

## Your Comments and Questions

(Views expressed here are not necessarily those of the editor)

### Masters Course at Pacific Bible Institute 2013

To date 19 applications have been received for the new Masters degree course planned to begin in August this year.

Costs for the students are administration costs and accommodation only. By faith the college will raise the funds to help the American lecturers travel costs and accommodation. Any donations towards these costs would be greatly appreciated.

This 4 year course involves two weeks lectures in Hervey Bay each August (this year 12th August - 23rd August). The two subjects this year are *Biblical Counselling* (Terry Arnold) and *Hermeneutics* (Dr. Michael Kerns).

### Prayer/Praise Points

- Praise the Lord, the interstate itinerary was very fruitful with a lot of good feedback from the saints. Terry was able to preach the Gospel to various ethnic groups in several meetings in NSW. Many unsaved people attended meetings. Some salvations have been evident. Pray for these and more souls to be won in follow up!

- Pray for the new Masters course at *Pacific Bible Institute* this year. Pray for a smooth operation for the first year of this course. Pray for the necessary donations towards the costs of running this course.

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# *Diakrisis* (Australia)

*'But strong meat belongs to them that are of full age, even those who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern [diakrisis] both good and evil', (Heb.5:14)*

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TA Ministries is a non-denominational faith ministry,  
*teaching, informing and equipping* the church.

Editor: Terry Arnold (MABS; Dip. Bib. & Min., Dip. Teaching)

The editor may not necessarily agree with all the views expressed by subscribers in this newsletter.

We welcome comments and items contributed by readers. Unless otherwise requested, these may be included in following newsletters at the discretion of the editor.

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This Newsletter is distributed bi-monthly *free* of charge. The cost to this ministry is approximately \$20.00 per subscriber annually. Any donations to help with these expenses is received with gratitude.

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### New Zealand Visit?

**There has been some expressions of interest in Terry visiting New Zealand. Any churches or colleges that may be interested should contact Terry on [taministries@bigpond.com](mailto:taministries@bigpond.com) or phone 0411489472. If there are enough churches or colleges, a possible itinerary could be looked at for late this year or early next year.**

## Editor's Comment

Many readers have been asking about my recent trip through three states. There were many valuable and encouraging experiences in more than 40 meetings in 20 churches over 12 weeks. Every trip I try to keep a 'theme' in mind. This year the theme was 'Bring the Gospel back!'. I felt a sense of urgency in preaching and teaching on many aspects of the Gospel - Justification, Redemption, Imputation, Substitution, etc. The Gospel is a bottomless tank in respect to these doctrines. One would never exhaust the sermons one can do on these topics! It has been a great concern to me that we are in danger of losing the Gospel in preaching and especially teaching. The number of 'other gospels' such as the healing, prosperity and the purpose/success (e.g. Hillsong) gospels have also increased, crowding out the true Gospel.

The most remarkable events in this trip were the reactions to the teaching on the Gospel doctrines. Many saints received fresh revelations of these doctrines, particularly Substitution and Imputation. But interestingly, many unsaved people came with questions. This trip was one of the most encouraging ever in the number of opportunities to preach to, and witness to, unsaved people. In a ministry that is not primarily evangelistic, this was a challenge for me personally. There were last minute invites to new churches, opportunities to share my testimony of salvation and have unsaved people invited and listening. This also stirred me to talk more freely with unsaved people I met, even while travelling from one place to another.

Literature has always been our interest in this ministry. But increasingly I am finding less people are reading - hence the need to look at producing Gospel and teaching materials in other media.

Every trip is also an opportunity to assess the state of the church at large in each town. There is no doubt an increasing polarisation between churches that are adopting the modernistic new programs that satisfy felt needs, and those who are holding to simple Biblical teaching without the thrills of the latest fads. It is my conviction that as we come to the end of the age the tares are increasing due to the Gospel being stripped of its warning of sin and judgement.

There is also a selfish undisciplined generation growing up who do not know the sacrifices of family life in the world and thus have little hope of understanding the *family concept* in the local church. A similar phenomenon is occurring in Christian marriages, which are failing at an unprecedented rate. The world teaches that you can opt out of marriage at any time, you can leave families. Commitment is optional. That same lack of commitment is seen today in the local church. People are more like tourists than committed to the one local church and its members. We are also the most weak and effeminate Christianity the world has ever seen. The church lacks strength and character. Any wonder it is not wanted and little respected?

Many pastors and elders are increasingly dealing with disgruntled Christians

## Terry's Itinerary

**July 7th** 9.30am & 6.30pm Hervey Bay Bible Church, Qld. Ph.0411489472  
**July 28th** 9.30am & 6.30pm Hervey Bay Bible Church, Qld. Ph.0411489472  
**Aug.12th-23rd** Pacific Bible Institute, Hervey Bay, (Masters degree course)  
**Aug.18th** 9.30am Hervey Bay Bible Church, Qld. Ph.0411489472

### **Your Comments and Questions**

(Views expressed here are not necessarily those of the editor)

*Hi Mr Arnold, Thank you for your encouraging e-mail - it really blessed me!...Yes, we all remember you!...Mum has always encouraged me to write since I was a very young girl...When I was fourteen, she encouraged me to enter into an open national writing/poetry competition, for school-aged pupils (6-18yrs). My poem wound up in the top 5% of all entries...I want to use any gifts that I might have to bless other Christians, and one way I have found of doing this is through 'The Young Ladies Journal'. I want to encourage isolated Australian girls in their walk with Christ, and I've received many comments and/or letters from girls who have been encouraged in this way...It is up on my website [www.theyoungladiesjournal.weebly.com](http://www.theyoungladiesjournal.weebly.com) for free viewing...I had a look at your website, and it's very well set out, according to the different 'doctrinal topics'. I really appreciate the work you've done on Seventh Day Adventism. I was able to challenge an SDA about a year ago, and your articles were a great help...it seems to be so clearly unfounded on anything Biblical (especially the E.G. White teachings!), yet it's amazing that so many swallow it hook, line and sinker. Thanks again for your recent e-mail and encouragement. Continue to stand in the Truth!*

(C.C.)

