is to be allowed to occupy our national churches'.[40] The Vicar of Bray, always adjusting to the prevailing winds, has once again become a familiar type.[41] Spurgeon laments what he calls 'the almost universal tendency of our countrymen towards Popery', a Popery that has planted itself 'in the enclosure of the national church'.[42] The spiritual life of the land is seriously threatened by the kind of false religion represented in a heady mixture of 'Brahminists, Romanists, Puseyites and other idolaters'.[43] And such a state of affairs is possible because: 'You may find evangelicals asleep, but you will not find ritualists slumbering'.[44] The many references in the sermons make clear what complaint Spurgeon has against this trend in the English Church. Like Rome, Ritualism with its 'rites and ceremonies' [45] and its 'priestcraft' [46] greatly distorts the truth of the Christian message and suggests that the way to God and to finding acceptance with God is something other than the Cross of Christ. At times it is not clear whether Spurgeon in a particular passage is fulminating against Rome, Ritualism or both. His hearers and readers would probably have understood both to be the targets of the following tirade of 1878:

> "He of the Seven Hills has nothing but maledictions for the pure gospel of Jesus, and with him stand a hierarchy clothed with terrible power, and a troop of Jesuits who stick at nothing. Completely organized, numerous, subtle, all pervading, the warriors of Rome are a great host, and not to be lightly thought upon. See how superstition multiplies in this land. See how the builders, appointed by the state to build up a Protestant church [the Anglican hierarchy?], are pulling it down with both hands. These, forsooth, are priests, clergy, – God's heritage! And what are they doing? Uplifting an idolatrous crucifix in the place of the doctrine of the cross; setting sacraments in the room of the precious blood, and preaching salvation by their own priestcraft instead of salvation by the grace of God through Jesus Christ." [47]

As his biographer Lewis Drummond has said, 'Spurgeon at times did give himself to hyperboles'.[48] Despite all the anti-Romanism Spurgeon was prepared to make a rather interesting concession. He said that, while he held out no hope for the salvation of a 'Unitarian', nevertheless

> "I can understand a man getting into heaven as a Roman Catholic, notwithstanding all his errors, because he believes in the divinity of Christ and relies on the expiatory sacrifice of his death, with whatever superstitions his creed may be overlaid." [49]

Spurgeon and 'the modern witcheries' [50]

Spurgeon was acutely aware of the shifting and conflicting patterns in Protestant theology: 'We are assailed by all sorts of new doctrines...I expect to hear tidings of

some new doctrine once a week.' [51] 'Put two mere theologians together, and they will fight like Kilkenny cats.' [52] In his sermons he frequently refers to the challenges presented by 'this age of unbelief' which for him is marked in particular by the rejection of Christ's Cross.[53] In 1858 he spoke of 'a crisis of religious affairs' [54] which was caused by people turning their backs on what God had revealed. Less than a year before his death he could still say: 'This is an age when men assail the inspiration of the Bible, the atoning sacrifice, and the election of grace.' [55] Regularly in his sermons he takes issue with 'neology',[56] 'these modern theologians',[57] 'the modern babblers',[58] 'the pretty nothings of modern thought',[59] 'the Broad men',[60] the 'revolutionists' who would 'tear away every covenant blessing from the children of God in their zeal to make the punishment of sin a trifle',[61] the preachers – some of them 'members and ministers of evangelical denominations who do not believe evangelical doctrine' – who 'put a quarter of a grain of gospel into an Atlantic of talk,'[62] the 'philosophical divines' who deny the Atonement and who 'would rob you of your only hope of heaven',[63] 'the last new novels in modern theology for they are mere novels and nothing better' [64] and especially 'this modern zeal to conceal the justice of God and hide the punishment of sin'.[65] In a sermon of 1886 he says:

> "Modern theology has for its main object the obscuration of the doctrine of atonement. These modern cuttle-fishes make the water of life black with their ink. They make out sin to be a trifle, and the punishment of it to be a temporary business; and thus they degrade the remedy by underrating the disease." [66]

And in one from the following year:

> "As the Roman sentinel in Pompeii stood to his post even when the city was destroyed, so do I stand to the truth of the atonement though the church is being buried beneath the boiling mud-showers of modern heresy." [67]

Spurgeon is usually not very strong on detail. There are occasional references to 'a doctrine of atonement which ... comes from Germany, which needs a man to be a great scholar before he can comprehend it himself',[68] 'Germany, with her metaphysical scepticism',[69] 'the unbelief of Germany' which, he says, is 'being repeated' in Britain.[70] There is very occasionally a comment about F D Maurice, Alexander Scott, McLeod Campbell, and James Baldwin Brown,[71] or about 'Colensoism.' [72] There are regular references to the dangers of 'Socinianism' [73] or 'Unitarianism'.[74] In the volumes of 1887-88 there are occasional (usually oblique) references to the Downgrade Controversy,[75] with the main battles being fought by Spurgeon through the pages of *The Sword and the Trowel.*

Even if not always explained in detail, a multitude of other extracts could be adduced to show that, for Spurgeon, one of the most damaging of aspects of modern thought was the rejection of the atoning sacrifice of Christ. 'Modern philosophers will accept anything except the bleeding Substitute for guilty man.' [76] Adapting the words of Exodus 12:9 he attacks those who reject Christ, the Lamb of God, and his atoning

sacrifice, and who 'present the lamb sodden in the water of their own speculations'; they 'boil out the soul of the gospel by their carnal wisdom' and 'stew down the most important of all the truths of revelation.' [77]

> Their atonement is not the vicarious sacrifice, but a performance of something they are long in defining. They have a theory which is like the relics of meat after months of boiling, all strings and fibres.[78]

Adapting the Latin tag *Aut Caesar aut nullus*, Spurgeon asserts that Christ must be seen and accepted as the Saviour of sinners or else he is nothing at all. He had no time for the Christ of so much nineteenth-century thought. The Cross is 'the very core of Christianity. Leave out the cross, and you have killed the religion of Jesus. Atonement by the blood of Jesus is not an arm of Christian truth; it is the heart of it.' [79]

> Those who would preach Christ, but not Christ crucified, miss the very soul and essence of our holy faith. "Let him come down from the cross, and we will believe in him", is the Unitarian cry.[80]
>
> The deniers of the atonement, who are supposed to be admirers of the example of Christ, generally turn out to be the greatest enemies to vital Christianity. There are no more real enemies of Christ than those who deny the doctrine of the cross.[81]

The significance of Christ's atoning work was for Spurgeon related to two other issues that generated so much controversy in his day: biblical inspiration and eternal punishment. He believed that those who took seriously the plain statements of the Bible and accepted them as infallible could not fail to accept the Bible's teaching on the death of Christ. Nor could they fail to accept what the Bible teaches about eternal punishment. Those who grasped the reality of God's wrath and judgment were driven to acknowledge that sinners needed Christ as their Saviour to deliver them from that judgment.[82] As for dealing with the errors of the modern age, Spurgeon's prescription is simple: 'Wherever the crucified Jesus has been preached, false systems have tottered to their fall. Dagon has always fallen before the ark of the Lord.' [83]

Spurgeon's positive teaching

The centrality of the Cross

'The death of the Son of God upon the cross is the *crux* of Christianity.' [84] For Spurgeon the central point of the Christian faith was 'the cross and its surroundings'.[85] We miss the point if we spend most of our time prying into deep and mysterious issues such as predestination or prophecy: 'these have small bearings upon our salvation from sin; but in the death of the Lord lies the kernel of the matter'.[86] In another example of Spurgeon's willingness to use Latin expressions (something which would probably leave most modern congregations cold!) he uses the words of the message allegedly given to Constantine, *In hoc signo vinces*. The preaching of the Cross is the means by which we shall conquer the world.[87]

The Cross has of course to be understood not in isolation but in its relation to other Christian doctrines. In a number of places Spurgeon draws attention to the Trinitarian dimension of Christ's work.[88] It is the Father's love which makes the Cross and salvation possible. 'The atoning sacrifice is the centre of the sun of infinite love, the light of lights.' [89] Jesus Christ is 'the golden pipe of the conduit of eternal love'.[90] One of Spurgeon's best known sermons is entitled, 'A Jewel from the Revised Version'. Preached in 1885, it was on I John 3:1 which in the King James Version reads: 'Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God.' The Revised Version – first published in 1881 and introduced by Spurgeon into a number of sermons[91] – used a Greek MS which adds the words kai. evsme,n , 'and we are', an emphasis which to Spurgeon captured the full meaning of the verse.[92] The Cross is the supreme expression of God's grace – Spurgeon quotes with approval one missionary's attempt to explain the gospel to 'an Oriental': 'Salvation is a *backsheesh* of the Almighty'.[93] The Father gives the Son, the Son gives Himself, and the Spirit applies the work of the cross to our hearts.[94] There are two great truths written over heaven's gate: *'Reconciliation by the blood of Jesus Christ;* and *Regeneration by the work of the Holy Ghost.'* [95] Spurgeon is particularly uncompromising on the deity of Christ. An angel could not have borne our sin; it was something which could only have been done by 'the incarnate God'.[96] He emphasizes what he calls the 'doctrine of the eternal affiliation of Christ'.[97] Christ must be understood as 'the eternal Son of God',[98] 'the infinite Son of God', the 'eternal Logos' through whom all things were made,[99] the Lamb 'co-equal and co-eternal with the Father, very God He is, very God He always was.' [100] The doctrine of the Incarnation means that 'God was in Christ as He died upon the accursed tree'.[101] Hence to Spurgeon it is perfectly acceptable to say that Paul in Acts 20:28 is referring to 'the blood of God'.[102] Understanding the Cross means also having a proper grasp of the full humanity of Christ,[103] and that includes his physical resurrection, the event which represents 'God's seal upon the great Magna Carta of man's salvation',[104] and also his ascension and his second coming.[105] Another important dimension to the work of Christ is why it was necessary in the first place, and Spurgeon has much to say on the seriousness of sin and the reality of the wrath of God.[106] 'Ruin' is one of 'the three R's' of Scripture, the other two being Redemption and Regeneration.[107]

The Cross in Scripture

There is hardly a sermon by Spurgeon which does not touch on the subject of the Cross to some degree or other. The reason why he emphasized the centrality of the Cross was simply that he believed it was central to Scripture, that 'from every text in the Bible there is a road to Jesus Christ' [108] and for Spurgeon that meant that the Cross is to be seen almost everywhere. It has to be said that sometimes his approach to Scripture is rather idiosyncratic; a critic might say that he often takes Scripture out of context. Take, for example, a sermon on Jonah 1:3, where Spurgeon

makes a rather obscure point based on the fact that 'Jonah paid his fare from Joppa to Tarshish, but I never find that he paid any fare back.' [109] Another example is his sermon on Amos 2:13 – 'Behold, I am pressed under you, as a cart is pressed *that is* full of sheaves'. The sermon was preached in 1862 [110] and so Spurgeon did not have access to the Revised Version which translates the first verb as an active, 'Behold I will press you' (as in several modern versions). This in fact makes more sense in the context of the prophetic oracle against Israel. Spurgeon uses the text to speak of the burden of sins borne by God and of the substitutionary death of Christ: 'See how they pile on him the sheaves of human sin.' [111] In a sermon on Isaiah 28:20 – 'For the bed is shorter than that *a man* can stretch himself *on it*: and the covering narrower than that he can wrap himself *in it*' [112] – Spurgeon applies the verse to the Christian who 'sleeps in a bed supported by the everlasting arms of the Saviour' and to the one garment 'that is never too narrow...the garment of the perfect righteousness of our Lord Jesus Christ'.[113] 'Let the believer be never so full of sin, what Jesus suffered covers all sin.' [114] A few words from I Samuel 30:20 – 'This is David's spoil' – form the basis for an extended reflection on what the sacrifice of Christ has achieved for us; [115] likewise part of Micah 2:13, 'The breaker is come up before them'.[116] In a brief comment based on the sticky end of Sisera at the hands of Jael in Judges 4, Spurgeon says: 'Right through the brain of all thy sins, the hammer has driven the nail of Christ's grace'.[117] Jeremiah's girdle (Jeremiah 13:1-11) – and particularly the Lord's injunction to the prophet, 'Put it not in water' – becomes, after a brief reference to the historical context, the starting-point for a complex meditation on the importance of being washed in the blood of the Lamb.[118] The message of the Cross is to be found in the words of Isaiah 43:6, 'I will say to the north, Give up; and to the south, Keep not back',[119] and in the words of Job, 'Can that which is unsavoury be eaten without salt? or is there *any* taste in the white of an egg?' (Job 6:6).[120] Rachel and Leah are symbols, respectively, of the Jewish Church and the Gentile Church, both of them redeemed by the toil of the One who loved them, and their stories speak of the eventual ingathering of Jewish believers once the fulness of the Gentiles has been gathered in.[121] A sermon on Joseph and the butler of Genesis 40-41 furnishes a host of references to the work of Christ. The butler's dream and his restoration (Genesis 40:9-13,20f) remind us that

> "We see Jesus as the cluster crushed until the heart's blood flows, and can by faith go in unto the King, with Jesus Christ's own precious blood and offer that, just as the butler stood before Pharaoh with the wine-cup in his hand. I bear a cup filled not with my blood but his blood." [122]

And we are never far from a mention of the enemies of the truth:

> "We read that Pharaoh sent for his wise men, but they could not interpret his dream. You are in a like case. There are thousands in England who are trying to minister to spiritual necessities; above all we have Popery in its double form, Romish and Anglican, doing its best to interpret the dream of the

> human heart. You know what a sad mess [Popery] makes of it; it gives a stone instead of bread, brings to a poor, needy, guilty man, anything but the Saviour he wants." [124]

However, a list of examples such as these should not be allowed to obscure the fact that Spurgeon very often preached on passages of Scripture which directly proclaim the cross and the atonement, such as we find in Romans and Hebrews for example.

