

Glossary

Creature-power or **creature-merit** is the unbiblical notion that unregenerate sinners have the ability, the power, the will, in themselves by nature, to repent and turn to Christ in saving faith.

A **Sandemanian** thinks saving faith is nothing more than mental assent. If a sinner accepts the facts of the gospel, he is saved. To talk about the heart, or feelings, is to introduce works, and ruin the grace of God in salvation. The name comes from Robert Sandeman (1718-1771).

An **Amyraldian** thinks that Christ died for and redeemed all sufficiently, but effectually only for the elect. The name comes from Moise Amyraut (1596-1664).

When I speak of the **eschatological** aspect of the gospel, I am referring to the New Testament phrase **‘but now’** (or, in the context, ‘now’) (Rom. 3:21; 5:9,11; 6:22; 7:6; 8:1; 11:30; 11:31 (second ‘now’ in NIV, NASB); 16:26; see also John 15:22,24; Acts 17:30; 1 Cor. 15:20; Gal. 4:9; Eph. 2:12-13; 5:8; Col. 1:26; Heb. 8:6; 9:26; 12:26; 1 Pet. 2:10).¹ ‘But now’ carries enormous overtones. It refers to the massive change that God brought about in the coming of Christ, his death and resurrection, his ascension, and the subsequent outpouring of the Holy Spirit. The age of the law has gone. The age of the gospel has come. In short: God, in time, works out his eternal decree to save his elect, and thus exalt his Son in their final glorification. God decreed the redemption of his elect – the purpose, means and ends of their redemption – in eternity, but he is accomplishing it in time, as a part of history. Adam, the promise to Abraham, the law at Sinai, the coming, life, death, resurrection and ascension of Christ, Pentecost, the return of Christ, and so on, are milestones in this historical process which is divided into two great ages, two great eras, two great dispensations or epochs – before Christ and after Christ, leaving aside the eternal age following the second coming of Christ – which lies outside history – to concentrate on ‘this present time’ (Rom. 8:18) in contrast to the age preceding it. Everything centres on Christ and his work. He is the watershed of the two ages, the climax of all history, especially salvation history.

¹ 1 Pet. 2:10 does not have the ‘now’ but it is clearly implied.

Introduction

In 2010, I published an expanded version of the paper I had given at the annual meeting of the Strict Baptist Historical Society, March 19th 2009, entitled *Septimus Sears: A Victorian Injustice and Its Aftermath*. As I said at the time, I hoped to produce a much fuller work on the subject. The years are passing, however, and still I am not ready to go to press with the finished manuscript – which, in any case, continues to grow. With this in mind, I have decided to proceed with the publication of what I thought would have formed an Appendix to the complete book – little did I realise how much *that* would grow!

As I have made clear in previous works, incipient hyper-Calvinism – leave alone hyper-Calvinism proper – continues to blight the standing command of Christ that we should ‘go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature’ (Mark 16:15). And since Christ immediately added the solemn words – ‘he who believes and is baptised will be saved; but he who does not believe will be condemned’ (Mark 16:16) – it is essential that we make sure it really is the *gospel*, and not a mangled version of it, that we preach! Moreover, it is essential that we do indeed *preach* it to every creature. Hyper-Calvinism ruins gospel addresses to sinners – both in *what* is said to them, and *how* it is said. And this includes the doctrine of eternal justification. Hence my book.

In October 1875, in his monthly magazine, the *Sower*, Septimus Sears published the second part of a sermon he had preached in the Strict Baptist chapel, Clifton, Bedfordshire, under the title: ‘A Safe Hand for a Sinful Soul’. This publication immediately met with a storm of protest, a storm which had long-term consequences, consequences still with us today. In his sermon, Sears, trying to help those who were lost, wandering – or complacent – in the maze produced by the hyper-Calvinistic doctrine of eternal justification, told his congregation that no sinner is safe until he has trusted Christ for salvation; that is to say, until a sinner trusts Christ he is under the wrath of God. Sears, needless to say, should have gone further, and commanded, invited, urged his hearers to trust Christ at