

January 2018

Dear friends,

Thank you for your continued support and prayers for the work of the Salisbury Reformed Seminary.

### **Worship Service**

On Monday, 8<sup>th</sup> January, at 9am, Trustees, Lecturers, Students, and other Christian friends met together in Grove House for a time of worship. Malcolm Watts led the service which, after the Call to Worship, began with the singing of Psalm 86, verses 11-17. David Kay of Barnstaple was then called upon to read from the Holy Scriptures, Numbers, chapter 14, verses 1-24. After this, Dewi Higham of Cardiff was asked to lead in prayer, which he did, seeking the Lord's presence and favour for the service and the opening of the seminary. Malcolm Watts then spoke on the words of Numbers 14:24: "My servant Caleb, because he had another spirit with him, and hath followed me fully, him will I bring into the land whereinto he went; and his seed shall possess it."

Opening up his text, Malcolm Watts noted that, at this time, the Israelites were near to the border of Canaan, the land of promise. 12 spies, or scouts, representatives of each tribe, were chosen and sent to take account of the land, its people and its cities or fortresses. When they returned, they all agreed that it was a very fruitful land, albeit a land populated by fierce peoples and very strongly defended. The majority, full of unbelieving pessimism, doubted the divine promise given, and felt there was no way they could take possession of this land. Only Joshua and Caleb felt that, with God's help, it could be done and they urged the people to evidence faith, not fear. On account of their persistent unbelief, the judgment of death and disinheritance fell on this generation, but the two believing spies were commended by God and assured of a place in Canaan. Caleb was especially mentioned, a man who had "another spirit with him, and hath followed me fully."

This man is identified as "the son of Jephunneh the Kenezite" (Number 32:12) and, since Kenez was an Edomite name (Genesis 36:11,15), it suggests that he was perhaps a foreigner by birth and, that professing faith in Israel's God, he was received as one of God's people and so incorporated in the tribe of Judah (Joshua 14:14; 15:13). Certainly, here in the text, Caleb (whose name means "a dog") is described by God as His "servant": one called by God, devoted to his Master, and dedicated to His service.

Yet he was a servant with a difference; and, in the worst of times, God has men who retain their integrity and who resolutely cleave to Him (Isaiah 1:9). As Thomas Boston once wrote, "their candle must shine brightest when that of others is dying out." (Genesis 5:22; 6:9; 17:1; Psalm 73:27,28).

It was pointed out in the sermon that this man was distinguished by his inner life ("another spirit with him") and by his outer life ("[he] hath followed me fully"):

#### **1. THE INNER LIFE**

##### ***"another spirit with him"***

This other spirit (disposition, or motivating force) was a spirit imparted, strengthened and activated by the Holy Spirit, something which was quite special and made him different from nearly all his contemporaries

(Ezra 1:5). Scripture makes mention of others like him who stood out in their several generations (e.g. 2 Kings 23:25; 2 Chronicles 17:6; 31:31; John 5:35; Acts 18:25).

Very important truths can be learned from this:

- God wants our hearts to be for Him (1 Samuel 16:7; Proverbs 23:26); and when our hearts are warm, fervent and full of zeal, they please and even delight Him (Deuteronomy 5:29; Acts 26:7);
- it is a real mark of grace when our spirits are right (2 Chronicles 15:15; Psalm 119:38), and it becomes us to keep such evidences clear and bright (Acts 11:22,23; Philippians 2:12);
- what we are, we are within, and nothing more (Proverbs 16:2; 23:7): and therefore we must take the greatest care of our souls to ensure they are in a good state before God (Proverbs 4:23);
- such are the times in which we live, that a godly, sincere, and earnest spirit is necessary and even indispensable (Psalm 51:10; Romans 12:11);
- our spirit should be one which seeks God's honour above everything else (Philippians 1:20; 1 Peter 4:11) and takes every opportunity to doing good (Galatians 6:10; Ephesians 5:16);
- to our great sorrow, we are not always what we should be (Galatians 4:15; Revelation 2:4), and therefore we need to reflect on our spiritual state and, if need be, repent before God (Revelation 3:3,19); and
- we need to keep a right spirit at all times, and particularly as we draw near to the end of our lives (Acts 20:24; 2 Timothy 4:7; Revelation 2:10): to that end we must implore the blessed Holy Spirit to quicken and maintain us within (Song of Solomon 4:16).