**Editor's comment: I visited this family a few years ago. This girl (now 16 years) lives in a remote area in the outback NSW. She writes a 'journal' for other such young ladies (see above). The literacy standard and writing skills in this journal recently caught my attention. I recommend this free 'journal' which has many various encouragements for young women. She has a faith ministry and I am sure donations for the Journal would be appreciated.**

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### The Church Growth/Emergent Movement

*'The contemporary user-friendly [church growth] movement...rather than arousing fear of God, it attempts to portray Him as fun, jovial, easy going, lenient, and even permissive. Haughty sinners who ought to approach God in terror (cf.Luk18:13) are emboldened to presume on his grace. Sinners hear nothing of divine wrath. This is as wrong as preaching rank heresy'.*

(*'Ashamed of the Gospel'* by John MacArthur, P.64)

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*Dear Terry,...I know that God cannot be wrong. But how do you explain 1Chr.21 that God allowed King David to be influenced to count how many people there were in Israel. What would be wrong with that, yet David was punished very severely for doing it and thousands died. It does not make sense to me. Can you explain it?*

**(J.T., W.A.)**

**Editor's reply:** *It was Satan who tempted David to number Israel (vs.1), yet David could have resisted. Joab even tried to dissuade David (vs.3) but to no avail (vs.4). Joab seemed to know this was wrong and refused to count two tribes (vs.6). God allowed this temptation and the result. All temptation is permitted by God. When evil spirits tempt us, they do so by permission (Job 1:12; 2:6; Lk.22:31, etc). If Satan therefore provoked David to number the people, God allowed him. And what God allows, He may be said to do. David likely did this in the *pride* of his heart.*

*Numbering Israel, when God had promised He would multiply them as the stars, implied a distrust of God. Many commentators believe David gratified his pride to ascertain the number of warriors he could muster for war. 1Ch.21:5 indicates David was not interested in a general census, but in determining how much military strength he had.*

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*About Bill Subritzky [New Zealand]...I am not comfortable with charismatic emotionalism or hype associated with Mr. Subritzky's meetings or Churches similar in style. I once took a work colleague to a charismatic Church and it scared her senseless. Fortunately, she didn't throw the baby out with the bath water and now attends a...Church...Personally, I would rather people go to charismatic Churches with all their excessive emotionalism than pubs. I've noted a common denominator between the two though...People often tell me how foolish they feel after an emotional, 'letting it all out' episode in a charismatic Church, not too different from the foolishness people feel after sobering up from a drunken night. Still, I suppose the former is less severe on one's brain cells so is probably the better alternative!...*

**(Name withheld at editor's discretion)**

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*Dear Terry, It was so good to catch up with you again on your recent trip south. We so look forward to receiving 'Diakrisis' and we pray that God will give you health and strength to continue to stand for the truth of the scriptures against so much opposition...God bless you and your team...*

**(J&N P., Vict.)**

who want their petty likes and dislikes satisfied. Many exhibit a selfish independence that is only met by the consumerism of the fast food type modern church. My trips are always attempting to encourage pastors and elders to remain biblical and doctrinal against the tide of liberal modernistic ideas flooding the church.

In recent years it is less common for me to meet teenagers or young people who are really zealous in holiness and studying their Bibles. But every now and then I meet someone who encourages me by their interest in the things of God and even sound doctrine. This trip was unusual in that I met several such young people. Unknowingly they greatly encouraged me not to give up on a generation that is arising in the midst of a crooked system. On this trip I picked up a Journal written by a 16 year old girl that really encouraged me in its standard of literacy and in the things of the Lord. In a particular trial in my own life, which I have unaffectionately labelled my 'thorn in the flesh', I have never received an answer except 'my grace is sufficient for you' (2Cor.12:9). But one article by this girl encouraged me concerning this trial. Of the book of Job she writes: 'I was struck by the last two verses of the first chapter, '...the Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away; blessed be the name of the Lord. In all this Job sinned not, nor charged God foolishly' and chapter 2 verse 10 '...What? shall we receive good at the hand of God, and shall we not receive evil? In all this did not Job sin with his lips'. How amazing! What faith! Job has just been told that all his livestock's been stolen, his servants killed, and finally, his children - the whole ten of them - are all dead. And yet he says, 'blessed be the name of the Lord'. When I read that, I realised that was what God wanted me to do, too. That no matter what happened, I was just to praise Him for it, trust the Lord for the grace needed at the time, and rest in His faithfulness for the outcome. Friends, it is so much easier to leave everything to the Lord than carry our troubles with us like a weight. I so often want to bear my own problems, my own troubles and stress, on myself. I like to tell myself to just 'toughen up' and 'get used to it' instead of 'Lord I leave this in your care'...We just can't dump things on God and say 'good I got rid of that one!' - but we must learn to let the worry of it rest on Him, and in the meantime do our best with what ability we have to continue, in HIS STRENGTH, to carry on. When we are bearing a burden in His strength, we will not grow weary. When we try to bear it on our own, we will faint beneath the load! So friends, praise God in the good and in the bad. Trust Him for the present strength needed and for the outcome of the journey. He is a fountain that will never run dry!' (The Young Ladies Journal, Autumn, P.5)

To all our subscribers and supporters, may the Lord encourage us all. **'Therefore seeing we have this ministry, as we have received mercy, we faint not...but by manifestation of the truth commending ourselves to every man's conscience in the sight of God'** (2Cor.4:1,2).

**Terry Arnold**

## Church Releases List of 29 Melbourne Priests Guilty of Sexual Abuse



*The Catholic Church has released the names of 29 Melbourne [Australia] priests who...are guilty of sexually abusing children...Archbishop of Melbourne, Denis Hart, told Victoria's child abuse inquiry the church had paid compensation to the victims of 59 priests in the archdiocese. The church revealed names of 29 of those priests...including repeat offenders*

*Desmond Gannon and Michael Glennon...Victorian detectives have also applied to question convicted pedophile priest Gerald Ridsdale about more allegations of child sexual abuse. The 79-year-old, one of Australia's worst pedophile priests, is serving a prison sentence for abusing children between the 1960s and 1980s...he could be paroled [by] June 29'. (Australian Broadcasting Corp. May 30, 2013)*

## Emergent Church and Same Sex Marriage



*Best-selling author and teacher Rob Bell told a British radio host it's time the church caught up with the 'modern world' in accepting same-sex marriage and that questioning the orthodoxy of those who do '...really, really, really pushes people away from Christianity'...Bell is a superstar of the Emergent church movement... (Apostasy Alert, May/2013)*

Editor's comment: One by one the Emergent leaders are adopting the same sex agenda. This should not surprise, as their interpretation of scripture is one of speculation and questioning its inspiration and inerrancy. The Emergent thinking is that there are no absolutes.

