

basic truths (20-23)! The stones were a start (and their importance repeatedly stressed), but there were other important lessons to learn before the people, within sight of the city of 'Jericho' and on its 'eastern border' (19) could deal with problem no. 1.

Secondly, God 'performs his acts before the forum of the peoples'.²² But he does this not merely to flabbergast his enemies but 'so that you might always fear the LORD your God' (24). Thus, remembering his works is a powerful incentive to faithfulness.

To Be Continued

Notes

- 1 Thus, for example, verse 11 echoes Dt. 3:18; 4:5, 14, verses 12,13 reflect Dt. 3:20 (as well as Num. 32) and verse 18 reflects Dt. 1:26, 43: 9:23.
- 2 A. G. Auld, *Joshua, Judges and Ruth* (Edinburgh: St. Andrew Press, 1984), 12.
- 3 Butler, 18.
- 4 See Numbers 32.
- 5 A. W. Pink, *Gleanings in Joshua* (Chicago: Moody, 1964), 21f.
- 6 Some note that in 4:13 40,000 fighting men are recorded as coming from these tribes. On the other hand Num. 26:7,18,34 mentions 110,000. Is this indicative of partial obedience in response to Joshua's 'all' (14)? In view of the fact that the two and a half tribes seem to consistently feature in a positive way throughout the book of Joshua, it seems preferable to conclude that Joshua called for the crack troops to follow him while leaving 'Dad's army' at home to secure the land.
- 7 C. J. Goslinga, *Joshua, Judges, Ruth* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1986), 40.
- 8 D. R. Davis, *Joshua: No Falling Words* (Fearn: Christian Focus, 2000), 25.
- 9 Davis, 25.
- 10 Various attempts by squeamish commentators to 're-invent' Rahab as an inn-keeper show a great deal more as to the imagination of the writer than their fidelity to the text!
- 11 We may be surprised that Rahab's property was not 'turned over' by the secret police. However, in the ancient world the privacy of a woman was usually respected. I recall the not dissimilar story told by a friend from the old Eastern Europe. He said that, when he was a baby, his parents used to smuggle Bibles in his carrycot since to disturb a baby was disapproved in his culture!
- 12 F. A. Schaeffer, *Joshua and the Flow of Biblical History* (London: Hodder & Stoughton), 69, 72f.
- 13 In doing so, she thinks like a typical inhabitant of the ancient world and seeks mercy for her family and clan. See, M. H. Woudstra, *The Book of Joshua* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1981), 74.
- 14 Elsewhere this is emphasized in other ways. She is named in both David's and Jesus' genealogies and in 6:25 her marriage to Nashon (a prince in Israel, see Num. 7:12) is recorded.
- 15 Davis, 28, helpfully notes that God's 'word should be sufficient to bolster us. But because of the weakness of our faith, he graciously stoops down and by a plethora of signs, evidences, and providences makes us feel assured of his already sure word.'
- 16 So J. Garstang, *The Foundations of Biblical History. Joshua and Judges* (London: Constable, 1931), 135. He adds that eight miles was probably a typical march for a company like Israel; hence the early start.
- 17 Was this the divine purpose behind the delay?
- 18 Davis, 34. Yahweh is the Hebrew name for God, usually translated in our Bibles as LORD.
- 19 Surely the worst of all meetings!
- 20 Davis, 39.
- 21 By its translation the NIV assumes two but the Hebrew text is less clear.
- 22 Woudstra, 96.

Tensions in Modern Theology

Charles Cameron

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There are two very different ways of approaching this discussion of 'tensions in theology': 'both - and' thinking and 'either - or' thinking. 'Both and' thinking tends to see two sides of an issue as two sides of a coin; the one side complements the other. 'Either or' thinking tends to see two sides of an issue as two sides of an argument; the one side is set over against the other. 'Both and' thinking turns a potentially controversial issue into an opportunity for increased mutual understanding.

'Either or' thinking turns a controversial issue into an explosive argument.