## 2. THE OUTER LIFE

*"[he] hath followed me fully"*

Under the direction and influence of God's Word and Spirit, we must worship Him, cleave to His truths and ordinances, and keep carefully to His revealed will and His righteous laws (Deuteronomy 10:20; 11:22; 13:4).

If the heart is right, the life will also be right. Consider:

- as believers, our lives should be summed up in this: following the Lord our God (Matthew 4:19; Luke 9:23; Revelation 14:14), which means receiving Him as our Guide (Psalm 23:1; Hebrews 12:2), obeying His Word (John 14:15, 21-23), and imitating His example (1 Peter 2:21; 1 John 2:6);
- it is fitting that we should be very careful about following the Lord, strictly observing all His commands (Ephesians 5:15; 1 Thessalonians 4:1);
- sadly, our behaviour is sometimes is not what it should be: we fail to refer to God's Word (Exodus 5:32; Psalm 78:56,57), influenced rather by what others are doing (Exodus 23:2; Galatians 2:13);
- we should follow Him "fully": this will mean following Him with "singleness of mind" (Acts 2:46; Ephesians 6:5), in all His commandments (Psalm 119:6; Luke 1:6), and constantly, to the very end (John 8:31; Revelation 2:10);
- to this end, we should make sure our consciences are informed and regulated by Scripture (2 Corinthians 1:12; 2 Timothy 1:3) and avoid anyone and everything that may hinder or divert us (Galatians 5:7; Hebrews 12:1);
- the secret is to keep close to the Lord throughout each day, maintaining communion with Him and thus preserving a sense of His presence (Psalm 16:8; 119:168; 139:17,18); and
- let us always remember the benefits of following Him fully: experience here of His love (John 14:21) and help (Proverbs 10:29), and hereafter a reward in glory (Luke 22:28,29; Revelation 2:10).

In closing, Malcolm Watts applied these truths to those present. The Trustees should dedicate themselves to "following the Lord fully" as they seek to lead this Seminary in a godly, reformed and spiritual way. The Lecturers too should excel in this, ensuring that they prepare as well as possible and seeking always to inform the mind, warm the heart, and direct the will. And finally, there are the Students: let them mind this in all their studies, aiming to reach the highest standard in order to please the Most High God.

We would all do well to take Caleb for our example and inspiration. "He had another spirit with him" and "[he] hath followed me fully" – Let us follow after him, even as he followed after the Lord our God!

The congregation then sang Psalms 63, verse 1 – 8, the last verse of which reads as follows:

In shadow of thy wings I'll joy,  
for thou mine help hast been.  
My soul thee follows hard; and me  
thy right hand doth sustain.

Malcolm Watts concluded the service with the Benediction.

### **The Seminary**

Looking back, we are profoundly thankful to God for granting the original vision of a Reformed Seminary in Salisbury and for the unity evidenced among the many reformed brethren with whom that vision was shared.

Now, we were so very grateful that on this same day, 8<sup>th</sup> January 2018, following the worship service, the doors of the Seminary were opened and, at the time of writing this, the first full week of the Seminary has been completed.

Subjects covered were as follows:

**Monday:** *What is a Pastor?* (David Kay); *Introduction of Church History* (Roland Burrows); *Introduction to Biblical Studies* (Neil Pfeiffer); *What is preaching?* (John Saunders).

**Tuesday:** *Introduction to Systematic Theology* (Malcolm Watts); *How to study* (DK); *Worship – the Sabbath* (DK); *Revelation* (MW).