Substitutionary atonement

'There are in the world many theories of atonement: but I cannot see any atonement in any one, except in this doctrine of substitution.' [125] 'The substitution of Christ for the sinner is the essence of the gospel.'[126] This doctrine is 'the very marrow' of the whole Bible.[127] 'Substitution and a vicarious sacrifice are the very marrow of the gospel of Christ.' [128] Passage after passage could be quoted to illustrate Spurgeon's basic conviction that 'Christ Jesus bore the wrath of God that we might never bear it. He has made a full atonement to the justice of God for the sins of all believers', and so their sins cannot be held against them and they are endowed with the righteousness of Christ.[129] 'It was as a substitute for sin that he did actually and literally suffer punishment for the sin of all his elect.' [130] Substitution is

> "... the great fact on which the Christian's hope rests...The vicarious sacrifice of Christ for the sinner, Christ suffering for the sinner, Christ's being made sin for us that we might be made the righteousness of God in him, Christ offering up a true and proper expiatory and substitutionary sacrifice in the room, place and stead of as many as the Father gave him, who are recognised by their trusting in him, – this is the cardinal fact of the gospel." [131]

In a sermon of 1891 on Romans 8:3f Spurgeon refers to the words: 'By sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh and for sin'. He welcomes the Revised Version's rendering which emphasizes that God sent his Son 'as an offering for sin': 'Our sin was laid on him.' Christ came 'to be offered up as a sacrifice, to be presented as an atonement for human guilt'.[132] Spurgeon's understanding of the Work of Christ is thoroughly steeped in biblical notions of sacrifice; hence the important principle that 'the sacrifices which the Israelites brought were meant to set forth Christ and his glorious work'.[133] The removal of our sins is very often related by Spurgeon to the shedding of Christ's blood.

> "Christ's redemption was so plenteous, that had God willed it, if all the stars of heaven had been peopled with sinners, Christ need not have suffered another pang to redeem them all – there was a boundless value in his precious blood." [134]

The Gospel 'is the preaching of a full, free, present, everlasting pardon to sinners through Jesus Christ's atoning blood.' [135] Although generally appreciative of the Revised Version, Spurgeon at one point expresses a preference for the KJV of Revelation 1:5 – 'Unto him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood' – rather than the RV based on the Greek MSS with the reading 'loved us and loosed us', and he suggests the alliterative 'loved us and laved us'.[136] At times Spurgeon's use of blood imagery is rather lurid, as when he uses a strange mixture of biblical metaphors to exhort the sinner to trust that 'the red sea of Jesus' blood shall cover the tops of the mountains of your sins,' [137] or, shifting the focus, that our sins are 'cast into the Red Sea of Jesus' blood, and, like the Egyptians, drowned there for ever.' [138] The military metaphors that Spurgeon is fond of using often allude to 'the blood-stained banner of Christ's cross'.[139]

Spurgeon believed that Christ bore the full weight of God's wrath for our sins.[140] It is not enough to think of the Cross as 'a vague expression of divine displeasure against sin' or a declaration of divine love towards the human race.[141] There is much more involved, namely, the full price which Christ paid on the Cross to redeem us, how he was 'beclouded with the eclipse of his Father's face'.[142] It has to be said that at times he is not as lucid as one might wish on the subject of how Christ's Passion is applied for our salvation. Take, for example, some words from a sermon of 1870:

> "In Gethsemane, and on the cross, He endured the penalty due for all the sin of his people, or rather the death which God had stipulated should stand as an equivalent for the sufferings of all the guilty ones for whom He stood." [143]

or words from the year 1886:

> "I do not say that our substitute endured a hell, that were unwarrantable. I will not say that he endured either the exact punishment for sin, or an equivalent for it; but I do say that what he endured rendered to the justice of God a vindication of his law more clear and effectual than would have been rendered to it by the damnation of the sinners for whom he died." [144]

Or when he says: 'There is in the atonement made by Christ a perpetuity of prevalence.'[145] However, Spurgeon's basic position is clear and uncompromising; the 'marrow of the subject' is:

> "Christ did really, literally, and truly, take the sins that belonged to all who do believe on him, and those sins did actually and in very deed become his sins; (not that he had committed them, nor that he had any part or lot in them, except through the imputation to which he had consented, and for which he came into the world,) and there lay the sins of all his people on Christ's shoulders." [146]

Often the focus is on the physical sufferings of Christ, using very graphic descriptions of, for example, the effects of a Roman scourge or of the torture inherent in crucifixion.[147] These sufferings are reflected in those of Christ's people down through

the ages as

> "The ship of the church has ploughed its way through seas of blood; with the blood-red cross at the masthead she has pushed on even in the night, throwing the crimson spray about her...What the martyrs did in their measure, by their bitter death-pangs, is being done on a divine scale by the sufferings of the chief of all martyrs and head of all witnesses." [148]

As well as thinking in terms of Christ as our substitute, Spurgeon also uses the theme of Christ 'our covenant Head and representative'.[149] The theme is found early in Spurgeon's ministry in a sermon of 1856 on Paul's use of Sarah and Hagar in Galatians 4,[150] and in one of the same year on Isaiah 49:8 – 'I will give thee for a covenant of the people'.[151] In these and later sermons Christ is seen as the focus and the means of realising a covenant which God makes for the salvation of his elect.[152] What Christ achieves he achieves on our behalf as 'the covenant representative of his people'.[153] Whereas on the one hand, we all as human beings, 'fell federally in our covenant head', namely Adam,[154] on the other hand 'Believers are in Christ *as their federal head*.' [155]

The principle of the covenant is again found in some unusual places. Just as 'at Jacob's hand Laban required all the sheep', so too 'at Jesus' hand every elect one will be required at the last. He is the surety of the covenant, and he is bound by the covenant engagements to bring the many sons home to glory.'[156] In a sermon on the treaty which Ahab made with Ben-Hadad of Syria (1 Kings 20:31-34) Spurgeon makes the point that:

> "God makes a covenant with sinners in the person of Christ. He gave Him to be a covenant for the people, a leader and commander to the people, and those hearts who are led by grace to accept the mercy of God in Christ Jesus, know that this is the result of a covenant made before the world began by God with elect sinners in the person of Christ Jesus." [157]

But principally Spurgeon's teaching on this subject is rooted in what Paul says in Romans 5 about our being 'in Adam' and being 'in Christ':

> "By Christ's righteous life and substitutionary death, justification has come upon all who are in him. As you were in Adam you sinned, and therefore you fell, and were condemned; and as you were in Christ through the divine covenant of grace, and Christ fulfilled the law for you, you are justified in him. His righteousness and sacrifice have availed for you: "There is therefore now no condemnation." Because we are viewed by divine justice as under the headship of the perfect Man, who, on our behalf, has magnified the law and made it honourable, therefore are we well pleasing unto God. We are accepted in the Beloved." [158]

The covenant theme is of course inseparably related to the shedding of Christ's blood; the new covenant is 'the covenant of which his blood is the seal'.[159] Spurgeon makes this plain in, for example, a sermon on Hebrews 9:20 – 'This *is* the blood of the testament which God hath enjoined unto you.' [160] The idea 'that God would be false to a treaty sealed with the blood of his own Son' is to be rejected as 'blasphemy'.[161] In the same sermon he draws on the point made in Hebrews 9:16f and he says: 'Jesus Christ has made a will, and he has left to his people large legacies by that will'. As Hebrews says, a will is not in force until the death of the testator; the will or covenant made in Christ becomes effective only through his death.[162]

Because of this act of substitution our sins are forgiven and we are 'covered with the righteousness of Christ'.[163] In what seems to be an echo of Luther's famous (infamous?) advice, *Pecca fortiter*, 'Be a sinner and sin boldly', Spurgeon says that 'Jesus Christ did not come into the world to save sham sinners, but real sinners.' [164] The cry of Jesus on the Cross – 'It is finished!' – means that everything that needed to be done for our salvation has been done.[165] Because of the Cross we can be assured that when God says '*Absolvo te*' he really does absolve us from all sin, and we have no need of a priest to say those words over us.[166]

Christ's death means not only full salvation for us but also total triumph over his enemies. In many passages – and usually in very vivid language – Spurgeon makes use of what has become known as the *Christus Victor* theme.[167] By his death Christ becomes the destroyer of death, the destroyer of Satan and his works,[168] and his triumph will be manifested to all creation at his Second Coming.[169] His triumph means the 'making new' of all things so that

> "The day will come when this world shall be as fair as it was at the primeval Sabbath...This great work of Christ, this grand design of making this old world into a new one, shall be carried into effect." [170]

Calvinism

In 1832 English Baptists took the decision to reconstitute the Baptist Union on a broader basis than previously. 'To this effect the Calvinistic articles of 1813 were replaced by the looser phrase inviting support from "Baptist ministers and churches who agree in sentiments usually denominated evangelical".' [171] This move reflected a desire to encourage as many as possible of the 'New Connexion' Baptists to join the BU, and also a feeling even among Calvinists that it was unnecessary to be so forthright on the subject. Spurgeon became a convinced Calvinist soon after his conversion and remained so for the rest of his life. Mark Hopkins emphasizes that 'Spurgeon's Calvinism was consciously adopted, and not merely inherited',[172] or as he himself expressed it in a sermon in 1872, 'I am not a Calvinist by choice, but because I cannot help it'.[173] Generally speaking Spurgeon tends be less confrontational in his

Calvinism in his later sermons. In 1855 he stated emphatically:

> "I have my own private opinion that there is no such thing as preaching Christ and Him crucified, unless you preach what nowadays is called Calvinism...It is a nickname to call it Calvinism; Calvinism is the gospel and nothing else...Nor do I think we can preach the gospel, unless we base it on the particular redemption which Christ made for his elect and chosen people." [174]

His language may not always have been this uncompromising but there is no doubt that he does not shift his basic stance and particularly that his understanding of the work of Christ is informed by his conviction as to the truth of 'limited atonement', or what he calls 'the Calvinistic and Christian doctrine of particular redemption'.[175] In 1857 he affirmed that Christ 'came into the world not to put men into a *salvable* state, but into a *saved* state',[176] just as he says in a sermon of 1888, '[Christ] did not die to make men savable, but to save them.' [177] In a clever use of the doctrine's label Spurgeon claims in 1858 that it is in fact the Arminians who 'limit' the atonement; [178] what he means by that can be illustrated from a comment made in 1875:

> "General redemption is not worth anything to anybody, for of itself it secures to no one a place in heaven: but the special redemption which does redeem, and redeems men *out of* the rest of mankind, is the redemption that is to be prayed for." [179]

Spurgeon's way of presenting what he saw as the truth about Christ's work varied over the years, but the substance of his teaching did not depart from what he once called 'the simplest way I know of setting out the belief I have in the atonement of Christ':

> Once a poor Irishman came to me in my vestry. He announced himself something in this way:
> "Your reverence, I'm come to ax you a question"
> "In the first place," said I, "I am not a reverend, nor do I claim the title; and in the next place, why don't you go and ask your priest that question?"
> Said he, "Well, your riv – sir, I meant – I did go to him, but he did not answer me to my satisfaction exactly; so I have come to ask you, and if you will answer this you will set my mind at peace, for I am much disturbed about it."
> "What is your question?" said I
> "Why, this. You say, and others say too, that God is able to forgive sin. Now I can't see how he can be just and yet forgive sin: for," said this poor man, "I have been so greatly guilty that if God Almighty does not punish me *he ought*; I feel that he would not be just if we were to suffer me to go without punishment. How then, sir, can it be true that he can forgive, and still retain the title of just?"
> "Well," said I, "it is through the blood and merits of Jesus Christ."
> "Ah!" said he, "but then I do not understand what you mean by that. It is the

kind of answer I got from the priest, but I wanted him to explain it to me more fully, how it was that the blood of Christ could make God just. You say it does, but I want to know how."
"Well, then," said I, "I will tell you what I think to be the whole system of atonement, which I think is the sum and substance, the root, the marrow and the essence of all the gospel. This is the way Christ is able to forgive. Suppose," said I, "you had killed some one. You were a murderer; you were condemned to die, and you deserved it."
"Faith," said he, "yes, I should deserve it."
"Well, her Majesty is very desirous of saving your life, and yet at the same time universal justice demands that some one should die on account of the deed that is done. Now, how is she able to manage?"
Said he, "That is the question. I cannot see how she can be inflexibly just, and yet suffer me to escape."
"Well," said I, "suppose, Pat, I should go to her and say, 'Here is this poor Irishman, he deserves to be hanged, your Majesty; I don't want to quarrel with the sentence, because I think it just: but, if you please, I so love him that if you were to hang me instead of him I should be very willing.' Pat, suppose she should agree to it and hang me instead of you: what then? Would she be just in letting you go?"
"Ay," said he, "I should think she would. Would she hang two for one thing? I should say not. I'd walk away, and there isn't a policeman that would touch me for it."
"Ah!" said I, "That is how Jesus saves. 'Father', [Jesus] said, 'I love these poor sinners: let me suffer instead of them!' 'Yes', said God, 'thou shalt,' and on the tree he died, and suffered the punishment which all his elect people ought to have suffered; so that now all who believe on him, thus proving themselves to be his chosen, may conclude that he was punished for them, and that therefore they can never be punished."
"Well," said he, looking me in the face once more, "I understand what you mean; but how is it, if Christ died for all men, that notwithstanding some men are punished again? For that is unjust."
"Ah!" said I, I never told you that. I say to you that he has died for all who believe on him, and all who repent, and that [he] was punished for their sins so absolutely and so really, that none of them shall ever be punished again."
"Faith," said the man, clapping his hands, "that's the gospel; if it isn't, then I don't know anything, for no man could have made that up; it is so wonderful. Ah!" he said, as he went down the stairs, "Pat's safe now; with all his sins about him he'll trust in the man that died for him, and so he shall be saved." [180]

While convinced that, 'When some of us preach Calvinism, and some Arminianism, we cannot both be right,' [181] – and while he was in no doubt which was right – Spurgeon throughout his career maintained a very open attitude to Arminians and

was often critical of those who were preoccupied with a system (Calvinist or Arminian) to the point of neglecting the essentials of the Gospel.