In order to underline the importance of 'both and' thinking, we can begin by noting how much we ourselves are caught up in 'either or' thinking. We find it is so difficult to put ourselves in the other fellow's shoes. We may see his point of view - but only as his point of view. Seeing his view as the other side of an argument, we feel compelled to oppose him! We are so quick to think in terms of 'either or'. We tend to identify our own partial insight with the fullness of truth. It is so easily done; indeed, we do it all the time in everyday life. 'This is how I see it,' we proclaim with self-confident emotion. We seem unable to hear the faint voice of protest - 'You're not even listening to me' or, 'You're putting words into my mouth.'

The negative effects of 'either or' thinking can be clearly seen in modern theology. There are a number of aspects of

Christian faith and practice which have become notorious areas of irritation, and even hostility, among Christians.

We are now going to look together at some of the 'tensions in modern theology'. As we do so, we will see that the immense value of 'both and' thinking can hardly be overemphasized. It is a matter of the greatest importance and urgency that we learn to see *both sides now*.

The 'tensions in modern theology' we will be looking at are:

- 1 Doctrine and Devotion.
- 2 Revelation and Reconciliation
- 3 Creation and Christ
- 4 The Holy Spirit and the Holy Scripture
- 5 Predestination and Preaching
- 6 Evangelism and Ecumenism
- 7 Proclamation and Persuasion
- 8 Spiritual Christianity and Social Concern

Doctrine and Devotion

For some Christians 'doctrine' is a taboo word. They only need to hear the word and their hackles are up! In their view, doctrine is dry. It is head knowledge. It is not practical. There are others whose preoccupation with doctrine gives precisely this impression. One recalls the story of the man who was asked his opinion of a certain preacher. The question was put to him, 'Was he sound?' The reply came back immediately, 'Oh yes, he was sound all right, but the rest of us were sound asleep.'

Doctrine can be 'on fire'. Doctrine need not be dull. Doctrine does not need to be above the heads of the ordinary people. It does not belong to the private domain of the academic's 'ivory tower'. When you hear the word 'doctrine' do not imagine an academic 'holy of holies' which is protected by the stern words, 'Trespassers Forbidden'. For both the academic theologian and the ordinary believer, the way forward in doctrine and devotion is the same. We must enrol in the *school of discipleship*. In this school there are no courses restricted to the intellectual elite. All of us must learn in precisely the same way. It is the way of sitting at the feet of Jesus and listening to his teaching (as with Mary – Luke 10:39).

In Jesus' school of discipleship, doctrine and devotion belong together. Jesus and his apostles know nothing of the modern tendency to separate doctrine and devotion. If some modern Christians regard 'doctrine' as a taboo word, the fault does not lie with N.T. Let us look briefly at *what the N.T. says about doctrine* :

- *Mt. 7:28* – the people were astonished at Jesus' doctrine – v.29 – Jesus 'taught them as one having authority, and not as the scribes'. Jesus' teaching was doctrine with a difference; doctrine brought to life for the people. Doctrine can be doctrine with a difference for *you!*
- *Mk. 12:37* – the common people heard Jesus gladly. This teaching is described as Jesus' doctrine in v.38 where Jesus warns his hearers; 'Beware of the scribes . . .' Jesus was able to speak forthrightly about the scribes because he spoke with an authority they did not possess. His doctrine made a difference to his hearers. It brought them *gladness*. Doctrine can make a difference to you!

- *Acts 2:41-42* – the 3,000 souls who were converted to Christ on the Day of Pentecost 'continued steadfastly (or devoted themselves) in the apostles' doctrine'. The apostles' doctrine brought 3,000 souls to Christ in one day! This was doctrine with a difference. This was doctrine on fire. This was doctrine, which had authority. This was doctrine, which brought gladness to the people. It was no ivory tower doctrine that brought 3,000 souls to Christ in one day. This was doctrine and devotion brought together in a powerful combination. Don't let it be 'Doctrine or Devotion?' Let it be 'Doctrine and Devotion'.