## Jesus Not Found Outside the 'Mother' Church, Pope Preaches

*Pope Francis said that people cannot be fully united to Jesus outside of the Roman Catholic Church, during a Mass to commemorate Saint George, the saint he is named after. 'You cannot find Jesus outside the Church' he said April 23...'It is the Mother Church who gives us Jesus, who gives us the identity that is not only a seal, it is a belonging...She gives the identity of the faith, because...finding Jesus outside the Church is impossible' the Pope said.*

*(Catholic News Agency, April 25, 2013; Apostasy Alert, April 25th)*

## Pornography Increasing With Professing Christians

*'A Promise Keeper's survey found 53% of its members consumed pornography. A 2000 Christianity Today survey found 37% of pastors said pornography is a 'current struggle' of theirs. 57% called pornography the most sexually damaging issue for their congregations...'*

*('When the Crosses are Gone' by Michael Youssef, P.93)*

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### Joyce Meyer and Women Ministers

*I just wanted to ask - is Joyce Meyer 'a teacher' in respect to scripture?...I think Meyer actually quotes a lot of texts (in or out of context?); but that leads me onto another matter. I feel very uncomfortable when the (female) Reverend in our...church preaches. I have mentioned this once and was virtually stoned by looks. I don't mean to offend or malign and she is a Godly woman but I don't understand how the [denomination] can ordain women into these Reverend and Bishop roles. I just want to believe the Bible. Also Pentecostal and Mary worship appears to have come into the mainline Church...I was once in a wonderful Gospel based Church of Christ in...during my coming to know the Lord...it's hard to find that strong Biblical based Church again...Anyway, I think the Lord has put me here for His reasons so here I stay.*

[Name withheld at editor's discretion]

**Editor's Reply:** Our website has an article on Joyce Meyer (<http://taministries.net/wp-content/uploads/2010/11/Joyce-Meyer-v2.0.pdf>). Meyer is a false teacher who has not only taught Word Faith heresies in the past but mixes psychology with scripture, confusing the Word. Her use of scripture is often out of context. It's clever preaching but much of it is extra biblical.

If you are sitting under a woman pastor/preacher who is publicly teaching men, you are sitting under outright contradiction to the Word. View our website article on 'Women in Ministry' (<http://taministries.net/wp-content/uploads/2012/12/Women-In-Ministry-Booklet-New-v1.17.pdf>). Paul 'forbids' women to 'teach' in public and 'usurp authority over a man' (1Tim. 2:12). 1Tim.3 and Tit.1 clearly teach the office of elder/pastor/overseer is male: 'The husband of one wife. One that rules well his own house, having his children in subjection with all gravity; (For if a man know not how to rule his own house, how shall he take care of the church of God?)'. The Greek word for 'man' is 'aner', not the generic word for mankind 'anthropos' which might include male or female. The word 'rule' here refers to headship and the order in creation: Since when does the Bible say a woman fulfils this role of 'ruling his own house'? I personally would exit this church.

### Quote

*'A Christian walk based on a decision without a distinction from the world, without commitment, without a fight, without endurance, is not a fireproof ticket to Heaven. It is more like the broad road to Hell...God does not accept 'fans' but only followers...'*

(From a 2013 sermon 'Are You a Fan or a Follower' by Terry Arnold)  
[http://taministries.net/?page\\_id=1714](http://taministries.net/?page_id=1714)

**['Rough'? To simply accept what is said would be worse - 'naivety'? The Charismatic scene is racked with that!]**

*...I have witnessed many cases of healing. [More stories follow]...kidney stones, gall stones, nerve palsy, cancer, punctured ear drum, incurable arthritis, muscular degeneration etc. Many...affirmed medically... [Jesus had people healed see a priest for verification...can you produce medical records?]* [Another story of healing followed]...*Verification enough? [No. It's still hearsay, despite how honest you may be. All such stories that we investigated over many years we found: the person did not have the disease stated; or it was not miraculous but medically explained (some by Christian doctors); or the symptoms returned; or it was psychosomatic; or the stories were exaggerated, or untrue...Real organic diseases are not healed today - again, have you heard of an Aids or Downs Syndrome person being healed?...]*

*...I would rather accept someone's testimony of healing than call them a liar...people are considered innocent until proven guilty? [I am not suggesting that someone who claims to have spoken to a second or third party who witnessed a 'healing' as a 'guilty' person?...it's not the person delivering the claim I am judging, it's the 'healing' that requires verification]. When I know people and their character, I know they believe their story to be true. Unless there is reason to question it, why should I? [I did this for many years and was duped, until I investigated. In these last days there is much spiritual deception? Bodily 'healing' is not a part of the Gospel...It is a doctrine brought into the church mainly by Pentecostalism in the 20th C.]*

*[Another story of healing follows]...You claim there were no failures in the 1st century - generally true, but even Jesus could not heal everyone (Mk.6:5)... [He didn't heal because of their lack of Faith..but never could he 'not heal'] I am the first to admit relatively few people are healed...so do we give up or press on? [We look at why Jesus healed 'all', 'every', 'immediately' and never failed. It proved his Messiahship. Do we need that now?]*

*...You almost seem pleased to think that people are not being healed. [Wrong. I wish people could be healed simply by attending a meeting, but they are not. I was once shipwrecked by this false gospel. I believe God can heal but I do not believe any man has the gift of healings as in the 1st C.]*