> "It is time that we had done with the old and rusty systems that have so long curbed the freeness of religious speech... It is time that the systems were broken up, and that there was sufficient grace in all our hearts to believe everything taught in God's Word." [182]

He is critical of those who 'confess all the five points of Calvinism, but they have not come to the one most needful point of looking unto Jesus that they may be saved,' [183] just as he is critical of 'Calvinistic ministers who are afraid to give a free invitation to sinners.' [184]

Conclusion – 'Crux lux'

Spurgeon did not have a 'theory' of the atonement; he simply accepted it as a given which was plainly set out in the teaching of Scripture. Spurgeon's view of the significance of the Cross and all that it represents could be summed up in two words which he used in a sermon of 1888, and it is not untypical of the man that they should be two Latin words: *Crux lux*.[185] The Cross is the light of God which shows the human condition for what it is; it also proclaims the justice of God and the love of God. Rejection of the Cross produces only darkness. In a message on 1 Corinthians 1:18 – 'For the preaching of the cross is to them that perish foolishness; but unto us which are saved it is the power of God.' – Spurgeon again appeals to the Revised Version and to the Greek underlying it. It is not 'the preaching of the cross' but rather 'the word of the cross' which is the point of Paul's words. 'In effect my text says, "*Let the cross speak for itself*".' [186] What is important is not what we have to say about the cross but what it has to say to us and about us. The word is singular: there is only one gospel, one atonement, one Saviour. This 'word of the cross' is God's message, to be contrasted with the multiplicity of human words, particularly the words of those who reject the doctrine of salvation by the blood of Christ as 'foolishness' and in doing so only demonstrate their own folly. 'Oh, to have done with all glory but glorying in the cross! For my part, I am content to be a fool if the old gospel be folly.' [187]

Lewis Drummond says: 'Spurgeon's soteriology actually formed the foundation of his entire theology.' [188] One important aspect of this theology is its practical outworking – how a Christian should live in the light of the Cross. The doctrine of final perseverance, which for Spurgeon was also related to the work of Christ, should not lull anyone into carelessness or antinomianism. 'The model for a saint is his Saviour.' [189] Spurgeon urges his hearers to face the question: 'Am I living as becometh a redeemed one?' [190] At the close of a sermon on 'the blood of the testament' (Hebrews 9:20), having emphasized all that we have through the death of Christ, Spurgeon stresses:

> "Because of all this we are to lead a separated life...The Lord hath set him apart that is godly for himself, and as the shepherd marks his sheep, so, with the precious blood of Christ applied by faith, hath God marked his own elect, that they should abide in Christ, and go no more out, no more mingling with the sons of men, nor joying in their joys, nor serving their lusts." [191]

Spurgeon was never one to despise learning[192] – witness the establishment of the Pastors' College – but the advice he gave to his students was of a piece with what he said to his congregations:

> "Be diligent in the school of the cross, therein is enduring wisdom...The science of Christ crucified is the most excellent of sciences; and to know him and the power of his resurrection is to know that which is best knowing.[193] Let us study what books we may, the knowledge of a crucified Saviour will still remain the sublimest of all the sciences." [194]

As a preacher Spurgeon's most important words of advice to other preachers might well be, in the words of a sermon of 1884:

> "His death is our life. Let us always dwell upon the central truth, and when we are preaching Christ risen, Christ reigning, or Christ coming, let us never so preach any of them as to overshadow Christ crucified." [195]

Notes

1 D.W. Bebbington, *Evangelicalism in Modern Britain: A History from the 1730s to the 1980s* (London, 1989), pp.3,14-17

2 www.cta.uk.com

3 O. Chadwick, *The Victorian Church: Part I* (3rd ed. London, 1971), p.420. It might be appropriate to mention Spurgeon's own comment: 'I very seldom read in print any story connected with myself which has a shade of truth in it' (Susannah Spurgeon and Joseph Harrald, *C.H. Spurgeon Autobiography: Volume 1, The Early Years* [revised ed. London, 1962], p.270). The remark about the barber's assistant has also been attributed to Miss Susannah Thompson, who later became Mrs C.H. Spurgeon; see Lewis Drummond, *Spurgeon: Prince of Preachers* (Grand Rapids, MI, 1992), p.225. Her testimony is that, when she first saw Charles, he bore 'an unmistakable resemblance to a gigantic robin' (*C.H. Spurgeon Autobiography: Volume 1*, p.279).

4 It is interesting to see in the sermon so many phrases in what Spurgeon once called 'Rome's mongrel tongue' (Susannah Spurgeon and Joseph Harrald, *C.H. Spurgeon Autobiography: Volume II, The Full Harvest* [revised ed. London, 1973], p.12).

5 David W. Bebbington, *The Dominance of Evangelicalism: The Age of Spurgeon and Moody* (Leicester, 2005), pp.37,42

6 *MT* 19 (1873), p.611. Lewis Drummond attributes this designation of Spurgeon to the Prime Minister W.E. Gladstone (Drummond, *Spurgeon: Prince of Preachers*, pp.50,57,658,771) but he does not give any references in Gladstone's writings or in any secondary sources. Ernest W. Bacon mentions Gladstone's visit to the Metropolitan Tabernacle in 1882, and also his message of sympathy to Mrs Spurgeon as Spurgeon lay dying, but he does not indicate that Gladstone ever used the phrase 'last of the Puritans' of him (E.W. Bacon, *Spurgeon: Heir of the Puritans* [Bristol, 1967], pp.69,164).

7 *MT* 27 (1881), p.71

8 G.R. Potter, *Zwingli* (Cambridge, 1976), p.66

9 Ibid. p.61

10 Ibid. p.65

11 Patrick Collinson, *The Elizabethan Puritan Movement* (London, 1967), p.51. See also John Guy, *Tudor England* (Oxford, 1988), p.304

12 James Davison, 'Puritan Preaching as the Means of Promoting and Cultivating Godliness with Particular Reference to the Life and Ministry of Jeremiah Burroughs.' Unpublished PhD thesis, Queen's University, Belfast (2005), p.63

13 Ibid. p.88

14 Peter Morden, *C.H. Spurgeon: The People's Preacher* (Farnham, 2009), p.18

15 J. Spurr, *English Puritanism, 1603-1689* (London, 1998), p.47

16 *MT* 33 (1887), p.611

17 William Estep has said of Spurgeon: 'Never free from some controversy, it seems that he may have provoked it upon occasion' (W.R. Estep, 'The making of a prophet: an introduction to Charles Haddon Spurgeon', *Baptist History and Heritage* 19/4, October 1984, p.13). The same could be said of Athanasius and of many a Puritan divine.

18 Spurr, *English Puritanism*, p.181

19 *NPS* 5 (1859), p.307; cf. p.306

20 *MT* 19 (1873), p.555

21 *MT* 18 (1872), p.76

22 *MT* 10 (1864), p.714

23 Ibid. p.322 (italics original)

24 Bebbington, *Evangelicalism in Modern Britain*, p.102. Chadwick has an extensive comment on reactions to the restoration of the Catholic hierarchy in *The Victorian Church: Part 1* (3rd ed.), pp.291-309.

25 *NPS* 7 (1861), p.166. Spurgeon is presumably referring to Thomas Grant, who was appointed RC Bishop (not 'Archbishop') of Southwark in1851 and continued in office until his death in 1870.

26 *MT* 20 (1874), p.137

27 *NPS* 4 (1858), p.428f; *MT* 28 (1882), p.200

28 *MT* 11 (1865), p.247f; *MT* 12(1866), p.196; *MT* 19 (1873), p.237; *MT* 36 (1890), p.286

29 *MT* 24 (1878), p.550

30 *MT* 16 (1870), p.47

31 *MT* 18 (1872), p.388

32 *MT* 32 (1886), p.246

33 *MT* 29 (1883), p.236

34 *MT* 18 (1872), p.482

35 *MT* 24 (1878), p.674

36 *MT* 16 (1870), p.22

37 *MT* 21 (1875), p.469

38 Ibid. p.610; cf. *MT* 21 (1875), p.323: 'I do believe...that if the atonement of Christ had been properly preached in the churches of England some years ago, we should not now be pestered with this revived popery.'

39 *MT* 10 (1864), p.370

40 *MT* 25 (1879), p.389

41 *MT* 11 (1865), p.532. Spurgeon locates the 'Vicar' firmly in the 16th century, whereas the most popular versions of his story have him living in Jacobean (and sometimes early Georgian) times.

42 *MT* 19 (1873), p.554; cf. *MT* 34 (1888), p.451: 'We are getting to have the idolatries of Rome set up in the churches called national; and this is not done by those called, outwardly and honestly, Romanists, but by those who are really so in their hearts, and yet wear the Protestant name.'

43 *MT* 12 (1866), p.331

44 *MT* 24 (1878), p.657

45 *MT* 11 (1865), p.678

46 *MT* 21 (1875), p.323

47 *MT* 24 (1878), p.356

48 Drummond, *Spurgeon: Prince of Preachers*, p.530. Drummond also says: 'It must be admitted, Spurgeon had a difficult time accepting subtleties; he thought in blacks and whites' (p.557).

49 *MT* 19 (1873), p.104. Drummond says that Spurgeon 'really had a more open mind than his rhetoric seemed to indicate. This was especially true as he matured' (ibid.).

50 *MT* 26 (1880), p.388

51 *MT* 16 (1870), p.454

52 *MT* 27 (1881), p.553

53 *MT* 29 (1883), p.519

54 *NPS* 4 (1858), p.57

55 *MT* 37 (1891), p.79. In *MT* 36 (1890), p.365, Spurgeon says: 'This is an age of doubt; it is in the air.' His next comments show that for him doubting the Bible, the deity of Christ, and the atonement are major features of this age of doubt.

56 *MT* 12 (1866), p.347

57 *MT* 8 (1862), p.233

58 *MT* 37 (1891), p.147

59 *MT* 31 (1885), p.501

60 *MT* 34 (1888), p.382

61 Ibid. p.545

62 *MT* 21 (1875), p.449

63 *MT* 27 (1881), p.538

64 *MT* 32 (1886), p.575

65 Ibid. p.639

66 *MT* 32 (1886), p.224

67 *MT* 33 (1887), p.374

68 *MT* 8 (1862), p.234

69 *MT* 10 (1864), p.337. Germany is also afflicted by 'her half-Romanism, that is to say, Lutheranism, and her abounding Popery' (ibid.).

70 *MT* 31 (1885), p.322

71 *NPS* 6 (1860), pp.190,195

72 *MT* 10 (1864), p.260

73 e.g. *NPS* 4 (1858), p.358; *MT* 8 (1862), p.462; *MT* 9 (1863), p.519; *MT* 10 (1864), p.9; *MT* 27 (1881), p.19; *MT* 32 (1886), pp.413,430

74 *MT* 11 (1865), p.365; *MT* 19 (1873), p.104; *MT* 20 (1874), p.308; *MT* 29 (1883), p.394; *MT* 36 (1890), p.694; *MT* 37 (1891), pp.57,641

75 e.g. *MT* 33 (1887), p.699: 'I have been forced into controversy for which I have no taste, and in which I have no pleasure. I have been driven to it: I have never sought it.'

76 *MT* 23 (1877), p.378

77 *MT* 28 (1882), p.5

78 Ibid.

79 *MT* 33 (1887), p.375

80 *MT* 13 (1867), p.137

81 *MT* 16 (1870), p.22; cf. *MT* 19 (1873), p.287; *MT* 20 (1874), p.497; *MT* 26 (1880), p.431

82 The three themes of inspiration, atonement and judgment are brought together in, for example, a sermon of 1891 (*MT* 37, pp.637-648) on Zephaniah 2:5, 'The word of the Lord is against you.' Those who reject the word of God on any of these doctrines inevitably end up rejecting them all; and they in turn find the word of the Lord directed against them. Similarly *MT* 36 (1890), p.105: 'When a man begins to doubt his Bible, to doubt the atonement, to doubt the wrath to come, and so on, there is generally a cause for it; and that cause is not always intellectual, but moral and spiritual.'

83 *MT* 17 (1871), p.202

84 *MT* 31 (1885), p.496

85 *MT* 37 (1891), p.119

86 Ibid. p.366

87 *MT* 18 (1872), p.239; cf. *MT* 34 (1888), pp.82,509

88 e.g. *NPS* 4 (1858), p.289f; *MT* 24 (1878), p.529; *MT* 32 (1886), pp. 69,452; *MT* 36 (1890), pp.227,429. Spurgeon stresses 'the union, co-operation, and inter-communion of the divine Trinity in the work of our salvation. The Son of God intercedes in heaven, and the Holy Spirit intercedes on earth...The Son pleads and the Father hears and answers, and in consequence conveys to us by the Holy Ghost the blessings purchased by his Son'. (*MT* 32 [1886], p.452)

89 *MT* 36 (1890), p.77

90 *MT* 28 (1882), p.341; cf. *MT* 19 (1873), p.426: 'God was not made to love us by the death of his Son, but because he loved us and had mercy on us, therefore he gave his Son...' 'It will never do to make it appear that Jesus died to make the Father merciful.' (*MT* 36 [1890], p.415)

91 Lewis Drummond has a curious comment that 'in 1889 he spoke out against the Revised Bible [*sic*]', but he doesn't give any details or any references (Drummond, *Spurgeon: Prince of Preachers*, p.668) and he also says that Spurgeon 'was always open to new translations' (ibid. p.623). Spurgeon quotes the Revised Version with approval in at least one sermon of 1891 (*MT* 37, p.558).

92 *MT* 32 (1886), pp.673-684. The sermon was apparently first preached in July 1885 but read in the Tabernacle (during one of Spurgeon's absences in Mentone) in December 1886

93 *MT* 33 (1887), p.333

94 *NPS* 3 (1857), p.130; *NPS* 4 (1858), p.289f; *NPS* 5 (1859), p.213; *MT* 12 (1866), p.281; *MT* 13 (1867), p.319; *MT* 20 (1874), p.498; *MT* 29 (1883), p.390; *MT* 36 (1890), pp.23,32,63,74,235

95 *MT* 23 (1877), p.302 (italics original)

96 *MT* 17 (1871), p.702; cf. *MT* 21 (1875), p.159 – 'God incarnate died in my stead'. 'With a Saviour less than divine you have a religion less than saving.' (*MT* 36 [1890], p.233) 'Those who deny the Godhead of Christ are consistent in rejecting the atonement. It is not possible to hold a proper substitutionary propitiation for sin unless you hold that Christ was God.' (*MT* 21 [1875], p.159)

97 *NPS* 6 (1860), p.41; cf. *MT* 30 (1884), p.584, where Spurgeon refers to 'the Eternal Filiation' of Christ.

98 *MT* 19 (1873), p.426

99 *NPS* 4 (1858), p.289

100 *MT* 27 (1881), p.17

101 *MT* 19 (1873), p.514

102 *MT* 26 (1880), p.424. As modern translations indicate, the meaning of the Greek is less obvious than Spurgeon seems to assume.

103 *NPS* 2 (1856), p.290; *MT* 21 (1875), p.714; *MT* 36 (1890), p.496

104 *NPS* 5 (1859), p.28

105 *MT* 36 (1890), p.250

106 e.g. *MT* 17 (1871), p.423; *MT* 19 (1873), p.426; *MT* 28 (1882), p.316; *MT* 37 (1891), pp.559,581

107 *MT* 36 (1890), p.517

108 *MT* 25(1879), p.634; cf. *MT* 23 (1877), p.690 – Christ is '*the end and object of the Bible*' (italics original).