Revelation and Reconciliation

Carl E. Braaten has written 'Serious reservations . . . must be voiced against the dominant position of the idea of revelation in theology.' Braaten suggests that the idea of revelation implies that 'man's essential predicament is his lack of knowledge'. Braaten offers this comment: 'If the ignorance of man stands in the centre, then the fact of revelation relieves that plight; but if man's guilt is the problem, then not revelation but reconciliation must become the theological centrum' (*History and Hermeneutics*, 14).

Any worthy theology of revelation will take full account of the substance of Braaten's comment. Man's basic need does not lie in his finitude but in his sinfulness. That need is not met by mere knowledge about God but by reconciliation to God. We must, however, resist any and every tendency to draw a false contrast between revelation and reconciliation. Revelation is not merely an antidote for ignorance. Revelation centres itself on Christ by whom men are reconciled to God. Biblical revelation must be understood with respect to its specific intention, which is most closely related to salvation. The Scriptures point us to Christ, that, believing in him, we receive eternal life. The salvation concerning which the Scriptures testify is not simply an antidote for our ignorance. It is God's way of removing our guilt. Scripture's primary focus of attention is on the divine reconciliation by which our guilt is removed. Let us not think, however, that we should dispense with the word 'revelation' and simply replace it with the word 'reconciliation'. Rather, let us rejoice that God who has revealed himself has done so supremely in this great act of reconciliation through Christ (2 Cor. 5: 18-21).

Creation and Christ

When we think of the relationship between creation and Christ, we become more strikingly aware of the inadequacy of the word 'reconciliation' as a replacement for the word 'revelation'. Christ is the centre of the divine revelation since it is in him alone that there is reconciliation or salvation. While seeing Christ as the centre of divine revelation, we must be careful not to make Christ the sum-total of revelation in such a restrictive way that we lose sight of the important biblical perspective on creational revelation (more commonly known as 'general revelation').

By strongly emphasizing the centrality of Christ in God's work of revelation and reconciliation, we are able to go beyond the vagueness of much modern theology when it

attempts to speak to God. We must, however, take care not to present Christ in a restrictive way which fails to bring out the comprehensiveness of God's revelation in creation that forms the indispensable background of God's mighty work of salvation in Christ.

The powerful evangelistic significance of a proper emphasis on creational revelation is brought out well by A.W. Tozer (*The Pursuit of God*, 73-82; *The Best of Tozer*, 20-26). Tozer, concerned to emphasize 'Not God spoke, but God is speaking,' highlights the danger of thinking of creational revelation as 'natural' and the Bible as 'supernatural'. This kind of contrast gives the false impression of a silent God who suddenly began to speak only to retreat again into silence after he had spoken. Concerning creational revelation, Tozer writes, 'His speaking voice . . . antedates the Bible by uncounted centuries . . . That voice . . . has not been silent since the dawn of Creation.' Tozer stresses the integral relation between creation revelation and biblical revelation. 'The Bible will never be a living book to us until we are convinced that God is articulate in His Universe.' Tozer insists that if we fail to appreciate the powerful speaking of God in creation, our witness to Christ will be weakened: 'To jump from a dead impersonal world to a dogmatic Bible is too much for most people. They may admit that they should accept the Bible as the Word of God and they may try to think of it as such, but they find it impossible to believe that the words on the page are actually for them.'

Tozer, careful to avoid 'a divided psychology' which 'tries to think of God as mute everywhere else and vocal only in a book' insists that 'much of our religious unbelief is due to a wrong concept of and a wrong feeling for the Scriptures of Truth. A silent God suddenly began to speak in a book and when the book was finished lapsed back into silence forever. Now we read the book as the record of what God said when He was for a brief time in a speaking mood. With notions like that in our heads how can we believe?' Grounding the unity of creational and biblical revelations in the conviction that God is 'by his nature continuously active', Tozer goes on to stress that the Bible is 'not only a book which was once spoken, but a book which is now speaking' and that 'a word of God once spoken continues to be spoken'. In our understanding of the Christian message let us be quite clear that any friction between creation and salvation must be recognized as an unbiblical fiction. Let us rejoice that the salvation of God in Christ opens our eyes to see the glory of God in creation. How we need to allow the glory and the majesty of God to fill our preaching of the gospel so that so that the world cannot turn away from the message we preach with the snide remark, 'Your God is too small'.