*It is easy to point out the failures, the charlatans. But what are you doing to bring release to the sick and needy? Do you laugh at them because they only have carbuncles? Is that what Jesus would do? [I wasn't laughing. I was questioning today's faith healings in the light of the Gospel. What am I doing? I am busy seeing the needy delivered from false teaching...I also see people saved each year - it does not come by preaching about healing and signs and wonders! It comes after preaching/teaching the doctrines of the Gospel...I will continue to 'earnestly contend for the faith once delivered'. If this is 'throwing stones' to you, so be it. It's no 'laughing' matter to me]*

*[No documentation of healings as requested was ever received]*

## Spurgeon and the 'Downgrade Controversy'

The 'Downgrade Controversy' was a pivotal event in the history of the 19th century church in England and in particular the Baptist Union, of which Charles Spurgeon was a minister. Charles Haddon Spurgeon pastored a church that grew from 20 people to over 6,000. He was one of the greatest evangelists of all time and a great defender of the faith, including the Doctrines of Grace. Many are still being won to the Lord through his prolific writings and sermons. He was a strong believer in the full inspiration and inerrancy of Scripture. It was during his era that the Baptist churches began to 'downgrade' on such issues.

### **The 'Downgrade' Issues**

Spurgeon did not seek controversy yet believed in defending the 'faith once delivered' (Jude 3). He resisted any change to the long held orthodox views on scripture. But he lived in an age following the Puritan revivals which saw a new era of rational reasoning and new scientific and philosophical theories. Darwin's theory of evolution expounded in his book '*The Origin of Species*' had also stunned the world.

But of more concern to Spurgeon was the new German '*higher criticism*' which raised speculative questions and doubts on the reliability of Scripture and thus its all sufficiency. Spurgeon wrote: '*Germany was made unbelieving by her preachers, and England is following in her tracks*'. (1)

Spurgeon was at times scathing in his comments but those who knew him closely, knew how he loved the church and wanted to see it hold the high ground of scripture which had been held since the apostles. '*Miserable heretics have permeated churches with their swords of higher criticism, hacking the whole of the Scriptures to pieces*'. Spurgeon also called attention in writing to the consequences of the new teaching: '*Attendance at places of worship is declining, and reverence for holy things is vanishing...*' (2)

Because scripture was being questioned, doctrine thereof was also under attack. It is one thing to question science and philosophy which are *man made* systems. But it is another to question the words of the Bible if God is indeed the author. Satan's first words to mankind were aimed at *speculating* on God's words: '*...he said unto the woman, has God said, You shall not eat of every tree of the garden?*' (Gen.3:1). Spurgeon's Biblical view was one of faith rather than speculation and human reasoning. He had a high view of the inspiration, inerrancy and sufficiency of scripture. It was that historic view that was on a 'downgrade'. Spurgeon wrote: '*Inspiration and speculation cannot long abide in peace. Compromise there can be none. We cannot hold the inspiration of the Word, and yet reject it; we cannot believe in the atonement and deny it; we cannot hold the doctrine of the fall and yet talk of the evolution of spiritual life from human nature; we cannot recognise the punishment of the impenitent and yet indulge the 'larger hope'. One way or the other we must go. Decision is the*

*virtue of the hour. Neither when we have chosen our way can we keep company with those who go the other way'. (3)*

Spurgeon was also concerned about the growing departure from the *Doctrines of Grace* which upheld the sovereignty of God in salvation. There was a shifting to a more Arminian thinking which tapped into humanistic thinking - that man had ability within himself and a part to play in initial salvation. Spurgeon had been fighting this battle on two fronts. He fought both the 'hyper-Calvinists' and the 'Arminians' while attempting to keep the necessity for the free preaching of the Gospel to all. Spurgeon's fellow pastor, Shindler, who wrote the early 'Downgrade' articles in the *Sword and the Trowel*, noted a correlation between the Doctrines of Grace and a high view of Scripture, suggesting that the great majority of those who remained committed to the authority of Scripture were '*more or less Calvinistic in doctrine*'. Spurgeon also noted that a high view of Scripture ran together with a high view of divine sovereignty. (4)

Spurgeon began writing to the Baptist Union asking them to adopt more definitive views in their *statement of faith*. Such a need for a new 'creed' was not new. In history 'creeds' and statements of faith were developed to *defend* the church against attacks on its doctrines. Many early creeds were also written to protect the church from a widening secularisation. Today many churches have either no statement of faith or a very shallow statement of beliefs. The Church of Christ is one denomination that has been fond of the slogan '*no creed but Christ*'. However admirable this may sound, it denies the reason for the early 'creeds' as being the answer to those who were denying the essential doctrines of the faith. The original Apostles Creed was developed for this very reason and to ensure that churches adhered to it in membership. Many churches today could well accept a Seventh Day Adventist into their memberships because their statements of faith concerning the scriptures do not spell out the inspiration of scripture in *only* 66 books (SDA believe their prophet Ellen G. White's writings are also inspired); and Hell is not spelled out as 'eternal' (SDA believe in annihilation, not an *eternal* Hell). The modern trend is similar to the 'downgrade' in Spurgeon's day in that the statements of faith are shallow and provide no defense against new ideas that would attack fundamental doctrines. The Union in Spurgeon's time had a bare statement of faith. The only requirement for membership was the condition that Baptism was by full immersion.