109 *MT* 11 (1865), p.191f

110 *MT* 8, pp.469-480

111 Ibid. p.478

112 *NPS* 5 (1859), pp.153-160

113 Ibid. p.157

114 Ibid. p.160

115 *MT* 34 (1888), pp.193-204

116 *MT* 33 (1887), pp.169-180

117 *NPS* 6 (1860), p.411

118 *MT* 29 (1883), pp.97-108

119 *MT* 17 (1871), pp.469-480

120 *MT* 29 (1883), pp.385-396

121 *MT* 11 (1865), p.543f

122 *MT* 12 (1866), p.148

123 Ibid. p.153. Another unlikely Genesis text for a gospel message is Gen.19:20, 'Behold now, this city *is* near to flee unto, and it *is* a little one: Oh, let me escape thither, (*is* it not a little one?) and my soul shall live.' (*NPS* 5 [1859], pp.185-192)

124 The message of the Cross is usually brought into sermons on the healing narratives in the four Gospels; for example, a sermon on the man healed at the Pool of Bethesda (John 5) which has the intriguing title, 'The hospital of waiters visited with the gospel' (*MT* 21 [1875], pp.13-24)

125 *NPS* 4 (1858), p.70

126 *MT* 33 (1887), p.526

127 *MT* 17 (1871), p.544

128 *MT* 11 (1865), p.243

129 *MT* 17 (1871), p.423

130 *NPS* 4 (1858), p.69

131 *MT* 12 (1866), p.280. 'Reconciliation by the blood, by the substitutionary sacrifice of the infinite Son of God, this is the message of our ministry.' (*MT* 19 [1873], p.426)

132 *MT* 37 (1891), p.558

133 *MT* 36 (1890), p.375

134 *NPS* 5 (1859), p.486; cf. *MT* 36 (1890), p.95: 'Sinner as I am, if I were a million times as sinful as I am, and then had a million souls each one a million times more sinful than my own, I would still trust his atoning blood to cleanse me, and himself to save me.'

135 *NPS* 4 (1858), p.274

136 *MT* 33 (1887), p.589; cf. *MT* 37 (1891), p.579 where Spurgeon tries to retain both readings: 'In his great love he laves away the defilement of our sins, and then loses us from the chains that those sins had thrown around our life.'

137 *MT* 9 (1863), p.348

138 Ibid. p.536. The printed sermons make a subtle point by using, respectively, 'red sea' and 'Red Sea'.

139 *MT* 36 (1890), p.30; cf. *MT* 21 (1875), p.333

140 e.g. his sermon on *Lama sabachthani* in *MT* 36 (1890), pp.133-144

141 *MT* 26 (1880), p.423

142 Ibid. p.476, in a sermon entitled, 'Redemption by price' (pp.469-480)

143 *MT* 16 (1870), p.42

144 *MT* 32 (1886), p.391

145 *MT* 19 (1873), p.543

146 *MT* 8 (1862), p.378f

147 e.g. *NPS* 5 (1859), p.93ff; *NPS* 6 (1860), p.48; *MT* 10 (1864), p.176, 344f; *MT* 33 (1887), p.712ff; *MT* 37 (1891), p.371f

148 *MT* 29 (1883), p.236. There is almost a note of nostalgia as Spurgeon reflects: 'What made us a Protestant nation for so many years? I do not say that we are Protestant now; but what made us enthusiastically Antipapal for so many years? The stakes of Smithfield did it.' Cf. *MT* 11 (1865), p.95f

149 *MT* 22 (1876), p.683; cf. *MT* 20 (1874), p.434; *MT* 36 (1890), p.452 (Christ is 'our Representative and Substitute'.)

150 *NPS* 2 (1856), pp121-128. This sermon develops the theme of the contrast between 'the covenant of works' and 'the covenant of grace'.

151 Ibid. pp.393-400

152 *NPS* 5 (1859), p.420. The particular sermon (pp.417-424) is entitled 'The blood of the everlasting covenant' and deals with this topic in detail. In a later sermon Spurgeon speaks of 'the electing love and covenant purpose of the Father' (*MT* 29 [1883], p.390). Cf. *MT* 36 (1890), pp.83f,171,468

153 *MT* 27 (1881), p.619

154 *MT* 11 (1865), p106

155 *MT* 32 (1886), p.474 (italics original)

156 *MT* 9 (1863), p.645f

157 Ibid. p.588

158 *MT* 32 (1886), p.474. Spurgeon also speaks of our being 'in Christ's loins' just as we were in Adam's (*MT* 8, 1862, p.533f). See also the sermon on Romans 5:16 in *The Treasury of the New Testament: Volume 3*, pp.23-27 entitled 'Lost through one; saved through one'.

159 *MT* 24 (1878), p.275; cf. *MT* 32 (1886), p.128

160 *MT* 26 (1880), pp.625-636

161 Ibid. p.630

162 Ibid. p.632f. Spurgeon is fully aware of the different meanings of the Greek word *diathēkē* and that 'testament', 'covenant', 'treaty', 'will' are all English equivalents of the one Greek term.

163 *MT* 29 (1883), p.400

164 *MT* 22 (1876), p.530; cf. *MT* 36 (1890), p.702. Similarly: 'Do you suppose that Christ bore little sins only? That is to make him a little Saviour. Beware of this. Nay, but mountain sins, heaven-defying sins, were laid on him when he hung upon the tree, and for these he made effectual atonement.' (*MT* 17, 1871, p.512)

165 Spurgeon has a sermon on this theme in *NPS* 7 (1861), pp.585-592; cf. *MT* 36 (1890), p.243

166 *MT* 20 (1874), p.548; cf. *MT* 23 (1877), p.262

167 e.g. *NPS* 5 (1859), p.386ff,453; *MT* 17 (1871), p.469f; *MT* 22 (1876), pp.697-708 (a sermon on 1 Corinthians 15:26); *MT* 29 (1883), p.369f; *MT* 36 (1890), pp.38f,245f,527f

168 e.g. *The Treasury of the New Testament: Volume 3*, pp.612-617; *Volume 4*, pp.529-534,680-686

169 e.g. ibid. *Volume 4*, pp.663-669

170 Ibid. p.805

171 J.H.Y. Briggs, *The English Baptists of the Nineteenth Century* (Didcot, 1994), p.214

172 M. Hopkins, *Nonconformity's Romantic Generation: Evangelical and Liberal Theologies in Victorian England* (Milton Keynes, 2004), p.132

173 *MT* 18 (1872), p.692

174 *NPS* 1 (1855), p.50

175 *NPS* 4 (1858), p.316

176 *NPS* 3 (1857), p.34

177 *MT* 34 (1888), p.509

178 *NPS* 4 (1858), p.135

179 *MT* 21 (1875), p.176. In *MT* 10 (1864) Spurgeon rejects 'the Arminian's Christ' who 'redeems men with precious blood, and yet they go to hell'. How different is 'the Christian's Christ' who really does give to his people eternal life (p.295).

180 *NPS* 3 (1857), p.37f

181 *NPS* 6 (1860), p.170

182 *NPS* 6 (1860), p.133. 'I preach very often sermons which get me the title of Arminian, and just as often I am charged with Hyperism. I am simply one who seeks honestly to tell you what he believes to be in Scripture.' (*MT* 8 [1862], p.503)

183 *MT* 17 (1871), p.531

184 *NPS* 6 (1860), p.398. '[D]o not let it be said that there is a Baptist existing who does not love to send the gospel to the utmost ends of the earth.' (NPS 4 [1858], p.207)

185 *MT* 34 (1888), p.717

186 *MT* 27 (1881), p.429

187 *MT* 33 (1887), p.283

188 *Spurgeon: Prince of Preachers*, p.614

189 *MT* 36 (1890), p.123

190 *MT* 14 (1868), p.286

191 *MT* 26 (1880), p.636

192 Learning 'need not be an impediment to grace, and may be a fitting weapon in a gracious hand'. (*MT* 11 [1865], p.712)

193 *MT* 17 (1871), p.400

194 *MT* 32 (1886), p.321

195 *MT* 30 (1884), p.585. A sermon on 1 Corinthians 2:2 entitled 'The man of one subject' emphasizes the place which should be given in preaching to 'Jesus Christ, and him crucified' (*MT* 21[1875], pp.637-648).

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An enquiry into the making of William Carey and of his Importance to the Development of Protestant Missions

Kenneth Scott

INTRODUCTION

William Carey (1761-1834),[1] a cobbler from Northamptonshire, England, grew in his passion for mission through the study of God's word and the world. He became convinced that foreign mission was the chief responsibility of the Church as he developed a biblical perspective as a lay preacher, while also reading vision-expanding sources such as *Captain Cook's Voyages* (Tucker, 1983, 115).[2] It was Carey's thinking on the Great Commission that made concrete his visionary work and that launched what eventually became today's missionary societies and agencies. The Church, by and large, did not use the Great Commission, prior to 1792, when William Carey published *An Enquiry into the Obligation to Use Means for the Conversion of the Heathen.*[3]

His short book consists of five parts. The first part is a theological justification for missionary activity, arguing that the command of Jesus to make disciples of the world (Matthew 28:18-20), remains binding on Christians. The second part outlines a history of missionary activity, beginning with the early church and ending with David Brainerd and John Wesley. Part 3 comprises 26 pages of tables, listing area, population, and religious statistics for every country in the world.[4] The fourth part answers objections to sending missionaries such as difficulty learning the language or danger to life. Finally, the fifth part calls for the formation by the Baptist denomination

of a missionary society[5] and describes the practical means by which it could be supported.
Carey's seminal 87 page booklet laid the foundations for missions and for contemporary mission societies. These included Christian 'obligation', the wise use of available resources ('means'), and accurate information. His ideas were so influential that many call him the 'father of modern Protestant mission' even though Protestant mission (and mission service) had been founded long before his work was published (Moreau, Corwin and McGee, 2004, 43). With reference to being the 'father of modern mission', Stephen Neill (1990, 222) makes the following comment: 'Carey stood, and was conscious of standing, in a noble succession, as the heir of many pioneers, in the past. Yet his work does represent a turning-point; it marks the entry of the English-speaking world on large scale, into the missionary enterprise ...' The purpose of this paper is to examine the making of William Carey and to reflect on his importance to the development of the Protestant missionary movement.

PREAMBLE

An important new chapter in mission opened through the efforts of William Carey, the shoemaker and lay preacher from Northamptonshire, England. On one occasion he asked the leaders of Northamptonshire Baptist Association to consider 'whether the command given to the apostles to teach all nations was not binding on all succeeding ministers to the end of the world, seeing that the accompanying promise was of equal extent'. A sharp rebuke followed: 'Young man sit down ... When God pleases to convert the heathen, He will do it without you and me. Besides, there must first be another Pentecostal gift of tongues' [6] (Carey, 1923, 50).

Carey's *Enquiry* was a reply to the hyper-Calvinism of the day[7] and became the first manifesto of the modern missionary movement. Carey and like-minded friends founded the Baptist Missionary Society in 1792;[8] he became its first missionary in 1793 and spent the rest of his life in India.

The appeal of the *Enquiry* was reinforced by Carey's sermon to a group of Baptist ministers on the 31st May 1792, starting from the text Isaiah 54: 2-3, 'Lengthen thy cords, and strengthen thy stakes', where he laid down two great principles of action: 'Expect great things [from God], attempt great things [for God]' [9] (Neill, 1990, 223). Carey's endeavours and his *Enquiry* soon gained symbolic significance and furnished a convenient starting point for a movement and an era. By 1825 Protestants had organized some thirty missionary societies (Shenk, 1999, 153).

According to the author (probably Andrew Fuller) of the preface of the first volume of the *Periodical Accounts Relative to A Society formed among Particular Baptists for Propagating the Gospel Among the Heathen,* the origin of the Society (later the Baptist Missionary Society – BMS from now on) must be traced to 'the working of our

brother Carey's mind, which for the last nine or ten years, has been directed to this object with little intermission'.[10] Andrew Fuller goes on to state that Carey's conversations, prayers and sermons throughout this period were 'mostly accompanied with something relative to this subject'. Fuller displays humility omitting mention of the contribution of his own book *The Gospel Worthy of All Acceptation*, which broke the theological log-jam among the Particular Baptists at the end of the eighteenth century and played a major part in preparing the ground for mission. The emergence of voluntary societies such as the BMS must also be set within the wider context of the historical and social-political developments of the closing decade of the eighteenth century. Indeed, Fuller goes on to refer to Carey's 'great thirst for geographical knowledge'.

Andrew Fuller had visited Carey's workshop and seen there a large map consisting of several sheets of paper pasted together with information concerning the geography, population and religions of the various countries of the world. Just as Fuller's book prepared the theological ground for Carey, in the area of geography and general knowledge of the world, Carey must be seen within the context of an era of rapidly expanding horizons resulting from the great trans-oceanic expeditions. Carey's guide to these new horizons, as already mentioned, was Captain Cook.

WILLIAM CAREY'S WORLD

The Reformers of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries recovered the message of the Church, but (for the most part) were too preoccupied with the problems of Europe to give much impetus to mission in other parts of the world. It remained for the Pietists, Moravians,[11] and a Baptist (Carey)[12] to recover the sense of urgency to take the gospel to the whole world (Hesselgrave, 2000, 25).

In 1723 Robert Millar (in the USA) wrote a *History of the Propagation of Christianity and the Overthrow of Paganism*. This led to the growth of prayer groups dedicated to focussing on mission. In 1786, back in England, John Sutcliff encouraged all Baptist churches in Northamptonshire to set aside the first Monday of each month to pray for the non-Christian world (Kane, 1971, 83-85). Soon William Carey sailed for India and a new day dawned for Christian Missions.[13]

Most of the sixteenth century Reformers believed the Great Commission was given to (and fulfilled by) the original apostles and that it did not directly apply to anyone who came after them. However, Adrian Saravia (1531-1613) and Justinian Von Weltz (1621-1668) argued that the Great Commission applies to the Church wherever it exists (Hesselgrave, 2000, 239).

Before the time of the Western colonial expansion, the term 'missionary' was not

used. People spoke of mission and missions, but they did not categorize 'missionary' as a professional role. For example, William Carey, and others went out as traders, teachers, and doctors.[14] They were guests of the countries that hosted them, and their roles were tied to functional occupations (Hiebert, 2004, 281).[15] In fact, there was a sense of nothing being incongruous in a shoemaker being a missionary. This was the way men came into the home ministry. Carey assumed that a man who accepted the call to Christian ministry must be ready to receive it to the mission field also (Walls, 1996, 160-161).