The Holy Spirit and the Holy Scriptures

James Philip, in his exposition of the doctrine of the Holy Scripture in the Westminster Confession, gives a simple yet profoundly helpful illustration that is most relevant to present discussion concerning the Spirit and Scripture:

The black plastic disc that is put on the gramophone turntable has a voice within it, and when we put on the pick-up the voice comes out; and every part of the disc contains the voice. You cannot say 'This part is the

voice, but this part is only the plastic' for the entire playing surface contains the voice. You cannot separate the voice from the disc once the voice has been recorded. This is how it is with the Scriptures. You cannot separate the living word of God from the written word that contains it. Every verse contains the voice. All you need is a pick-up. Sometimes the needle gets worn and when the record is put on it is no longer clear. A good needle is needed to bring the voice out and sometimes when faith is not very strong it is like putting on a faulty needle and you can hardly hear what is being said. But this is not the fault of the record but of the needle. The record is a record whether you put it on or not; it does not become a record only when you put it on and play it. In the same way, the Bible is the Word of God whether faith picks up its message or not. When faith is strong and clear the message is strong and clear, and out of it comes the most marvellous and wonderful way (Part 1, p. 13).

Thus,

- We hold together the Holy Spirit and the Holy Scriptures. On the one hand, we hold that Scripture does not derive its authority from the fact that we use it, not even when we use Scripture in faith. On the other hand, Scripture can be experienced as God's Word only when we use it in accordance with its God-given purpose. On the one hand, Scripture is recognized as the Word of God because it is the Word of God. On the other hand, Scripture must be used – read and studied – if we are to experience its power as the Word of God.
- We must emphasize both the word and the Spirit – not the Word without the Spirit; not the Spirit without the Word. If we seek to move forward with the Spirit without keeping in line with the Word, we will find ourselves drifting into confusion.

It is the Word of God that the Spirit uses to keep us close to God. If we place high value on the Word yet do not experience the power of the Spirit using the Word to lead us to Christ, we will drift into a barren and lifeless rationalism. In Mk. 12:24 Jesus charged the Sadducees with knowing 'neither the Scriptures nor the power of God'. We need to know both the Scriptures and the power of God. It is only as the Spirit is leading us through the Word to Christ that we will be able, in the Spirit's power, to confess Scripture as the Word of God.

Predestination and Teaching

In his discussion of the 'pre' element in predestination, G.C. Berkouwer insists that 'he who speaks of God's counsel in terms of human categories will have to be aware of the inadequacy of his words'. Berkouwer maintains that the inadequacy of our words is particularly felt when we speak of before and after with respect to God. He seeks to understand the language of predestination in line with what he calls the 'depth-aspect' of salvation. He emphasizes that 'the depth-aspect of salvation is not a matter of hiddenness which goes beyond the knowledge of faith – not something far distant, not a vague, threatening reality, but the foundation of salvation'. Seeking to understand the idea of 'before the

foundation of the world' he writes, 'These words do not occur in Scripture as a threat, but in the decisive depth-aspect of salvation. They are not placed in a context in which they make us dizzy in the face of an unapproachable "eternity" but they are intended to show us the source of our eternal salvation. "Before" indicates that this divine act of salvation, preached to us by the gospel, is free from what we know in the world to be arbitrary and precarious. When we speak of the depth-aspect we mean that eternity does not stand in contrast to what in time became historical reality but rather that the salvation accomplished by Christ's death of reconciliation cannot be merely historical but that it has its eternal foundation in the love of God.'