Another issue with Spurgeon was that there was no real *disciplinary action* for ministers who denied the necessary essentials of the faith. Spurgeon wrote: '*God's Word, in this age, is a small affair; some do not even believe it to be inspired; and those who profess to revere it set up other books in a sort of rivalry with it. Why, there are great Church dignitaries now-a-days who write against the Bible, and yet find bishops to defend them*'. (5)

Spurgeon soon found himself swimming against an increasingly strong tide. A congregationalist, R.W. Dale, spoke against the eternal punishment in Hell, believed in annihilation, and that belief in the deity of Christ was not necessary

## Your Comments and Questions

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### The Healing Debate

**The following excerpts are from a prominent Charismatic author and former head of a Bible college. Editor's replies in bold and brackets.**

*Terry, your article on Wigglesworth [‘Hillsong and a False Prophet with a False Prophecy’ May/June Diakrisis P.4]...you have no grounds for dismissing all the stories. To say there is no evidence of anyone being healed is not true. There were many verified testimonies. [Show me definite substantiated claims of Wigglesworth healings...the claims I have seen are stories...not ‘verified’. Pentecostal/Charismatic accounts of these prove exaggerated...[Re: Wigglesworth] I have not seen one credible account of miraculous healing.*

*...Your request for one credible primary source, I had a close personal friend named...(who is now with the Lord) whose father was healed overnight from painful carbuncles at a Wigglesworth meeting in Melbourne, 1927...There is no reason to doubt his or his father's testimony...as a historian I rarely accept oral history from just one person: I require at least two witnesses...I have been told by more than one person of healings through...Wigglesworth. [...‘Hearsay’ again. I have also heard of healings in Hinn’s, Bonnke’s meetings - all investigated were proven false] The people in question are usually godly, honest and upright people...there is no need to question their claims. [So, no matter how outrageous a claim is we accept it if from an ‘upright’ person? No wonder so many are deceived by the healing gospel]...I agree there are mysteries in...healing - why some are cured, others not. [Not so in the 1st century with the ‘gift of healings’...healings were to authenticate Christ’s divinity and apostles were also given power to authenticate this. The NT was yet to be closed. Christianity needed ‘signs’ to show the Jews that Jesus was the Messiah (Lk.7:18-22; Jn.20:30,31; Acts 2:22; Heb.2:3,4, etc)*

**You need medical records and to speak *directly* with those healed, not just ‘witnesses’? (Interestingly, you *never* find these healers in hospitals or morgues). When Christ healed He had them report to the priest. The healing was authenticated. We have investigated *many* healing claims. Healers refuse to give medical records; or the ‘healing’ was not miraculous; and some fraudulent. I tired of these investigations and ceased investigating. I believe God can heal but I have yet to see any person who has the 1st Century gift of healing! They do not heal ‘all’, ‘every’, ‘immediately’ (Matt. 23:24; 8:16; 10:1,8; 12:13,15; 14:36;20:34, etc). There were no failures in the 1st C. and they healed more than ‘carbuncles’! They healed organic diseases. Show me a healing of a Downs Syndrome or Aids person]**

*...The many claims of healing - You have a choice - call the writers liars or accept what they say. [There is a **third** choice? Request verification!] Given they are usually committed believers, it seems rough to take the first position.*

## **Ephesians 2:8 - Is the 'Gift' - 'Faith' or 'Salvation'?**

**'For by grace are you saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God' (Eph.2:8).**

Many debate whether the 'gift' is referring to 'faith' or 'salvation' in this verse. One argument used to state the 'gift' is 'salvation' is that 'faith' in Greek is feminine and 'it' is neuter. Therefore the 'gift of God' must refer to our 'salvation' and not the 'faith' because 'Greek pronouns match their antecedents in gender' (i.e. 'it' being neuter does not match 'faith' being feminine).

However, this argument is flawed because there is no such hard rule in Greek. *There are exceptions.* The pronoun 'it' is a demonstrative pronoun which points out the thing that is referred to (the antecedent). Pronouns *generally* agree with their antecedent in gender and number (plural/singular), but *not always*.

The necessity is to work out exactly what the antecedent is. But what is more important is the *context*. The whole passage is clearly saying that *salvation is of God and none of man. Any Greek exegesis does not supplant the context!*

Again, the argument that the pronoun matches the antecedent in gender and number - this is usually the case, but *not always*. There are exceptions. Sometimes the 'it' or 'this' take on what some call a 'conceptual antecedent', (as in 1Thess.3:3). Exceptions to this 'rule' are actually not rare. One example is 2Jn.1:1 (the 'whom' - masculine does not match 'children' - neuter).

In Ephesians 2:8 the 'it' does not 'agree' in gender with either 'faith' (feminine), 'grace' (feminine) or 'saved' (masculine)!

By context I am persuaded to read the pronoun 'it' as referring to the entirety of the preceding clause. This would mean that all the parts of salvation mentioned are through faith 'and not of ourselves'. This still makes faith a gift. However, this does not have to be proven by this one verse, as it is taught in many verses (1Cor.12:9; Rom.12:3,6; Eph.6:23; Phil.3:9; 2Tim.3:15, etc).

Some Greek scholars, despite their scholarship in Greek, have arguably been biased in their rule that 'the pronoun matches the gender of the antecedent'. A. T. Robertson is one example ('*Word pictures in the NT*'). When discussing this verse Robertson knows that the pronoun does not *always* match with the gender of the antecedent, as he mentions elsewhere that this is '*in general*' the case. But '*in general*' means *not always*. And the exceptions are not rare.

However, you don't have to go to the Greek to discover what God is saying about 'faith' or 'salvation' in this verse! The context is obvious. The next verse also speaks of man being ordained *unto* good works. Everything is from God at the initial point of salvation, its a packaged gift. If God did not give us the faith we would never seek him (Rom.3:11).

The first 'rule' that should be looked at in this verse is *context!* The whole passage is stressing the sovereignty of God in salvation and the inability of man to come with anything to give. Is God not the '*author and the finisher of our faith*'? (Heb.12:2)

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to be saved. R.F. Horton and Alexander MacKenna supported Dale and also believed that doctrine was 'progressing' rather than closed within scripture (Jude 3). This view that the word of God was evolving cut at the very heart of inspiration and inerrancy. The later *neo-orthodox view* of inspiration stated similar - that the way we know God is through His 'revelation' to us. This view denies that the Bible is the Word of God, but rather says it is a 'witness' to the Word of God and by the power of the Holy Spirit it becomes revelation to us. God can use the words in the Bible to speak to individuals, but they still may be fallible words by fallible men. However, this view is no inspiration at all and we might as well get 'revelation' from God from any other writing. The neo-orthodox Karl Barth (1886-1968) was typical of the doublespeak of such a view. Barth would state that the Bible was 'inspired' and even the 'word of God', yet he would also insist the Bible was full of 'contradictions' and fallible. '*Nowhere do we find a rule...and evade the contradictions as such. We are led now one way, now another...whoever is the author, we are always confronted with the question of faith...they are all vulnerable and therefore capable of error even in respect of religion and theology...*'...'*The Bible must from time to time become His Word to us*'. (6) This view leaves us in uncertainty and to pick and choose what we want. These views began as speculative views carried over from humanistic and rationalistic thinking which had pervaded society, especially in the areas of science and philosophy. But this thinking can be devastating to faith - and this is why Spurgeon fought such views so strongly. He rebuked any 'progressive' or new view of inspiration and that the 'faith' should be given over to the subjective reasoning of men.