The world of the 1780's was smaller than our's in the sense that geographical knowledge meant that large regions of the globe remained unexplored and the map of the world 'consisted of white spaces crossed by the marked trails of traders or explorers' (Hobsbawn, 1962, 2). At the same time, the world was larger than today because of the difficulty in communications. Within the British Isles, for example, communications were limited; a clergyman and college-fellow like Charles Simeon might undertake a horseback tour of Scotland, but the 'purchase of a saddle-horse at Stirling' was the only method of returning from Edinburgh to Cambridge. In 1852, when the industrial revolution had made possible railway travel to Scotland, men could look back with curiosity on the horseback journeys of a Simeon or a Wesley (Haldane, 1852, 143). Inter-continental travel was only possible by sea and, provided one's voyage was not disrupted either by violent weather or violent revolution, was relatively fast. Carey and Thomas took five months to sail to India in 1793! Towns like Plymouth, Bristol and Liverpool became key centres, for to be 'within reach of a port was to be within reach of the world' (Hobsbawn, 1962, 25). The ministry of Dr John Ryland in Bristol was to prove crucial to the success of the mission both as a geographical link and because Ryland's ministry was instrumental in the calling to India of a number of missionaries, including Joshua Marshman. For all these men (Carey, Fuller and Ryland) the world of the 1780s appeared vast.

Carey's world was characterised by major upheavals in an 'age of revolution' and included the American Declaration of Independence in 1776. Even more significant was the 'double revolution' in France and Britain. To ignore this background is to misunderstand William Carey and the development of the missionary movement. The French Revolution of 1789 and the massive impact of industrialisation and urbanisation in Britain led to the growth of radical ideas in both religion and politics. These factors serve as a background to Carey's life and are illustrated by the fact that the publisher[16] who sold Carey's *Enquiry* in London also printed and distributed Tom Paine's *The Rights of Man* and Mary Wollstonecraft's *Vindication of the Rights of Women*. Writers like Sydney Smith were attacking the voluntary societies of that time as being potentially subversive. The fact that the *Enquiry* was published by the same publisher as *The Rights of Man* did not help allay the suspicions of some regarding their paranoia of revolution. This was not made easier by the fact that the missionaries were Calvinists, in a theological line of the then despised Puritans, or because of their sympathies with the French Revolution as being indicative of the dawning of millennial glory.

PARTICULAR (CALVINISTIC) BAPTISTS

Volume one of the *Periodical Accounts* locates the society formed by Carey, Fuller and their brethren within a tradition described as 'Particular Baptist'. By the time of publication of the second volume in 1801 the word 'Particular' had dropped out and the organisation was called the Baptist Missionary Society. This is evidence of the rejection of the brand of Calvinism that had, until the 1780s, been the theology of the Baptist churches with which Carey, Fuller and Ryland were identified. Some congregations could trace their origin back into the Puritan era and included John Bunyan and John Robinson among their spiritual predecessors. Some Baptists had adopted a hyper-Calvinism, and the very word 'Particular' served to emphasise the distinctive emphasis of this group. This was common to all Calvinists, including the Evangelist George Whitefield. The issue was that when, along with such a belief, there developed an almost total inertia with regard to preaching the gospel to the wider world. Indeed, they came to deny that preachers had the right to call people to repentance and faith in Christ and that those who heard the gospel had a duty to believe it. In 1707 an Independent minister named Joseph Hussey had published a work entitled *God's Operations of Grace but No Offers of His Grace.*[17] In the early eighteenth century this was picked up by the Particular Baptists and this concept of divine grace meant that these churches remained virtually untouched by the Methodist revival.

OTHER INFLUENCES ON CAREY

It was Andrew Fuller who publicly called into question the old theology through his *Gospel Worthy of All Acceptation* which was written in 1781 and published five years later. Fuller remained unashamedly within the Calvinist tradition; there is he says, 'no dispute about the doctrine of election, or any of the discriminating doctrines of grace'.[18] At the same time he demolished the tenets of the hyper-Calvinists, showing that the denial of the free offer of the gospel to all men, and the argument that men have no obligation to believe the command of Christ, were alike the result of an unbiblical rationalism. 'Christ by his death' writes Fuller, 'opened a door of hope to sinners of the human race as **sinners; affording a ground for their being invited, without distinction, to believe and be saved**' *[emphasis is mine]* (Fuller [1961], 54). This is the theological foundation for the task of mission in the new world of the 1790s.

Fuller drew on two sources. He went back to the Puritan era and quoted frequently from John Owen and John Bunyan. Bunyan, a fellow Baptist, had written a book entitled *Come to Jesus Christ and Welcome.* Fuller showed that the hyper-Calvinistic position deviated from mainline Puritanism and Calvinism. Secondly, Fuller demonstrated that that those few Protestants who had shared their faith beyond their own cultures were not like the Particular Baptists. He referred to people like David

Brainerd, whose life and work was written about by Jonathan Edwards. Edwards also published a work in 1747 with the title *An Humble Attempt to Promote Explicit Agreement And Visible Union of God's People, in Extraordinary Prayer, For the Revival of Religion and the Advancement of Christ's Kingdom on Earth.* This call was itself inspired by news of a similar plan in Scotland which had resulted in the formation of 'praying societies' in Edinburgh, Glasgow, Dundee and Aberdeen some three years earlier. The re-publication of Edward's *Humble Attempt* in 1789 by the Baptist pastor of Olney, John Sutcliff (himself later one of the founding fathers of the missionary society), along with a call for the establishment of groups praying for revival all across England, was an event of tremendous significance. The writings of Jonathan Edwards enabled men like Sutcliff, Carey, Fuller and Ryland to retain 'the discriminating doctrines of grace' (he, like them, was a convinced Calvinist) while yet introducing them to an eschatological vision of an earth filled with the knowledge of the glory of God. This provided a powerful dynamic for missionary outreach. The doctrine of election, instead of functioning as a damper on all human effort, became both the pledge of the universal triumph of the gospel and an incentive to untiring labour in making Christ known everywhere.

The connection between this vision and William Carey's famous exhortation at the association meetings in Nottingham in the Spring of 1792 to 'expect great things [from God]; attempt great things [for God]' is clear. Carey echoes Edwards in his *Enquiry* when he asserts that 'God repeatedly made known his intention to prevail finally over all the power of the Devil, and to destroy all his works, and to set up his own kingdom and interest among men, and **extends it as universally as Satan had extended his**'.[19] *[emphasis is mine]*

What the Particular Baptists had rediscovered through the writings of Jonathan Edwards was (to quote the title of Iain Murray's book) *The Puritan Hope.* Edwards bequeathed to evangelical Christians of the day an understanding of the prophecies of the Bible common to the Puritans. Thomas Goodwin anticipated the time when God would do great things throughout the earth in response to prayer: 'One reason God will do such great things toward the end of the world even because there hath been so great a stock of prayers going for so many ages, which is now to be returned' (Murray, 1971, 103).

However, there were two crucial differences between the hope of the Puritans, on the one hand, and the eschatological ferment in Dissenting circles at the end of the eighteenth century, on the other. First, while the Puritans anticipated an **eventual** triumph of the gospel, the Particular Baptists caught Edward's thrilling conviction that the millennial glory might be about to happen. Writing of Scriptural promises that a future generation of God's people would see times of unprecedented blessing, Edwards asked in 1747, 'who knows but that the generation here spoken of may be this present generation?' (Murray, 1971, 291) For Carey and his colleagues all the 'signs' were that the promised age of blessing was about to dawn: the recent events

in America; the opening up of the world; and even the French Revolution of 1789 – all seemed to indicate that the glorious dawn was breaking forth. This conviction was by no means confined to the Baptists. On the contrary, Fuller could state through the *Periodical Accounts* (1795, Vol. 1, 12) that 'various as the different opinions of Christians may be with respect to particular parts of the gospel scheme, all will agree in this, that the sacred scriptures assure us of the universal conquests of the Redeemer'.

Secondly, whereas the Puritans urged their congregations to pray for the coming of the promised age, Carey believed he lived at a time when God had made it possible to **do** something about the evangelisation of the world by devising practical **means** to carry out Christ's commission. In the *Enquiry* Carey was not only concerned about the theology of mission but with the obligation **'to use means for the Conversion of the Heathens'.** It was no longer enough to 'expect' great things; one must also 'attempt' great things. At the end of the Northamptonshire Baptist Association meetings in 1792, having bared his soul in preaching from Isaiah 54:2-3, and despite support for his sermon, Carey remonstrated with Andrew Fuller, 'Is there nothing again **going to be done** sir?' What happened in response to that question is now part of history. It is interesting to note that, after Carey and Thomas had sailed for India in 1793, Fuller wrote: 'The thought of having **done** something towards enlarging the boundaries of our Saviour's kingdom, and of rescuing poor Heathens and Mahometans from under Satan's yoke, rejoiced our hearts' (*PA*, 1795, Vol. 1, 12).
The influence of Jonathan Edwards and, through him, David Brainerd continued to have an influence on all the early Baptist missionaries in the Far East until at least the time of Andrew Fuller's death in 1815. Not only did Brainerd serve as an inspiring example but the Calvinism of Jonathan Edwards which provided the theological framework of his life and labours was a reminder that faith, prayer and a radical trust in the Holy Spirit were indispensable prerequisites for missionary labour. This perspective kept Carey and his colleagues from indulging in missionary triumphalism, and made them critical of such trends that began to appear elsewhere in later years.

If the influence of Edwards was important at the level of theological understanding, it was the example of the Moravians which inspired Carey in the area of missionary practice. Or, to put it another way, if Edwards taught him to 'expect' great things, the Moravians provided the stimulus to 'attempt' great things. In the *Enquiry* Carey acknowledges the example of the Moravian missionaries and both he and his colleagues explicitly state their indebtedness to these people over and again. For example, William Ward, en route to India in 1799, writes, 'I can scarce ever go to a throne of grace now, but I carry thither the congregation of Greenlanders, Esquimeaux, Negroes, South Sea Islanders, Indians and Hottentots. Thank you Moravians! Ye have done me good. If ever I am a missionary worth a straw, I shall owe it all to you, under our Saviour' (*PA*, 1801, Vol. 2, 2). The importance of the Moravians in relation to the Baptist Mission is also seen in the precise method and organisation they evolved in order to undertake such a task. Carey, Ward

and Marshman consciously modelled the missionary community at Serampore on communal principles already put into practice by the Moravians (*PA*, 1806, Vol. 3, 210-211).

William Carey and John Thomas set sail for India on June 13th 1793, and despite the immense problems confronting them, they went out with great hopes of reaping a spiritual harvest among the peoples of the sub-continent. In addition to the confidence generated by their eschatological views, reports reaching England suggested that once certain initial problems were overcome, the Indian peoples were likely to prove receptive to the Christian message. John Thomas had already been to India between 1787 and 1791. His report had been encouraging: the Hindus, he said, believed in 'one great God, Omnipotent, Omnipresent, and Omniscient'. He listed other Protestant-sounding doctrines which are truths 'commonly believed among them all'. He acknowledged the difficulty presented by the caste system but believed that this would be overcome and that the Indian church which would result from the preaching would become a new 'caste of themselves'. As to the supposed barbarity of the heathen, he believed the Hindoo to be 'certainly distinguished from all people on the face of the earth, for their harmless and inoffensive behaviour' (*PA*, 1795, Vol. 1, 19-20). One cannot help but wonder whether, like other Englishmen of his generation, Thomas was influenced by Jean Jacques Rousseau's notion of the 'noble savage'? Nevertheless, it was not long before Carey and Thomas discovered that the task of evangelising India was a formidable one.

William Ward writes that he heard Carey preach 'with much pleasure and many tears' and that after dinner he raised for discussion the question 'of what importance is it, **to give no offence in any thing**; neither to one another, nor to the Hindoos, nor to the Musselmans?' [20] (*PA*, 1801, Vol. 2, 151). When William Ward's ship reaches India and is approaching Calcutta he uttered words which, whatever else may be said about them, certainly display no trace of a feeling of racial or cultural superiority: 'I have already longed to be a converted Hindoo [21] ... I feel pleased with the idea of spending my life with the gentle and placid Hindoo'.[22]

In this remarkable sentence ('I have longed to be a converted Hindoo ...') is encapsulated the approach of Carey, Ward and Marshman to the task of mission in India. Today this principle would probably be described by the term 'contextualisation' and it comes as something of a surprise to realise that what is often viewed as a **new** insight in twentieth century missiology was already embedded within the pattern of the work at Serampore at the beginning of the nineteenth century. The missionaries were learning by experience the complexity of cross-cultural communication. Carey, Thomas, Marshman and Ward,[23] recognised the importance of acquiring a genuine understanding of the language and culture of the people and, as time passed, came to see themselves as sowers rather than reapers. Thus, Carey writes to Dr Ryland in 1800, 'I have often thought that it is very probable that we may be only as pioneers to prepare the way for more successful missionaries ...' (*PA*, 1801, Vol. 2).

Of course, the comparative lack of success was the cause of heart searching not only to the missionaries in India but to those who supported them at home. As the years rolled by and news from Bengal continued to be discouraging, with few converts from Hinduism, (who themselves displayed certain inconsistencies in the eyes of English Baptists) questions were bound to be asked as to why the expected blessing had not come. Poor John Thomas had to deal with just such a questioner from America: 'You ask, WHAT SUCCESS? I know of no question so difficult to answer with precision just now' (*PA*, 1801, Vol. 2, 165).

In similar vein, William Ward wrote to an American correspondent in 1821 that the 'restricted progress of Christianity and the moral darkness in which so great a proportion of the globe has remained, notwithstanding the Son of Righteousness has arisen ... forms one of the most mysterious dispensations of Providence which has ever occupied human attention'.[24] In England it was Andrew Fuller who had to head off the criticism by providing a theological explanation of what was happening – or not happening - in India. Fuller, whose contribution to the success of BMS was incalculable, frankly acknowledged that they had all 'looked for greater success than we have yet experienced.' In explanation he argued firstly, that while there **may** be a great outpouring of the Spirit before the end of time [Fuller is cautious about this] such a work, like that at Pentecost, would be exceptional and 'in the ordinary course of things it is not to be expected.' God's normal method of working is to bring change gradually from small beginnings; thus Christians should not be discouraged even though 'but little fruit should appear for a number of years'.

Secondly, Fuller draws a parallel between a church emerging from Hinduism and the church at Corinth which, also coming from a pagan culture, displayed the kind of problems presently being encountered in India. The BMS constituency in Britain was one which demanded a very high standard of spiritual experience in those who professed conversion and therefore tended to look for the same pattern of conversion in the *Periodical Accounts*. Fuller counters this by saying that if a community like that in the church at Corinth were 'to appear amongst us, we should probably deem them a company of hypocrites and give them up as strangers to real religion' [25] (*PA*, 1801, Vol. 2, x). Yet Paul did not do this but 'pursued and reclaimed them'.