Berkouwer's use of the idea of the depth-aspect of salvation to illuminate the 'pre' element in predestination may be set in a broader context now:

- A proper understanding of theological language is attainable only within the context of the obedience of faith. Here we are simply developing further the integral relationship between the Holy Scriptures and the Holy Spirit. The language of predestination may be understood as a form of expression that the believing man who has willingly submitted himself to the authority of grace, uses to confess his Christian faith.
- A proper understanding of theological language is attainable only within the context of encounter with God. This does not imply a retreat into subjectivism since faith's subjectivity has meaning only in relation to the God in whom we put our trust.
- The language of predestination is understood in direct connection with the gospel through which we come to know God in Christ. Set in this context, predestination need not be regarded as a form of determinism, which threatens to strip human experience of decisive significance. When we place the words of Jesus – 'He who has seen me has seen the Father' (John 14:9) – at the heart of our understanding of the gospel of God's sovereign grace, we may rest assured that in our encounter with Christ the revelation of God's love for us is not threatened by a hidden God whose secret will cannot be known.
- A proper understanding of theological language involves the recognition of the inexpressible character of the God whom we come to know in faith. The gift of God's grace in Christ is an 'inexpressible gift' (2 Cor. 9:15). When the believer seeks to express his gratitude to God for this inexpressible gift, he finds it quite impossible to give adequate expression to this gratitude that he feels so deeply. He is almost certain to use language which, at best, will contain certain ambiguities and which, at worst, will suggest misleading impressions if his language is not recognized as a groping after a form of expression that is worthy of a virtually inexpressible reality.

Through this approach to the doctrine of predestination we may be able to preach the gospel as a joyful gospel which is filled with true gladness. When the 'mirror of election' (Calvin) is a clearly reflecting mirror which points us clearly to Jesus Christ and not away from him to an unknown God, we will preach the gospel with joy and urgency.

Evangelism and Ecumenism

Frequently there has been a deep division between those who are committed to 'evangelical' concerns and those who are committed to 'ecumenical' concerns. This is a sad situation especially when we look at this particular tension in modern theology in the light of the gospel. In John 17: 2 we read of Jesus' prayer for the church – 'that they may all be one . . . so that the world may believe that thou hast sent me'. In the light of Jesus' prayer, we must honestly acknowledge that the dividedness of the church is a spiritual catastrophe for the watching world. We must not become so accustomed to disunity that we become immune to the words of warning in Jesus' prayer. The contemporary church must penitently acknowledge 'that the endless division of the Church gives the world cause for joy and derision, a reason for its unbelief' (Berkouwer).

In the face of its mission the church must acknowledge guilt for the world's unbelief. We must, however, reject the idea of 'unity at any price'. We must not be gullibly taken in by a 'lowest common denominator' type of ecumenism which pays little attention to truth. We must heed the warning of Hans Kung – 'A Church which abandons truth abandons itself'. We must have realism about the ecumenical enterprise. We must, however, be quite clear about this – realism is not fatalism. Realism will keep us from acting in a misguided way but it will not rob us of a true concern for Christian unity. Realism means recognizing that if ecumenism is to have any relevance to our world it must be grounded in the gospel. Realism means that we must not be so closed that we are unwilling to move forward with the gospel into new situations of life. Realism also means that we must not be so open that we lose sight of the gospel and then have no gospel to bring to the world. Evangelism will lead us beyond our own group, our own denomination. Will ecumenism lead us to seek to win men and women for Christ? – This is the question which realism forces us to ask. As we reflect on Jesus' prayer 'that they may all be one . . . So that the world may believe that thou hast sent me' (Jn. 17:21) our concern must be for world evangelism and not simply for the kind of ecumenism which may turn out to be more of a hindrance to world evangelism rather than a compelling impetus to evangelise the world.

Proclamation and Persuasion

The work of evangelism has come, in our secularised world, increasingly to involve the work of apologetics as well as the work of preaching. When we think about the place which apologetics has in our Christian witness, we must carefully distinguish between a proper use of apologetics and an illegitimate or irresponsible use of apologetics. We must carefully avoid the spirit of conflict that will only provoke our hearers to argument rather than lead them to Christ.