The Union Assembly met and prepared a brief evangelical, doctrinal statement. However, when the statement was read at the meeting it was also stated that the Union had no authority to enforce doctrinal standards on its members. Many evangelicals at the meeting, including Spurgeon's brother (James Spurgeon), received the statement as an acceptable compromise. The statement was moved by Charles Williams, a believer in the 'new theology'. He added to his motion with a speech on liberal ideas, including quotes by liberals. James Spurgeon '*seconded the motion but not his speech*'. (7) It was actually James Spurgeon who helped sway many to pass this vote which was won by 2,000 to 7! The pastors cheered. One observer later wrote: '*It was a strange scene, that this vast assembly should be so outrageously delighted at the condemnation of the greatest, noblest, and grandest leader of their faith*'. (8) Spurgeon wrote to a friend, '*My brother thinks he has gained a victory, but I believe we are hopelessly sold. I feel heart-broken. Certainly he has done the very opposite of what I should have done. Yet he is not to be blamed, for he followed his best judgment. Pray for me, that my faith fail not*'. (9)

### **The warfare intensifies**

In March 1887, Charles Spurgeon published the first of two articles entitled

'The Down Grade'- written by Robert Shindler in their monthly magazine 'The Sword and the Trowel'. Spurgeon footnoted the first article: 'Earnest attention is requested for this paper...We are going down hill at breakneck speed'.

Shindler's article documented the downward trend after the Puritans from about 1662 and that many non Anglican ministers had fallen away to speculative and rationalistic ideas on the scriptures. He stated that ministers had fallen back into a liberalism similar to the early 'Socinianism' which rejected doctrines of Christology, original sin, aspects of the atonement and demonstrated scepticism of the scriptures. Many ministers in Spurgeon's era had also 'paid more attention to classical attainments and other branches of learning...increased attention to academical attainments in their ministers, and less to spiritual qualifications; and to set a higher value on scholarship and oratory, than on evangelical zeal and ability to rightly divide the word of truth'. (10) Shindler challenged the deception of those who would say they are orthodox, yet who were not: 'These men deepened their own condemnation, and promoted the everlasting ruin of many of their followers by their hypocrisy and deceit; professing to be the ambassadors of Christ, and the heralds of his glorious gospel, their aim was to ignore his claims, deny him his rights, lower his character, rend the glorious vesture of his salvation, and trample his crown in the dust'. (11) This first article 'The Down Grade' concluded: 'These facts furnish a lesson for the present times, when, as in some cases, it is all too plainly apparent men are willing to forego the old for the sake of the new. But commonly it is found in theology that that which is true is not new, and that which is new is not true'. (12)

In April, *The Sword and the Trowel* carried a second article, again entitled 'The Down Grade'. Shindler continued the history of decline in Puritanism. He cited examples of apostasy in various churches and mentioned Philip Doddridge (1702-1751), who was principle of an academy which gave into Socinianism, and was then dissolved in one generation after Doddridge's death. Shindler stated Doddridge 'was too judicious, and not sufficiently bold and decided'.

In August 1887 *The Sword and the Trowel* published another article by Spurgeon titled 'Another Word Concerning the Down-Grade'. Spurgeon became more intense: 'A little plain-speaking would do a world of good just now. These gentlemen desire to be let alone. They want no noise raised. Of course thieves hate watch-dogs, and love darkness. It is time that somebody should spring his rattle, and call attention to the way in which God is being robbed of his glory, and man of his hope'. He warned that 'Too many ministers are toying with the deadly cobra of 'another gospel', in the form of 'modern thought' ... 'modern thought 'shall be burned up with fire unquenchable'".

This article got attention nation wide and beyond. Spurgeon, who had been held in high esteem, suddenly became the object of criticism from within the Baptist Union which had now increasingly become ecumenical. Spurgeon was going against the flow and urging them, at least in principle, to separate from

the week by the men of modern thought - 'I will go my way and preach Christ's Gospel and win souls'. One lifting up of Jesus Christ Crucified is more to me than all the quibbling of the men who are wise above what is written! Converts are our unanswerable arguments!...converts are our defense'. (24)

On June 7, 1891, in much physical pain from rheumatism, gout and Bright's disease, Spurgeon preached his last sermon. His concluding words were about His beloved Saviour: 'He is the most magnanimous of captains. There never was his like among the choicest of princes. He is always to be found in the thickest part of the battle. When the wind blows cold he always takes the bleak side of the hill. The heaviest end of the cross lies ever on his shoulders. If he bids us carry a burden, he carries it also. If there is anything that is gracious, generous, kind, and tender, yea lavish and superabundant in love, you always find it in him. These forty years and more have I served him, blessed be his name! And I have had nothing but love from Him. I would be glad to continue yet another forty years in the same dear service here below if so it pleased him. His service is life, peace, joy. Oh, that you would enter on it at once! God help you to enlist under the banner of Jesus even this day! Amen'.

Spurgeon spent the last of his days in Menton, near Nice, France, and died on January 31, 1892. Over 60,000 people filed past his casket in the *Tabernacle*.

Lest we forget the heroes of the faith who fought for 'the faith once delivered'!

**Terry Arnold**

'Does The Truth Matter Any More' (2 DVD's) details some of the 'Downgrade' issues. Quotes by Spurgeon show the prophetic voice of Spurgeon for today's church. Available from this ministry \$29 (postage free).

References: Some material excerpted from 'Ashamed of the Gospel' by John MacArthur.