**Wednesday:** *Inspiration* (MW); *Introduction to Greek* (Simon Green); *Benefits of Greek* (SG); *Inerrancy* (MW).

**Thursday:** *Preservation (of Scripture)* (MW); *The World before Christ* [1] (RB); *The World before Christ* [2] (RB); *The Being of God* (MW).

**Friday:** *Names of God* [1] (MW); *Mandate for Evangelism* (JS); *Goal of Evangelism* (JS); *Names of God* [2] (MW).

We look to our God to lead, guide and bless His work. Please remember in your prayers the two men who have started this year's course.

### **Bursaries**

Thankful to God as we are for His provision in setting up this Seminary, as we look to future intakes of students, we anticipate that there could be some who have financial difficulties. As Trustees, we really do not want financial constraints upon men to prevent them from applying. It is therefore our hope to provide bursaries to enable these men to follow the course at the Seminary. If anyone feels it laid on their hearts to help sponsor such men, we would gratefully receive any gifts towards this bursary fund.

### **Charitable Status**

Our prayers have also been answered in that our application for Charitable status has been approved by the Charity Commission (Licence Number: 1176241). We see the Lord's hand in this, especially since in these days so many people are antagonistic to the gospel and to the Christian cause. "For with God nothing shall be impossible." (Luke 1:37)

### **Study Day**

Most of the lectures are being given by the Seminary's Trustees. However, on Friday, 8<sup>th</sup> June and the morning of Saturday, 9<sup>th</sup> June, we have a guest speaker: Michael Haykin, Professor of Church History and

Biblical Spirituality at The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, and, God willing, he will be lecturing on 'The Particular Baptists and the Revival in the 18<sup>th</sup> Century'.

You would be very welcome to join the students for what promises to be an interesting, informative and valuable series of lectures. These will be held in the large meeting room at Grove House, 18 Wilton Road, Salisbury, SP2 7EE, which is where all the Seminary lectures take place. In order to have some idea of the number of people likely to attend, we would be very grateful if you would register on the Seminary website ([www.salisburyseminary.org](http://www.salisburyseminary.org)). Over the two days, a series of eight lectures will be given by Professor Haykin: the first starts at 8.30am on the Friday morning. Please feel free to join us for all or a part of the time.

### **The future**

As we plan and prepare the course for the next two years, and finalise the details for this year, we would be most grateful for your prayers. We need the Lord's guidance in every aspect of the course and in all our endeavours to obtain the right balance, maintaining academic standards yet emphasizing true spiritual experience.

At this point of time we have just two students. We intend to be flexible in our approach to increasing the number, by accepting students throughout this year rather than waiting for set times to enrol. Please continue in prayer with us, that men chosen, gifted and called by God will be led to apply for places at the Seminary and to follow the prepared Course.

Our thoughts go beyond the training of men for the ministry. We pray for men to furnish our churches with faithful ministries, preaching Christ in the power of the Holy Spirit, all to the glory of God and the furtherance of His Kingdom.

When Sion by the mighty Lord  
built up again shall be,  
In glory then and majesty  
to men appear shall he.

The prayer of the destitute  
he surely will regard;  
Their prayer will he not despise,  
by him it shall be heard.

For generations yet to come  
this shall be on record:  
So shall the people that shall be  
created praise the Lord.           *(Metrical Version, Psalm 102:16-18)*

### **In conclusion**

The Lord has brought the Seminary into being and, although there is still much to be arranged, we trust He will continue to lead, guide and provide for the needs of all those involved in the work. One student emailed to say, "The week at the Seminary was an incredible blessing." The other said, "It was a most helpful and stimulating first week at the Seminary and I am sure the lectures will continue to be a blessing in the months ahead." We thank God for this, encouraged to continue our efforts in dependence upon the Lord.

Once again, we request your prayers.

Yours through God's grace alone,

Malcolm Watts