It should be noted that the missionaries in India also found encouragement in the discovery of the relevance of the Corinthian correspondence in a missionary situation. Marshman wrote to Fuller: 'Respecting our dear Hindoo friends we are often filled with joy by them, and sometimes with sorrow. We hope that there is in the greater part of them a real work of grace; but were it not for some of Paul's epistles, particularly those to the Corinthians, we should often be ready to faint' (*PA*, 1806, Vol. 3, 541). Fuller was grappling with issues debated today by theologians and missiologists. While Carey and his colleagues were working in India men like Fuller 'held the ropes' back home.

The above is indicative of the beginnings of Carey's missionary work in India and in a paper of this nature space does not allow more detail on the progress of the mission during these years. Biographies have been written [26] of what is, by any standard, a remarkable story of courage, persistence and dedication. Yet, after twenty years of their labours in India, Carey could write to Andrew Fuller in 1812 (*PA*, 1813, Vol. 5) and say that the religious situation was now vastly different from that which he found on his arrival there. True, the millennial glory had to come, but he believed that a solid foundation for the spread of the gospel had been laid in India. Nearly five-hundred converts had been baptised by the missionaries; the Bible was translated into no less than eleven vernacular languages; and there was 'a general spirit of enquiry about the gospel all over the country'.

REFLECTIONS ON WILLIAM CAREY'S STRATEGY

Carey sought to impress the Christian public of its duty to gather the resources necessary to fulfil 'the Commission given by our Lord'. He worked out the empirical basis for prosecuting the task and then proposed such practical steps as the founding of denominational missionary societies.[27] Carey, as already mentioned, had trouble with the hyper-Calvinism of his day. Carey's response to them is a patient, methodical survey of the world and of the history of Christian efforts to take the gospel to it. His mind was free from the eschatological speculations [28] of others of his day. Christ, he claimed, had a kingdom that was to be proclaimed in its power to the ends of the earth. He wrote '...it is the duty of all Christians to engage in the proclamation of this kingdom, whether the time allotted by God for the fulfilment of this purpose be long or short' (*Enquiry,* 1792, 77).

Carey saw a five-pronged advance:

- ◊ widespread preaching of the gospel by every possible method;
- ◊ support of preaching by the distribution of the Bible in the languages of the country;
- ◊ establishment at the earliest of a church;
- ◊ profound study of the background and thought of non-Christian peoples, and
- ◊ training of an indigenous ministry at the earliest possible moment.

It would be true to claim that Carey had relative success in all of these areas (Neill, 1990, 224-225).

REFLECTIONS ON WILLIAM CAREY'S VISION

How was it possible for an impoverished pastor in rural England to have such an impact on missionary enterprise? He had been, as already mentioned, preceded by others; among those were great preachers and theologians, such as Puritan divines in the seventeenth century and Jonathan Edwards from the USA. These men and their writings inspired Carey. It may be argued that Carey was rightly called 'the father of modern missions' because of his understanding of the world of his day. A reading of the *Enquiry* is astonishing in that he gathers statistics and information of such factual accuracy, balanced assessments and global comprehensiveness.[29] This was so, even in the light of hindsight [30] (Johnstone, 1998, 28).

Carey taught mission as the heart of God and as the message of Scripture. His years of pastoral ministry and church planting in rural England led him to believe in mission as involving the whole body of Christ in an effort to evangelize the whole world. In practice he was able to communicate that vision by both word and print.[31] Carey's *Enquiry* sent a ripple-effect across the Christian world. He laid the foundations of missions in accurate information, careful consideration and in the wise use of 'means' as an obligation of Christian duty.[32]

Carey was ahead of his time by proposing a self sustained society. This was born out of the culture of his time, much as societies were used in the Methodist revivals. He suggested these to be culturally moulded, yet based on a separate supra-cultural and biblical foundation (*Enquiry,* 1792, 81-82).

William Carey's famous sermon encouraging people of his day to 'Expect great things [from God]; attempt great things [for God]' was an epochal statement of faith. He lived this out through his example, despite obstacles with finance, opposition of his own countrymen in India, disease, disastrous setbacks in ministry and even the unwillingness of his first wife to support him wholeheartedly. [33]

Patrick Johnstone (1998, 30) writes that William Carey 'plodded on to become one of the greatest missionary Bible translators and church planters of all time ... Carey was a visionary, researcher, theologian, linguist, writer, preacher and an effective communicator all rolled into one – a rare combination indeed'.

FINAL REFLECTIONS

Surely, Carey's challenge to action and to a simple and effective theological and structural framework into church planting is his greatest heritage. William Carey's *Enquiry* in 1792 was the first real statistical, global survey ever undertaken. His vision became a stimulus for opening up many countries for Christian missions. In contrast,

the many sources available today would seem like a miracle to Carey. Above all, Carey's vision for world evangelization as God's and the Bride's vision (the Church's vision) did much to restore that vision to the Church (Johnstone, 1998, 31).

Carey demolished the traditional interpretation of Matthew 28:18-20 (Bosch, 1991, 340) as he writes a devastating critique in developing his arguments for the 'Great Commission' being a task of the Church. In reply to the hyper-Calvinists' assertion, he argued that if the command to make disciples of all peoples was no longer valid, then nor was baptism any longer incumbent on Christians (*Enquiry,* 1792, 8-9). As a result of Carey's *Enquiry* the Great Commission became the motivation for missions, although he was not the first to make such arguments (Bosch, 1991, 529).

There are more than six times as many people in the world today than when William Carey went to India in 1793. There are also more non-Christians than ever before. Therefore, the task is greater. Carey was a product of his times, as are we all, and the missionary movement that grew up in his wake had its weaknesses. Perhaps the greatest of these are outlined in the following quote and this will act as an evaluation of William Carey's blind spots (Van Rheenen, 1996, 181):

> "The modern mission movement, beginning with William Carey in the nineteenth century, grew out of deep piety, which accounted for both its initial strength and weakness. The strength of the movement lay in its sincere devotion to God, expressed through acts of service and zeal for winning the lost. **But the search for spirituality negated discussions about the structure and organization of the church. This neglect, coupled with the paternalism of the day, resulted in the establishing of churches that were spiritually and materially dependent on the European and American missionary movement."** [34]

William Carey suggested that a general missionary conference should be held in 1810 at the Cape of Good Hope. Many countries would still have been missing, but a century later, Afghanistan, Tibet and Nepal were the three major countries still closed to the Christian faith (Rouse, 1949, 181-192). This is remarkable and remains as a tribute to a rural pastor and cobbler [35] who may justly be called a 'father of modern missions', among others, because of his interpretation of the 'Great Commission' as signifying the use of 'means for the conversion of the heathen'.

Care must be taken not to perpetuate warped 'faith elements' from inflated life-stories of people such as William Carey (Rajendran, 2001, 318). We should not really attribute the beginning of the era of modern missions to just Carey, but to many typical of that era (Howell, 2001, 413). Others rode on the wings of the British economic empire, with all its resources (Araujo, 2001, 61). Like others, Carey did bracket together 'civilization' and the 'spread of the gospel' (Bosch, 1991, 296).

Carey was but 'one of many similar figures from this period and as much a product as a shaper of the spirit of the time' (Bosch, 1991, 280). Most missionaries, like Carey, did not possess a higher education, but belonged to what Bosch (1991, 299) calls the 'aristocracy of labour' and hailed from the lower middle class or working class. Therefore, William Carey's contribution to the modern missionary movement is even more remarkable. While he was, in one sense, a product of his times, he was in another, certainly a 'father of modern missions' and of missionary societies.

It is appropriate to allow a life-long student of William Carey (John Appleby, 2010, 283) who, like Carey, served in India for many years as a missionary, to reflect on William Carey and his importance to the contemporary scene:

> "We ought not to leave the story of William Carey without emphasising, firstly, the conviction that his remarkable life's work was done in the context of the outstanding fellowship of those dedicated friends who with him first formed the Society, and the similarly rich fellowship of his colleagues in Serampore. The warmth of Kettering and of Serampore was a vital component of the success of Carey's achievements. Secondly, to this we must add the significant fact that God's providentially arranged circumstances were so often just ahead of the next steps that Carey was to take, ensuring their success. That was his continual expectation as he set out to attempt his next task. And thirdly, we must not overlook the solemn fact that once the Christian message was planted in India God's providences began to test the genuineness of the work by providing various tough trials – a thing which, as Carey would have understood, God had the right to do. *Any Christian ministry loses too much if it loses the awareness of the importance of those three precious experiences.*"

Notes

1 This essay celebrates 250 years since William Carey's birth on the 17th August 1761.

2 Captain James Cook had circumnavigated the earth and influenced Carey through his book (Bosch, 1991, 280). Carey did not agree with Captain Cook's negative attitude towards overseas Christian missionary work (Appleby, 2010, 48).

3 The original title was *An Enquiry into the Obligation of Christians to Use Means for the Conversion of the Heathens. In which the Religious State of the Different Nations of the World, the Success of Former Undertakings and the Practicability of Further Undertakings, are considered.* It was published in Leicester in 1792 and several times reprinted. A facsimile edition with an introduction by Dr E.A. Payne was published by the Carey Kingsgate Press in London in 1961. As a publication event the appearance of Carey's book was unremarkable. When offering for service in India the following year one of Carey's problems was the disposal of unsold copies. From now on the publication will be referred to in this paper as the *Enquiry*.

4 Carey had compiled these figures during his years as a schoolteacher and while working as a shoemaker.

5 Carey finally overcame the resistance to missionary effort, and the *Particular Baptist Society for the Propagation of the Gospel Amongst the Heathen* (subsequently known as the *Baptist Missionary Society* and since 2000 as BMS World Mission) was founded in October 1792, including Carey, Andrew Fuller, John Ryland, and John Sutcliff as charter members. They concerned themselves with practical matters such as raising funds, as well as deciding where they would direct their efforts. A medical missionary, Dr. John Thomas, had been in Calcutta and was currently in England raising funds; they agreed to support him and that Carey would accompany him to India.

6 Andrew Walls (1996, 246) calls this 'one of those stories which is probably not true but which ought to be true'. John Ryland Senior 'was simply expressing a standard form of Protestant doctrine formulated a century earlier as an apologetic against Roman Catholics'. John Ryland Jr. disputed that his father made this statement.

7 Carey had trouble with the hyper-Calvinism of the day that convinced many that the conversion of the heathen would be the Lord's own work in His own time, and that nothing could be done by men to hasten it

8 In autumn of 1792 the Particular Baptist Society for the Propagation of the Gospel amongst the Heathen was founded at Kettering, England. It was later known as the Baptist Missionary Society.

9 Carey's statement expressed the prevailing mood of the Enlightenment (Bosch, 1991, 279).

10 The first volume of the *Periodical Accounts* was published in 1795. They will be referred to from now on as *PA*, followed by the year of publication, volume and page number.

11 The Protestant Missionary movement began among the Pietists and Moravians in the beginning of the eighteenth century. Led by Count Von Zinzendorf self-supporting Moravian missionaries went to Greenland, America and Africa.

12 Carey turned Baptist at the age of eighteen and combined, for a time, the offices of village pastor and village cobbler.

13 During the first twenty five years of Carey sailing to India, a dozen mission agencies were formed on both sides of the Atlantic (Hiebert, 2004, 286). Carey's influence led to women in Boston to form women's missionary prayer groups. Single women began to go abroad as missionaries. By 1865 they had mission boards operated entirely by single women.

14 When Carey sailed to India his only colleague, John Thomas (1757-1801), was a medical man (Walls, 1996, 211).

15 The British East India did not support Carey. His support came from the Danish community in Serampore and the 'success' of the enterprise followed the arrival of Joshua Marshman (a schoolteacher) and William Ward (a printer).

16 Joseph Johnson.

17 For a detailed description of the emergence of this see Peter Toon, 1967, *Hyper-Calvinism,* London, The OliveTree,

18 [1961], *The Gospel Worthy of All Acceptation*, Ann Arbor, Michigan, Sovereign Grace Publishers, 10.

19 Stephen Neill (1979, 262) is to be challenged when he asserts that Carey's mind was 'entirely free from the eschatological speculations of the pietists'.

20 Throughout his life William Carey held to a deep conviction as to the fundamental unity of the entire human race. In the *Enquiry* of 1792 he commended those people who had decided to boycott West Indian sugar 'on account of the iniquitous manner in which it is obtained.'

21 Ward uses the word 'Hindoo' not to describe a religion but as a generic term covering all non-Muslim inhabitants of Bengal.

22 It was six years before the team (based in Serampore) saw their first Hindu convert to Christ (Appleby, 2010, 186).

23 Carey and Thomas were followed to India by William Ward, a printer; Joshua Marshman, a schoolteacher, among others.

24 *Farewell Letters*, 1821, 34.

25 Fuller returned to this subject in 1806. Writing in the preface of the third volume of the *Periodical Accounts* he noted that in certain ways the New Testament appeared to Europeans to be 'an obsolete book, written for other times'. Not so for those in India: they are engaged in a work which places them in the midst of the kind of ethical problems dealt with by Paul, making the 'apostolic directions concerning them highly interesting' (*PA*, 1801, Vol. 2, xi).

26 See, for instance, D.W. Bebbington, 1979; R. Brown, 1986; M. Drewery, 1978; T. George, 1991; M. Haykin, 1994; M. Haykin, 1988, 2000, 2003; R.W. Oliver, 2006; also B. Stanley, 1992. John Appleby (2010) is the author of a biography of William Carey entitled *I Can Plod ... William Carey and the Early Years of the first Baptist Missionary Society.* Appleby, like Carey, 'embraces a sensible, biblical Calvinism' and writes with empathy about Carey. All the above sources have helped in the articulation of this paper.

27 The arguments for denominational missionary societies were pragmatic and not theological (Bosch, 1991, 330)

28 Carey, on eschatology, was open to the American influences of his day (Walls, 1996, 224). As has been noted above, American eschatology leaned towards the post-millennial view. This approach emphasized the action of the Church as the instrument used to bring in the Millennium.

29 'Carey devoted a good number of pages to statistical charts about the population of the world and the religious affiliation of the peoples. In preparation for some of the great missionary conferences... similar statistical information was compiled in order to communicate the nature of the missionary effort that was required and to promote an urgency about it' (Escobar, 2001, 109).

30 The world population has grown from the 902 million people of Carey's day to well over 6 billion today. Similarly, the percentage of Christians (23%) grew to 1.4 billion (32.8%) in 1980, as quoted in Shenk (1999, 153).