(1) 'Another Word Concerning the Down-Grade', *The Sword and the Trowel* (August 1887), 399 (2) 'The Down Grade', *The Sword and the Trowel* (March 1887), 124 (3) 'Our Reply to Sundry Critics and Enquirers', *The Sword and the Trowel* (September 1887), 465 (4) 'The Down Grade' (second article), *The Sword and the Trowel* (April 1887), 170. In the 'notes' section of the same issue, Spurgeon added: 'We care far more for the central evangelical truths than we do for Calvinism as a system; but we believe that Calvinism has in it a conservative force which helps to hold men to the vital truth', P.195 (5) 'The Forgotten Spurgeon' by Iain Murray, P.141 (6) 'Church Dogmatics' by Karl Barth, I/2:509-510 & P.123-124 (7) 'A Welcome Conclusion' *The Baptist* (May,1888), 230 (8) 'The forgotten Spurgeon' by Iain Murray, 149-50. (9) Ibid, 148 (10) 'The Down Grade' by Robert Shindler, *The Sword and the Trowel* (March 1887), 123 (11) Ibid,125 (12) Ibid, 126 (13) *Letters of Charles Haddon Spurgeon*, 183 (14) 'Spurgeon: Prince of Preachers' by Lewis Drummond, 671 (15) Ibid, 697 (16) *Autobiography*, 4:256 (17) 'The Baptist Union Censure', *The Sword and the Trowel*, Feb. 1888, 83 (18) 'Our Reply to Sundry Critics and Enquirers', *The Sword and the Trowel*, September 1887, 462 (19) 'From the Usher's Desk to the Tabernacle Pulpit: The Life and Labors of Charles Haddon Spurgeon', 274 (20) 'The Sword and the Trowel', 1888, 127 (21) 'The Forgotten Spurgeon' by Iain Murray, P.160 (22) Ibid, P.162 (23) 'The Down Grade' (second article), *The Sword and the Trowel*, April 1887, 170 (24) Sermon #1990 1887



supposed to challenge false teaching and false teachers (Tit.1:9-11; 2Tim.4:2,3). Sadly today many pastors and elders shrink from this command.

Many accused Spurgeon of schism and causing controversy but he knew that we are to *'earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints'* (Jude 3). The defence of the faith is a vital necessity despite the fact that heresies will come. This is not an option! It may not be everyone's calling to actively pursue this on a regular basis but those who do so in a Godly fashion should be supported. Spurgeon in an article *'separation, not schism'* wrote: *'Separation from such as connive at fundamental error, or withhold the 'Bread of Life' from perishing souls, is not schism, but only what truth, and conscience, and God require of all who would be found faithful'*. (20)

One of the important lessons from the Downgrade was the issue of pragmatism. Pragmatism is a deceptive 'Trojan horse'. Iain Murray wrote of the 'Downgrade': *'It showed a readiness on the part of many ministers to justify their lack of firm action on the grounds of the greater good to be gained by a more accommodating policy. This was the attitude of those who sympathised with Spurgeon's concern, but regretted his withdrawal as they balanced it over against the influence he might have exerted had he stayed in the Union'*. (21) Of this pragmatism Spurgeon responded: *'What have you and I to do with maintaining our influence and position at the expense of truth? It is never right to do a little wrong to obtain the greatest possible good...Your duty is to do the right: consequences are with God...If an act of sin would increase my usefulness tenfold, I have no right to do it; and if an act of righteousness would appear like to destroy all my apparent usefulness, I am yet to do it. It is yours and mine to do the right though the heavens fall, and follow the command of Christ whatever the consequences may be'*. (22).

The scriptures teach against this pragmatism - with a question that demands a negative answer: *'...shall we do evil, that good may come...'* (Rom.3:8)

How did so many Bible-believing churches fall into apostasy? It is the *doubting, reasoning and speculating of doctrine held*. Spurgeon wrote: *'But let a man question, or entertain low views of the inspiration and authority of the Bible, and he is without chart to guide him, and without anchor to hold him. Reason has been exalted above revelation, made the exponent of revelation, and all kinds of errors and mischiefs have been the result'*. (23)

Today we are on the same 'downgrade' as in Spurgeon's day. It is arguable that we are actually much further down the 'grade'. Almost all the denominations no longer teach the doctrines they taught in the mid 20th century. The latter half of the 20th century has seen a wholesale abandonment or weakening of major doctrines, a full blown ecumenical movement (which was once resisted by most), as well as a dearth of biblical teaching.

Spurgeon wherever possible avoided controversy with personalities but was not backward in using the pen or preaching to expose false teaching. But his focus was ministry: *'I say to myself, after being badgered and worried through*

those who were unorthodox, rather than attempt unity with them.

Spurgeon began to write and appeal to the secretary of the Union, S.H. Booth. He appealed to the Union to deal with the known error in their midst and those who denied the full inspiration of scripture. Spurgeon increasingly became convicted that he could not continue to fellowship with this error.

### The Separation

On October 28th, 1887, Spurgeon withdrew from the Union. Spurgeon wrote to Samuel Harris Booth, General Secretary of the Baptist Union: *'Dear Friend, - I beg to intimate to you, as the secretary of the Baptist Union, that I must withdraw from that society. I do this with the utmost regret; but I have no choice. The reasons are set forth in The Sword and the Trowel for November, and I trust you will excuse my repeating them here...I wish also to add that no personal pique or ill-will has in the least degree operated upon me. I have personally received more respect than I desired. It is on the highest ground alone that I take this step, and you know that I have long delayed it because I hoped for better things. - Yours always heartily'*.

In the November *Sword and Trowel* Spurgeon wrote: *'Believers in Christ's atonement are now in declared union with those who make light of it; believers in Holy Scripture are in confederacy with those who deny plenary inspiration; those who hold evangelical doctrine are in open alliance with those who call the Fall a fable, who deny the personality of the Holy Ghost, who call Justification by faith immoral, and hold that there is another probation after death...To pursue union at the expense of truth is treason to the Lord Jesus...He is our Master and Lord, and we will keep his words: to tamper with his doctrine would be to be traitors to himself. Yet, almost unconsciously, good men and true may drift into compromises which they would not at first propose, but which they seem forced to justify...But how are we to act towards those who deny his vicarious sacrifice, and ridicule the great truth of justification by his righteousness? These are not mistaken friends, but enemies of the cross of Christ...It is our solemn conviction that where there can be no real spiritual communion there should be no pretense of fellowship. Fellowship with known and vital error is participation in sin. Those who know and love the truth of God cannot have fellowship with that which is diametrically opposed thereto, and there can be no reason why they should pretend that they have such fellowship'*.