'The apologetic task' may not be waged for the sake of a fight but only for the sake of the truth. There must never be lust for victory in confrontation 'for we' may then celebrate some sort of victory 'while only exposing (our) poverty' because we haven't taken seriously those with whom we have been speaking (Berkouwer – *A Half Century of Theology*). If all cheap apologetics is to be ruled out, how are we to

proceed? A great statement of the way forward for apologetics has been given by Berkouwer (*Christianity Today*): here is room for a humble and courageous defence of Christianity. The combination of humility and courage is the combination that Christianity in our day sorely needs.' We could expand on this statement by specifying four key elements in Christian apologetics:

- The irreducible content of the gospel – The gospel must not be watered down for the sake of apologetic relevance. The end result of this procedure will be not relevance but irrelevance. Be faithful to the gospel.
- The essential reasonableness of the gospel – The gospel does not call us to make an irrational leap in the dark by which we have to commit intellectual suicide. 'In understanding be men' (1Cor. 14:20).
- The apologetic significance of the gospel does not have to be made relevant. The gospel is relevant. Our apologetic activity should arise from the gospel rather than being determined by modern man's questions.
- The spiritual character of the gospel – It is only through the working of the Holy Spirit that a person comes to Christ. Never forget this for it is fundamental to all Christian work.

As we think about the relationship between proclamation and persuasion let us keep both a firm commitment to the gospel and a listening ear to the questions people are asking.

Spiritual Christianity and Social Concern

Howard Butt, in his book *At the Edge of Hope* makes some helpful remarks regarding Christian hope:

Turn to God because the human prospect is so bleak

... The human prospect can be changed because of God. ... Everything is hopeless but God. Everything is hopeful because of God. ... we and our societies are nothing compared with God. ... We and our world are beloved of God ... Conservative 'other worldly' hope and liberal 'this worldly' hope are dangled like competing pearls of great price before us today. What tragedy when they really form a single unified reality.

God's people can truly give all their attention to him without being lured away from their neighbours. We are to have faith alone but faith that leads us to a life of good works. We are to live according to the word of God. We are to live within the world of men. When we consider the kind of theology known as 'Liberation theology' we must be committed to the practice of liberation which is grounded in the Lord Jesus Christ – the Liberator who said 'I am the truth' (Jn. 14:6), and 'the truth will set you free' (Jn. 8:32) When liberation theology is grounded in faith in Christ the Liberator (not just a model for man's political and social activism) there will be a true unity of spiritual Christianity and social concern. Stephen Travis reminded us that 'We do not have to choose between this world and the world to come because the purpose of God embraces both' (*I Believe in the Second Coming of Jesus*).

This is a good point at which to draw things to a conclusion. We so often make a choice 'either-or' when we should be affirming 'both – and'. Let us ask God to deliver us from a one-sidedness which does not reflect the width and the breadth of the gospel. The tensions in modern theology will grow greater if we do not allow the broad outlook of the gospel to lead us beyond the narrowness of our own limited understanding of the gospel. May it not be said of us 'Your God is too small.'

Music and the Spirit

David Williams

KEYWORDS: worship, sermon, Pentecostal, Charismatic, praise, theophany, psalms, singing, hymns, songs, prayer, rock, rhythm, culture, conservatism, Watts, Wesley, liturgy, emotion, evangelism, communication, unity, order, purpose, harmony, salvation, eternal, difference, human agency, choice, individual, corporate, improvement, silence, setting, sympathy, healing

It is not surprising that the Reformation, which centred its thought on the work of Jesus as the incarnation of the *logos*, the Word of God, then centred its form of worship on the spoken word, the sermon. It is then significant that the Pentecostal and Charismatic movements, which are centred upon the activity of the Holy Spirit, centre their worship on music; these are in large part musical services, in which people sing not only with voices but with their whole bodies. Songs and choruses comprise (in practice although not in theory) Pen-

tecostal liturgy. Certainly manifestations of the Spirit in the modern church have diminished aspects of worship such as the sermon. The movement has naturally produced both new styles of music and a plethora of new compositions. Indeed charismatic services seem sometimes barely distinguishable from musical events. This stress on music has certainly contributed to the growth of these groups; just as in advertising, music makes something attractive.

Worship is naturally expressed in music

It is said '... that this spiritual energy and verve, newly released by the Pentecostal Spirit, should give expression in songs of praise is again a natural consequence'.¹ But is there an inherent reason why this is the case?

Christianity is essentially a relation with Christ, present through the Spirit, especially in worship. It is hardly surprising that this involves sound. Theophany in the Old