31 New experts on languages were missionaries, the first and greatest of them, William Carey (Walls, 1996, 202), and Carey majored on printing the Scriptures.

32 Andrew F. Walls (1996, 244) succinctly evaluates Carey's *Enquiry*: '...the crucial words *the obligation to use means*. There is theology in Carey's pamphlet, and there is history, and there is demography; but at the heart of it lies the responsibility of Christians to use means to seek the appropriate instrument, to accomplish a task which God has laid upon them'.

33 Carey made stringent criticism of policies of overseas trading companies. This resulted in missionaries being less acceptable in certain territories (Bosch, 1991, 307).

34 Bold type is mine.

35 'Not even shoemaker, sir: just a cobbler', said Carey to a sneering army officer (S.P. Carey, 1923, 34f).

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The History of Dunseverick Baptist Church

Alastair McCaw

I count it a wonderful privilege and honour to have the opportunity to recall the history of the Baptist Church at Dunseverick. I wish to do so under seven different headings and so without anything further by way of introduction, let me begin ...

Starting the Work for the Lord of Dunseverick Baptist Church

Dunseverick is in a staunchly unionist area of Northern Ireland along the beautiful North Antrim coast. Traditionally, the two main industries in the area are fishing and farming. It was in this environment that a Baptist Church was formed in 1935. There is some evidence of the 1859 revival affecting the nearby town of Bushmills and surrounding area and one thus affected was Charlie McCaw, a trophy of grace who was to become a member of the Gospel Hall in Bushmills. He had a tremendous passion for souls and God used him in seeing many from Dunseverick and further afield come to the Lord. Perhaps it is for this reason that there does not appear to be any mention of the revival under W P Nicholson in the 1920's having any impact in the area.



Charlie McCaw

He bought an old schoolhouse just along the way from where the Baptist Tabernacle is now located and developed a friendship with Pastor Alex Jardine from Grove Baptist Church in Belfast who came to the area to conduct tent missions. Pastor Jardine's son Samuel, the new Pastor of Kilrea Baptist Church conducted a nine week

mission in the old schoolhouse in 1932 and it is with this mission that any account of the history of Dunseverick Baptist Church rightly begins. The platform for preaching was made up of fishboxes, the seats were wooden benches but around 40 souls were saved amongst them Albert McMullan (aged 18), John McVicker (aged 14) and Sam Sloan (aged 13). The young believers got much encouragement from Pastor Sam Jardine and 29 were baptized in the sea at Whitepark Bay the following year. This caused considerable interest and indeed much hostility in the district at that time.



Sam & Mrs Jardine

For a period of approximately a year and a half, a group of believers, around 12 in number met locally at the Feigh in the home of Mr & Mrs David Hill to remember the Lord. A site was purchased in February, 1935 at 200 Whitepark Road, not far from the old schoolhouse for the sum of £30 even with the opposition to the work at the time. The Tabernacle was built by William Johnston, a contractor from Portrush with much voluntary labour involved. Fifty years later at the Anniversary Service in the Tabernacle, Albert McMullan recalled going along to help his father with picks and shovels over their shoulders. He commented to those present that if they knew exactly what was below them, they would not sit too contentedly! He obviously thought that they hadn't a very solid foundation under them! A 'Great Opening Conference' was held in the new building on Saturday 31 August, 1935 with meetings at 4pm and 6.15pm. Pastor Alex Jardine chaired the meetings and those taking part included Pastors Carser from Lurgan, Olley from Newtownards, Baillie from Magherafelt and Wilson from Grove.

The Church was legally constituted the following day, Sunday 1 September, 14 members being present after the breaking of bread. By the 29 September a roll of membership contained 23 names. By the end of 1935, the Church had appointed 6 deacons. In the years immediately following the formation of the Church, numbers were small at times and the Church received much help from Pastor Paisley from Ballymena. Interestingly, one of the first things we find the young Church doing was organizing a mission for one week to be conducted by Mr J E Tetley. This would be a sign of things to come and leads us nicely onto our next heading:

Sounding Out the Word of the Lord from Dunseverick Baptist Church

Apart from the regular gospel meetings held weekly on a Sunday evening in the Tabernacle, the gospel has always gone forth from the Church in two other ways; open air meetings and gospel missions. There is a record of open air work in the district long before 1935, indeed it is recorded of Charlie McCaw that he had a

tremendous voice for such work. Mrs Jack Borland recalled as a youngster in the early 1940's listening to John McVicker preaching the gospel in the open air near her home on a lovely Lord's Day afternoon, those involved having come along on their bicycles to conduct the meeting. During Pastor Byers time open air meetings formed part of the witness to the village of Armoy where an open air at 6pm was followed by a children's meeting at 7pm and then a gospel meeting in the Park Orange Hall at 8pm. It is recorded that in 1971 the Church held 39 outdoor meetings. This form of outreach continues to this day although the number of meetings has been greatly reduced but in the past 3 summers a new venture has proved very successful. A Drive-In Church has been held at the nearby Dunseverick Harbour for a few weeks during the summer instead of the evening gospel meeting in the Tabernacle and this has been very well attended.



Marc Taylor

Gospel missions have been central to spreading the Word of God in the area and the oldest mission which is still fondly remembered in the Church is one held just before Christmas, 1943 and conducted by Pastor T J McNabb then of Killyleagh Baptist Church. Some 20 souls were saved amongst them Hugh Sloan, Eric Todd, Stanley Todd, Peggy McVicker and Mary McMullan. An era of blessing ensued with more missions during the mid-late 1940's and a resultant increase in membership. Amongst those who evangelised in the district were Pastors Ravey and H H Orr and Mr J A McCrea.


Charles, Stanley & Eric Todd

Many great names from the past in our denomination conducted missions during the 1950s including Pastors Lyttle and Bradley from the church, Victor McManus, Currie Brennan, Willie Mullan, James McManus and James Irvine. For a few years during the 1950's a work was carried on in the Milltown, a small village just over a mile from the Tabernacle following a mission held there. Jim Smyth, then a young believer from the Coleraine Church often helped in that work. When Pastor Byers came to the Church in 1960, a mission held in Portballintrae led to a regular work commencing in Bushmills firstly in the Old Courthouse building and then in a portable hall at the top of the town near the home of Sammy and Mary McAlister. Although the main gospel meetings had ceased earlier, a work amongst boys and girls continued to 1989. Similarly, a mission in the Park Orange Hall near Armoy in 1964 led to the commencement of a work there amongst all age groups. Again this continued for 16 years until 1979. Just before Pastor Byers left Dunseverick in August 1967, 3 souls were saved at tent missions in the area.

The theme of missions continued during Pastor Garrett's time in Dunseverick. Tent missions were held in both Liscolman and Mosside and Pastor J.Johnston conducted a mission in the Tabernacle in early 1970. Pastor John McVicker helped out in both Armoy and Bushmills and in 1973 Pastor T J McNabb returned to conduct what would be the last mission held in the Tabernacle for 11 years. It was a time of blessing but not with the outward results of 1943! In 1972 a work also commenced in Ballycastle initially to try to meet the needs of holiday makers coming into the town and it continued until 1979.



Ken & Isa Humphries

The mission of 1984 held for 4 weeks from the end of October and conducted by Pastor Ken Humphries will always be remembered by those of us who were privileged to be there and have some small part in it. Pastor Humphries described it as a time of blessing the like of which neither he nor his wife had experienced before. Further missions were held in 1989 (Pastor Tom McLaughlin), 1995 (Pastor Denis Lyle), 2003 (Pastor Keith Lindsay) and in 2009 (Pastors David Scott & Kenny Wilson). The last of these was the best attended by people from the district and one person got saved.

The word of the Lord has now been consistently sounded forth from Dunseverick Baptist Church for more than 76 years to the surrounding area. Thankfully there are those from the Church who have taken the gospel further. Let us consider:

Sending Forth to the Work of the Lord from Dunseverick Baptist Church



Sam Sloan

The Church was barely 4 years old when a young man saved during the mission in the old schoolhouse and just 20 years of age heard the call of God. When others were leaving in 1939 to fight for their country, Sam Sloan left home to go to the Bible Training Institute in Glasgow in September of that year. It was not until 1947 that the way opened up for him to go to the land of his calling in Peru. During his first furlough in 1953 he married Mary Gribbon and together they served the Lord in their adopted homeland until returning to Northern Ireland for the final time in 1988 due to ill-health. I wish to repeat something mentioned in the book – in 1954 there were 7 churches at the General Assembly in Peru and by 1985 the number had risen to 120. Dunseverick Baptist Church some 6,000 thousand miles from Peru played a major part in that growth.

John McVicker also heard the voice of God. Although appointed an elder in 1944, in 1946 he attended an Irish Baptist Foreign Mission training course and in January,



John & Mary McVicer

1950 sailed to Peru. I wish to read an extract from his memoirs at this point. It is nothing to do with John in particular so much as it lets us see how God was working in those early days and indeed will still work if we but let Him!

'As a young Christian, I received much needed encouragement ... by a man called Harry Irwin. He recalled that ... some time previous local Christian farmers in Ballymena had banded together to build a little Mission Hall. In the slack period they used their horses and carts to transport to the site required materials such as sand and lime. Work was progressing well when the weather suddenly improved towards the early spring, so most of the farmers went back to get their fields cleared and the ploughing finished for the new season. One of them however was intent on getting the hall finished so allowed his men to stay until God's house was completed. In those days the potatoes were stored or pitted in the open fields and these had to be collected and brought in before the new ploughing could commence. By that time he found that the market for the old crop was over so it had to be discarded and covered at the end of the field. However there occurred an unexpected frost which damaged the new early summer imports and resulted in a demand for the old crop. Potato merchants scoured the countryside looking for supplies and the only farmer in the whole district that could meet their requirements was the one who honoured the Lord who proved Himself no man's debtor because the farmer received a much higher price per ton than the others had earlier obtained.'

Mary McMullan was saved in 1943 and spent time at Missionary Training School in the late 1940's. She arrived in Peru on 15th February, 1951 and 2 days later married John McVicker in Arequipa. For the next 17 years they faithfully laboured for God in Peru. Due to ill-health, they returned home at the end of 1968. They were to spend 12 years pastoring the Baptist Church in Kilrea.

Stanley Todd also left in January, 1951 to go to Missionary Training School having become interested in the work of the Sudan Interior Mission through visits made to Dunseverick by Mr.Alex Ireland, a serving missionary there. In June, 1954 Stanley went to Nigeria and in 1957 married Etta in Nigeria. They were back home several times before Stanley took up a position as Deputation Secretary for the mission and they transferred their membership in 1975 to Rosemary Park Church in Bangor.

Others have since followed in their footsteps. For a number of years during the 1970's Sammy and Mary McAlister served with the Irish Missionary Fellowship in North Antrim and North Londonderry. Dessie Creelman was led to the Lord by Pastor Garrett late one Saturday night in the manse and after Bible College in Wales served in Peru from 1977-1991 and continues to serve in the Literature and Trailer ministry. Brian Scott came to faith in Christ at a BYF weekend and after a period at the Baptist



Desmond Creelman

College pastored Calvary Baptist Church in Dee Street, Belfast for 5 years from 1978. Presently he serves the Lord in Canada. More recently, Jayne McCurdy, brought up in the Church and a student at the Baptist College served with Mission Africa in Nigeria for a time.

Dunseverick Baptist Church has sent forth workers to the work of the Lord both at home and further afield. Before the Church was 20 years old it was reaching not only the continent of Europe but also South America and Africa with the gospel.

Others were needed to feed the flock of God at home so let us think of:

Servants of the Lord in the Work of Dunseverick Baptist Church

The Church is greatly indebted to the efforts of the pioneers (if we may call them so) in the work at the beginning. Without men such as the Jardines it may never have got off the ground. Mr. Alfred Olley pastored for approximately one year from May, 1936 but such were finances at the time he could not be offered a stated salary when he commenced. Towards the end of the war years there was a feeling in the church that a full-time pastor was required to spearhead the work. From 1945, a number of men have served in this capacity and I just want to mention their names and refer briefly to things of significance which happened during their time in office.

C J KEENAN (1945-47) One of the low points in the Church's history as some members ceased attending due to the Church affiliating with the Baptist Union. There are different records of Mrs Keenan being heavily involved in the witness with her husband as well. It was a relatively short pastorate with Pastor and Mrs Keenan moving on to Portstewart before eventually retiring in the USA.

A LYTTLE (1950-54) It was during Pastor Lyttle's time, again a relatively short pastorate that the first manse to be owned by the Church was built at 220 Whitepark Road near to the village of Lisnagunague. One of the most interesting facts unearthed about Mr Lyttle was that on Sunday 12 February, 1950 he spoke at a meeting in the Protestant Hall in Ballymoney inaugurating a Baptist witness in that town. Upon resigning, he joined the Gospel Hall assembly in Bushmills and continued to preach the gospel, as the Lord gave opportunity.



Pastor A Lyttle

J BRADLEY (1955-58) It was in 1956 that electricity was switched on in the district. The same year twins were born to the pastor and his wife. Mrs Bradley recalled the time when the tank was filled on a Saturday for a baptismal service on the Sunday and no one realised that there was a leak in the tank. The water had to be pumped in from the nearby stream.



Jack Bradley

W J K BYERS (1960-67) We have already mentioned some things from this era but we can add the renovations and extension which were opened in January, 1964 after the purchase of additional ground the previous year. The first church newsletter was produced and an important work amongst young people was established. The most significant development of this period was that from 1 January, 1966 Dunseverick Baptist Church became self-supporting.

J GARRETT (1968-78) At a time during this pastorate the Church was reaching out to three out-stations and it was during the 1970's that membership reached an all-time high to the mid-60's. The midweek prayer meeting moved into the main building in 1975. Daily Vacation Bible Schools were held in different places. During the vacancy which followed Pastor Garrett's time as pastor, the Church sold the first manse at 220 Whitepark Road and bought another property at 193 Whitepark Road.



Mark Taylor, David Scott, WJK Byers, Jim Garrett, Silas Henry

B CARGIN (1981-82) If we are to tell the history of Dunseverick Baptist Church factually then this will surely go down as the lowest point of the past 76 years. Not only did the pastor resign but the Church lost around 25% of its members. At this time the Church purchased some ground across the road from the Tabernacle part of which later would become a Car Park.

S HENRY (1990-97) By the time Pastor Henry came much of that which was lost in 1982 had been regained during the Ken Humphries mission. All the Church's work was now based in Dunseverick and a new car park was formed. The last church newsletter was produced. A hearing loop system was installed in the main building and the 60th anniversary was celebrated.