On November 23 he wrote from the south of France to explain his actions to a fellow pastor, Mr. Mackey: *'It was incumbent upon me to leave the Union, as my private remonstrances to officials, and my repeated pointed appeals to the whole body, had been of no avail. My standpoint had become one from which, as an earnest man, I could see no other course but to withdraw'*. (13)

This private letter to Mackey was shared with the hundred-member Council of the Baptist Union. Eighty of these men then met December 13th to discuss Spurgeon's charges. Many were outraged at Spurgeon's accusations and his

separation. They accused him of having his facts wrong and officers of the Union denied Spurgeon had ever come to them with ‘private remonstrances’ or doctrinal concerns. They accused him of not using Matthew 18 to deal with the offences. However, it is evident that at least Booth and Spurgeon had many conversations and letters exchanged. Booth had in fact once sympathised with Spurgeon on the rapid rise of modernism within the Union. (14) But Booth had made Spurgeon promise not to use the letters, to which Spurgeon honoured to the end, despite the accusations by the Union and the eventual rejection by Booth himself. (15) In a letter to his wife, Spurgeon wrote: ‘What a farce about my seeing these brethren, privately, according to Matt.18:15! Why, I saw the Secretary and the President again and again; and then I printed my plaint, and only left the Union when nothing could be done’. (16)

The Union was now considering censuring Spurgeon and planned to send four men to confront him. But an unwell Spurgeon was in France resting and replied that he would meet them when he returned to England. Spurgeon did not want to make the issue personal, but keep it squarely in doctrinal grounds.

On January 13, 1888, Spurgeon met with the Union delegation at his church, the *Tabernacle*. The men included General Secretary Booth, outgoing President James Culross, and President-elect John Clifford. Alexander Maclaren was supposed to also be present but was ill. The men requested Spurgeon reconsider his separation from the Union. Spurgeon countered with a proposal that the Union write an evangelical statement of faith. The men refused. Five days later the Union met and voted to accept Spurgeon’s withdrawal *but also to censure him*. Out of nearly 100 members only 5 supported Spurgeon. The Union stated that Spurgeon’s claims were not substantiated with facts, names and evidence.

Spurgeon could have named names of those who had the ‘new theology’ and had departed from evangelicism. But he believed that the Union did not really want to clean up the false teaching and he did not want the controversy to be about personalities rather than doctrine. ‘*The warfare has been made too personal; and certain incidents in it, upon which I will not dwell, have made it too painful for me to feel any pleasure in the idea of going on with it*’. (17)

### The Aftermath

The Down Grade Controversy was a perpetual grief to Spurgeon until his death on January 31, 1892. Spurgeon’s health suffered and many believed the controversy hastened his death. Close friends and even some of the students from his Pastors College, turned against him. Few came to Spurgeon’s aid and most of his defences were enacted alone. Even the few who agreed with him - most of them chose to remain in the Union, some thinking that churches might not survive outside the Union.

Spurgeon was now struggling with kidney ailments and had been absent from the pulpit. Some of his critics stated that the ‘Down Grade’ articles were the writings of someone quite ill. Spurgeon was hurt by that charge: ‘*Our opponents*

*have set to work to make sneering allusions to our sickness. All the solemn things we have written are the suggestions of our pain, and we are advised to take a long rest. With pretended compassion, but with real insolence, they would detract from the truth by pointing to the lameness of its witness. Upon this trifling we have this much to say: - In the first place, our article was written when we were in vigorous health, and it was in print before any sign of an approaching attack was discoverable. In the second place, if we were in a debate with Christians we should feel sure that, however short they might run of arguments, they would not resort to personalities’.* (18)

History was to prove Spurgeon right. Those who adopted the ‘new theology’ were hardened and also increasingly held more power in the Union. The Union was racked with problems and heresies. Unbelief became prominent within many churches. This is similar to the many churches of today who have ‘negotiated’ with known error such as homosexual lobbies and liberal theology. (The Uniting Church in Australia is one example of a church gutted and apostatised over many decades).

In contrast, Spurgeon’s church continued to grow in numbers and in outreach. The Evangelical Alliance, which stood with Spurgeon, also gained strength. Spurgeon’s fight alerted evangelicals worldwide to the dangers of modernism and the ‘down-grade’ in doctrines.

In Spurgeon’s final years he was invited to speak at the Evangelical Alliance, Shindler wrote: ‘*The reception given by the audience to Mr. Spurgeon when he rose to speak was almost overpowering in its fervor and heartiness. We occupied a seat on the platform near enough to witness the powerful emotions that agitated his soul, and the tears that streamed down his cheeks as he listened to previous speakers; and though only a very few of his Baptist brethren were present, there was not wanting such a display of hearty sympathy as must have been cheering to his heart, and comforting to his soul...The Lord graciously purge His Church of all false doctrine, all false teachers, and all who are traitors in the camp of Israel! And may the Spirit from on high be poured out upon all flesh, that all the ends of the earth may see, and own, and rejoice in, the salvation of our God!*’ (19)

### The Lessons

*Heresies are necessary.* That may shock some readers. But *heresies are actually important to the church.* ‘**For there must be also heresies among you, that they which are approved may be made manifest among you**’ (1Cor.11:19). It is not until divisions arise that those who are ‘**approved**’ by God (lit. ‘*Those who pass the test*’), can be known, or *proved* to be true. ‘Heresies’ show or prove the true. Divisions actually separate those faithful to God’s word, from the rest (2Pet.2:1-22). Those who will stand on truth will be ‘**manifest**’ - they will come forth. How are these ‘*approved*’ ones ever going to come forward (be ‘*manifested*’) unless they have publicly resisted ‘heresy’? Elders/Pastors are