M TAYLOR (2010-present) After a vacancy of almost 13 years, our most recent pastor was installed at the beginning of 2010 and later on in the year a new manse was purchased at 179a Straid Road near Bushmills. This has led to an increase in attendances especially at the evening gospel meeting.

Whilst briefly mentioning the men who have served the Lord as pastors of Dunseverick Baptist Church, we must never forget the contributions made by their wives without whom their work would have been more difficult. Also, it should not be forgotten that the Church was indebted to others for their help during times of vacancy and in the two years prior to the induction of Pastor Taylor, the help of Pastor David Scott and his wife was invaluable. The various branches of the Church have always helped out in the work and it is only proper that we should say something about them:

Sub-divisions of the Work of the Lord in Dunseverick Baptist Church

Although over the years there have been different aspects of the Church's work such as the Building Fund which have long since been done away with, we are thankful for them and don't forget that in the past they were important in the running of the fellowship. In thinking of how the Church operates today, we will confine ourselves to briefly say something about the Women's work, the Youth Fellowship and the Children's work.

There are some references to women's meetings during the time of Pastor Keenan. However, in 1951 a branch of the Women's Missionary Auxillary was formed in the Church, encouraged by Mrs Hutchinson, the daughter of a Baptist pastor. Mrs Lyttle, the pastor's wife had the distinction of being the first President of the Dunseverick branch. Numbers were small initially but peaked during the 1970's when church membership was highest. Other pastor's wives followed Mrs Lyttle as President and it was later to become known as the BWF (Baptist Women's Fellowship). Dunseverick has had the privilege of hosting the BWF regional rally comprised of local branches on a number of occasions, most recently during this past year. The Dunseverick women have also themselves had cause to celebrate such as on 12 May, 1976 on its 25th anniversary and on other occasions.

The ladies of the Dunseverick BWF have over the years been commended for two things. Firstly, the wonderful suppers which they provide for the special occasions which take place in the life of the Church and also for their prayerful support for pastors and missionaries. Only heaven will reveal exactly what has been accomplished through their prayers.

The Youth Fellowship has been part of the work and witness now for almost 50 years really becoming a branch on its own during Pastor Byers' pastorate. As far back as 1965, 19 young people from the Church attended the Annual Rally at the Wellington Hall in Belfast. Back in May of this year about the same number attended the Rally in Moira Baptist Church. The BYF have held their own open air meetings, have sent

quite a few young people on BYE teams since 1975 and during the 1970's this work was blessed of God both numerically and spiritually under the leadership of Maurice McKendry. Special outreach weekends have been held in the Tabernacle at various times and at one such in January of this year a young girl of 20 years of age put her trust in Christ and presently is going on well with the Lord.

Youth Fellowship weekends have been part of the youth work since the first one to Donegal in 1970 and continue to be. Just under 3 weeks ago, 19 leaders and young people spent the weekend at Seaview in Kilkeel. Presently we meet every other Monday night in the back room at the Tabernacle from October through to March. At Christmas time we are involved in carol singing in Old Folks homes and send shoe boxes to help out a mission in Romania. Numbers aren't what we would like but away back in February, 1965 Pastor Byers gave a report to the Church in which he said 'because the nature and design of the meeting was not to entertain, the numbers would inevitably be small'. It is still the same today!

A Sunday School commenced in January, 1936 and continued right up until 2009 when because of dwindling numbers a decision was taken by the Church to change to a weekly Children's Meeting on a Wednesday night. Since 1936, many children have heard from faithful Sunday School teachers that they needed to be saved and during the mid-1970's when the Church was involved in Armoy and Bushmills as well as at the Tabernacle over 200 children were being reached in a single week and that does not take into account the summer Daily Vacation Bible Schools which were held in various centres. A Sunday School ceased to be held in Bushmills from 1989 due to falling numbers and the need for teachers at Dunseverick. For many years Sunday School Outings and Children's Days were important features on the Church's calendar but in recent times they have fallen by the way. One such outing was to Cushendun in July, 1950 when about 80 attended. At that time the Sunday School was growing although there was a day when only 2 pupils turned up. Reaching out to children was a major part of Pastor Byers' ministry. In 1973 over 300 children and young people were contacted through the Daily Vacation Bible Schools. Many children have received awards for 5 and 10 years unbroken attendance at Sunday School. Dunseverick has also had the Amazing Journey along to help with outreach into schools.

An annual Christmas Social had been held for many years usually on the Friday night before Christmas and children from the Sunday School played a very prominent role. Since 1995 it was moved to the Lord's Day afternoon before Christmas. Due to fewer numbers in the various branches of the Church, in the past few years there has been the involvement of each of the 3 branches of the work discussed above in the Social. We will now think of:

Stalwarts in the Work of the Lord in Dunseverick Baptist Church

This is a dangerous heading to address since it would be so easy to leave someone out who should quite obviously be included but nevertheless I strongly believe it has a place in this account of the history of Dunseverick Baptist Church. Where would the Church be without its stalwarts, without those who have been the backbone of the work? Many have served as deacons during the lifetime of the Church but only 6 have been elders; John McVicker, Robert Bennett, Eric Todd, Sammy McAlister, Jack Borland and Albert McMullan. Each has made an invaluable contribution to the history of the Church and both Eric and Jack are still in membership. Indeed Eric still plays the organ on a Lord's Day morning and on a Tuesday night. Back in 2008, a presentation was made to him in recognition of over 50 years of faithful service at the organ. It is only right that we still remember both these men as Pastor Garrett recalled them; 'Eric Todd who was slow to speak but ever a model of stability and Jack Borland with always the right word at the right time'.



Jack Borland

What can we say about Albert McMullan, one of the first Sunday School teachers in 1936? I'm sure no one present at the Special Members' Meeting on 18 November, 1983 will ever forget his call to prepare for a mission the following year. John and Bob Thompson – always present and their voice always heard in prayer on a Tuesday night. Dan McClelland – a man whose experience in the building trade was priceless around the Church. Hugh Sloan was a man of faithful service which included 12 years as Secretary. William James McVicker amongst many other duties served as Treasurer for 25 years. Names from the distant past include the likes of Albert and Jane Taggart. We could include the names of many wives as well. What about today? If the speaker doesn't turn up for a meeting, you can be sure that Dan McCurdy won't be filling in but if there was something done in the background which went unseen, it is very likely that it was Dan who saw to it. What about women in the Church? Many of us have memories of the prayers of Mrs Nessie McCaughan or more recently of Mrs Mary McAlister. Mrs Flora Todd was the Church's first missionary secretary. We should not forget that families have played a major role in the witness of the Church going away back to the Sloans and the McMullans or more recently the McCurdys. Perhaps you are thinking that someone should



Hugh Sloan



Dan McCurdy

have got mentioned or there should have been more said about someone and if you are, you are probably right! Where do we stop? At Hebrews 11:32, '*And what shall I more say? For the time would fail me to tell of ... others...*'

We have tried to cover the history of the Church but without doing it chronologically. You can be sure that people have been overlooked, that things have been overlooked. Perhaps the last section gives us the opportunity to redress this because during the past 76 years, there has been;

Special Moments in the Work of the Lord in Dunseverick Baptist Church

There have been many special occasions already mentioned such as the opening and the missions and other things alluded to such as inductions and farewells – all memorable events in the lifetime of the Church. When building work was carried out, there was usually a celebration and, for example Saturday, 18th January, 1964 was one such occasion. The 50th Anniversary Service in August, 1985 was rightly described as having 'exceeded our expectations' even though it was a prolonged meeting as some over the years proved to be. Sixty years were also celebrated in 1995 and then 75 years were celebrated in September, 2010 when Pastor Eddie Rea did a week of ministry on the subject of the Tabernacle.



Eddie Rea

No one should forget their wedding day and since 1935 there have been 35 marriages in the Tabernacle. The first of these was on 16 September, 1936 when Robert Bennett married Hessie McClelland. The Church affiliated with the Baptist Union of Ireland in 1944 and a Trust Deed was set up in 1945. At that time a new and improved Constitution was drawn up and some years later from 1 January, 1966 the Church became self-supporting.

In January, 1964 the first ever Church Newsletter was produced and was to be issued bi-monthly for the next 25 years. At its peak, over 200 copies of 12 pages each were printed. Today we produce bi-monthly a bulletin called the Tabernacle Times which is much less comprehensive than the original one.

We should not forget the achievement of Rachel McConaghy who in 1974 was recognised for 17 years unbroken attendance at Sunday School or the privilege experienced by the BYF in 1977 when 3 of their number had the honour of giving a report of their activities at the Annual Youth Rally in the Wellington Hall in Belfast.

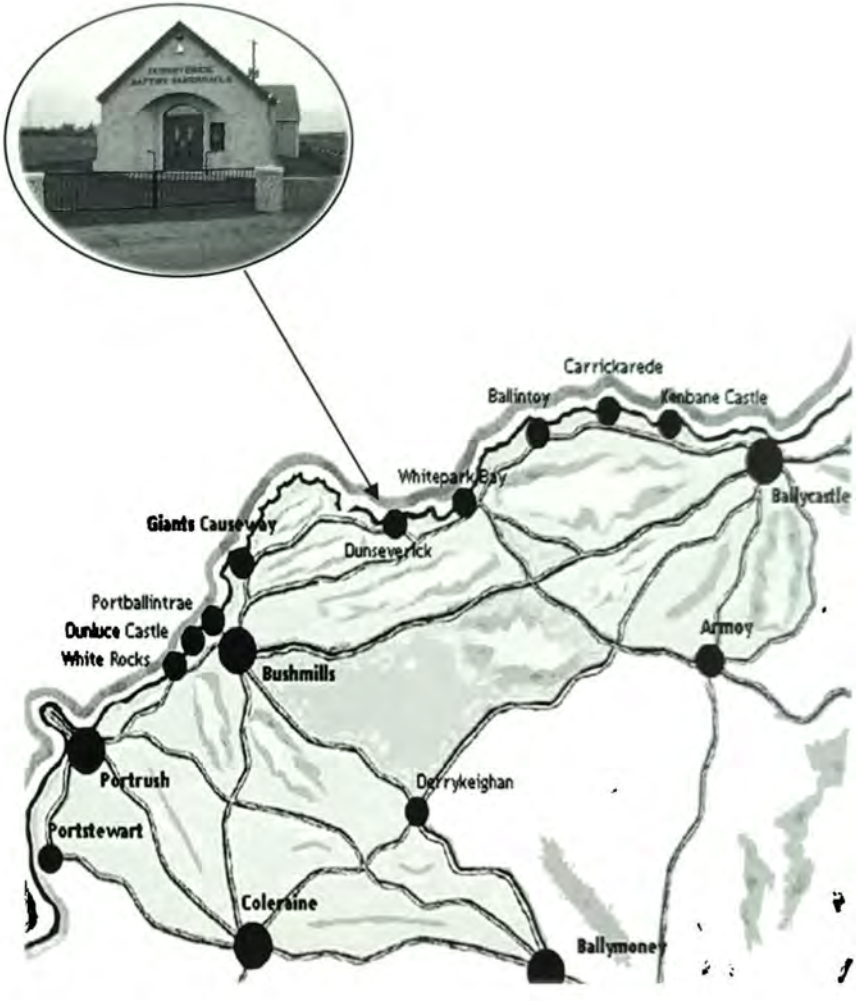
Around this time Christmas morning and Watchnight services were commenced but these generally fall by the wayside at times of vacancy.

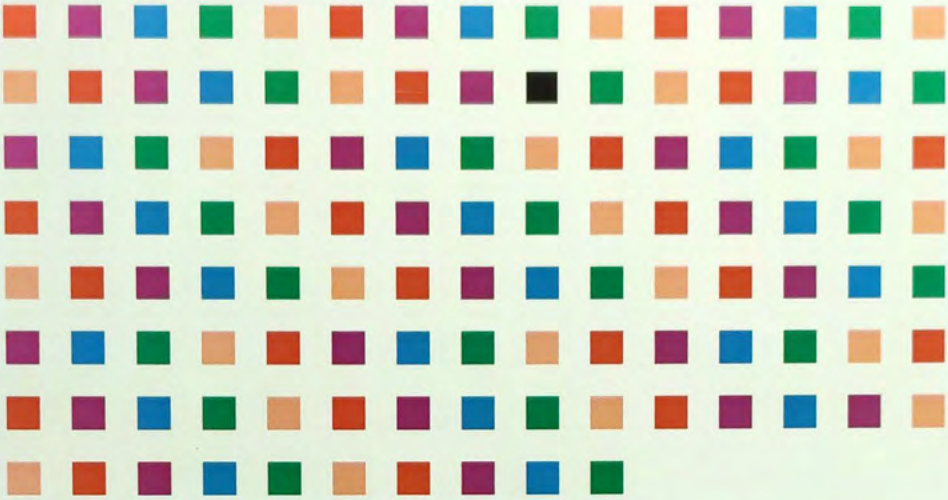
From 1992, the Church has had the use of a car park just across the road from the Tabernacle, constructed on the ground purchased some years earlier. Many could tell of special moments they have experienced in Dunseverick Baptist Tabernacle maybe when God spoke to them about salvation or about serving Him. Personally, I remember the spirit of unity which existed amongst members at the time of the mission in 1984 and for me, a member since 1982 that has to be highest point, certainly since then. Others in membership for longer could well suggest something different, after all there were twice as many saved in 1943 but I can only speak of what I know.

I trust you have enjoyed this brief account of the history of a little Baptist Church in a scenic part of Northern Ireland. We give God the glory and the thanks for everyone who has been part of that history and for everything He has accomplished in the area and in people's lives and we rejoice that the end is not yet! Let me conclude by quoting to you from the final paragraph of the book published in June 2010.

'Dunseverick under God's care has sought to maintain a faithful witness to fundamental Bible truth; has continued watchful in prayer and preserved a strong conviction in the near return of the Lord for His own. In dark days and light, in hard times and easy with unwavering faith, the Church has steadfastly sought to contend for the Lord's glory. The firm conviction has always been, *'being confident of this very thing, that he which hath begun a good work in you will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ'* (Philippians 1v6).

(This talk was delivered to the IBHS on 20 October 2011)


Carrickarede
Ballintoy
Kenbane Castle
Whitepark Bay
Ballycastle
Giants Causeway
Dunseverick
Portballintrae
Dunluce Castle
White Rocks
Bushmills
Armoy
Portrush
Portstewart
Derrykeighan
Coleraine
Ballymoney



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